

Queering Maternity

Let us hypothesize the last maternal speech, preceding her execution for the crime of servitude. Will she reassert her dissidence from a patriarchal capitalist individualism? Will she cry out against agonism and rabid accumulation in the face of need and vulnerability? Will she even bother to explain, to ears which condemn their own dependence, her innocence? Will she claim the servitude for which she is banished from esteem as something applied, like a pesticide or a pathologising category, upon her soul? Or will she silently compose her own requiem, tired, emptied, humiliated, and with nothing left to give?

A brief introduction to the general problem as I perceive it

It is, in part, through a repudiation of the maternal within the self, forced by a paternal despotism which permeates our civilization and reproduces itself within and through dominant familial structures, that maternal forms of selfhood continue to be degraded, mocked and reviled. Desirable selfhood continues to be understood, through liberal notions of individuality and equality, as monadic fraternity. It is my contention that the tragedy which in recent history denied and repressed in boys their maternal identity has now, in the name of liberatory feminisms, been extended to persons of both genders. The liberation of women has meant the near-complete eradication of the maternal. Daughters have donned the symbolic penis and joined the brotherhood. Although the call to separate an impetus to domination from masculinity has gained a certain popular appeal, a much larger social transformation has seen femininity embrace ethics of domination. The repudiation of the maternal has infiltrated, at a molecular level, the changing performances of femininity. It is my belief that we are witnessing a silent spreading of the subjugation,

repudiation, longing for, and desiring of the maternal.

Queering maternity¹

In one of my favorite papers, *The Subject and Power*, Foucault tells us that it is not power, but the subject, which, all along, has been the general theme of his work. "My objective," he writes, "has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (1982: 777). The mode I am particularly concerned with in this paper is the objectivizing of the subject in what Foucault terms "dividing practices": "on the one hand, they assert the right to be different, and they underline everything which makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything which separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself, and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way" (Foucault, 1982: 785). The dividing practices with which this paper is concerned are those which tie mothers to the identity "mother." The problematic constraint, as I see it, lies not so much in the identity itself, but rather in the separation of this identity from non-mothers. In other words, the problem is that the category allows an existence external to itself which generally disallows mothers leave from the practices which bind them and absolves everyone else from participation in, and responsibility for, maternal ethical relations with the other. Divisions between "kin" and "stranger," perpetuate ethicalities in which those who enact relations of gift and responsibility for the other, restrict these enactments to their "own" children.² Such divisions not only perpetuate inequalities once understood as foundational to women's oppression, but also service the persistence of egoistic sensibilities and agnostic subjectivities.

This paper takes up Foucault's suggestion: "*We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries*" (Foucault, 1982: 785) (my italics). My plea is for the refusal of the type of individualization which is linked to the fraternal-democratic, capitalist state and the two-gendered system. My plea is in the form of a request to cross the dividing lines between mother and non-mother, responsibility and non-responsibility, kin and stranger. It is my hope that such a crossing could potentially not only allow us, mothers and non-mothers alike, to revive dormant aspects of our own identities, but could allow the children to grow up with the psychosocial potential to form bonds not restricted to the monogamic family structure, to identify with the objects of their desires instead of repudiating and disdaining them, and to cultivate ethics, sensibilities and capacities of multiplicity and maternity. It is my hope that such a crossing could allow us to revive and revalue our own maternal aspects as politically efficacious and downright radical.

My partial and provisional suggestion, partial in its necessary incompleteness and provisional in an attempt to avoid setting up yet another dogmatic framework, (and yet I have seen provisionality used by some as an excuse to slip

away from responsibility), is for a proliferation of identification, a flooding, unfolding of gender binaries within which maternal relations have been constrained. My suggestion is for the refusal to be caught, and to bind ourselves and others, within a two gendered system of entrapment within a single gender and the severing of identification from desire. But more than this, my suggestion is for a refusal of polarized subjectivities which sever some of us from, and tie others to, maternity; which restricts maternal other-oriented modalities of selfhood to narrow realms and subjugates it to prescriptive fraternal monadic modalities of selfhood, agonistic ethics of democratic equality, and “public,” “political” realms. My suggestion is for the cultivation of maternal relations in all spheres and with all others.

Identification and desire

this child who is tied to being a son in relation to me,
this child who is tied to being a son in negation of me

Engulfment

We all begin as maternally identified. According to Chodorow's (1978) ontogenic narrative, our selves are initially formed through engulfing the maternal, and it is the retaining of the maternal within the self which first allows the self to become a self and to emotionally weather separation from the mother. The infant takes the maternal figure/s within itself, and she, he, they remain within the infant when she, he, they leave. Maternal figure/s, that is, those who mother the child, are the constituents of the child's primary self-identification. I would like to push this thesis of other-in-the-self slightly further in two directions. On the level of gender identification I would like to suggest that the child's first gender, any child's first gender, is maternal.

Secondly, and this seems to me a much more difficult point, on the level of subjectivity, a child's first modality of selfhood is qualitatively maternal. This is not to say that infants and small children are “little mothers,” though toddlers tend to delight in role reversals, but rather to say that there is a relational quality, a modality of being which takes place in the bonds formed through the interactions between mother and child. Chodorow terms this modality of being as “self-in-relationship” and claims, along with Benjamin, that it forms our fundamental sociality. We all have, according to this thesis, an overwhelming propulsion to recreate the qualitative aspects of our early bonds with the maternal. While women tend to recreate these bonds through themselves becoming mothers, men tend to satisfy this propulsion through heterosexual relationships with women. Benjamin takes this analysis further to explain domination and submission as the impetus to return to maternal bonds gone awry.

The growth and development of selfhood is accompanied by, and dependent upon, engulfments of maternal figure/s and internalizations of maternal

relationships. It is upon this psychosocial analysis of early development that Chodorow rests what I consider her most radical claim: *within all of us who have been mothered, regardless of our sex or gender, lie the foundations for mothering, lie the abilities to engage in maternal relations, practices, self-understandings and ethics.*

Repudiation

And yet, we do not all mother. When we do, those of us who do, mother within exceedingly narrow realms, barely extending maternity beyond the others we consider kin. Chodorow (1978) begins to explain this by way of an analysis of gender formation within the modern Western heteromonogamic family structure (which, I might add, is unraveling faster than I write). In its current configuration, heterosexuality requires and perpetuates a gender polarity which outlaw desire for the gender one identifies with. Within a kinship system in which maternity is fused with femininity, one must disavow one's maternal self in order to identify with masculinity. Within a political culture where dominant masculinities have been the templates with which "freedom" and "individuality" have been defined, freedom and individuality have come to require a disavowal of maternal modalities of selfhood.

To return to Chodorow's explanation: All children begin as maternally-identified, but only daughters exhibit and re-enact this identification as mothers. Only daughters become mothers. The paradigmatic daughter, as belonging to the same sex-gender category as the mother, does not need to disavow her earliest identification in order to identify with the gender imposed upon her. Although she cannot *have* the mother as an object of desire, such a having being antithetical to identification and reserved for the father and, through the substitution of another female figure, the son, she can *be* the mother. Identification is for her a relatively undistruptive process. Because her gender identity does not require a rupture from or repudiation of her earliest identification, the daughter's self-understand is formed as continuous with the m/other and as in relationship with the m/other.

The gendering of sons as masculine requires a repudiation, within the self, of all that is associated with femininity, including the maternal. In order to identify as masculine, sons must distinguish themselves through early negation, as not-mother. This radical break not only with the m/other but with the early self, a self in relation, a self as vulnerable, shapes the self-understanding of sons as immaternal, unrelated, and invulnerable: monadic. Further, the negative nature of masculine identificatory processes—the formation of masculinity as not-mother and not-feminine—feeds masculine belittlement, disregard, disdain, and contempt for those who enact femininity and maternity:

... boys define and attempt to construct their sense of masculinity largely in negative terms. Given that masculinity is so elusive, it becomes important for masculine identity that certain social activities

are defined as masculine and superior, and that women are believed unable to do many of the things defined as socially important. It becomes important to think that women's economic and social contribution cannot equal men's. The secure possession of certain realms, and the insistence that these realms are superior to the maternal world of youth, become crucial both to the definition of masculinity and to a particular boy's own masculine gender identification. (Chodorow, 1978: 182)

What I find particularly fascinating in Chodorow's discussion of the role of mothering in gender formation, is the marrying of certain modes of selfhood, the self as connected and in-relation, and the self as monadic, to maternal identificatory and disidentificatory processes. Chodorow then explains gender inequality, and masculine tendencies to domination, as stemming from these modalities of subjectivities, as stemming from the type of selves we become through our identificatory process with the maternal. In other words, *drives to enact relations of domination require specific forms of subjectivity*. It is specific modalities of subjectivity and forms of selfhood embodied in dominant masculinities and correlated to specific ("masculine") ethics, types of attachment, and practices of relating to the other, which give rise to the domination of persons whose modes of subjectivity and practices of relating are primarily maternal.

The subjugation of maternal modalities of selfhood takes place not only externally between differently-gendered groups and individuals, but also takes place intrapsychically, within the self. Conventional masculinity requires the internal suppression and disavowal of the m/other within the self. But what I consider even more distressing is that, within our current system of valuation, in order to be a free and individual self one must subjugate one's own maternal modes of being to a fraternal agonism. I draw from Judith Butler's (1997) discussion of gender formation to exposit and expand upon the first point before going on to explain the second.

Butler's variation of the gender formation narrative, while keeping with Chodorow's tradition of heteromonogamic incubation, differs, firstly, in framing gender formation in terms of homosexual desire, and, secondly, in a focus on repudiation as endemic to the formation of both bipolar genders. Further, while in Chodorow's rendition of masculinity, engulfment precedes and makes repudiation both necessary and possible, for Butler it is repudiation which is the primary force motivating the incorporation of the other. "Internalization preserves loss in the psyche; more precisely, *the internalization of loss is part of the mechanism of its refusal*" (my italics). Or, to be consistent with the language I have been using, one engulfs the other in order to cope with the loss sustained upon one's repudiation of one's desires for the other. "If the object can no longer exist in the external world, it will then exist internally, and that internalization will be a way to disavow the loss, to keep it at bay, to stay or

postpone the recognition and suffering of loss" (Butler, 1997: 134). The parallel understood in terms of gender performance, then, is that gender is *copying and refusing to copy*, desiring and refusing to desire, simultaneously.

As in Chodorow's (1978) rendition, desire and identification are agonistically polarized. A daughter's giving up of her first love object, the mother she, like all young children, fiercely, tyrannically, desires, becomes possible only on the condition that she incorporates the mother into herself, becoming, in a sense, the lost object of her own desire. The daughter identifies with the mother because she cannot have the mother. Similarly, the son, within this convoluted heterosexual matrix, in order to deal with the loss of the *father* as an object of desire, must incorporate the father into himself, and so become part of the same defining category, as identified with. I quote Butler, with pleasure, at length:

Consider that gender is acquired at least in part through the repudiation of homosexual attachments; the girl becomes a girl through being subject to a prohibition which bars the mother as an object of desire and installs that barred object as part of the ego, indeed, as a melancholic identification. Thus the identification contains within it both the prohibition and the desire, and so embodies the ungrieved loss of the homosexual cathexis. If one is a girl to the extent that one does not want a girl, then wanting a girl will bring being a girl into question; within this matrix, homosexual desire thus panics gender.

Heterosexuality is cultivated through prohibitions, and these prohibitions take as one of their objects homosexual attachments, thereby forcing the loss of those attachments. If the girl is to transfer love from her father to a substitute object, she must, according to Freudian logic, first renounce love for her mother, and renounce it in such a way that both the aim and the object are foreclosed. She must not transfer that homosexual love onto a substitute feminine figure, but renounce the possibility of homosexual attachment itself. Only on this condition does a heterosexual aim become established as what some call a sexual orientation. Only on the condition of this foreclosure of homosexuality can the father and substitutes for him become objects of desire, and the mother becomes the uneasy site of identification.

Becoming a "man" within this logic requires repudiating femininity as a precondition for the heterosexualisation of sexual desire and its fundamental ambivalence. If a man becomes heterosexual by repudiating the feminine, where could that repudiation live except in an identification which his heterosexual career seeks to deny? Indeed, the desire for the feminine is marked by that repudiation: he wants the woman he would never be. He wouldn't be caught dead being her: therefore he wants her. She is his repudiated identification (a repudiation he sustains as at once identification and the object of his desire).

One of the most anxious aims of his desire will be to elaborate the difference between him and her, and he will seek to discover and install proof of that difference. His wanting will be haunted by a dread of being what he wants, so that his wanting will also always be a kind of dread. Precisely because what is repudiated and hence lost is preserved as a repudiated identification, this desire will attempt to overcome an identification which can never be complete. (Butler, 1997: 137)

The self becomes a self through the incorporation of differently gendered others, the first other being the mother. We are, thus, multi-gendered. However, within a two-gendered system of binary heterosexuality, the self must repudiate, disavow, repress, subjugate (pick your word) elements of one's own identity, modalities of one's own subjectivity, in order to exhibit the "correct" gender and desire schema and the corresponding "correct" modality of selfhood. As the genders associated with the sex "woman" change, become "liberated" to include egoist, monadist, agonist, and dominatory tendencies, maternal modalities of selfhood (the self as for the other, as in relation, as empathetic, as giving without expectation of return) become subjugated even within selves whose gender identities correspond to the sex "woman."³

Chodorow (1978) suggests, by implication, the possibility of preserving masculinity while removing the impetus (driven by the panicked fear of being the object of one's masculine desire) to dominate women.⁴ The existence of such a possibility supports my suggestion that we are witnessing a spreading of forms of subjectivity bent on domination. Forms of subjectivity traditionally attributed to masculinity, are becoming dominant within female and feminine personhoods, walks, apparels, and desires (one can have a monadic and agonistic self-understanding and still desire rippling muscles or household appliances—my desire is for a dishwasher). Some of the very modalities of selfhood Chodorow would have selected out in a process of masculine socio-sexual evolution are now becoming dominant within both genders. Instead of the extrication of dominatory tendencies from masculinity, we are witnessing the addition of the master, the liberal individual, and the fraternal rival, to femininity.

Chodorow's claim is this: It is "the asymmetrical organization of parenting in which *women* mother" which "is the basic cause of significant contrasts between feminine and masculine identification processes" (1978: 173). Allow me to reframe this claim: because persons who identify with the gender attached to the sex "woman," mother⁵ within a bipolar sex and gender system, and because men do not, within this system, mother, girls formulate understandings of themselves positively and as in-relation with others, while boys formulate understandings of themselves negatively, as not-in-relation, or as monadic. It is this negation of the maternal and her gender that leads to the domination, disdain, contempt and, desire for, an instrumentalizing, ob-

jectivising, and jealous treasuring of, women. If parenting sons so that their identity forms negatively is the cause for such an impetus to domination, one could simply suggest that women remedy this by mothering all children as though they were girls, by refusing to cut away certain children due to the makeup of their organs. This is not, however, the remedy Chodorow outlines.

Chodorow's (1978) remedy instead is that men do more parenting, thus providing boys with positive role models. That is, Chodorow's remedy is to replace a bipolar gender hierarchy with a more egalitarian bipolar gender system.⁶ Her suggestion is to level the playing field. Put another way, Chodorow's suggestion is for the equal (I use the liberal definition here) parenting of children by two parents within a monogamic two-gendered nuclear family system. And yet, if we focus on forms of selfhood, on the type of self one enacts (as other-concerned or egoistic, etc), instead of on specific gender performances (femme, butch, bear, queen, etc), we can see that it is not mothering by *women* which perpetuates the domination of women by men, but rather, it is mothering by mothers within a system which affixes the female and the femme to the maternal and privileges maternally antithetical practices and subjectivities which is the progenitor of not only the traditional domination of women by men, but of a cultural malaise of agonistic and dominatory sensibilities, practices and processes which permeates all relations and infects many modes of being. It is not that maternity has been devalued because of its attachment to femininity but rather that *femininity has been devalued through its affiliation with, or, more aptly, affixture to, maternity*. Extricating femininity from maternity does not reverse the valuation of maternal practices and modes of selfhood any more than affixing the maternal to masculinity would (such an attachment would simply result in a devaluation of maternal enactments and aspects of self of some maternal butch or masculine persons). What is commonly understood as gender inequality is perpetuated by a system of binary modalities of subjectivity. Untied from newly liberated gender performances, subjugated selfhoods remain subjugated.

It is not that I disagree that "the elimination of the present organization of parenting in favor of a system of parenting in which both men and women are responsible would be a tremendous social advance." And I certainly do not disagree that "such advances do not occur simply because they are better for "society," and certainly not simply because they are better for some (usually less powerful) people" but rather "depend on the conscious organization and activity of all women and men who recognize that their interests lie in transforming the social organization of gender and eliminating sexual inequality" (Chodorow, 1978: 219). My point is simply that sexual equality does not necessarily translate into equality between forms of subjectivity, or between the practices and ethics tied to these forms. Indeed, Western "civilization," in its current configuration, *requires* domination by agonistic and dominatory forms of subjectivity. Dominatory forms of subjectivity, in order to self-identify, require an other against whom to enact domination. The current system of

egoistic, agonistic, rights-based equality, rather than reaching for political systems and ethics beyond domination, simply instills an element of egalitarianism into a field of contestation which has domination as its overriding impetus. Indeed, what I find particularly unsavory is the system's unspoken stipulation that, in order to participate in democracy, one must engage in contestation and subjugate one's maternal aspects to a rivalrous self-oriented form of selfhood. Nor does instilling an element of egalitarianism into a two-gendered system alter the two-gendered and bipolar fact of the system. A level playing field may be a good beginning, but it is far from optimal.

What Chodorow (1978) fails to question is the presupposition of mutual exclusion; the presupposition that one cannot simultaneously identify with and desire the same, that subject and object designate antithetical ontological states. Yet, as Butler points out "identification and desire can," and *do*, "coexist". Indeed, "their formulation in terms of mutually exclusive oppositions serves," of course, "a heterosexual matrix." There are butches who desire each other's struts and femmes who engage in mutual flirtation. It is my hunch that the outlawing of intrapsychic multiplicities, specifically, the apartheid of identification and desire, presents one of the roadblocks along the illusive yellow brick road leading beyond domination. Indeed, the co-operative co-existence of identification and desire may be imperative for engendering collaborative social and political possibilities. The gender concept "queer" offers (a) possible amorphous and shifting framework/s for such co-operative co-existences.

Performances of gender are also performances of subjectivity, indeed "the very possibility of becoming a viable subject requires that a certain gender mime be already underway" (Butler, 1993: 314). That is, subjectivity within the current system is necessarily gendered in its becoming. Our possibilities for theorizing change, as well as our subjectivities, are limited by this system. And yet it is a system that provides exciting material with which to work. Potentialities lie in the inherent instability, the continual shifting of amalgams, of gender and subjectivity. Gender and subjectivity are not ridged formations, but rather they are, in most permutations, viscous, moving, changing, in spite of our best attempts at stability, singularity and coherence.

...a stone butch may well seek to constitute her lover as the exclusive site of erotic attention and pleasure. And yet, this "providing" butch who seems at first to replicate a certain husband-like role, can find herself caught in a logic of inversion whereby that "providingness" turns to a self-sacrifice which implicates her in the most ancient trap of feminine self-abnegation. She may well find herself in a situation of radical need, which is precisely what she sought to locate, find, and fulfill in her femme lover. In effect, the butch inverts into the femme or remains caught up in the specter of that inversion, or takes pleasure in it. On the other hand, the femme who..."orchestrates" sexual exchange, may well eroticize a certain dependency only to learn that

the very power to orchestrate that dependency exposes her own incontrovertible power, at which point she inverts into a butch or becomes caught up in the specter of that inversion, or perhaps delights in it. (Butler, 1993: 317)

The stability and singularity of subjectivity is no more self-identical than the stability and singularity of gender (Butler, 1993: 314). The specter of coherent subjectivity, like that of gender, is achieved “through the apparent repetition of the same” (Butler, 1993: 314). Such repetitions within current binary systems require the repudiation and subjugation of the other or opposite. The paradigmatic dutiful wife and mother of “Leave it to Beaver” engages in the formation of her own subjectivity (or perhaps we should say non-subjectivity) as continuous with, as extension of, through repetitive re-enactments of selflessness. The paradigmatic emancipated dyke of my Toronto milieu repetitively deviates from traditionally heterosexual enactments of “woman” in such a way as to establish herself as loudly separated. Polyamorous (within narrow boundaries), she denies elements of subjugated relationality through panicked engagements in hedonistic activities.

One of the ways oppression works is “covertly, through the constitution of viable subjects and through the corollary constitution of a domain of unviable (un)subjects—*abjects*, we might call them—who are neither named nor prohibited within the economy of the law. Here oppression works through the production of a domain of unthinkability and unnameability” (Butler, 1993: 313). While lesbianism has made its way into the thinkable, and, in a number of social venues, dominates as the legitimated name and regulatory category, it has done so, in part, by claiming for itself, as itself, dominant forms of subjectivity. The unthinkable, the unnameable, the abjective, what I refer to as the maternal, is further subjugated as a condition of the ascent to liberation for oppressed groups.

In this way the migration of dominant forms of subjectivity has taken place. The dominating forms of subjectivity, of the fundamentally antagonistic Western ego, thrive within capitalism’s “new woman.” The feminine greedily engulfs aspects of masculine subjectivity, leaving the maternal repudiated, disembodied and without an advocate. Such is one of the newest forms of colonization. Insidious it is, in its invisibility, its penetration of the soul, of one’s mode of self, while seeming to leave identity intact. Insidious it is, as the newly colonized call themselves victorious.

What I find radical, indeed, mutinous, in Chodorow’s work is the assertion that we all begin as maternally-identified, that the foundation for maternal qualities is laid in every person who has been mothered, and that it lies dormant in all of us who do not engage in maternal practices, ethics, relations and self-concepts. I have use this assertion to expand upon my belief in the, although often dormant, overwhelming potential for giving freely, empathizing with the other, taking responsibility for the other, and engaging in communication with

a will to understand. It was toward social potentials beyond domination that Chodorow called for a sharing of parenting between the genders. It is towards social potentials beyond domination that I have attempted to “queer” Chodorow’s call for shared parenting. My provisional supplication is formed though an incomplete analysis of the polarization of identification and desire. My focus has been on how this polarization binds us, not only to identities of gender, but to specific forms of subjectivity which I consider to a certain degree extractable from the constituting veneer of gender we all play as drag. It is toward refusing to be bound to specific and antithetical subjectivities, toward refusing to participate in polarizations which feed domination, and toward an interpermeation, a mixing, a flowing of the divided—individual/abject, self/other, kin/stranger, subject/object, doer/done to, good/bad, masculine/feminine, etc—that I offer the following as both invitations and appeals: 1. Engagements in maternal practices as, in a sense, “queer”: as both the same as and other than the other, as in-relation with and separate from. 2. Desubjugations of maternal forms of subjectivity through engagements in maternal relations regardless of one’s categorical positionality 3. Proliferations of maternal practices, forms of subjectivity, and ethics, into self-other relations of all kinds.

¹Mothing Defined: Gender is practice. One becomes a gender, genders, gendered, through repetitive enactments and reenactments which shape one, internally, externally, as specifically gendered, which shape body and consciousness. Subjectivity is practice. One becomes a subject through practices of self, which include repudiations and engulfments of others and Others. To mother, in my usage, is to engage in maternal practices. These change historically, culturally and individually but share similarities of giving to freely, caring for, empathizing with (that is, putting the self in the place of the other in an attempt to understand the other), and taking responsibility for the well-being and even the actions of others. I use the term “maternity” to designate not the specific relation of mother to child, but rather these practices of subjectivity as self-in-relationship and the ethics of responsibility and empathy. Understanding maternal practices as practices, and as practices which shape subjectivity, not only provides implications in the reformulation of gender systems, but also provides a challenge to the forms of subjectivity with which our current rights-oriented and individualistic democratic systems are built.

²There is here another division which I wish to contest, between one’s “own” children who, as kin, are considered not to be strangers, and the stranger for whom those who mother their “own” children may feel justified in taking little or no responsibility for. One is tied to “kin,” another to “stranger.”

³I find it difficult to use the term “feminine” here as the gender modalities associated with “woman” seem to increasingly become less “feminine”.

⁴Chodorow’s concrete suggestion is that if men spend more time parenting, boys will have positive models to identify with, therefor their masculine

identification will be formed positively as qua-father instead of not-mother. With a positive identificatory process they will not need to develop belittling and contemptuous attitudes toward women, the maternal, or the feminine.

⁵I use the term "mother" as designating practices or enactments.

⁶Sharing devalued labour between persons of two genders within a heterosexual nuclear family structure does little to revalue the labour itself, it simply divides it more equally between the two adult participants of such a family. It is also important to point out in this point of the text that Chodorow does discuss communal child-rearing formations favorably, pointing to how children raised within such structures are less individualistic and more group-oriented than those raised in nuclear families.

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