

**PSYCHOLOGY'S CONSTRUCTION OF A GENDERED
SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH SUPPORT GROUPS FOR DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**

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ABSTRACT

The increasing psychologisation of domestic violence in the past 25 years is an example of what Rose (1985) terms the 'psychological-complex'. The psy-complex rests on a particular understanding of the subject of psychology. The subject is the unitary, rational and psychological being. This understanding of subjectivity is gendered as it identifies women as responsible for the transferal of the psy-complex to the family. The psy-complex is analysed as a form of power resting on this gendered subjectivity. It is also analysed as a form of power that has escaped feminist scrutiny due to the feminist assumptions that power is repressive and prohibitive.

PREFACE

Unless specifically indicated to the contrary, this project is the result of my own work.

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CHAPTER ONE

A JOURNEY TO FEMINIST POSTSTRUCTURALISM

This thesis reflects my personal travels through the vast literature on domestic violence and the ways in which it has influenced my work and interest in the area. My interest in domestic violence began as an undergraduate student when I started to facilitate support groups for women who were victims of abuse at the local Family and Marriage Society. As I began to work my way through the literature, I found it intellectually stimulating but devoid of much practical usefulness. I was aware that my repeated attempts to bring what I had learned to the women in the group were met, usually with blank stares, and occasionally with outright disbelief. It seemed that the theory on domestic violence existed at a level of abstraction far removed from the everyday lives and experiences of these women. They had no need for, nor grasp of, concepts such as ‘locus of control’ or ‘thought stopping’. Terminology of this kind did not change their everyday lived realities. For all the personal growth that may have occurred through the use of such concepts, the entire structure and organisation of our society seemed to work against them achieving freedom and safety. I began to get a feeling of living a dual existence. Debates around theories and aetiologies of domestic violence existed within the realm of my academics. The real ‘work’ in the area was with the women who entered the support groups and seemingly had no need for such theories. This experience lay in stark contrast to many of the claims by theorists to have developed down to earth, easily implementable theory.

But every cloud does have a silver lining it would seem. Browsing through the library, I stumbled across a book, entitled *Domestic violence: A Profeminist Analysis* (Yllo and Bograd, 1988). It focused on feminist responses to traditional theories of domestic violence. The suggestions they proposed were ones that I could share with the women with whom I worked. They were practical and implementable and the critiques of existing theories were ones that I could clearly identify with. The focus for women was in changing our patriarchal society in order that women enjoy the freedom and privileges that men had enjoyed for so long. All this time I had misguidedly looked inside of myself and other women to try to understand domestic violence. Now I realised that we must focus on the power of men, the law, the state and how it maintains patriarchy. We must lobby for change, demand that attention be given to women's issues, critique the ideas and theories of men and the ways that they represent men's interests, and hold men responsible for their actions that subordinate women in every aspect of their lives. The theory matched the outrage that women were feeling at being continually ignored by psychological theory or treated as 'other': that which is not male. I became caught up in this wave of activity. Women were united and working for a mutual goal. We were political activists working for a common struggle against a common enemy that was clearly defined and identifiable. There was unity and sisterhood, and old theories were rejected in favour of practice. The passion and dedication was invigorating.

Slowly in this country, laws have changed. Those with legal power have become aware of domestic violence and policies have become increasingly gender sensitive. The solution to domestic violence seems, however, to remain maddeningly distant. Again, it appears that these

legal changes do not affect the everyday lived experiences of women. The changes advocated for by feminism did not seem to have much of an impact on the relationships and values of women or their husbands. In addition, I became distinctly aware of the divisions and rifts within feminism and realised the alienated feeling of being accused of not being a real feminist if I did not agree with everything that was being advocated for. I began to wonder whether I had the right to identify myself as a feminist as it seemed that I qualified as one only occasionally. An article by Erickson (1992) reflected succinctly the feelings I had. She relates certain feminist approaches to a particular religious fundamentalist who “continued to exalt comrades in his faith and warn of damnation for dissenters” (p. 263). Was I so overcome by false consciousness that I could not recognise the truth in these feminist theories? I began to ask how a feminism for women could exclude some women on the grounds that they were letting down the side? Which side were we on and who were our team captains? Did we even elect these captains? Amid this sea of conflicting theory and competing calls for action among the branches of feminism, my study of psychology (the psychology of another species it would seem) continued.

My introduction to poststructuralist theory, I suppose, gave me a way out of this confusion. I was now able to state that none of these theories or calls for action was the true or right one but all were acceptable ways of understanding domestic violence. What we need to do is not weigh a theory up according to its truth-value but according to its usefulness and the underlying assumptions that it takes for granted. There is no reality ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered, but rather we construct our reality through language. This critical, reflexive approach allowed me to

see some light through the clouds of competing ideas. But once again, darkness soon fell on this bright day.

As I returned to the continual flow of women entering the support groups I was once again struck by the way in which the theory seemed to have been developed in a world apart from theirs. The reflexivity of poststructuralism left me at a loss as to what to do. I was crippled by it. Everything was good enough, there was no right way to do things, but at the same time, nothing was good enough and I could not decide what theory should guide my practice. How could I choose between a mass of theories if all were acceptable? Back once more to the separate development of my academic life and my sense of responsibility to the women with whom I worked.

At this point, I remain struck by the theoretical merit of the social constructionist movement in psychology. But I long for the passion and vigour that accompanied my encounter with feminism. It was a time of action and unity in spite of the conflicts. What I am left with is a desire to find an understanding of domestic violence that allows the theoretical merits of poststructuralism to emerge without losing the feminist focus on practice and the lived experiences of women. A theory that allows us to critique and expose the artificiality of the assumptions, categories and notions that we take for granted and that allows patriarchy to escape the clutches of feminism, in spite of the drastic changes in power that are supposed to have occurred between the sexes. I aim in this thesis to show that a poststructuralist analysis of domestic violence needn't disappear into the mists of the ivory tower and can still be informed by a feminist ethos. In addition it is both possible and essential that our critique of the categories and assumptions accepted by both

mainstream theory and feminism do not neglect the very real ways in which these categories reinforce the oppression experienced by those who are supposed to belong to them. More importantly, I aim to show that this approach can lead to a more critical and reflexive practise that allows for an account of the power relations in psychological theory in spite of its claims to be apolitical.

Most books written on domestic violence begin with a debate around the definition of the subject matter. I have purposefully avoided entering into such a debate. The definition that one uses will clearly be influenced by the theoretical approach taken. For example in proposing a communication approach to domestic violence, Cahn (1996) define domestic violence as “the ability to impose ones will (i.e., wants, needs, or desires) on another person through the use of verbal or nonverbal acts, or both, done in a way that violates socially acceptable standards and carried out with the intention or the perceived intention of inflicting physical or psychological pain, injury, or suffering or both....the description of a communication perspective on domestic violence includes the goals and effects of message behaviours that are intended or perceived as intended” (p. 6). This can be contrasted to the feminist approach that defines domestic violence, according to Adams (1988), as a “controlling behavior that serves to create and maintain an imbalance of power between the battering man and the battered woman” (p. 191). The definition of domestic violence in this study came from the women in the group. They were self identified abused women and what they recognised as abuse and their given reasons for it were not challenged. The range of experiences that they mentioned were wide and at times unexpected. In addition, the women were all married and living in heterosexual relationships. For this reason, no

attempt has been made to distinguish between domestic violence and wife battering, or to account for abuse within homosexual relationships.

The first chapter outlines the mainstream theory on domestic violence. This is kept purposely brief as my concern is not for the details of the theories but for the ways in which domestic violence is constructed as a problem of self and the assumptions underlying this self. I have classified the theories somewhat simplistically according to their theoretical orientation in an attempt to highlight where differences and similarities exist between them. I end the chapter with a discussion of how feminism has contributed to our understanding of domestic violence in what I consider to be profound ways as well as the ways in which it has not differed from mainstream theory. The second chapter aims to show how a feminist understanding can be enhanced by the concepts of poststructuralism. What I argue is that rather than being accurate and scientific accounts of domestic violence, it is useful to consider the theories identified in chapter two as productive discourses. This viewpoint allows us to consider how domestic violence has been constructed through psychological discourse, at the expense of competing accounts, as a problem of self. From this approach, we can see psychological accounts of domestic violence as well as the therapeutic encounter as being saturated with power relations and requiring critical reflection. In order to achieve this theoretical position, I shall look critically at the notion of self and the psychologisation of the problem of domestic violence.

The notion of a feminist poststructuralism leads to a novel methodology. Here the task is simpler as a discursive analysis of the experiences of women can be done under the direction of a

feminist ethos and the two methods are largely complimentary. Discourse analysis has long been used for the exposing of political concerns and has, therefore, been a useful tool for feminism (Burman, 1991).

Having outlined the methodology, I shall provide an analysis of the material in an attempt to show how the merging of feminism and poststructuralism allows for a new understanding of the power relations inherent to domestic violence. The starting point of this thesis is that much of the mainstream literature on domestic violence has presented itself as both apolitical and ahistorical. The feminist objection to such an approach to domestic violence has been extremely useful in exposing the power relations that are central to domestic violence and transforming our understanding of domestic violence from a therapeutic to a political opportunity. However, the feminist understanding has offered a useful but limited understanding of power. It has viewed power as something that one group has and another lacks. This fails to take account of the ways in which psychological and feminist theory is itself imbued with power relations. Through a discussion of the psy-complex (Rose, 1985) and the nature of the subjectivity that is assumed by psychological discourse, another, more productive and less repressive understanding of power is made possible which the feminist understanding of power is unable, in its present form, to take account of. This is a view of power well documented in the work of Foucault and Rose. I argue, however, that the Rosean understanding of power fails to account for the ways in which this new, productive power is gendered. That is, in his exposure of how the psy-sciences make possible a new form of power he does not consider how this may have different implications for men and women or reinforce a gendered subjectivity. Thus the feminist approach to power remains a

useful one in an analysis of domestic violence but it can be complemented by an analysis of power as conceptualised by Foucault.

CHAPTER TWO

SUBJECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 1988, Bograd stated that until 15 years ago, hardly any information on wife abuse existed. Initially, it was feminist activists who began working on the issue by setting up shelters for battered women and forming networks to aid women abused by their partners. The terms battering and marital rape were coined soon afterwards (Bograd, 1988). Since then, it seems that there has been an explosion of literature on the topic. This literature has largely been an extension of mainstream psychological theory into this newly identified domain.

The interest that psychology has shown this topic allows for a specific conceptualisation of the problem which differs from the conceptualisation offered by other disciplines. Domestic violence is not seen as an illness (as, for example, it may have been if a medical explanation was given for it) and it is, therefore, not curable through drugs or surgery. Rather, domestic violence, from a psychological perspective, is constructed as a problem of self. This analysis of the psychologisation of domestic violence is adapted from Rose's (1985, 1988, 1990, 1993) work. This chapter aims to show that despite the diversity of therapeutic approaches from which a 'consumer' can choose, they are all concerned with the client's sense of self; their identity. It is assumed that there is a discrepancy between their present self and their desired self. This self is changeable and fluid and the aim of therapy is thus to guide the person towards their desired self. This is done initially through the self-scrutiny of the individual who evaluates himself/herself according to a norm and, as a result, perceives himself/herself as lacking in some way.

Psychological theory then provides people with a 'manual' for changing themselves into the ideal or desired self. Therapy is 'sold' through a promise of happiness and satisfaction if this desired self is achieved. The happiness for which one strives is thus synonymous with the success of the therapy (Rose 1990).

This chapter has two aims. Firstly, I aim to overview, very briefly, the kinds of approaches that have typically been taken by psychologists in dealing with domestic violence. In doing so, I aim also to suggest that despite their diversity, they share certain fundamental assumptions, that is, they take the basis of therapy to be the self which is transformed into its full potential through self-scrutiny and self-management.

The Psychological Approaches

Perhaps the branch of theory that has received the most interest and debate are the psychoanalytic and other intrapsychic theories of domestic violence. Okun (1986) states that for psychoanalysts, masochism is an innately feminine trait. The victim has a central role in provoking the abuse as she is in fact demanding a dominant response from her partner. The masochism of women is, from this perspective, a psychological trait that exhibits itself in self-sacrifice, self-degradation, self-punishment and suicidal behaviour to mention a few such 'feminine' traits (Okun, 1986).

Aside from such controversial ideas, psychoanalysis has paid little attention to domestic violence. In a similar vein, however, there are still many theories that explain domestic violence in terms of intrapsychic factors residing in one or both of the parties. For example, Rothschild, Dimson, Storaasli and Clapp (1997) aimed to uncover the personality characteristics of veterans

who had been perpetrators of domestic violence. They state that the MCMI-II scores showed this sample to have subclinical narcissism, narcissistic personality disorder and high general psychopathology. Similarly, men who abuse their wives have, in other studies, been described as having deficits in social competence and neurotic symptoms (Spaccarelli, Bowden, Coatsworth and Kim, 1997) as well as being poor empathisers (Forte, Franks, Forte and Rigsby, 1996). Ammerman and Herson (1990) suggest that batterers have more poorly defined sexual identities, lower self-esteem and are attention seekers. They are more likely to interpret their spouse's behaviour as damaging to their self-esteem. Bersani, Chen and Pendleton (1992) summarise some of their findings thus: "...compared to the general population they are more nervous, indifferent, and impulsive. They also have a slight tendency to be more depressive, subjective, dominant and hostile" (p. 128).

These descriptions can be seen as descriptions of the selves of batterers. Battering is described as being manifested in the internal characteristics of the man who is abusive and/or the woman who is abused. It is assumed that a score on a psychometric test is a representation of the man's potential to batter, that is, it measures that part of him responsible for the battering. Given this understanding of the man who batters, specific techniques for self-scrutiny are developed which lead, if successful, to self-management of the problem.

Adams (1988) describes these techniques stating that through educating the man into methods of self-inspection, the man is encouraged to focus on his past traumas, through such techniques as introspection, in an attempt to reduce his need to abuse others. The aims of such therapy would

be to boost the man's feelings of efficacy in various areas, such as sexuality or parenting, and to redefine masculinity in such a way as to reduce the violence that is seen to be an overcompensating behaviour stemming from a fear of his feminine side (Adams, 1988). Self-inspection thus occurs during introspection under the supervision of the therapist. The therapist then teaches the man what changes are needed to his existing self in order to cope and respond more appropriately and less violently. In other words, he learns what needs to be done in order to reach his ideal self as defined in therapy.

More recently, domestic violence has begun to be defined as an interpersonal or communication deficit between couples. Battering is thus identified as just one aspect of a dysfunctional interaction pattern between the couple. Cahn (1996) provides a detailed account of this perspective on domestic violence. He states that there is more evidence to suggest that the communication between a couple is the best indicator of violence than any other possible predictor. In a similar way to the intrapsychic or learning theories, the author suggests that a communication perspective would accept that battering may be a result of a loss of control due to increased emotional arousal or sympathetic nervous system arousal, a decrease in one's cognitive control and a reliance on learned behaviours. In other words we learn bad communication patterns and when these are combined with the above mentioned biological responses violence could result. Domestic violence is, therefore, defined as a poor and socially unacceptable communication pattern (Cahn, 1996).

Frieze and McHugh (1992) follow a similar line of reasoning and suggest that the decision making style of the couple should be considered as a predictor of violence in a marriage. They identify six possible decision making styles. The first is Positive-direct which describes the couple that 'talk things over'. Other-direct strategies include identifying oneself as the expert on the topic being discussed or referring to what others do in a similar situation. Coercive-direct approaches to problem resolution can include either physical coercion, such as violence, or verbal coercion, such as swearing or shouting. Positive-indirect strategies include being affectionate or nice to one's spouse in order to affect the outcome of the communication. Ignore-indirect strategies would include pretending there was no problem or showing no emotion and Withdraw-indirect strategies include emotional withdrawal or threatening to leave the relationship (pp. 455-456). They summarise their findings by stating that, "overall the most commonly used strategies for all the women were indirect positive strategies...and the direct strategies....withdrawal was also relatively highly rated" (p. 456). In addition, they state that "husbands who were violent were reported to use most of the influencing strategies more frequently than were the nonviolent husbands, except for the positive strategies. More attention should be given to the ways in which violence relates to decision making within marriage" (p. 460).

These findings are reinforced in the work of Cahn (1996) who states that an interaction between spouses that is violent is characterised by negative and emotional problem-solving discussions and a depressed atmosphere. In addition, the abuser slowly develops antisocial patterns of behaviour, rigid and predictable behaviour, and progressively fewer positive communications or

negotiations. Similarly, Berman, John and Margolin (1992) studied couples engaged in conflict discussions and found that physically aggressive couples had discussions that increased the chance of verbal aggression. Couples that were not maritally distressed showed fewer such negative cycles of interaction. The communication perspective is, therefore, concerned with the goals and effects of abuse as a message behaviour or as a dimension of communication (Cahn, 1996).

Here the focus of the problem has been shifted away from characteristics within the individual. It is still defined, however, in terms of the kind of person that is abused or abusive. That is, abusive couples are ones in which one or both partners communicate in an ineffective and destructive manner. Here the problem is identified by looking at one aspect of the individual's self, namely, their communication.

Adams (1988) suggests that therapy from this perspective would view violence as just one expression of a dysfunctional interaction pattern. Communication is considered to be a joint venture and as such is given joint meaning by the two parties (Cahn, 1996). For this reason, therapy focuses on both parties and each would be expected to examine the ways in which they contribute to the violence (Adams, 1988). The therapy would focus on teaching the couple more effective and socially acceptable patterns of communication. The self is once again the focus of the intervention. Each party 'looks' at the kind of self that they are and identifies through therapy their ideal self. The ideal self is defined according to the kinds of relationships that one would like to have and the kind of communication skills that one needs to have in order to acquire such

relationships. One thus attempts through therapy to acquire and maintain an identity that is different from one's existing identity. This is achieved through examining one's relationships and the ways in which our 'self' impacts on these relationships. The incentive that encourages this process is the promise of happier relationships if one is successful. The steps to return to our normal, happy selves are, therefore, identified and followed.

Cognitive behavioural models of domestic violence are also widely used. This perspective assumes that battering is a behaviour that is acquired because it has the desired effect and is thus reinforced. In addition, it can be learned through modeling. Hamberger and Lohr (1989) state that through learning, verbal attacks may gradually come to have the same significance as physical ones as they are usually associated or paired with physical attacks. The physical attack will thus be an unconditioned stimulus and the symbolic behaviours such as verbal attacks will become a conditioned stimulus. The approach is considered cognitive-behavioural because it is concerned with verbal mediators of violence as well as the functional aspects of behaviour (Hamberger and Lohr, 1989).

Learning theories have led to an interest in whether violent behaviours are transmitted across generations. Truscott (1992) looked at the impact of domestic violence on the violent behaviour of adolescent males and found support for the hypothesis that violence is transmitted from generation to generation. Violent behaviour was related to having experienced physical or verbal paternal violence but not the witnessing of violence or having experienced maternal violence.

Hamberger and Lohr (1989) suggest that language is an element of cognition that allows us to respond to events that are not physically present as if they were. Through a process of conditioning, our words take on an emotional meaning. For example calling your wife a 'slut' conjures up a particular image associated with the words. This label (slut) is generalised and other associated words are conjured up (lazy, bitchy etc.). The man tells himself that his wife is like that label and the choice of label will mediate his actions. The batterer then acts to decrease the negative emotions associated with this labelling process through violence. The labelling process has, in this way, led to negative emotions about his wife who need not even be present. The label may well be inaccurate and this would lead to an inaccurate reasoning sequence (for example, 'if she's late she must be having an affair'). The verbal cognitive instructions that the batterer gives himself help to explain battering. 'Thought Stopping' could be used in an example like this to help interrupt such thoughts and replace them with constructive ones (Webb, 1992).

Cognitive behavioural models thus suggest that the lack of satisfaction the person feels with their present sense of self stems from having learned inappropriate or poor behaviours. Similarly, our thought processes influence the way in which we understand a problem or event in our lives. More important are the assumptions underlying the techniques of behaviour change. The notion that one can engage in 'Thought Stopping' implies a particular notion of subjectivity; that is, the individual is an autonomous agent capable of self-scrutiny and self-control. He/she is both independent and self-reliant. As the self is under the control of the individual, it becomes a site of work for them.

Changes to our selves, from this perspective, are to be made at the level of our behaviour and thinking patterns. Treatment from this perspective would, therefore, include techniques such as contingency management or the use of operant principles such as punishment, positive reinforcement, extinction and negative reinforcement to try to highlight the negative consequences of the battering (Adams 1988). Similarly, techniques such as relaxation training would allow for arousal reduction. Desensitisation, modeling and rehearsal, including assertiveness training and other techniques, would be used to teach the man to be more empathetic. Because anger leading to violence is thought to be a result of self-doubt or a feeling of threat, the batterer could also be taught to analyse his self-talk to help him to keep the situation in perspective and to congratulate himself when he is successful. An attempt is therefore made to get abusive men to question and understand the ideas that lead them to become angry (Hamberger and Lohr, 1989).

Following a similar framework, Webb (1992) outlines a four step cognitive-behavioural programme for women who are victims of domestic violence. The first step is to provide the women with an explanation of the intervention so that she becomes aware of how it relates to the violence. Secondly, role-plays and modeling are used to show her what the desired behaviour is for her. This is based on the assumption that when growing up, women often learn inappropriate responses to violence such as focusing on making 'I' statements, like, "when you clench your teeth, I feel anxious because I think you are angry with me" (Webb, 1992, p. 213). The woman then practices and rehearses these new behaviours and she is taught to execute her new learned behaviours successfully. In addition, women learn to make more accurate evaluations of

themselves and their abilities and to view the situation from a number of different perspectives. Here, most clearly, we are able to see the ways in which psychology provides a manual or a set of instructions for the achievement of the desired self. The desired self as defined through therapy, will allow for happier, more successful relationships if reached.

Geffner, Mantooth, Franks and Rao (1989) outline the family systems approach to battering. For family systems theorists, the term family violence is more appropriate as the abusive family is seen to be a closed information system in which violent behaviour serves to maintain equilibrium in the family (Geffner, Mantooth, Franks and Rao, 1989). The behaviour of each person affects that of the other. Neither party is blamed for the violence because they are thought to know no better behaviour (Adams, 1989). In an abusive relationship, there is thought to be unilateral control in the system and there is little room for negotiation (Geffner, Mantooth, Franks and Rao, 1989). Bott (1994) states that "...family systems thinking is primarily concerned with current relationships in the clients' life and symptomatic behaviour is understood as performing a function in relation to an unresolved family dilemma" (p. 107).

From the perspective of Geffner, Mantooth, Franks and Rao (1989) two kinds of change are possible for such a system. First order change occurs when there is a decrease in the violence but the values, assumptions and roles in the family remain the same. Second order change occurs when the ideas of the family members regarding the family have changed. The aim of family systems interventions is to maintain the functional family. To this end both parties to the marriage are included in treatment and are taught techniques for the reduction of violence. The

assumption of this approach is that one cannot separate the abuser from the abused, submission from domination, aggressiveness from passivity and so on. The family is informed that their problem is context bound and that contexts are both changeable and relative. The focus here remains on the 'symptomatic behaviour' of the client (Bott, 1994). This approach stands apart from others, however in that the behaviour of the individual is seen to be influenced by his/her social environment. In understanding how a person becomes the self that he/she is, one must consider that changes in one part of the system influence other parts of the system.

Geffner, Mantooth, Franks and Rao (1989) continue by stating that the treatment takes a 'no blame approach' in an attempt to avoid the endless cycles of blaming that families typically get into. A further advantage to this approach is that it increases the families trust in and bonding with the therapist. Responsibility for one's behaviour is, however, encouraged. The techniques used would include role-playing to re-enact a misunderstanding and homework to reinforce the techniques that have been learned. In addition people are taught to be attentive to their body cues and feelings, for example, how they feel when they begin to get angry. Fair fighting is encouraged through teaching family members how to express themselves effectively and how to get their needs met. Rational Emotive Techniques are also used to help the family take responsibility for their role in the abuse. Adams (1988) adds to this by suggesting that family systems theory sees battering as being caused by the man and the woman who have difficulty separating from their original family and use violence to achieve homeostasis in the distance/closeness theme. Yegidis, (1992) suggests that "the therapist will need to address issues related to parental boundaries, role, and enmeshment.... the clinical work with the mother is often

especially key....she must be helped to address her disbelief and to develop her ability to protect her children” (p. 527).

Here, once more, the focus of the therapy is, not surprisingly, on decreasing violence. This is achieved through the individuals in the family monitoring themselves (their body cues, boundaries, parenting etc.) in terms of a norm. For example, Bott (1994) states that Minuchin provides a model of a normal family. He suggests that “The family system and sub-systems within it are surrounded by clearly marked but permeable boundaries. The marital or partner sub-system is particularly well defined, in order to protect the privacy of partners, while the boundary around the parental sub-system will be more open to allow effective parenting. ...individuation is supported by respect for the boundaries around individuals and family members are able to think and speak for themselves” (Bott, 1994, p. 109). The techniques for changing oneself in relation to this norm are provided through therapy.

Feminist Responses To The Psychological Approaches

From a feminist perspective, a number of criticisms of the above theories can be put forward. All to a greater or lesser degree are psychological theories of domestic violence. The processes in our broader society and the ways in which these influence domestic violence are largely ignored. Even those theorists who criticise intrapsychic approaches (such as Cahn, 1996) do not consider factors existing outside of the immediate family. As a result of this, issues of power are seldom addressed. Also, the assumption that the violence is merely a symptom of a deeper underlying problem is questioned by feminists as it displaces the focus of therapy and misnames the

problem (Adams, 1989). Finally the descriptions of the processes of violence are couched in terms removed from the everyday language and terms of women (Ramazanoglu, 1993). In this way these theories serve to silence the experiences of women and their ways of understanding them. Feminism has made a number of contributions to the study of domestic violence by addressing these issues.

Feminist theorists believe that battering is a result of a male desire to dominate women. Violence is used to reinforce a man's authority, especially if the sex roles are unclear in the relationship (Harway & Hansen, 1993). Men are believed to learn violent behaviour and make a choice when to use it. For example, a man who is abusive towards his wife is unlikely to be as aggressive towards his employer. Responsibility must therefore be taken for his actions (Adams, 1988). Women are in turn socialised into taking a submissive role in the family, as well as taking a primary role in the private sphere whilst the same time being excluded from the public sphere. This is thought to result from our gender role development. In schools, especially, boys and girls are treated differently and expected to behave accordingly. Girls tend to have a more communicative and agreeable relationship with their peers whereas boys tend to have hierarchical relationships with their peers (Hansen, 1993). Power and control, be it political, economic, social or physical are, therefore, the main aims of battering. Frieze and McHugh (1992) take a feminist view of violence when they state that "the research reported here confirms the observation that violence is indeed used as a power strategy within marriage" (p. 460). Pence (1989) provides an overview of a programme informed by this perspective. She notes that the acts that men perform are intentional and aimed at achieving a particular end. The acts that they

use are similar to those used by any group with power aiming to maintain the subordination of others. These tactics rest on the belief that those in oppressed positions are there as a result of a deficiency or weakness within themselves.

Adams (1989) suggests that wife abuse has political meaning because it affects the balance of power between individuals. Men are thought to resort to violence to gain compliance and signal their power. To this end physical abuse is likely to be accompanied by other strategies, such as, psychological abuse in an attempt to decrease the self-esteem of their partner and increase her dependence on him. Economic abuse is also used to increase the man's power by controlling all the material resources in the family such as money, cars, bank accounts, or through not paying maintenance. Finally, the wife is given primary responsibility for the domestic work in the family and is not free to refuse childcare, housekeeping or the sexual or emotional demands of her husband. The woman is socially isolated due, either, to the man physically restricting her social activities, or through shame of the abuse and fear that socialising may trigger abuse. These findings show that men benefit from abusing their wives in that they are allowed to uphold unequal power relations, double standards and unequal privileges. The feminist focus is thus on the utility of domestic violence rather than its psychological aetiology (Adams, 1989).

In addition, (Adams, 1988) suggests that domestic violence is considered to be a practice that is rooted in patriarchy. Violence is thus addressed as a form of sexism rather than a deficit in a particular skill such as communication or problem management. Similarly, feminists point out that abusive men often display adequate social skills in public and only seem to lack them in

private where there is no motivation for them to use them (Adams, 1989). According to a feminist perspective, previous approaches misname the problem because they minimise or ignore issues of power. As a result, Meth (1992) states that “many of our current models for working with violent men minimise the impact and consequences of violent behaviour” (p. 259).

Bograd (1988) notes that a further problem with mainstream theories of domestic violence are that they focus on domestic violence as an abnormality or a pathology. She suggests that the prevalence of domestic violence in our societies suggests that it is instead the norm. She feels that the theories of domestic violence are differentially applied to men and women in an attempt to excuse men’s violence and shift some of the blame on to women. In addition, comparisons of the psychological differences between abused women and women not abused should be seen as studies of the effects of violence, rather than the causes thereof. As with other feminist theorists, she is critical of the theories that do not consider questions of power. She does not recommend the rejection of existing psychological theories but rather suggests that we begin to link them within the social context of patriarchy and the patterns of gender relations. This could result in some normalisation and de-pathologising of the issue. She suggests that domestic violence, rather than being an oddity, is central to the way in which the contemporary family is organised and structured. She also cautions against the labelling of women through therapy, which could perpetuate stereotypes about battered women and affect our responses to them.

Feminist theorists, therefore, tend to see domestic violence as a socialised pattern of behaviour that develops within our patriarchal society. Although it is considered by some feminists to be a

normal and predictable behaviour pattern given the way in which our society is structured it is nevertheless an undesirable phenomenon. Feminist approaches have been extremely useful in ensuring that the blame for the violence is not placed on the woman and that men take responsibility for their violent behaviour.

Although feminists strive for the ideal of gender and political equality, they recognise that this is indeed an ideal and no therapy will ever be non-political or egalitarian. Similarly a gender free language is an unattainable ideal towards which therapists should strive. (Hansen, 1993) For this reason, the cultural and political beliefs of the therapist and the client should be made explicit before beginning therapy rather than either party claiming to be value-free. The main goal of therapy would be to challenge the man's attempts to control his wife. The aim is to eliminate all behaviour that undermines women's rights, not just physical violence. Adams (1989) states that feminist approaches have used some of the techniques from Social Learning Theory as well as communication theories in attempting to teach men to examine their attitudes and sex role stereotypes. Men are educated as to the effects of abuse and expected to take responsibility for their actions often through identifying their excuses for battering and being challenged on them. Men are expected to keep logs of their abusive and controlling behaviour. 'Male bonding' is said to occur when men in group therapy reinforce one another's negative stereotypes about women. It is considered the therapist's role to interrupt this process. This directly contradicts the ways in which men are socialised. Thus, "the profeminist educational curriculum helps men to recognise that their attitudes, expectations and behaviours toward women are not unique. They exist in a social context that restricts the freedom of women, gives unfair advantages to men, and promotes

misogynistic attitudes” (Adams, 1989, p. 14). As Erickson (1992) suggests, “it is our job as therapists, both female and male, to midwife the rebirth of (this) Man. That takes firm limits on his abuses of power while we work to get up underneath his defences to find the more gentle, tender, mature human emotions that likely are there but were cauterized long ago by his socialisation and by his early life experiences” (p. 266). For this reason, a central goal of therapy is encouraging the abuser to advocate for social change in his community and to raise awareness of sexism. An evaluation of a feminist therapeutic intervention would consider not only personal changes within the man but also changes that he has been active in at a community level. (Adams, 1989).

Feminist theory has, therefore, contributed to the psychological literature in several profound ways. Firstly it has questioned the assumptions about gender differences which are implicit in mainstream theory. For example it criticises mainstream theories for seeing violence as secondary to other problems and thus allowing men to displace responsibility for the violence. It also questions the assumption that certain roles, behaviours and attitudes, such as motherhood, caregiving and sensitivity, are taken as natural for women and the way that these are unquestioningly accepted by mainstream psychologists. In addition, it points to the fact that many theories are inconsistent with the reports of women and as such their accuracy is questioned.

Secondly feminism considers the power relations between men and women and how these pervade not only abusive relationships but every aspect of our daily lives. Changes are expected at the societal level as opposed to just the individual level. The second main point of departure

for feminist approaches is, therefore, that they expect the new values of the batterer to be extended into his community. The batterer is, therefore, not only expected to work on his own self but on the selves of other men that he comes into contact with. The ideal self that this man has achieved can, in this way, be transmitted to many men thereby increasing the efficacy of the goals of therapy. Feminism looks at the ways in which the subordination of women is beneficial to men. Violence is the most overt way in which men can control women and even men that are not violent benefit from the ways in which women's lives are limited because they live with the constant threat of violence. This makes women dependent on men and in so doing reinforces men's domination and control. Other social divisions are seen to be secondary to gender divisions (Bograd, 1988). Finally, feminist approaches focus on the experiences of women and analyse existing theory for bias. The bias inherent in traditional theories of domestic violence are considered to be a reflection of male constructed understandings of women (Bograd 1988).

There are, however, areas in which feminism has not differed significantly from the traditional literature on domestic violence. Therapy has still been seen as the primary solution to eradicating domestic violence although community, social and legal changes are also thought to be necessary. The therapy that has been offered has still focused on issues of the self. Although the cause of battering is cited as our patriarchal society, the 'cure' is focused on the man's subjectivity. He is expected to challenge the assumptions and values that underlie his identity as a man and these new found attitudes are expected to be carried into the broader society.

Feminism in its understanding of domestic violence has made use of the psychological terms and techniques that have been developed. This approach has critiqued the kinds of selves that are

constructed in therapy, for example, Emerson Dobash and Dobash (1992), in their chapter entitled *The therapeutic community constructs battered women and violent men*, suggest that “...therapeutic accounts usually emphasise the unique backgrounds and permanent personality traits that make women vulnerable to violent relationships and unable to leave them” (p. 224). Rather than seeing abused women as women with particular personality characteristics, feminism has offered a new understanding of the self. Battered women are women who are made vulnerable to abuse through their socialisation. Feminism challenges traditional understandings of domestic violence but it still locates the problem at the level of the self. These feminist understandings of abuse draw from the experiences of those working as shelter advocates and from the battered women themselves. The credibility of the feminist description of self comes from the fact that it has not been ‘discovered’ by the experts, but described by those with ‘hands on’ experience of the issue (Emerson Dobash and Dobash, 1992). Similarly, as with other approaches, techniques are then offered which are aimed at changing the man’s sense of self (helping him to become less violent and developing more appropriate cognitive schema about women) as well as that of the woman (becoming less dependent on the man and more assertive). The explanation for domestic violence focuses on the selves of those in a marriage and sees the self as the raw material on which to work towards overcoming domestic violence.

It is perhaps necessary to point out at this stage that it is not my intention to suggest that there is anything wrong with therapy focusing its attempts at change on notions of the self. What I am suggesting in the chapters that follow is that we need an ongoing awareness of what kind of a subject we are assuming when we attempt change, how we aim to make the change and how it is

that people come to desire a different self identity. Clearly, the goal of decreasing domestic violence is a common one. The ways in which this is to be achieved is not, however, common. We need a new understanding of power in order to see the ways in which psychology is powerful and what the effects of this power, both positive and negative, could be.

To elaborate on this, Rose (1990) suggests that the regulation of subjectivity has become central to modern government. This regulation is not achieved via a centralised state but through a “complex and heterogeneous assemblage of technologies” (p. 213) of which psychological expertise is one. The language of psychology has been seen increasingly frequently in many diverse forms from self-help books to radio phone-in.’s. The message from these technologies is that happiness is to be reached through working on our selves. The effects of these technologies of the self is that we have become increasingly self-monitoring and self-regulating. The self can be seen to shift according to the norms and expectations that are placed upon it. This notion of the self-monitoring and self-governing individual requires an understanding of power that is not provided by the feminist writers in the field. We need to be able to ask what kind of self is constructed through psychological theory, what power psychology has to construct the self in this way, and what the nature of the power is that psychology, as a technology of the self, has for constructing the self. It is at answering these questions that this thesis is aimed.

Some Conclusions

This overview of the literature on domestic violence reveals certain common themes. The central assumption evident in these theories is that domestic violence is a problem of subjectivity. In

proposing a theory, a particular understanding of the self is implied. The theories can, therefore, be said to describe a particular kind of subject. The subject described is one that is capable of being self-monitoring. They are able, in cognitive-behavioural terms, to monitor their own thought processes and 'stop' these thoughts when they become irrational. The self is, therefore, self-governing in the sense that we identify our own flaws and problems through a process of self-surveillance. The self is also autonomous. The literature on domestic violence suggests that people are independent and responsible for changing themselves and their behaviour. They take responsibility for their behaviour and monitor it so as to reduce the unwanted behaviours. The self can be described as the raw material on which we work or the site on which we act when we perceive ourselves to be lacking in some way. This change should not, therefore, be seen as one that is forced upon us or even expected. Rather we seek out this change gladly and in the name of freedom and happiness. This understanding of subjectivity is to be taken further in the following chapters. I will argue that this understanding of subjectivity is a result of the permeation of what Rose (1985) terms the psy-complex, that is, the increasing psychologisation of socially deviant behaviour. The psy-complex is, however, a system of governance that has failed to be adequately analysed given the repressive and prohibitive understanding of power identified by feminism.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRODUCTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Chapter two identified the assumption of a self in psychological theories of domestic violence. The aim of this chapter is to elaborate on this reading of the literature by arguing that domestic violence is a discursive production. It is not only produced precisely through those discourses or theories that claim to document it but it has also been produced in a very specific way, that is, as a problem of self. Although different theories of domestic violence give different, and at times, opposing accounts of its subjects, this chapter argues that these accounts share certain fundamental assumptions. In addition, I will argue that theory on domestic violence has primarily arisen to address a need (violence between married couples). In other words, the nature of the self that psychology has assumed stems from the practices of psychology, in this case the techniques of reducing violence, rather than from the documentation or theorisation of domestic violence. The construction of domestic violence in terms of the self can, therefore, be seen to accomplish certain ends which, I will argue are, social regulation and administration. More specifically, by constructing the self as autonomous and self-monitoring, our present self can be seen as a result of our past choices. In this way, the self becomes a site upon which we can work (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996). In other words, we become able to shape and responsible for shaping the kinds of selves that we are. I will further suggest that as psychology plays a role in constructing the self as a site of work and social regulation, it can be seen as a form of power. Furthermore it is a form of power that has escaped the scrutiny of feminism through its claims to document reality and its assumptions that power relations exist outside the realm of psychology.

The Historical Construction Of Domestic Violence Through Discourse

In this chapter I follow the argument made by Foucault (1980) that knowledge is productive and as such affects the objects to which it refers. In other words, in developing a theory of domestic violence, we are at the same time re-constructing and changing both the conceptualisation of domestic violence and the subjects to which the theory refers. A similar point is made by Rose (1988) when he states that “such authoritative texts of scientific history play a key role in constructing the image of the present reality of the discipline in question” (p. 180). My aim is not to suggest that mainstream theory conspires with abusive men to ensure the oppression of women, but rather to suggest that it is necessary to consider how our understandings of domestic violence have come about, that is, their history. In other words, if our modern view of domestic violence is historically constructed through discourse, what conditions made this view of domestic violence possible? This question cannot be answered if we accept that psychology has simply mapped the characteristics of domestic violence as it exists in external reality. Rose (1985) states that this notion of psychology merely reflecting that that exists in reality was necessary for the development of psychology and its establishment as an effective field of knowledge. As a discipline, psychology had to be able to make claims to accuracy if it was to present itself as useful. Psychology has, in this way, come to rest on the assumption that there are psychological facts (such as domestic violence being a problem of self). Rose (1988) identifies the importance of considering the history of psychological discourse. He states that “rather than marginalize these texts of the past from the point of view of the present, we might do better to question the certainties of the present by attention to such margins and to the process of their marginalization” (p. 180-181). In other words, we must consider what history of domestic

violence has been presented and what has been marginalised or ignored and how this has resulted in our present conceptualisation of the object (domestic violence). In this way, we can begin to unravel some of the assumptions and taken for granted concepts that have been produced through their development. It is this unravelling that this project is concerned with.

To elaborate on this claim, consider the coining of terms such as ‘wife battering’, ‘domestic violence’, ‘marital rape’ and related concepts. Through the development of such concepts, abused women can begin to be identified. They are women who fit the definition of such terms. In addition, the boundaries of the subject matter are identified and forged and the roles of various individuals in the violence and the causes thereof may also be identified. Take, as a further illustration, the definition offered by Geffner and Pagelow (1990). They define spouse abuse as “...a pattern of behaviour in a relationship by which one person victimizes the other. Abuse can take many forms: physical, sexual, verbal, and/or psychological.” (p. 113). Those who are abused then, are those who are victimised in one of the ways listed. This process of construction through definition serves to exclude those not fitting the description (such as women who are emotionally abused) as well as include some who, under a different definition, would not have been abused spouses (such as those psychologically abused women who would not be victims of spouse abuse if the definition referred only to physical violence). The definition clearly suggests two role players, namely, a victim and a perpetrator both of whom have particular actions and roles in this relationship. The psychological focus of the problem and of its causes ensures that psychological solutions are sought. Psychology, therefore, plays a role not only in the production of the object (domestic violence) but also of the subject (those who are abusers and those who abuse) and

through this process of production sets itself up as the solution. The object is a problem whose solution rests on psychological understandings thereof. These psychological understandings take as their starting point a very particular understanding of the self. What is required then is not a history of psychology and how it has developed, but a history of the object. According to Rose (1985) the development of the history of domestic violence through psychological discourse would serve to designate it as a psychological problem, that is, one existing within the realm of psychology. Through this “psychological historicography”, domestic violence is not only viewed as existing but it is also produced (Rose, 1985, p. 224).

This argument suggests that the discourse on domestic violence plays a central role in the construction of the object. More than this, however, this discourse has a history. The definition given above draws on some aspects of past theory whilst rejecting others. The recollection of the history of ideas on domestic violence by present day theorists functions to reject old or outdated concepts whilst reinforcing new ones (Rose 1985). In the definition given by Geffner and Pagelow (1990) above, the notions of women’s masochistic tendencies are rejected in favour of new terms (such as victimisation). In this way, history functions to organise the scientific truth of domestic violence. The falsity of past theories is rejected to incorporate more accurate understandings of domestic violence. The psychological theories outlined in chapter two also do not recognise a politics. Given that they are put forward based on their accuracy, they can be seen as apolitical. They do not serve political functions but document a real phenomenon in a scientific manner.

Henriques (1984) states that the birth of Humanism as well as the Women's Liberation Movement led to a focus in psychology primarily on personal change and individual consciousness. From a feminist orientation, therefore, women as individuals had to recognise the oppressive ties that existed within their everyday interactions. The feminist slogan 'the personal is political' takes its shape from these beliefs (Rose, 1996b). Personal change was seen to be the key to political transformation. A useful contribution of feminism for the purposes of this argument is, therefore, its focus on subjectivity and its assumption that subjectivity is produced and dynamic rather than fixed and biologically determined (Weedon, 1987). For feminism, gender roles are learned (Hansen 1993). One's individual subjectivity is thus fluid and dynamic and it is at the level of the personal that social change becomes possible. A critique of subjectivity requires that this point be extended to suggest not simply that the focus on the individual be replaced with a focus on the social but rather that we consider how it is that the social produces the individual, that is, how our social circumstances produce a particular subjectivity. This stands in contrast to the debates highlighted in chapter two that centre around whether domestic violence is a result of our social circumstances or innate traits. In other words, I would extend the feminist understanding of subjectivity being produced to suggest that it is produced through a specific set of discursive practices and as such is a historical construct. For Parker (1989) the self is constructed through discourse and manifested in the texts of everyday life. Similarly, Sampson (1989) states that "societies create both the types of character essential to societal reproduction and the ideologies necessary so that those characters will function to achieve this reproduction" (p. 5). Through discourse, particular kinds of people are constructed

and this construction takes place in a manner that ensures that these constructions are continually reproduced. The questions raised in this and later chapters ask what the utility of this construction of subjectivity is as opposed to other possible constructions as well the effects of this particular construction of subjectivity on both the object being constructed and the subjects of that construction?

Homo Rationalis

If we accept then that psychological understandings of domestic violence have focused largely on a conceptualisation of the self, what is the nature of the self that has been assumed? Rose (1990) describes the citizens of the liberal democratic state as being self-regulating and taking an active role in the management and direction of their own lives. Venn (1984) adds to this suggesting, that the psychological subject is the unitary, rational and, by implication, male subject. Sampson (1989) in tracing the history of the self over time notes how it has changed from people being seen as inseparable from their family units to being conceptualised as private individuals, whom he terms 'bourgeois individual(s)' (p. 3). This 'bourgeois individual' is integrated, non-contradictory, unique, and - most importantly - fictitious (Sampson, 1989). Rose (1990) goes on to suggest that rather than being motivated by a threat of punishment, these subjects are motivated to think, want and feel in terms of a psychological norm. If they are not motivated by punishment, they cannot be motivated by force. They must instead be educated in such a manner that they desire to shape their own lives through making choices as autonomous individuals. This desire should lead them to continually evaluate themselves in terms of certain values and adjust themselves should they not meet this norm (Rose, 1990). Consider as an illustration the cognitive

behavioural technique of 'thought stopping'. This technique assumes the individual as an autonomous agent with the power to monitor and regulate himself/herself. The individual is one who recognises that his/her behaviour does not meet the norm and adjusts himself/herself accordingly.

Clearly then, violence contravenes the psychological norm in terms of which we evaluate ourselves. In the normal family, violence should not occur. If it does occur, the assumption is that it should be recognised as contravening the psychological norm, that is, it should be recognised as pathology. It should also be admitted to one qualified to hear and, based on this qualification, to advise, reform and judge (Rose 1990). The explosion of publications on domestic violence in the last 25 years can be viewed as a massive confessional as described by Foucault (1979). It is this confessional that is so instrumental in governing our subjectivity. It is not only aimed at restructuring the behaviour of pathological families, but through its publicisation, it also aims to address those of us who are consensual members of normal families. As normal family members, we are reassured by such discourses whilst they, at the same time, provide us with the language and concepts with which to evaluate ourselves. Through psychological theory on domestic violence, each family member is given their roles and responsibilities. They are reassured of their competency in carrying out these roles and persuaded that they require education by experts. Thus the scandal surrounding domestic violence activates our normality in that we are reassured of it. We thus become aware of the norms of family life and begin to monitor our degree of adherence to them (Foucault, 1979).

Here Foucault talks about the ways in which the confession has pervaded our everyday activities.

The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell. One confesses in public and in private, to one's parents, one's educators, one's doctor, to those one loves; one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else, the things people write books about. One confesses-or is forced to confess (Foucault, 1979, p. 59).

The subject matter of the confession does not remain secret but is publicised by the experts. It is through this publicisation that we are encouraged to monitor ourselves. The publicisation of reports of domestic violence do not just address those families who experience violence. Rather they address all of us as members of a normal family as well. We identify with the confessions of others and evaluate our own degree of deviation from the psychological norm. They do not, therefore, only describe abnormality but in so doing construct normality. In this way, self control is induced in individuals through encouraging them to monitor themselves. It also allows for the encouragement of self-governance in such a way that we welcome and embrace it rather than seeing it as restrictive and oppressive. Thus, the modern democratic society rests on the understanding of a particular kind of individual that does not require controlling. It is assumed that he/she is able to govern himself/herself (Foucault, 1979). For example, women are continually in contact with confession on domestic violence. These discourses reach us through magazines, through self-help books, doctors waiting rooms and so on. We compare our own

relationships to the relationships of those confessing. In this way a norm is presented according to which we can evaluate ourselves, our relationships and our marriages. We work to achieve this norm and through such actions govern ourselves rather than being governed by an external force. We choose to make changes to ourselves rather than being forced to act in particular ways.

Venn (1984) states that "...the norms which psychological discourse constructs and fixes are those consistent with the dominant form of sociality, that is to say that reproduce the social, intersubjective relations and relations of power as they are played out in social institutions of all kinds, from the family to the shop floor" (p. 130). Thus psychological knowledge is taken up in our everyday activities leading to changes in 'who we are'. These changes do not, however, contradict our accepted social norms and relations. Our failure to meet the psychological norm leads to a desire for adjustments in our selves. These are achieved by following the techniques and procedures that are provided by the psychological experts. In this way, it is those who are experts on the self that allow us to overcome the perceived discrepancy between who we are and who we desire ourselves to be. In doing so, they reinforce the dominant norms of society by creating in us the desire to be like that norm. The norm would be constructed as the heterosexual, married and therefore happy couple and their children with each member performing certain roles in the family. More detail about the nature of the normal family will be given in the analysis.

This subject as described above is not, therefore, a result of the essential characteristics within each of us. The question that requires addressing concerns the specific historical circumstances out of which this notion of the self arose? What social conditions made its emergence possible?

Venn (1984) notes that the subject of psychology is the “unitary, rational subject but that this notion of subjectivity only begins to appear in western culture from the seventeenth century. It is the subject-of-science that classical epistemology takes to be the ideal representative of *homo rationalis*” (Venn, 1984, p. 121, emphasis original). He continues by suggesting that psychology aims to maximise the individual responsibility of its subjects and encourage them to make decisions for themselves. This is clear if we return to the discourses on domestic violence considered in chapter two. Individuals are taught not only that they are responsible for the monitoring of themselves in terms of the psychological norm but also that solutions to the deviations from these norms should be actively sought rather than imposed by an authority figure.

Venn (1984) states that the emergence of the unitary, rational and non-contradictory subject central to this historical epoch stems from two related sources. The first is the birth of modern science and its value on rationality - most notably from the work of Descartes - and the second is the emergence of legal rights for the individual. As a result the subject for psychology is both individualistic and rational. Similarly Rose (1990) suggests that after World War II, a distinction between the public and the private realm emerged in which the state governed those matters of public concern but had no right to interfere with matters of private concern. Thus new methods were required to ensure that the values of those in authority were upheld within the private domain. To this end magazines, the media, shops, and many other sources show people who are happy as people who uphold the dominant values. As a result, we work to construct the lifestyles portrayed in such discourses. We identify with those confessing and work to match up to the

norms constructed therein. That is not to say that there is a unitary lifestyle that we all lead. Rather we choose amongst alternatives, all of which encapsulate the dominant norms and values of our society. Psychology operates as a technology that deals with conflicts of identity or selfhood. It helps people to find 'who they really are' and restore their pleasure in the choices available to them. In this way it produces an individual who is 'free to choose', although the choices that they have are those that are made available to them through the discourse (in this case on domestic violence). Similarly, a particular understanding of the subject has become normalised and deviations from it become pathological. Thus the notion of 'modern man' (I use the masculine unashamedly given the masculine values that epitomise the rational, unitary subject) emerges within a very specific set of circumstances and it is these circumstances that much psychological theory has failed to take note of. As Venn (1984) states, this new rational 'man' is constructed to have no past, but a natural point of origin. This notion of the subject of domestic violence is considered to be both natural and normal, rather than historically constructed.

If domestic violence is historically produced as a problem of self, the obvious question to consider next is what benefit can be derived from the construction of domestic violence in this particular manner? According to Venn (1984) The psychological focus on the individual is linked to the specific goals of social regulation. In other words, the self is a useful site for social regulation. In a similar manner, Rose (1993) considers the production of the self to be central to what he terms 'advanced liberalism'. He suggests that advanced liberalism has led to a new kind of governing based on using the criticisms of the welfare state (including, for example, its neglect

of autonomy). These shortcomings of the welfare state have been used for the benefit of advanced liberalism. He suggests that advanced liberalism seeks to “govern without governing *society*, that is to say, to govern through the regulated and accountable choices of autonomous agents-citizens, consumers, parents, employees, managers and investors” (Rose, 1993, p. 29, emphasis original). Following a Rosean approach to domestic violence, we would see the production of domestic violence in terms of subjectivity as central to the management of individuals and the reproduction of psychology as a discipline.

Subjectivity And The Psy-Complex

What has begun to become evident is that subjectivity seen as a historical construct can no longer be viewed as a private matter. Instead it is intensively governed and socially managed (Rose, 1990). To this end, complex technologies have been developed for the management of subjectivity. What I would suggest is that psychology and, more specifically, the discourse on domestic violence, is one such technology. Psychology has developed an expertise on subjectivity and has provided experts to aid people in managing their subjectivity. This has been done through rendering its subjects calculable and providing the means by which the self is converted into data (Rose 1988). Psychology is instrumental in developing not only a new language for conceptualising domestic violence but also making its subjects knowable (Rose 1988). The notion of a subjectivity based on the understanding of the self detailed above has led to a new language with which we understand ourselves and this understanding in turn influences the way we act and interact with others. In other words, the focus on the self has meant that we describe our experiences in terms of emotions and feelings. As a result we begin to have a new

‘sense of our selves’ (Rose, 1990). What the analysis of this thesis is concerned with is, what role psychology plays in the production and maintenance of this understanding of subjectivity and the specific impact of this for women living in abusive relationships. We need to consider that the power of psychology comes from its ability to construct the self. For example, we must ask how the various theories of domestic violence help us understand our situation by giving us the language to explain it.

The central issue that ensured the development of psychology as a discipline was the question of how individual conduct adapts to social expectations (Rose, 1985). Rose (1985) states that psychology as a discipline first gained scientific, professional and social status through its attempts to diagnose and administer “pathologies of conduct” (p. 226). Psychology can therefore be seen as a technique for the administration of individuals and populations in terms of their mental attributes and capacities. Abnormality for psychology is not a disease, as in medicine, but is measured in terms of social apparatus and the aims of government. The abnormal cases upon which the development of psychology rests were provided by schools, armies, courts and related institutions. Psychology arose to address the problems of misconduct in these institutions (Rose, 1985).

What is, therefore, implied is a new form of governmentality. This rests on a notion of power that differs from the notion of power as described by feminism in chapter two. Rose (1990) suggests that this new form of governance relies on knowledge regarding its subjects and their characteristics. Psychology can be seen to provide such knowledge as it has developed a

language for analysing and explaining the subjects of the modern democratic state. Through the gathering together, analysing and transcribing of these confessions obtained through the confessional, subjects of domestic violence become knowable and theories of domestic violence can be written. These documents of confessions have been the basis of our claim to a scientific truth, the content of which is the unmentionable that must be admitted to (Foucault, 1979).

The development of such conceptual systems has meant that subjectivity has become manageable and calculable. According to Rose (1990) psychology has provided new methods for the old problems of how to educate, cure, reform and punish. Through applying norms and through the methods of observation, our subjectivity can be translated into data. By providing a discourse on domestic violence according to which people can begin to monitor and adjust themselves, they can be educated, cured and governed. As Rose (1985) notes, “health for the psychology of the individual, is not so much life in the silence of the organs as life in the silence of the authorities” (p. 231).

The new form of governing allows those in power to act from a distance on individual subjects in that they need not directly exert control over them. The new conceptualisation of subjectivity has also determined what actions are possible for subjects, that is, given that domestic violence is a problem of self, an expert on the self is required if problems are experienced and one would not seek medical intervention, for example. As new ways of thinking about subjectivity have been produced, so new techniques for the management of such a subjectivity are made possible. Just as psychology does not conspire with men to oppress women, it also does not conspire with the government to create obedient, docile subjects. It addresses very real needs that exist within our

society, but it also makes certain kinds of solutions possible over others. Rose (1988) states that "rather than 'the State' extending its control in the nineteenth century, and the psychological sciences serving such functions for it, we should investigate the formations of a new way of mobilising political authority in this period, the role played by the psychological sciences in the birth of a new form of governmental rationality" (p. 182). In other words, rather than psychology serving the state, a form of governing independent of the state can be conceptualised through methods and procedures that make various aspects of our everyday lives calculable and manageable. I would also not go so far as to say that psychology alone is responsible for this new mode of governance. Rather, psychology can be seen as one of a network of 'technologies of the self' that have the effects of rendering its subjects knowable and hence governable (Rose, 1992).

Rose (1990) notes the claims by libertarians that state intervention into the family is illegitimate and as such should be limited and clear guidelines established to determine when it is appropriate. This is due largely to the stigmatisation and, on occasions, increasing problems of the family following state intervention. The interventions by social workers have been criticised as culturally biased, unsubstantiated and too controversial to be warranted. Intervention has, however, not declined but rather, its nature has evolved. Thus the family is awarded freedom and privacy except in cases where clear harm is being done. Rose (1990) suggests that this notion of family privacy is testament to the success of the attempts to construct self-regulating individuals. In most cases, the law is unnecessary as psychological theory reaches us through a host of other pathways from the radio phone-in to magazines. The governing of individuals is able to be effective not through the law but through the promotion of subjectivity. It is the gap between the

much publicised normal family and our own reality that leads us to the psychological experts. What I argue, however, is that domestic violence is an example of legitimate state intervention. It is one example of a gross social abhorration into which state intervention is not only legitimate but increasingly demanded. This state intervention only operates, however, to reinforce the power of disciplines like psychology. It acts to feed into and encourage the kind of power that operates at the level of subjectivity.

The outline of the theory on domestic violence reveals two interesting phenomena. Firstly the literature on domestic violence is very young, and secondly, it is prolific. Since the emergence of the subject of psychology, domestic violence and families, have been constructed increasingly in terms of their “emotional economy” (Rose, 1985, p. 176). That is, we describe our problems in terms of our feelings and our emotions. According to Rose (1985) psychology as a discipline has been made possible through the alignments that it has formed between personal happiness, family relations and social adjustment. Personal happiness has come, through psychology, to be equated with social adjustment. The family has been awarded a special role in this adjustment as it is responsible for ensuring the adjustment of the characters of children. Management of problems in the family, such as violence, is achieved through our psychological relations with the rest of the family. As domestic violence is a problem of the self, it is addressed through the management and regulation of our selves. Through this process, the normal family has become something for which we all strive. Social adjustment has become a self-realisation. The notion of the normal family is derived through studies on the abnormal family. In other words, the studies in chapter two documenting the abnormal behaviour of some families also define what is normal

in the family (Rose 1988; Foucault, 1979). It is the ability of psychology to define social abnormality or socially deviant behaviour in terms of the psychological functioning of individuals that Rose (1985) has termed the psychological-complex. Parker, Georgaca, Harper, McLaughlin and Stowell-Smith (1995) refer to the psy-complex as the “psychologization of several types of socially undesirable, non-productive behaviours” (p.83). Thus the construction of domestic violence has in the last 25 years been in increasingly psychological terms and as such, the psy-complex plays a role in the regulation of socially undesirable behaviour through its ability to bring people to a more desirable self.

‘Power Over’ And ‘Power To’

Power can thus be seen to operate at two levels. There is what could be termed 'power over' which represents the state control of grossly antisocial behaviours, such as physical violence, between parties to a marriage. This notion of power over can be extended to interpersonal relationships and as such would be compatible with the feminist notion of power. It is the power that one group, party or individual has at the expense of another. When a husband abuses his wife physically, he can be said to have power over her. When the state grants an interdict (as identified in the Prevention of Family Violence act 133 of 1993) to the abused woman, it is exercising its power over the husband. At the same time the woman has been given a degree of power over her husband. In other words the notion of power over can be seen as a speech act of the form ‘thou shalt not’ (Foucault, 1980). It assumes the existence of a sovereign subject who says ‘no’ and a subject who says ‘yes’ to the prohibition (Foucault, 1980). I would suggest that power over is only one form of power and that power can exhibit itself in far more complex and partial ways.

One cannot stand outside of power in order to analyse it. There are no “spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network” (Foucault, 1980, p. 142). Rather, power is present in our everyday relations and interactions.

Another notion of power in the form of the psy-complex can, therefore, be conceptualised. This other notion of power can be called 'power to'. It is this notion of power that has been introduced above. It is the power to influence others' behaviours through inducing them to manage and control themselves. It is a way of disciplining individuals using self-scrutiny in such a way that they welcome and embrace it. Drawing on the work of Foucault, Rose (1990) suggests that in the 16th and 17th centuries, the management of individuals took place through 'policing' and the development of rules and regulations of behaviour to ensure public safety, happiness and common good. All aspects of social life were seen to fall under this umbrella of government. The modern democracy relies on a subject who does not require the state to exercise power over. The limits of state intervention into the family rests on the assumption that individuals have the internal capacity to govern themselves. More specifically, this is seen in the literature on domestic violence that assumes an autonomous self-regulating agent. In an earlier article, Rose (1988) states that “such practices also, and more characteristically, seek actively to produce subjects of a form, to mould, shape, and organise the psyche, to fabricate individuals with particular desires and aspirations” (p. 196).

Through the spread of the psy-complex into the newly delineated area of domestic violence, our subjectivity is described in such a manner that we are expected to care for and be responsible for

ourselves. As it is we who govern the choices that we make, we can live the life that we choose and be the kind of people we choose. In considering power in this manner we can begin to consider “all the ways in which the conduct of government was linked to the government of conduct” (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996, p. 212). We need, in other words, to look at the ways that subjectivity and identity have become linked to political aims. Barry, Osborne and Rose (1996) note that there are numerous, plans, programmes and policies that are concerned with our conduct in relationships, our values and our identities. The expansion of the psy-complex into the area of domestic violence can thus be seen as a political activity in that it has the ability to instil self-governing behaviour within us, that is, it has power to. From this perspective, we can begin to see that the literature on domestic violence is powerful in its ability to encourage people to monitor and adjust their behaviour in terms of social norms.

Foucault (1980) states that the feminist notion of power is limited as it sees power is repressive and restricting. If this is the way that power works, he asks, why do people accept or obey power? He suggests rather that power produces things and gives us pleasure. He states that “it (power) needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). Domestic violence can be seen to have ‘come out’ in the last 25 years. It is no longer hidden or taboo. This coming out is the positive aspect of power that cannot be analysed using the concept of power over. Furthermore, it is power to that is the basis of power over. This begins to suggest that feminism is a resistance that is merely a recodification of the notion of state

power. As such it leaves the capillaries of power (power to) undetected. Power to is effective precisely because of its ability to get productive service from individuals.

Foucault (1980, 1984) uses the metaphor of the panopticon to illustrate his notion of power. It consists of a central tower surrounded by a ring of cells. The overseer in the tower is able, due to backlighting in the cells, to see all people in the cells. The assumption is, then that if people are visible, the speech, opinions and gaze of others would be sufficient to regulate them and take away their desire to do wrong or commit harm. "Power will be exercised by virtue of the mere fact of things being known and people being seen in a sort of immediate, collective and autonomous gaze" (Foucault, 1980, p. 154). This system is less expensive than power over in that it minimises the resistance that is an inevitable response to harsh repression. The result of this gaze is that people interiorise it and oversee themselves. If each person is watched by all others, we can see that power cannot be seen to belong to one group (Gordon, 1980). The aim of this thesis is not to judge or subvert the power of the psy-complex but to expose it as a form of power and consider the ways in which it works to construct our subjectivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Famsa is the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa. It offers a range of services including, marriage and relationship, family, and individual counselling as well as offering legal aid advice and mediation. In 1994, the social workers at Famsa, Pietermaritzburg, began to realise that a great many of their clients were women who were living with abusive partners. It was felt that a problem of this magnitude needed to be addressed in a manner that reached the greatest number of women in practical ways. Having recognised this need, the WIN (Women in Need) project was developed in 1995. The project began with a Rally held in 1995 that was attended by 100 women and that aimed to raise awareness of domestic violence and bring women together to get the project off the ground. From this rally, the first group of 25 volunteers were recruited. These were women from a variety of ethnic, racial and socio-economic backgrounds who were trained to facilitate support groups for women who were suffering abuse by their partners. Many of the women had themselves been in abusive relationships and their experiences and insights were welcomed. It was decided that community based facilitators were needed to run such support groups. From 1996 a training manual was developed and the support groups were running successfully. The groups are based on a 'bottom up' approach to educating and supporting women in abusive relationships so that they are able to take increased responsibility for themselves. From this point onwards the support group system grew and many of the women who had been in previous groups now facilitate their own support groups. The project has also

extended into other projects based on the issues and difficulties that the women identified in the groups. JAWS (Justice and Women) is a project that has developed to help women obtain more effective access to the justice system such as helping them to obtain interdicts and maintenance. Similarly there is now a 'haven' in Pietermaritzburg where women whose safety is threatened may stay and receive counselling and support. An educational programme has also been set up at the gynaecological clinic at Northdale hospital to teach women about their rights in relationships as well as to increase awareness of the programme. In the short time that the WIN project has operated it has resulted in a network of dedicated workers and activists in the field.

Setting Up The Research

I had run support groups of this nature since the outset of the support group system and the first step in conducting this research was thus to negotiate with the director of Famsa, Pietermaritzburg about using one of the groups for research purposes. I then requested the permission of the woman who would co-facilitate the group and discussed the research with her. I discussed the research with the women in the group at our first meeting and requested their permission to tape record the sessions. When introducing the project to the women in the group I was surprised that they did not demand more information from me than what I had given them. With hindsight I can guess that they perhaps felt that they were not able to say no to the research. I was introduced to them as the 'psychologist in training' and the initial sessions could have been influenced by this. My relationship with the women in this group was initially quite different to the relationships I have had with women in other groups. They demanded far more 'solutions' to their problems from me and did not want to accept that I knew no more than them about their

experiences given my apparent 'expertise'. I was, however, struck by what they identified as their need to help others and reach out to other women. As the time went on, they became increasingly excited and interested in the research and talked of the way it could prevent other women from entering abusive relationships like theirs. I developed an immense respect for them and the potential risk to their own safety that they were willing to take for the sake of other women.

After having introduced the research topic and content to the women who were joining the group, I set up one-to-one interviews with each of them to be held before the second group session. This was an attempt to consider how they felt about their experiences of domestic violence before their encounter with the group in order to see whether their perceptions had changed significantly by the end of the sessions and if so, in what ways.

Ethos Of The Research

Feminist researchers, according to Bograd, (1988) ask different questions from traditional researchers. For example, instead of asking a woman why she stays in an abusive relationship, one would ask what it is that prevents her from leaving. In this way we must be continually vigilant to avoid victim blaming. Mainstream questioning is often based on gender stereotypes and these, as well as current theories, need to be challenged through our questioning. I would extend this argument to suggest that not only do our specific interview schedules differ, but also the kinds of research projects that we undertake and the research questions we phrase differ from traditional research. A feminist piece of research would not, for example, attempt to 'discover' the underlying personality traits of women who are battered-unless the social and political value

of such a discovery could be convincingly argued.

Because different questions are asked, different methodologies are usually employed. According to Bograd (1988) we should be aware that it may be our objective, fixed format questionnaires that cause bias in our research by misrepresenting women. Feminists should prefer open-ended questioning which allows the categories to emerge from the data. She further adds that we must remain self-critical about our choice of research methods. Bograd (1988) states that there is no neutral, objective and value-free science for research that takes place in a patriarchal society. Not discussing our biases in research means simply that they go undetected, not that we are or can ever be without them. Our bias in research should be made explicit and our ideologies acknowledged.

The issues, which Bograd raises, gives a somewhat different slant to the age-old 'qualitative/quantitative' debate. Yllo (1988) suggests that the social sciences have suffered from 'physics envy' which has resulted in an over reliance on quantitative methods in the social sciences. She warns against the stereotype that quantitative methods are masculine and qualitative methods are feminine. In quoting Bacon, she says that expressions like "let us establish a chaste and lawful marriage between mind and nature" construct the mind/knower as masculine and the nature/known as feminine (cited in Yllo, 1988, p. 37). She argues instead for a question oriented approach that transcends such stereotypes. In developing a methodology, my focus was, therefore, on its appropriateness rather than its conformity. For this reason it was decided that the process of a support group would be followed as this approach would allow me

to best answer how it is that psychology is able to play a role in the construction of our subjectivity. Emerson Dobash and Dobash (1988) take a somewhat stronger stand on the issue and state that “we explicitly rejected the use of the survey methods employing large probability samples that must invariably use superficial questionnaires and interviews based on abstract categories relating to preconceived and, in our view, irrelevant issues (p. 56). This is a belief reiterated by Bograd (1988) and for this reason she suggests that by focusing on the categories that the subjects use, we are able to challenge our existing ones that claim to represent all experiences. Here the work of Riley (1988) becomes especially important. She problematises the very category women and notes its reliance on essentialist thinking. In doing so, she reminds us that the most taken for granted aspects of our everyday lives must continually be subject to scrutiny. As Stanley and Wise (1990) suggest, we must continually refuse to play the “women are ...game” (p. 40).

Yllo (1988) goes on to state that science is a source of power rather than a source of truth. It is structured by dichotomies such as rational/irrational, objective/subjective and masculine/feminine. The positivist paradigm’s association with masculinity is what has given it prestige. As an example she considers the Conflict Tactics Scale used in many of the studies described in chapter two. This scale counts incidences of violence without consideration for severity and thus renders results such as “1.8 million wives are physically abused by their husband each year (3.8%) while (the) nearly two million husbands are physically abused by their wives (4.6%)” (Yllo, 1988, p. 40). This dubious finding shows the ways in which statistics can bias findings. Nevertheless, it is these statistics that hold the most influence with policy makers

due to their prestige. In addition, Emerson Dobash and Dobash (1988) suggest that scales like the Conflict Tactics Scale make use of badly conceived categories of violence, ignore issues like the injuries sustained, and ignore the systematic violence shown towards women by men. The findings of the Conflict Tactics Scale contradict the experiences of the service providers who are overwhelmed by the numbers of abused women, but these experiences are not given the same value as statistics as their argument is said to be unscientific. Emerson Dobash and Dobash (1988) suggest that this leads to a flow of knowledge from the 'scientist' to the worker in the field as opposed to the other way around. This ignores the subjective experiences of women as they are reported to the workers in the field. Stanley and Wise (1990) suggest further that objectivity must be challenged as it cannot be separated from subjectivity. Rather than attempt to avoid or marginalise subjectivity we should welcome subjective accounts and make them the focus of our research.

As a researcher into domestic violence, I was not emotionally detached and value-free. Rather, I was hoping to use the research for a specific purpose and had a vested interest in its ability to make some kind of change to knowledge in the field. The research is thus *for* women, not *about* them and my political aims and methods cannot and should not be disconnected from the research process. My methodology was influenced by the above criticisms of past research. I took a qualitative approach to see how subjectivity was constructed in therapy through language. This referred not only to the subjectivity of the women in the group but my own and the ways in which my sense of self influenced theirs.

To conclude this argument, I draw in the work of Stanley and Wise (1990). They suggest that a feminist ethos should be present in the following aspects of research: “In the researcher-researched relationship, in emotion as a research experience, in the intellectual autobiography of researchers; therefore in how to manage the differing ‘realities’ and understandings of researchers and researched; and thus in the complex question of power in research and writing” (Stanley and Wise, 1990, p. 23). I have thus made every attempt in the limited space available to elaborate on the interactions between myself and the women being interviewed, how the interviews have affected my life and feelings personally, and how my and their background and past experiences colour the ways in which we interact and the power relations inherent to these interactions. These principles cannot simply be reflected on in writing a report but require reflection throughout the research process and adjustments to methodology and assumptions need to be made where required.

The Interviewees

Patton (1990) states that the logic of qualitative sampling rests on an in depth look at the phenomenon at hand. It is thus purposive; searching for information rich as opposed to representative samples. My aim in following a single support group was thus to look in depth at a typical case. For this reason, the sample size was less important than the quality of data obtained from the research. The sample was decided on with the purpose of the study clearly at hand. That is, I wanted, not to develop traditionally generalisable results but to trace the process of a complete group over time with a focus on the details of the discussions held during the support groups. This is not to suggest that the results and perhaps methods of this study will not be

transferred to other studies. The extent of the generalisation in this study would therefore be if other researchers were to employ a similar approach in evaluating their practice or that of others. It was hoped that this approach would allow me to capture any changes in attitude and belief that occurred as a result of the support group process. The generalisability of the present study can therefore be determined by its perceived social worth. Generalisability would therefore be from case to case rather than from case to population (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The following are brief descriptions of the women in the group, based on my personal impressions of them and their initial presenting problems.

Mary: Mary is a middle class white woman in her mid twenties. She has a small girl and was pregnant at the time of the support group. She has since had a son. She felt that her husband had a history of psychological problems such as depression and insecurity, which were now affecting her and her child. She did not feel that he was acting in a way that was appropriate for a new father. He spent a lot of time with his friends of whom she did not always approve and he was controlling and domineering over her.

Sushi: Sushi is a Hindu woman who has been married a long time. Her husband is extremely violent and has stabbed her on more than one occasion. She does not work and depends entirely on him for money. He is particularly abusive when he has been drinking which he does regularly. She feels that his abuse makes her violent and insensitive towards her children.

Krishne: Krishne is a Muslim woman in her forties. She has been married for sixteen years. For thirteen years she was homeless and slept with friends in the night and spent days in parks with her three children. During this time her husband was almost entirely absent. Her husband is not physically violent towards her but gambles excessively, which she feels is contrary to their religious beliefs. He has not worked in the time they have been married and she has supported the family entirely by sewing and buying household goods cheaply and reselling them for a profit. She has recently been granted a municipal house that she is paying off. Although she wants to own the house she cannot as she is married in community of property. She is afraid that as soon as the house is paid off, her husband will throw her out.

Fatima: Fatima is also in her forties. This is her second marriage and she is married according to Hindu law. Her husband drinks excessively and is extremely violent. She too has been stabbed by him on more than one occasion. He is continually unfaithful to her and she is afraid that she may contract sexually transmitted diseases from him. She is extremely self-conscious about not having been educated (she has a grade 5) and not reading or writing well. He continually wakes her at night when he comes home and is drunk. It is usually at these times that she is physically or sexually abused.

Jane: Jane is a coloured woman who has a high social status in her community. She is a very strong Christian and most of her social interaction comes from the church. She has recently been divorced which resulted from her husband being unfaithful to her. She continually receives obscene and harassing phone calls from the woman he now lives with. She feels that she has

been unable to overcome her divorce and the fact that he was unfaithful to her for most of their married life.

Sue: Sue is a white woman in her forties. She too is divorced as a result of her husband's infidelity. She is a Christian woman whose religion has a large influence in her life. She takes the role of helping other women as a result of her experiences.

The Interviews

One-on-one interviews were initially conducted with all the women except Sue who preferred not to be interviewed. A hand held dictaphone was used. The questionnaire was largely unstructured and I began each interview by telling the women that I wanted to get an understanding of where they were coming from and what had brought them to the support groups. I thus aimed to get an understanding at two levels. Firstly I wanted to know about what their experiences were and their understandings of these experiences. To this end, interviewing involved asking questions such as what is abuse for you and what kinds of abuse do you suffer, why does abuse happen to women in general, and who does it happen to? I also wanted to know about the tactics that they had tried to solve their problem in the past and how they thought that the issue of domestic violence should be dealt with.

After I had interviewed the women, each of the eight support group sessions were recorded. Each session dealt with a different topic. The first session looked at who gets abused and what acts could be defined as abusive. We then went on to look at the cycle of violence (Walker, 1984) and

women were invited to identify with or dissociate from this. We also considered topics such as emotional abuse, anger and depression, self-esteem building and legal options available to battered women. Other related topics were dealt with if they were identified as necessary by the women.

One of the primary difficulties that I faced in the interviews was how to ask women to tell personal and painful experiences to me. A balance had to be struck between being sensitive and unobtrusive and at the same time avoiding ambiguity. The following extract highlights my difficulty.

INGRID: Mm. Mm. So um am I right then that when things got really bad, then you came to FAMSA?

MARY: Ja. Ja.

INGRID: So (.) How did you come to FAMSA.

MARY : I looked it up in the phone book.

INGRID: Oh, so you just ...

MARY: I just looked it up.

INGRID: OK.

What I had been trying to ask Mary was what incidents led to her seeking help from Famsa. In my attempts to be sensitive and subtle, I was completely incomprehensible and the conversation died completely. With time I felt that the best tactic was to admit when I felt uncomfortable about

asking someone a question and encourage them to respond only to what they felt comfortable with. I also found on repeated occasions that I had to admit ignorance to what they were talking about. This was particularly acute when the language or cultural differences between us meant that we used very different expressions as in the following example.

INGRID: Alright, so it sounds like what you're wanting is him to be there in the home and to be an affectionate partner and the gambling's becoming a problem.

ASHA: The gambling is becoming a problem because if he starts gambling and he's losing he starts chasing. Well I've learnt that word over the years -

INGRID: I don't know what it really-I don't know what that means=

ASHA: =means. When you start chasing, now you've got to borrow money from this person and that person and you're chasing your money, you're trying to recover it, so that's the term they use for chasing the money and they go on borrowing and borrowing and borrowing. That goes and he has to start paying that back as well. So, it's quite a strain financially as well.

I felt that my honesty and ignorance helped the women to feel relaxed and broke down some of the power relations that I felt had been constructed when I first met them. I felt that these admissions meant that the women were more willing to bring me to some kind of understanding of the way they saw their circumstance as opposed to relying on my advice as the 'expert'.

Oakley (1981) identified the difficulties in interviewing women following the mainstream techniques. She suggests that we are taught not to focus attention on the person doing the interviewing, the interview, how the interviewees feel and the social relationships that develop from such interviews. She criticised this traditional paradigm for being masculine. Interviewing is seen as a method of data collection with the interaction skills of a personal conversation. In other words it has been accepted that treating your interviewees in a friendly, warm manner is necessary for extracting your information. As interviewers, we are warned against becoming too personally involved with those whom we interview. We are also not prepared for the kinds of questions which interviewees may ask back and the responses we are asked to give to such questions are patronising, for example, "I'm here to learn, not to pass judgement" (Oakley, 1981, p. 35). It is recommended that we give out no personal information. All this is done in the name of avoiding biasing the responses of the subjects. The interviewer should ideally be a recording device and the interviewee a data producing machine. The interviewer is also, however, the expert analyst and the power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee are thus hierarchical. That which is proper interviewing, is that which follows the masculine values of detachment and objectivity. Women are passive, submissive, subordinate and to be exploited through research. Oakley (1981) suggests that psychology, like the rest of society does not look at interviewing from the perspective of women.

For the purposes of this research, I took such feminist claims seriously. Questions from the women were welcomed on any topic from my own experiences of male violence, to my views on marriage and families, to questions regarding the use to which the research would be put. I felt

that it would be unethical to expect them to share with me intimate and potentially dangerous information (which it would be if, for example, I was to break confidentiality) whilst I remained detached and thus emotionally safe. I was asking a lot of the women about a topic that many of them felt afraid, ashamed and defensive about, and I felt that it was the least I could do to answer the questions that they asked me. This gave me some insight into how difficult it is to trust strangers with personal information and the possible consequences of not respecting their need for confidentiality. In addition, allowing me to interview them often cut into their busy schedule and some interviews had to be done whilst we fed children or attended to other jobs. In addition, the long term and personal contact between us meant that it was impossible for friendships not to develop between us and these were welcomed. We still see each other socially or in times of crisis.

The women were told that I was the only person to ever hear the tapes and that no one else would see transcripts that contained any identifying information. They were told of the possibility that some of the research may be published. I attempted to answer their questions as fully as possible making it clear where my responses were no more than personal opinions. This meant often admitting that I had no answers. I hoped in this way that they would also get some satisfaction from the personal relationship that developed amongst us. This is in keeping with the feminist demand that we re-evaluate our relationships with others and the values of the interviewing process (Oakley, 1981). Clearly then, it would go without saying that avoiding emotional attachment with the women in the support group was not possible, nor desirable in this project. I had become intimately involved in their lives and in a few cases, those of their families.

It was also essential in my analysis of the transcripts that I remained aware that the women were interacting with me as a *young*, white, middle class, educated woman. The issue of me being very young for the work I was doing came up towards the end of the group session and a few said that they felt apprehensive about my age when they first saw me. Similarly, when we knew each other better, it seemed that a few had felt uneasy about the taping but not felt in a position to say so. I was introduced to them as a 'psychologist in training' and the power hierarchy was clearly not equal despite my attempts to follow a feminist ethos at all times. I feel that feminist approaches thus are useful as they provide a method of remaining critical, not only of one's interpretation of the problem but also of one's approach to it.

Data Management

At the end of the interviews and support group sessions, I had 22 hours of tape that was transcribed by myself and somebody within the group who wanted to earn the money. All the women were told how I went about transcribing and that the tapes would be destroyed at the end of the project. They were also told that all identifying information about themselves or anyone they spoke of would be changed. Sample transcripts were taken to the women so that they could be reassured that they were not identifiable. Some of the initial themes were also fed back to them at the end of the sessions.

The transcription conventions were used as listed in Potter and Wetherall (1987). A pause was indicated by the following symbol (.) and where this pause in speech was long, the number of seconds of silence were written in the brackets, for example (3). An interruption in a sentence

was indicated by an = sign at the end of the interrupted sentence and the beginning of the interruption. Words in double brackets indicate actions that are relevant but not noticeable in the transcripts such as laughing. I used words in brackets within the text to elaborate on what the person had said if it was unclear. Words emphasised or said loudly were put in capital letters. For example,

FATIMA: At first when I really met him (4) The first time when I met him he poked (stabbed) me on my head here. ((Pointing)) He gave me ten stitches on my head. TEN STITCHES he gave me. And er I told him I said you know what, when I saw the blood, I said you know what I took all this from my previous marriage and I'm not prepared to go through it again. And that's the case and now you'd better leave. I don't want to see you again. Yet I told him so many times, you know. You can go. He waited for thirteen years to ruin my life (.) spoil it and now he must go. (.) His own friends comes and tell me that how he's going out with other women, how he comes into town and pick up all this dirty womens (prostitutes) With his part time money we can do so much it, but he don't give me his part time money - those are his wages and with his wages I see to all the accounts. I see for the whole month that he has a packet of cigarettes every day and good lunch. And his part time money whatever part time job he does, the money he makes, when he feel like taking us out, he takes us out - but not alone. He must have all his friends with him. ((crying))

INGRID: Mm. Mm.

FATIMA: You see, if he`s taking us out for a day or maybe taking us to the beach, or to the dam or something he invites all his friends=
INGRID =So it`s not a family =
FATIMA =And they all must be with us so which means, if I go, I must have about R200 to R300 to buy and feed all of them.

Analysis

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) liken the qualitative researcher to a bricoleur, as the choice of research tools is not set in advance but pieced together depending on the question to be asked. They state that “the product of the *bricoleur*’s labour is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation that represents the researcher’s understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis” (p. 3, emphasis original). Accordingly, my approach to the analysis could not be determined by a pre-existing set of procedures. Patton (1990) argues that there can only be guidelines that can be followed in analysing qualitative data and that these should be applied creatively using sound judgement.

Although the choice to use discourse analysis was relatively straightforward, the different kinds of discourse analysis abound depending on the theoretical framework from which one works (Burman, 1991). My first step in analysing these transcripts was to read and re-read making notes to myself about any themes that seemed to be occurring and their possible significance. I found it most useful to note a series of questions to ‘ask’ the text.

Given that I was interested in the political nature of the self and in problematising the presenting understanding of the self, I felt that the critical guidelines outlined by both Parker (1992) and Burman (1991) would be most useful. Parker (1992) states that discourses are used to do things in an interaction. Depending on the function required (for example wanting to present oneself as non-sexist) our speech will vary. Discourses do not, therefore, describe the world neutrally but classify it, bringing some aspects of our social reality into sight whilst concealing others. In this way, discourse becomes a framework for debating the value of one version of reality over another as is seen in the debates discussed in chapter two.

My next step was thus to re-read the transcripts asking myself why the person chose to say what they did and not something else. Why this account of their experience and not a competing account? Why is therapy about the self and not about how to keep oneself safe given that so many of the women were living in situations where their lives were in danger? I also asked myself what was being left out of their account of their experience and why. Were some things left out on the assumption that I already knew them or were they left out for other significant reasons? At Parker's (1992) suggestion I used free-association to explore some of the possible connotations of what was being said.

Parker's (1992) guidelines are compatible with the approach of Foucault (which Burman identifies as only one approach to discourse analysis) that "takes discourse as a social practice, and as constitutive of the construction and shifting grounds of frameworks of meaning-including knowledge of ourselves, our subjectivities" (Burman, 1991, p. 326). Using these assumptions as

well as those of Rose (as outlined in the theory of this thesis), I was in a better position to read texts critically and identify themes in terms of their ability to regulate and discipline. The Foucauldian approach is especially useful for my purposes given the questions it asks about subjectivity. I thus asked, whilst reading the texts, what kinds of subjectivities were possible given the constraints of our language around domestic violence? How do the concepts we have regulate people into acceptable social behaviour and, most importantly, what are the links between the self and power, that is, who benefits from this conceptualisation of the self (Parker, 1989, 1992)? Linked to this I then asked who the discourse addresses, is it women, violent men, psychologists etc.? My next step was to try to critique the picture of the world that I had painted and test the extent to which this picture was resilient to such critique (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Given the approach taken to this analysis, I could not possibly claim to represent the ‘reality of domestic violence’. My interest in the self as it is constructed through therapy emerged as I facilitated support groups over a couple of years. I, therefore, approached the text with these questions already in mind. I clearly then will have left out other significant themes in the data. In a sense it could be said that my analysis had begun before the data had even been collected. My focus then can only be seen as one attempt to render comprehensible a complex field of inquiry. Atkinson (1992) states that “the comprehensible representation of social worlds is (therefore) produced via a kind of “symbolic violence” (cited in Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Understanding is always bought at the expense of fidelity to the phenomena” (p. 14). Thus my analysis must be seen as accurate at one level, but always unfaithful to domestic violence on

another in that the logical sequence required to present it coherently cannot do justice to the complexity of the subject.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUBJECTIVITY

In this chapter I hope to show how the data collected for this project has led me to the understanding of subjectivity which has been briefly outlined in chapter three. I will show the ways in which the women in the group explained their sense of self and the changes that they felt were necessary to reach happiness and fulfilment. I also aim to extend this argument to consider the specific ways in which the women are constructed in terms of their roles as mother and wife, that is, how the subjectivity of a woman is constructed in a unique manner. For the purposes of this analysis, the *homo rationalis* described in chapter three requires further analysis. The psychological understanding of the subject attributes specific roles to men and women. The categories of men and women are used to play a role in the transmission of the dominant norms of society as they are reinforced by psychology. Women have a unique and central role in ensuring that the notion of a unified, rational subject is reproduced and as such constructed as normal.

The Psychological Self

Rose (1990) suggests that psychological expertise has provided us with a new language for constructing our selves. We understand our selves in increasingly psychological terms which include new ways of understanding the way we feel, our emotions, hopes and so on. This new sense of ourselves directly influences the way we act as well as the way we interact with others. Consider the following extract.

ASHA: He'll never, never do it. **He's that kind of a person.** And (.) it (.) it's difficult (.) I mean although I have accepted that I (.) there's no way he's going to change, but what I actually need is support. **Somebody who can understand what I'm going through** and it's difficult to get that somebody.

Here Asha describes the kind of person that her husband is (or is not). His identity is described in terms of the psychological characteristics that he exhibits. By referring to the 'kind of person' that he is she focus the problem around his subjectivity, his self and the ways in which it is lacking. Similarly, her solution to the problem involves seeking out someone who can meet her emotional needs. The solution is thus also framed in psychological terms. The following four extracts are taken from the preliminary interview with Mary.

MARY: That's a minor sort of thing and generally every Christmas time, every Easter holiday, every birthday, every time there's a major holiday of some sort, **he um gets very depressed and takes things out on me. I think it's got to do with his childhood or something.**

MARY: I find his love very **conditional.**

MARY: But um right from the beginning I had to do a lot of **emotional work.**

INGRID: Mm.

MARY: You know what I mean? It's not like (.) It's not quite stuff that you do (.) It's **feelings and thoughts and almost working through**

MARY: They're very aware (.) they are (children) (.) I think it's associated to (.) Man and **by the time they're five years old and 7 years old or whatever their personality is pretty well formed.**

INGRID: Ja.

MARY: I'm actually just not prepared to sit around for five years waiting for my husband to come to his senses, because by that time the damage is done.

INGRID: Ja. Ja.

If we accept Parker's (1989) premise that we construct our reality through language, then the problems that Mary and her husband are experiencing are constructed in psychological terms. It is his depression and his childhood that are problematic. More than this, however, they are both constructed as psychological selves and the focus is, therefore, on 'feelings', 'working through' and 'personalities'. The language that Mary uses to describe her experiences is taken from psychological theory as are her understandings of the effects of her husband's behaviour. Rather than being described as a social or legal issue, domestic violence is an issue of a failure of one party to live up to his psychological responsibility. In other words, Mary's husband fails to 'work through' feelings and emotions and offers only conditional love. His psychological self is thus seen to be lacking. In the process of describing her husband's lack, Mary also defines a 'normal

psychological self'. It is one where love is unconditional and problems are solved through working on feelings and emotions.

The increasing construction of domestic violence in psychological terms stems from psychology's general permeation through society. It is not necessarily psychologists that 'teach' women to explain violence in psychological terms. In other words, the tendency to see one's problems in psychological terms should not be considered to be a direct consequence of psychology as a discipline nor an effect of psychologists. Rather, these psychological explanations address individuals in all areas of interaction in their lives. We hear these emotional and other psychological explanations in all arenas of our lives from soap operas to radio phone-ins; from self-help books to advice columns. This allows for all to use these concepts and terms, as opposed to them being exclusively for use by psychologists. Doctors, mothers, teachers, magazines and friends, all construct our problems of living as problems requiring a psychological explanation.

Here the women describe some of the people who have influenced the ways they perceive their problems.

MARY: I heard something very interesting on the radio a little while ago. I can't remember who it's by but they were talking about something called the IMARGO theory.

INGRID: The IM...?

MARY: IMARGO theory.

INGRID: IMARGO.

MARY: Basically saying that when you choose a partner in life, subconsciously you choose somebody whose got a problem, or the relationship will have some sort of problem that you have had in the past that you weren't able to deal with, and because you **naturally** want to deal with it so you put yourself in situations so it can=

INGRID: =Ja. ja=

MARY: =force you to deal with your situation.

This extract illustrates one of the many diverse ways in which psychological understandings of domestic violence can be transmitted. I am not suggesting that it is psychologists who make us see the world in psychological terms. Rather, these psychological understandings of domestic violence are adopted by many that are in contact with the field, including doctors, radio hosts and writers of popular psychology. Psychological understandings of domestic violence are so central that even those who are not psychologists can only identify it as being a psychological problem. Domestic violence is so saturated with the psy-complex that it can only be explained in psychological terms. Note how Mary describes it as 'natural' to put oneself in situations where problems are worked on. The psychological techniques for working on problems are not acknowledged as historical constructions but are the natural or proper responses to perceived abnormality in a relationship. This is not to suggest that without psychological explanations of domestic violence men would not hit, degrade or sexually assault their wives, but this would not be a psychological problem. It would not be a problem of a psychological nature and thus would

not require addressing from a psychological perspective. By constructing domestic violence as a psychological problem, a need for psychological services is created. The next extract illustrates the ways in which psychology has become indispensable to us. In this extract, Krishne is talking about the build up of tension and stress in her relationship.

KRISHNE: It (the tension) builds up. It's something that **you need to talk about immediately** because mine had built up into quite a state - as I said to you. **You have to have help - there is no such thing as dealing with it without help** - I know for a fact I never complained, and you virtually learn to start realising the symptoms and seek help again.

This extract followed a discussion of emotional abuse. Here, Krishne makes it clear that emotional issues require 'dealing with'. The women go on to discuss how emotional abuse can be worse than physical abuse because of the dire psychological effects of being emotionally abused. Although many of the women have experienced extreme violence, their problems are none the less constructed as those that have to do with emotions and feelings almost to the exclusion of other possible constructions. It would, for example, seem quite possible that domestic violence could be constructed as a problem of personal, physical safety instead of the kind of person one is or wants to be. A need is therefore created for those who are 'experts' in the field of the self, that is, those who are knowledgeable about psychological issues. The women monitor themselves for signs that their emotions are damaged and that emotional 'experts' may need to be consulted.

More than this, however, this extract begins to expose some of the assumptions that exist about the nature of this self. The individual is identified as the one who seeks help. It is she who must identify the symptoms that something is wrong in the relationship and actively work to reverse the problem. That is, psychological explanations of domestic violence rest on a specific understanding of the self, who one is. Cruikshank (1996), in evaluating self-esteem workshops, makes a similar point. She suggests that in the process of writing, a self is constructed upon which one can act in order to achieve resolution of the problem. In other words, writings on domestic violence such as those described in chapter two are not only based on a notion of the self; this self and its administration is our responsibility. Through the construction of this self, we are given a site on which we can work in order to achieve our goals. The assumption underlying this construction of domestic violence is that we all know the kind of person that we are and we monitor and compare this self continually. Consider the following extract.

ASHA: He sits like er we don't watch TV together at home when he comes from work. He does his own thing. He sits, if we are in the lounge, he sits in the room. He's a referee and he has a whole lot of work to do, so he takes it out and he sits and looks at his papers and he never sits to have supper with us, or he got no time for the children and er if we come out of the lounge and go into the room he goes to watch TV. There's no time that we spend together. But er now that he knows I'm coming for help he sits with us. He pays a bit of attention to the children as well and er he's showing love as well, that he cares. It's just a front.

INGRID: Alright that's quite interesting that it's a front. Do you believe then that he will go back to how he was?

ASHA : Definitely.

INGRID: Definitely. How would you like to see your relationship?

ASHA: I'd like him to change. I mean I told him over the years all I need from him is a please, thank you, be there for me. I don't need him to do things for me. I don't children. That's what I actually need, and his gambling. That's also a burden to us.

This extracts provides the counsellor with an illustration of the kind of person that Asha's husband is. The problem is set up as a problem of self. Her husband is not the kind of person that he should be. He does not, in other words, live up to the norm of what a husband should be. In order for their relationship to be happy and fulfilled, he needs to change his self. Rose (1990) suggests that this normal self is defined in various ways. We receive messages about what is normal from the publicised confessions around domestic violence as well as from other discourses about the family. In other words, the increasing literature on domestic violence and the increasing awareness that has been created from our contact with this literature provides us with a norm according to which we can evaluate ourselves, our relationships and our families. It activates the normality in us and incites us to work towards the achievement of this norm (Foucault, 1979).

Psychological Entrepreneurs

Consider the following extract.

ASHA: You see, when (.) It started affecting me immediately because I come from a (.) I was a very quiet person. If you were to hear me talk you had to come close.

INGRID: Mm...Mm...

ASHA: You had to come very close to hear what I am saying. And um it affected me in such a way it made me vulgar. It made me violent. It made me want to be violent. In fact I hurt myself too - I cut my hands and I used to break the window and all that (.) with my hands I used to become so violent, **but I didn't know it was a problem. I never knew that this is what is causing it.** And um I used to abuse him too, **I didn't know how to take out my anger.** I used to shout at him and call him names and after it I used to become ashamed of it and I started suffering with headaches and er it just went on for quite a long time, when I say 12 years, only after 12 years seeked help. And er I ended up in intensive care and then they asked me why did I have high blood pressure, what was my problem - am I having problems, or whatever. I was too ashamed to tell them that -

Again we see that the psychological approach taken to the problem of domestic violence leads to a discussion of one's self. The self that one constructs in therapy is monitored according to a psychological norm. The description given is of what a normal family and relationship should be. The husband's subjectivity is monitored and found in this case to be lacking. Similarly, in

describing her self prior to therapy, Asha sees this self as not living up to normal behaviour. The discrepancy between the existing self and the desired self provides the space in which one can begin to see oneself differently. This dichotomy, in other words, allows us to see the self as changeable and in so doing provides a space for action. We are able to work on the self given that it is changeable. Because the problem is constructed in terms of the self, the wanting self is perceived to require attention. The solution that provides relief from their abnormal situation is, predictably, therapy. Wilbraham (1997) states that by formulating the problem in psychological terms, it can be seen as a therapeutic opportunity. In other words it is an opportunity to work on the problems and move past them. We can therefore be seen as entrepreneurs as we identify the need for this work and set up the conditions for this work. It is we who manage and work on the self. We are the managers of our selves and work to create a more normal self.

What then is defined as this psychological norm? The following discussion occurred when the women were describing the ways in which other people often blamed them for the abuse that they were suffering or failed to notice it.

ASHA: You've got a very valid point, because there's something I want to add to what you have just said. As with your life I accepted the fact that's the way my husband is, but I needed help and I came here. I learned something, I think, for the first time in my life for many, many years I'm really happy. I'm not putting on a show to say I'm smiling, it's great. I am really happy. The thing is I sat down and I thought about everybody and their problems and my problems. We have a right to

change our positions. **There's no such thing as we cannot change it. But what we can - what we *don't* want to change it's our decision.** As I said I didn't want to change my position, but I was also making my husband unhappy. Although I didn't want to change this position that I am in I know for a fact, er because I have been here also, a couple of weeks - three weeks I think I have been=

JANE: Mm. Mm.

ASHA: = **and I've become more like the person I used to be** before I married him, and I can see my husband is happy as well. It's making me happy and it's making my children happy as well. So I think=

MARY: =I've found the same thing as well

Here Asha's happiness stems from the fact that she has decided that it is up to her to change her situation. By seeing herself as dependent and helpless, she was only making the whole family unhappy. Rather, she states very strongly that we are all able to make our own decisions in life and if we are unhappy with our situation, then it is for us to change it. Once she has come to this realisation she is a happier person. The normal individual is one with a healthy autonomous and independent focus. The incentive that encourages us to live up to the psychological norm is the promise of happiness and liberation from past troubles.

This is similar to Rose's (1990) argument that in the modern democratic state, individuals take an active role in the shaping of their lives. They are self-monitoring and self-regulating, they shape their own lives through the choices that they make and are thus responsible for their own

happiness. By using the techniques offered to them by psychology, they are able to make the changes to their selves that are necessary in order for them to reach happiness. In this way it is possible for individuals to overcome this discrepancy between who they are and who they would like to be.

What is not made as explicit as the reward for upholding the norm, is the 'punishment' for not working towards it. This extract shows the conflict that is caused when individuals fail to live up to this psychologically constructed norm. This extract is taken from the session on the cycle of violence.

MARY: I find that strange because with everything I've read on abusive marriages, every book, every article, they always say there's a phase where the husband or the partner or whatever it is (Its not necessarily a marriage) always apologises and tries to make up for it. I've never experienced that, never. My husband just sort of lets things go and carry on as normal and never talk about it. There's never an apology never sort of comes to me and says I'm terribly sorry, I'm going to make it up to you or whatever.

Here again the normal family is constructed in terms of the characteristics of the individuals that comprise it. The normal way to deal with problems is to talk about them. Thus not only do normal people work towards a psychological norm but normal relationships should also be monitored and worked on. Here the problem stems from the fact that Mary's husband is unable to

monitor himself sufficiently to recognise that he is contravening what is accepted, normal behaviour. In addition he does not give the relationship the necessary work to make it normal. He does not talk about problems the way that we are supposed to. Through being increasingly self-monitoring, he would be able to recognise his problem and approach an expert on the self. The experts educate the individual as to the reasons for their abnormal behaviour and provide them with the techniques for regaining their normality as in the following extract.

FATIMA: You **learn you've got to have help**, I didn't know how to do it until I got referred to the psychologist and she told me, I didn't know it was a problem, I didn't know that was the problem I was suffering from. As I said I thought I was asthmatic. That was the (.). She got me talking, about my life and my husband and I realised I was being abused and I learned how to deal with it. Now I was feeling the symptoms coming on and I knew I needed help.

Here Fatima relates how she was diagnosed with depression. This extracts summarise quite succinctly the themes touched on above. The language of psychology is pervasive in our society. In Fatima's case, it was a doctor who helped her to define her problem as one, not stemming from a medical problem, but of psychological origin. She was referred to the psychologist who 'taught' her what her problem was, thus liberating her from it. The problem is one that is defined in psychological terms. She has to work on her self in order to reach normality once more. The psychological cycle does not end with this, however. A large part of her therapeutic encounter involved defining what her ideal self would be. She learns to continually monitor herself to

ensure that she maintains this ideal even after the therapy has ended. When she finds herself lacking in any way, she now knows what it is that she needs in order to regain happiness. She must consult the experts on the self.

This relates to what Foucault refers to as the incitement to discourse. He states that in our society, we have developed procedures for confessing that which is most painful to admit (Foucault, 1979). Through our identification with discourses on domestic violence that reach us via diverse technologies of the self, we are prompted to confess the ways in which we fail to live up to the psychological norm. We are not forced by an external authority to talk about our failures of the self but rather the incitement to discourse comes voluntarily from ourselves in an attempt to reach fulfilment and happiness. Fatima's perceived abnormalities in her relationships incites her to verbalise her problems.

Through describing oneself in therapy, the assumption is, therefore, that the expert can teach you what you don't know about yourself. In the above example, Fatima did not know why she was behaving in a manner that was incongruent with her usual self. In order to find out she had to seek advice from a psychological expert who was able to relate back to her the parts of herself of which she was not aware.

Women's Work

The category women is unproblematically used in much psychological discourse and its reality is seldom questioned. Similarly, the above Rosean reading of the transcripts appears to be gender

blind. It relates to all individuals who exist in the modern democratic state and does not consider the ways in which different categories of individuals may be addressed in different ways by this pervasive psychological discourse. It is clear that there are times when the categorisation of people into men and women is unquestionably useful. For example, the development of new treatments for cervical cancer rest on a definition of 'woman' in terms of her biology. The result of the categorisation is uncontroversially positive and allows for the improved health and at times the saved lives of women. This does not mean that the category has always been used in a positive manner, nor does it suggest that it can be unproblematically traced to an external reality. Consider the following extract.

INGRID: And you think he's bringing that into your family now?

MARY: Absolutely. But you know I (.) before we got married I actually thought solved it because we spoke about all this sort of thing and (.) he was dealing with it.

INGRID: Ja.

MARY: And I don't know why I really thought that he was actually growing and that he was going to get over it.

INGRID: Ja.

MARY: And it's just got worse.

INGRID: Ja.

MARY: My Mom said something interesting to me a while ago. She mentioned that she thought the reason why things had got as bad as they have is possibly because I'm the kind of person who likes to deal with a problem when the problem arises I like

to deal with it. I confront it. I really I really tackle it, and some people just don't like doing that. They need to think about it for a while.

INGRID: Some people battle with any confrontation.

Here Mary evaluates her husband's inability to talk about his problems. It seems that he lacks the incitement to discourse (Foucault, 1979) that is associated with the construction of life's problems in psychological terms. Mary is not only responsible for monitoring herself but her whole family. She ensures that the psychological norms are being adhered to by the whole family and that the values of psychology are instilled in its members. In her initial interview, she expresses her frustration at her husband's unwillingness to handle problems the way that 'normal adults' would. He not only lacks the incitement to talk about his problems but having consulted a psychological expert on his problems he has failed to carry the lessons of therapy with him and adjust himself through such techniques as required. Having found that he is lacking in comparison to our social norms, it is Mary who is responsible for ensuring that the necessary steps are taken for him to seek help.

MARY: When I realised it's those simple little things, **and I thought no there's definitely something wrong here.**

INGRID: Mm.

MARY: **And I said to him he must go to counselling** and he refused and refused and refused and eventually it got really bad and things between us were quite chronic and he said OK he will go to FAMSA with me.

INGRID: Ja.

MARY: And it DEFINITELY helped.

It is therefore the role of the woman in a relationship to provide the necessary evaluation of the family, which leads to the search for help. She instils the desire to confess in the other members of her family. This is not to suggest that her husband is not expected to live up to the norm of being a self-monitoring, autonomous individual. Rather in the face of his failure to do so it is she who is responsible for the management of the family self. That is, the emotional needs of the family as a whole are monitored and satisfied through her. Wilbraham (1997) in discussing discourses on monogamy states that it is the wife that is addressed by these discourses and it is therefore she who is responsible for the “emotional housework” (p. 71). It is thus she who works to save relationships and it is she who seeks therapy to this end. In these transcripts the wife not only acts as ‘sales representative’ for psychological discourses, but she also plays the role of the lay counsellor in the home if necessary. Later on in the interview Mary states that:

MARY: You know it was ALWAYS that. Always that sort of thing. And um it was really getting me down and I thought, no I was going to talk to him about this because I could see what was happening and I said to him I think this is happening, do you think I’m right or wrong. And he said yes this is definitely the way he feels and he’ll disown his family - he wants nothing to do with them. And I said to him you can’t do that, you can’t just disown them your family=

INGRID: =Ja. Ja.

MARY: =because they do love you, but you've got to learn to say no to them. **You know I became like a counsellor in the whole issue.** It was months before he started dealing with it and I must say there was a big improvement. It was the first thing that he, I think the only thing he really, really dealt with and actually=

INGRID: =Ja. Ja.

MARY: You know now he can say if his family are being unreasonable he'll say look I'm sorry I don't have the time. I can't do it.

Mary not only helps her husband to confront his problems but through talking the issue over with him helps him to identify his problem as one with his family of origin. The desired changes are identified and she provides him with the techniques for reaching his desired state, that is, learning to say 'no' to his family. The incentive for acting on his problem is the promise of happier relationships with his family. A similar situation can be seen with Asha and her eldest son.

ASHA: And if they need anything they come to me. They don't go to their father.

INGRID: Ja.

ASHA: They come to me. There's nothing that he's (.) he shares nothing in their lives.

INGRID: So it sounds almost as if you're playing two roles. You're being mother and father and=

ASHA: Yes, yes that's true.

INGRID: It must be quite a strain on you.

ASHA: It is quite a strain because I don't have anybody that I can turn to. **If I don't know how to solve their problem I've got to ask somebody else for advice**, like how do I go about something, because my husband doesn't know anything about raising children. I caught my son smoking and er I told him - I said look David I caught him (.) I watched him smoking, what do you think we should do about it? Oh, leave him, leave him - he'll know, when he's going to start paying for his own cigarettes he'll know how hard it is to smoke. Now is that the way you talk to your son? So I took the matter into my own hands and I did talk to him and I said look if you want to smoke, go and smoke as much as you want while I'm sitting here. I want to see you smoke it. And he says - No Mommy I don't want to smoke. I said - Do you know what cigarettes is about? Do you know what's nicotine ? (.) My husband doesn't smoke and he doesn't drink (.) so that's one good side of him as well. **And er he (.) I didn't hit him, because usually if I was in that position I would have murdered him - almost murdered him - and er I sat and spoke to him.** I told him - look if there is anything you want of me, come and ask me first. Mommy is strong. It can be anything. **Feel free to talk to me. If it's not right I'll tell you that it's not right, but it's your choice. You're an individual. You've got to make your own choice.**

INGRID: Mm (.) .Mm=

ASHA: But I'm not going to MAKE you do something you don't want to do. You going to do whatever you want to do eventually. It's going hide and do it. But I'm telling how bad the cigarettes are going to affect him.

Firstly, Asha is quick to admit that she would consult an expert should she feel the problem is out of her hands. She is not the expert on the topic but she does have some psychological skills. Through talking with her son, they construct the norms according to which his behaviour is measured together. He is also constructed as a free, autonomous individual who has to make his own choices. Her role is to provide him with the objective facts on the matter, that is, the effects of nicotine on his health. In other words, he is able to decide for himself whether he wants to smoke or not but his choice will always be made in relation to the norm constructed in their therapeutic encounter. It is significant that her new approach to dealing with the identity needs of her family has changed since her own encounter with psychology. She is handling her family's needs in a more acceptable manner, that is, in psychological terms. Clearly one would not want to suggest that her prior violent approach would be preferable but rather it is essential that we recognise that the psychological approach taken is not the only alternative. She could, for example, have explained that smoking is wrong because it contradicts religious teachings.

The extract shows how she encourages her son to talk to her about his problems. She is responsible for instilling the incitement to discourse in him. He is encouraged to talk about any problems he has. Asha offers herself as the therapist for the family.

In both of the above examples, therefore, we can see that the woman, in her capacity as mother and wife takes on the role in the family that the psychological expert has in society. Women can be seen to carry the responsibility for instilling the psy-complex in the family as a whole. She

monitors all members in terms of the psychological norm whilst at the same time instilling the values of psychology. In other words, she teaches her children and encourages her husband to become self-monitoring. When they fail to do so she consults the experts on the self. When family members do perceive lack, she is available for confession. It is this confession that results in the members of the family being freed of their past inadequacies and becoming increasingly self-determined individuals whose normality is closely monitored. As they grow up, they should ideally require her less and less and soon they will consult the experts for themselves upon perceiving their selves to be inadequate. In this way, the mother acts as a relay to ensure that the values and norms of psychology are instilled in individuals thus increasing the pervasiveness of the discipline. 'Women's work' can be seen to have two aspects to it. Firstly, the woman is responsible for ensuring that the members of the family are working on themselves. She instils the values of the psychological entrepreneur in the members of her family. Secondly, she is responsible for hearing the family's confessions. She can, therefore, be seen as the manager of the psychological selves within the family.

The rationale stated in therapy for getting women to work on their selves and their families' selves is their own empowerment. What is not considered is the options that are abnormalised through the construction of a psychological norm. Drawing on the work of Wilbraham (1997) we can suggest that the options which may be abnormalised are ones that undermine the sanctity of the family. They may include the woman simply leaving the relationship with a sigh of relief, or pursuing an extra-marital affair. In presenting the norms of the self through therapy it is essential that the counsellor be aware of the historical context out of which such norms emerge.

Some Conclusions

Increasingly, domestic violence is constructed as a problem of self. The theory on domestic violence takes as its starting point an assumption that people are self monitoring, autonomous individuals who evaluate themselves in terms of the psychological norm. What remains to be explored are the political implications of this focus on subjectivity. We have already seen that the transmission and reproduction of psychological norms and values identifies a particular role for women and as such rests heavily on the reproduction of gender categories. I intend to extend this argument to show that power over and power to are not incompatible notions that require debate to ensure that one does not undermine the existence of the other. Rather, I will look at how psychology plays a role in the encouragement of power to through the reduction of power over.

Some feminists have debated the value of the Foucauldian notion of power for women (Poovey, 1995; Lloyd, 1993). Lloyd (1993) sees his 'micro-physical' focus on power as problematic because it is unable to account for the systematic power imbalances between men and women as social groups. In other words, it is unable to account for why men as a group abuse women as a group. Lloyd (1993) also states that it is unable to account for the ways in which power is organised to ensure that practises such as domestic violence can continue given its view of power as a dispersed network. She states that through the rejection of the feminist universals and the 'macrophysical' way in which power manifests itself, the genderedness of power is ignored (Lloyd, 1993, p.438). Along a similar line, Hartssock (1990) states that Foucault's view of power as having no site, location or presence means that feminism lacks a unifying focus for political

action. Different authors have come to different conclusions about what should be done about this conflict of interests. Hartsock believes that it should lead to the rejection of poststructuralism by feminism. I would however follow the argument of Einstein (in Lloyd, 1993) that the difference, discontinuity and diversity of Foucault's understanding can be integrated into and complimented by the feminist understanding of the genderedness of power. That is, by looking at the interrelationship between the two notions of power a feminist agenda can be advanced.

CHAPTER SIX

POWER: KEEPING THE HEART BEATING

Having illustrated that understandings of domestic violence have been saturated with the psy-complex and that this has been instrumental in constructing it as a problem of self, the question to be answered is, what are the consequences of such a construction. We have already seen that psychological discourse ensures its transmission through the reinforcement of the gender categories that justify men and women having different psychological jobs. Here I shall consider in more detail the nature of the power that the psy-complex wields. I would also like to emphasise that domestic violence is an example of legitimate and demanded State intervention into the family. We thus require a theory of both the manifest and the latent ways in which power is present.

‘Power Over’: The Arteries Of Power

The starting assumption here is that domestic violence is about power but that this power can manifest itself in different ways. This chapter aims to identify the different kinds of power that are present in the way the women understand their experiences and to look at how these interact. I hope to show that ‘microphysical’ and ‘macrophysical’ power work hand in hand to ensure the reproduction of a particular notion of subjectivity. In addition, both of these understandings of power rest on the assumption that gender categories exist in reality. It is therefore necessary to critique our understanding of gender categories whilst at the same time maintaining a focus on

the effects that they have on the everyday lives of women given that they have been treated as real.

Consider the following extract that was taken from a preliminary interview with Krishne.

KRISHNE: At the moment it's fine, but why I came here is because two months ago I had a very serious problem. My husband was drinking excessively. He was coming home and beating me and er I actually had two assault cases (.) No, (.) one attempted murder and one assault case. (sighs))

INGRID: Ja. Ja.

KRISHNE: Because um he just beat me up and you know he didn't even think - he just left me to lie in gutter. He didn't um (2) after he hit me he was acting very er like he didn't feel sorry about it you know =

INGRID: =Mm (.) Mm (.)=

KRISHNE: =and he didn't apologise and er anyway I got a Court Interdict for him and I got him out of the house and er like er basically I used to live in fear because I never know what he's going to do. And er before he already assaulted me, I er used to run away like er on the days I know he's going to cause a problem.

Clearly in this extract, Krishne's husband has power over her based on his physical strength. She has no power in the relationship. Feminist focuses have been on increasing this kind of power for women in relationships. The success of such attempts can be seen in the fact that she is now able

to have him removed from the house. Before the Prevention of Family Violence Act (no 133 of 1993) this would not have been possible and she would have had to leave if she were in physical danger. Rose states that State intervention into the family has become increasingly illegitimate except in cases where there is clear harm being done. Domestic violence is a clear example of one such case. Here Krishna is able to appeal to State power, which is another clear example of power over. Her husband can be arrested and she can obtain an interdict (as stated in the Prevention of Family Violence act, 133 of 1993). In this sense the law can be seen to act in her defence to give her some degree of power over. It is at this macrophysical level of power that feminism has focused (Lloyd, 1996).

I have already suggested that feminism's acknowledgement of power relations represents its major shift from the mainstream understandings of domestic violence as outlined in chapter two. Although this notion of power has come under critique recently, it is one still relevant to the study of domestic violence. In the view of feminism, power is seen to work from the top, that is, it is juridico-discursive (Foucault, 1979). Power is exercised by an authority (Krishna's husband, the law etc.) over the person with less power (Krishna in the case of her husband and her husband in the case of the law). Changes to the system, from this perspective, need to be made to laws, schools, communities and other institutions via their leaders. Following the feminist tradition, much of the lobbying around domestic violence called for changes to be made to the Prevention of Family Violence Act (133 of 1993). This has been to increase women's power over men and thus balance the scales in some way. Some theorists such as Foucault (1979) have, however, debated that this kind of power even exists. I would suggest that in the area of domestic violence

there are changes which need to be made at this level, given that many of our laws, schools and other institutions directly obstruct the prevention of violence against women.

I have argued that the psy-complex is powerful and that its power is based, to some extent, on gender categories. In other words, women are given a unique role in the transmission of the psy-complex. Although some authors (Riley, 1988) that the category 'women' is a myth, I argue that although this may be the case, as a historical construction, this category is very real because these sources of power have treated it as real. In other words, through treating the category 'women' as real, psychology has been able to use this category to ensure the reproduction of a particular notion of subjectivity thus reinforcing women as being the partner responsible for the work on the relationship in terms of psychological norms. We thus require an of analysis of power that can explain the systematic oppression of women by men and the institutions that reflect male interests. It is, therefore, worth considering in more detail the nature of this power as feminism as typically viewed it. Consider the following example:

KRISHNE: Er no I take anything and I throw it at him when he wants to hit me, or like um I threatened him a few times and I told him that he if he comes home and he's going to hit me or anything like that. Because see that last time he took a knife and er hit me with beer bottles on the head. And er I'm just not sure what he's going to do. You know he can actually KILL me

INGRID: Ja ja

KRISHNE: =and he's quite a big size, you know tall guy and all (.) And er I told him that (.) I was actually boiling water one day and I told him if he's comes over I'll burn him with it. And (.) er I think with all that threatening he really appreciates not to hurt me.

INGRID: Ja ja

KRISHNE: =And with those charges and you know

INGRID: Ja. ja. So (3)

KRISHNE: =we lock him up and all that. I think I'm really pleased with that you know. I don't think he'll ever hit me again.

INGRID: So it sounds like you are kind of regaining some kind of power over him or control?

KRISHNE: Power ja, and control ja that's how I feel=

INGRID: =over the situation?

KRISHNE: He's afraid actually even to be verbally abusive to me.

INGRID: Mm. Mm.

KRISHNE: He's just a thing and he's quiet, because he knows that er (.) even if he's going to abuse me and all or be physically abusive that he's going to be locked up.

Foucault (1979) suggests that juridico-discursive power is first and foremost a negative form of power. In other words, it is based on rejection, refusal, concealment and exclusion. It says 'no' and creates lack. Here Krishne notes the ways in which the law has helped her to become more powerful in a relationship that she previously had no power in. She is able to reject her husband's

power over her. With the help of the State's power his actions towards her are limited. Power over thus sets up a system based on 'saying no'; it tells people what they may or may not do. It is a law of prohibition that works primarily through the threat of punishment. Her husband may not physically beat her. The ability to disallow this behaviour rests on the power of the law to say no by intervening in cases of clear or extreme harm. What is beginning to be evident is that power from this perspective, would place domestic violence in a system of binary oppositions (powerful/powerless, man/woman etc.). It must be analysed in terms of these binaries and the laws and institutions that serve to maintain it.

I have called power over the arteries of power because they are the most obvious kinds of power. They exist in all the institutions in which we live and work and are the direct and obvious forms of power that lead into patriarchy. As arteries pump blood away from the heart, so power over transmits the values and norms of patriarchy and implements them in society. They carry with them assumptions about men and women and the roles that they are equipped to play in society. They can be seen to be evident in domestic violence to the extent that the masculine and violent norms of patriarchy are transmitted into the family.

Feminism has been instrumental in exposing the irregularities and unethical practices of existing power structures that have a direct influence on domestic violence. An example would be the attempt to expose sexist attitudes and stereotypes that uphold unequal power relations within the family as feminist responses to mainstream theory on domestic violence have done. The feminist responses to mainstream theory have tried to show how it is that such structures can be free from

these inequalities. For example, therapy allows for the sexist attitudes of men to be exposed and the therapist shows the abuser how it is that family power relations can become more egalitarian. This attempt at a new and gender free power has not, however, been limited to an analysis of the power relations within the family but has been extended to all institutions which impact in some way on domestic violence. Feminist theory on domestic violence has thus been useful in recognising that power relations do not simply exist within the family or the legal institutions but in all the social areas into which we enter as individuals including schools, personal relationships, and so on. Its critique has, however, remained within this juridico-discursive framework. The characteristics and manifestations of power are taken to be the same in all institutions whether we are analysing the family or the state. It is seen as the top-down, and prohibiting power discussed above. As a result, feminism has failed to problematise the system of binary oppositions upon which its analysis of power is based. It has identified the pervasiveness of patriarchy and the ways in which it manifests itself but has, as its solution, offered a power free society. In so doing it has been able to consider feminist approaches to be free from power relations. Rather, I would suggest that this simply allows the power relations within the feminist framework to go undetected. We need to look at the extent to which a feminist therapy is as powerful as other therapies and critique the assumptions and categories that it takes for granted in order to expose this power.

‘Power To’: The Capillaries Of Power

Rose states that State intervention into the family has become increasingly illegitimate due to the critiques that have arisen of the welfare State (Rose, 1990). He states that the damage that the

welfare state has on occasions done fails to justify its wide reaching intrusions into areas considered private. Although State intervention in cases of extreme violence has been demanded, this power to intervene is limited. The state is only able to intervene where there is a clear example of power over. Where there are clear arteries of power the State has at its disposal the means to combat such power. Where this is the case it can intervene to increase the power of the powerless and 'balance the playing field'. When this is not the case, it is assumed that the State is not required. What I would suggest is that feeding into the arteries of power are capillaries of power that reinforce the norms and values of patriarchy but are less easily identified. This is evident in the following extracts.

ASHA: I've tried threatening him with the police but what am I going to threatening him with the police for? I didn't call the police because he never hurt me or abused me in any way that (.) You understand what I'm trying to say =

INGRID: =Ja there's nothing =

ASHA: =So there was nothing that I could actually call the police. (.) says go ahead and call them (.) What our neighbours can do?

INGRID: Yes=

ASHA: =So that was no help for me either, but I don't know (.) I think what is gong to open his eyes, I really don't know.

ASHA: I know for a fact that she even told me that if I have to go to Court, she will stand in Court and tell them the abuse that I am suffering from my husband - that she sees what I do for my family and my husband's not interested.

INGRID: Mm.

ASHA: And there was a day when I went over there and told her - there's the house key, I've had enough. This is it. I'm not going back, but I don't want my husband to go and stand in the street and see how his wife is not there. There's the key. PLEASE give it to him.

INGRID: Ja.

ASHA: She was very angry. She was (.) that's the day she told me that no let's go to the police station and charge this man. And I said - What are we going to charge him for? There is no way, I mean what is there to charge him for. There's no way that he's doing anything illegal (.)

INGRID: Ja. Ja=

ASHA: =or even if he's smoking drugs or something, taking (.) then I can say no he's doing these things under the influence of drugs and liquor or whatever.

Here Asha expresses her frustration at having no way of improving her power over her husband given that he has not been physically violent towards her. State intervention into this case would be illegitimate as it is not a sufficiently extreme situation to warrant it. The problem is constructed not as one of violence or threat of physical harm but of self. The State has no expertise on the self and is thus helpless in this situation. Consider the following extract. This discussion took place during the group session on anger.

ASHA: You've got a very valid point, because there's something I want to add to what you have just said. As with your life I accepted the fact that's the way my husband is, but I needed help and I came here. I learned something, I think, for the first time in my life for many, many years I'm really happy. I'm not putting on a show to say I'm smiling, it's great. I am really happy. The thing is I sat down and I thought about everybody and their problems and my problems. We have a right to change our positions. There's no such thing as we cannot change it. But what we can - what we DON'T want to change it's our decision. As I said I didn't want to change my position, but I was also making my husband unhappy. Although I didn't want to change this position that I am in I know for a fact, er because I have been here also, a couple of weeks - three weeks I think I have been=

SUE: =Mm. Mm.

ASHA = and I've become more like the person I used to be before I married him, and I can see my husband is happy as well. It's making me happy and it's making my children happy as well. So I think=

MARY: I've found the same thing as well

ASHA: Yes. And what you actually - what I've actually learned is that I don't want to change my situation, but I was making it more of a problem than helping it. And by me showing them that I am happy, whole altogether, actually happy, really meaning it, I am happy, my husband is happy and my children are happy. **So I mean I am human. There are going to be times when I'm going to feel I need help again and I need this help, so we need to be here so, because we need**

this. I mean, I've learned, I know it's only about three or four times that we've been here but that's the kind of help I got already. So maybe by the end of the session I maybe even happier. So you have very point.

MARY: It's strange. You moved through the (.) I mean it's eventually you get to a point where you just can't cry about it anymore. You have no more tears=

ASHA: =and then what you actually, what I weighed out, the good sides of our marriage, what we have gained out of it and you know like I put myself in your situation. You have a terrible situation. Well like your husband how he has. My husband put me through emotionally. But like I say you asked for help early. **Hopefully you will be able to understand your husband how I am learning.** I think is the second stage now that I'm learning. **From the psychologist I learned to find my mistakes. From here I've learned to be happy and I've learned that if want to change something I can change it, but if I don't want to change it I've got to make, MAKE it work for us.**

JANE: Ja. Ja.

ASHA: And I think it's better. We living in much=

JANE: =The decision really is yours=

ASHA: It's is. It's mine.

JANE: =and it's amazing how once you've made the decision it's such a relief almost.

ASHA: Yes. It's nice. It's a nice feeling. So Mary is right to have that problem. Think about that. And she's got help at an earlier stage. I refused help until 13 years later.

JANE: Mm. Mm.

ASHA: So she's quite right.

((Child screaming))

SUE: They think violence is a (.) method of problem solving. Many of them feel that that's the way to solve the problem because they don't know how else to do it. Do you find that?

KRISHNE: I do, because my husband is unable to talk. He feels like he must be violent, you know, to get the message across. And um it's very confusing, because er even though he's violent he's when he's drunk he wants to talk about everything. But when he's sober he's just really quiet. I mean as much as I try to talk, he's just quiet. Like um everyone around us, our neighbours, they all feel like he's such a saint, because you don't hear him shouting or something and I sort of get these temper tantrums and I start to scream at him, so everyone says - oh because she's shouting and screaming and everything and she's=

What is interesting about this extract is the way that it progresses. The previous week, Asha had been expressing her disillusionment with her relationship and doubting that she could continue in it. Here she returns to the advice of her previous psychologist and she changes herself and her attitude to the relationship. She learns to manage her relationship not through obtaining increased power over her husband as this not really possible given that there is no blatant form of abuse. Rather, through her encounter with psychology she learns that she can change her husband through changing herself. It is she who has the *power to* alter the mood in the family through the

way in which she conducts herself. In this way the cycle is reproduced in which she becomes increasingly self-monitoring. She also monitors the kinds of changes that occur in the family as she alters her self. Through psychology, she learns to rely less on power over. She no longer acts violently or aggressively. Rather she monitors herself and makes changes in order to affect the whole family. The woman is once again responsible for the 'emotional housework' (Wilbraham, 1997). She is taught the appropriate ways for her to exercise power and this is through her own self management. In addition, due to the psychologisation of the problem, that is, its description in terms of the self, the inappropriateness of the power over that the women's husbands' use is identified. This is not the correct way to deal with problems. Rather they should be dealt with through self-monitoring and self-management. Their husbands have failed to reach the psychological norm as they have not constructed problems in terms of the self and have therefore failed to use the appropriate methods (power to) to change the situation.

Power to is, therefore, constructed as the appropriate way for a woman to increase her power in a relationship. In addition, however, it is also the method employed by those offering expertise on the self to encourage and mould women's power strategies. The above extract describes how, through therapy, Asha learns a better way to handle the problems she is experiencing with her husband. Psychology thus has the power to influence the choice of action that an individual takes. When she forgets that it is power to and not power over that she should be using (as she will because, as she says, she is only human) she returns to the psychologist to have these lessons reinforced.

Again, this argument is one that is related to the work of Foucault (1979) who suggests that increasingly, there is a new kind of power emerging coupled with a gradual and consistent move away from the notions of power stemming from the middle ages as described above (that is, what I have termed power over). The operation of these new forms of power “is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalisation, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus” (Foucault, 1979, p. 89). He goes on to argue that one cannot examine power’s existence from a central, sovereign point with secondary forms radiating out from this point. Rather, power is a force that is “local and unstable” (p. 93). Rather than being an institution or a structure, power is produced from one moment to the next and it comes from everywhere. It is “the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies” (Foucault, 1979, p. 93).

Power is thus not something that someone has as would be the case in power over, but rather is something that is exercised through the interplay of unequal, dynamic relations. In addition, power relations are evident in all relations and are the conditions of division and inequality. They are not therefore prohibitive but are rather productive. It has already been shown that they are

able to produce emotional work as women's work. In this way, power can be said to come from below. There exists no binary opposition between the rulers and the ruled. Rather than the power relations in a family being a reflection of the power relations that exist in society, they are the basis for social inequality as a whole. These small scale inequalities are, however, ambiguous. Women are given a degree of power in that they are able to manage families. Giving power at this level ensures, however, that it can be withheld at a grand level. Large scale domination can be explained as an effect of these smaller scale inequalities and is sustained by them. This makes the feminist analysis of power somewhat problematic. As I have argued previously, there is a need to consider the large scale domination of women by men. However, if such large scale domination is maintained by smaller scale power relations such as those in the family, the feminist goal of questioning gender inequality in the family would be vital. Its attempts to replace these unequal relations with egalitarian ones is somewhat more problematic if we accept that power is everywhere and is inescapable. In counselling men and women who are in abusive relationships we would, in addition to this critique of the power inequality in society, require a critique of the power inequality in the therapeutic relationship and the history behind our demands for change. We need to consider what it is that we are assuming to be true of men and women and where these assumptions have developed from.

Like the feminist notion of power, Foucault's notion of power sees it as being based on the ultimate achievement of a set of aims and objectives. These aims and objectives needn't, however, arise from the choice of someone with that power. Rather, power is manifested as a set of tactics that, through propagating one another, find support in other areas. The aims are thus

clear, but it is not possible to say that they are the aims put forward by any one person. No one person tells women that they need to adjust their selves in order to increase their power in relationships. Linked to this, resistance doesn't take the form of single revolutionary movements as seen in feminism but rather, there are multiple points of resistance within this power network. She resists her husband's power by refusing to be unhappy and by learning how to make the relationship work. This gives an explanation of the existence of multiple Feminisms which, as I have attempted to show in the discussion of binary oppositions, operate within the existing power framework which has a specific historical construction. So what then of women's systematic oppression? Foucault suggests that it is more likely that there are ever changing points of resistance which create divisions that are dynamic and fluid both within individuals and between groups. It is this kind of oppression that is more likely than large scale binary divisions. Rather than consider what form of power is the most likely, I am concerned here with a consideration of how these two notions of power are mutually reinforcing and the different ways in which power operates when dealing with domestic violence specifically.

Thus psychology's power to construct the subjectivities of its clients does not come from a sovereign authority or from a clearly identifiable place in our society. It comes from the power that it has in the interactions between people. Women are constructed as the member of the family responsible for doing the emotional labour through the interactions between people in support groups and the contact people have with discourses on the self. These discourses do not, however, contradict our social norms, as has been suggested in earlier chapters. Rather they act to reinforce existing norms by giving people choices within these values and constructing them as

free, autonomous individuals. In this way, these ‘capillaries’ of power can be seen to feed into the arteries of power. It is the capillaries that make the existence of arteries possible. They construct people to understand themselves in particular ways that justify the existence of institutions to reinforce this construction. For example, by constructing men and women as having different roles in the relationship and by constructing emotional work as women’s work, structures, such as support groups, can be set up that target women as their clients without causing controversy. This appears both natural and unproblematic as, it is women to whom these services would naturally appeal.

Conclusion

What would be required then would be a theoretical perspective that allows us to be critical of the very categories on which our understanding of the phenomenon is based. Here the transmission of the ‘technologies of the self’ relies heavily on the category ‘women’. Riley (1988) claims that the category ‘women’ is historically constructed relative to other categories which themselves also fluctuate. “‘Women’ is a volatile collectively in which female persons can be very differently positioned, so that the apparent continuity of the subject ‘women’ isn’t to be relied on” (p. 2) These are ideas which initially appear contradictory to the aims of feminism. If we want to produce a feminist critique of the ways in which women are seen as being responsible for ‘emotional housework’ in a relationship we need to argue that this is simply a myth about women. It is not the notion that women exist that is problematic, but the stereotypes associated with it that allow for unequal power relations within relationships. Riley (1988) continues by stating that “...Yet it must be emphasised that these instabilities of the category are the *sine qua*

non of feminism, which would otherwise be lost for an object, despoiled of a fight, and, in short, without much life” (1988, p. 2). This does explain the feminist resistance to the poststructuralist movement in psychology. She goes on to argue, however that feminists can safely welcome the inconsistency of the category ‘women’. She makes the bold statement that there are no women and that all gender categories must be looked on critically. It is this scrutiny that is the appropriate subject matter for feminism. She cautions, however, that our queries into our sexual categorisation should not ride roughshod over the harshness of our lived gender. It is this point which I wish to emphasise. Feminist theory is useful in its analysis of gender the way it has been constructed in our society, as it is this gender which has been the basis for policy, and other social practices which subordinate the interests of ‘women’ to those of ‘men’. As in the above analysis, the notion women can be considered very real in that it allows psychology to address ‘women’ as a group of people in a different way to the ways in which men are addressed. There is, therefore, use in treating women as an existing and real category in analysing the ways in which it has been used to achieve very particular ends in our society. What is lacking on the whole from the feminist analysis of domestic violence, however, is an analysis of the artificiality of these constructions. Ultimately, a feminist reading of domestic violence and its construction in psychological terms should aim for the poststructuralist goal of a post-gendered identity.

Riley suggests that “The precise specifying of ‘women’ for feminism might well mean occasionally forgetting them - or remembering them more accurately by refusing to enter into the terms of some public invocation. At times feminism might have nothing to say on the subject of ‘women’ - when their excessive identification would swallow any opposition, engulfing it

hopelessly” (1988, p. 4). She thus sees a new feminism, one that is reflexive, and critical of the gender categories that we take for granted. She suggests that there are not only two options for feminism, namely a realism that tolerates no uncertainty surrounding the category women, and a deconstructionist theory that has no political aims. Rather we can use the category ‘women’ with an awareness of its historical construction at times when its use would further benefit our political goals. It should be the place of feminism to debate such aspects of categorisation. It is this point which needs to be reinforced in the way psychological discourses address women. It is a category that can be used to the benefit of its subjects. It is also a category that can be seen as historically constructed to serve ideological goals. The above analysis shows the role of psychology in reproducing a gendered subjectivity that ensures the effective permeation of psychological norms into society.

To demonstrate the fluidity of the category of ‘women’ Riley (1988) traces its history over time. She notes how it has become increasingly sexualised and how the development of the social sciences have resulted in the modern notion of ‘women’ through their studies. She suggests that “it was not so much that women were omitted, as that they were too thoroughly included in an asymmetrical manner” (Riley, 1988, p. 15). This is clear in considering the ways in which psychological discourses on domestic violence have addressed women, to a great extent but in a manner that awards them a different role in the relationship to men. Through therapy, women could, for example be encouraged to become active in examining, rejecting or redefining these constructions of ‘women’. Foucault claimed that we should aim to dissipate our identities rather than to uncover their roots. The question that remains is what can feminism do with this kind of a

subjectivity? The feminist fear that this fluidity in subjectivity would result in a post-gendered being which would dilute the feminist aims and strengthen the powers of those that subordinate women is a realistic one but it is not the only possibility. A recognition of the historical nature of gender is unlikely to melt away gender divisions or antagonisms. The most feminism could hope for is a temporary and brief understanding of domestic violence with a critical awareness of the assumptions that underlie this understanding.

The question that feminists should welcome then is how it is that people come over time to be collected under the banner of 'men' and 'women'? Riley (1988) argues convincingly that the aim should not be to validate these categories, nor to entirely refute them but rather to demonstrate their temporality and the manner in which they have been defined historically and in relation to other categories. The author is thus not calling for a new feminism without 'women' but suggests that there are valuable ways in which the category women has been employed (for example in the development of cervical cancer treatments). Feminists should, however, maintain an awareness of the instability of this category.

Along a similar line, Haraway (1990) denies that we need a unified experience in order to rally for women. Rather than our politics being based on a notion of the innocent subject under a hierarchy of oppressions with a moral superiority and a closeness to nature, we should base our politics on the realisation that we are fully implicated in the world. This is compatible with the Foucauldian notion of the body as an effect. That is, the female body becomes so only under a

particular 'gaze'. There is no essential characteristic of a woman's body that precedes her being grouped with other 'women'.

Thus, whilst the category 'women' should not be entirely disregarded, we must remain aware that a self-representing or independent femininity remains an ideal. The increasing sexualisation of women's bodies is rooted in a language that has become indoctrinated. One could suggest (in a moment of extremity) that feminism will eventually fade with the realisation of the post-gendered subjectivity but, this is not, from my perspective, always desirable and there are times when we will want to maintain the category 'women'. I suggest rather that we must seek to break this bond of binary opposition by locating our debates and struggles as feminists in the area of social and personal identity in an attempt to uncover the constructed nature of such an identity. This could allow for the potential undoing of these identities as opposed to their reversal. At worst the category could be minimised and women could become less saturated in their sex and could at times distance themselves from the category whilst at other times identifying with it. As Riley (1989) states, "if feminism is the voicing of 'women' from the side of 'women', then it cannot but act out the full ambiguities of the category. This reflection reduces some of the sting and mystery of feminism's ceaseless oscillations, and allows us to prophesy its next incarnations" (p. 112).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This thesis develops the argument by Rose (1985) that social misconduct has increasingly been explained in psychological terms. This psychologisation of social misconduct, of which domestic violence is an example, is referred to in this thesis as the psy-complex. The psy-complex rests on a very specific understanding of the subject of psychology and this understanding is evident in the discourses of domestic violence. The self as constructed through the literature on domestic violence is the rational, autonomous individual who is responsible for his/her own decisions and choices. We are constructed as ‘psychological entrepreneurs’ that work on our selves and manage them of our own free will. This understanding of the self has been seen as natural rather than historically constructed and as a result it has escaped scrutiny and critique.

An analysis of the subjectivity that psychological theories of domestic violence assumes reveals it to be a gendered construction. In therapeutic encounters, women are assigned a specific role in the family as the managers of the selves of the family. The psy-complex therefore has two effects. It is firstly capable of making people see their deviant behaviour in psychological terms which leads them to work on their selves should they perceive them to be lacking. More than this, however, it assigns women the role of monitoring the members of the family and ensuring that the selves of all members are in keeping with the psychological norm. The transmission of the values of psychology into the family is constructed as ‘womens work’. As a result, it is she who instils in family members the incitement to discourse. In other words, when a member of the

family perceives himself/herself to be behaving in a manner that deviates from the norm, it is the wife and mother who he/she confesses to.

Power in domestic violence can be said to exist at two levels. The first and most obvious form of power is power over. This is compatible with the feminist understanding of power and is easily identifiable. This is a form of power that requires ongoing scrutiny as domestic violence is a clear example of this power over. There are, however, other forms of power that feminism has failed to acknowledge given its focus on the systematic inequalities between men and women. This is what I have termed power to. Power to refers to the power of the psy-complex. The psychologisation of deviant behaviour such as violence means that people are encouraged to monitor and govern themselves. Women are 'taught' through psychological discourses that power to is the appropriate method for the management of their problems. In other words they learn that if they want to change conditions within their marriages, they must adjust themselves rather than demanding changes from others. They must work on their own subjectivity to achieve happy relationships. As we have seen, however, this message is especially strong for women as they are the ones who are expected to work on the selves of all family members.

For a more critical theory and practise, what is required is a critique of the ways in which psychological discourses have unquestioningly accepted the category women. Discourses are able to address women without being considered political as the roles for women and men are considered natural rather than historically constructed. A goal of feminism could be a deconstruction of the gender categories and the way that they allow the psy-complex to address

men and women differentially.

In this way we see that the notion of power over and power to are both notions that can be accepted by feminist theory. An analysis of the capillaries of power does not require us to dismiss systematic power differences between men and women. Rather we can choose when it serves feminist agendas to use the category women and when it would best serve our purposes to reveal its constructed nature.

Critiques Of This Thesis

General Process Criticisms

Brydon-Miller (1997) states that traditionally we have been told that “you can’t mix your politics and your psychology”. From a feminist perspective, it is not only impossible to separate politics and psychology but it is undesirable. Research can and should, therefore, be done for political reasons. This does not mean, however, that this is an easy approach to take. In the conclusion of this thesis I suggest that therapy could benefit from a critique of the ways in which it is instrumental in the transmission of the psy-complex and though this its construction of a gendered subjectivity. This is a strong political belief of mine. Given that I was studying the group that I was also facilitating, I did not raise such criticisms as I felt that it may jeopardise the quality of the data that I obtained. I was on the whole very quiet during the groups in my efforts to get at the women's understandings of their experiences. In this sense I could be criticised for withholding critiques that could have helped women to question their roles in the family. I was torn between the desire to confront them on this and challenge their accepted subjectivity, and the

need to obtain my data. My silence on this topic may have meant that I did not offer all that I could have to the women in the group as they could have benefited from being challenged on their understandings of subjectivity. This could, however, be justified on the basis that having obtained this data, the research can be used to influence therapeutic skills and psychological discourse on a broader level. This leads me to the second challenge of the research.

What Happens To This Research?

If the critique of subjectivity was not offered, then this research would have to be put to practical use for women. It is not sufficient for it to remain in the form of a masters thesis. More than this, the thesis will have to be published in a form and place that makes it accessible to women and ensures that they derive benefit from it; either directly or indirectly through their contact with therapy. Leaving the thesis in a theoretical and somewhat abstract form denies women access to it. This is a critique that feminists have raised against much mainstream theory. Ramazanoglu (1993) relates her early experiences of the emergence of postmodernism into women's groups. She writes:

I arrived late at a women's meeting towards the end of the annual conference of the British Sociological Association a few years ago, to find some women expressing indignation at finding session after session of the conference dominated by men talking in terms of 'postmodernism'. These women said they felt silenced, intimidated, excluded, put down and angry. They did not know whether 'postmodernism' was something they should take seriously, because they could not engage with a debate which made the issues inaccessible to them....the general ideas of thought which have been defined (in

various ways) as postmodernist and poststructuralist are, (however) the intellectual context of Foucault's work. Much of the work in this area has been characterised by intellectual elitism, and a level of abstraction from experience which makes it far removed from most English-speaking feminist work. This has turned discussion of the wider relevance Foucault's thought into a demanding academic specialism which has had little impact on feminism outside academic circles. In discussions of Foucault, those most sympathetic to his work tend to disappear into high terminology (Ramazanoglu, 1993, p. 1).

Although this thesis has argued the relevance of Foucault's work and, more generally, poststructuralism for feminism, the feelings she relates are ones that must be taken seriously. Given that many women have been excluded from academic institutions, this research has the potential to be of little use to them. It is therefore essential that any publication of the thesis reaches those working 'on the ground'. It is also essential that the findings be fed back to both Famsa and the women from the group so that they can air any views that they may have on the debates raised.

The Quality Of The Research

Given that qualitative research lacks a set of strict procedures or rules, it is difficult to evaluate how good a study is as no one set of evaluation criteria can be used. I have chosen to judge the quality of this research (very loosely) on a number of questions that Miles and Huberman (1984) identify as useful. Firstly, on the basis of the methodology, one must ask whether the study is replicable. Have researcher biases been identified and would another researcher be able to carry

out the same study and reach similar conclusions? Secondly, is the setting, time scale, design, questions posed, and method of analysis appropriate for the aims and objectives of the research? Does the research make sense? Good research findings should be coherent and rival hypotheses should have been considered. In assessing the transferability of the study, one could ask whether it describes the sample adequately and whether the scope and boundaries of the research are identified. Can the theory be transferred to other studies and have the findings been tested in other studies? What these questions suggest is that good qualitative research should have practical usefulness. One could, therefore, ask how much of the study is practically useful and what actions should come of the research. It should to some extent solve a problem. Through the research process, these questions have been posed and asked in order to ensure that the study meet the requirements of 'good' research.

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