

Is Woman the Future of Man?

An Exploration of the Potential of Women in the Knowledge Economy and of the Problem of Gender Inequality in the Workplace

Shelley Reciniello

Abstract

The knowledge economy of the twenty-first century has need of the particular talents women possess to fulfil its promise. Although women make up half of the workers in the developed world, they remain in the minority in executive positions that could have the influence and contribution of the female perspective. The gender inequality that persists in organisations continues to create working environments where women are not able to make a differential contribution. The author has focused on research and consulting projects with financial institutions which provide an example of polarised gender dynamics resistant to change. The difficulties of the present-day economy and recent financial collapse point to a one-sidedness in our culture that harms both men and women. Drawing from contemporary and modern psychoanalytic theories, the importance of culture on the psychology of gender is emphasised. The author presents that certain aspects of each gender are idealised and others are split off and projected according to cultural prescriptions/proscriptions creating a stasis of forced separation. The result is that men dominate organisations and women struggle for ways to participate. And when they focus on fitting in, women lose their voices and unique perspectives. The author argues for the importance of helping women to make more of a contribution to work and the world we live in. Without the equal contribution of women, half of all knowledge is lost.

Key words: gender inequality, influence of culture, knowledge economy, forced separation, splitting, reaction formation, identification, projection, Wall Street, financial organisations, contemporary psychoanalysis, relational theory, female perspective.

*Address for correspondence: Dr Shelley Reciniello, SRA Consultations, 235 West 48th Street, Suite 34E, New York, NY 10036. Email: SRAsnelle@aol.com, SR@sraconsultations.com

INTRODUCTION

Peter Drucker was arguably the most popular management guru of the twentieth century. Prolific and respected, he has given us detailed accounts of modern economic systems, and his explanations of our transition into a post-capitalist society have been prescient preparation for a knowledge economy wherein knowledge would replace capital as our economic resource. But, as a man of logic, he had assumed that rationality would guide organisations to the right managerial behaviour necessary for such an economy once they had defined their strategic objectives. According to Kanter,

This perspective made him less attuned to the judgment-distorting role of biases and stereotypes, identity politics, lingering tribalism, power-seeking, and pure greed. Although he applauded women who were effective non-profit leaders, he downplayed the struggles of women and minorities for admission to leadership ranks in business and government and failed to see that elites often preferred social similarity over talent. (2009, p. 68)

The promise of Drucker's (1992, 1993) knowledge economy in the twenty-first century – and I am using the knowledge economy as a metaphor for contemporary organisations and the strategic challenges they face – has been threatened by a scarcity of talent, the challenges of integrating a diverse and multi-cultural workforce, and the need for an awareness of the increased moral responsibility inherent in the globalised consequences of decisions and actions. Oddly enough, it appears that women are ideally poised to become the saviours of the knowledge society.

Regarding talent, for example, it has become increasingly obvious to business and industry that women represent a barely tapped resource. In the US and Europe alone, the majority of university graduates are women. In addition, half of the workforce in the developed world is made up of women and the numbers are steadily increasing. And yet, organisations continue to grapple with how to attract female talent, maintain a vigorous and flowing pipeline, and promote and integrate women into top executive positions. Most frustrating is the inability to keep talented candidates in the pipeline long enough to reach executive heights. A related problem, even more daunting and certainly more costly, is also keeping those few women who have already made it to the top from leaving.

Regarding qualities that Drucker deemed necessary for the knowledge worker to possess, the particular assets women offer are also, ironically, in keeping with Drucker's vision of the future. According to Ann Mettler (2007), Executive Director of the Lisbon Council,

women of the twenty-first century 'have been aided by an economic model that relies less on hard physical labor and plays to their innate strengths – flexibility and endurance or service orientation and the ability to multi-task in diverse, professional environments' (p. 1). Recent research concludes that women tend to be more consensus minded, participative and democratic in leadership style, as opposed to a more autocratic male style, team oriented in project fulfilment, better overall at reading human visual cues and interpreting the feelings of others, more effective at maintaining relationships and networks, and they prefer to place an emphasis on cooperative as opposed to competitive ventures (Carli and Eagley, 2007; Gurian and Annis, 2008; Pinker, 2008). In a capitalist society, these qualities have assumed a less valuable status than the traditional male competitive and directive style of doing business, but within a knowledge economy, the emphasis is less on dominance and controlling assets, and more on equality and sharing resources. In a descriptive example of knowledge work, authors Arthur, Defillippi and Lindsay (2008) explain: 'When people share money, they can each have only part of the original amount. However, when people share knowledge, they can each have it all' (p. 371). Within the vast talent pipeline of women, there appear to be the requisite skills and abilities needed by the knowledge worker to be successful in a globalised, multi-cultured workplace.

Lastly, women seem to possess more of the contextual morality that Drucker (1993) considers a non-negotiable trait of the 'men of knowledge'. As Gilligan (1982) has explained, the relational nature of women's morality requires a judgment style that is relentlessly contextual. Whereas, if the male moral dilemma is focused more on legality – what is allowed and what is not – which can easily lead to what one can get away with, it will and it has, as the recent financial crisis has demonstrated, come up lacking in a globalised economy of inter-related actions and consequences. A more relational approach is required. Becoming a 'citizen of the world', according to Drucker (1993, p. 214), with the responsibility and obligations that this implies, is also a non-negotiable characteristic of the knowledge worker.¹

Despite these attributes and the urgency of the new age that is upon us, women have not risen to the top of business and industry as the strength of their overall pipeline would have predicted. Why?

Despite being in possession of qualities that would make them ideal ambassadors of a worldwide knowledge economy, with only fifteen women as CEO's of Fortune 500 companies and another twenty-eight as CEO's of Fortune 1000 companies, it is obvious that

women are seldom seated at the tables where their different perspectives could make a contribution to the strategy, direction, and innovation of an organisation. Why?

Why has the female perspective not been equally represented, in particular, in the world's financial institutions? Would it have made a difference in the vast economic crisis the world is now facing?

In comparing stock prices of companies on the French CAC during the crisis, Ferrary (2009) concluded that companies with more women on their management teams suffered less loss. The Catalyst Organization (Giscombe, 2007) has long touted the rewards that organisations enjoy who have incorporated what women have to offer. They report that 'companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams had a return on equity that was 35% higher than that of companies with the lowest representation of women at the top', and 'a total return to shareholders that was 34% higher' (p. 385).

How can we identify the factors that work together to continue a male-dominated business model? How can we explain what forces are operative in making the model so resistant to collaboration with a female point of view? Or is the problem that the female point of view has not been adequately articulated or is simply not available?

Before attempting to address these questions, I wish to acknowledge that any discussion of such issues creates controversies and sensitivities among men and women so an effort is being made to approach the issues from a common sense point of view, and organise around the following basic assumptions:

1. Women are different from men; their biology, their evolutionary charges, their acculturation as the dominated sex, and the impact of the resulting constraints on their education, privilege, freedom, and experience would naturally result in a knowledge and understanding of the world that would differ markedly from the experience of men.
2. In the community of women, there is great diversity among women; particularly at either end of the bell curve, there are unique variations of biology and/or experience that would create different impressions/expressions of being in the world and predispose them to more or less comfort with a male way of being and doing things.
3. In addition, in the community of men, there is also great diversity. Many male bosses, subordinates, co-workers, husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers have also been perplexed and dismayed by the minimal results of their efforts to create equality for women in the workplace.

This paper will explore these issues by drawing on research and theories from a variety of fields and will offer insights from the psychoanalytic tradition; in particular, contemporary and relational psychoanalytic theories. I have chosen to focus on my thirty years experience of consulting and research with financial institutions which have proved to be an example of gender dynamics uniquely resistant to change. In the US, the large investment banks have had active diversity departments for many years and they still have not substantially increased the number of female department heads, or impacted the low percentage of females on executive and corporate boards or executive committees. The *Wall Street Journal* (2011a, March 29) reported that among twenty investment banks, just under 8% of the senior bankers are women: 'Investment banks make a great play of their equal opportunities and gender diversity agenda, but the talk has yet to filter through into hard reality' (p. 1). The banks have also been unable to eliminate a continuing spate of lawsuits by women for harassment and/or discriminatory working conditions (Smith Barney's infamous 'Boom-Boom Room' scandal and lawsuit for sexual discrimination and harassment, 1996; Morgan Stanley's settlement of \$54 million for sex discrimination, 2004; Morgan Stanley's settlement of \$46 million for sexual discrimination, 2007; Goldman Sachs's ongoing gender bias lawsuit citing 'outdated corporate culture, run by, and catering to men', with allegations of sexual harassment, 2010). The current crisis within the financial industry also makes this industry particularly appropriate for a discussion of the gender equality that is essential for a successful transition to a knowledge economy.

WOMEN ON WALL STREET

In 1982, I began providing contractual psychological services to several prominent Wall Street companies as a consultant, counsellor, and coach. In those early days, women professional employees were a rarity in finance and so were female psychological consultants. Because there were so few women, most of the people I initially interacted with were men, and I came to understand them and their fast-paced, successful, big boys club, and I came to be a trusted advisor. They confided in me about their fears, their ambitions, their families and their relationships, and their thoughts about the women they worked with.

These many years later, I have often reflected upon why they trusted me. Was it because I was so well analytically trained that they saw only the blank slate that would not judge them? Was it because

the company imprimatur carried such weight that I was beyond doubt and scrutiny? Or was the need so great for a connection, a partner, a witness to their moments of quiet desperation and insecurity? And was it the fact that I was a woman that made me unimportant enough, familiar enough, compassionate and safe enough to trust with their secrets of vulnerability? Probably all of these.

The women who were growing slowly in numbers and upwards also came to see me. I think of those years as having shared a parallel process with them in the indoctrination of Wall Street, a baptism by fire in a male-dominated industry. Some memories are vaguely humorous like the day two women managers and I tried to find a ladies room near the boardroom and had to be sent several floors down to the nearest one. Others are not at all funny but shame-based and disturbing. My regional director in Chicago, who happened to be a very accomplished female clinician, had had the audacity to conduct a meeting with senior management wearing a trouser suit. I was berated for this, and had the unhappy task of explaining the problem to her while trying to make light of the bias in the objection that was both about her being a woman and being black.

I studied the women of Wall Street consciously and unconsciously. I listened to how they incorporated the favourite male expressions *du jour* into their conversations: 'ball's in your court', 'put the pedal to the metal', 'forget the low-hanging fruit', and several more colourful ones. I learned about dirndl skirts, pearls, sensible shoes, little bowties, and well-kept hair. Unconsciously, we understood and did not speak of our complicity to protect the men from our femininity, our complicatedness, and our distraction.

I was lucky because I had my training and clinical focus as a shield. I also had my own company, several client companies, and a staff that focused on my vision. Additionally, I underwent endless hours of analytic supervision that helped to keep me conscious. The women of these financial institutions, for the most part, had nothing to challenge their indoctrination. They were ambitious and wanted professional careers; they had to accommodate, acclimate, to be absorbed into the blue and gray, muted backdrop of their environment. They were talented quick studies who learned to mimic manner, style, behaviour, appearance, interests, pursuits, goals, and, sometimes, dreams.

I watched with each passing year as they gave up pieces of themselves. Sometimes these pieces were not merely lost but had never been fully developed into existence. And herein lies the tragedy and the point: knowledge, and a viewpoint, and a perspective were being lost.

Wall Street and almost all businesses were not invented by women. Women were not there at the beginning to contribute to the formation of the field, the creation of capital markets, the building of the skyscrapers that would hold them. So men set the structure, the rules, the style, and the tone. Why wouldn't they recreate what was familiar to them – the playing field, the locker room, the fraternity, and the battleground? And when women did arrive on the scene, finally in a capacity that was not to be solely in support of, or subordinate to men, but to make their contribution, it was not to be. They were consciously and unconsciously constrained by convention, fear, and domination. They were smart and savvy, and copied the only game in town and played it as if it were their own. Women did not just lose a voice, they lost sight, imagination, and they lost what they could have brought to the table that would be uniquely their own – the female point of view.

Psychological and political dynamics conspire to create this outcome. In addressing the inhibitions women face in the workplace, Person (1982) sees it as a dual process. Part of what thwarts the success of women is social and political – discrimination, harassment, and sexism in all their subtle forms. But parts of it are the internal psychological conflicts that exist. In addition, some of these internal conflicts can be created by, or intensified by, these external conflicts. And, of course, the internal/external conflicts interact, and sometimes cause women to react in less than optimal ways which serve, in turn, to inadvertently strengthen the external barriers (Reciniello, 1999).

That is why the external requirement that women adjust their styles to accommodate males is a slippery slope that begins a host of collisions with internal predispositions and this cultural requirement has not been limited to finance. Catalyst (2000) surveyed women in senior management in the US, Canada, and UK and found that the top strategies women listed for advancement were 'consistently exceed performance expectations and develop a style with which male managers are comfortable'. Because women are not all alike, the specifics of that accommodating style will be different. Women at one end of the spectrum may be so intimidated by a powerful male style, that they resist and play the role of sister, mother, female friend, and accept the professional consequences that come with being perceived as more traditionally female in a world that only values maleness.

Women at the other end of the continuum may employ strategies to copy and 'improve' upon the male agentic style. For some of the women I have known, this has included a variety of behaviours that are classic examples of identifying with the aggressor, such as: acting

tough, hiding feelings, yelling at people, dressing less femininely, not carrying a purse, cursing, drinking, telling off-colour jokes, talking or playing sports, laughing at inappropriate stories, criticising other women. I have known women to minimise maternity leave to two weeks, to leave infants for months at a time for business travel, and to rush back to the office while still partially anaesthetised from a breast biopsy. For them, idealisation/identification with the men was a reaction formation against the envy and rage at the inequality and lost opportunities they experience and against their guilt for the wish to surpass them in maleness. This strategy was also a defensive attempt to protect them from the underlying male rage at their presence and provocation.

Elsewhere (Reciniello, 1999), I have written more about the internal conflicts of envy and guilt that plague professional women in traditionally male organisations in finance and technology, and the strategies that they employ to rid themselves of the psychic discomfort. The male advantage in the workplace evokes the only real penis envy that modern women can accept as stated by Clara Thompson,

The woman envies the greater freedom of the man, his greater opportunities and his relative lack of conflict about his fundamental drives. The penis as a symbol of aggression stands for the freedom to be, to force one's way, to get what ones wants. These are the characteristics which a woman envies in a man (1942, p. 334).

The guilt women experience comes from many sources, guilt at leaving mother, devaluing mother, being an Oedipal winner, leaving children at home, surpassing a spouse in success and financial reward, etc. The defensive strategies include denying success, task-driven good girl behaviour, perfectionism, self-sabotage, and the previously discussed identification with the aggressor, 'becoming male' behaviour (Reciniello, 1999).

Initially, the becoming male strategy works, but because of my longevity at these companies, I have watched these strategies eventually come to hurt most of these women professionally. After a certain point in their careers, their alpha male styles began to be criticised by male colleagues and subordinates who complained to the CEO or Board members. The double bind was to prove they were tough enough to do business on this level, to show that they were more male than the males, to make the point, and at the same time, to not violate some basic standards of being a woman which meant being feminine, warm, and likeable. An untenable position that grew more so, as these women came to head departments and have many former male colleagues working for them. The media has

often chronicled of how the fall of one of these women would be met with glee by the men who had felt castrated and bested by them.

However, the majority of the women in financial institutions have not chosen to be extreme at either end. They have kept their heads down and worked hard. They put in long hours, met deadlines, managed budgets, executed programs, and completed projects. They were collaborative, strong players, loyal corporate citizens, and many were promoted and compensated well. That their compensation was often not equal to that of their male colleagues, that they were deprived of opportunities for growth, that their promotions were more scarce, and that only a very, very few ever rose to senior line positions, as opposed to staff positions, is a matter of record.

WOMEN VS THE WALL

Most of the women in corporations, with very few exceptions, no matter where they may fall on this continuum of style strategies, or where they may work on a continuum of industries from more to less male governed, to a great extent, have been viewing their work and their achievements on male terms, on what they have learned of the male perspective. That is why research that focuses on similarities and differences between male and female senior managers in traditionally male businesses will prove nothing. The sample of women's style is not pure. Most women in upper levels would not be there if they had done things their own way. What they have had to do was to be less of themselves and become more acceptable to 'the other'.

De Beauvoir (1952) wrote: 'Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men. They describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth' (p. 133). The implications of this for women are quite simple: male is the default position. When women come to work in offices where they are not of the majority in power, they begin to look over their shoulders to see 'how "they" are doing it', 'what "they" would think of it', and so on. Even young women, who have been educated in more gender-neutral universities, report that they start to second guess themselves in these environments. That is why many choose not to even enter the pipeline.

In relation to her research of how women poets and visual artists are finding their own mythic images, Lauter (1984) references feminist Mary Daly's statement 'that women live on the boundaries of patriarchal culture, or that we live in two cultures at once: the dominant one and a "muted" one that is not yet entirely known even to ourselves' (p. 7). The greatest challenge facing women, is to be able

to *not* see the dominant one, and to make clear the muted one, to lift the cloud of androcentric socialisation and culture that obscures their sight, that keeps them looking over their shoulders and second guessing themselves.

There is a story that is a profound metaphor that has been told elsewhere but bears repeating in this context. Janice Yoder, the feminist psychologist, was observing how the first female West Point cadets were attempting to scale an eight foot wall without the aid of a bolster, for which they would lose points. The women watched the men run and grab hold of the top of the wall with their hands and with their upper body strength they hoisted themselves over the other side. Woman after woman tried but had to rely on the bolster because they did not have the upper body strength to pull themselves all the way up. One woman looked long and hard at the wall and ran and jumped up without the bolster and hooked her fingers over the top edge of the wall. Instead of even trying to use upper body strength, she did something strange. She walked her legs up one side until her feet went over the top and she used her legs to pull her bottom over the edge of the wall (Lorber, 1993).

This example is symbolic and significant because in order for this woman to realise that she could use her lower body strength to accomplish the task, she had to have a paradigmatic shift in thinking that rid her mind of how men were doing it. She needed to clear her vision of all limiting images so that she saw the task as something that existed between her and the wall, and relative to no man.

Only when a woman's vision is cleared of cultural and self-imposed limitations that emanate from that culture will she have access to the missing half of the human puzzle – her beliefs, her values, her goals, her style, her way of doing things. Only when a woman can free her intuitive and creative vision can she contribute her full share that speaks to why there were these two – different but equal – in the first place.

There are many other examples of women who have defied the world and struggled, often at great personal expense, to escape from a male perspective and to finally break through with their own vision/version of things. The artists and writers come most easily to mind: Virginia Woolf, Colette, George Sand, Sarah Bernhardt, Georgia O'Keeffe, Frida Kahlo, Maya Angelou, and the entrepreneurs, Anita Roddick and Oprah Winfrey. They have become symbols of what can be when women go over the wall on their own terms.

GOING OVER THE WALL

The feminist author Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) wrote, 'Men tend to move on a fairly predictable path to achievement; women transform themselves only after an awakening. And that awakening is identifiable only in hindsight' (p. 118). Carol Gilligan (2004) describes a going over the wall moment in her career that led to her influential theories of female development,

The theories of psychological development I had learned and was teaching – the theories of Freud and Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg – were all based on the assumption that man was the measure of all things human. My question was not how well can women do when measured by standards derived from studying men, [My issue with leadership models and assessments] but rather, what had been lost by leaving out women? What light do women's voices and perceptions shed on human psychology and the human condition? (p. 132).

This question led her to see her reality in a different way and inspired her to write the unique and paradigm-shifting *In a Different Voice* (1982).

Gilligan has focused on girls and women finding a voice, their own unique description of life as they see it and live it without the taint of cultural expectations. She notes that Freud called 'his women patients, "his teachers" ' and that he helped them to recover their voices lost in dissociation to trauma (2004, p. 133). She has documented the loss of a unique voice in girls around ages 12 to 13. The younger girls who spoke their minds and were curious and confident existed in 'the time before the good girl sets in' (p. 134). As relational needs and societal pressures come to the fore, the good girl stops wanting to rock the boat with her own ideas and instead wants to fit in, wants to attract men, and do what her culture has prescribed for her. As Gilligan puts it 'She has given up relationship in order to have relationships, muting her voice so that "she could" be with other people' (p. 135).

Chodorow's unique theories of feminism and psychoanalysis were born when she was tackling Freud's understanding of women. She was struck by the early women analysts 'in a field that was more welcoming than almost any other but at the same time put at its core a masculine norm that devalued them' (2004, p. 101). Chodorow (1994) saw that in early analytic theory women only existed as objects in the male psyche, and the experiences and images of women in the male mind became truth. When Freud tried to defend his position against his early critics, he claimed that from the beginning of time, men had viewed women the same way and so it must be true (p. 28). The work

of the early female analysts, whom he cited to confirm his theories about women, were themselves his analysands. Tolpin (2004) states, 'They unquestioningly corroborated him as they struggled with their own intensified needs for corroboration . . . When they embraced Freud, his idealized theory, "inexact" as it was, and his idealized goals to prove himself, became their own theory and their own goals' (p. 182). They were like many of the women on Wall Street, indoctrinated in a male point of view that became indistinguishable from their own.

Despite indoctrination, some of the female analysts did go over the wall and did their own theorising, sometimes secretly, as described by Henriette Klein (Chodorow, 2004, p. 117) and sometimes publicly, as did Horney (1924) and later Thompson (1942), and suffered public disapproval. Person (1983) has argued that psychoanalysis had to undergo a paradigmatic shift to overcome its biased beginnings by developing 'the ability to theorize the interaction between individual psychology and the cultural milieu' (p. 643). Only then could it free 'the concept of normative femininity from the stereotypes of passivity, masochism, dependency, and narcissism' (p. 634).

Culture and its impact on gender development and gender equality are the focus of contemporary analytic theories that are particularly applicable to the problem of the continuation of a male dominated workplace and the psychological shrinking of women in such a workplace. Layton (1998) emphasises that 'gender is both a cultural and personal construct' (p. 10) and that Chodorow (1995) has also made a similar argument. Elsewhere, Chodorow (2004) explains, 'everyone is born into a culture but each person at the same time filters that culture through an individual projective and introjective prism, itself partly created by the transference prisms of parents and caregivers' (p. 120). Layton (1998) further cautions that 'these different levels of discourse [on which meaning is constructed] are not dichotomous: the cultural is psychologically constructed and the psychological is cultural' (p. 10).

The culture we live in and our immediate subcultures, school, church, corporation, community, etc., have clearly delineated qualities of what one gender looks like vs another. Layton (2007) has voiced her concern at the 'way that internalizations of sexist gender norms produces various forms of psychic pain for men and women'. She describes how in her book *Who's That Girl? Who's That Boy?* (1998), she argued for psychoanalysts to accept the poststructuralists' descriptions of 'the constricting aspects of what society posits at any given time as ideal versions of femininity and masculinity' and their thinking that 'well articulates the coercive aspect of social norms and

how they set limits on what is psychically possible' (p. 2). But she also recognises the traditional analytic emphasis on the individual, and acknowledges that the impact of culture is not so simply understood for identifications and internalisations are multi-determined. The result will be individualistic but she adds, 'At the same time, however, hierarchies of gender, race, class, and sexuality do make certain types of internalizations prevalent' (p. 2).

How does the influence of culture take place? According to Layton (2007) and Benjamin (1988), we arrive at a sense of ourselves as a 'subject' as opposed to an 'object' by what we make of our experiences with others. For Layton, these experiences can be either narcissistically wounding or reinforcing of our selfhood. Benjamin conceives of them as experiences where we are merely objects to another person's selfhood or they are experiences with others where we are affirmed for own selfhood. Layton explains, 'Social hierarchies are most psychologically damaging because they require splitting of human capacities . . . that, in health, ought to be integrated' (p. 2). For girls, the qualities that are split off are agency, autonomy, independence and for boys the split off pieces include dependency, vulnerability, and emotionality.

Layton calls the processes 'that seek to maintain the splits "normative unconscious processes," and these processes pull us to repeat affect/behavioral/cognition patterns that uphold the very social norms that cause psychic distress in the first place' (p. 3). These processes are necessary to maintain a stasis I (Reciniello, 1999) have identified in the rigidly delineated gender norms of Wall Street companies that I call 'forced separation', which appears as a polarisation 'of that which is exclusively and narrowly masculine from that which is exclusively and narrowly feminine' (p. 318). Object relations theories (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983) explain that the aspects of each gender that are split off by cultural disapproval are then protectively projected onto the other gender. For example, men on corporate playing fields and corporate battlefields, have a great fear of the vulnerability within them, and project this vulnerability along with other qualities that have been culturally recognised as female, such as passivity and dependency, onto women. Women can then projectively identify with that projection and become stereotypically and negatively feminised – passive, dependent, neurotic. Or, as discussed, women can react by identifying with the aggressor and try to fit in by 'passing' as men.

However, wherever they fall on the continuum, women are striving to create some type of connection with the men who are in power. According to analytic/relational theory (Miller, 1986, 1991),

women's desire for connectedness and relationship is an organising theme in forming a female self-concept. By accepting the projected identification and maintaining a passive stance, they protect the bonds of connection by not being threatening. By identifying with the men, they are also seeking connection by disguising the intense anger they feel toward them for their power and privilege. The irony is that this interplay of reactions creates no connection but a false and forced separation.

In between, where most of the women in male governed organisations reside, women try to appear more neutral, read the cues for acceptable female behaviour, work hard, and hope their hard work will be rewarded. They seek more reality based forms of connection which are also elusive. These women describe how they have not experienced much outward hostility or harassment, but that they continue to be excluded from the most visible and important projects despite their qualifications. Without those opportunities, where their leadership and ideas could have a platform, they will not be considered for senior line positions or for seats on the executive committee.

Chodorow (1978) looked at how children were raised in her generation, the 1950s, and arrived at a theory that incorporates how culture intervenes and the splitting begins. Layton (1998) summarises, 'Because the primary caretaker of boys and girls is a woman, a woman becomes the first object of identification. Nurture, caretaking, emotion, and dependence all become associated with females' (pp. 161–162). In order to establish their identities as males and cease identifying with their mothers, Chodorow (1989) states that for boys, 'learning what it is to be masculine comes to mean learning to be not-feminine or not womanly' (p. 109). A boy comes to value what is different and to reject what is 'not-me' (p. 110). The parts of him that are dependent, vulnerable, and passive, the secret 'not-me' that lies hidden in his unconscious, must be projected onto women. This will be exaggerated whenever he is threatened, and he is threatened all his life by the male world, where everyone is hiding the same secret so the constant proving of manhood becomes a male preoccupation.

The psychic focus for men in clinical and organisational settings appears to be on their tenuous membership in the world of men. Missing fathers, in actuality or in experience, have been epidemic in most cultures. Fathers who did not father, fathers who humiliated them, competed with them, who did not hold them or mould them, who left them longing for a male core, male connection, for male kindness, for an acceptable way to integrate the two parts of themselves. Layton (1998) refers to Kaftal 'that the lack of a nurturant father and the projection of the boy's dependency and the need for

nurturance onto the female lead to misogynistic envy of women, rivalry and hostility towards men, and driven repeated enactments of (failed) separation via acts that require heroic isolation' (p. 162).

The male group at work becomes the father 'holding environment'. Women in business get in the way of men's pursuit of maleness, their bonding, competing, accomplishing. Having women around is unsettling because connection with them is a different pursuit, that of mother and relationship, of vulnerability, and tenderness that must remain private and secret. At the same time, women function in the workplace as the mother 'holding environment'. Layton (2007) writes 'cultural hierarchies enforce splitting and splitting requires that we keep near what we split off' (p. 4). If Layton is right and we split off pieces of ourselves that do not fit in, and in order to constantly reinforce what 'we are' vs 'what we are not', we must keep the other who holds the 'what we are not', our vulnerabilities, close by as a sort of psychic reference point that can quell any anxieties that may surface.

In my theory of forced separation in the workplaces where dominant male identity prevails and women seek advancement, as the women become too close in competence, it is necessary to maintain the distance by not allowing them into the higher circles of management (See *Wall Street Journal*, 2011b, June 6, 'Most Dangerous Job on Wall Street? Female Executive'). As women become more male in their style and appearance and threaten to become men, more of the superficial differences between men and women become exaggerated and we see, for example, in the US, a return to office behaviours such as going to strip clubs at lunchtime and other sexual improprieties in the workplace to reinforce the necessary distance to maintain the split. Layton (2007) states, 'Social inequalities such as sexism . . . cause wounds that split the psyche, creating shameful vulnerabilities that we defend against by wielding identity as a weapon against others' (p. 5).

In the media, the financial world is described often as narcissistic, and the employees of that world as exhibiting over-the-top examples of pathological narcissism. Layton (1998) has focused on the narcissistic injuries that result from gender inequality and states, 'I have followed those feminist relational theorists who have argued that dominant versions of femininity and masculinity are marked by pathological narcissism' (p. 14). She explains further, 'Gender inequality, located in such social practices as the sexual division of labor and the organization of the work world . . . is experienced internally as narcissistic injury' (p. 33). Drawing from Chodorow and Benjamin, she also posits that males and females will experience

different kinds of narcissism. Males will express an omnipotent grandiosity to cover their vulnerability (Layton, 2004, p. 30). As an aside, I have often speculated that the more risky and selfish manoeuvres that Wall Street perpetrated that led to the financial crisis may, in part, have been behaviours that were a reaction formation against the lingering sense of vulnerability and insecurity left from the 9/11 attacks.

Women, on the other hand, express more of a secondary narcissism which is aligned with the clouded vision and muted voice that obscures the true female perspective as discussed earlier. Women attach themselves to successful male bosses and companies and hope that their greatness will shower over them, rendering them great also. (I have also witnessed men vacillating between primary and secondary narcissism in these organisations depending on their status and recent success rate, who their bosses are, and the current stock prices of their companies.)

Every day, as a clinician and a coach, I watch women wear a veil of history as opposed to herstory. The wounds to a woman's self-esteem are so great that she struggles to cover herself up with his views, accomplishments, ways of being and knowing. I was leading a seminar of very accomplished senior women and as an icebreaker I asked them to name a woman in literature or film who served as a role model or guiding image for them. Not one woman named a woman. They named only men. When I asked them about that, they seemed not to understand the question. A few relented and named very minor female characters and a few others named actual women in politics.

Layton (2004) notes that she sometimes sees this type of woman in her clinical practice and comments that the 'relational female might be giving way to a female psyche marked by defensive autonomy' (p. 34), 'the kind of woman best suited to work in a male environment' (p. 35). But is this real? I have found in my practice that these women often appear to be operating 'in drag'. They have donned the male psychic garb and suffer their own ills of relational needs unfulfilled, and lonely, unconnected autonomy. They also have a sense of the sham they perpetuate because they are unable to go over the wall, either as a female or as a male. They remain stuck and inauthentic, distanced from the true agency of their considerable capabilities, creativity, and uniqueness.

KNOCKING DOWN THE WALL

The inspiration for this paper originally was a request for papers for a conference focusing on gender in the knowledge economy. I had

an association to the suggestion that we would come together 'in a spirit of agora'. Agora – ancient Greece – Athens – the marketplace where ideas were exchanged, where a civilization was created. The agora where respectable women could not go; agora where only citizens could meet and exchange ideas and women who were non-citizens contributed nothing. As women, exclusion and censorship will always precede us. But what does our future hold?

It is clear that there is no simple solution to how women can exert a proper influence in business and in the world in general. A variety of theories, classical, postmodern, relational, and social psychoanalysis, object relations, and feminism have offered some insights into the psychology of women in the workplace. The problem remains that the study and theories of women, including women in the workplace, continue to bear the effects of women's second class status in the world. We need another paradigmatic shift to deepen even more our understanding of the powerful connection between culture and psyche in order to see women – and for women to see themselves – independent of the distortion of domination and constraint that begins so early.

There is a recent example of a research study that exemplifies 'the looking over the shoulder' to see the male perspective on the part of the researchers themselves. Researchers Ibarra and Obodaru (2009) analysed the 360 degree evaluations of men and women enrolled in INSEAD executive classes over several years. Although their research concluded that women had better ratings than the men on most of the core leadership capabilities identified in the evaluations, they chose to focus their article on the one dimension where women were not rated as highly. They focused on male peers rating women significantly lower on envisioning even though female peers, and male and female subordinates, all rated the women higher than the men on this capability. In their discussion, they mention reasons why this might be the case, such as possible competitive feelings of male peers, and yet they focused the entire article on women not having vision and what they should do about it. The male perspective – the male peers over the female peers and other observers – was more clearly valued.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier, women in traditionally male businesses have had to alter themselves to survive the moment they entered the door. To measure them, these many years later after their indoctrination has been complete, on qualities based on the male model of leadership, for that is the reigning model no matter how tweaked it may be to include some 'female aspects', is to continue the revision and subordination of the female perspective. To tell women

that they lack vision as observed only by their male peers is to continue the assault under the guise of assistance. Whatever problems women may have in articulating vision will not be solved by their emulating a male perspective of what 'vision' means, that is analogous to having women wear those ubiquitous bowties of the 1980s. A fundamental shift must occur in the depths of organisations that recognises that the present model, style, and qualities and all the rest of it, are one-sided and insufficient to encompass and to express the perspective, values and, yes, vision of a truly diverse workforce. Corporations must acknowledge the ways they discourage the creative contributions of women and create instead environments that will solicit and encourage them.

Discussions continue in the media, financial groups, and women's organisations as to whether or not the financial collapse would have happened if women had occupied a significant number of influential and decision-making positions in the financial industry. Although there are compelling arguments that this might have been the case, in particular, regarding women's risk averseness and their relational morality that focuses on consequences to others as discussed earlier in this paper, the question must go unanswered because women were not in those seats. Nor do we know that if they were in those seats, they would have had and voiced a female perspective. The argument I prefer to focus on is that, in theory, there is a very great probability that a female perspective with its relational propensity and other attributes would enhance and complement the male perspective and between the two, a more balanced approach to a world made up of both genders and both perspectives would ensue. However, until women, in finance and in all business, can access the female voice and perspective, and conditions of the workplace allow for that knowledge to have expression and influence, we will not benefit from this cooperative effort.

Toward that end, I would like to raise some questions for further exploration.

1. Culture has a profound impact on what women are allowed, and what they allow themselves, to become and needs to be more central in any psychoanalytic theories that wish to address the subject more completely. It strikes me that a parallel process still exists wherein we hold onto some aspects of a vision of the world as seen through the eyes of a member of the Viennese patriarchy. I am curious as to why Chodorow finds it necessary to retain the Oedipal in her remarkable theories of women and why Benjamin eroticises her compelling subject-object discussions. I believe

the baby is far too substantial to go out with the bath, but the bath water appears too murky when the baby is female.

2. Gilligan speaks not only of girls losing their voices but also of little boys at ages 5 to 6 losing their emotional connections. How can we intervene to stop the conditions that create forced separation so early? What impact might we see from the unique permutations of families, parenting, and caretaking of the modern society?
3. I am interested in the history that plays a role in the construction of the culture, such as the unresolved trauma of the returning veterans of the Second World War who created the gendered child-rearing practices of the 1950s, and laid the foundations of modern corporate battlefields where they could bond with other men in peacetime. Equally interesting is the threat of the women's movement and the gay rights movement on their sons who carried the burden of their forced separation. When the psychological becomes cultural, the culture does indeed become psychological.
4. In considering the persistence of gender inequality in financial institutions, it is interesting to note Layton's (2004) belief that Chodorow and Benjamin owe a debt to the Frankfurt School of thought (Horkheimer, Adorno, etc.) which focused 'on the damage done by capitalism to capacities for relatedness and autonomy. The etiology of this damage is traced to commodity fetishism and the abstract equivalence that money imposes on all things . . . these phenomena cause relations to both self and others to be experienced as relations between things' (p. 29).

I am reminded of how the people who produce the most money are held in such high esteem, idealised, and emulated. Their behaviour both good and bad becomes the model for success and most often the model is 'The ends justify the means' and 'He who has the most wins', all of which were captured by Frankfurt influenced Lasch (1979) in *The Culture of Narcissism* and which remain relevant today.

I am also reminded of the words the head of a trading floor said to me when I refused to back down regarding an incident of sexual impropriety on the floor: 'Don't you know that I can buy and sell you in a New York minute?' Money and capitalism and how they reinforce gender inequity would make for an interesting discussion particularly relevant to Benjamin's subject-object vs subject-subject relations.

5. How is the patriarchy maintained and how can it be dismantled? What else will fall? What exactly is at stake here? Gilligan (2004) states: 'Patriarchy is an order of domination elevating some men over others and subordinating women. But in separating some

men from other men and all men from women, in dividing fathers from mothers and daughters and sons, patriarchy creates a rift within the psyche, dividing everyone from parts of themselves' (p. 141). Layton (1998) refers to Derrida who 'contends that the wish to avoid uncertainty . . . is a wish that produces rigid binaries in hierarchic relations' (p. 20). This uncertainty is called the 'not knowing' by Heifetz (2007) who states, 'Women have a lot to teach men about getting comfortable with a feeling of "not knowing" ' (p. 321).

Women's very biology entails times of waiting and the waiting requires not knowing, being patient, and being able to tolerate frustration. This capacity has been enhanced by centuries of not being in control of their lives, for example, the inability to own their bodies, to own property, to vote, to earn equal pay, and so on, and that has cultivated in women what Bion (1970) called 'the negative capability' of not knowing. It is in the not knowing that men are most threatened. It violates their need to appear sure of themselves and confident, and therefore, not weak. It feels passive because they do not understand that receptivity can be active and empowering. But what is hopeful is that men and women can learn and do learn from each other.

6. Most of all, I am interested in how women can make a greater contribution to work and the world we live in and how they can lead more fulfilling lives. Most women still see themselves through a glass darkly. But once a woman clears her vision, nothing is ever the same again. That is the moment when she goes over the wall. It is the moment when Nora slammed the door at the end of *A Doll's House*. For the early psychoanalyst, Therese Benedek, it was when she wrote, 'female psychosexual development is not a reaction formation against not being a male, but women are born to be women, just as men are born to be men' (Schmidt, 2004, p. 224). How can we better understand how to help women find these moments and fight the legacy of losing themselves and their voices?

We are living in an amazing time of possibilities that are erupting from the present chaos and the only thing that can stop us is the fear of letting go of what we hold onto in our psyches about men and women. In therapy, clients must let go of what brought them to this point. The beliefs and behaviours that helped them survive will now stop their growth. It is the same with the evolution of human beings. The forced separation of the sexes that brought us here will consume us.

In a true knowledge-based economy, competencies must come from both sexes – two voices and two perspectives working together, equal but different, reflecting the logic of nature. Without the equal contribution of women, half of all knowledge will be lost. The original and primal difference among human beings is not based on race, culture, national, or religious affiliation but on gender, and gender reconciliation will go a long way toward assisting in the integration of the other human differences that are inherent in a globalised society. What has been missing in corporate thought, behaviour, and responsibility is the contribution of the other half of the partnership. Aragon (1963), the French resistance poet, wrote, ‘The future of man is woman’ (*L’avenir de l’homme est la femme*). But perhaps the guiding principle for going forward is something else he wrote: ‘Woman is half of the sky’ (*La femme est la moitié du ciel*). Psychoanalytic thought, which has in itself struggled since its inception with this understanding, is ideally poised to assist in reconciling the genders and ending the one-sidedness of our world. The future of both women and men may depend upon it.

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Note

1. The importance of morality in the knowledge economy was raised by Drucker in 1992. A way to understand it might be that in this transitional state of our post-capitalist society, we are undergoing the replacement of capital with knowledge as our economic resource. As Drucker (1993) wrote, ‘We need an economic theory that puts knowledge into the center of the wealth-producing process’ (p. 183). Our gentlemen capitalist/knowledge workers have been struggling of late to adjust to the commodity of knowledge, and unfortunately, attempted to employ knowledge in the service of capital, instead of the other way around, which resulted in faulty or untruthful knowledge in the service

of personal gain or greed. They did not understand that the world had already changed significantly, and that an interconnected, globalised knowledge economy was already in motion and that their dealings in the marketplace were no longer their private business. As if in prophesy, Drucker had cautioned,

The men of knowledge will find it hard to accept that the basic decisions on knowledge are political decisions rather than knowledge decisions and therefore not in their hands. They will find it even harder to swallow that we will hold them responsible for these decisions, even though they do not control them . . . The only choice open to the men of knowledge is whether to take part in them responsibly or have them imposed by somebody else . . . We will also demand of the men of knowledge a high code of morality. (1992, p. 373)

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