

GENDER AND DOMINATION,  
In BONDS OF LOVE, P. 183  
Jessica Benjamin

1. What does Benjamin mean by Gender Polarity, and what is its effect?
2. What does Benjamin mean by Male Relationality?
3. Describe what Benjamin means by the social separation of public and private; what are the effects on men and on women in both public and private life?
4. What does Jessica mean when she says: "The missing piece in the analysis of Western rationality is the structure of gender domination"?
5. Benjamin says the problem of this world of Male Rationality is that it lacked a theory of the intersubjective. Discuss her meaning, including Barbara McClintock's reminder that the act of knowing can be felt as communion, not conquest.
6. Discuss Gilligan's analysis and repudiation of Kohlberg's model of moral development/
7. What does Seyla Benhabib add to the discussion of public and private domains in terms of questioning political morality?
8. What does Benjamin mean by Gender Conservatism? How does this group, which includes feminists, rationalize gender polarity? Why do they argue against expanding public policies supporting family life? Why do the Bergers oppose extension of individualism to women? What is the role perceived for women in Gender Conservatism? In particular, what is woman's duty from this perspective?
9. How do Gender Conservatives respond to the feminist proposal of dual parenting? What unconscious fear does Benjamin attribute to these Conservatives regarding why they are against dual parenting? What image is carried of the father, and what image of the mother?
10. Benjamin describes in many ways an increasingly difficult situation faced by women in their marriages and in the outside world pre-WW2 and post-WW2. Discuss.
11. How is attachment and daycare discussed by Selma Fraiberg, and how does Benjamin respond, using her own experience and also and extensively the writings about infancy of Winnicott and other psychoanalytic contributors, to address how the experiences of separation and aggression may be survived, and why such survival is so significant?
12. Benjamin describes the situation in which two ideal figures are born and are bound together in a relationship of domination: the perfect mother and the autonomous individual. Discuss.
13. Benjamin says that the concept of dual parenting represents both the virtues and limitations of the psychoanalytic feminist approach. Explain her meaning.
14. In Peter Rudnytsky's interview of Jessica Benjamin, Benjamin says that when she was in college at the University of Wisconsin in 1966, she had a startling insight: All binary opposites are linked to gender. Apply this insight to the chapter on Gender and Domination we are discussing.