Individualizing Gender and Sexuality

Theory and Practice

Nancy J. Chodorow

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Chapter 1

Psychoanalysis and women from margin to center

A retrospect

For a volume of *The Annual of Psychoanalysis* on psychoanalysis and women, I was asked, along with several other contributors, to write an autobiographical essay on my own professional trajectory in relation to psychoanalysis and women. The chapter traces my writing from the beginning of second-wave feminism, in the late 1960s, through my analytic training and almost to the present, and it alludes to some personal biographical factors that may also have played a role in my intellectual development and the character of my thinking. I suggest that such multiple factors inform all psychoanalytic writings on sexuality and gender.[1]

> I, as a woman, ask in amazement, and what about motherhood?
>
> Karen Horney (1926)

> But, in contradistinction to Freud, we are assuming that the castration complex in female children is a secondary formation and that its precursor is the negative oedipal situation.
>
> Jeanne Lampl-de Groot (1927)

> The reader may ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and "masquerade" … they are the same thing.
>
> Joan Riviere (1929)

Psychoanalysts need (at least) two stories—external and historical, internal and psychological—to understand our field, its practitioners, its history,

[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared in J. A. Winer & J. A. Anderson (Eds.), *The Annual of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 32: Psychoanalysis and Women* (pp. 101–129). Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 2004. Reprinted with permission.

its theoretical and clinical developments. We find this confluence first in Freud, excluded from the professoriate and research because of Jewishness, whose personal psychology—especially his driving ambition and willingness to engage in and reveal his own self-analysis—combined with his work with patients, early collaboration with Breuer, and studies with Charcot and Bernheim, all these factors together enabling him to discover the methods and theories of psychoanalysis.

Among the classic 1920s and 1930s psychoanalytic contributors to the psychology of women, we find the same confluence. Deutsch, Horney, Bonaparte, Lampl-de Groot, Klein, and others, all these women spoke from within the field, from their unique individuality, and from their psychological response and position as insider-outsiders, at both center and margin: women practitioners in a field that was more welcoming than almost any other but that at the same time put at its core a masculine norm. We find Horney's autobiographical exclamation, Lampl-de Groot's tentative disagreement with Freud (buried, I note, midparagraph 10 pages into her paradigm-shifting article), Riviere's ironic musings. So, too, my own intellectual trajectory is situated in history, in my personal psychology, and in my self-location, historically created and driven from within, at both margin and center.

IDENTITY AND ORIGINS, MARGIN AND CENTER

In the spring of 1969, I went to my first conference on "women's liberation." I was 25 and a budding social scientist about to switch from anthropology to sociology, with an (already greatly overdetermined) interest in child development and the relations of psyche and culture. I had made it my business intuitively to choose an undergraduate field—anthropology—in which there had been an unusual number of prominent women and in which I could actually work with women professors. Influenced by and influencing psychoanalysis in the 1930s, psychological anthropology, my own subspecialty, had even investigated the psychology of gender in culture (Margaret Mead, for example, in the 1920s and 1930s, and my own teachers, Beatrice and John Whiting, in the 1940s and 1950s). However, with few exceptions neither psychoanalysis nor anthropology had in recent years focused on or problematized women or gender.

For me, as for numbers of women of my generation, the women's movement exhilarated and propelled us into awareness. When I entered a graduate program in sociology in the fall of 1969, I wrote what would become my first published essay, "Being and Doing: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females" (1971). At the time, American feminists had begun to conceptualize and document sexism in political, economic, and familial institutions in terms of men's behavior toward women. Sexism was external, and although the personal was political, this meant

that feelings and primary relationships were caused by external forces, not that we needed to investigate their internal constitution and creation.

By contrast to this trend, "Being and Doing" located the origins of male dominance not externally but internally, in men's dread of women and fear of their own internal femininity, and it suggested that men's and women's bisexual identifications were asymmetrical, the man's more threatening. I contrast women's more easily attained feminine identity, based on "being," with men's constantly challenged masculine identity, based on "doing," and I describe a "self-perpetuating cycle of female deprecation" (Chodorow, 1971, p. 41) in which mothers transmit to daughters their own anxieties and conflicts about femininity. The chapter cites only one psychoanalyst, Karen Horney, and its title, "Being and Doing," created in 1969, fortuitously anticipates terms found in Winnicott (1971), whom I had never heard of. I draw idiosyncratically upon a wide range of psychological anthropology, psychology research, and psychoanalytic sociology.

This first publication of mine inadvertently anticipates many of the themes found in subsequent psychoanalytic rethinkings of femininity, as well as constituting a protomodel of my own later work. My argument here, as in many later writings—the intuitively natural mode in which I think, but a mode that has been challenged by my more recent desire to write from within the clinical moment—begins with a single, self-evident, taken-for-granted but previously unnoticed or unstudied feature of the psychic or cultural world and elaborates the consequences of this fact from within.[2] In what would become characteristically Chodorovian fashion, I unabashedly invent theory, putting together observations from different studies and drawing upon evidence and (sometimes apparently contradictory) theories from a variety of fields.[3]

In "Being and Doing," the self-evident observation is that male dominance seems to be universal. I ask: How can we account for this? In my next publications—"Family Structure and Feminine Personality" (1974, written in dialogue and dividing the territory of psyche, culture, and society with Sherry Ortner (1974) who wrote on culture and Shelly Rosaldo (1974) who

[2] Having put things this way, I recognize that my method expresses the principles of ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), which I learned from my graduate dissertation advisor, Egon Bittner. In this sociological development from phenomenology, sociologists try to unpack the unspoken, unnamed, taken-for-granted rules and processes, the pretheoretical assumptions, that enable social life to move forward.

[3] Many years ago, having just read *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Chodorow, 1978), which in its sociological chapter fuses Marxist Frankfurt School thinking and emphatically anti-Marxist Parsonsian structural-functionalism, Jessica Benjamin exclaimed in a conversation upon the almost blithe way in which I chose synthesis and seemed oblivious to contradictions and incommensurabilities in theories I wished to draw upon. I like to think of myself as in good company: Freud, it seems to me, changed his mind about several key elements in psychoanalysis in an additive fashion (e.g., the changing drive theories, the move from topography to structure) while not giving up his previous conceptualizations.

wrote on society), "Oedipal Asymmetries and Heterosexual Knots" (1976), and *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978)—I begin from the observation that women mother, a completely self-evident, taken-for-granted fact that at the same time had been hitherto almost theoretically and clinically unremarked (Stoller is the exception here). As is well known, following from this I develop claims that the mother-daughter relationship must be central to female psychology and that the fact that everyone's primary caregiver is a woman must be important to children's gender development and to the relations between the sexes, creating, as I called them, oedipal asymmetries and heterosexual knots. In "Heterosexuality as a Compromise Formation" (1992), I begin from further observations on heterosexuality, noting that it has been taken for granted as normative, not only culturally but within psychoanalysis, and that it has therefore not been studied. I ask: What if we treat heterosexuality as problematic, as we have done with homosexuality and the perversions?

In *The Power of Feelings* (1999b), I begin from clinical individuality—the obvious fact that each person who walks into the analyst's consulting room is unique. In relation to psychoanalysis, I elaborate the claim that our universalistic developmental theories and theories about the content of unconscious fantasies of self and other, including those about gender and sexuality, do not take account of this clinical individuality. Also beginning from basic psychoanalytic principles—the demonstrated existence and effect of dynamically unconscious mental processes, thoughts, and feelings; the fact that meaning comes from within as much as from without—I argue against the taken-for-granted assumption, found in feminist poststructuralism, cultural studies, and social science, that people are shaped culturally and discursively rather than creating their own psyches from within.

Just as with the classical writings on female psychology, there is some implicit autobiographical input in my contributions. I do not think that without a personal analysis, a strong mother and maternal lineage, and early experiences of finding myself a cultural outsider,[4] my writings would have the emotional and affective solidity and resonance that they possess. Yet, in spite of being of the feminist generation who believed that the personal was political and knowledge perspectival, and that the female scholarly "I" should replace the male objectivist view from nowhere, my writings, at least until well into the 1990s, do not begin from a female experiential voice. My voice seems characterized by clarity and confidence, even by a certain courage: "This is what I think, there is no other way I can think, all I can do is present it to you, as directly as possible." When I first presented "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" to a group of feminist

[4] See Chodorow (2002a) where I describe how, as a result of postwar migration, my Jewish family moved when I was 3 from New York to a still traditionally Western, semirural, pre-Silicon Valley, emphatically not Jewish, mid-San Francisco Peninsula.

English faculty in the Boston area in 1972, I was accused of being too confident and "writing like a man": How could I begin so directly, "I propose here a model … " (Chodorow, 1974, p. 45)? I was shocked, in 1978, upon first encountering *l'écriture feminine*, to find that French feminists such as Irigaray and Cixous believed that traditional language and modes of argument were phallologocentric (Chodorow, 1979).

My voice echoes, perhaps, those no-nonsense, speak-your-mind, midwestern and western pioneer lineage women with whom I grew up, or my Jewish New Yorker mother and aunts, all of whom had been professionals—teachers, librarians, scientists, social workers, musicians—before marriage and some afterward, those women of that prefeminine mystique 1890–1920 birth cohort with higher education and professional participation than those who came before or after them. In my voice, there is also a paternal identification—hence, writing like a man. My father, an eminent professor of physics and applied physics at Stanford and a Silicon Valley pioneer, once told me (at least, this is my screen memory) that while he was not a great theoretical physicist, he had an especial capacity to see linkages and structure—connections among widely disparate scientific theories and discoveries, often heard of years apart—in ways that enabled him to conceptualize comprehensively, leaving nothing out, how these principles and discoveries might all be put together to work perfectly in a new instrument or process.

A traditional stance toward voice continues. In the present period, I find myself uncomfortable with and resistant toward the postmodern locutions and wordplay that became so prominent in academic feminism and the humanities more generally and that, in psychoanalysis, characterizes relational more than classical writing. Thus, although I have written (Chodorow, 1989b) that the great difference between women psychoanalysts of the second and third psychoanalytic generations and feminist psychoanalysts of my generation was that for us the theoretical was personal—that we evaluated psychoanalytic theories of femininity against our personal experience—it is not the case that I explicitly brought in my own personal experience, or shifted voice, in making my theoretical arguments. I begin from experience, from a freedom to challenge, and from a sense that knowledge is perspectival and derived from power, but I have found myself on the classical-modernist side (or somewhere in the middle; see Chapter 6[5]), in psychoanalysis, as in feminism, of a divide about evidence and language (a place perhaps more characteristic of analysts who were trained in the "mainstream" institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association).

These qualities of invention, starting from the unremarked and taken-for-granted, synthesizing disparate or surprising theories and observations in a not theoretically monolithic, interdisciplinary, almost structural template,

[5] Here and elsewhere, I am referring to chapters within this book unless otherwise noted.

and using traditional approaches and language that are theoretically steeped but quite straightforward, characterize many of my writings.[6] Yet these same qualities, which also gave my work a relative independence—that is, I respond to trends that seem relevant to my thinking and am careful to cite relevant work, but I do not fit easily into a school, probably by conscious and unconscious intention—have meant that my work has always received attention somewhere, but often belatedly, and not necessarily from its intended audience. *The Reproduction of Mothering* was immediately recognized and lauded within the feminist humanities, ambivalently accorded admiration but also widely criticized in my then-exclusive field, sociology, and only noticed within psychoanalysis many years later. Articles that became classics, widely reprinted and cited, were originally rejected by leading psychoanalytic journals for being "not psychoanalysis" (for example, "Heterosexuality as a Compromise Formation") or severely criticized by editorial readers for feminist journals for being intersubjective and reflexive rather than statistical (e.g., "Seventies Questions for Thirties Women," 1989b).

I have not, it seems, wanted to be placed, and others have not wanted to place me. Even as I originated the idea that feminine personality is founded on relation and connection and named women's self in relationship, I am not a self-in-relation theorist, and I have been criticized by those who are for not understanding the mother-daughter relationship (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991). Although I was one of the first American psychoanalysts to make British object relations theory central to her or his theorizing (in 1974, I cite Alice Balint, Fairbairn, & Guntrip; in 1978 also Michael Balint & Winnicott) and have been recognized as a founding American relational thinker (Mitchell & Aron, 1999), I do not consider myself a relational psychoanalyst.

When I was honored by CORST (the Committee on Research and Special Training that enables academics to be trained in the American Psychoanalytic Association), I titled my talk, "Why It Is Easy to Be a Psychoanalyst and a Feminist, But Not a Psychoanalyst and a Social Scientist," and I joked that I had considered calling the talk "From Margin to Margin and Back Again." There, I described the experience in 1979 of simultaneously receiving the Jessie Bernard Award for *The Reproduction of Mothering* from the American Sociological Association and being in a symposium on the book, later published in *Signs* (Lorber, Coser, Rossi, & Chodorow, 1981), in which Judith Lorber observed, "When I read *The Reproduction of Mothering*, I found to my disappointment that it is primarily an exegesis of psychoanalytic theory and therefore, in my eyes, a lesser contribution to the sociology of gender than Nancy Chodorow's earlier, short pieces" (p. 482), and Alice Rossi said, "I was not prepared for so extended an exegesis

[6] I have taken as my model here the sociologist Howard Becker (1986), who writes that the social scientist can choose between writing for the man on the street or for the *gymnasium*-trained European theorist.

of psychoanalytic theory past and present … what constitutes 'evidence' in Chodorow's book [?] … does her central insight require the burden of so much psychoanalytic theory?" (p. 493). Only Rose Coser enthusiastically supported my use of psychoanalytic theory in the work.

At sociology meetings for years afterward, I would wander into session after session on gender, feminist theory, or mothering, only to hear someone saying, "We can take seriously five different understandings of sexual inequality (or women's mothering), but Chodorow's individualistic psychology is not one of them." A former student, Michigan professor of sociology Karin Martin, remarked, when we were at the meetings of the University of California Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium, that of the faculty present, all the feminists were in the humanities, except me, and all the social scientists, except me, were men.

My sociology colleagues were right to be uneasy. Even as I have drawn upon many theories, my "field" has always been, basically, psychoanalysis. I have always been interested in the complexities of individuality and in studying people, and I think that the absence of serious attention to individuality as a field of study in its own right is a great lack in the academy. I have never studied groups, institutions, organizations, stratification, collective behavior, or any other typical sociological topic, and I do not do research. I came to feminism in the first place partly because it called for an understanding of the psyche.

Yet, even as sociological colleagues were excoriating my individualistic psychology, colleagues in the humanities—in literary criticism, philosophy, and political theory—were writing books and dissertations based on my work. My focus on the mother-daughter internal world and its sequelae opened new vistas for understanding women authors, women characters in women's novels, and imagery, metaphor, and characteristics found in women's writing. My characterization of the female psyche, in terms of relation and connection, and my noting the defensive denial of connection and dependency in men, served as a basis for thinking in moral philosophy and epistemology and for critiques of normal science, classical political theory, and so forth. For many practitioners of these literary and textual-theoretical academic feminisms (at least until the poststructural and Lacanian turn), my work was almost idealized (for some, however, I erred in my purported "difference feminism," or "universalizing and essentializing"). Whether praised and criticized, I was certainly a founding feminist theorist.

THE REPRODUCTION OF MOTHERING

Returning to substance and chronology: After "Being and doing," I became interested in mother-daughter relations and women's mothering, participating in a women's group discussing mother-daughter relations and reading

whatever I could find in the psychoanalytic literature. I read the classical (contested among themselves) 1920s and 1930s theories of Lampl-de Groot, Freud, Deutsch, Riviere, Horney, and Klein, which at the time were published mainly in obscure anthologies, along with the lone 1950s and 1960s voices of Chasseguet-Smirgel (1964, 1976), Kestenberg (e.g., 1956a, 1956b, 1968), Stoller (e.g., 1965, 1968, 1976), and the odd, controversial Mary Jane Sherfey (1966), who had argued, in the pages of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, for the existence of the unified clitoral-vaginal orgasm. I found a psychoanalytic mentor, George Goethals, at Harvard, and seminars for graduate students (in a model I wish all institutes would emulate) at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute (BPSI). BPSI subsequently assigned me to Malkah Notman as dissertation mentor.

Propelled again by an inner search as much as by an external intellectual or political context, I published "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" (1974) and finished my dissertation, which subsequently became *The Reproduction of Mothering*, in 1974.[7] Aged 30, a daughter but not yet a mother, a psychoanalytic sociologist whose first intellectual love had been psychological anthropology but not yet a psychoanalyst, I had, as a feminist during its writing the dubious benefit of the sharp feminist critique and dismissal of psychoanalysis found in de Beauvoir, Friedan, Millett, and others. I could also draw upon a few psychoanalytic feminist books and articles that appeared from 1971 to 1978, during the period from when I began the dissertation to book publication.[8]

Thinking about context is important for psychoanalysis as well as for feminism. As we look back over the development of psychoanalytic thinking about women, and the place that my own work, along with that of other feminists, played in psychoanalysis itself, we can recall what Fliegel calls "the [40-year] quiescent interval" (1986, p. 17) in thinking about women, an interval brought to an end by psychoanalytic feminism, and then, almost in response, by psychoanalysis (e.g., Blum, ed., 1976). These changes did not simply emerge from within psychoanalysis, through the disconfirming of hypotheses and "normal" scientific progress. Rather, theorizing and critique mainly from without came slowly to be accepted from within, leading to major breakthroughs in understandings of gender and sexuality and changes in psychoanalytic attitudes toward mothers. Indirectly, the feminist psychoanalytic project also generated increased attention, revaluation,

[7] Historical note: In 1976, when I signed my contract, my University of California Press editor was uncomfortable with my title, afraid that mothering was too uncommon a word. He thought that we would be better off calling the book *The Reproduction of Motherhood*.

[8] Mitchell's 1971 *Woman's Estate* included a chapter on psychoanalysis; Miller's anthology of classic papers appeared in 1973 and Strouse's comparable collection in 1974, as did Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. Rubin's brilliant "The Traffic in Women" appeared in 1975, Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* and Baker Miller's *Toward a New Psychology of Women* in 1976.

and depathologization of "preoedipal" levels of functioning and perhaps also greater mainstream American psychoanalytic acceptance of relational theories—both native-grown Sullivanian and Horney schools and British object-relations and Kleinian thinking. In addition, feminism as a social and political force propelled greater numbers of women into the professions, and psychoanalytic institutes began accepting more women candidates, so that women now (or once again) form a strong presence in American psychoanalytic societies.[9]

As is well known, *The Reproduction of Mothering* radically rethought the psychology of women on many levels. I begin from the observation that it is not enough, as previous psychoanalytic theories of women had done, to reduce the psychology of women to female sexuality. How could it be, I wondered, after all the advances and transformations in theory that followed the libido-centered *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*—the structural theory that led to the ego psychological focus on intrapsychic conflict, defense, and compromise formation; British object relations and Kleinian theories; our expanded developmental understanding and greater attention, whether Mahlerian, Winnicottian, or Kleinian, to infancy and the preoedipal mother-child relationship—how was it that psychoanalysts, when it came to the subject of women, could write as if such developments in thinking had not occurred?

Looking back, the reader could speculate that I was responding to Freud's self-defense of 1933, when, in noting that his account is "incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly," he reminds us to "not forget that I have only been describing women in so far as their nature is determined by their sexual function" (p. 135). Many of Freud's contemporaries and followers had tended to follow Freud's lead, or, as Lampl-de Groot, to couch radical extensions and challenges in apparently consonant terms.[10] By contrast, I wanted to consider other determinants of women's "nature," as psychoanalysis had been considering other determinants of the psyche in general. Especially, I had discovered British object relations theory, and I sought to reinterpret female and male development through the lens of the unconscious internal world and self construction, rather than through the lens of a "sexual function" automatically determined by the character of the female body. As I wrote, quite courageously for my age and training, and for the psychoanalytic era itself:

> In what follows, I reinterpret both the traditional psychoanalytic theory of feminine (and masculine) development and psychoanalytic clinical

[9] My research on the history of women in psychoanalysis documents a decline in the proportion of women psychoanalysts in the United States, in contrast to England and continental Europe, during the 1950s through 1970s.

[10] The ways that the early women psychoanalysts chose to acknowledge or occlude their originality and their disagreements with Freud deserve an essay in itself.

> case studies in terms of the developing ego and the growth of relational potential and psychological capacities. The story I tell is for the most part not explicit in these accounts, but can be drawn from them. I apply object-relations theory and the theory of the personal ego to our understanding of masculine and feminine development. … The object-relations reformulation has not been brought to bear upon the question of gender. Object-relations theorists (like ego psychologists) have hardly begun to address questions concerning differences in female and male ego development, gender differences in object-relational experiences, and the effect these have on the differential constitution of mental structure and psychic life. Psychoanalysts continue to assume a biological and instinctual basis for the sexual division of labor, gender personality, and heterosexuality. Writing concerned with gender has continued to emphasize oedipal, libidinal issues and sexual orientation, has continued to see women as appendages of their libido, has continued to emphasize feminine sexuality, penis envy, masochism, genitality, frigidity, more than object-relations and ego development. My work here is a step away from that trend. (1978, pp. 53–54)

Substantively, *The Reproduction of Mothering* argues that psychoanalysis had not noticed theoretically the import for the psychology of gender of women's being primary caregivers. Moreover, the import of mothers, *as women*, for infantile development had been taken for granted. "Women mother" are the book's opening words.

The book makes a number of interrelated arguments. First, I suggest that we cannot talk about a generic mother-infant relationship because, from the beginning, the mother-daughter and mother-son relationship differ. In response to the mother's sense of gender-similarity and gender-difference, daughters and sons from earliest infancy begin to develop a different sense of self-in-relation—a basic "I" that responds to the mother's unconscious, as well as conscious, gender-inflected senses of and fantasies about her infant. I suggest that these different senses of self are elaborated throughout development, creating a kind of relatedness—one that enables empathy, intuition, and ability to see the point of view of the other—that is more typical of women than of men, and that in turn becomes the foundation for maternal capacities. In a context in which there had been virtually no psychoanalytic recognition of gender differences in the mother-child relation in the preoedipal period (although there had been recognition of a 2-year-old genital phase), I milked a sparse clinical literature to argue for subtle gender differences in portrayals of individual mothers and their children to make my argument.

A reformulation of oedipal and later developmental periods was easier to elaborate, because for psychoanalysts gender had always been located in the oedipal period. I drew upon the classical accounts—of Lampl-de

Groot, Freud, Deutsch, Brunswick, and others—to expand upon the claim that the girl's complete Oedipus complex was more long lasting and more fully bisexual than the boy's, emphasizing that this was because her first love object was a woman. I thus anticipate the view (as I note in Chodorow, 1991a) that Persephone, rather than Oedipus, provides a better mythic model of female development (for elaboration of this position, see Kulish & Holtzman, 1998, 2008).[11] This reinterpretation generated my claim that the female oedipal triangle further propelled maternality in the girl, whose heterosexuality is triangular (mother-father-daughter/child) rather than dyadic, as is more characteristic of men.

In keeping with my goals—to retain psychoanalysis while eliminating sexism—I discovered and drew upon the variety of accounts that made more dynamic sense than Freud's in explaining penis envy: Chasseguet-Smirgel's suggestion that the girl wants a penis to gain autonomy from her overpowering mother; Lampl-de Groot's implication, and Rubin's claim, that the originally matrisexual girl wants a penis to satisfy her heterosexual mother; Horney's argument that the girl's nonvirulent wish to urinate like a boy is replaced by the desire for a penis as an object of (hetero)sexual desire; Klein's and Jones's claim that the wish for a penis is a defense against fear of loss of female organs and female sexuality, both threatened as punishment for oedipal (hetero)sexual wishes.

At a time, then, when there was really nothing in the psychoanalytic literature after Freud's penis-baby equation that could explain maternal capacities or desires, with the exception of Kestenberg's claim that an early inner genital phase foreshadowed in drive terms pregnancy and maternality (Kestenberg, 1956a, 1956b, 1968), *The Reproduction of Mothering* took on both of these problematics: How did maternality develop?[12] Why did women want to become mothers? Furthermore, at a time when mothers and maternal activity were seen exclusively from the point of view of the child—as holding environment, container, seducer or not-seducer, rather than as experiencers and experienced by the child in their own right—the book considered maternal subjectivity, the mother as subject.

[11] Confirming this observation, the classicist Helena Foley (1999) reprinted my "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" among the interpretive essays in her new translation and interpretation of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.

[12] Not that I appreciated Kestenberg's contribution at the time. To the contrary, in my great skepticism about the biological, I was very critical. I now appreciate how original and generative Kestenberg was, not only for her time but also for ours. During my research on early women psychoanalysts, I was brought sharply up against my prejudice when I met Kestenberg and came to understand both what she had been doing and how radical (and isolating) her work was. I consider her one of the three lone voices, along with Chasseguet-Smirgel (1964) and Stoller (1965, 1968), of the "quiescent interval" between the 1930s writings on female sexuality and the feminist revival of interest in the psychology of women.

The impact of *The Reproduction of Mothering* went beyond its understandings of the psychology of women. My writings of the time anticipate and provide part of the groundwork for feminist critiques (like self-in-relation theory and theories of women's voice and morality) of psychologies that favor separation and autonomy over relatedness, but also for the development of relational psychoanalysis and other critiques of classical psychoanalysis. As early as 1974, I claimed that "'ego strength' is not completely dependent on the firmness of the ego's boundaries" (p. 61), and in 1979, I argued that

> separateness is defined relationally; differentiation occurs in relationship … the child learns to see the particularity of the mother or primary caretaker in contrast to the rest of the world … adequate separation, or differentiation, involves not merely perceiving the separateness, or otherness, of the other. It involves perceiving the person's subjectivity and selfhood as well. … Thus, how we understand differentiation—only from the viewpoint of the infant as a self, or from the viewpoint of two interacting selves—has consequences for what we think of as a mature self. (pp. 102–104)

I conclude that "differentiation is not distinctness and separateness, but a particular way of being connected to others" (p. 107).

Yet, even as the book had impact, it also generated critique, particularly among some feminists. Some readers were uncomfortable with my account of the psychology of women, feeling that I romanticized the "difference feminism" outcomes I describe (for more recent commentary along these lines, see Heenan et al., 2002). In my view, these readers seem to pass over the attention I pay to the challenges women face in separating and individuating and to my documentation of difficulties that take different forms in each sex with closeness to the mother—for girls, the threat of overidentification and loss of a separate sense of self; for boys, engulfment and loss of masculinity.

Perhaps because my arguments about the differential constructions of the Oedipus complex are not so easily understandable in non-psychoanalytic terms (you need to know how object relations theory portrays the psychic reality of an unconscious internal object world, rather than simply to understand the intuitively clearer notion that women are relational), such readings also tended not to recognize that the book is about oedipal and not just preoedipal outcomes—the internalized bisexual triangle, the unresolved, un-"smashed to pieces" (Freud, 1925, p. 257) female Oedipus complex, the oedipal asymmetries and heterosexual knots of adult relationships, and the mother's greater "oedipalization" of the relationship to her son than

to her daughter.[13] Finally, I describe maternal difficulties in separating and acknowledging the child, as well as the ideological and psychological splitting in attitudes to mothers and fathers that result from mothering:

> Psychoanalytic accounts … reproduce those infantile expectations of mothers which they describe so well. … Mothers, they suggest, come to symbolize dependence, regression, passivity, and the lack of adaptation to reality. Turning from the mother (and father) represents independence and individuation, progress, activity, and participation in the real world. … Girls and boys expect and assume women's unique capacities for sacrifice, caring, and mothering, and associate women with their own fears of regression and powerlessness. They fantasize more about men, and associate them with idealized virtues and growth. (1978, pp. 82–83)

As I make these critiques, I am, like some of the classical women thinkers, at the same time quite dutiful (a dutiful, if challenging, daughter or granddaughter—just as, in arguments with my father, I was always careful to be rational and articulate rather than emotional, and to cite facts to ground arguments). I stay carefully within the lines of and draw capaciously from previous psychoanalytic writing and do not dismiss, except very carefully and with a heavy baggage of elaboration, any of Freud's claims, even about penis envy or the weak female superego. This is part of my work's strength: The theory is complex and multifaceted, but there is little unprocessed rage or feminist outrage, which, in my view, usually detracts from readers' freedom to think. Another way to put this is that the theory was radical, but the writer was not.

I am only intemperate and overly dismissive, as I note in my 1999 preface (see Chapter 4), about the reproductive body. Not yet a mother, swept up in 1970s feminism, I am leery about the possible influence, however clinically and developmentally individual, of libido, lust, physical maternal passion and desire, or for the demands for psychic representation and fantasy of bleeding, breasts, arousal, pregnancy, and lactation (it would be no surprise to a psychoanalyst that I seem to have been from the beginning more intemperate in regard to theories about the body than about anything else that contributes to psychic life). As I note in the same preface, the call for shared parenting at the end gives short shrift to the very psychic developments—of maternal passions, desires, and capacities in women—that the book documents, and that I experienced firsthand within a year of the book's publication. As I have noted recently (see Chapter 8), this call

[13] 2011 note: Perhaps such partial reading still holds. A recent psychoanalytic book (Kulish & Holtzman, 2008) rediscovers the mother-daughter Persephone story, and cites the same classic texts, of Deutsch, Lampl, and others, that I had discussed extensively (though of course without clinical case material, since I was not then a psychoanalyst) in 1978.

has come back to haunt me, in patients, students, and young colleagues who put forth, among other feminist and culturally rationalized defenses against exploring intrapsychic conflicts and ambivalence about motherhood, the claim that they will not have children unless their husbands agree to do half the child care, or the claim that motherhood and work are incompatible in our culture.[14]

STUDYING WOMEN PSYCHOANALYSTS/ BECOMING A PSYCHOANALYST

The Reproduction of Mothering was published in 1978. The main outcome of my thinking in the book was professional development, rather than more writing. I thought at the time, quite rightly, that I had gone as far as I could in clinically and experientially persuasive thinking about the psyche from within, and not just about the contours of the theory from without, without clinical experience and psychoanalytic training, which I began in the mid-1980s. Partially as a result, the 1980s were for me a fallow period. *The Reproduction of Mothering* was still sedimenting into my consciousness as well as into concurrent feminist and psychoanalytic consciousness, and I was immersed in the wonders and rigors of psychoanalytic training (and of being a mother).[15]

Two contributions of this period bear mentioning. First, following upon our observation that feminist thinking about motherhood seemed to replicate the blame, idealization, and enmeshment in primal attachment and fears of abandonment or attack found in both cultural and psychoanalytic thinking, Susan Contratto and I published "The Fantasy of the Perfect

[14] I put this more assertively in an interview (Elovitz & Lentz, 2005). In response to a question about my "call for equal parenting" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 218), I say, "Well, I think you put it exactly right: 'issuing a call.' It was a naïve call, though I know that many people feel grateful to me for having suggested it. … It is a sort of social engineering call that is really undermined by the heart of the book itself, which is about the development of maternal desires, subjectivity, and capacities, and the importance of the mother-child relationship for both mother and child. The entire argument of the book implies that fathers are not mothers and, as I have done clinical work, and myself become a mother, I know that more strongly than before. The call for 'equal' parenting comes from two sources. … First, I am of the generation of war babies who were the subjects of all the 'father-absence' studies—fathers were off at war or doing war work, and, after the war, working hard in the beginning of a boom economy, while women were 'returning' to the home. I translated this cohort experience into a political call, but you don't need equal parenting to have men participate in child care. Secondly, this call is characteristic of my political generation—an absolutist claim for how society *ought to be* transformed, without a lot of attention to the subjectivities, feelings, and wishes of the people themselves whose causes we were advocating."

[15] If you look at the vitae of any number of women academics of my generation, you will find that there is often a 10- to 12-year time of low textual productivity that coincides with a time of high familial generativity.

Mother" (1982). We drew upon my conclusions about the mother as subject and Contratto's critique of the prevalence of mother-blame found in the developmental and clinical literature (Contratto, 1980, 1987), along with her extensive clinical experience, to argue that like psychological and psychoanalytic thinking, feminist thinking about the maternal role and maternal activity expressed an unconscious "fantasy of the perfect mother." This fantasy reflected and projected infantile expectations and understandings into psychological assessment and cultural theories.

As Alice Balint had put it, perhaps ironically: "The ideal mother has no interests of her own. … For all of us it remains self-evident that the interests of mother and child are identical, and it is the generally acknowledged measure of the goodness or badness of the mother how far she really feels this identity of interests" (1939, pp. 93, 97).[16] Contratto and I argue for a more secondary-process view of maternal activity and for a perspective that sees the mother as a subject, rather than an object or cipher to be evaluated in terms of her child. We address reciprocally related tendencies to blame or idealize mothers and to desexualize or oversexualize them, and we locate how a primary process mode of thought and feeling—what we would now call paranoid-schizoid splitting and rage—invades supposedly neutral or empirical conceptions of the mother-child relationship.

Second, perhaps in a tacit search for the reproduction of professional mothering, I undertook in 1980 an interview study of early women psychoanalysts. I wanted to hear, from these women themselves, how it came to be that there were, compared to other professions, so many important women psychoanalysts among the second and third generations (those analyzed by Freud, Ferenczi, Abraham, and others of their generation, and those analyzed by their analysands). I wondered what it was like for these women and, especially, how they came to understand and internalize Freud's theories of femininity, which were such a challenge and insult to women of my generation.

As with my theoretical work, I seem even in this historical and sociological project presciently to have made problematic the heretofore unnoticed and taken-for-granted. When I began the research, there was little published work on women psychoanalysts—in English one full-length study (Carotenuto, 1973) and a few chapters in other books (Roazen's, 1971, section "The Women," with chapters on Brunswick, Anna Freud, Deutsch, and Klein; and Alexander's, 1966, several chapters on individual women). Ten years later, over 25 biographies and autobiographies of individual early

[16] An interesting side note, which I discovered during my research on early women psychoanalysts: Alice Balint and Margaret Mahler were high school friends, and Mahler learned of psychoanalysis though Balint's mother, Wilma Kovacs, who was a colleague of Ferenczi's. Mahler's work on separation-individuation, beginning from the child who is fused with the mother, is consonant with and an elaboration upon Balint's preliminary thinking (Balint died at a young age) about love for the mother and mother-love.

women analysts had appeared, as well as several studies of women as a collective presence in the post-Freudian period. Today, we find plays and films about these women.

In this context, my 80 interviews, just over half with women of the second and third generations and the rest with those who knew them (trainees; sons and daughters who were themselves analysts; colleagues), along with my attempts to gather comparative quantitative data on women in the field, did not continue to promise new in-depth information. More to the point, however, the main result of my research was to precipitate me relatively quickly into psychoanalytic training. I did not, apparently, want to study women psychoanalysts; I wanted to *be* one. I published only a few essays on early women analysts (Chodorow, 1986c, 1989b, 1991b, in English; others translated into French, 1986a, 1999d, and German, 1987) and then moved on.

My data gathering itself tells a story about the sociology and history of psychoanalysis. I began my research shortly after the Masson/Freud Archives and Eissler/Malcolm debacles, and many analysts had felt exploited by Roazen. As a result, several were interview shy and needed convincing, letters of introduction (support from Robert Wallerstein was invaluable in this sphere), copies of my book, and so forth. From my side, I was working within the constraints of social science, where it was necessary to document my claims—impressions would not do—that there were "many" women analysts. However, a number of factors—local institutional organization, the shift of the psychoanalytic center from *Mitteleuropa* to the United States and England, the Nazi destruction of institutes and institutional records, the forced emigration of psychoanalysts themselves—all made statistical data gathering almost impossible. Moreover, several contemporary institutes, along with national organizations like the American Psychoanalytic Association and the British Society, were reluctant and seemingly suspicious when it came to sharing data, for example, lists of training analysts during a particular period, as if membership data called for the same level of confidentiality as that required in the consulting room.

Finally, although I had an intuitive sense of the strong presence of women, intuition did not serve to document, for example, that 30% women practitioners was a high number in 1930s Vienna or Berlin, say, in comparison to something else—the proportion of women lawyers, academics, or doctors, for instance. For my interviewees, 20% or 30%—huge in comparison to other contemporaneous professions—could still feel, as one put it, "not so many."

I was way above my non-statistically-trained head. Yet, I was more or less able to document that, relative to other professions, psychoanalysis in Europe and the United States had an unusually high proportion of women practitioners in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, and that these percentages had stayed high in Europe, especially in Britain, in the 1950s through the

1970s. I could also show that numbers had plummeted in the United States as the émigré analysts began to retire, because the requirement, unique to the United States, that psychoanalysts be physicians, had served as de facto discrimination against women.

Through my research, I learned also of the family culture of psychoanalysis—analytic couples and parent-child lineages that are still with us and that give psychoanalysis something of a craft and guild character. I described, in implicit and explicit contrast to the academy, what I called the several "hats" that psychoanalysts can wear—clinician, teacher, theoretician, writer, institutional mover and shaker—which, along with the sense that psychoanalysis required both a kind of knowledge (about children, families, feelings, the psyche) and stance (listening, empathy, careful attention to the other) that women were particularly likely to have, allowed women not only to participate but also to gain recognition and eminence. Unlike in psychiatry or any other medical, scientific, or academic field, recognition and advancement in psychoanalysis came in the first instance from clinical acumen rather than from research or writing. The field thus recognized that aspect of its practice in which women, often balancing family and work, were as likely to participate as men.

On the matter of the theory of femininity, which was of equal concern to me as the question of what facilitated female participation, my encounter with my interviewees was perhaps the first step in my own rethinking and revaluation. In the reflexive paper, "Seventies Questions for Thirties Women: Gender and Generation in a Study of Early Women Psychoanalysts" (1989b), I came to see for the first time that the views of my own feminist psychoanalytic generation, while partly based on progress in knowledge and theoretical advances, were also partly a product of our own generational location and (lack of) life or clinical experience.

Most stunning, in contrast to feminists and psychoanalysts of the second-wave generation, for whom it was axiomatic that the theoretical was personal, few women of the second and third psychoanalytic generations seemed to—as Freud had explicitly invited them—"enquire from [their] own experiences of life" (1933, p. 135). These women had been, after all, independent and strong enough to get themselves into medical school and perhaps from the United States to Vienna in the 1920s and 1930s; they were political and cultural radicals; they had participated in anti-Nazi work in the 1930s. A few interviewees claimed to hold, as Henriette Klein put it, "secret" theories that challenged penis envy; others observed that what Freud said was nonsense. But more characteristic, in terms of the personal and theoretical, were interviewees like Margaret Mahler, who responded that "it didn't go through [her] brain" to consider Freud's theories in relation to her own life, or Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, who claimed that there was nothing autobiographical in her 1927 observations about the daughter's attachment to her mother. These came entirely from her work with patients.

Yet, by switching generational perspective and thinking from the point of view of an early 20th-century woman, a new view emerged. Penis envy, made into a driving force by Freud only in the 1920s, could not obscure a much more important discovery. As interviewee Ruth Eissler emphatically put it, "For Freud, women were sexual beings, with sexual desires!"

CLINICAL INDIVIDUALITY: TOWARD *THE POWER OF FEELINGS* AND BEYOND

"Seventies Questions for Thirties Women" makes problematic the different views on femininity that women of different generations and trainings can hold. It brought my feminist social scientist's eye to perspectives on femininity held by practitioners and added generation as a feature of specificity to feminist understandings of differences among women. Depending on someone's generation, country of origin, professional background, own mother and family, and personality, she will have her own individualized view.

I had first explored clinical individuality in "Freud on Women" (1991a) and "Heterosexuality as a Compromise Formation" (1992), both included in *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities* (1994). My plurals themselves challenged psychoanalysis, which had always written about "the girl," "the boy," "the woman," "the man," "the mother," "the father." Even in Freud, I argue, there is no single clinical femininity, masculinity, or sexuality, but along with him, we have conflated a singularized normativity and clinical plurality. "Rethinking Freud on Women" notes that, although we can take several stories from Freud, we have tended to read only the story that charts the well-known tortuous path to normative femininity.

Freud was faced with the many individual heterosexual and homosexual women he had in treatment, including his own non-traditionally feminine daughter and several of the early women analysts, as well as with the profession he created, in which he and his colleagues encouraged a large number of women, some of whom had their own ideas about femininity. In his writings, you find the individual women he describes in the *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer & Freud, 1893–1895), in "Dora" (Freud, 1905a) in "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920), and in other writings—all the "sexual beings with sexual desires"—who cannot be reduced to a singular "woman." You find in his later theorizing that clinical women tended to fall into three, rather than one, typical developmental trajectories, three typical patterns, only one of which is the path to "femininity." This is how Freud *wants* women to turn out, and he calls it "femininity" to make his point. Similarly, as I argue in "Heterosexuality as a Compromise Formation," the divide heterosexual/homosexual, or straight/gay, does not begin to specify the personally unique constellation of fantasies and desires that go into each heterosexual person's "sexual orientation."

Although it had also theoretical origins, my perspective on the clinical individual came most radically to the fore in my writing and thinking as a result of psychoanalytic training and practice, as I began to ground myself in the view "from behind the couch" (Chodorow, 2003a). As all clinicians know, the individual is immersed in bodily, sexual experience and in affectively charged, psychically organizing (and disorganizing) unconscious fantasies about internal self and other, but psychoanalytic theory, at the same time, tends to generalize and often universalize: You are an ego psychologist, a relational analyst, a Kleinian, a Winnicottian, a Kohutian, a Bionian, a Lacanian, and you see your patients through that theoretical lens.

My thinking about clinical individuality culminated in *The Power of Feelings*. Addressed to both psychoanalysts and academics, the book, as my previous contributions, derived from a simple observation: Of the several women and several men patients I had treated, each person's psyche was unique. What psychoanalysis gives us is a universalized account—an account of the psychobiology of being human—of the functioning of the human psyche, much as, say, cognitive psychology gives us a universalized account of cognition, perception, and so forth. I locate the center of this functioning in the creation of personal meaning, meaning best described as created through transference, fantasy, introjection, and projection. "Experience," whether embodied and biological, cultural and social, or interpersonal and familial, is actively created and individually filtered through these affective, unconscious, meaning-creating capacities and the internal, affect-laden fantasies about body, self, and other that they create. Each of our many theories helps to explain these elements of psychic life in some individual some of the time.

Psychoanalysis, I suggest, argues against determinism. In a dialogue with psychoanalysis, I claim that universalized developmental theories based on the *content* of unconscious fantasy or affect—the universalized accounts we have of gender, for example, or of the necessary interpretation of the body, as in the later (but not the earlier) Freud, or of "Oedipus"—exhibit a misplaced concreteness. What is universal is the demand, because of the powerful salience of bodily experience, or the powerful salience of early family experience, or the powerful salience of being labeled and treated as female or male, that these experiences be given psychic and fantasy representation, but the particular representation that they are given will be set in the context of the individual's overall psychic makeup and functioning. When we call something "oedipal," "feminine," or "oral," it is because we have discovered prevalent *patterns* that characterize the ways that people respond to these meaning-creating demands. When we universalize these, we take away from the activity of the psyche and from clinical individuality.

Our knowledge of patterns helps us to make sense of what we experience clinically. When we recognize something that has previously fit a pattern, we may look for other manifestations that have, in our experience, hung

together with that pattern (I employ this formulation in Chapters 4 and 8). That everyone is unique and that we can also find patterns in psychic life indicates, further, a need for theoretical pluralism rather than theoretical exclusivity and embattlement. Different theorists tend to address different aspects of psychic functioning and fantasy and different constellations of patients. *The Power of Feelings* is theoretically inclusive (what I call *both/and* rather than *either/or*), drawing especially from Loewald, Klein, Winnicott, and Erikson. I take from these theorists Loewald's generative syncretism and his radical claim that ego and reality, self and other, drive and object, and primary process thinking and language are all developmentally emergent from a proto ego-self; Klein's focus on projection and introjection—what she calls the "doubling" or filtering of external experience through unconscious fantasy and internal experience (1940; see also Chapter 3); Winnicott's attention to the internal, private, true self and to transitionality; and Erikson's serious consideration of how culture and history are transferentially filtered and created by the individual psyche. I bring my argument for the power of feelings and the powers of personal meaning to expanded understandings of gender and culture.

One result of my clinical experience, then, was to enable and require me to rethink the psychology of women, especially two particular characteristics of the thinking that went into *The Reproduction of Mothering* and related early work (see Chapter 4). First, the book falls into a tendency (though I am careful not to universalize) to create a generalized theory. I wrote it in an era of universalistic theory (structuralism, functionalism, Marxism), as well as of classical universalizing psychoanalysis. At the time, we had no postmodernism, poststructuralism, or psychoanalytic pluralism to temper our grand theoretical visions.

In my generalizations themselves, however, I was, in contrast to some of the classical theories, like universal penis envy as *the* driving force in femininity, largely right. It is certainly the case that for virtually all women, the internal and external relation to the mother is developmentally central. The experiences of puberty, menarche, breast development, the potential for pregnancy and motherhood, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and motherhood themselves (including adoption or co-mothering a partner's child) are also important in virtually every woman's development. My own solution, as I note earlier, was to think in terms of patterns of development and of psychic femininity: The intrapsychic and intersubjective reproduction of mothering that I describe is certainly a prevalent pattern, but it needs clinical specification for each individual, put in the context of her entire internal life. We will not find it in all patients, but it helps us to have this pattern in mind and to know that for many women, a projective and introjective filtering of the mother-daughter relationship will be centrally constitutive of their sense of female self and femininity (see especially Chapters 4, 8, and 11).

Similarly, both clinical experience and cultural change required, along with the reconsideration of embodied femininity and maternality that I discuss earlier, an expansion of my thinking about sexuality. *The Reproduction of Mothering* discusses sexuality very much in the terms of the later Freud (e.g., 1925, 1931)—that is, more in terms of gender than of sexual desire and fantasy. The active libido of the radical *Three Essays* is neither in these late essays of Freud's nor in my early writings. In a feminist era that was phobic about biological determinism and that advocated political lesbianism and the lesbian continuum (Rich, 1980), sexuality was not thought of as something that erupted asocially out of the body and desire. Rather, it was politically shaped by cultural heterosexism and could and should be politically challenged. Most feminist writing (Rubin, 1975, is an exception here) made sexuality into a political choice or political constraint.

Clinical experience made the actuality and power of embodied sexuality evident, but I was also inspired by my students, whose understandings of sexual object choice were well in advance of anything found in the psychoanalytic literature (see Epstein, 1991; Martin, 1996; Stein, 1989, 1997).[17] My first foray into thinking about sexuality, while attuned to the individuality of desire, had nonetheless some of the character of feminist outrage. I wrote, and named, "Heterosexuality as a Compromise Formation," originally entitled "Heterosexuality as a Symptom," in response to several talks I had heard in which homosexuality was called a symptom.

Once again, the impulse and language were reactive, but the underlying thinking was generative. I tried to figure out what we psychoanalysts knew about the sexual object choice that characterized most of us, most of our patients, and indeed the majority of people in the world—what I called, tongue in cheek, to myself and my friends, "garden-variety heterosexuality." The essay reviews the various criteria by which homosexuality was judged pathological and suggests that these criteria apply equally to some manifestations of heterosexuality and some of homosexuality.

Two implications follow. First, in assessing pathology, some other criterion enters, and must enter, besides the gender of the object in relation to the subject's gender: Neither term adequately specifies anyone's sexual orientation. Second, there must be several homosexualities and heterosexualities. No "heterosexual" man is attracted to all women and to no men, similarly for heterosexual women, similarly for those who are gay or lesbian. I claim:

> Those who are called or who consider themselves heterosexual are, in all likelihood, tall-blond-Wasposexual, short-curly-haired zaftig-Jewishosexual, African-American-with-a-southern-accentosexual, erotically excited only by members of their own ethnic group or only by those

[17] I cite published work, but I was reading this work long before publication.

> outside that group. Some women find themselves repeatedly attracted to men who turn out to be depressed, others to men who are aggressive or violent, still others to narcissists. Some men are attracted to women who are chattery and flirtatious, others to those who are quiet and distant. Some choose lovers or spouses who are like a parent (and it can be either parent for either gender or a mixture of the two); others choose lovers or spouses as much unlike their parents as possible (often to find these mates recapitulating parental characteristics after all, or to find themselves discontented when they don't). These choices have both cultural and individual psychological resonance. (1992, p. 38)

Sexual desire is an individual project and outcome that we learn of, like gender, in the clinical context of fantasy, transference, and descriptions of actual relationships. As I describe this (see Chapter 11), it is composed of a number of constitutive components, including an internal oedipal and preoedipal world, a prevalent personal erotism, organizing fantasies, a sense of gender in relation to sexuality, a filtering of culture, and so forth. It is intertwined with other aspects of psyche, self, and fantasy and can be defensively subordinated to aggression. Gender itself can fade in its presence. My conclusions thus return us again to clinical individuality.

Following from this essay, I was invited to write or present several reflections on sexuality. A new foreword to Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (Chapter 2) allowed me to notice how Freud distinguishes "inversion" from "perversion"—deviance in object choice from deviance in aim—both found in all people, abnormal or deviant only when fixation and exclusivity reign. For Freud, I notice, anyone exclusively either heterosexual or homosexual in their fantasy life is abnormal and represses the alternative, and all people's sexuality includes perverse elements. The *Three Essays*, then, anticipate my argument in "Heterosexuality" that there is nothing inherent in the gender of the object relative to the gender of the self that makes a particular sexual orientation pathological.

A public forum that considered homophobia (Hoffman et al., 2000), attended by several hundred at the meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association, enabled me to begin to elaborate thoughts about sexuality, body, and culture and to begin to consider the "faultlines" of masculinity (Chapter 9). As I put it then:

> What is true, I think, is that the parts of prejudice that are most deep and violent are often cast unconsciously as well as in cultural tropes as bodily and sexual. For instance, when you read the most virulent anti-Semitic tracts, or reflect on lynching of blacks in the South and the accusations of interracial rape or sex that often preceded these lynchings, it is sexual and bodily imagery that stands out. In recent years, we notice that rape and even more brutal and violent attacks on women

> are instruments of war, especially in ethnic wars and in dictatorships that engage in kidnapping and torture. Men also kill other men who perform abortions, although whatever the hate involved here—and I do think it is extreme—we still have to notice that this is done with a single bullet, rather than with prolonged brutal torture, as in the case of violence against homosexuals.
>
> What seems to be the case is that there is a huge psychic faultline around the sexual body in relation to masculinity. Images of a man having sex with other men, a black man having sex with a white woman, a woman who is sexual without having a baby, are for some men extremely threatening. (Hoffman et al., 2000, p. 23)

Finally, I was asked to contribute to an issue of *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* that featured Stephen Mitchell's groundbreaking early critiques of psychoanalytic treatment of homosexuality (Chapter 5) and to a special issue of the *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* on the "homosexualities"—a plural that would not have been found 10 years earlier (Chapter 11). There, I extend my discussion of Freud's *Three Essays*, noticing that Freud gives us an account of gender-bending and fluidity that rivals that of any post-modern theorist: Everyone is homosexual and heterosexual, masculine and feminine; the most "masculine" man can be gay, the most "feminine" man heterosexual; both heterosexuality and homosexuality involve the "tyranny" of one object and aim.

I began my graduate work in 1969 with an intuition that psychoanalysis gave us a primary vehicle for understanding gender and its discontents. Forty years later, clinical (as well as life) experience has deepened and transformed my understanding of men and women, masculinity and femininity, sexuality and desire, and, more generally, of psychic life and how we study this. The lens that best captures what clinical experience has given me, one that I continually return to in this essay and throughout my recent writing, is that of clinical individuality. It is a lens generated by experience, by "listening to" rather than "listening for" (Chodorow, 2003a), and it is given specificity by my reading and following of many theories of mind and theories of technique. Listening to the patient, rather than listening for manifestations of a particular theory or documentation of a particular belief, whether about the operation or contents of the mind or about the analytic relationship, respects clinical individuality, in matters of gender and sexuality and in the rest of psychic life.