

THEORIES



R. W. Connell

Key Concepts

- Hegemonic Masculinity
- Patriarchal Dividend



Judith Butler

Key Concepts

- Queer Theory
- Heterosexual Matrix
- Performativity

There is no original or primary gender a drag imitates, but gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original.

—Judith Butler

A Brief History of Women's Rights in the United States

1700s

American colonial law held that “by marriage, the husband and wife are one person in the law. The very being and legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated into that of her husband under whose wing and protection she performs everything.”

By 1777, women are denied the right to vote in all states in the United States.

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1800s

In *Missouri v. Celia* (1855), a slave, a black woman, is declared to be property without the right to defend herself against a master's act of rape.

In 1866, the Fourteenth Amendment is passed by Congress (ratified by the states in 1868). It is the first time "citizens" and "voters" are defined as male in the U.S. Constitution.

1900s

In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified. It declares, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

In 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment is introduced in Congress in the United States.

In 1963, the Equal Pay Act is passed by the U.S. Congress, promising equitable wages for the same work, regardless of the race, color, religion, national origin, or sex of the worker. In 1982, the Equal Rights Amendment, which had languished in Congress for fifty years, is defeated, falling three states short of the thirty-eight needed for ratification. (National Women's History Project n.d.; Jo Freeman, *American Journal of Sociology*, in Goodwin and Jasper 2004)

The brief timeline above underscores an obvious but all-too-often overlooked point: the experience of women in society is not the same as that of men. In the United States, women's rights have expanded considerably since the nineteenth century, when women were denied access to higher education and the right to own property and vote. Despite major advances, there are still some troubling gender gaps in the United States, however. Women still suffer disproportionately, leading to what sociologists refer to as the "feminization of poverty," where two out of every three poor adults are women. In addition, in contrast to countries such as Sweden where 47 percent of elected officials in parliament are women, in the United States only about 17 percent of the politicians in the House or Senate are women, placing the United States a lowly sixty-first worldwide in the global ranking of women in politics (Gender Gap Index 2009; International Women's Democracy Center 2008; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2010).

Yet, it was not until 2005 that women in Kuwait were granted the right to vote and stand for election (see Table 7.1), and sadly, as of this writing, women in Saudi Arabia do not yet have those political freedoms. Indeed, in a recent study by Freedom House, Saudi Arabia ranked last in all five categories analyzed in terms of women's equality, although in none of the seventeen societies of the Arab Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) studied do women enjoy the same citizenship and nationality rights as men.¹ In Saudi Arabia, women are segregated in public places, are not allowed to drive cars, and must be covered from head

¹For instance, in no country in the region is domestic violence outlawed, and some laws, such as those that encourage men who rape women to marry their victims, even condone violence against women. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the least rights and 5 representing the most rights available, Freedom House (2009) rated Saudi Arabia as follows: Nondiscrimination and Access to Justice 1.4; Autonomy, Security, and Freedom of the Person 1.3; Economic Rights and Equal Opportunity 1.7; Political Rights and Civic Voice 1.2; Social and Cultural Rights 1.6.

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to toe when in public. Men are entitled to divorce
without explanation simply by registering a statement
to the court and repeating it three times. By contrast,
most women not only lack the right to divorce, but
also, because their children legally belong to the
father, to leave their husband means giving up their
children (Freedom House 2009; PBS 2002).

What these latter cases also demonstrate is that
the expansion of women's rights does not proceed auto-
matically and must not be taken for granted. Laws that
discriminate against women were instituted in the United
States in the nineteenth century; these laws had not
existed in previous decades. On a global scale, nowhere
was the precariousness of women's rights more evident
than it was when the Taliban radically rescinded them in
Afghanistan (1996–2002). Under the rule of the Taliban,
women who had previously enjoyed many rights were
banished from the workforce, forbidden an education,
and prohibited from leaving their homes unless accompa-
nied by a close male relative (PBS 2002).

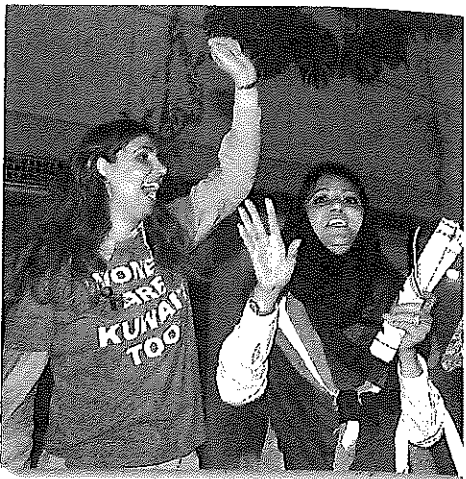


Photo 7.1 Kuwaiti Women Protesting
Kuwaiti women press for their full political right
amid crucial parliamentary meeting in March 2005

Table 7.1 International Women's Suffrage Timeline

1893 New Zealand	1950 India
1902 Australia ^a	1954 Colombia
1906 Finland	1957 Malaysia, Zimbabwe
1913 Norway	1962 Algeria
1915 Denmark	1963 Iran, Morocco
1917 Canada ^b	1964 Libya
1918 Austria, Germany, Poland, Russia	1967 Ecuador
1919 Netherlands	1971 Switzerland
1920 United States	1972 Bangladesh
1921 Sweden	1974 Jordan
1928 Britain, Ireland	1976 Portugal
1931 Spain	1989 Namibia
1944 France	1990 Western Samoa
1945 Italy	1993 Kazakhstan, Moldova
1947 Argentina, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan	1994 South Africa
1949 China	2005 Kuwait

SOURCE: *The New York Times*, May 22, 2005.

NOTE: Two countries do not allow their people, male or female, to vote: Brunei and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia is the only country with suffrage that does not allow women to vote.

^aAustralian women, with the exception of aboriginal women, won the vote in 1902. Aboriginals, male and female, did not have the right to vote until 1962.

^bCanadian women, with the exception of Canadian Indian women, won the vote in 1917. Canadian Indians, male and female, did not win the vote until 1960.

In this chapter, we explore the works of five different analysts who take seriously the distinct social situation of women and men and examine it from a variety of theoretical viewpoints. We begin with the Canadian sociologist Dorothy E. Smith, who provocatively blends neo-Marxist, phenomenological, and ethnomethodological concepts and ideas. We then turn to the work of African American sociologist Patricia Hill Collins, who extends the work of Smith by formally situating the variable of race into the critical/phenomenological exploration of class and gender, while also borrowing significantly from postmodernism and recent work on the body and sexuality. We then turn to the psychoanalytic feminist Nancy Chodorow, who draws on both the Frankfurt School and Freud to explore various factors that serve to perpetuate sexism. Both of the final two theorists featured in this chapter challenge the prevailing “sex/gender” dichotomy, i.e., the notion that “sex” is the *biological* difference between “male” and “female” human animals, while “gender” is the *social* difference “between males’ and females’ roles or men’s and women’s personalities” (Connell 2002:33). Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell explains how in many ways men and boys are gatekeepers for gender equality. Finally, in accordance with postmodern lines of thought, the American philosopher Judith Butler challenges the very binary categories that we use to think about both gender and sexual orientation.²

That gender analysts bring to bear such a wide variety of theoretical approaches brings us to the question, why not discuss each of these theorists in the chapter on the theoretical tradition of which they are a part? Although this is certainly an option for professors and students, as you will see, the feminists whose works you will read in this chapter do not fit very neatly into a single theoretical tradition; rather, they provocatively draw from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary wells in order to fully address feminist concerns. In addition, grouping feminist theorists together in this chapter better enables us to compare and contrast these various approaches to gender.

Significant Others

Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986): The Second Sex

Simone de Beauvoir was born in Paris in 1908 to a bourgeois family. Like her famous companion, Jean-Paul Sartre, whom she met at the École Normale Supérieure, she was an acclaimed French existentialist philosopher who wrote fiction and memoirs, as well as philosophy. In her most influential book, *The Second Sex* (1949), de Beauvoir argued that women have been defined by men and that if they attempt to break with this, they risk alienating themselves. Specifically, following Hegel, de Beauvoir maintained that

²To be sure, feminism has never been a unified body of thought, and there are various ways that feminisms and feminist theorists can be contemplated. One of the most common is according to political/ideological orientation. According to this approach, which typically equates “feminism” with “feminist theory,” “liberal feminists” such as Betty Friedan (see Significant Others, p. 317), focus on how political, economic, and social rights can be fully extended to women within contemporary society, while “radical feminists” such as Andrea Dworkin (1946–2005) and Catharine MacKinnon (1946–), most famous for their proposal for a law that defined pornography as a violation of women’s civil rights (thereby allowing women to sue the producers and distributors of pornography in a civil court for damages), view women as an oppressed group, who, like other oppressed peoples, must struggle for their liberation against their oppressors—in this case, men. However, here we consider feminists largely in terms of their theoretical orientation rather than in terms of their political/ideological commitment, because we view the former as *prior* to the latter (Alexander 1987:7). As discussed in Chapter 1, theoretical presuppositions are, by definition, simply the most basic assumptions that theorists make as they go about thinking and writing about the world (ibid.:12).

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"otherness is a fundamental category of human thought" (ibid.:xvii). Women are defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute; she is the "Other." Simone de Beauvoir links woman's identity as Other and her fundamental alienation to her body—especially her reproductive capacity. Childbearing, childbirth, and menstruation are draining physical events that tie women to their bodies and to immanence. The male, however, is not tied down by such inherently physical events (ibid.:19–29, as cited in Donovan 1985/2000:137). In the struggle described by Sartre as that between *pour-soi* and *en-soi*, men are cast in the role of the *pour-soi* (for itself), that is, the continual process of self-realization, or creative freedom; while women are cast in the role of *en-soi* (in-itself), in which, instead of choosing to engage in the authenticating project of self-realization, they consent to become an object, to exist as *en-soi* (ibid.:136). De Beauvoir urged women "to decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal" (ibid.:xx). Akin to earlier feminists such as Charlotte Perkins-Gilman (see Edles and Appelrouth 2005/2010:ch.5), de Beauvoir encouraged women to strengthen their "masculine" rational faculties and critical powers, to exist as a *pour-soi*, that is, a transcendent subject who constitutes her own future by means of creative projects (Donovan:130). However, de Beauvoir fully recognized that this moral choice was fraught with anxiety, since "women's independent successes are in contradiction with her femininity, since the 'true woman' is required to make herself object, to be the Other" (ibid.:246). De Beauvoir died on April 14, 1986.

Significant Others

Betty Friedan (1921–2006): The Feminine Mystique

Betty Friedan was born Betty Naomi Goldstein in Peoria, Illinois, in 1921. She graduated from Smith College in 1942 with a B.A. in psychology. In 1958, she surveyed her Smith classmates and found that a great many of them were, like her, deeply dissatisfied with their lives. She turned her findings into a book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which became an immediate and controversial best seller. It sold more than three million copies, was translated into a number of languages, and ushered in a new era of consciousness-raising. Friedan's central thesis was that women suffered under a pervasive system of delusions and false values under which they were urged to find personal fulfillment, even identity, vicariously through the husbands and children to whom they were expected cheerfully to devote their lives. This restricted role of wife-mother, whose spurious glorification by advertisers and others was suggested by the title of the book, led almost inevitably to a sense of unreality or general spiritual malaise in the absence of genuine, creative, self-defining work. In effect, then, Friedan extended de Beauvoir's writing in a more popular form. In 1966, Friedan co-founded the National Organization for Women, a civil rights group dedicated to achieving equality of opportunity for women. It became the largest and probably the most effective organization in the women's movement. Friedan also helped found the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws in 1969, and the National Women's Political Caucus in 1971. Friedan's other major works include *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (1963); *The Second Stage* (1981); and *The Fountain of Age* (1993), which focuses on the psychology of old age and urges a revision of society's view that aging means loss and depletion. Betty Friedan died on February 5, 2006, in Washington, DC.

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facing African-American women intellectuals working in these new locations concerns the potential isolation of individual thinkers from Black women's collective experiences—lack of access to other U.S. Black women and to Black women's communities. Another is the pressure to separate thought from action—particularly political activism—that typically accompanies training in standard academic disciplines or participating in allegedly neutral spheres like the “free” press. Yet another involves the inability of some Black women “superstars” to critique the terms of their own participation in these new relations. Blinded by their self-proclaimed Black feminist diva aspirations, they feel that they owe no one, especially other Black women. Instead, they become trapped within their own impoverished Black feminist universes. Despite these dangers, these new institutional locations provide a multitude of opportunities for enhancing Black feminist thought's visibility. In this new context, the challenge lies in remaining dynamic, all the while keeping in mind that a moving target is more difficult to hit.

U.S. Black Feminism and Other Social Justice Projects

A final distinguishing feature of Black feminist thought concerns its relationship to other projects for social justice. A broad range of African-American women intellectuals have advanced the view that Black women's struggles are part of a wider struggle for human dignity, empowerment, and social justice. In an 1893 speech to women, Anna Julia Cooper cogently expressed this worldview:

We take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life, and the unnaturalness and injustice of all special favoritisms, whether of sex, race, country, or condition. . . . The colored woman feels that woman's cause is one and universal; and that . . . not till race, color, sex, and condition are seen as accidents, and not the substance of life; not till the universal title of humanity to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is conceded to be inalienable to all; not till then is woman's lesson taught and woman's cause won—not the white woman's nor the black woman's, not the red woman's but the cause of every man and of every woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong. (Loewenberg and Bogin 1976, 330–31)

Like Cooper, many African-American women intellectuals embrace this perspective regardless of particular political solutions we propose, our educational backgrounds, our fields of study, or our historical periods. Whether we advocate working through autonomous Black women's organizations, becoming part of women's organizations, running for political office, or supporting Black community institutions, African-American women intellectuals repeatedly identify political actions such as these as a *means* for human empowerment rather than ends in and of themselves. Thus one important guiding principle of Black feminism is a recurring humanist vision (Steady 1981, 1987). . . .

Perhaps the most succinct version of the humanist vision in U.S. Black feminist thought is offered by Fannie Lou Hamer, the daughter of sharecroppers and a Mississippi civil rights activist. While sitting on her porch, Ms. Hamer observed, “Ain’ no such thing as I can hate anybody and hope to see God’s face” (Jordan 1981, xi).

■ ■ NANCY CHODOROW (1944–): A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nancy Chodorow was born in 1944 in New York City. She earned her B.A. in social anthropology from Radcliffe University in 1966 and her Ph.D. in sociology from Brandeis University in 1974. She first taught women's studies at Wellesley College in 1973, then taught at the University of California, Santa Cruz, from 1974 to 1986. Since 1986, she has been teaching at the University of California, Berkeley. From 1985 to 1993, Chodorow undertook training at the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute. Arguably the most important psychoanalytic feminist and reinterpreter of Freud, Chodorow is a practicing clinical

such as libidinal and aggressive drives, gain meaning. In sum, the term "object relations" refers to the self-structure that we internalize in early childhood, which functions as a blueprint for establishing and maintaining future relationships (Klee 2005).¹²

Object relations theorists emphasize that, during the first few years of life, certain innate potentials and character traits (e.g., the ability to walk and talk) develop in the presence of good object relations. The quality of these relations affects the quality of one's linguistic and motor skills (ibid.). In addition, in stark contrast to traditional Freudian thought, object relations theorists emphasize that the child's gender identity has little to do with the child's own awareness of sexuality and reproduction (whether conscious or unconscious). Rather, gender identity is developed through a process involving (1) the establishment of a close, symbiotic relationship to the primary caretaker, which is generally the mother, in the first three years of life, followed by (2) the subsequent dissolution of that relationship through *separation* (differentiating oneself from one's primary caretaker) and *individuation* (establishing one's own skills and personality traits). Of course, this newly developed gender identity reflects and expresses not merely personal traits, but also the gender-specific ideals and inequities of the family/community into which she or he is born.

In this way, psychoanalytic feminists tackle one of the enduring conundrums that feminists face: the resiliency of gender roles. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, many feminists were profoundly optimistic about the power of socialization to change gendered patterns of behavior.

They assumed that if boys and girls were socialized in similar ways (i.e., if girls were not trained to do "girl" things and boys were not trained to do "boy" things), stereotypical gender roles would not persist. Gender roles would become obsolete, and sexism at the microlevel would be largely eliminated. However, this has not been the case. Despite significant changes in socialization (e.g., the rise in girls' sports and more gender-neutral activities in school), and much to the chagrin of many parents and teachers, there are still strongly gendered preferences among both boys and girls. Thus, psychoanalytic feminists seek to explain how gender patterns are reproduced independent of our conscious intentions (Chodorow 1978:34; Williams 1993:134).

Chodorow begins by noting that, because of the allocation of work roles, infants usually originally identify with the female parent. That is, the infant first develops a sense of his or her own selfhood in a close, one-on-one relationship with the mother, and qualities possessed by the mother are internalized

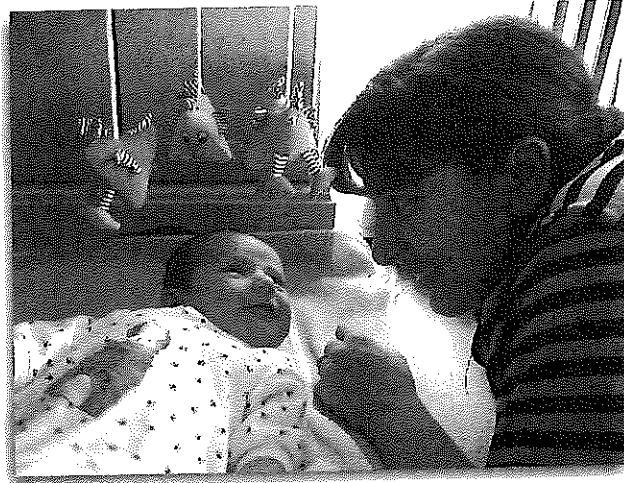


Photo 7.2 Mother and Child

For Chodorow, the mother-child relationship is central to the formation of the child's personality.

¹²Klee (2005) notes that while object relations theory might well be called "human-relations theory" because of its prioritization of human relationships, in fact, in childhood, we form relationships with "transitional objects," such as stuffed animals, toys, and pets; later in life, some people form intense and even self-destructive relationships with food and alcohol, as well as with other people. "So the term object is more inclusive for our understanding of how humans form and preserve a sense of self, as well as relationships with others" (ibid.).

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However, the particularly strong bonds formed with the mother and the relative absence of the father have important implications for the development of "normal" adult heterosexual identity. Boys achieve their adult sexual identity (i.e., become "men") only by separating themselves from their mothers. This separation entails denying the world of emotional intimacy that she represents. That is, boys become men by defining themselves in opposition to the femininity of their mother. According to Chodorow, the consequence of this is that men have difficulty in dealing with emotional matters: they see acknowledgment of emotions as a sign of vulnerability and weakness. Moreover, social contempt for women (and, in its extreme form, misogyny)

arises as boys deny their earliest emotional experiences with their mothers and particularly the sexually charged nature of their oedipal love for their mothers. The acknowledgment of emotions, in particular feelings of vulnerability, is considered "feminizing" and is threatening to their status as "real" men (Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon 2002:59).

Girls, however, are never required to make a complete break with their mothers in order to achieve their adult sexual identity (i.e., to become "women"). Rather, society fosters the continuation of intense mother-daughter bonds into adulthood. However, not having been forced to emotionally separate from their mothers, women continue to long for the emotional intimacy provided by close relationships. This unconscious desire to form attachments to others leads women to suffer greater dependency needs, as their self-identity is tied to their relationships with others. According to Chodorow, this lack of differentiation explains why women become preoccupied with the very relational issues at the heart of motherhood: intimacy and a lack of ego separation. Women find their self-in-relation (in intimate relations with others), but because of their socialization into adult heterosexuality, men lack the emotional capabilities that women need in order to be fulfilled in relationships. Because masculinity is defined by separation and distance, women turn not to men but to motherhood to fulfill their unconscious desire for intimacy; they re-create the early infant-mother relationship by becoming mothers themselves. Of course, as women again mother (and fathers continue to eschew intimacy), the cycle continues on into another generation: a female self that is fundamentally a self-in-relation and a male self that is fundamentally a self-in-denial of relations (Gerhenson and Williams 2001:282).

To be sure, Chodorow is not the first sociologist to suggest that gender personality is shaped within the psychodynamics of the family. Talcott Parsons (see Chapter 2) also borrowed this idea from Freud. But, in contrast to Parsons, who Chodorow (1978:38) maintains "always sounds as though he wants to understand order to contribute to its maintenance," Chodorow examines the family critically. She maintains that the strains in the family that Parsons (1943) describes (e.g., the "asymmetrical relation of the marriage pair" in the occupational structure, which leads men to oppress and dominate women, and women to "succumb to their dependency cravings through such channels as neurotic illness or compulsive domesticity"—see Chapter 2) are actually deep distortions that, far from being a



Photo 7.3 Teenage Boy at Video Arcade

According to Chodorow, boys become "men" by separating themselves from the emotional intimacy that the mother represents.

The Reproduction of Mothering (1978)

Nancy Chodorow

THE RELATION TO THE MOTHER AND THE MOTHERING RELATION

The Effects of Early Mothering

The character of the infant's early relation to its mother profoundly affects its sense of self, its later object-relationships, and its feelings about its mother and about women in general. The continuity of care enables the infant to develop a self—a sense that “I am.” The quality of any particular relationship, however, affects the infant's personality and self-identity. The experience of self concerns *who* “I am” and not simply *that* “I am.”

In a society where mothers provide nearly exclusive care and certainly the most meaningful relationship to the infant, the infant develops its sense of self mainly in relation to her. Insofar as the relationship with its mother has continuity, the infant comes to define aspects of its self (affectively and structurally) in relation to internalized representations of aspects of its mother and the perceived quality of her care. (As I have indicated, to call this quality “perceived” brackets the variety of fantasies and transformations the infant may engage in to deal with its anxiety and ambivalence.) For instance, the experience of satisfactory feeding and holding enables the child to develop a sense of loved self in relation to a loving and caring mother. Insofar as aspects of the maternal relationship are unsatisfactory, or such that the infant feels rejected or unloved, it is likely to define itself as rejected, or as someone who drives love away. In this situation, part of infantile attention, and then the infantile ego, remains preoccupied with this negatively experienced internal relationship. Because this situation is unresolvable, and interferes with the ongoing need for love, the infant represses its preoccupation. Part of its definition of self and its affective energy thus splits off experientially

from its central self, drawing to an internal object energy and commitment which would otherwise be available for ongoing external relationships. The growing child's psychic structure and sense of self thus comes to consist of unconscious, quasi-independent, divided experiences of self in affective (libidinal-attached, aggressive, angry, ambivalent, helpless-dependent) relation with an inner object world, made up originally of aspects of its relation to its mother.

The infant's mental and physical existence depends on its mother, and the infant comes to feel that it does. It experiences a sense of oneness with her and develops a self only by convincing itself that it is in fact a separate being from her. She is the person whom it loves with egoistic primary love and to whom it becomes attached. She is the person who first imposes on it the demands of reality. Internally she is also important. The infant comes to define itself as a person through its relationship to her, by internalizing the most important aspects of their relationship. Its stance toward itself and the world—its emotions, its quality of self-love (narcissism), or self-hate (depression)—all derive in the first instance from this earliest relationship.

In later life a person's early relation to her or his mother leads to a preoccupation with issues of primary intimacy and merging. On one psychological level, all people who have experienced primary love and primary identification have some aspect of self that wants to recreate these experiences, and most people try to do so. Freud talks about the turn to religion as an attempt to recreate the lost feeling of oneness. Michael Balint suggests that adult love relationships are an attempt to recreate primary intimacy and merging, and that the “tranquil sense of well-being” is their ultimate goal: “This primary tendency, I shall be loved always, everywhere, in every way, my whole body, my whole

SOURCE: Excerpts from *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* by Nancy Chodorow. Copyright © 1978 by The Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with permission from The University of California Press via Copyright Clearance Center.

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l the Sociology of Gender by
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being—without any criticism, without the slightest effort on my part—is the final aim of all erotic striving."

The preoccupation with issues of intimacy and merging, however, can also lead to avoidance. Fear of fusion may overwhelm the attraction to it, and fear of loss of a love object may make the experience of love too risky. When a person's early experience tells him or her that only one unique person can provide emotional gratifications—a realistic expectation when they have been intensely and exclusively mothered—the desire to recreate that experience has to be ambivalent. . . .

Children wish to remain one with their mother, and expect that she will never have different interests from them; yet they define development in terms of growing away from her. In the face of their dependence, lack of certainty of her emotional permanence, fear of merging, and overwhelming love and attachment, a mother looms large and powerful. Several analytic formulations speak to this, and to the way growing children come to experience their mothers. Mothers, they suggest, come to symbolize dependence, regression, passivity, and the lack of adaptation to reality. Turning from mother (and father) represents independence and individuation, progress, activity, and participation in the real world: "It is by turning away from our mother that we finally become, by our different paths, grown men and women."

These attitudes, and the different relations to mother and father, are generalized as people grow up. During most of the early period, gender is not salient to the child (nor does it know gender categories). However, the fact that the child's earliest relationship is with a woman becomes exceedingly important for the object-relations of subsequent developmental periods; that women mother and men do not is projected back by the child *after* gender comes to count. Women's early mothering, then, creates specific conscious and unconscious attitudes or expectations in children. 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. . . .

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE PREOEDIPAL PERIOD

Family structure produces crucial differentiating experiences between the sexes in oedipal object-relations and in the way these are psychologically appropriated, internalized, and transformed. Mothers are and have been the child's primary caretaker, socializer, and inner object; fathers are secondary objects for boys and girls. My interpretation of the oedipus complex, from a perspective centered on object-relations, shows that these basic features of family structure entail varied modes of differentiation for the ego and its internalized object-relations and lead to the development of different relational capacities for girls and boys.

The feminine oedipus complex is not simply a transfer of affection from mother to father and a giving up of mother. Rather, psychoanalytic research demonstrates the continued importance of a girl's external and internal relation to her mother, and the way her relation to her father is added to this. This process entails a relational complexity in feminine self-definition and personality which is not characteristic of masculine self-definition or personality. Relational capacities that are curtailed in boys as a result of the masculine oedipus complex are sustained in girls.

Because of their mothering by women, girls come to experience themselves as less separate than boys, as having more permeable ego boundaries. Girls come to define themselves more in relation to others. Their internalized object-relational structure becomes more complex, with more ongoing issues. These personality features are reflected in superego development.

My investigation, then, does not focus on issues at the center of the traditional psychoanalytic account of the oedipus complex—superego formation, gender identity, the attainment of gender role expectations, differential valuations of the sexes, and the genesis of sexual orientation. It takes other issues as equally central. I will be concerned with traditional issues only insofar as my analysis of oedipal object-relations of boys and girls sheds new insight on the different nature of male and female heterosexual object-relations. . . .

The clinical and cultural examples I have discussed all point to the conclusion that preoedipal

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experiences of girls and boys differ. The girl's preoedipal mother-love and preoccupation with preoedipal issues are prolonged in a way that they are not for the boy. With the exception of Whiting's cross-cultural analysis, all the examples I cite are cases which their authors have taken to be noteworthy for their "abnormality" or "pathology." However, the extent of such pathology varies (from preoccupation to mild neurosis to psychosis). More important, there is systematic variation in the form it takes depending on whether a person is female or male—on whether we are talking about mother-daughter or mother-son relationships. In all cases the pathology reflects, in exaggerated form, differences in what are in fact normal tendencies. The cases give us, as Freud suggests about neurosis in general, insight into what we would otherwise miss just because it is subtle, typical, and familiar. These cases, then, point to typical gender differences in the preoedipal period, differences that are a product of the asymmetrical organization of parenting which founds our family structure.

Because they are the same gender as their daughters and have been girls, mothers of daughters tend not to experience these infant daughters as separate from them in the same way as do mothers of infant sons. In both cases, a mother is likely to experience a sense of oneness and continuity with her infant. However, this sense is stronger, and lasts longer, vis-à-vis daughters. Primary identification and symbiosis with daughters tend to be stronger and cathexis of daughters is more likely to retain and emphasize narcissistic elements, that is, to be based on experiencing a daughter as an extension or double of a mother herself, with cathexis of the daughter as a sexual other usually remaining a weaker, less significant theme.

Other accounts also suggest that mothers normally identify more with daughters and experience them as less separate. Signe Hammer's book, *Daughters and Mothers: Mothers and Daughters*, based on interviews with over seventy-five mothers, daughters, and grandmothers, describes how issues of primary identification, oneness, and separateness follow mother-daughter pairs from a daughter's earliest infancy until she is well into being a mother or even grandmother herself.

Most of the daughters in this book have received enough support from their mothers to emerge from the stage of complete symbiosis in early infancy. But for the vast majority of mothers and daughters, this emergence remains only partial. At some level mothers and daughters tend to remain emotionally bound up with each other in what might be called a semisymbiotic relationship, in which neither ever quite sees herself or the other as a separate person.

Hammer's study is certainly confirmed by my own discussions with a number of mothers of daughters and sons, first in a women's group devoted to the discussion and analysis of mother-daughter relationships in particular and family relationships in general, and later with individual acquaintances. Finally, the resurfacing and prevalence of preoedipal mother-daughter issues in adolescence (anxiety, intense and exclusive attachment, orality and food, maternal control of a daughter's body, primary identification) provide clinical verification of the claim that elements of the preoedipal mother-daughter relationship are maintained and prolonged in both maternal and filial psyche.

Because they are of different gender than their sons, by contrast, mothers experience their sons as a male opposite. Their cathexis of sons is more likely to consist from early on in an object cathexis of a sexual other, perhaps in addition to narcissistic components. Sons tend to be experienced as differentiated from their mothers, and mothers push this differentiation (even while retaining, in some cases, a kind of intrusive controlling power over their sons). Maternal behavior, at the same time, tends to help propel sons into a sexualized, genitally toned relationship, which in its turn draws the son into triangular conflicts.

Early psychoanalytic findings about the special importance of the preoedipal mother-daughter relationship describe the first stage of a general process in which separation and individuation remain particularly female developmental issues. The cases I describe suggest that there is a tendency in women toward boundary confusion and a lack of sense of separateness from the world. Most women do develop ego boundaries and a sense of separate self. However, women's ego and object-relational issues are

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concerned with this tendency on one level
(of potential conflict, of experience of object-
relations), even as on another level (in the forma-
tion of ego boundaries and the development of a
separate identity) the issues are resolved.

That these issues become more important for
girls than for boys is a product of children of
both genders growing up in families where
women, who have a greater sense of sameness
with daughters than sons, perform primary par-
enting functions.¹ As long as women mother, we
can expect that a girl's preoedipal period will be
longer than that of a boy and that women, more
than men, will be more open to and preoccupied
with those very relational issues that go into
mothering—feelings of primary identification,
lack of separateness or differentiation, ego and
body-ego boundary issues and primary love not
under the sway of the reality principle. A girl
does not simply identify with her mother or want
to be like her mother. Rather, mother and daugh-
ter maintain elements of their primary relation-
ship which means they will feel alike in
fundamental ways. Object-relations and conflicts
in the oedipal period build upon this preoedipal
base. . . .

OBJECT RELATIONS AND THE FEMALE OEDIPAL CONFIGURATION



Mothering, Masculinity, and Capitalism

Women's mothering in the isolated nuclear
family of contemporary capitalist society creates
specific personality characteristics in men that
reproduce both an ideology and psychodynamic
of male superiority and submission to the require-
ments of production. It prepares men for partici-
pation in a male-dominant family and society,
for their lesser emotional participation in family
life, and for their participation in the capitalist
world of work.

¹I must admit to fudging here about the contributory effect in all of this of a mother's sexual orientation—whether she is heterosexual or lesbian. Given a female gender identity, she is "the same as" her daughter and "different from" her son, but part of what I am talking about also presumes a different kind of cathexis of daughter and son deriving from heterosexuality. Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1978.

Masculine development takes place in a fam-
ily in which women mother and fathers are rela-
tively uninvolved in child care and family life,
and in a society characterized by sexual inequal-
ity and an ideology of masculine superiority.
This duality expresses itself in the family. In
family ideology, fathers are usually important
and considered the head of the household. Wives
focus energy and concern on their husbands, or
at least think and say that they do. They usually
consider, or at least claim, that they love these
husbands. Mothers may present fathers to chil-
dren as someone important, someone whom the
mother loves, and may even build up their hus-
bands to their children to make-up for the fact
that these children cannot get to know their
father as well as their mother. They may at the
same time undercut their husband in response to
the position he assumes of social superiority or
authority in the family.

Masculinity is presented to a boy as less
available and accessible than femininity, as rep-
resented by his mother. A boy's mother is his
primary caretaker. At the same time, masculinity
is idealized or accorded superiority, and thereby
becomes even more desirable. Although fathers
are not as salient as mothers in daily interaction,
mothers and children often idealize them and
give them ideological primacy, precisely because
of their absence and seeming inaccessibility, and
because of the organization and ideology of male
dominance in the larger society.

Masculinity becomes an issue in a way that
femininity does not. Masculinity does not become
an issue because of some intrinsic male biology,
nor because masculine roles are inherently more
difficult than feminine roles, however. Masculinity
becomes an issue as a direct result of a boy's
experience of himself in his family—as a result
of his being parented by a woman. For children of
both genders, mothers represent regression and
lack of autonomy. A boy associates these issues
with his gender identification as well. Dependence

on his mother, attachment to her, and identification with her represent that which is not masculine; a boy must reject dependence and deny attachment and identification. Masculine gender role training becomes much more rigid than feminine. A boy represses those qualities he takes to be feminine inside himself, and rejects and devalues women and whatever he considers to be feminine in the social world.

Thus, boys define and attempt to construct their sense of masculinity largely in negative terms. Given that masculinity is so elusive, it becomes important for masculine identity that certain social activities are defined as masculine and superior, and that women are believed unable to do many of the things defined as socially important. It becomes important to think that women's economic and social contribution cannot equal men's. The secure possession of certain realms, and the insistence that these realms are superior to the maternal world of youth, become crucial both to the definition of masculinity and to a particular boy's own masculine gender identification.

Freud describes the genesis of this stance in the masculine oedipal crisis. A boy's struggle to free himself from his mother and become masculine generates "the contempt felt by men for a sex which is the lesser"—"What we have come to consider the normal male contempt for women."

Both sexes learn to feel negatively toward their mother during the oedipal period. A girl's negative feelings, however, are not so much contempt and devaluation as fear and hostility: "The little girl, incapable of such contempt because of her own identical nature, frees herself from the mother with a degree of hostility far greater than any comparable hostility in the boy." A boy's contempt serves to free him not only from his mother but also from the femininity within himself. It therefore becomes entangled with the issue of masculinity and is generalized to all women. A girl's hostility remains tied more to her relationship to her mother (and/or becomes involved in self-depreciation).

A boy's oedipus complex is directly tied to issues of masculinity, and the devaluation of women is its "normal" outcome. A girl's devaluation of or hostility toward her mother may be a part of the process, but its "normal" outcome, by

contrast, entails acceptance of her own femininity and identification with her mother. Whatever the individual resolution of the feminine oedipus complex, however, it does not become institutionalized in the same way.

Freud "explains" the development of boys' contempt for mothers as coming from their perception of genital differences, particularly their mother's "castration." He takes this perception to be unmediated by social experience, and not in need of explanation. As many commentators have pointed out, it did not occur to Freud that such differential valuation and ensuing contempt were not in the natural order of things. However, the analysis of "Little Hans," which provides the most direct (reported) evidence that Freud had for such an assumption, shows that in fact Hans's father perpetuated and created such beliefs in his son—beliefs about the inferiority of female genitalia, denial of the feminine role in gestation and parturition, views that men have something and women have nothing, rather than having something different.

Karen Horney, unlike Freud, does take masculine contempt for and devaluation of women as in need of interactive and developmental explanation. According to her, these phenomena are manifestations of a deeper "dread of women"—a masculine fear and terror of maternal omnipotence that arises as one major consequence of their early caretaking and socialization by women. Psychoanalysts previously had stressed boys' fears of their fathers. Horney argues that these fears are less severe and therefore less in need of being repressed. Unlike their fears of a mother, boys do not react to a father's total and incomprehensible control over his child's life at a time when the child has no reflective capacities for understanding: "Dread of the father is more actual and tangible, less uncanny in quality." Moreover, since their father is male like them, boys' fears of men do not entail admission of feminine weakness or dependency on women: "Masculine self-regard suffers less in this way."

Dread of the mother is ambivalent, however. Although a boy fears her, he also finds her seductive and attractive. He cannot simply dismiss and ignore her. Boys and men develop psychological and cultural/ideological mechanisms to cope with their fears without giving up

ance of her own femininity with her mother. Whatever of the feminine oedipus does not become institutionalized.

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women altogether. They create folk legends, beliefs, and poems that ward off the dread by externalizing and objectifying women: "It is not . . . that I dread her; it is that she herself is malignant, capable of any crime, a beast of prey, a vampire, a witch, insatiable in her desires . . . the very personification of what is sinister." They deny dread at the expense of realistic views of women. On the one hand, they glorify and adore: "There is no need for me to dread a being so wonderful, so beautiful, nay, so saintly." On the other, they disparage: "It would be too ridiculous to dread a creature who, if you take her all round, is such a poor thing." . . .

PSYCHODYNAMICS OF THE FAMILY

Gender Personality and the Reproduction of Mothering

In spite of the apparently close tie between women's capacities for childbearing and lactation on the one hand and their responsibilities for child care on the other, and in spite of the probable prehistoric convenience (and perhaps survival necessity) of a sexual division of labor in which women mothered, biology and instinct do not provide adequate explanations for how women come to mother. Women's mothering as a feature of social structure requires an explanation in terms of social structure. Conventional feminist and social psychological explanations for the genesis of gender roles—girls and boys are "taught" appropriate behaviors and "learn" appropriate feelings—are insufficient both empirically and methodologically to account for how women become mothers.

Methodologically, socialization theories rely inappropriately on individual intention. Ongoing social structures include the means for their own reproduction—in the regularized repetition of social processes, in the perpetuation of conditions which require members' participation, in the genesis of legitimating ideologies and institutions, and in the psychological as well as physical reproduction of people to perform necessary roles. Accounts of socialization help to explain the perpetuation of ideologies about gender roles. However, notions of appropriate behavior, like coercion, cannot in themselves

produce parenting. Psychological capacities and a particular object-relational stance are central and definitional to parenting in a way that they are not to many other roles and activities.

Women's mothering includes the capacities for its own reproduction. This reproduction consists in the production of women with, and men without, the particular psychological capacities and stance which go into primary parenting. Psychoanalytic theory provides us with a theory of social reproduction that explains major features of personality development and the development of psychic structure, and the differential development of gender personality in particular. Psychoanalysts argue that personality both results from and consists in the ways a child appropriates, internalizes, and organizes early experiences in their family—from the fantasies they have, the defenses they use, the ways they channel and redirect drives in this object-relational context. A person subsequently imposes this intrapsychic structure, and the fantasies, defenses, and relational modes and preoccupations which go with it, onto external social situations. This reexternalization (or mutual reexternalization) is a major constituting feature of social and interpersonal situations themselves.

Psychoanalysis, however, has not had an adequate theory of the reproduction of mothering. Because of the teleological assumption that anatomy is destiny, and that women's destiny includes primary parenting, the ontogenesis of women's mothering has been largely ignored, even while the genesis of a wide variety of related disturbances and problems has been accorded widespread clinical attention. Most psychoanalysts agree that the basis for parenting is laid for both genders in the early relationship to a primary caretaker. Beyond that, in order to explain why *women* mother, they tend to rely on vague notions of a girl's subsequent identification with her mother, which makes her and not her brother a primary parent, or on an unspecified and uninvestigated innate femaleness in girls, or on logical leaps from lactation or early vaginal sensations to caretaking abilities and commitments.

The psychoanalytic account of male and female development, when reinterpreted, gives us a developmental theory of the reproduction of women's mothering. Women's mothering

reproduces itself through differing object-relational experiences and differing psychic outcomes in women and men. As a result of having been parented by a woman, women are more likely than men to seek to be mothers, that is, to relocate themselves in a primary mother-child relationship, to get gratification from the mothering relationship, and to have psychological and relational capacities for mothering.

The early relation to a primary caretaker provides in children of both genders both the basic capacity to participate in a relationship with the features of the early parent-child one, and the desire to create this intimacy. However, because women mother, the early experience and preoedipal relationship differ for boys and girls. Girls retain more concern with early childhood issues in relation to their mother, and a sense of self involved with these issues. Their attachments therefore retain more preoedipal aspects. The greater length and different nature of their preoedipal experience, and their continuing preoccupation with the issues of this period, mean that women's sense of self is continuous with others and that they retain capacities for primary identification, both of which enable them to experience the empathy and lack of reality sense needed by a cared-for infant. In men, these qualities have been curtailed, both because they are early treated as an opposite by their mother and because their later attachment to her must be repressed. The relational basis for mothering is thus extended in women, and inhibited in men, who experience themselves as more separate and distinct from others.

The different structure of the feminine and masculine oedipal triangle and process of oedipal experience that results from women's mothering contributes further to gender personality differentiation and the reproduction of women's mothering. As a result of this experience, women's inner object world, and the affects and issues associated with it, are more actively sustained and more complex than men's. This means that women define and experience themselves relationally. Their heterosexual orientation is always in internal dialogue with both oedipal and preoedipal mother-child relational issues. Thus, women's heterosexuality is triangular and requires a third person—a child—for its structural and emotional completion. For men,

by contrast, the heterosexual relationship alone recreates the early bond to their mother; a child interrupts it. Men, moreover, do not define themselves in relationship and have come to suppress relational capacities and repress relational needs. This prepares them to participate in the affect-denying world of alienated work, but not to fulfill women's needs for intimacy and primary relationships.

The oedipus complex, as it emerges from the asymmetrical organization of parenting, secures a psychological taboo on parent-child incest and pushes boys and girls in the direction of extrafamilial heterosexual relationships. This is one step toward the reproduction of parenting. The creation and maintenance of the incest taboo and of heterosexuality in girls and boys are different, however. For boys, superego formation and identification with their father, rewarded by the superiority of masculinity, maintain the taboo on incest with their mother, while heterosexual orientation continues from their earliest love relation with her. For girls, creating them as heterosexual in the first place maintains the taboo. However, women's heterosexuality is not so exclusive as men's. This makes it easier for them to accept or seek a male substitute for their fathers. At the same time, in a male-dominant society, women's exclusive emotional heterosexuality is not so necessary, nor is her repression of love for her father. Men are more likely to initiate relationships, and women's economic dependence on men pushes them anyway into heterosexual marriage.

Male dominance in heterosexual couples and marriage solves the problem of women's lack of heterosexual commitment and lack of satisfaction by making women more reactive in the sexual bonding process. At the same time, contradictions in heterosexuality help to perpetuate families and parenting by ensuring that women will seek relations to children and will not find heterosexual relationships alone satisfactory. Thus, men's lack of emotional availability and women's less exclusive heterosexual commitment help ensure women's mothering.

Women's mothering, then, produces psychological self-definition and capacities appropriate to mothering in women, and curtails and inhibits these capacities and this self-definition in men. The early experience of being cared for by a

homosexual relationship alone and to their mother; a child, moreover, do not define themselves and have come to suppress and repress relational needs, to participate in the affect-laden work, but not to fulfill for intimacy and primary

complex, as it emerges from the organization of parenting, secures position on parent-child incest and is in the direction of extrafamilial relationships. This is one reproduction of parenting. The absence of the incest taboo and girls and boys are different, superego formation and identification, rewarded by the superiority, maintain the taboo on her, while heterosexual orientation from their earliest love relationships: girls, creating them as first place maintains the men's heterosexuality is not theirs. This makes it easier for her a male substitute for their time, in a male-dominant exclusive emotional heterorelationship, necessary, nor is her representative. Men are more likely to push them anyway into sex.

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woman produces a fundamental structure of expectations in women and men concerning mothers' lack of separate interests from their infants and total concern for their infants' welfare. Daughters grow up identifying with these mothers, about whom they have such expectations. This set of expectations is generalized to the assumption that women naturally take care of children of all ages and the belief that women's "maternal" qualities can and should be extended to the nonmothering work that they do. All these results of women's mothering have ensured that women will mother infants and will take continuing responsibility for children.

The reproduction of women's mothering is the basis for the reproduction of women's location and responsibilities in the domestic sphere. This mothering, and its generalization to women's structural location in the domestic sphere, links the contemporary social organization of gender and social organization of production and contributes to the reproduction of each. That women mother is a fundamental organizational feature of the sex-gender system: It is basic to the sexual division of labor and generates a psychology and ideology of male dominance as well as an ideology about women's capacities and nature. Women, as wives and mothers, contribute as well to the daily and generational reproduction, both physical and psychological, of male workers and thus to the reproduction of capitalist production.

Women's mothering also reproduces the family as it is constituted in male-dominant society. The sexual and familial division of labor in which women mother creates a sexual division

of psychic organization and orientation. It produces socially gendered women and men who enter into asymmetrical heterosexual relationships; it produces men who react to, fear, and act superior to women, and who put most of their energies into the nonfamilial work world and do not parent. Finally, it produces women who turn their energies toward nurturing and caring for children—in turn reproducing the sexual and familial division of labor in which women mother.

Social reproduction is thus asymmetrical. Women in their domestic role reproduce men and children physically, psychologically, and emotionally. Women in their domestic role as houseworkers reconstitute themselves physically on a daily basis and reproduce themselves as mothers, emotionally and psychologically, in the next generation. They thus contribute to the perpetuation of their own social roles and position in the hierarchy of gender.

Institutionalized features of family structure and the social relations of reproduction reproduce themselves. A psychoanalytic investigation shows that women's mothering capacities and commitments, and the general psychological capacities and wants which are the basis of women's emotion work, are built developmentally into feminine personality. Because women are themselves mothered by women, they grow up with the relational capacities and needs, and psychological definition of self-in-representation, which commits them to mothering. Men, because they are mothered by women, do not. Women mother daughters who, when they become women, mother.

RAEWYN CONNELL (1944–): A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ■■

Raewyn Connell (formerly R. W. or Bob Connell) was born in Australia in 1944. One of Australia's most highly acclaimed sociologists, Connell has authored or coauthored a number of books, including *Ruling Class*, *Ruling Culture* (1977), *Class Structure in Australian History* (1980), *Gender and Power* (1987), *The Men and the Boys* (2000), and *Masculinities* (1995), which has been translated into thirteen languages and is among the most-cited research publications in the field. Connell's most recent book, *Southern Theory* (2007), discusses theorists unfamiliar in the European canon of social science and explores the possibility of a genuinely global social science. Her ongoing work explores the relation between masculinities and neoliberal globalization, combining, in characteristic form, her concern