

Research Report

Feminist Studies in Psychology: An Overview

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For most of the history of modern psychology, men more than women speculated about the nature of human growth and fulfillment. Their subjects were most often other men. Even when women were subjects, conclusions ultimately rested upon male models and ideals. Psychologists became accustomed to seeing life “through men’s eyes,” as Carol Gilligan has said so well. Women were basically excluded “from critical theory-building studies,” whether of human sexuality, cognitive development, or moral stages.¹ Likewise, in everyday life, “women’s reality” or ideas and understandings commonly held by women were all too often labeled “sick, bad, crazy, stupid, ugly, or incompetent.” The “White Male System,” explained psychotherapist Anne Wilson Schaef, sets the normative agenda for human behavior and health.²

Gilligan and Schaef are only a few of the people now churning out research in psychology that challenges the normativity of male experience and provides new understandings of gender, sexuality, selfhood, growth, and fulfillment. This research has only just begun to affect pastoral practice and theological language. Many clergy and other professionals now recognize that they must understand women and men within more inclusive psychological and theological frameworks. Ultimately these new frameworks have the power to transform divine imagery and devotional practices.

As requested by the editors of the *International Journal of Practical Theology*, my intent is to report on this relatively new and growing body of literature in the United States and to indicate some of its implications for practical theology. Since a research report such as this cannot cover all of the publications and trends of the past three decades, I will attempt to provide a taste of the major developments through attention to prominent works.³ I will give more attention to early and pivotal works, in part

1 Carol Gilligan, quoted by Francine Prose, *Confident at 11, Confused at 16*, in: *New York Times Magazine*, January 7, 1990, 37.

2 Anne Wilson Schaef, *Women’s Reality. An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society*, New York (Harper and Row) 1981.

3 A review article comments that “women’s studies in the U.S. is in such a state of good health that it is currently producing at least 20 volumes of scholarly work a month”, in:

because later works often build on and sometimes offer mostly minor variations on the revolutionary claims of the original texts.⁴

By necessity, I have chosen to exclude work on feminist spirituality and feminist therapy, although materials in both areas have also grown and have connections to and implications for feminist psychology and practical theology. I have also set aside popular or self-help books even though these publications reach a wider public through bookstore chains and mass media coverage. Such books often distill prominent ideas from the more academic works that I will discuss. Finally, an entire corpus of new literature in feminist practical theology has developed in the last two decades. Since a few pivotal papers have done a good job describing the contributions of feminist practical theology, I will not attempt to summarize this material or directly relate its growth to research in feminist psychology.⁵ Of course, my interest in feminist psychology arises precisely out of my own investment in practical theology, so I will make a few natural connections, even though this is not my main intent.⁶

On the part of my readers, I assume a certain level of unfamiliarity with feminist studies in psychology. I take the chance that I may both underestimate knowledge of feminist studies and overestimate acquaintance with general psychological concepts; I hope to strike a happy medium between these two extremes. In general, I want to show the high level of scholarship in the area of gender and psychology and encourage further exploration on the part of readers. In my teaching and writing on pastoral care and women, I have often quoted a maxim by Emma Justes: if clergy “are unable to travel the route of hearing women’s anger, of exploring with women the painful depths of experiences of incest and rape, or enabling women to break free from cultural stereotypes that define their existence,” they should not be doing pastoral counseling with women.⁷ In like fashion: if scholars in prac-

New Statesman and Society, February 16, 1999, 32. For a useful anthology of pioneering and recent writings, see Claudia Zandardi, ed., *Essential Papers on the Psychology of Women*, New York (New York University Press) 1990.

- 4 For an example of such a book, see Ellyn Kaschak, *Engendered Lives. A New Psychology of Women’s Experience*, New York (Basic Books) 1992.
- 5 See Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Feminist Theory in Pastoral Theology*; and, Kathleen J. Greider, Gloria A. Johnson, and Kristen J. Leslie, *Three Decades of Women Writing for Our Lives*, both in *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita Gill-Austern, eds., Nashville (Abingdon) 1999; and, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *The Living Human Web. Pastoral Theology at the Turn of the Century, Through the Eyes of Women. Insights for Pastoral Care*, Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, ed., Minneapolis (Fortress) 1996, 9-26.
- 6 For a review of some of this literature for a more general audience and in relation to practical theology, see Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *How New Understandings in Sexuality and Relationships Have Revolutionized Pastoral Theology*, in: *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, ed. (U.S. consultant, John Patton), London (Blackwell) Forthcoming 1999.
- 7 Emma J. Justes, *Women in: Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling*, ed. Robert J. Wicks, Richard D. Parsons, and Donald E. Capps, New York (Paulist) 1985, 298 (279-99).

tical theology are not willing to engage seriously a new body of scholarship on gender, sexuality, and women, then they ought not to theorize about the nature of human development and fulfillment in practical theology.

I. Locating Feminist Studies in Psychology

My own research and teaching history embodies the changes that have occurred in the last several years. In the early 1980s when I considered a variety of topics for Ph.D. dissertation study, I refrained from writing on women, psychology, and religion. While publications by U.S. scholars in this area had grown exponentially during the 1970s, my hesitation reflected the ongoing lack of status and recognition of such research.

Times have changed. By the time I began teaching in 1986, a few pivotal texts on women and psychology had begun to make a lasting impression on developmental and therapeutic theory. Ten years later, one can group and categorize this material into distinct movements and stages. In some cases, one can discern first, second, and third waves within particular schools of psychology. While recognizing that any such typology is partly artificial, I will organize my discussion of this evolution mostly in terms of schools of thought, covering the following five movements and prominent figures: psychoanalytic theory (Juliet Mitchell and Nancy Chodorow), self-in-relation theory (Jean Baker Miller), developmental theory (Carol Gilligan), family systems theory (Monica McGoldrick, Carol Anderson, and Froma Walsh), and ethnicity, women, and psychological theory (Lillian Comas-Díaz and Beverly Greene).

Again, this grouping is representative but far from exhaustive. Psychoanalytic feminism has had a longer history and greater influence than the other schools and hence will receive slightly more attention and space. Readers familiar with some of these movements and theorists know that the revolutionary ideas of only ten years ago now have their own problems. My exploration will attempt to identify some of this critique as well as to capture aspects of the initial impact and appreciation.

A brief word needs to be said on the preference for “feminist” rather than “gender” as a critical characteristic of the literature I will cover. A comprehensive definition of feminist theory in psychology is impracticable because each theorist and movement embodies slightly different interpretations of the dilemmas of women. Nonetheless, this literature as whole does support *feminist* studies as distinct from *gender* studies in psychology. In a 1992 issue of *The Family Therapy Networker*, family systems therapist Better Carter makes the case well and, at the same time, captures an important challenge of the evolving discussion in psychology. She is worth quoting at length:

In spite of feminism's apparent impact on clinical thinking, I believe we have entered an ambiguous and slippery phase of change – that phase in which the system, having failed to intimidate the upstarts into giving up, now proceeds to water down, coopt and obfuscate the issues. The blurring begins, as always, with language, and so 'feminist' becomes 'gender sensitive,' a men's movement is added to the women's movement, and *voilà!* we are no longer talking about inequality, but simply about the unfortunate aspects of female socialization on the one hand, and male socialization on the other – the very juxtaposition suggesting an *equal*, though different, set of problems The problems of most couples cannot be rationally addressed or resolved until the *core inequality* of their relationships is acknowledged.⁸

In a word, feminist studies in psychology assumes a core inequality in the psychological dynamics and consequences of growing up female in a sexist society, even though individual scholars interpret this in different terms and with different emphases. Put a bit too colloquially, feminism is the radical notion that women are human. More formally, feminist theory repudiates the ranking of people as inferior or superior according to various traits of human nature, especially sexual traits. Such a definition locates women's specific struggles within a broader context of other sources of oppression (e.g. racism, classism). To differing extents, feminist theorists in psychology have located women's oppression in the psyche more than in economic disadvantage, cultural disempowerment, or political inequity, even though these other factors also receive varied attention.⁹ Feminist theory is "an instance of critical theory," in this case, theory that has a political purpose involving "a redistribution of power that will be emancipatory for women."¹⁰

Lest readers be tempted to forget or downplay the adversity and animosity that early feminist theorists in psychology faced, it is worth reviewing briefly some telling remarks about women by a few founding fathers of modern psychology. As Naomi Weisstein observes, these psychologists "set about describing the true nature of women with a certainty and a sense of their own infallibility rarely found in the secular world."¹¹ Of course, Sigmund Freud is most easily caricatured. He obstinately

8 Betty Carter, Stonewalling Feminism, in: *The Family Therapy Networker*, January/February 1992., 66.

9 For amplification of different movements and emphases in feminist theory, see Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought. A Comprehensive Introduction*, Boulder (Westview Press) 1989, esp. the introduction, and Josephine Donovan, *Feminist Theory. The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism*, New York (Continuum), 1991.

10 Mary Ann Zimmer, *Stepping Stones in Feminist Theory*, in: *In the Embrace of God. Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology*, ed. Ann O'Hara Graff, Maryknoll, New York (Orbis) 1995, 9 (7-21).

11 Naomi Weisstein, *Psychology Constructs the Female*, in: *Women in Sexist Society. Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, eds., New York (Basic Books) 1971, 133-146. For an early radical critique of the cultural construction of madness and the treatment of women in psychology, see Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*, 25th Anniversary Edition, New York (Four Walls Eight Corners) [1972] 1997.

argued that women without question desire a penis “in spite of everything” and “refuse to accept the fact of being castrated.” As a result, he declares:

I cannot escape the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for woman the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in man Character traits which critics of every epoch have brought up against women – that they show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great necessities of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgements by feelings of affection or hostility – all these would be amply accounted for by the modification in the formation of their super-ego We must not allow ourselves to be deflected from such conclusions by the denials of the feminists, who are anxious to force us to regard the two sexes as completely equal in position and worth.¹²

Elsewhere, he concludes that women’s “social interests are weaker than those of men and ... their capacity for the sublimation of their interests is less.”¹³ A few decades later, Erik Erikson moves away from penis envy and even postulates male envy of female reproductive powers but still finds himself entrapped in prejudices against women’s independent self-development. He declares that “much of a young woman’s identity is already defined in her kind of attractiveness and in the selectivity of her search for the man (or men) by who she wishes to be sought.”¹⁴ In another example of male projection of women’s desires, Bruno Bettelheim announces that “we must start with the realization that, as much as women want to be good scientists or engineers, they want first and foremost to be womanly companions of men and to be mothers.”¹⁵

In general, these early psychological theorists promoted cultural consensus as biological and psychological fact. In establishing and justifying the inferiority of women, modern psychology nicely assumed a task previously performed by patriarchal religion. Women were again proven inferior by nature, but now in new and scientifically incriminating ways.

12 Sigmund Freud, *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between Sexes, Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. with an introduction by Philip Rieff, New York (Macmillan) [1925] 1963, 193.

13 Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, New York (W.W. Norton) [1933] 1965, 119.

14 Erik H. Erikson, *Womanhood and the Inner Space*, in: *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, New York (W.W. Norton) 1968, 283; reprinted in *Women and Analysis. Dialogues on Psychoanalytic Views of Fminity*, Jean Strouse, ed., Boston (G. K. Hall) 1974, 1985. See also Erikson’s reply to his own work, *Once More the Inner Space*, in: *Women and Analysis*, 320-340.

15 Bruno Bettelheim, *The Commitment Required of a Woman Entering a Scientific Profession in Present Day American Society*, in: *Woman and the Scientific Professions. A MIT Symposium on American Women in Science and Engineering*, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, cited by Phyllis Chesler, *Patient and Patriarch. Women in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship*, in: *Women in Sexist Society . Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, New York (Basic Books) 1971, 264 (251-275).

Nor were these purely theoretical speculations. A classic study in 1970 revealed that these assumptions spilled over into clinical practice and daily life. When asked to indicate traits of mature men, women, and adults, clinicians clearly held sexually differentiated standards of health. While the traits for healthy adults and healthy men correlate closely with one another, a woman cannot acquire the traits of a healthy adult (e.g., rational, independent) and the named traits of a healthy woman (e.g., emotional, cooperative) at the same time. In a classic double bind, a woman can be either a healthy adult or a healthy woman, but not both.¹⁶

II. Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud had his early dissenters. Helene Deutsch, Alfred Adler, and Clara Thompson discounted the import of the castration trauma in different ways. Without essentially disturbing the patriarchal status quo, Deutsch affirmed the positive role of "feminine" attributes, including the power to bear and nurture others.¹⁷ Deviating more sharply than Deutsch, Adler and Thompson saw penis envy as envy of male social power and domination rather than as an ontological deficiency.¹⁸

As a second-generation analyst, Karen Horney is especially notable because she dared to protest Freudian ideas about female sexuality from inside the psychoanalytic movement during its earlier years of institutional consolidation. We might consider her work a part of the first wave of feminist psychoanalytic theory.¹⁹ In her eyes, Freud had simply projected his own little-boy view of girls onto women as a group. Trained at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and eventually welcomed by both the Chicago and the New York Institutes in the 1930s, she joined a few others, including Adler and Thompson, in contending that penis envy,

16 I. K. Broverman, D. M. Broverman, and F.E. Clarkson, Sex Role Stereotypes and Clinical Judgments of Mental Health, in: *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 34, 1970, 1-7; and, I. Broverman, S. Vogel, D. M. Broverman, F.E. Clarkson, and P. Rosenkrantz, Sex-role Stereotypes. A Current Appraisal, *Journal of Social Issues* 28, 1972, 59-78.

17 Helene Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women. A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, New York (Collier Books) 1963. Her emphasis on normal femininity as requiring motherhood can also be read as only a further elaboration of Freud's limited theories. See Tong, *Feminist Thought*, no. 24, 146, 257.

18 Alfred Adler, *Understanding Human Nature*, New York (Greenberg) 1927; Clara Thompson, *Problems of Womanhood*, in: *Interpersonal Psychoanalysis. The Selected Papers of Clara Thompson*, M. P. Green, ed., New York (Basic Books) 1964.

19 See Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, New York (Norton) [1930] 1967; *Flight from Womanhood*, in: *Psychoanalysis and Women*, Jean Baker Miller, ed., New York (Penguin) [1917] 1973, 5-20. For recent attempts to situate Horney within psychoanalytic feminist history, see Marcia Westkott, *The Feminist Legacy of Karen Horney*, New Haven (Yale University Press) 1986; and, Susan Quinn, *A Mind of Her Own. The Life of Karen Horney*, New York (Summit Books) 1987.

while a valid observation of female sentiment, results not from a natural female deficiency but from envy of male social status and authority. Penis envy is in reality envy of male power in a world in which having a penis means having economic, political, and social standing.

Horney also named the unnamable male envy of women: "men resent and fear women because they experience them as powerful mothers" (an idea that Chodorow picks up later and develops in new directions).²⁰ Although seldom discussed or explored, the male inability to bear children is experienced as a sexual deficiency on par with penis envy.²¹

In her later writings, Horney captures powerfully the intense conflict for women between compliance with female devaluation through internalization of cultural expectations of femininity and the rage to triumph over and oppose these expectations. Domestic ideals of religious piety, sexual purity, wifely submission, and motherly domesticity led to inherent contradictions between responsibility for men and deference to them, self-reliance and dependence. In a powerful contemporary retrieval of the life and work of Horney, Marcia Westkott depicts the disharmony of the "feminine type" as understood by Horney:

Women were permitted to pursue education but expected to become mothers. They were encouraged to be sexually emancipated but supposed to limit sexual desire to monogamous marriage combined with asexual motherhood. They were told that they could have careers but were expected to defer to men at work and at home. They were enticed by ambition but taught to find salvation in love.²²

It is no small wonder that many women suffered arrested energy and depression. What is surprising is that people like Horney were so quickly dismissed, in their own time and even recently, by clinic, academy, and church. Horney's work did little to alter the bias against women at the heart of culture. Until recently Horney was criticized, ostracized, and overlooked as an important analyst and theorist in her own right, partly as a result of her dissent within the psychoanalytic movement.

With changes in the cultural climate of the U.S. in the 1970s, the work and ideas of Nancy Chodorow had a greater impact and more lasting influence. A sociologist with an interest in anthropology who later trained as a psychoanalyst, Chodorow is less interested in Oedipal struggles between father and child over sexual possession of the mother and more interested in pre-Oedipal dynamics between mother and child centered

20 Nancy J. Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, New Haven (Yale University Press) 1989, 6.

21 See E. Jacobson, *Development of the Wish for a Child in Boys*, in: *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 5, 1950, 139-152; John Munder Ross, *Beyond the Phallic Illusion. Notes on Man's Heterosexuality*, in: *The Psychology of Men*, ed. by Fogel, Saree, and Siebert, New York (Basic Books) 1986, 49-70.

22 Westkott, *The Feminist Legacy* (n. 19), 50-51.

around emotional separation and relationship. Her lasting power may have something to do with her uncanny ability to crystallize and articulate a few rather remarkable theses that had been percolating throughout the writings of other social scientists at the time.

First, Chodorow argues forcefully that social constructions of motherhood and, more troubling, misogyny reproduce themselves culturally precisely because women mother. Second, and equally important, genderized, often opposing, and sometimes oppressive patterns of male independence and female dependence have their source in the distance of boys and the proximity of girls to the primary parent, normally the mother. These ideas first appeared in an article in 1974 and then in a pivotal text, *The Reproduction of Mothering* in 1978.²³

The article appeared the same year as another important text in academic psychoanalytic feminism, Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. In striking opposition to the radical feminist denunciation of Freud,²⁴ she offered a defense of the relevance of psychoanalysis for feminist theory. Mitchell summarizes her argument on the opening page: "[P]sychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one. If we are interested in understanding and challenging the oppression of women, we cannot afford to neglect it."²⁵ Psychoanalysis's distinctive contribution is found in its attempt to decipher not the conscious but the unconscious motivations and ideations behind human cultural constructions, particularly the "law of the father" and a system that must by definition oppress women. For this, psychoanalysis is indispensable.

These two texts, along with a few others, constitute what might be characterized as a critical second stage of psychoanalytic feminism in the 1970s. They also reflect the influence of two developing traditions in psychoanalysis. Chodorow grounds her work in the British object relations school of D.W. Winnicott and its emphasis on the mother's role in pre-Oedipal development; Mitchell draws on the work of the French poststructuralist psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and his emphasis on cul-

23 Nancy J. Chodorow, *Family Structure and Feminine Personality*, originally in: *Woman, Culture and Society*, Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., Stanford (Stanford University Press) 1974 and reproduced in: *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, ch. 2; *The Reproduction of Mothering. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, Berkeley (University of California) 1978. See Introduction. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, in: *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, 1-19 for a helpful summary of the relationship between feminism and psychoanalysis over the past twenty years in terms of Chodorow's work.

24 See, for example, Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley, New York (Vintage Books) [1949] 1974; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, New York (Dell) [1963] 1974; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, Garden City, New York (Doubleday) 1970; Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex. The Case for Feminist Revolution*, New York (Bantam Books) 1970.

25 Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. Freud, Reich, Laing and Women, New York (Vintage Books) 1974, xiii.

tural constructions of language, the phallus, the law of the father, and sexual difference.²⁶ Chodorow's work represents a more popular and eclectic approach, while Mitchell has sometimes stood for psychoanalytic purism. I will focus on developments in the former school more than the latter because of their greater impact thus far on feminist studies in practical theology in the U.S. and because of their slightly greater proximity to clinical therapy.²⁷

In an overview essay, Chodorow nicely summarizes the most recognized outcome of her early work: "I showed that the selves of women and men tend to be constructed differently – women's self more in relation and involved with boundary negotiations, separation and connection, men's self more distanced and based on defensively firm boundaries and denials of self-other connection." Or again "women develop a self-in-relation, men a self that denies relatedness."²⁸

When only women mother, daughters identify with the same-sex parent and struggle to establish a sufficiently individuated and autonomous self, while sons engage in defensive assertion of ego boundaries, repress emotional needs, and struggle instead with attachment and intimacy. Intrapsychically and cross-culturally, the more father-absence and distance, the more severe the boy's conflicts around fear of women and masculinity. In turn, women and mothers are devalued and the very requirements of good parenting are lost. According to Chodorow, motherhood and fatherhood are not biologically or naturally determined roles, but bio-psychologically reproduced. "Women come to mother because they have been mothered by women. By contrast, that men are mothered by women reduces their parenting capacities."²⁹

26 Mitchell moves closer to Lacan in recent writings. See Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds. *Feminist Sexuality*. Jacques Lacan and the *École Freudienne*, trans. Jacqueline Rose, New York (Pantheon) and London (Norton) 1983.

27 For further discussion of feminists in the tradition of Lacan, see Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, in: *New French Feminism*, Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds. (Schocken Books) 1981; Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction. Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, London (Macmillan) 1982 and *Reading Lacan*, Ithaca, New York (Cornell University Press) 1985; Elizabeth Grosz, Jacques Lacan. *A Feminist Introduction*, New York (Routledge) 1990; Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Ithaca, New York (Cornell University Press) 1985; and, *This Sex Which is Not One*, New York (Cornell University Press) 1985; Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, Toril Moi, ed., New York (Columbia University Press) 1986. For a nice discussion of this material, see Chris Weedon, *Feminism, Theory and the Politics of Difference*, Oxford and Malden, Mass. (Blackwell) 1999, ch. 4; and, Elizabeth Wright, ed., *Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary*, Oxford (Blackwell) 1992. I also will not comment upon another branch of psychoanalytic work that has broken sharply from the clinical orientation and uses psychoanalysis as a cultural theory to read texts of various kinds. See, for example, Marianne Hirsch, *The Mother/Daughter Plot. Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, Bloomington (Indiana University Press) 1989; and, Elizabeth Abel, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*, Chicago (University of Chicago) 1989.

28 Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (n. 20), 2, 15.

29 Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (n. 20), 211.

Children of both sexes are subjected to the biases of the wider culture, which has conventionally limited the mother's power to the confines of the home in contrast to the comparatively greater power of fathers in the public sphere. Woman's mothering generates, more or less universally, misogyny and sexism.³⁰ Almost exclusive female parenting leads to the development of a defensive masculine identity, defined over against female attributes, and ultimately a compensatory psychology and ideology of male superiority that sustains male dominance.

To counteract the almost inevitable devaluation of women and caregiving activities, Chodorow lends psychoanalytic support to the wider social and political premise that men and women should share primary parenting responsibilities. This analysis dramatically shifts the burden of family problems from the individual mother and her egotistic pursuits or possessive traits to the wider system of sexual inequalities. Primary parenting must be shared. Although Chodorow oversimplifies the ease which with this could come about and mostly ignores the biological complications of pregnancy, birth, and nursing, her argument is convincing that parenting or mothering qualities can and must be created in men. Unless they are, families will continue to repeat patterns destructive to their very survival and the sustenance of community.

Feminists within and beyond psychoanalytic thought have debated whether joint parenting is an adequate solution to the gender asymmetries of patriarchal society.³¹ In her later work, Chodorow acknowledges psychoanalytic tendencies to universalize and discount cultural differences. She maintains its importance, nonetheless, as a source of knowledge of the unconscious and internal fantasies characteristic of all people in all societies, pointing out that the individual case study actually does a better job of respecting diversity than many other social-science methods. She notes a "global shift" in her thinking from a mono-causal view of the source of women's oppression in women's mothering to a "multiplex" account of mothering as "one extremely important, and previously largely unexamined, aspect of the relations of gender and the psychology of gender."³² Still she contends that she has yet to find an explanation of women's

30 As an important source of this analysis, Chodorow credits the work of Philip Slater, *The Glory of Hera. Greek Mythology and the Greek Family*, Boston (Beacon Press) 1968. See also Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, New York (Harper & Row) 1976.

31 For an early critical review, see Judith Lorber, Rose Laub Coser, Alice S. Rossi, and Nancy Chodorow, *On the Reproduction of Mothering. A Methodological Debate*, in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 6, no. 3, Spring 1981, 482-514; for a more recent exploration of issues of diversity, see Denise A. Segura and Jennifer L. Pierce, *Chicana/o Family Structure and Gender Personality. Chodorow, Familism, and Psychoanalytic Sociology Revisited*, in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19, no. 1, Autumn 1993, 62-91.

32 Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (n.20), 5-6. For another important psychoanalytic text, focused more on therapy, see Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, *Understanding Women. A Feminist Psychoanalytic Approach*, New York (Basic Books) 1984.

oppression that surpasses Horney's original suggestion about male resentment and fear of maternal power.

Since the 1978 publication of *The Reproduction of Mothering*, as Chodorow herself observes, the "psychoanalytic-feminist project has proliferated and become more intricate."³³ Jessica Benjamin's *Bonds of Love* further contests the genderized polarities of male and female parenting as a primary source of the perpetuation of domination and a key obstacle to the development of genuine mutuality. Mutual recognition of the other and the self are essential for satisfactory development. Yet when fathers excel in asserting themselves and mothers specialize in recognizing others, basic needs for recognition of oneself and for regard for the other are thwarted and distorted for both girls and boys. Like Chodorow, she points toward the need for shared parenting as a means to subvert patterns of male domination and female submission, so that mothers no longer symbolize engulfment and fathers no longer represent independence.³⁴

Publishing in the 1990s, Jane Flax, Judith Butler, Madelon Sprengnether, Chris Weedon, and others turn to psychoanalysis as a secondary resource from their primary positions as political scientists, philosophers, literary critics and so forth.³⁵ Bringing together feminism, psychoanalysis, and postmodernism and drawing upon her clinical work with borderline patients, Flax mounts a nice critique of the fashionable celebration of the "decentered" or "fragmented" self. By contrast, Butler further unsettles categories of selfhood by uncovering and contesting the heterosexism of psychoanalysis and the binary and constricting nature of sexual categories. Chodorow herself has also recently taken up the problem of monolithic portrayals of gender and heterosexuality and argues for a variety of sexualities.³⁶

33 Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (n.20), 19. For a few good reviews of some of this literature, see Diane Jonte-Pace, *Psychoanalysis after Feminism*, in: *Religious Studies Review* 19, no. 2, April 1993, 110-115; Judith Kegan Gardiner, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism. An American Humanist's View*, in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2, Winter 1992, 437-454; Michèle Barrett, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism. A British Sociologist's View*, in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2, Winter 1992, 455-466.

34 Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love. Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, New York (Pantheon) 1988. See also Mariam M. Johnson, *Strong Mothers, Weak Wives. The Search for Gender Equality*, Berkeley and Los Angeles (University of California Press) 1988, a book that combines psychoanalytic thought with sociology and cognitive psychology to explore the role of the father in perpetuating male dominance.

35 Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments. Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West*, Berkeley (University of California Press) 1990; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York (Routledge) 1990; Madelon Sprengnether, *The Spectral Mother. Freud, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis*, Ithaca (Cornell University Press) 1990; Chris Weedon, *Feminism, Theory and the Politics of Difference*, Malden, Mass. (Blackwell) 1999.

36 Nancy J. Chodorow, *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities. Freud and Beyond*, Lexington (University of Kentucky) 1994.

In different ways, these recent publications expand the dialogue between psychoanalysis and feminism to include postmodern theorists (Foucault, Rorty, Lyotard, Derrida), French feminists (Irigaray, Kristeva, Cixous), and, as already noted, other psychoanalytic theorists (Lacan in the French psychoanalytic tradition, Winnicott in the Anglo-American tradition). Together they form part of what might be seen as a third wave of psychoanalytic feminism.

III. Self-in-Relation Theory

Neo-Freudians, such as Erikson, Horney, and Harry Stack Sullivan, criticized the exclusive focus on intrapsychic causes of human behavior in orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis and attempted to reorder psychological exploration toward interpersonal and social aspects of selfhood. Jean Baker Miller, who was trained as a Sullivanian analyst, produced *Toward a New Psychology of Women* in 1976, the first book of its kind and now a classic. This acclaim results less from the specific contents of the book, written in nontechnical language for the general public, and more from its timing, its reclamation of devalued relational dimensions of human interaction, and its instigation of further clinical research. Miller's focus on the role of power, domination, and subordination in emotional development led to a new school and clinical approach identified with the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College.

Miller begins *Toward a New Psychology* by itemizing characteristics of dominants and subordinants in a stratified society. While dominants define "normal" human relationships, subordinants suppress their wisdom and capacities. With this claim as a basic premise, she sets about reclaiming the devalued qualities that women have perfected precisely as a result of their subordination. In a word, those characteristics seen as women's weakness actually qualify as great strengths when seen in a new light. Women have, indeed, functioned as "'carriers' for society of certain aspects of the total human experience."³⁷ Most centrally, women have valued affiliation rather than self-enhancement. In this, they have accepted the inevitability and naturalness of other qualities commonly devalued by society, such as vulnerability, dependence, weakness, helplessness, affectivity, cooperation, nurture, and emotionality.

More than just empirical or clinical observations, these comments suggest a redefinition of human nature. Humans are not driven by aggressive, destructive, sexual, or competitive needs. Humans are essentially cooperative: "there must be a bedrock modicum of cooperativeness for

37 Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, Boston (Beacon Press) 1976 [2nd ed. 1986], 22-23.

society to exist at all.”³⁸ Rather than conceptualizing the self as ego mediating between instincts and reality, Miller hypothesized a “more complex” intersubjective structure and dynamic:

We are suggesting then that the organizing principle in women’s lives is not a *direct* relation to reality – as reality is culturally defined. Nor is it the mediation between one’s own ‘drives’ and that reality Instead, women have been involved in a more complex mediation – the attempt to transform their drives into the service of another’s drives; and the mediation is not directly with reality but with and through *the other person’s purposes* in that reality.³⁹

Miller makes an even more fundamental claim: development itself proceeds “*only* by means of affiliation.”⁴⁰ Assuming here an implicit ontological and moral foundation of reciprocity and harmony, she insists that one can and should meet one’s needs as one meets the needs of others.

Where Miller’s early work adopted a clear political stance challenging sexism and social inequality, contemporary colleagues have focused more on psychological issues and dynamics. Theoretical conceptions, first published as *Works in Progress* papers made available through the Stone Center,⁴¹ have since partially appeared in two collected editions, *Women’s Growth in Connection* and *Women’s Growth in Diversity*.⁴² These writings evolved primarily out of the clash between traditional therapeutic explanations and the experiences of clinicians in the privacy of therapeutic sessions. In their faithfulness to a collaborative process of intellectual exchange and encouragement at the Stone Center, the publications embody one of the main premises of connectivity of selfhood. Many of the ideas presented are said to have developed in community and are not attributed to any sole individual.

In this second wave of research, Miller, the first director of the Stone Center, and a growing number of other scholars at the Center, such as Judith Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey, formalized the original interpersonal theory of *Toward a New Psychology* into an approach now known as “self-in-relation theory,” the “relational self,” or the “Stone Center model” of development. While these titles

38 Ibid., 41.

39 Ibid., 72, emphasis in text.

40 Ibid., 83, emphasis in text.

41 See *Works in Progress* papers, available from the Stone Center Publications, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181-8259. For information on clinical training, contact the Jean Baker Miller Training Institute (JBMTI) at the same address or through the JBMTI Website: www.wellesley.edu/JBMTI.

42 Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey, *Women’s Growth in Connection*. Writings from the Stone Center, New York (Guilford) 1991; Judith V. Jordan, ed., *Women’s Growth in Diversity*. More Writings from the Stone Center, New York (Guilford) 1997. See also Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, *The Healing Connection*. How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life, Boston (Beacon Press) 1997.

emphasize the distinctive emphasis on relationship in this approach, they fail to acknowledge the extent to which this approach picked up and amplified ideas of others. Their contention that development does not necessarily proceed through stages of increasing distance, mastery, and independence but through increasing sophistication in relationship coincided with pioneering research by Daniel Stern, Gilligan, Chodorow, and self-psychological theorists.⁴³ By the time Jordan proclaims, "we are suggesting a major paradigm shift in all of western psychology ... from a psychology of the separate self to a psychology of relational being" in 1997, her assertion seems dated.⁴⁴ The shift is well underway by this time.

For this reason, and perhaps because the Center focuses on one primary theme and often replicates work done elsewhere, the Stone Center approach sometimes seems the least innovative and exciting of those in feminist studies in psychology. The introductions to both collections repeatedly state the in-process character of their claims. While this stance affirms a common postmodern caution about truth claims, it also leads to a weakened theoretical framework.

Chodorow identifies several key differences between object-relations feminists and interpersonal feminists. The latter have less interest in the inner object world, internalizations, unconscious desires and conflicts, or the early infantile and pre-Oedipal period, except as these influence relational dynamics, for example, between mother and daughter.⁴⁵ Interest lies instead in the investigation of interpersonal and social experience. Second, self-in-relation theorists adopt a more extreme gynocentric, woman-centered, or separate spheres position, focusing primarily on female psychology and displaying, almost without exception, a disregard for or disinterest in male psychology.⁴⁶ Essays focus on the mother-daughter relationship, women's anger, depression, empowerment, and sexuality, women's work inhibitions and eating patterns, late adolescent girls, minority women, lesbian relationships, and lesbians and their mothers. For the most part, perhaps as part of the original desire to reclaim devalued attributes, girls and women seem to be depicted as psychologically and

43 See, for example, Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, New York (Basic Books) 1986; Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge (Harvard University Press) 1982; Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (n. 23); and, Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?*, Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 1984.

44 Jordan, *Introduction, Women's Growth in Diversity* (n. 42), 3.

45 See Irene P. Stiver, *Beyond the Oedipus Complex. Mothers and Daughters*, in: *Women's Growth in Connection. Writings from the Stone Center*, New York (Guilford) 1991, 97-121.

46 See Irene P. Stiver, *The Meanings of 'Dependency' in Female-Male Relationships*, in: *Women's Growth in Connection. Writings from the Stone Center*, New York (Guilford) 1991, 143-161; and, Stephen J. Bergman and Janet L. Surrey, *The Woman-Man Relationship. Impasses and Possibilities*, in: *Women's Growth in Diversity. More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan, New York (Guilford) 1997.

developmentally healthier than boys and men. Comments on male development often enter the picture only as a foil or contrast to women.

Object-relations theorists more readily acknowledge the conflictual nature of all psychic life, including female development. Women's relationality has its own dangers of self-loss and self-demise. The close identification between mother and daughter can lead to psychological enmeshment and confusion, with the mother intolerant of her daughter's neediness (since she herself has had to learn to curtail her own desires) and the daughter losing a sense of what she wants. Merger with the mother can result in failure to achieve a sense of self-worth, self-entitlement, and separateness.⁴⁷

IV. Developmental Theory

All the theorists thus far suggest new ways of understanding human development. Gilligan, however, has a particular interest in developmental theory. A Harvard educated clinical psychologist and later a Harvard professor of education, she returns to a nagging question about the role of gender in psychological maturation and women's absence from landmark developmental studies. Essentially, she broadens the focus from emotional to moral development and significantly undermines the widely accepted cognitive psychologies of Heinz Kohlberg and, indirectly, Jean Piaget, and the life cycle theories of Erikson and others. Influenced by Miller and Chodorow, her contribution centers around reclaiming women's voices and suggesting another line of development focused on relational concerns and care. Two important articles, appearing in *Harvard Educational Review* in 1977 and 1979, set the stage for *In a Different Voice*, a book that sold more than 360,000 copies by 1990.⁴⁸

According to Gilligan, moral theory has mislabeled women's relational priorities derogatorily as deviations from a male norm, thereby losing sight of a critical line of development for both men and women, the development of intimacy, relationships, and care. When Kohlberg found girls and women more focused at a lower level of moral development centered on relationships, he was measuring women's development against a male standard. His theory prizes abstract reasoning as the superior moral position and labels negatively decisions based on relationships as a lower stage of moral intelligence. Based on interview responses to ethical dilemmas, Gilligan persuasively argues that moral deliberation about

47 See Luise Fichtenbaum and Susie Orbach, *Understanding Women. A Feminist Psychoanalytic Approach*, New York (Basic Books) 1983, chapter 2, *The Construction of Femininity*.

48 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice. Women's Conceptions of the Self and Morality*, in: *Harvard Educational Review* 47, 1977, 481-518; *Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle*, in: *Harvard Educational Review* 49, 1979, 431-444; and, *In a Different Voice* (n. 48).

relational connections requires comparably sophisticated reasoning of a different sort.

Although Gilligan largely ignores social and political influences on morality, she draws on empirical research into women's perspectives on moral dilemmas to propose a reconception of moral development that recognizes for both sexes the importance throughout life of the connection between self and other. In rough terms, she outlines a three-stage movement in the development of an ethic of care from an initial focus on caring for the self in order to survive to caring for others at the sacrifice of the self to a third perspective in which "a new understanding of the interconnection between other and self" occurs.⁴⁹ In optimal adult moral development, an ethic of relationality overcomes the stark alternatives of egoism and self-sacrifice. The most advanced moral self is neither egoistically concerned for itself nor lost in its concern for the other. Rather the moral imperative is "to act responsibly toward self and others and thus to sustain connection."⁵⁰ To move to this more integrated stage of moral development that recognizes the mutual interdependency of self and other, women often require a powerful experiences of choice, such as meaningful productive work or authority in reproductive decisions, to offset their propensity toward self-loss. Men need pivotal experiences of intimacy, such as responsibility for the minutiae of daily childcare or acute sensitivity to a partner's needs, to offset tendencies toward self-isolation.

Gilligan's initial research, like Miller's, has spawned waves of further investigation. An edited collection, *Mapping the Moral Domain*, simply carries Gilligan's hypotheses about the gender-defined orientations of care and justice in different directions.⁵¹ Other more novel work has been undertaken through the Harvard Project on the Psychology of Women and the Development of Girls founded in 1983. *Making Connections*, another collection of essays, contains innovative ideas grounded in a five-year study of students at a private girls' school. Based on observations that morally articulate preadolescents become apologetic, hesitant teenagers, these studies document ways in which girls "go underground" by age 15 or 16 in response to cultural strictures that send them a message about their precarious position as women. This book was the first in a series of studies designed to "connect a psychology of women with girls' voices."⁵²

49 Gilligan, In *A Different Voice* (n. 48), 74. Earlier versions of Chapters 1 and 3 appeared first in the Harvard Educational Review.

50 Gilligan, In *A Different Voice* (n. 48), 21, 149.

51 Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, eds., *Mapping the Moral Domain. A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education*, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard University Press) 1988.

52 Carol Gilligan, Preface. *Teaching Shakespeare's Sister. Notes from the Underground of Female Adolescence*, 14, Note to the Harvard Edition, in: Gilligan, Nona P. Lyons, and T. J. Hanmer, *Making the Connections. The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard University Press) 1989, xiii.

In the 1990s, two more volumes have appeared, carrying the exploration of adolescent girls further and bringing in other factors, such as race.⁵³

A closely related project on development, education, and knowledge appeared in 1986. Building upon Gilligan and William Perry's theories of epistemological development, four women in the field of psychology, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, spent five years interviewing 135 women in a variety of educational institutions.⁵⁴ Not only do women define themselves relationally, they conclude, but the very ways that they learn differ significantly from male-defined epistemologies and conventional educational practice. Using the metaphor of voice as a unifying theme, they identify "five different perspectives" in women's engagement with knowledge, truth, and authority. While they claim that they do not intend these perspectives as developmental stages, the perspectives do represent a hierarchy of maturity and of complexity of thought. Women often move from phases of "silence" to "received" and "subjective knowledge" to modalities of "procedural" and "constructed knowledge" in which an integrated self participates in the creation of knowledge.

The publication of *In a Different Voice* also led to a wide-ranging debate over the ethics of care, the ethics of justice, and their genderized connections in a host of other disciplines, such as social work, theology, and philosophy.⁵⁵ Theological ethicist Cynthia Crysdale helpfully divides responses to Gilligan's work into three categories: debate about empirical studies of moral orientation, debate about implications for moral philosophy, and feminist debate about dangers of relationality.⁵⁶

Certainly one of the difficult issues for feminist studies is the rather apolitical cast of much of Gilligan's work and her reduction of differences to gender.⁵⁷ Her advocacy of women's different voices left her open to

53 See Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads. Women's Psychology and Girls' Development*, New York (Ballantine) 1993; Jill McLean Taylor, Carol Gilligan, and Amy M. Sullivan, *Between Voice and Silence. Women and Girls, Race and Relationship*, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard/Belknap) 1996. Some of Gilligan's ideas have been more sensationally presented and publically received through the work of Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia. Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, New York (Ballantine Books) 1994.

54 Mary Field Belenky, et al. *Women's Ways of Knowing. The Development of Self, Voice and Mind*, New York (Basic Books) 1986.

55 See, for example, Eva F. Kittay and Diana T. Meyers, ed., *Women and Moral Theory*, Totowa, N.J. (Rowman Littlefield) 1987; and, Susan J. Hekman, *Moral Voices, Moral Selves. Carol Gilligan and Feminist Moral Theory*, University Park (Pennsylvania State University) 1995. See also two journals that devoted issues to Gilligan's work in the 1980s. *Social Research* 50, no. 3, 1983; and, *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11, 1986.

56 Cynthia Crysdale, *Gilligan and the Ethics of Care. An Update*, in: *Religious Studies Review* 20, no. 1, January 1994, 21-28. The review includes an extensive bibliography.

57 See Joan C. Tronto, *Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care*, in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12, 1987, 644-63; Ruth L. Smith, *Moral Transcendence*

criticism that she ignores the hazards of female socialization to care for others. She also displays a rather blind confidence that eventually over the life cycle with the right kinds of provocation female and male paths of development will complement one another. Finally, many scholars have accused Gilligan of an essentializing tendency in the naming of female traits. In her defense, she says she is astonished that she has been so "consistently misread." Care does not mean being "nice" nor is it only defined by gender; it is a radical ethic of mutuality or responsibility for oneself and others.⁵⁸

V. Family Therapy and Theory

Reflecting the ferment of the 1970s in psychoanalytic, developmental, and relational feminist circles, women in family therapy were also restless and active. In 1977, Peggy Papp, Olga Silverstein, Marianne Walters, and Betty Carter held their first meeting on the subject of "Women as Family Therapists" and constituted the Women's Project in Family Therapy.⁵⁹ Contrary to their expectation of a small attendance the next year, an audience of over 400 confirmed the importance of their work. This coincided with the publication of a groundbreaking article by Rachel Hare-Mustin, "A Feminist Approach to Family Therapy," in the journal *Family Process*.⁶⁰ In 1984 Monica McGoldrick, Carol M. Anderson, and Froma Walsh spearheaded the first major conference of family therapists with feminist interests and edited one of best-known volumes on gender in family therapy, *Women in Families: A Framework for Family Therapy*, in 1989. Several single-authored books also appeared in the 1980s as well.⁶¹

and Moral Space in the Historical Experiences of Women, in: *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4, 1988, 21-37; J. Auerback, V. Blum, and C. Williams, Commentary on Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, in: *Feminist Studies* 11, 1985, 149-61.

58 Prose, *Confident* at 11 (n. 1), 38, 40.

59 Betty Carter, Foreword, in *Women in Families. A Framework for Family Therapy*, Monica McGoldrick, Carol M. Anderson, and Froma Walsh, eds., New York (W. W. Norton) 1989.

60 Rachel Hare-Mustin, *A Feminist Approach to Family Therapy*, in: *Family Process* 17, 1978, 181-194.

61 See Thelma Jean Goodrich, Cheryl Rampage, Barbara Ellman, and Kris Halstead, *Feminist Family Therapy. A Casebook*, New York (Norton) 1988; Harriet Goldhor Lerner, *The Dance of Anger. A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships*, New York (Harper & Row) 1985; *Women in Therapy*, London (Aronson) 1988; and, *The Dance of Intimacy*, New York (Harper & Row) 1989; Debra Luepnitz, *The Family Interpreted*, New York (Basic Books) 1988; Marianne Walters, Betty Carter, Peggy Papp, and Olga Silverstein, *The Invisible Web. Gender Patterns in Family Relationships*, New York (Guilford) 1988. The first edited collection was Marianne Ault-Riché, ed. *Women and Family Therapy*, Rockville, MD (Aspen Systems Corporation) 1986, followed by Lois Braverman, ed. *A Guide to Feminist Family Therapy*, New York and London (Harrington Park Press) 1988, simultaneously issued by The Haworth Press under the title *Women, Feminism and Family Therapy*, in: *Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family* 3, no. 4, Winter 1987.

These publications often build upon the massive literature on women produced in other areas in the 1970s. Different from the movements investigated above, many scholars have contributed and no single pivotal scholar rises to the top. Hence, in this and the next section I will focus on a major edited collection rather than on any single theorist as representative of the discussion's breadth.

McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh identify Virginia Satir as the only widely recognized female voice among prominent family therapists until the 1970s. The first director of the Mental Research Institute, home of the brief therapy model, Satir used an experiential approach centered around feelings, intuition, and growth. While not overtly feminist, she sometimes represented a dissenting or different voice. Morris Taggart, however, reminds us that the "*founding mothers* of family therapy" do exist (Mary Richmond, Charlotte Towle, Emily H. Mudd), but they have been "largely ignored and consequently have fallen into oblivion."⁶² In fact, women may have been more instrumental in the evolution of the new field of family therapy than in other therapeutic modalities. In general, *Women in Families* makes a good case that highlighting gender as a significant category of analysis is a natural next step in systems theory. Or said inversely, "to ignore gender, is in fact, nonsystemic."⁶³

Yet, oddly and sadly, major models of family therapy, such as the structural model of Minuchin or the Bowen method, have not attended to the power differentials between women and men in families. Indeed, these models have sometimes perpetuated sexist patterns. The Bowen Scale of Differentiation of Self, for example, rates "relatedness," "seeking love and approval," and "being-for others" as characteristics of the poorly differentiated person and "autonomous," "being-for-self," and "goal-directed" as healthy functioning.⁶⁴ Systems theory mechanistically establishes the rules of family functioning divorced from social, economic, and political factors. Lois Braverman believes that a fundamental reason that women themselves had their heads "buried in the sand" is the epistemological challenge of feminist theory. Acknowledging the impact of patriarchy threatens a major family therapy assumption that men and women are equal participants in family interactions and that marriage is only an interactional scene and not a political institution. Feminist theory challenges the viability of patriarchal families and hence of family therapy.

Still, for the most part the authors in *Women in Families* do not reject the family therapy movement itself. Instead, they demand a more politi-

62 Morris, Taggart, Epistemological Equality as the Fulfillment of Family Therapy, in: *Women in Families* (n. 59), 102-103 (97-116).

63 Froma Walsh and Michele Scheinkman, (Fe)male. The Hidden Gender Dimension in Models of Family Therapy, in: *Women in Families* (n. 59), 16-17 (16-41).

64 *Ibid.*, 34. See, M. Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, New York (Jason, Aronson) 1978.

cally-sensitive and gender-informed family approach. Most important, the perception of gender as a “special issue” rather than a fundamental category deserves critique. Family systems theory cannot assume a gender-blind position when in reality women traditionally occupy a “one-down” position in families and in larger social systems.

Rather than assuming that all family members are interchangeable parts with equal control within the interaction of a family system, therapists must acknowledge the unequal division of power both within and beyond the confines of the home. In working with a couple and marital conflict, a therapist, for example, must consider such factors as economic dependency or the secondary status of a woman’s life plans and personal goals in the family interaction. As Harriet Lerner notes, therapists must notice genderized patterns in families, such as the typical tendency of women toward “underfunctioning for the self while overfunctioning for others.”⁶⁵ On the whole, *Women in Families* raises an ultimatum on par with those stated at the beginning of this essay:

A therapist who fails to respond to a families’ presentation of their problems with a framework that takes into account the inequities of the culture, and who attempts to maintain a so-called ‘neutrality’ vis-à-vis the family, is necessarily doing sexist family therapy If the field cannot move to integrate current and developing information about gender and its impact, if it regards such criticism as simply representing only a few radical women, then none of us, male and female, will develop our abilities to the fullest.⁶⁶

VI. Ethnicity, Women, and Psychological theory

As has become increasingly clear, gender is not the only critical category influencing self and knowledge. In the late 1980s and the 1990s, various psychoanalytic, self-in-relation, developmental, and family systems theorists all began to attend to the relevance of race and ethnicity in psychological theory and therapeutic practice.⁶⁷ In a variety of organizations,

65 Lerner, *Women in Therapy* (n. 61), 153.

66 McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, *Women in Families* (n. 59), 13 (3-15).

67 In psychoanalysis, see, for example, Laura S. Brown and Maria P. P. Root, eds., *Diversity and Complexity in Feminist Therapy*, New York (Haworth Press) 1999; Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Christian, and Helene Moglen, eds., *Female Subjects in Black and White. Race, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism*, Berkeley (University of California Press) 1997; and, Elizabeth Abel, *Race, Class, and Psychoanalysis? Opening Questions*, in: *Conflicts in Feminism*, Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds., New York (Routledge) 1990, 184-204. On self-in-relation theory, see Jordan, *Women’s Growth in Diversity* (n. 42). In developmental theory, see Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan, *Between Voice and Silence* (n. 53). In family therapy, see Monica McGoldrick, Nydia Garcia-Preto, Paulette Moore Hines, and Evelyn Lee, *Ethnicity and Women*, in *Women in Families*. (n. 59), 169-99; and, Nancy Boyd-Franklin, *Recurrent Themes in the Treatment of African American*

such as the Feminist Therapy Institute, women of color called feminist psychology “on its racism and said ‘Enough!’”⁶⁸

Attention to race and ethnicity in psychology has not come about easily. Psychology is often seen as part of a medical world associated with the European-American middle class. At various times, modern medicine and psychology exemplified some of the racist prejudices of society at large. As a result, many people of color have had little, if any, confidence in either medical or psychological expertise on pathology and cure. Psychological analysis with its focus on individuals and intrapsychic dynamics seems to blame the victim and, sometimes worse, the victim’s mother or the victim’s extended family. In many ways, much of modern psychology has functioned as a rather elaborate ethnography of the white Western psyche.⁶⁹

Publication of *Women of Color*, a collection co-edited by Lillian Comas-Díaz and Beverly Greene, represents a pioneering effort to integrate reflection on gender and ethnicity into mental health understandings and treatment of women. It is organized in three sections. The first explores the heterogeneity of women of color, with chapters on African American, American Indian, Asian and Asian American, West Indian, and Latina women. The second section evaluates a variety of theoretical and clinical frameworks for therapy, such as family therapy and psychodynamic approaches, and the final section treats special issues, such as mixed-race women, lesbian women of color, violence, and work. Throughout, the authors counter the tendency to subordinate race to gender. Comas-Díaz and Greene contend that failure to recognize the “combined influence and impact of racial and gender parameters can seriously compromise the effectiveness of mental health treatment.”⁷⁰ In arbitrating multiple oppressive factors in their family and work lives, women of color find themselves in “double jeopardy.”

Although not a psychologist, bell hooks argues that African-American women need both psychological self-actualization and political involve-

Women in Group Psychotherapy, in: *Women and Therapy* 11, 1991, 25-40. Other important books by feminist scholars on race and therapy more generally include Nancy Boyd-Franklin, *Black Families in Therapy. A Multisystems Approach*, New York (Guilford Press) 1989; Monica McGoldrick, John K. Pearce, and Joseph Giordana, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, New York and London (Guilford) 1982; and, Elaine Pinderhughes, *Understanding Race, Ethnicity and Power. Key to Efficacy in Clinical Practice*, New York (Free Press) 1989.

68 Laura Brown, Editorial Introduction, in: *Diversity and Complexity* (n. 67).

69 Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Christian, and Helene Moglen, Introduction. *The Dream of a Common Language*, in: *Female Subjects in Black and White. Race, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism*, Abel, Christian, and Moglen, eds., Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London (University of California Press) 1997, 1.

70 Lillian Comas-Díaz and Beverly Greene, Overview. *Gender and Ethnicity in the Healing Process*, in: *Women of Color. Integrating Ethnic and Gender Identities in Psychotherapy*, Comas-Díaz and Greene, eds., New York and London (Guilford) 1994, 187 (185-193).

ment, given patriarchy and racism. "We cannot," she contends, "create effective movements for social change if individuals struggling for that change are not also self-actualized."⁷¹ Much like Miller, Gilligan, and others in feminist studies in religion, hooks argues that to move "ourselves from manipulable objects to self-empowered subjects," women of color must break with the ways "our reality is defined and shaped by the dominant culture" and assert "our understanding of that reality, of our own experience."⁷² In her understanding of suffering and healing, she nicely combines a receptivity to psychology, self-help, and therapy, a view of self-actualization of oppressed groups as a political activity or "liberatory political practice," and a sensitivity to the wisdom of the elders, the movement of the spirit, and the resources of religious traditions and communities. A first step in healing is breaking the silence and telling the stories of suffering, not unlike both the therapeutic talking cure and old traditions of storytelling.

V. Implications

What are some of the implications of this expanding body of literature for practical theology? This, of course, is a huge question that could conceivably occupy an entire article itself. Nonetheless, classic works of feminist scholars in psychology have dramatically and definitively reshaped thinking on women and men in several ways that must now be taken into account in all reflection on theological anthropology and religious practice. Beyond the specific achievements of particular schools of thought and individuals and by way of conclusion, it is worth listing a few of the more general contributions.

First and foremost, feminist theorists question biological and psychological determinism and bring to psychological theory and practical theology a serious exploration of the social construction of gender.⁷³ As is clear in the brief quotes from Freud, Erikson, and Bettelheim, early theorists in psychology made little distinction between sex and gender. The distinction arose in feminist theory as a way to depict the social and historical evolution of sex roles and categories. Feminist theorists in psychology emphasize the enormous plasticity of human sexuality from group to group and culture to culture and the multiple ways in which social expectation and social contexts determine human behavior and personality. Gender and sexual differences are not absolute and irreduc-

71 bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam. Black Women and Self-Recovery*, Boston (South End) 1993, 4-5.

72 *Ibid.*, 1-2; see also 9, 80-81.

73 Many have, of course, turned to Michel Foucault, *A History of Sexuality, I*, New York (Pantheon) 1978.

ible. Time and place produce gender. The social, political, and economic context play an undeniable role in human pathology and hence, must receive serious consideration in any genuine therapeutic intervention.

Second, feminist studies in psychology uncovers the genderized nature of family conflicts and the problems of sexual inequality in families. Simply put, not only is gender constructed, the construction of gender is problematized. So also are sexual identity and desire. As Chodorow says so well, "as long as women must live through their children, and men do not ... provide easily accessible role models," the cycle of female devaluation will continue to the next generation and "neither boys nor girls [will] attain stable identity and meaningful roles."⁷⁴ Based on such assessments, many theorists argue for the centrality of an equal division of power and labor in families for healthy human development and family life. Theorists make not just an academic but a political case for significantly increased male parental involvement. In analogous fashion, women, particularly mothers, must have a valued role in families and, moreover, a clear sphere of public influence and legitimate social control that lies beyond intimate and family responsibilities and relationships.

Third, feminist psychologists identify ways in which female development of relationally-grounded thinking and acting has been labeled "pathological" when judged according to male norms of adult development. Previously devalued personality attributes, such as dependence and sensitivity, are reclaimed as essential for full human development. Some schools, such as psychoanalytic feminism and self-in-relation feminism, actually stand previous theory on its head. These schools revalorize female development in connectivity while pointing out the problems of male development in opposition to the other, particularly the mother. Scholars, such as Gilligan, hope to make development a more complex and nuanced process, implying the validity of multiple lines of development. Moreover, many theorists advocate a fundamental revaluing of female subjectivity, including maternal subjectivity. They argue for psychological analysis of the mother as a subject and not just as an object in relation to the needs of the child.

Fourth, and related to this last point, feminist theorists advance a woman-centered critique of the individualism and solipsism of psychodynamic therapy and theory. Selfhood is fundamentally reconceived in more complex relational terms. Developmentally, infants do not begin life in a completely merged stage of symbiosis with a primary parent. Rather selfhood is fundamentally intersubjective and fluid. Human development includes the maturation of other kinds of qualities, including connection, affectivity, endurance, and relationality. Autonomy depends on interconnection and differentiation rather than on complete independence and self-sufficiency. Therapy cannot focus on the individual alone. Neurosis

74 Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (n. 20), 44.

and pathology do not evolve from genital conflict or intrapsychic dynamics alone. Rather they evolve in the midst of problems of cultural valuation. The focus is on the experience of self with others and on critical social influences.

Fifth, feminist studies in psychology confirm the importance of psychology for theological scholarship in practical theology, particularly research focused on questions of theological anthropology, human nature, and fulfillment. In the first edited book on women and pastoral care, Maxine Glaz worried about the haste with which contemporary pastoral theologians were writing off psychology in their rush to become more theological.⁷⁵ Despite the contemporary movement away from psychology in practical theology, psychology remains essential to adequate understandings of human nature. Despite popular cultural stereotypes of psychology as a handmaiden to individualism, psychology has itself promoted relational and social understandings of selfhood and society. Despite early radical feminist condemnation of psychology as inherently oppressive, psychology has a primary place in understanding sexual oppression. As Chodorow contends, psychological theory “describes a significant level of relation that is not reducible to ... social or cultural organization” and “is constitutive and determinative of human life.”⁷⁶ Psychoanalytic feminists in particular argue convincingly that understanding the cultural construction of gender requires exploration of the power of the unconscious in sexual desire and formation. One must understand how fantasies and social realities interact. Psychology offers a means to understand the dynamics of patriarchy, even if it does not provide a fully adequate strategy for broader social transformations.⁷⁷

Finally, feminist studies also helps situate the science of psychology in its historical and political context and has made important contributions to the moral evaluation of psychology. Mitchell, for example, historicizes psychoanalysis; penis envy is not a theory for all people in all times and places, but embodies the height of a capitalistic, patriarchal edifice. Psychology, as Susan Sturdivant declared in 1980, is more a value-loaded philosophy than an objective science. Social and political beliefs have colored the questions raised and the answers given by scientific theories on the needs and abilities of women and men. If psychology is “related as much to what we *believe* about people as to what we *know* about them,” its claims about women and men deserve sustained critical moral and cultural analysis.⁷⁸

75 Maxine Glaz, *A New Pastoral Understanding of Women*, in: *Women in Travail and Transition. A New Pastoral Care*, Minneapolis (Fortress) 1991, 12, 29 (11-32).

76 Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (n. 20), 7.

77 Sprengnether, *The Spectral Mother* (n. 35), 8.

78 Susan Sturdivant, *Therapy with Women. A Feminist Philosophy of Treatment*, New York (Springer) 1980, 4, emphasis in text.

In the end, if the measure of the most mature adult rests on male standards based on the study of men, women's reality disappears and women appear deficient. If one-half of the population is omitted from psychological and theological research on human well-being and sexuality, people will not be able to see the whole picture. If, however, clinicians and scholars attend to feminist studies in psychology, we may see human life anew.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Forschungsbericht stellt neuere Beiträge zu einer feministischen Psychologie in den USA vor und formuliert einige Konsequenzen, welche die Praktische Theologie aus diesen Studien zu ziehen hätte.

Drei Jahrzehnte feministischer Psychologie und Therapie haben zur Überwindung der Normativität männlicher Sichtweisen in diesen Wissenschaftsdisziplinen geführt und für ein neues Verständnis von Geschlechtszugehörigkeit (gender), Sexualität, Selbstbeziehung und Persönlichkeitsentwicklung geführt. Der Forschungsbericht arbeitet die verschiedenen Stadien der Forschung heraus und lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit wesentlich auf folgende fünf Ansätze und ihre wichtigsten Vertreterinnen: Psychoanalytische Theorie (Juliet Mitchell und Nancy Chodorow), sozio-kulturelle Selbstbeziehungstheorie (Jean Baker), systemische Familientheorie (Monica McGoldrick, Carol Anderson, and Froma Walsh) und ethnisch-feministische Psychologie (Lillian Comas-Díaz, Berverly Greene).

Die Berücksichtigung feministischer Psychologie in der pastoralen Praxis und der theologischen Sprache steht noch am Anfang. Die Impulse, die von den neuen Fragestellungen auf eine anthropologische Theologie ausgehen können, werden jedoch in Zukunft die Kraft haben, erhebliche Veränderungen in Theologie und Kirche auszulösen.



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