Introduction: Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory

In the early period of the contemporary feminist movement, feminists searched for a grand theory. This single cause, or dominant factor, theory would explain a sexual inequality, hierarchy, and domination that were omnipresent and that defined and circumscribed entirely the experience and organization of gender and sexuality. For some theorists, gender oppression inhered in capitalist relations of work and exploitation, in the state or the family, in divisions among women or alliances among men, or in male violence and control of women's reproductive and sexual capacities. For others, women were entrapped through their own reproductive anatomy, the objectification of their bodies, the mothering relation or the marriage relation, compulsory heterosexuality, the cultural or ideological construction of "woman," location in the domestic sphere, or association with nature.

For members of the feminist subculture that developed out of the New Left, Marxism presented the hegemonic theoretical claim to explain oppression. Yet as I reflected during the late 1960s upon the historical and cross-cultural record, it seemed clear that women's oppression well preceded class society and that its dynamics did not inhere exclusively or dominantly in material relations of work. I turned to psychological anthropology for an alternative to the Marxist account of women's oppression that would still privilege actual social relations as an explanatory underpinning. I concluded, as I argue in chapter 1, that women's mothering generated, more or less universally, a defensive masculine identity in men and a compensatory psychology and ideology of masculine superiority. This psychology and ideology sustained male dominance.

Following out this psychological focus, and supported by the early feminist claim that the personal is political, I turned to psychoanalysis as a

basis for feminist theory. This choice of theoretical focus was an expectable outcome of my disciplinary origins and training throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. I was first trained as an undergraduate anthropology student at Radcliffe College by Beatrice and John W. M. Whiting in a culture and personality anthropology that might be considered prefeminist but that was certainly gender and generation sensitive.[1] I was later influenced as a graduate student in sociology at Brandeis University by the protofeminist psychoanalytic sociology of Philip Slater, who told me quite forcefully after reading the original version of chapter 1 that I would never understand personality if I focussed only on conscious phenomena. Slater's *The Glory of Hera*, itself influenced by Whiting and Whiting, remains one of the most powerful accounts we have of the psychodynamics of male fear of women and its cultural institutionalization.[2] These approaches indicated a psychological depth to cultural attitudes, implying that we must always investigate the conflictual emotional components in cultural categories and practices.

The advantages of a psychoanalytic feminist approach were substantial. In psychoanalytic theory, as in psychological anthropology and anthropological kinship theory, explicit attention to sex and gender, though not approached from a feminist perspective, has been central and basic to both theory and practice. It would be difficult for a psychoanalyst to ignore completely an analysand's sexuality or gender or to argue that a theory of sexuality or gender was irrelevant to the field. In other disciplines that feminists have tried to reshape, the argument for gender neutrality or irrelevance has been more easily sustained by traditionalists.

I argued that this centrality of sex and gender in the categories of psychoanalysis, coupled with the tenacity, emotional centrality, and sweeping power in our lives of our sense of gendered self, made psychoanalysis a particularly apposite source of feminist theorizing.[3] I suggested that our experiences as men and women come from deep within, both within our pasts and, relatedly, within the deepest structures of unconscious meaning and the most emotionally moving relationships that help constitute our daily lives. 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. This emotional meaningfulness has something to do more generally with the continuing theoretical appeal of psychoanalytic feminism and with the emotional–intellectual engrossment of psychoanalytic feminists.

Psychoanalytic feminism has a rather complex and sometimes underground prehistory, a prehistory which recent work on early women psychoanalysts

helps us to excavate. I locate its political and theoretical origins with Karen Horney, a second-generation analyst whose early essays on femininity forcefully challenge Freud. Horney asserts a model of women with positive primary feminine qualities and self-valuation, against Freud's model of woman as defective and forever limited, and she ties her critique of both psychoanalytic theory and women's psychology to her recognition of a male-dominant society and culture. Horney's theories, and indeed the early psychoanalytic debates about femininity, do not seem to have made a major impact on mainstream psychoanalysis for many years, indeed, until the current revival of interest in female psychology sparked by the feminist movement and challenge. However, her theories form the basis, acknowledged or unacknowledged, for most of the recent revisions of psychoanalytic understandings of gender and for most psychoanalytic dissidence on the question of gender in the early period as well.[4]

The work of Melanie Klein is another, more theoretical than political, early source of psychoanalytic feminism, although one not much drawn upon by feminists in the contemporary period except in its object-relational transformation.[5] Klein turned psychoanalysis from a psychology of the boy's relation to the father to a psychology of the relation to the mother in children (people) of both sexes. For Klein, children's intense reactions to and infantile fears of their mother, her breast, her insides, and her powers shape subsequent emotional life, leading to the construction of self and other and to moral (guilty, reparative) concern for the other. The Kleinian contribution, as feminism, is even less explicit than the buried 1920s and 1930s debates on femininity, but it introduces, both in its content and in the debate it generated, a passion-laden, even painful, rawness and immediacy to psychoanalytic discourse about gender, and more specifically, about mothers.[6] Kleinian theory in itself, and as it has been translated by object-relations theorists, offers a reading of the psyche not so directly tied to cultural gender as Freudian theory. But it is more attentive, in an unmediated way, to the emotions and conflicts that relations rooted in gender evoke in the child and in the child within the adult.

Contemporary psychoanalytic feminism begins with its opposite, a history of feminist challenge, dismissal, and excoriation. Many feminists saw Freudian psychoanalysis as a great enemy, and, consequently, most early psychoanalytic feminist writings, whatever their specific argument, spend some time simply arguing directly for the usefulness of psychoanalytic insights to feminism.

Like all theoretical approaches within the feminist project, psychoanalytic feminism does specific things and not others. First, like the theory from which it derives, it is not easily or often historically, socially, or culturally

specific. It tends toward universalism and can be read, even if it avoids the essentialism of psychoanalysis itself, to imply that there is a psychological commonality among all women and among all men. Psychoanalytic feminism has not tried enough to capture the varied, particular organizations of gender and sexuality in different times and places, nor has it made the dynamics of change central. The dominant theoretical lexicon of psychoanalysis includes gender but not class, race, or ethnicity. Accordingly, psychoanalytic feminism has not been especially attuned to differences among women – to class, racial, and ethnic variations in experience, identity, or location in social practices and relations. Feminist theory and practice, of course, need to be culturally and historically specific, and it would be useful if psychoanalysis had the data and theory to differentiate genders and sexualities finely across history and culture. Psychoanalytic feminism would also be considerably enriched by clinical, theoretical, or psychoanalytically informed phenomenological and experiential accounts of gender identity, self, and relation among women and men of color and of non-dominant classes.

It is a serious mistake, however, to conflate this delimitation of the contribution of psychoanalysis to feminism with a dismissal of its importance. People everywhere have emotions that they care about, connections to others, sexual feelings, and senses of self, self-esteem, and gender. People everywhere form a psyche, self, and identity. These are everywhere profoundly affected by unconscious fantasies as well as by conscious perceptions that begin as early as infancy. Psychoanalysis is the method and theory directed toward the investigation and understanding of how we develop and experience these unconscious fantasies and of how we construct and reconstruct our felt past in the present. Historically, this method and theory have not often been applied in a socially or culturally specific manner, but there is not a basic antagonism between psychoanalytic thinking and social specificity. Psychoanalysis uses universal theoretical categories – distinguishing conscious from unconscious mental processes, labelling and analyzing defenses, arguing that basic ego or self feelings are a product of and constructed by early experienced object relations – but it need not (though it may in some versions) prescribe the content of unconscious fantasy, the inevitable invocation of particular defenses, or particular developmental or self stories. As factors of race, class, culture, or history enter either into a labelled (conscious or unconscious) identity, or as they shape particular early object-relational and family patterns and forms of subjectivity, psychoanalytic tools should be able to analyze these. Until we have another theory which can tell us about unconscious mental processes, conflict, and relations of gender, sexuality, and self, we had best take psychoanalysis for what it does include and can tell us rather than dismissing it out of hand. We might also bear in mind that on some

kinds of differences among women, psychoanalysis already has great interpretive potential experientially and clinically on the individual case level, if not theoretically – that is, as a general developmental theory. I think here of differences of sexual orientation and identity, of sexual victimization and its sequelae, of married and single, of mother and not-mother.

My own project, represented in this book, continues to be a project in psychoanalytic feminism, to engage and weave together strands of feminism and of psychoanalysis, but it has changed in both these terrains. During the early period of single-cause feminism, I probably would have continued to develop as a Marxist feminist if I had thought that gender inequality inhered primarily in capitalist or capitalist–patriarchal work relations. I would have learned political theory if I had thought that the state was the primary locus of women's oppression or become a cultural critic or philosopher if I thought woman's oppression was located in her otherness. I might have tried to become an expert on aggression and testosterone or female hormonal cycles if biology seemed the key. My drawing upon psychoanalysis, in some sense the creation of a single individual, during that period was itself in the context of, and remains a sort of carryover from, feminist grand theory days.

Now, however, when I speak of feminist theory, I mean something more holistic and pluralistic – encompassing a number of organizational axes – and at the same time not absolute. In my current view, feminist understanding requires a multiplex account – perhaps not as acausal as thick description, but yet not necessarily claiming causal explanatory status – of the dynamics of gender, sexuality, sexual inequality, and domination. It is the focus on relations among elements, or dynamics, along with an analysis and critique of male dominance, which define an understanding of sex and gender as feminist, and not just the exclusive focus on male dominance itself. I no longer think that one factor, or one dynamic, can explain male dominance (even if I still have my own predilections for particular theoretical contenders). An open web of social, psychological, and cultural relations, dynamics, practices, identities, beliefs, in which I would privilege neither society, psyche, nor culture, comes to constitute gender as a social, cultural, and psychological phenomenon. This multiplex web composes sexual inequality, but, at the same time, feminist understanding encompasses relations of gender and sexuality not immediately comprehended in terms of hierarchy, domination, or inequality or by concepts like patriarchy, male dominance, or the law of the father. Gender and sexuality are more fragmentary, so that some differences are not implicated in dominance, and the complex of gender may include benefits to women as well as liabilities. This complex is

manifold, constituted by multiple, often contradictory, locations and identities. There are times when gender itself as well as sexual inequality are more or less relevant to our experiences or the conclusions of our investigations. Such complexity is among other things a necessary correlate to the multiple social, psychological, and cultural identities of different women and to the polyvocality we find in women's accounts of their lives and situations. These accounts show that psychological, cultural, and social constructions of gender vary and that gender varies in its link to the self and in how and when it is invoked. Chapters 9 and 10 begin to address these issues.

This global shift in my general view of feminist theory has substantive import for my psychoanalytic feminist analysis. My early writing, in articles represented in this volume and in my book, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, implied that women's mothering was *the* cause or prime mover of male dominance.[7] I would now argue that these writings document and delineate one extremely important, and previously largely unexamined, aspect of the relations of gender and the psychology of gender. My focus on the mother and the pre-Oedipal period must also be understood historically and contextually, as a reaction to and dialogue with the nearly exclusive Freudian focus on the father and the Oedipus complex. That we are mothered by women, that in all societies women rather than men have primary parenting responsibilities, is an important social and cultural fact that still bears remarking and analyzing. In those individual and cultural cases where we have some insight into human emotions and psychodynamics, this fact also seems to have significant import for people's constructions of self and interpersonal relations, for their emotions, their fantasies, and their psychological apprehensions of gender. Women's inequality may be multiply caused and situated, but I have yet to find a convincing explanation for the virulence of masculine anger, fear, and resentment of women, or of aggression toward them, that bypasses – even if it does not rest with – the psychoanalytic account, first suggested by Horney, that men resent and fear women because they experience them as powerful mothers.

To emphasize the emotional (and even social, cultural, or political) power of the mother, which I have done, following psychoanalytic object-relations theory, does not preclude a recognition of the father's social, cultural, and political (and even emotional) power. However, although such a position is not incompatible with a view that locates power in the father, it is incompatible with arguments that the father, either as actual or symbolic presence, controls the mother–child relation entirely, or that motherhood is solely an institution that sustains women's powerlessness, or that we can only understand the mother–daughter relation as it is experienced in the domain of the father. Fathers are not only socially and

culturally dominant; they can be personally domineering, seductive, and exciting, often as an alternative to the taken-for-granted mother. Mothers can, in contrast to such fathers, be perceived as submissive, self-effacing, and powerless.[8]

My position here is consonant with modern, more decentered, views of theory in general and feminist theory in particular – views of the multiplicities of gender(ed) experience which include varied axes of power and powerlessness and dimensions of gender which do not encode power. The complexity of the emotional and personal is best captured by decentered views, such that attempts to polarize personal and emotional experiences as all bad, or to valorize them as all good, are often insufficient. Such a perspective enables us to understand that one can both valorize feminine qualities like women's self in relation and see them as products of inequality. As a result of investigating how the relational development of self differs for women and men, I have criticized men's denial of relatedness and individualism in social and psychoanalytic theory. I have implied that women's self in relation is a potential strength. But such critique does not mean that I do not acknowledge many women's very difficult problems with establishing differentiated selfhood, autonomy, and an agentic subjectivity.

There is a second change in my project from the period when I wrote *The Reproduction of Mothering*, and that is a greater interest in writing about psychoanalysis for its own sake. As I now see feminist theory as a more multiplex account of relations in many domains, I care less to justify my interests by arguing that psychoanalysis is *the* feminist theory. I am more convinced even than I was during an earlier period that psychoanalysis describes a significant level of reality that is not reducible to, or in the last instance caused by, social or cultural organization. I would not, as I believe I do in *Reproduction*, give determinist primacy to social relations that generate certain psychological patterns or processes but would argue that psychology itself is equally important to, constitutive and determinative of, human life. If I were to discover that the "central dynamic" or "cause" of women's oppression were located outside of the personal, interiorized, subjective, and intersubjective realm of psychic life and primary relationships that psychoanalysis describes, I would still be concerned with this realm and its relation to gender, sexuality, and self.

Part of the explanation for this shift may lie in the particular psychoanalytic feminist approach that I chose. Object-relations theory is originally a set of accounts about the constitution of self in the context of primary emotional relationships.[9] It is not primarily a theory of gender. This branch of psychoanalytic feminism in some sense imposed a non-explicitly gendered object-relational account on gender and the gender-infused relations of parenting and heterosexual intimacy. As a result, some

of my writings more easily grew to encompass an independent interest in self or subjectivity, as these experiences are and are not so gender-related. Part II exemplifies these interests.

For some readers and colleagues, this direct fascination with – what I sometimes consider this experience of being passionately "hooked on" – psychoanalytic theory may make my more recent writing less powerful as feminist theory, which should in their opinion focus unswervingly on gender domination.[10] My own view, of course, is that such a position is wrong. I continue to locate important experiences and oppressions of gender in emotional and intrapsychic life and in the arena of primary relations. This personal sphere is psychologically, culturally, and socially meaningful, even if we now understand that our cultural legacy conceptualizing such a sphere as separate is historically and structurally inaccurate. I certainly recognize relations of gender and male dominance in the community, the economy, and the state, and I think that feminist politics and analysis in these arenas are extremely important. But I do not agree with the strand of feminist theory that argues that the central arena of gender oppression in the modern period has moved from the family and the personal to the public and social realm.[11] Moreover, it does seem to me that the most heatedly contested gender politics concern what we conceptualize and experience as the personal and familial – abortion, marriage, divorce, the regulation of sexuality, parenting.

I would stress, probably more now than in my earliest writings, the extent to which concerns in the emotional realm, gender related or not, are tied up with (at least our own society's) notions of human fulfillment – selfhood, agency, meaningful relationship, depth and richness of experience, a comfortable centering in our bodies and in our sexuality. Psychoanalysis enables us to understand such experiences particularly well, to recognize their acute intensity and yet to analyze them in their full multilayered complexity. Such concerns are a natural extension of my interests in object-relations theory.

I believe that this concern for psychoanalysis-in-itself infuses, and explains, the writings in this volume. I have begun to delineate the origins of such concerns. Writers like myself who draw upon psychoanalysis seem to do so for reasons that go beyond its aptness for their/our intellectual project. We are hooked, have fallen intellectually in love. This passionate attachment (and psychoanalysis tells us that all passionate attachments are ambivalent) seems to come first from Freud. The intensity in his own writing, the tortured conflict as well as the often sweeping brilliance that both his texts and his subtexts exhibit, seem to draw (at least some) readers in emotionally. Freud challenges us to maintain that precarious balance between objective assessment and subjective involvement which may be the mark of our most profound intellectual insights and which is

certainly the mark of our most emotion-laden intellectual experiences.

In psychoanalytic terms, we have transferences to Freud and to other analytic writers. These are based on our own intellectual prehistories (our intellectual infancies and childhoods), on our feelings about authoritative (and authoritarian) parents, teachers, and writers, and, I believe, on our unavoidable entanglement, or entrapment, in the history of controversy within psychoanalysis. These transferences mean that we always bring something active and involved to our reading of psychoanalysis. We also have countertransferences to Freud's own transferences, that is, to those many parts of his (and other psychoanalysts') writings that are themselves emotion-laden and driven by unconscious conflict and desires.[12]

Many of us, also, are gripped by the grand humanistic claims of psychoanalysis. Freud, and others who follow him, give us standards for human fulfillment in both the emotional and interpersonal spheres. My own involvement in this theory has led me away from the social determinism prevalent in sociology and in political movements and from an exclusive reliance on social standards as measures of human life. I do not mean to deny or pass over the important recognition that social conditions can be life-draining and debilitating, and psychoanalysis should certainly explore more fully just how much difficult social conditions shape and constrain subjectivity and psychic life. But I have learned from psychoanalysis that we cannot measure human life solely in socially determinist terms. In the integration of their conscious and unconscious lives, in the quality of their primary emotional relationships with others, as in social organization and politics, people can help to create for themselves a more meaningful life.

The intellectual trajectory described by this volume began with a concern for the structure of male dominance, and shortly thereafter, for the dynamics of the mother–daughter relationship. This latter interest led me directly to issues of separation and connection, as these are discussed by psychoanalytic writers, and indirectly to a broader set of concerns that these writers also address. These concerns, like those of psychoanalytic theorists in other traditions, tie psychoanalysis to claims about the nature and meaning of life. As with much feminist theory, a focus on gender-related issues and a feminist theoretical critique turned back upon the original theory itself and pointed toward transformative concerns for theory in general. My originally neatly contained project in feminist theory and the psychology of gender has spilled over to other (I emphatically do not mean "larger") theoretical questions. I wanted a method to understand what seemed to me the prevalent intertwining of conscious and unconscious feeling and emotion in interpersonal and intrapsychic life. Freud's insistently individualist drive psychology and

structural theory do not tie issues of self and feeling closely enough to questions of gender; Lacanian theory does not have categories for self and relation as I conceive these at all. Because object-relations theorists make such concerns central and discuss them most extensively, these theorists form the dominant psychoanalytic theoretical basis of my work.

Object-relations theorists, emerging from and reacting to the work of Melanie Klein, image a course of transactions between self and other(s) that help form our first subjectivity and sense of self, and that throughout life are renegotiated to recreate the sense of self and other in terms of connection, separation, and in between. These transactions give depth and richness of meaning to experience, by resonating with the past and with constructions of the past.[13]

Winnicott, currently seen as the pre-eminent British object-relations theorist, elaborates the social and cultural import of issues of connection and separation more than any other psychoanalyst, as he points us to the transitional space between mother and infant that is neither me nor not-me and that becomes the creative arena of play and culture. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 contain some discussion of Winnicott.

Others also speak to the continual preoccupation with establishing and maintaining such intrapsychic and interpersonal space, claiming it as the individual's life project. According to infant researcher and theorist of separation–individuation Margaret Mahler:

> For the more or less normal adult, the experience of being both fully "in" and at the same time basically separate from the "world out there" is among the givens of life that are taken for granted. Consciousness of self and absorption without awareness of self are the two polarities between which we move, with varying ease and with varying degrees of alternation or simultaneity . . . *As is the case with any intrapsychic process, this one reverberates throughout the life cycle.* . . . Here, in the rapprochement subphase, we feel is the mainspring of man's eternal struggle against both fusion and isolation.
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> One could regard the entire life cycle as constituting a more or less successful process of distancing from and introjection of the lost symbiotic mother, an eternal longing for the actual or fantasied "ideal state of self," with the latter standing for a symbiotic fusion with the "all good" symbiotic mother, who was at one time part of the self in a blissful state of well-being.[14]

Mahler here captures the essence of oscillation between connection and separation, though, in the end, she does indicate a tendency – perhaps partially in reaction to the individualist biases of traditional theory – to see the tension more in terms of the attractions of connection and the collapse of boundaries, with separateness and distance more residual.[15]

Among psychoanalysts, Hans Loewald perhaps best expresses an evenhanded ability to see fully the promises and limitations of what we conventionally think of as early developmental and later developmental

stances like connection and separation. He wants us to rethink these stances and to move beyond associating them with regressive and progressive moments in human development and human psychological life. He also ties these more directly than either Mahler or the object-relations theorists not only to powerful affects but also to drive derivatives. In a relatively early paper, he writes:

> As we explore these various modes of separation and union, it becomes more and more apparent that the ambivalence of love–hate and of aggression–submission (sadism–masochism) enters into all of them and that neither separation nor union can ever be entirely unambivalent. The deepest root of the ambivalence that appears to pervade all relationships, external as well as internal, seems to be the polarity inherent in individual existence of individuation and "primary narcissistic" union.[16]

Such a reading of development and psychic life enables Loewald to resolve a number of theoretical and clinical problems. He can move beyond the traditional privileging of Oedipal development as a more advanced stage without reverting to the sometime anti-Oedipal tendency of cultural critics and feminists who tend to see only pre-Oedipal modes of connectedness as a model for a desirable human life. He overcomes the tendency in object-relations thinkers and other theorists of early development like Mahler and Kohut to be unable to integrate their approach into Oedipal theory. These theorists tend simply to add on classical assumptions about Oedipal drive, ego, and superego development to their broadly object-relational theories, based on different metapsychological premises, of early development, and to hold an implicit developmental model that the analysis of pre-Oedipal issues in adults is a residual necessity for those patients who need to be brought up to the Oedipal stage. For Loewald, "Oedipal" projects of individuation and morality and "pre-Oedipal" concerns with boundaries, separation, connection, and the transitional space continue throughout life:

> [psychoanalysis] seems to stand and fall with the proposition that the emergence of a relatively autonomous individual is the culmination of human development. How this may come about, and what interferes with such an outcome, resulting in psychopathology, is a most important aspect of psychoanalytic research, reconstruction, and treatment.
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> On the other hand, owing in part to analytic research, there is a growing awareness of the force and validity of another striving, that for unity, symbiosis, fusion, merging, or identification – whatever name we wish to give to this sense of and longing for nonseparateness and undifferentiation. . .
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> The Oedipus complex is a constitutent of normal psychic life of the adult, and as such is active again and again. A psychotic core, related to the earliest vicissitudes of the ambivalent search for primary narcissistic unity and individuation, also is an active constituent of normal psychic life.[17]

Echoing both Freud, in his invocation of the Oedipal killing of the father and subsequent instigation of guilt, and Klein, in his focus on the desire to repair or atone toward the other rather than simply to criticize and undermine the self, Loewald describes the psychoanalytic contribution to our understanding of morality:

> If without the guilty deed of parricide there is no individual self worthy of that name, no advanced internal organization of psychic life, then guilt and atonement are crucial motivational elements of the self.[18]

My own recent thinking about the psychoanalytic contribution to our understanding of self, meaning, and experience is indebted to Loewald. This growing appreciation of his writing may be partly a result of my psychoanalytic clinical training, which has focussed me more on the psychoanalytic dialogue and less on the psychoanalytic story of development and the early dialogue of mother and child. Loewald's writing bridges and sees as parallel these two sometimes disparate dialogues. He indicates for us the often missing connection between psychoanalytic practice, psychoanalytic theory, and the potential uses and applications of that theory in other fields.

Loewald is certainly familiar to psychoanalysts, as he has been a consistently productive and wide-ranging psychoanalytic writer for several decades. He is highly respected within the profession but until recently has not been particularly lionized, adulated, or seen as a theoretical leader.[19] He is not associated with a specific theoretical tradition and is not seen as an independent innovator, maverick, or rebel. There are no (at least not yet) "Loewaldians," as there are Winnicottians, Kohutians, or Mahlerians. Indeed, he himself seems to be an insistent synthesizer rather than polarizer within psychoanalytic discourse, committed to and able to maintain himself as a drive theorist, ego psychologist, and object-relations theorist who respects self psychology, while also remaining fully enmeshed in the clinical situation that ultimately provides psychoanalysis its truths.[20] Psychoanalytic feminists and other psychoanalytic social or cultural critics have not drawn much upon his work. Here, I cannot do justice to the Loewaldian *œuvre*, but I indicate some of those directions in his thinking that I think show most promise for an expanded psychoanalytic sociology and psychoanalytic understanding of the life course, and, thereby, an expanded psychoanalytic feminism as well.

Loewald seems particularly able to capture the ways that unconscious processes resonate with conscious and thus give conscious life depth and richness of meaning. As he does so, he gives us a vision of intersubjectivity deeply imbued with multiply tiered ways to understand and experience self and other. Against those who would maintain a negative view of

transference as something that interferes with the reality of daily life, as well as those who would idealize the unconscious, he argues:

> far from being . . . "the enduring monument of man's profound rebellion against reality and his stubborn persistence in the ways of immaturity," transference is the "dynamism" by which the instinctual life of man, the id, becomes ego and by which reality becomes integrated and maturity is achieved. Without such transference – of the intensity of the unconscious, of the infantile ways of experiencing life that have no language and little organization, but the indestructibility and power of the origins of life – to the preconscious and to present-day life and contemporary objects – without such transference, or to the extent to which such transference miscarries, human life becomes sterile and an empty shell. On the other hand, the unconscious needs present-day external reality (objects) and present-day psychic reality (the preconscious) for its own continuity, lest it be condemned to live the shadow life of ghosts or to destroy life.[21]

Similarly, he links, rather than opposes, fantasy and reality, and claims that these give meaning one to the other:

> But fantasy is unreal only insofar as its communication with present actuality is inhibited or severed. To that extent, however, present actuality is unreal too. Perhaps a better word than "unreal" is "meaningless." In the analytic process the infantile fantasies and memories, by being linked up with the present actuality of the analytic situation and the analyst, regain meaning and may be reinserted within the stream of total mental life. Thereby they may resume that growth process (an element of which we call sublimation) which was interrupted or interfered with at an earlier time, leading to neurosis. At the same time, as the present actuality of the analytic situation is being linked up with infantile fantasies, this present gains or regains meaning, i.e., that depth of experience which comes about by its live communication with the infantile roots of experience. The disruption of that communication is the most important aspect of the problem of defense, of repression, isolation, etc.[22]

This connection of transference and current relationship, of fantasy and reality, of rational and irrational, itself turns back upon the psychoanalytic enterprise (and upon any enterprise, like that of psychoanalytic feminism, that draws upon psychoanalysis):

> While it has been [psychoanalysis's] intent to penetrate unconscious mentality with the light of rational understanding, it also has been and is its intent to uncover the irrational unconscious sources and forces motivating and organizing conscious and rational mental processes . . . unconscious processes became accessible to rational understanding, and at the same time rational thought itself and our rational experience of the world as an "object world" became problematic.[23]

This volume traces my thoughts about the relations between feminism and psychoanalytic theory over the past twenty years, since the beginning of the contemporary feminist movement. The essays argue for the necessity

to include psychoanalytic understanding, broadly construed, in feminist theory and also feminist understanding, broadly construed, in psychoanalysis. Both the feminism and psychoanalytic theory in the essays are to some extent matricentric and woman-related. They begin from my argument for the importance of women's mothering for the constitution of psychic life and of experiences of self and other. They focus on the relations and psychologies of gender and sexuality. Even as they see some need to move beyond such a polarization, they privilege psychoanalytic theories that stress the mother-dominated pre-Oedipal period over the father-dominated Oedipal period.

Part I provides an overview of the development of my thought about the significance of women's mothering. I describe the developmental unfolding of mother–daughter and mother–son relationships and delineate the impact of mothering on feelings about women in men and about mothers in women and men. I suggest that this relation to the mother will be especially implicated in those transferences and fantasies discussed by Loewald that imbue the relations and interactions of daily life with meaning and a vibrant, or problematic, reality. If my work in general can be seen as a series of investigations about the intertwining of female and male personality development with the psychological underpinnings of male dominance, it might be said that *The Reproduction of Mothering* focusses more on the former, while the essays in Part I and throughout the book, as they examine male fear and objectification of women, the casting of woman as other, and the refusal to accord subjectivity to mothers, focus more on the latter.

I do not address an issue that recent psychoanalytic theorizing points to, that is, the extent to which these transferences and fantasies reproduce actual early experiences – whether they are constructions or reconstructions.[24] I note only that whatever their original status, we do seem regularly to construct unconscious senses of self in relation to our mothers, including relational stories and self-images which have some of those qualities that we currently believe to characterize our earliest relationship and earliest sense of self. As Susan Contratto and I argue in chapter 4, we also bring these (constructed or reconstructed) infantile expectations and experiences to our relations with our mothers and our adult senses of self as mother or mothered, and we inscribe them in our cultural ideology about mothers.

Chapter 1, "Being and doing: a cross-cultural examination of the socialization of males and females," is included because it incorporates my first explorations into the psychological and cultural import for male dominance of the fact that women mother and puts forth my first insights into the greater continuities in female than in male development.[25] It casts its quest universally, reflecting the early feminist search for universals and

single-cause theories of male dominance. The essay is predominantly pre-psychoanalytic. It makes some reference to psychoanalytic writers and uses the notion of defense as a central explanatory category, but its argument is put forth in the terms of a psychological anthropology of role training and identity formation. The essay reflects my early training as a culture and personality anthropologist.

Chapter 2, "Family structure and feminine personality," previews the psychoanalytic argument I develop in *The Reproduction of Mothering*, that, through relation to their mother, women develop a self-in-relation, men a self that denies relatedness. It presages themes in my subsequent writing, differentiating gender identity from gender personality and arguing that there may be qualities that tend to characterize each gender that are not a consequence or cause of consciousness of self as male or female. It also argues, implicitly against anthropological and sociological colleagues, for the independent reality of the object-relational level of analysis, asserting that we should investigate the mother–daughter relationship whether or not it is of structural (I would now add cultural) importance in the society under consideration. This essay bridges culture and personality anthropology and psychoanalytic sociology, as it argues for a more psychoanalytic understanding of personality than culture and personality studies have heretofore provided.

Both these chapters exhibit the limitations one would expect in any scholar's early work, and any work that bears the mark of a field's earliest investigations. The data we now have on gender cross-culturally far surpasses anything I could draw on, and the essays, as many essays in the early period of feminist anthropology, probably read some Western differences, for instance on the extent of father-absence, into all cultures.[26] I also make the early feminist mistake of implying that women do not work in the paid labor-force.

Chapter 3, "Oedipal asymmetries and heterosexual knots," develops the implications of women's mothering for the construction and experience of heterosexual relationships. It also points briefly to a missing and often-sought closeness with other women in women's lives.[27]

The first three chapters take my work up to *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Although I cannot, in a brief introduction, exhaustively describe contemporary academic psychoanalytic feminism, it might be useful to the reader if I situate these essays within the early psychoanalytic feminist project. During this period, until about 1978, there were a few founding contributions and little of the richness and range of the more recent period. "Being and doing" was published in 1971, at a time when feminist treatment of psychoanalysis was entirely critical.[28] "Family structure and feminine personality," written in 1972, was published in 1974, the year during which I completed the dissertation work that

subsequently became *The Reproduction of Mothering*, and the year that witnessed publication of the first major argument for psychoanalytic feminism, Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. Two anthologies of psychoanalytic writings on women were published in response to the women's movement during the same period. In 1973, Jean Baker Miller's *Psychoanalysis and Women* collected a number of classical and contemporary writings on women in the Neo-Freudian tradition, and in 1974 Jean Strouse's *Women and Analysis* paired classical psychoanalytic essays with modern responses. In 1975, Gayle Rubin published *the* classic psychoanalytic feminist essay, perhaps the classic essay of modern feminism. "The traffic in women: notes toward a 'political economy' of sex" elegantly and succinctly criticized the Marxist–feminist project and tied together the theories of Freud and Lévi-Strauss. "Oedipal asymmetries and heterosexual knots" was published in 1976, the same year as three works foundational to modern psychoanalytic feminism and to the feminist theory of mothering: Dorothy Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, which shares a similar analysis to mine of heterosexual relationships, Jean Baker Miller's *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, and Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born. The Reproduction of Mothering* appeared in 1978. These works of the period about 1970–8 largely provide the bases for contemporary psychoanalytic feminism.

In chapter 4, "The fantasy of the perfect mother," Susan Contratto and I take the issue of mothering in another direction, toward the kinds of fantasies people (and in particular feminists) develop as a result of being mothered and living in a culture that exalts and debases mothers at the same time. This essay was influenced by Contratto's contemporaneous writing and thinking concerning ideology about mothers.[29]

Part II, "Gender, self, and social theory," moves from an interest in gender to an interest in sometimes and sometimes not gender-related qualities of self. This section is thematically related to its predecessor: it draws upon object-relations theory and feminist analysis, and it assumes the importance of mothering. However, the impact of this mothering, or preoccupation with mother-related issues, is now seen to inhere in masculinist theory as much as in social relations. Chapter 5, "Gender, relation, and difference in psychoanalytic perspective," provides a transition, as it connects an analysis of the general meaning of separateness and self to processes of gender differentiation and to attitudes toward women. Chapter 6, "Beyond drive theory: object relations and the limits of radical individualism," is an exegesis of the psychoanalytic sociologies of Marcuse and Brown demonstrating that drive-theory-based social theories are inevitably individualistic and denying of differentiated human connection. It argues that such purportedly universalistic individualism

has gendered foundations, modelling the self as male child and the other as mother. Chapter 7, "Toward a relational individualism" recapitulates both previous essays, as it distills an argument that object-relations theory and clinical practice enable a move beyond the individualism of drive theory and of orthodox psychoanalytic technique.

Part III, "Psychoanalysis, psychoanalysts, and feminism" takes up the psychoanalytic feminist dialogue about gender more as an imagined and actual problem in professional and political communication. Chapter 8, "Feminism, femininity, and Freud" and chapter 9, "Psychoanalytic feminism and the psychoanalytic psychology of women," address feminists and psychoanalysts about the asymmetric approach each takes to questions of gender and psychoanalysis. These essays continue what I have called the woman-related, and even matricentric, theme of the previous two sections. They implicitly and even explicitly pose the problem of connection and difference among people writing about women, contrasting the point of view of psychoanalysts writing about gender, who might well be men but who are likely to be women, with feminist writers. "Psychoanalytic feminism" especially concerns relations among women writers – among feminists as well as between psychoanalysts and feminists – with different points of view about the psychology and sociology of gender.

"Psychoanalytic feminism," as well as the chapters in Part II, begin to locate me in the psychoanalytic feminist debates of the post-1978 period, especially in relation to Lacanian feminism. Chapter 5 was originally written for a conference in which the French feminist anti-Lacanian view of difference was the main arena of debate. Chapter 6 addresses critical theory, and chapter 9 situates my work in relation to Neo-Freudian feminism and to Lacanian theory.

This book begins with reflections on my gender consciousness and how it developed. It concludes also with considerations about gender consciousness, this time playing off mine, and that of my generation, against that of women of another generation. As a further attempt to understand psychoanalysis and women, I began a study in the early 1980s of surviving second-generation women analysts, women who trained in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, when a relatively large number of women were entering the field. Chapter 10, "Seventies questions for thirties women: gender and generation in a study of early women psychoanalysts," comes from that research. It is a contribution to the growing literature in feminist methodology, reflecting on gender consciousness among "1970s feminists" (women who became feminists during the early second wave) and among women psychoanalysts trained around the 1930s. The essay addresses the cultural and psychological context in which different women ask questions

about psychoanalysis and feminism and the kinds of answers they are likely to accept, given their background, training, and cultural and social life situation.

Part III points to another enduring, somewhat defensive, preoccupation in my writing, with who I am and who I am not, intellectually. Such a preoccupation may characterize many interdisciplinary scholars, especially if they adhere to non-traditional and controversial approaches like feminism or psychoanalysis, and it may also characterize women. I am a self-defined "interpretive," or even "humanistic," psychoanalytic sociologist and psychoanalytic feminist. I have been criticized by sociologists for being ungrounded empirically and individualistic theoretically, for not understanding societal determinism, and for underestimating the force of social reality. At the same time, I have been criticized by Lacanian psychoanalytic feminists for the opposite, for being empiricist and socially determinist and for seeing the unconscious as a sociological phenomenon rather than an analytically irreducible and unique register of being and level of analysis.

As a psychoanalytic theorist, I part company with most American psychoanalysts in my reliance on object-relations theory and in that I have always seen psychoanalysis as an interpretive and not a medical or scientific enterprise. However, I differ from many academic humanists in seeing psychoanalysis as a social science that is a theoretically grounded but nonetheless empirically infused study of lives.[30] Recently, as I have been training as a psychoanalyst, I have become more concerned than formerly with claims psychoanalysts, both in their traditional identities and as feminists, make about gender. As I indicate in chapter 9, often what psychoanalysts have to say is narrowly delimited – the little details of how men and women empirically *are*. This is not rich enough or broadsweeping enough, or enough imbued with an understanding of gender as a relation, for the average academic feminist. Even writing by self-defined feminist psychoanalysts sometimes seems too closely focussed on the details of masculinity and femininity, assuming only in a general way that there is something problematic about the larger situation of gender but having no specific analytic categories to invoke to explain or characterize this situation. Reciprocally, the sweeping generalizations of psychoanalytic feminists sometimes seem well beyond utility for the clinical practitioner. I have felt in the middle, and as a result there is often a sense, in the concluding chapters, of someone feeling buffeted around the disciplines, reacting rather than creating.

I have not, in this brief introduction, been able exhaustively to describe contemporary psychoanalytic feminism or to place my ideas within it, and the volume as a whole has the task of documenting and arguing for the psychoanalytic feminist project. In the ten or more years since the major

statement I put forth in *Reproduction*, the psychoanalytic–feminist project has proliferated and become more intricate. Psychoanalytic feminism has also become much more institutionalized and has developed a number of proponents (and antagonists) in a variety of academic fields and from a variety of psychoanalytic perspectives. We can now count ourselves, even as we disagree, as part of a collaborative and growing project. The essays that follow provide my own contribution to that rich and complex endeavor.

2

Family Structure and Feminine Personality

I propose here a model to account for the reproduction within each generation of certain general and nearly universal differences that characterize masculine and feminine personality and roles.[1] My perspective is largely psychoanalytic. Cross-cultural and social-psychological evidence suggests that an argument drawn solely from the universality of biological sex differences is unconvincing.[2] At the same time, explanations based on patterns of deliberate socialization (the most prevalent kind of anthropological, sociological, and social-psychological explanation) are in themselves insufficient to account for the extent to which psychological and value commitments to sex differences are so emotionally laden and tenaciously maintained, for the way gender identity and expectations about sex roles and gender consistency are so deeply central to a person's consistent sense of self.

This chapter suggests that a crucial differentiating experience in male and female development arises out of the fact that women, universally, are largely responsible for early child care and for (at least) later female socialization. This points to the central importance of the mother–daughter relationship for women, and to a focus on the conscious and unconscious effects of early involvement with a female for children of both sexes. The fact that males and females experience this social environment differently as they grow up accounts for the development of basic sex differences in personality. In particular, certain features of the mother–daughter relationship are internalized universally as basic elements of feminine ego structure (although not necessarily what we normally mean by "femininity").

Specifically, I shall propose that, in any given society, feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does. (In psychoanalytic terms,

women are less individuated than men; they have more flexible ego boundaries.[3]) Moreover, issues of dependency are handled and experienced differently by men and women. For boys and men, both individuation and dependency issues become tied up with the sense of masculinity, or masculine identity. For girls and women, by contrast, issues of femininity, or feminine identity, are not problematic in the same way. The structural situation of child-rearing, reinforced by female and male role training, produces these differences, which are replicated and reproduced in the sexual sociology of adult life.

The essay is also a beginning attempt to rectify certain gaps in the social-scientific literature, and a contribution to the reformulation of psychological anthropology. Most traditional accounts of family and socialization tend to emphasize only role training, and not unconscious features of personality. Those few that rely on Freudian theory have abstracted a behaviorist methodology from this theory, concentrating on isolated "significant" behaviors like weaning and toilet-training. The chapter advocates instead a focus on the ongoing interpersonal relationships in which these various behaviors are given meaning.[4]

More empirically, most social-scientific accounts of socialization, child development, and the mother–child relationship refer implicitly or explicitly only to the development and socialization of boys, and to the mother–son relationship. There is a striking lack of systematic description about the mother–daughter relationship, and a basic theoretical discontinuity between, on the one hand, theories about female development, which tend to stress the development of "feminine" qualities in relation to and comparison with men, and, on the other hand, theories about women's ultimate mothering role. This final lack is particularly crucial, because women's motherhood and mothering role seem to be the most important features in accounting for the universal secondary status of women.[5] The present essay describes the development of psychological qualities in women that are central to the perpetuation of this role.

In a formulation of this preliminary nature, there is not a great body of consistent evidence to draw upon. Available evidence is presented that illuminates aspects of the theory – for the most part psychoanalytic and social-psychological accounts based almost entirely on highly industrialized Western society. Because aspects of family structure are discussed that are universal, however, I think it is worth considering the theory as a general model. In any case, this is in some sense a programmatic appeal to people doing research. It points to certain issues that might be especially important in investigations of child development and family relationships, and suggests that researchers look explicitly at female vs male development, and that they consider seriously mother–daughter relationships even if

these are not of obvious "structural importance" in a traditional anthropological view of that society.

The Development of Gender Personality

According to psychoanalytic theory, personality is a result of a boy's or girl's social-relational experiences from earliest infancy.[6] Personality development is not the result of conscious parental intention. The nature and quality of the social relationships that the child experiences are appropriated, internalized, and organized by her or him and come to constitute her or his personality. What is internalized from an ongoing relationship continues independent of that original relationship and is generalized and set up as a permanent feature of the personality. The conscious self is usually not aware of many of the features of personality, or of its total structural organization. At the same time, these are important determinants of any person's behavior, both that which is culturally expected and that which is idiosyncratic or unique to the individual. The conscious aspects of personality, like a person's general self-concept and, importantly, her or his gender identity, require and depend upon the consistency and stability of its unconscious organization. In what follows I shall describe how contrasting male and female experiences lead to differences in the way that the developing masculine or feminine psyche resolves certain relational issues.

Separation and Individuation (Pre-Oedipal Development)

All children begin life in a state of what Fairbairn calls "infantile dependence" upon an adult or adults, in most cases their mother. This state consists first in the persistence of primary identification with the mother: the child does not differentiate herself or himself from her or his mother but experiences a sense of oneness with her. (It is important to distinguish this from later forms of identification, from "secondary identification," which presuppose at least some degree of experienced separateness by the person who identifies.) Second, it includes an oral-incorporative mode of relationship to the world, leading, because of the infant's total helplessness, to a strong attachment to and dependence upon whoever nurses and carries her or him.

Both aspects of this state are continuous with the child's prenatal experience of being emotionally and physically part of the mother's body and of the exchange of body material through the placenta. That this relationship continues with the natural mother in most societies stems

from the fact that women lactate. For convenience, and not because of biological necessity, this has usually meant that mothers, and females in general, tend to take all care of babies. It is probable that the mother's continuing to have major responsibility for the feeding and care of the child (so that the child interacts almost entirely with her) extends and intensifies her or his period of primary identification with her more than if, for instance, someone else were to take major or total care of the child. A child's earliest experience, then, is usually of identity with and attachment to a single mother, and always with women.

For both boys and girls, the first few years are preoccupied with issues of separation and individuation. This includes breaking or attenuating the primary identification with the mother and beginning to develop an individuated sense of self, and mitigating the totally dependent oral attitude and attachment to the mother. I would suggest that, contrary to the traditional psychoanalytic model, the pre-Oedipal experience is likely to differ for boys and girls. Specifically, the experience of mothering for a woman involves a double identification.[7] A woman identifies with her own mother and, through identification with her child, she (re)experiences herself as a cared-for child. The particular nature of this double identification for the individual mother is closely bound up with her relationship to her own mother. As psychoanalyst Helene Deutsch expresses it, "In relation to her own child, woman repeats her own mother–child history."[8] Given that she was a female child, and that identification with her mother and mothering are so bound up with her being a woman, we might expect that a woman's identification with a girl child might be stronger; that a mother, who is, after all, a person who is a woman and not simply the performer of a formally defined role, would tend to treat infants of different sexes in different ways.

There is some suggestive sociological evidence that this is the case. Mothers in the mother–daughter group (see n. 1), say that they identified more with their girl children than with boy children. The perception and treatment of girl vs boy children in high-caste, extremely patriarchal, patrilocal communities in India are in the same vein. Families express preference for boy children and celebrate when sons are born. At the same time, according to anthropological researchers, Rajput mothers in North India are "as likely as not" to like girl babies better than boy babies once they are born, and they and Havik Brahmins in South India treat their daughters with greater affection and leniency than their sons.[9] People in both groups say that this is out of sympathy for the future plight of their daughters, who will have to leave their natal family for a strange and usually oppressive postmarital household. From the time of their daughters' birth, then, mothers in these communities identify anticipatorily, by re-experiencing their own past, with the experiences of separation that their

daughters will go through. They develop a particular attachment to their daughters because of this and by imposing their own reaction to the issue of separation on this new external situation.

It seems, then, that a mother is more likely to identify with a daughter than with a son, to experience her daughter (or parts of her daughter's life) as herself. Psychoanalyst Robert Fliess's description of his neurotic patients who were the children of ambulatory psychotic mothers presents the problem in its psychopathological extreme.[10] The example is interesting, because, although Fliess claims to be writing about people defined only by the fact that their problems were tied to a particular kind of relationship to their mothers, an overwhelmingly large proportion of the cases he presents are women. It seems, then, that this sort of disturbed mother inflicts her pathology predominantly on daughters. The mothers Fliess describes did not allow their daughters to perceive themselves as separate people, but simply acted as if their daughters were narcissistic extensions or doubles of themselves, extensions to whom were attributed the mothers' bodily feelings and who became physical vehicles for their mothers' achievement of autoerotic gratification. The daughters were bound into a mutually dependent "hypersymbiotic" relationship. These mothers, then, perpetuate a mutual relationship with their daughters of both primary identification and infantile dependence.

A son's case is different. Cultural evidence suggests that insofar as a mother treats her son differently, it is usually by emphasizing his masculinity in opposition to herself and by pushing him to assume, or acquiescing in his assumption of, a sexually toned male-role relation to her. John Whiting and Whiting et al. suggest that mothers in societies with mother–child sleeping arrangements and postpartum sex taboos may be seductive toward infant sons.[11] Slater describes the socialization of precarious masculinity in Greek males of the classical period through their mothers' alternation of sexual praise and seductive behavior with hostile deflation and ridicule.[12] This kind of behavior contributes to the son's differentiation from his mother and to the formation of ego boundaries (I will later discuss certain problems that result from this).

Neither form of attitude or treatment is what we would call "good mothering." However, evidence of differentiation of a pathological nature in the mother's behavior toward girls and boys does highlight tendencies in "normal" behavior. It seems likely that from their children's earliest childhood, mothers and women tend to identify more with daughters and to help them to differentiate less, and that processes of separation and individuation are made more difficult for girls. On the other hand, a mother tends to identify less with her son, and to push him toward differentiation and the taking on of a male role unsuitable to his age, and undesirable at any age in his relationship to her.

For boys and girls, the quality of the pre-Oedipal relationship to the mother differs. This, as well as differences in development during the Oedipal period, accounts for the persisting importance of pre-Oedipal issues in female development and personality that many psychoanalytic writers describe.[13] Even before the establishment of gender identity, gender personality differentiation begins.

Gender Identity (Oedipal Crisis and Resolution)

There is only a slight suggestion in the psychological and sociological literature that pre-Oedipal development differs for boys and girls. The pattern becomes explicit at the next developmental level. All theoretical and empirical accounts agree that after about age three (the beginning of the "Oedipal" period, which focuses on the attainment of a stable gender identity) male and female development becomes radically different. It is at this stage that the father, and men in general, begin to become important in the child's primary object world. It is, of course, particularly difficult to generalize about the attainment of gender identity and sex-role assumption, since there is such wide variety in the sexual sociology of different societies. However, to the extent that in all societies women's life tends to be more private and domestic, and men's more public and social, we can make general statements about this kind of development.

In what follows, I shall be talking about the development of gender personality and gender identity in the tradition of psychoanalytic theory. Cognitive psychologists have established that by the age of three, boys and girls have an irreversible conception of what their gender is.[14] I do not dispute these findings. It remains true that children (and adults) may know definitely that they are boys (men) or girls (women), and at the same time experience conflicts or uncertainty about "masculinity" or "femininity," about what these identities require in behavioral or emotional terms, etc. I am discussing the development of "gender identity" in this latter sense.

A boy's masculine gender identification must come to replace his early primary identification with his mother. This masculine identification is usually based on identification with a boy's father or other salient adult males. However, a boy's father is relatively more remote than his mother. He rarely plays a major caretaking role even at this period in his son's life. In most societies, his work and social life take place farther from the home than do those of his wife. He is, then, often relatively inaccessible to his son, and performs his male role activities away from where the son spends most of his life. As a result, a boy's male gender identification often becomes a "positional" identification, with aspects of his father's clearly or not-so-clearly defined male role, rather than a more generalized "personal" identification – a diffuse identification with his father's personality, values,

and behavioral traits – that could grow out of a real relationship to his father.[15]

Psychoanalyst and social theorist Mitscherlich, in his discussion of Western advanced capitalist society, provides a useful insight into the problem of male development.[16] The father, because his work takes him outside of the home most of the time, and because his active presence in the family has progressively decreased, has become an "invisible father." For the boy, the tie between affective relations and masculine gender identification and role learning (between libidinal and ego development) is relatively attenuated. He identifies with a fantasied masculine role, because the reality constraint that contact with his father would provide is missing. In all societies characterized by some sex segregation (even those in which a son will eventually lead the same sort of life as his father), much of a boy's masculine identification must be of this sort, that is, with aspects of his father's role, or what he fantasies to be a male role, rather than with his father as a person involved in a relationship to him.

There is another important aspect to this situation, which helps to explain the psychological dynamics of the universal social and cultural devaluation and subordination of women. A boy, in his attempt to gain an elusive masculine identification, often comes to define this masculinity largely in negative terms, as that which is not feminine or involved with women. There is an internal and external aspect to this. Internally, the boy tries to reject his mother and deny his attachment to her and the strong dependence upon her that he still feels. He also tries to deny the deep personal identification with her that has developed during his early years. He does this by repressing whatever he takes to be feminine inside himself, and, importantly, by denigrating and devaluing whatever he considers to be feminine in the outside world. As a societal member, he also appropriates to himself and defines as superior particular social activities and cultural (moral, religious, and creative) spheres – possibly, in fact, "society" and "culture" themselves.[17]

Freud's description of the boy's Oedipal crisis speaks to the issues of rejection of the feminine and identification with the father. As his early attachment to his mother takes on phallic-sexual overtones, and his father enters the picture as an obvious rival (who, in the son's fantasy, has apparent power to kill or castrate his son), the boy must radically deny and repress his attachment to his mother and replace it with an identification with his loved and admired, but also potentially punitive, therefore feared, father. He internalizes a superego.[18]

To summarize, four components of the attainment of masculine gender identity are important. First, masculinity becomes and remains a problematic issue for a boy. Second, it involves denial of attachment or relationship, particularly of what the boy takes to be dependence or

need for another, and differentiation of himself from another. Third, it involves the repression and devaluation of femininity on both psychological and cultural levels. Finally, identification with his father does not usually develop in the context of a satisfactory affective relationship, but consists in the attempt to internalize and learn components of a not immediately apprehensible role.

The development of a girl's gender identity contrasts with that of a boy. Most important, femininity and female role activities are immediately apprehensible in the world of her daily life. Her final role identification is with her mother and women, that is, with the person or people with whom she also has her earliest relationship of infantile dependence. The development of her gender identity does not involve a rejection of this early identification, however. Rather, her later identification with her mother is embedded in and influenced by their on-going relationship of both primary identification and pre-Oedipal attachment. Because her mother is around, and she has had a genuine relationship to her as a person, a girl's gender and gender role identification are mediated by and depend upon real affective relations. Identification with her mother is not positional – the narrow learning of particular role behaviors – but rather a personal identification with her mother's general traits of character and values. Feminine identification is based not on fantasied or externally defined characteristics and negative identification, but on the gradual learning of a way of being familiar in everyday life, and exemplified by the person (or kind of people – women) with whom she has been most involved. It is continuous with her early childhood identifications and attachments.

The major discontinuity in the development of a girl's sense of gender identity, and one that has led Freud and other early psychoanalysts to see female development as exceedingly difficult and tortuous, is that at some point she must transfer her primary sexual object choice from her mother and females to her father and males, if she is to attain her expected heterosexual adulthood. Briefly, Freud considers that all children feel that mothers give some cause for complaint and unhappiness: they give too little milk; they have a second child; they arouse and then forbid their child's sexual gratification in the process of caring for her or him. A girl receives a final blow, however: her discovery that she lacks a penis. She blames this lack on her mother, rejects her mother, and turns to her father in reaction.

Problems in this account have been discussed extensively in the general literature that has grown out of the women's movement, and within the psychoanalytic tradition itself. These concern Freud's misogyny and his obvious assumptions that males possess physiological superiority and that a woman's personality is inevitably determined by her lack of a penis.[19]

The psychoanalytic account is not completely unsatisfactory, however. A more detailed consideration of several accounts of the female Oedipus complex reveals important features of female development, especially about the mother–daughter relationship, and at the same time contradicts or mitigates the absoluteness of the more general Freudian outline.[20]

Psychoanalysts emphasize how, in contrast to males, the female Oedipal crisis is not resolved in the same absolute way. A girl cannot and does not completely reject her mother in favor of men, but continues her relationship of dependence upon and attachment to her. In addition, the strength and quality of her relationship to her father is completely dependent upon the strength and quality of her relationship to her mother. Deutsch suggests that a girl wavers in a "bisexual triangle" throughout her childhood and into puberty, normally making a very tentative resolution in favor of her father, but in such a way that issues of separation from and attachment to her mother remain important throughout a woman's life:

> It is erroneous to say that the little girl gives up her first mother relation in favor of the father. She only gradually draws him into the alliance, develops from the mother–child exclusiveness toward the triangular parent–child relationship and continues the latter, just as she does the former, although in a weaker and less elemental form, all her life. Only the principal part changes: now the mother, now the father plays it. The ineradicability of affective constellations manifests itself in later repetitions.[21]

We might suggest from this that a girl's internalized and external object relations become and remain more complex, and at the same time more defining of her, than those of a boy. Psychoanalytic preoccupation with constitutionally based libidinal development, and with a normative male model of development, has obscured this fact. Most women are genitally heterosexual. At the same time, their lives always involve other sorts of equally deep and primary relationships, especially with their children, and, importantly, with other women. In these spheres also, even more than in the area of heterosexual relations, a girl imposes the sort of object relations she has internalized in her pre-Oedipal and later relationship to her mother.

Men are also for the most part genitally heterosexual. This grows directly out of their early primary attachment to their mother. We know, however, that in many societies their heterosexual relationships are not embedded in close personal relationship but simply in relations of dominance and power. Furthermore, they do not have the extended personal relations women have. They are not so connected to children, and their relationships with other men tend to be based not on particularistic connection or affective ties, but rather on abstract, universalistic role expectations.

Building on the psychoanalytic assumption that unique individual experiences contribute to the formation of individual personality, culture and personality theory has held that early experiences common to members of a particular society contribute to the formation of "typical" personalities organized around and preoccupied with certain issues: "Prevailing patterns of child-rearing must result in similar internalized situations in the unconscious of the majority of individuals in a culture, and these will be externalized back into the culture again to perpetuate it from generation to generation."[22] In a similar vein, I have tried to show that to the extent males and females, respectively, experience similar interpersonal environments as they grow up, masculine and feminine personality will develop differently.

I have relied on a theory which suggests that features of adult personality and behavior are determined, but which is not biologically determinist. Culturally expected personality and behavior are not simply "taught," however. Rather, certain features of social structure, supported by cultural beliefs, values, and perceptions, are internalized through the family and the child's early social object relationships. This largely unconscious organization is the context in which role training and purposive socialization take place.

Sex-Role Learning and its Social Context

Sex-role training and social interaction in childhood build upon and reinforce the largely unconscious development I have described. In most societies (ours is a complicated exception) a girl is usually with her mother and other female relatives in an interpersonal situation that facilitates continuous and early role learning and emphasizes the mother–daughter identification and particularistic, diffuse, affective relationships between women. A boy, to a greater or lesser extent, is also with women for a large part of his childhood, which prevents continuous or easy masculine role identification. His development is characterized by discontinuity.

Historian of childhood Philippe Ariès, in his discussion of the changing concept of childhood in modern capitalist society, makes a distinction that seems to have more general applicability.[23] Boys, he suggests, became "children" while girls remained "little women." "The idea of childhood profited the boys first of all, while the girls persisted much longer in the traditional way of life which confused them with the adults: we shall have cause to notice more than once this delay on the part of the women in adopting the visible forms of the essentially masculine civilization of modern times." This took place first in the middle classes, as a situation developed in which boys needed special schooling in order to prepare for

their future work and could not begin to do this kind of work in childhood. Girls (and working-class boys) could still learn work more directly from their parents, and could begin to participate in the adult economy at an earlier age. Rapid economic change and development have exacerbated the lack of male generational role continuity. Few fathers now have either the opportunity or the ability to pass on a profession or skill to their sons.

Sex-role development of girls in modern society is more complex. On the one hand, they go to school to prepare for life in a technologically and socially complex society. On the other, there is a sense in which this schooling is a pseudo-training. It is not meant to interfere with the much more important training to be "feminine" and a wife and mother, which is embedded in the girl's unconscious development and which her mother teaches her in a family context where she is clearly the salient parent.

This dichotomy is not unique to modern industrial society. Even if special, segregated schooling is not necessary for adult male work (and many male initiation rites remain a form of segregated role training), boys still participate in more activities that characterize them as a category apart from adult life. Their activities grow out of the boy's need to fill time until he can begin to take on an adult male role. Boys may withdraw into isolation and self-involved play or join together in a group that remains more or less unconnected with either the adult world of work and activity or the familial world.

Anthropologist Robert Jay describes this sort of situation in rural Modjokuto, Java.[24] Girls, after the age of five or so, begin gradually to help their mothers in their work and spend time with their mothers. Boys at this early age begin to form bands of age mates who roam and play about the city, relating neither to adult men nor to their mothers and sisters. Boys, then, enter a temporary group based on universalistic membership criteria, while girls continue to participate in particularistic role relations in a group characterized by continuity and relative permanence.

The content of boys' and girls' role training tends in the same direction as the context of this training and its results. Barry, Bacon, and Child, in their well-known study, demonstrate that the socialization of boys tends to be oriented toward achievement and self-reliance and that of girls toward nurturance and responsibility.[25] Girls are thus pressured to be involved with and connected to others, boys to deny this involvement and connection.

Adult Gender Personality and Sex Role

A variety of psychologist's conceptualizations of female and male personality all focus on distinctions around the same issue, and provide

alternative confirmation of the developmental model I have proposed. Bakan claims that male personality is preoccupied with the "agentic," and female personality with the "communal." His expanded definition of the two concepts is illuminating:

> I have adopted the terms "agency" and "communion" to characterize two fundamental modalities in the existence of living forms, agency for the existence of an organism as an individual and communion for the participation of the individual in some larger organism of which the individual is a part. Agency manifests itself in self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion; communion manifests itself in the sense of being at one with other organisms. Agency manifests itself in the formation of separations; communion in the lack of separations. Agency manifests itself in isolation, alienation, and aloneness; communion in contact, openness, and union. Agency manifests itself in the urge to master; communion in noncontractual cooperation. Agency manifests itself in the repression of thought, feeling, and impulse; communion in the lack and removal of repression.[26]

Gutmann contrasts the socialization of male personalities in "allocentric" milieux (milieux in which the individual is part of a larger social organization and system of social bonds) with that of female personalities in "autocentric" milieux (in which the individual herself or himself is a focus of events and ties). He suggests that this leads to a number of systematic differences in ego functioning. Female ego qualities, growing out of participation in autocentric milieux, include more flexible ego boundaries (i.e. less insistent self–other distinctions), present orientation rather than future orientation, and relatively greater subjectivity and less detached objectivity.[27]

Carlson confirms both characterizations. Her tests of Gutmann's claims lead her to conclude that "males represent experiences of self, others, space, and time in individualistic, objective, and distant ways, while females represent experiences in relatively interpersonal, subjective, immediate ways."[28] With reference to Bakan, she claims that men's descriptions of affective experience tend to be in agentic terms and women's in terms of communion, and that an examination of abstracts of a large number of social-psychological articles on sex differences yields an overwhelming confirmation of the agency/communion hypothesis.

Cohen contrasts the development of "analytic" and "relational" cognitive style, the former characterized by a stimulus-centered, parts-specific orientation to reality, the latter centered on the self and responding to the global characteristics of a stimulus in reference to its total context.[29] Although focussing primarily on class differences in cognitive style, she also points out that girls are more likely to mix the two types of functioning (and also to exhibit internal conflict about this). Especially, they are likely to exhibit at the same time both high field dependence and highly developed analytic skills in other areas. She

suggests that boys and girls participate in different sorts of interactional subgroups in their families: boys experience their family more as a formally organized primary group; girls experience theirs as a group characterized by shared and less clearly delineated functions. She concludes: "Since embedded responses covered the gamut from abstract categories, through language behaviors, to expressions of embeddedness in their social environments, it is possible that embeddedness may be a distinctive characteristic of female sex-role learning in this society regardless of social class, native ability, ethnic differences, and the cognitive impact of the school."[30]

Preliminary consideration suggests a correspondence between the production of feminine personalities organized around "communal" and "autocentric" issues and characterized by flexible ego boundaries, less detached objectivity, and relational cognitive style, on the one hand, and important aspects of feminine as opposed to masculine social roles, on the other.

Most generally, I would suggest that a quality of embeddedness in social interaction and personal relationships characterizes women's life relative to men's. From childhood, daughters are likely to participate in an intergenerational world with their mother, and often with their aunts and grandmother, whereas boys are on their own or participate in a single-generation world of age mates. In adult life, women's interaction with other women in most societies is kin-based and cuts across generational lines. Their roles tend to be particularistic, and to involve diffuse relationships and responsibilities rather than specific ones. Women in most societies are *defined* relationally (as someone's wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law; even a nun becomes the Bride of Christ). Men's association (although it too may be kin-based and intergenerational) is much more likely than women's to cut across kinship units, to be restricted to a single generation, and to be recruited according to universalistic criteria and involve relationships and responsibilities defined by their specificity.

Ego Boundaries and the Mother–Daughter Relationship

The care and socialization of girls by women ensure the production of feminine personalities founded on relation and connection, with flexible rather than rigid ego boundaries, and with a comparatively secure sense of gender identity. This is one explanation for how women's relative embeddedness is reproduced from generation to generation, and why it exists within almost every society. More specific investigation of different social contexts suggests, however, that there are variations in the kind of

relationship that can exist between women's role performance and feminine personality.

Various kinds of evidence suggest that separation from the mother, the breaking of dependence, and the establishment and maintenance of a consistently individuated sense of self remain difficult psychological issues for Western middle-class women (i.e. the women who become subjects of psychoanalytic and clinical reports and social-psychological studies). Deutsch in particular provides extensive clinical documentation of these difficulties and of the way they affect women's relationships to men and children and, because of their nature, are reproduced in the next generation of women. Mothers and daughters in the mother–daughter group described their experiences of boundary confusion or equation of self and other, for example, guilt and self-blame for the other's unhappiness; shame and embarrassment at the other's actions; daughters' "discovery" that they are "really" living out their mothers' lives in their choice of career; mothers' not completely conscious reactions to their daughters' bodies as their own (over-identification and therefore often unnecessary concern with supposed weight or skin problems, which the mother is really worried about in herself).

A kind of guilt that Western women express seems to grow out of and to reflect lack of adequate self/other distinctions and a sense of inescapable embeddedness in relationships to others. In an early women's liberation pamphlet Meredith Tax describes this well:

> Since our awareness of others is considered our duty, the price we pay when things go wrong is guilt and self-hatred. And things always go wrong. We respond with apologies; we continue to apologize long after the event is forgotten – and *even if it had no causal relation to anything we did to begin with*. If the rain spoils someone's picnic, we apologize. We apologize for taking up space in a room, for living.[31]

As if the woman does not differentiate herself clearly from the rest of the world, she feels a sense of guilt and responsibility for situations that did not come about through her actions and without relation to her actual ability to determine the course of events. This happens, in the most familiar instance, in a sense of diffuse responsibility for everything connected to the welfare of her family and the happiness and success of her children. This loss of self in overwhelming responsibility for and connection to others is described particularly acutely by women writers (in the work, for instance, of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Chopin, Doris Lessing, Tillie Olsen, Christina Stead, Virginia Woolf).

Slater points to several studies supporting the contention that Western daughters have particular problems about differentiation from their mother. These studies show that though most forms of personal parental identification correlate with psychological adjustment (i.e. freedom from

neurosis or psychosis, *not* social acceptability), personal identification of a daughter with her mother does not. The reason is that the mother–daughter relation is the one form of personal identification that, because it results so easily from the normal situation of child development, is liable to be excessive in the direction of allowing no room for separation or difference between mother and daughter.[32]

The situation reinforces itself in circular fashion. A mother, on the one hand, grows up without establishing adequate ego boundaries or a firm sense of self. She tends to experience boundary confusion with her daughter, and does not provide experiences of differentiating ego development for her daughter or encourage the breaking of her daughter's dependence. The daughter, for her part, makes a rather unsatisfactory and artificial attempt to establish boundaries: she projects what she defines as bad within her onto her mother and tries to take what is good into herself. (This, I think, is the best way to understand the girl's Oedipal "rejection" of her mother.) Such an arbitrary mechanism cannot break the underlying psychological unity, however. Projection is never more than a temporary solution to ambivalence or boundary confusion.

The implication is that, contrary to Gutmann's suggestion, "so-called ego pathology" may not be "adaptive" for women.[33] Women's biosexual experiences (menstruation, coitus, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation) all involve some challenge to the boundaries of her body ego ("me"/"not-me" in relation to her blood or milk, to a man who penetrates her, to a child once part of her body). These are important and fundamental human experiences that are probably intrinsically meaningful and at the same time complicated for women everywhere. However, a Western woman's tenuous sense of individuation and of the firmness of her ego boundaries increase the likelihood that experiences challenging these boundaries will be difficult for her and conflictual.

Nor is it clear that this personality structure is "functional" for society as a whole. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that satisfactory mothering, which does not reproduce particular psychological problems in boys and girls, comes from a person with a firm sense of self and of her own value, whose care is a freely chosen activity rather than a reflection of a conscious and unconscious sense of inescapable connection to and responsibility for her children.

Social Structure and the Mother–Daughter Relationship

Clinical and self-analytic descriptions of women and of the psychological component of mother–daughter relationships are not available from societies and subcultures outside of the Western middle class. However,

accounts that are primarily sociological about women in other societies enable us to infer certain aspects of their psychological situation. In what follows, I am not claiming to make any kind of general statement about what constitutes a "healthy society," but only to examine and isolate specific features of social life that seem to contribute to the psychological strength of some members of a society. Consideration of three groups with matrifocal tendencies in their family structure highlights several dimensions of importance in the developmental situation of the girl.[34]

Young and Willmott describe the daily visiting and mutual aid of working-class mothers and daughters in East London. In a situation where household structure is usually nuclear, like the Western middle class, grown daughters look to their mothers for advice, for aid in childbirth and child care, for friendship and companionship, and for financial help. Their mother's house is the ultimate center of the family world. Husbands are in many ways peripheral to family relationships, possibly because of their failure to provide sufficiently for their families as men are expected to do. This becomes apparent if they demand their wife's disloyalty toward or separation from her mother: "The great triangle of childhood is mother–father–child; in Bethnal Green the great triangle of adult life is Mum–wife–husband."[35]

Hildred Geertz and Jay describe Javanese nuclear families in which women are often the more powerful spouse and have primary influence upon how kin relations are expressed and to whom (although these families are formally centered upon a highly valued conjugal relationship based on equality of spouses).[36] Financial and decision-making control in the family often rest largely in the hands of its women. Women are potentially independent of men in a way that men are not independent of women. Geertz points to a woman's ability to participate in most occupations and to own farmland and supervise its cultivation, which contrasts with a man's inability, even if he is financially independent, to do his own household work and cooking.

Women's kin role in Java is important. Their parental role and rights are greater than those of men; children always belong to the woman in case of divorce. When extra members join a nuclear family to constitute an extended family household, they are much more likely to be the wife's relatives than those of the husband. Formal and distant relations between men in a family, and between a man and his children (especially his son), contrast with the informal and close relations between women, and between a woman and her children. Jay and Geertz both emphasize the continuing closeness of the mother–daughter relationship as a daughter is growing up and throughout her married life. Jay suggests that there is a certain amount of ambivalence in the mother–daughter relationship, particularly as a girl grows toward adulthood and before she is married,

but points out that at the same time the mother remains a girl's "primary figure of confidence and support."[37]

Siegel describes Atjehnese families in Indonesia in which women stay on the homestead of their parents after marriage and are in total control of the household. Women tolerate men in the household only as long as they provide money, and even then treat them as someone between a child and a guest. Women's stated preference would be to eliminate even this necessary dependence on men: "Women, for instance, envision paradise as the place where they are reunited with their children and their mothers; husbands and fathers are absent, and yet there is an abundance all the same. Quarrels over money reflect the women's idea that men are basically adjuncts who exist only to give their families whatever they can earn"[38]. A woman in this society does not get into conflicts in which she has to choose between her mother and her husband, as happens in the Western working class described by Young and Willmott, where the reigning ideology supports the nuclear family.[39]

In these three settings, the mother–daughter tie and other female kin relations remain important from a woman's childhood through her old age. Daughters stay closer to home in both childhood and adulthood and remain involved in particularistic role relations. Sons and men are more likely to feel uncomfortable at home, and to spend work and play time away from the house. Male activities and spheres emphasize universalistic, distancing qualities: men in Java are the bearers and transmitters of high culture and formal relationships; men in East London spend much of their time in alienated work settings; Atjehnese boys spend their time in school, and their fathers trade in distant places.

Mother–daughter ties in these three societies, described as extremely close, seem to be composed of companionship and mutual cooperation, and to be positively valued by both mother and daughter. The ethnographies do not imply that women are weighed down by the burden of their relationships or by overwhelming guilt and responsibility. On the contrary, they seem to have developed a strong sense of self and self-worth, which continues to grow as they get older and take on their maternal role. The implication is that "ego strength" is not completely dependent on the firmness of the ego's boundaries.

Guntrip's distinction between "immature" and "mature" dependence clarifies the difference between mother–daughter relationships and women's psyche in the Western middle class and in the matrifocal societies described. Women in the Western middle class are caught up to some extent in issues of infantile dependence, while the women in matrifocal societies remain in definite connection with others, but in relationships characterized by mature dependence. As Guntrip describes it: "*Mature dependence* is characterized by full differentiation of ego and object

(emergence from primary identification) and therewith a capacity for valuing the object for its own sake and for giving as well as receiving; a condition which should be described not as independence but as mature dependence."[40] This kind of mature dependence is also to be distinguished from the kind of forced independence and denial of need for relationship that I have suggested characterizes masculine personality, and that reflects continuing conflict about infantile dependence. "Maturity is not equated with independence though it includes a certain capacity for independence. . . The independence of the mature person is simply that he does not collapse when he has to stand alone. It is not an independence of needs for other persons with whom to have relationship: *that would not be desired by the mature*."[41]

Depending on its social setting, women's sense of relation and connection and their embeddedness in social life provide them with a kind of security that men lack. The quality of a mother's relationship to her children and maternal self-esteem, on the one hand, and the nature of a daughter's developing identification with her mother, on the other, make crucial differences in female development.

Women's kin role, and in particular the mother role, is central and positively valued in Atjeh, Java, and East London. Women gain status and prestige as they get older; their major role is not fulfilled in early motherhood. At the same time, women may be important contributors to the family's economic support, as in Java and East London, and in all three societies they have control over real economic resources. All these factors give women a sense of self-esteem independent of their relationship to their children. Finally, strong relationships exist between women in these societies, expressed in mutual cooperation and frequent contact. A mother, then, when her children are young, is likely to spend much of her time in the company of other women, not simply isolated with her children.

These social facts have important positive effects on female psychological development. (It must be emphasized that all the ethnographies indicate that these same social facts make male development difficult and contribute to psychological insecurity and lack of ease in interpersonal relationships in men.) A mother is not invested in keeping her daughter from individuating and becoming less dependent. She has other ongoing contacts and relationships that help fulfill her psychological and social needs. In addition, the people surrounding a mother while a child is growing up become mediators between mother and daughter, by providing a daughter with alternative models for personal identification and objects of attachment, which contribute to her differentiation from her mother. Finally, a daughter's identification with her mother in this kind of setting is with a strong woman with clear control over important

spheres of life, whose sense of self-esteem can reflect this. Acceptance of her gender identity involves positive valuation of herself, and not an admission of inferiority. In psychoanalytic terms, we might say it involves identification with a pre-Oedipal, active, caring mother. Bibring points to clinical findings supporting this interpretation: "We find in the analysis of the women who grew up in this 'matriarchal' setting the rejection of the feminine role less frequently than among female patients coming from the patriarchal family culture."[42]

There is another important aspect of the situation in these societies. The continuing structural and practical importance of the mother–daughter tie not only ensures that a daughter develops a positive personal and role identification with her mother, but also requires that the close psychological tie between mother and daughter become firmly grounded in real role expectations. These provide a certain constraint and limitation upon the relationship, as well as an avenue for its expression through common spheres of interest based in the external social world.

All these societal features contrast with the situation of the Western middle-class woman. Kinship relations in the middle class are less important. Kin are not likely to live near each other, and, insofar as husbands are able to provide adequate financial support for their families, there is no need for a network of mutual aid among related wives. As the middle-class woman gets older and becomes a grandmother, she cannot look forward to increased status and prestige in her new role.

The Western middle-class housewife does not have an important economic role in her family. The work she does and the responsibilities that go with it (household management, cooking, entertaining, etc.) do not seem to be really necessary to the economic support of her family (they are crucial contributions to the maintenance and reproduction of her family's class position, but this is not generally recognized as important either by the woman herself or by the society's ideology). If she works outside the home, neither she nor the rest of society is apt to consider this work to be important to her self-definition in the way that her housewife role is.

Child care, on the other hand, is considered to be her crucially important responsibility. Our post-Freudian society in fact assigns to parents (and especially to the mother) nearly total responsibility for how children turn out.[43] A middle-class mother's daily life is not centrally involved in relations with other women. She is isolated with her children for most of her workday. It is not surprising, then, that she is likely to invest a lot of anxious energy and guilt in her concern for her children and to look to them for her own self-affirmation, or that her self-esteem, dependent on the lives of others than herself, is shaky. Her life situation leads her to an over-involvement in her children's lives.

A mother in this situation keeps her daughter from differentiation and from lessening her infantile dependence. (She also perpetuates her son's dependence, but in this case society and his father are more likely to interfere in order to assure that, behaviorally, at least, he doesn't *act* dependent.) And there are not other people around to mediate in the mother–daughter relationship. Insofar as the father is actively involved in a relationship with his daughter and his daughter develops some identification with him, this helps her individuation, but the formation of ego autonomy through identification with and idealization of her father may be at the expense of her positive sense of feminine self. Unlike the situation in matrifocal families, the continuing closeness of the mother–daughter relationship is expressed only on a psychological, interpersonal level. External role expectations do not ground or limit it.

It is difficult, then, for daughters in a Western middle-class family to develop self-esteem. Most psychoanalytic and social theorists claim that the mother inevitably represents to her daughter (and son) regression, passivity, dependence, and lack of orientation to reality, whereas the father represents progression, activity, independence, and reality orientation.[44] Given the value implications of this dichotomy, there are advantages for the son in giving up his mother and identifying with his father. For the daughter, feminine gender identification means identification with a devalued, passive mother, and personal maternal identification is with a mother whose own self-esteem is low. Conscious rejection of her Oedipal maternal identification, however, remains an unconscious rejection and devaluation of herself, because of her continuing pre-Oedipal identification and boundary confusion with her mother.

Cultural devaluation is not the central issue, however. Even in patrilineal, patrilocal societies in which women's status is very low, women do not necessarily translate this cultural devaluation into low self-esteem, nor do girls have to develop difficult boundary problems with their mother. In the Moslem Moroccan family, for example, a large amount of sex segregation and sex antagonism gives women a separate (domestic) sphere in which they have a real productive role and control, and also a life situation in which any young mother is in the company of other women.[45] Women do not need to invest all their psychic energy in their children, and their self-esteem is not dependent on their relationship to their children. In this and other patrilineal, patrilocal societies, what resentment women do have at their oppressive situation is more often expressed toward their sons, whereas daughters are seen as allies against oppression. Conversely, a daughter develops relationships of attachment to and identification with other adult women. Loosening her tie to her mother therefore does not entail the rejection of all women. The close tie that remains between mother and daughter is based not simply on

mutual over-involvement but often on mutual understanding of their oppression.

Conclusion

Women's universal mothering role has effects both on the development of masculine and feminine personality and on the relative status of the sexes. This chapter has described the development of relational personality in women and of personalities preoccupied with the denial of relation in men. In its comparison of different societies, it has suggested that men, while guaranteeing to themselves socio-cultural superiority over women, always remain psychologically defensive and insecure. Women, by contrast, although always of secondary social and cultural status, may in favorable circumstances gain psychological security and a firm sense of worth and importance in spite of this.

Social and psychological oppression, then, is perpetuated in the structure of personality. My account here enables us to suggest what social arrangements contribute (and could contribute) to social equality between men and women and their relative freedom from certain sorts of psychological conflict. Daughters and sons must be able to develop a personal identification with more than one adult, and preferably one embedded in a role relationship that gives it a social context of expression and provides some limitation upon it. Most important, boys need to grow up around men who take a major role in child care, and girls around women who, in addition to their child-care responsibilities, have a valued role and recognized spheres of legitimate control. These arrangements could help to ensure that children of both sexes develop a sufficiently individuated and strong sense of self, as well as a positively valued and secure gender identity, that does not bog down either in ego-boundary confusion, low self-esteem, and overwhelming relatedness to others, or in compulsive denial of any connection to others or dependence upon them.