GENDER ON THE
MODERN-POSTMODERN
AND CLASSICAL-RELATIONAL
DIVIDE: UNTANGLING HISTORY
AND EPISTEMOLOGY

This essay considers the historical periodization and epistemology of psychoanalytic thinking about gender. Overlapping historically with feminism itself, psychoanalytic thinking about gender has two periods of efflorescence, the 1920s and 1930s, and the contemporary period beginning in the 1970s. Two divides have characterized our gender thinking, the modern-postmodern and the classical-relational. From the early theorizing of the 1920s and 1930s until around the early 1990s, most psychoanalytic thinking about gender should be considered modernist, as it draws on traditional views of scientific evidence and holds more universalistic and dichotomized conceptions of men and women. In the contemporary period, although postmodernism tends to be associated with relational psychoanalysts and modernist thinking with classical analysts, the divisions overlap. The author argues that considering any psychoanalytic theory as “premodern” is misleading: from its inception, psychoanalysis formed part of modernism.

How do we conceptualize the history and character of psychoanalytic thinking about gender, and how does each of us who works in the field situate him- or herself within it? Our interchange in particular addresses and reflects two divides, most explicitly that

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Dedicated to Lisby (Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer), who was never so uncertain, waver- ing, and embroiled in definitional detail as to lose sight of the big picture and what was most important within it, and who used all her energies to help her colleagues see as clearly as she did. And thanks for help in thinking about modernism and modernity to Elizabeth Abel and Gabriel Chodorow-Reich. Submitted for publication August 2, 2004.
between modern and postmodern, but also the classical-relational divide. In what follows I attempt, sometimes focusing on trends in my own work, to unpack and disentangle these two divides, which themselves seem to overlap in an easily observed though not universal tendency among practitioners, in which classical analysts seem to be more modernist, whereas relational analysts lean toward postmodernism. Our project, I suggest, requires distinguishing the different nature of each divide, even as they are in empirical observation of necessity intertwined. It also requires distinguishing periodization from epistemology.

WHY EARLY PSYCHOANALYTIC GENDER THEORY IS NOT PREMODERN

I begin with some extended remarks about why I consider it inaccurate and confounding of an already complex reality to think, as have my colleagues in this exchange, in terms of a tripartite—premodern-modern-postmodern—history to psychoanalytic thinking about gender. Such remarks take us by necessity to epistemology and the history of thought.

Psychoanalysis is from the outset a preeminently, perhaps exemplary, modern practice and theory, modern and modernist in both eighteenth- and late-nineteenth-century forms. It arose in the late nineteenth century, contemporaneously with what is called modernism in the arts and literature, in a period sometimes considered the apogee of modernity (the journal *Modernism/Modernity* claims to address artistic and literary currents and social and intellectual history from 1860 to the present). It is rooted in many elements of an eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinking and praxis that almost definitionally institutes sociopolitical modernity and separates modernity from the premodern. In its rejection of the premodern, Enlightenment thinking focused on the (bourgeois) individual creating himself instead of being inserted by God into a fixed place in the sociopolitical world. As exemplified in the French and American Revolutions, such thinking encompasses

1I believe we are all much clearer about what we mean by relational than by classical. Except when I differentiate the historically classical from the contemporary, I am using *classical* in reference to analysts trained in the institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association. *Mainstream* seems too untied to theory and technique, too much simply to reflect the politics and history of American psychoanalysis; *ego psychological* seems too narrow to capture the contemporary identities of many “mainstream” analysts and analytic institutes.
emancipatory goals in general and in particular the notion that freedom comes from reason and thought. Similarly, Freud centered the psychoanalytic project on individuals creating and re-creating themselves in analysis and freeing themselves from internal fetters through self-understanding.

The premodern-modern transformation also encompasses the rise of a scientific, research- and evidence-based weltanschauung, rather than one based on religion. As he argues forcefully, this is where Freud (1933) situates psychoanalysis. Thus, for Freud, psychoanalysis was certainly, or certainly aspired to be, a modern science, and it can safely be said, I think, that no historical or contemporary epistemological debate about psychoanalysis (here-and-now versus history and development, hermeneutics versus science, medical versus social science, etc.) takes a stand with what we conventionally call pre-modern. Finally, Freud’s theory of the mind is consonant with, and part and parcel of, other late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century definitionally “modernist” portrayals, especially that of Nietzsche, who described a psychological individual torn between Apollonian and Dionysian impulses, anguished, and prone to resentment.

Even as it is the culmination of the Enlightenment focus on the reasoning, self-understanding individual and exemplifies the fin de siècle modernist understanding of mind, elements in this fin de siècle modernism also implicitly articulate what we now consider to be a post-

2In the last of the New Introductory Lectures, “The Question of a Weltanschauung,” Freud (1933) contrasts the religious, prescientific point of view with the scientific perspective of psychoanalysis. To cite entire fields that discuss the rise of Enlightenment thinking and modern science, as well as the library of works that differentiate modernism from postmodernism, is well beyond the scope of this paper. For books that focus specifically on the rise of a modern individuality and individualism that could be thought to set the stage for psychoanalysis, see Heller, Sosna, and Wellbery (1986) and Taylor (1989).

3Modernist pictorial arts, contemporaneous with Freud, also rendered unconscious forces and psychic fragmentation; composers disrupted the tonalities and chord structures of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and in their operas, as we see most forcefully in Wagner, portrayed their characters’ internal drives and conflicts. All of these forms signal and reflect the “Freudian” internally divided, decentered, self-critical, and drive-impelled individual. Contemporaneously, in modern social theory, we find psychological conceptions like Durkheim’s anomie or Weber’s personal entrapment in the iron cage. On gender, modernism, and modernity, see, e.g., Felski (1994). Felski outlines a debate about the different relations of men and women to modernism and modernity, but it seems to me that either side of the debate as she describes it, as well as the periodization she puts forth, situates psychoanalytic approaches to women within modernity and modernism.
modern critique of identity. Freud’s is the most elaborated modernist theory of how the individual is composed of conflicting parts, and he describes primary and secondary process, repression, and splits in the ego that allow knowing and not-knowing, all going on at the same time and incompatible one with the other. In the arena of gender and sexuality he claims, radically, that all people have homosexual and heterosexual components of both identity and desire, and masculine and feminine identities and partial identifications, that repress and express one another (Freud 1905).

Freud thus founded the modern Enlightenment science of individuality, and he at the same time established, along with fin de siècle modernism, that the individual is divided, set upon internally by sexual and aggressive drives, and conflicted. My own view is that there is only one way in which psychoanalysis participates in premodern thinking. That is, Freud sometimes unknowingly allows unsubstantiated pretheoretical assumptions to enter his theorizing, sometimes takes a premodern stance in laying out criteria of belief (“shibboleths”) without which people cannot call themselves adherents of psychoanalysis, and has himself sometimes been treated as infallible. In spite of these exceptions, however, I am suggesting that conceptualizing psychoanalytic thinking about any subject in terms of a tripartite premodern-modern-postmodern history creates an idiosyncratic and inaccurate historical periodization divorced from conventional academic usage, conflates history with epistemology, and ignores the basic premises and historical location of psychoanalysis itself.

To apply this general observation to the problem of gender, we can look back on one of the most important early women writers on the

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4As I read the literature, it seems to me that much of what we contemporary psychoanalysts want to call postmodern is what for literary and cultural critics defines modernism.

5Whether or not we want to call psychoanalytic views of the fragmented and affectively charged subject modernist or postmodern, there is no question that in terms of the perspectivalism and relativist views of truth that define postmodern epistemology, Freud, just as he is not premodern, was critical. In his weltanschauung lecture, he takes aim at contemporary trends toward epistemological relativism and its critique of an evidence-based science (1933, p. 176).

6Levy (2004) warns against the “splendid isolation” that threatens psychoanalysis when it remains uninformed by relevant intellectual currents. I worry that arbitrarily identifying particular substantive psychoanalytic points of view on gender as premodern, modern, and postmodern, or calling “premodern” some aspect of this late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century field that is thought to have helped define modernism, succumbs to that very danger. I would argue, too, that when we talk about postmodernism we should make a point of knowing the relevant literature.
subject. In her remarkable and original article, “The Evolution of the Oedipus Complex in Women,” Jeanne Lampl–de Groot (1927) can be said to have discovered the psychic significance of the girl’s pre-oedipal relation to her mother and the negative oedipus complex. This article formed the primary basis for Freud’s radical reformulation of the theory of female sexuality (1931). Lampl–de Groot’s theory, like that of all the early writers, is preeminently modernist, in exhibiting one indisputable characteristic of modernism—a respect for science and evidence. In a paragraph that begins, “This view confirms Freud’s hypothesis,” Lampl–de Groot puts forth a modest suggestion: “But, in contradistinction to Freud, we are assuming that the castration complex in female children is a secondary formation and that its precursor is the negative oedipal situation” (1927, p. 12). Lampl–de Groot then elaborates upon her observation and theory and gives two case vignettes to support her claim.

But Lampl–de Groot’s article is also a bit premodern. Before putting forth her own ideas, she spends ten pages reviewing and approving of Freud’s previous theory (Freud, needless to say, did not reciprocate). Here, in her submission to an almost religious authority and her implication that Freud is infallible, but not in the method or content of the theory itself, is the premodernism (a premodernist submission that Freud, in spite of his ostensible commitment to science, was not averse to in his followers) that we find in much of the early writing on women, especially in writings by women who were themselves analyzed by Freud (see, e.g., Bertin [1982] on Bonaparte; Deutsch [1973] on herself; Roazen [1985] and Thompson [1987] on Deutsch; and Young-Bruehl [1988] on Anna Freud).

Lampl–de Groot’s account is emphatically modern, and just as it is not premodern, so it is not postmodern. She is modern, in that she grounds her claims in the evidence from her patients (patients who, she claims, were unable to progress with male analysts); she does not draw from personal, nonclinical experience. She assumes that there is a general developmental story that applies to “the girl,” rather than making claims for many gender or sexual narratives, although she does, foreshadowing Freud (1931), describe three possible outcomes of the girl’s conflicts. She does not challenge the masculine-feminine binary, and she does not argue that there is nothing innate to gender or sexuality and object choice. She is not interested in history, culture, or power. Although we do not know this from the text, she is typical of
women of her psychoanalytic generation in that she did not hold the second-wave feminist belief that the theoretical is personal (let alone political): in an interview in the early 1980s, when I asked her explicitly if thinking about herself or her daughters had contributed to her radical reformulation, Lampl–de Groot said, “No, it was only in thinking about my patients.”

As with Lampl–de Groot, all of the 1920s and 1930s gender and sexuality theories, whether beginning from the presence or absence of the penis or based on a proto–primary femininity, are basically modernist and not premodern, though we can find a few postmodern elements here and there. Riviere alone among these early theorists could perhaps be said to be postmodern, as she shifts epistemological focus and tells her readers, disingenuously and playfully, that womanliness is both a masquerade and the real thing (Riviere 1929). It is only in the contemporary period, and then not from the beginning of second-wave feminist rethinking but from perhaps the late 1980s onward, that we can speak accurately of postmodern as distinct from modern trends.

As these post–second-wave developments occur, beginning in the 1970s, we can begin usefully to map the modern-postmodern onto the classical-relational divide. But before we can look at the contemporary period, we need to consider this second confusing entanglement in psychoanalytic gender theory. Like premodern-modern-postmodern, classical and to a lesser extent relational have both historical and theoretical referents. We are used (in the United States, at least: in much of the rest of the world our “classical” is distinctly anticlassical) to thinking of ego psychology (in all its contemporary derivatives) and the institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association as classical, in contrast to relational psychoanalysis and the relational institutes. But we also implicitly and explicitly contrast classical as an historical

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7In the early 1980s I conducted an interview study of some of the living second- and third-generation women psychoanalysts, hoping to understand the reasons for the important role of women in the early years of psychoanalysis and to find out how they thought about gender and sexuality. I describe my findings about my 1970s gender consciousness versus theirs in Chodorow (1989).

8Second-wave feminism can more or less be said to have begun in the United States and Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Women analysts of the first, second, and sometimes third generations, who contributed to the literature of the 1920s and 1930s, were affected, and saw themselves to be affected, by the first-wave suffragist or socialist feminism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as by the post-Victorian greater sexual liberalism; see, e.g., Deutsch (1973) on her socialist roots, and Meisel and Kendrick (1985) on the Bloomsbury cultural and sexual radicalism of the Stracheys.
category with contemporary. In this historical sense, all of the 1920s and 1930s gender thinkers I have mentioned, as well as the founding cultural school and interpersonal analysts, like Horney and Thompson, who wrote about women, could be considered classical.\textsuperscript{9} We would then contrast “classical” thinkers of all sorts with contemporary thinkers, those who locate themselves in the current period as classical or as relational analysts. And, although we might imagine that relational analysts would be more likely to incorporate the work of the historically classical interpersonalists, who pointed to the cultural beliefs and social and interpersonal experiences that explain penis envy, while classical analysts may have been more likely to have continued to emphasize, following Freud, Deutsch, and others, the drives and the sexual-reproductive body in gender formation and experience, none of these distinctions is firm, as there is no contemporary classical thinker who ignores culture and no contemporary relational thinker who ignores the body.\textsuperscript{10}

In terms of historical periodization, then, instead of premodern, modern, and postmodern, it is more accurate to say that there is a classical period of psychoanalytic thinking about women, mainly in the 1920s and 1930s with a few outliers in the early 1940s. This classical period includes those who follow Freud in making the penis central to everyone’s psychological gender and sexuality, and those, like Klein, Jones, and Horney, who, wherever they stood on penis envy, also developed variations of what we might call a proto–primary femininity theory, acknowledging in many ways the female-generated psychic reality of the female body and the female oedipus complex; and finally, those who, like Horney, add on considerations of the role of culture

\textsuperscript{9}It is not so hard to separate the historically classical from the contemporary in the case of psychoanalytic thinking about gender, because, as I discuss below, there was such a long hiatus in this thinking.

\textsuperscript{10}In the first presentation of this roundtable discussion with Helen Gediman and Adrienne Harris, the latter suggested that I was the subject of a possible custody war between classical and relational analysts. I would suggest that Horney, especially, lends herself to such custody disputes. She from the outset intertwined in her thinking a psychic and physical primary femininity based on the reality of the primary female genitals, vagina and clitoris, as well as what she called a nondefensive primary penis envy, based on the reality of observability and exhibitionistic urination; she conceptualized a nonderivative feminine form of the oedipus complex and castration fears; she insisted on the primary importance of motherhood, including suckling the infant; and, well before she joined the ranks of the neo-Freudians, she developed a critique of the patriarchally charged nature, cultural and personal, of Freud’s own thinking (see Horney 1967).
in shaping defensive psychologies of femininity and masculinity. All of
these classical theorists are largely modernist when it comes to how
they reason and what they think.

To turn to contemporary thinking, which took root in the 1970s,
both phallic monism—whose contemporary vestiges are still to be
found in Lacanian and Lacanian-inspired “sexual difference” think-
ing (see, e.g., Mitchell and Rose 1982) and which certainly inspired
the eminently modernist scientific research of Roiphe and Galenson
(1981)—and primary femininity theory, which has classical roots in
Horney, Jones, and Klein, although it was developed more fully in the
contemporary period, are, in terms of their epistemological bases and
their form of theorizing, modern. They are modern in that they are
unitary theories of the girl and the boy and are based on evidence.
They both argue from a position that postmodernism would claim
is the objectivized “view from nowhere.” Freud’s views, that there is
only one genital for both boy and girl until puberty, that the psychology
of women is driven by penis envy and of men by castration anxiety,
that we define masculine as active and feminine as passive, these are
all from our contemporary perspective incomplete or sexist, but they
are not different in kind from the primary femininity theories that
originate in the classical period with Horney, Jones, and Klein and
that were elaborated before the contemporary period by Kestenberg
and Stoller.

Thus, the phallic monism that begins with Freud is no more pre-
modern than primary femininity. Theories of primary femininity make
an empirical, clinical argument against Freud’s original theory. Although
they are certainly an advance in terms of clinical and developmental
evidence, they retain an anatomical and developmental determinism.
Moreover, with the exception of Kestenberg (1956a,b, 1968), they retain
a focus on the external genital as defining of psychological femininity
that seems to derive from an attempt to counter the emphasis on the
penis. 11 The contents of the theories differ, but both universalize about
the boy and the girl and base their claims on a single element—anatomi-
cal construction and its sequelae. We can see an historical trend, with
phallic monism more dominant in the 1920s and 1930s and primary
femininity theory in the ascendant in the contemporary era, but the
epistemology of the theories does not differ.

11See Balsam (2003), who describes the psychoanalytic scotoma toward the
pregnant body.
Some writings on both theories from both eras, particularly concerning the question of universalism and unitary gender, anticipate postmodernism. I have mentioned Rivière’s sense that womanliness is both real and created. On the side of the phallic determinists, Freud, following Lampl–de Groot, does in fact give us three developmental stories—three nonpredictable, individualized integrations or nonintegrations of body configuration, identification, and desire—regarding the sequelae of penis envy, even if only one constitutes normal femininity (as he has earlier, in 1905, given us a radically gender-bending account of the individualized integrations of homosexual and heterosexual desire and masculinity and femininity in everyone). Primary femininity theory does a bit better, due perhaps to the actual on-the-ground empirical multiplicity of female sexuality and the feminine body. That is, although it too holds that anatomy is destiny and thus centers on the importance of female bodily configuration, primary femininity theory is drawn to being nonmonolithic, perhaps of necessity somewhat postmodern: you find here an emphasis on the girl’s vaginal opening, vulva, labia, or clitoris, there the inner genital or inner space; here the potential for pregnancy, there the developing breasts; you find givens at birth and bio-anatomical experiences—breast development, menstruation, pregnancy, lactation—that are anticipated and represented by the little girl but will only come to fruition in adolescence or adulthood. You find many elements in this bodily experience, each of which will have its own trajectory and its own combination with other elements, and you find an emphasis on different kinds of experience—diffuseness of genital representation, anxiety and fear of penetration or of being closed over, fantasies about pregnancy or the uterus, and so forth (see, e.g., Balsam 1996, 2003; Bernstein 1990; Elise 1997; Holtzman and Kulish 1996; Mayer 1986, 1995; Notman 2003; Pines 1993; Richards 1996). Thus, primary femininity theory can incorporate postmodern elements more easily than can phallic monism.

12Here again we may be in the realm of fantasy or premodern authority from on high, still in thrall to Freud instead of engaging in our own empirical observations, in our thinking that female sexual and reproductive anatomy is more complex, physically and psychically, than male sexual and reproductive anatomy.
FROM THE SECOND GENERATION TO THE SECOND WAVE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN AND POSTMODERN THOUGHT

American feminism in the early 1970s bequeathed a dual attitude toward psychoanalysis. On the one hand, it introduced into politics, as previous social movements had not done, the idea that feelings are important, and that much of what women suffered was not in the sphere of the workplace or the public realm but in feeling objectified, devalued, ignored, and confused about their sexuality and desires. It addressed personal relations in the family and between women and men as worthy of political attention and redress. On the other hand, even as the “personal” was “political,” all of these feelings were seen as externally caused by the social relations of male dominance, and Freud was the enemy. Yet a few of us thought things were more complicated and that we had better find a theory that helped us understand them. Thus, in my own earliest explorations, I wrote “Being and Doing” (1972), which located the origins of male dominance in men’s dread of women and fear of their own internal femininity; suggested that men’s and women’s bisexual identifications were asymmetrical, the man’s being more threatening; contrasted women’s feminine identity, based on “being,” with men’s masculine identity based on “doing”; and described a “self-perpetuating cycle of female deprecation,” in which mothers transmitted to daughters their own anxieties and conflicts about femininity. Among psychoanalysts, this paper cites only Horney, but by the time it was published I was deeply immersed in reading the 1920s and 1930s literature and shortly thereafter completed the thesis that would become *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Chodorow 1978). Contemporaneously, the leading British New Left feminist theorist, Juliet Mitchell (1974), also turned to psychoanalysis to understand male dominance and family relations. Our trajectory was mirrored by a few other outsider-newcomers. Gayle Rubin’s still extraordinary article “The Traffic in Women” (1975) drew feminist attention to the preoedipal girl’s prohibited lesbian love for her mother and the unnamed invisibility of the same-sex incest taboo, while Dinnerstein’s also remarkable *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* appeared in 1976.

Meanwhile, the 1920s–1930s writings on women began to resurface, though not because of attention from “mainstream” analysts. The Sullivanian analyst Miller published the anthology *Psychoanalysis and Women*
in 1973, and that was followed by *Women and Analysis* (Strouse 1974), which republished classic papers with new introductions, almost half by clinicians. My 1971 paperback copy of Clara Thompson’s collected papers, *On Women*, opens to a page asking, in large boldface type, *IS WOMAN A CASTRATED MAN?* Miller’s cultural psychoanalytic *Toward a New Psychology of Women* appeared in 1976. In most of these writings, by clinicians and nonclinicians alike, there is a sense that the theorist is generating theory through internal conviction, seeing connections among different levels of empirical reality (the psyche, the sociocultural, the historical), and rereading, with a feminist eye, psychoanalytic accounts of “gender-y” issues (the psychologies of men and women, sexuality, the oedipus complex, observations of mothers and fathers) in novel ways.

I describe this early history because our goal here is partly to consider the relations between psychoanalytic theories of gender, the intellectual and political épopes and settings in which these develop, and the personal biographies of those who create these theories. In my view, second-wave feminism in general, and the specific contributions of the 1970s in particular, propelled reconsideration both at the margins and at the center of psychoanalysis. With the exception of Miller, all of these early second-wave interventions arrived from outside of clinical psychoanalysis (and Miller herself was certainly outside the “main-stream” of American psychoanalysis). The nonclinician Strouse had solicited contributions from two analysts of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Ethel Person and Robert Stoller, as well as from Erik Erikson. These interventions occurred in the midst of a discontinuous historical trajectory that, with the rise of renewed psychoanalytic attention to women in the 1970s, mirrors the two waves of feminism itself. This trajectory began, as I have suggested, with the foundational (though contested) 1920s and 1930s papers of Freud, Lampl–de Groot, Brunswick, Deutsch, Riviere, Horney, Klein, and others. It had been elaborated during the “quiescent interval” (Fliegel 1986, p. 17) in thinking about women by the lone 1950s and 1960s voices of Kestenberg (1956a,b, 1968), Chasseguet-Smirgel (1964) and her colleagues, and Stoller (1965, 1968). Of the early generation, Benedek and Bibring also stand out during this quiescent period as having continued their interest in the psychosexuality, especially the reproductivity, of women (Benedek 1952, 1973; Bibring et al. 1961).

All this changed in the 1970s. The upsurge of theorizing and feminist politics from the margins that I have described generated a strong
response from the center: I would argue that we are not here in the realm of modernist “normal science,” with theories revised mainly on the basis of new evidence. This response included most notably the 1976 supplement on women of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, Notman and Nadelson’s multivolume *The Woman Patient* (1979, 1982), and Chasseguet-Smirgel’s ground-breaking naming of and challenge to phallic monism (1976). It is further striking, within American psychoanalysis, that with the exception of Kestenberg, those who seem earliest and most consistently to be considering gender in new ways—Stoller, Notman and Nadelson, and, in her 1970s work with Ovesey on transsexualism and transvestism, Person (1999)—come from psychoanalytic communities closely tied to universities (UCLA, Harvard, and Columbia). Contemporaneously with this beginning up-surge in psychoanalytic rethinking of the psychology of women, several second-wave feminists—including myself, Mitchell, Jessica Benjamin, Jane Flax, Muriel Dimen, and Adrienne Harris—went into psychoanalytic training. 13

As I have indicated, this historical-theoretical trajectory of feminist psychoanalytic thinking and the contemporaneous training of theorists maps onto the history of psychoanalysis, depending on whether training was classical or relational. It also divides generational cohorts. In terms of periodization, I take these 1970s–early 1980s interventions to have initiated the contemporary period of psychoanalytic thinking. They followed chronologically from, and in some cases drew upon, those I call the lone voices, but we were not, I believe, aware of their importance as opening revisionist salvos.14 Like the rest of the psychoanalytic world, we saw the debates as still shaped by the 1920s–1930s contributions, all basically modern in their approach, and either classically drive/body based or, in the case of Horney and Thompson, also drawing on culture.

In the contemporary period the divisions classical-relational and modern-postmodern begin to have substantial salience. But before we

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13 Virginia Goldner is obviously missing from this lineup: she had from the outset trained as a clinician.

14 My personal contact with these loners has given me more awareness. Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel in conversation and in her writings has described her sense of having taken up, after decades of complete European silence, the question of femininity. In her interview with me, Judith Kestenberg took great care to explain what her project had been and why it was important. I think as you read Kestenberg—repetitive, long, and emphatic—you also read her sense of isolation and mission.
parse these distinctions, a necessary word on culture. Classical psycho-
analysis is supposedly more intrapsychic and innatist than relational
psychoanalysis, and it is certainly the case that classical rethinking has
focused, inter alia, on the body, whereas relational thinking, initiated by
political feminists who became analysts, has made more central the
internalized psychopolitics of male dominance, as well as the intrapsy-
chically constitutive and continuously reemerging and shifting role of
family-child and analyst-patient interaction. Yet, just as did Freud, all
contemporary classical theorists think that culture helps shape sexu-
ality and gender and has had as well an impact on psychoanalytic
type. Thus, when we contrast “relational” and “classical” in the
current period, differentiation does not inhere mainly in the view of
culture, but in more subtle distinctions about focus, primacy of interest
or emphasis, and clinical modalities.

As you begin to have classical, in the sense of (broadly) “main-
stream” ego psychological, in contrast to “relational” psychoanalysis
and theories of gender, you can also begin to distinguish an overlapping
but not congruent development of modern and postmodern strands. An
overview of trends in my own thinking over the last thirty-five years,
I believe, can help us see the ways that modern and postmodern
elements have played out in our literature. First, characteristic of my
second-wave feminist generation (including the postmodern relational
feminists), my early forays were extremely leery and suspicious of
any acknowledgment of the sexed body. Here we see, I think, a distinct
contrast with the medically trained early second-wave feminist
psychoanalytic thinkers like Nadelson, Notman, and Person, who were
able to distinguish sexist and inaccurate understandings of the body
from the importance of the body itself. Freud’s “essentializing and
universalizing,” his “anatomy is destiny,” had turned most second-
wave feminists against him. Even those of us who were fervently and
definitely psychoanalytic believed that such biologically determinist
assumptions had harmed women both in and outside the field. We
argued that empirical investigation—cross-cultural and historical—
documented extensive variation in women’s roles and psyches, and that
clinical evidence showed created psychological meaning, not biological

15I have suggested (Chodorow 2004) that American mainstream psychoanalytic
thinkers like Balsam, Bernstein, Holtzman, Kulish, Mayer, Notman, Person, and
Tyson, all cited above, and others who come from mainstream training and institutes
might be considered, when it comes to gender, “cultural ego psychologists.”
cause. For Lacanians like Mitchell, language rather than body created the psyche. You could say that we folded our emotions into modernist claims.

Second, for 1970s feminists the personal was not only political; it was also theoretical and epistemological. We measured theories, and developed our own, against personal experience and a critique of power, writing about mothers and daughters, competition among women, intrapsychic lesbian taboos, power and sexuality. I would claim that this epistemological skepticism and reference to the self constitutes the first “postmodern” input into the psychoanalytic rethinking of femininity. Postmodernism, following the sociology of knowledge, claims that knowledge is perspectival—that there is no “view from nowhere” (except the view that there is no view from nowhere). Contemporaneously, we also borrowed from poststructuralism (often fused with postmodernism, but with its own theoretical roots) and followed Foucault and the early Marx in arguing that knowledge inhered in power. Thus, psychoanalytic theory presented not only a masculine perspective but a masculine perspective that was hegemonic—based in political and sociocultural male dominance. As the postmodern zeitgeist enters psychoanalysis, we can trace a decline in tentativeness in primary femininity and mother-daughter theories (Horney, anything but tentative and dutiful, is the obvious early exception here), from the many qualifications and bracketings with which Lampl–de Groot introduced her radical but carefully clinically grounded observations, to forthright contemporary arguments about phallocentric theory and language.

Calling upon the realm of female experience, experience read through clinical observation but drawing explicitly or implicitly on personal affect, outrage, self-observation and observation of nonclinical others, which began with primary femininity theory, came to distinguish all contemporary critiques of historical theories and to some extent all new theories themselves; in this limited sense, all second-wave psychoanalytic thinking is postmodern. Such thinking differentiates the second wave from the second generation, as I discovered in my study of early women analysts. Lampl–de Groot, as she told me, listened to her patients. Margaret Mahler talked extensively about her personal sense of femininity in relation to her mother, but when I

16Note, for example, Mayer’s title “Everybody Must Be Just Like Me,” and her opening vignette of a little girl, not a patient (Mayer 1986).
asked if she had thought about the theory of femininity in relation to herself, she said, “It didn’t go through my brain.” They did not—Horney’s famous self-reference, “I, as a woman, ask in amazement, and what about motherhood?” (1926, p. 60), is the exception here—use themselves, except clandestinely, to think about the psychology of women. When they did, as we now know was the case for Anna Freud, Deutsch, Riviere, Klein, Bonaparte, and others, they disguised themselves in modernist garb, as “cases”; like other early writers, Lampl–de Groot (1927) may have turned herself into “an acquaintance, the mother of two girls” (p. 6). It was only second-wave feminism that gave women psychoanalysts permission to begin from their own subjective intuitions in challenging and rethinking established theory—at least without, like Horney, being finally excommunicated. I stress this contrast, in terms of the attempt to sort out modern and postmodern in the present interchange, without wanting to minimize the gatekeeping that went on: in the 1980s, classically trained women who were taking feminist stances or bringing in culture, like Notman, Nadelson, Zilbach, and Person, were often criticized and dismissed by reviewers in the leading journals (personal communications).

Reflexivity and a perspectival epistemology, then, exemplify the first postmodern input into the rethinking of femininity. Experience and perspective led to a second postmodern step. Even while critiquing the masculinist perspective, most psychoanalytic writings of the 1970s and 1980s retained a gender binary and a unitary conception of each gender, describing men and women, the boy and the girl, the mother and the father. By contrast, recent classical as well as relational writings suggest that there are many masculinities, femininities, and sexualities and that each person’s psychic gender and sexuality is clinically unique and individual (even the Revue Française de Psychanalyse titled a 2003 issue using the plural: “the homosexualities”).

This challenge, requiring a focus on individual differences, multiplicity, and shifting partial identifications, came from both feminism and postmodernism. Academic and political feminism demanded: how can you generalize about women when there are women of different colors, sexual orientations, ethnicities and cultures? Postmodernism asked: how can you talk about “femininity” when identities are partial, fragmented, situated, and overlapping? Such challenges influenced classical and relational thinkers differently, but there is no easy divide.
For example, Benjamin, a prominent relational analyst, has developed a complex but more binary and generalizing theory, in which there is “identification with difference” and postoedipal gender, but in which the meanings of masculine and feminine, the roles of mother and father, and an emphasis on sexual difference remain (see, e.g., Benjamin 1995). The relationally trained Elise (1997) is a leading contemporary primary femininity thinker, arguing for the psychic sequelae of bodily configuration. By contrast, the relational analysts Dimen (2003), Goldner (1991, 2003), and Harris (2005) locate partial identities, uneasy compromises, and combinations at the heart of multiple genders and sexualities, while the independent hybrid political philosopher and clinician Flax (1990) explicitly addresses the intersections of psychoanalysis, postmodernism, and feminism. My own writing centers on unconscious fantasy, conflict, and compromise formation but makes multiple constitutive features, contradiction, partiality, and clinical individuality central (see Chodorow 1994, 1999a). The classical analysts Schuker (1996) and Tyson (1996) claim that there are many paths toward female development, while the classical Kulish and Holtzman have developed a new theory of “the” female oedipus complex based on Persephone (Kulish and Holtzman 1998; Holtzman and Kulish 2000). I am suggesting that we can locate the classical-relational divide, defined by training, identity, and institute affiliation, more easily than the modern-postmodern divide, which is appropriated differently by different contemporary writers (and sometimes differently by the same writer).

There is a further distinction here among those who draw on postmodern assumptions. Some in the postmodern camp favor performative gender-bending theory and use playful alliterative language. Others who draw on postmodernism are without skepticism toward straightforwardly presented evidence and do not challenge modernist language, but they nonetheless make empirical arguments for epistemological perspectivalism, as well as for clinically observed, multiple, partial, overlapping facets of identity and psyche. Just as classical analysts find themselves closer to the body and focus on its innately propelled fantasies and desires and the intrapsychic as clinical reality, whereas relational analysts are more likely to conceptualize the body and psychic life as interactionally co-constructed, so also those who begin from a classical identity and training tend more toward a traditional, modern use of language and evidence, whereas those who have a more rela-
tional identity also find themselves drawn to postmodern epistemology and language.\textsuperscript{17}

My own self-location in the modern epistemological and linguistic camp, even as I agree with what I have defined as foundational postmodern claims for perspective and multiplicity, arises from several sources. My clinical work with patients, probably sustained by classical training, has led to a rethinking that accords more recognition to the actual body and its determinative importance in psychic life. I worry less about anatomy being destiny, and here I am very much in the classical tradition. I now think that bodies, especially our sexual and reproductive bodies—primary and secondary sex characteristics from birth and through the developments of adolescence; reproductivity; the erotogenic zones that Freud described; libido and drive—that all of these experiences intrinsically demand psychic and fantasy elaboration and representation and are likely to get embroiled in conflict (Chodorow 1999b).

I am substantively both modernist and postmodern in this anatomical determinism. I go with an empirically discovered clinical individuality and hold that these conflicts, fantasies, and psychic elaborations and representations will not be the same for everyone. I claim, further, that elaborations of sexed and gendered body intertwine with all aspects of psyche and that identity is shaped through contradiction, conflict, and compromise formation (compromise formation is perhaps a preeminently postmodern, if also a preeminently ego psychological, concept). Sexed and gendered bodies are shaped from birth and even before by the maternal surround: much as Loewald argued about language, or as we might say with Laplanche, psychosexuality develops and is bathed in the mother’s flow of words, fantasy, and body (Loewald 1951, 1978; Laplanche 1997). But our biological makeup makes a difference: genitals, breasts, arousal, menstruation, erection, ejaculation, these will all be psychically (and culturally) elaborated in a way that shoulders or feet will not. These elaborations receive a push from our innate psychobiological makeup, however much they are also shaped by the mother’s, the father’s, and the culture’s choices of organs and bodily experiences to invest in.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17}These stylistic differences can easily be found by comparing the tables of contents of this journal or \textit{The Psychoanalytic Quarterly} with \textit{Psychoanalytic Dialogues} or \textit{Studies in Gender and Sexuality}.

\textsuperscript{18}I am suggesting that contemporary classical and relational analysts both see body and mind as “cooking each other” (Harris) and that both agree that part of the seasoning of the soup comes from culture, but that we may have different views of the order in which ingredients get added.
The psychoanalytically influenced feminist philosopher of science Evelyn Fox Keller (1987) nicely elaborates this middle ground. She argues against postmodern critiques of empiricism that claim that there is no reality out there that is being studied. Bodily and other physical realities exist in the natural world; they are not wholly created or constructed and do not gain meaning only through the discourse that invokes and describes them. However, traditional Enlightenment empiricist assumptions are also inadequate, since naming and discursive practices, including those in the natural sciences, and for our purposes in the family, the culture, and psychoanalysis, do help shape how we conceptualize (and therefore what we think of) as the physical world. There is not just one correct way to observe and understand nature, but nature does constrain and influence our ways of observing and understanding accurately, such that some ways are more adequate than others.

My own unease with postmodernism and perhaps overly driven modernism also arises from my dual historical location in the consulting room and the university. Postmodernism has grown from and is intertwined with the academic humanities, where a related deconstructionism has made an innovative and playful use of language central and in which the favored psychoanalytic theory is Lacanian. In the university, there is a wide split between these postmodern humanities, which are often skeptical, dismissive, or hostile toward traditional research, and the empirical social and human sciences, among which I locate psychoanalysis. In order to be pushed toward a strong clinical and theoretical modernism, you have only, as a psychoanalyst, to listen to cultural studies scholars, who have not worked with or witnessed actual patients who suffer, dissociate, or encrypt frozen memories. These scholars draw on psychoanalysis to describe, in richly elaborated reflexive language, how we “figure” suffering, “embodiment,” torture as a “discursive trope,” “traumatic gender aporias,” and the ways that “we” appropriate the Holocaust. They see “melancholy” as a romanticized Wertheresque nineteenth-century romantic languish or sadness about social configurations, rather than referring to the actual pain and terrors of clinical depression.

To conclude: in the contemporary period, classical and relational gender theorists are both postmodern, beginning from experience, a freedom to challenge, a view that knowledge is perspectival and embedded in power, and an awareness of the multiple constituents of
individual genders and sexualities, and modern, relying on clinical evidence and rooting for the individual. I hope that our interchange in these pages helps all of us unpack these overlapping and crosscutting divides—classical-relational and modern-postmodern—these subtle epistemological, theoretical, and methodological distinctions that interact with the contents of theory and the biographical location of theorists and that have enriched and challenged our attempts to think clinically and theoretically about gender and sexuality.

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