

major role in bringing cultural analysis back into the center of sociological analysis in general. In encouraging the attempt to see both actors (and therefore actions) and institutions as shaped by cultural schemas (to borrow Sewell's recent term), it also opens up the possibility of analysis of the way in which those schemas are shaped in struggle. This is the larger task to which Bourdieu's account of "symbolic violence" speaks; it has already been put to use in a variety of more specific analytic contexts. *Outline* also foreshadowed Bourdieu's development of the concept of cultural capital, and more generally the theory of how different forms of accumulated resources may have different effects, and may be converted. In one related sense, however, *Outline* may have misled readers. Bourdieu's sociology is aimed largely at an account of power relations, and especially of the many ways in which power is culturally produced, reproduced, and manipulated. Partly because of the heavy emphasis on strategizing language, this is not as manifest in *Outline* as in some of the rest of Bourdieu's work.

The influence of *Outline* remains large, partly because it appears (along with the

overlapping *Logic of Practice*) as the most important of the relatively few general and synthetic statements Bourdieu has offered of his "theory" (a label he doesn't like). The rest of his publications range across a wide variety of empirical objects of analysis, from museums and literature to kinship, class, Algerian workers, and French higher education. *Outline* is not a cure for the common fragmented reading of Bourdieu, but it does go some way towards showing what is central to his perspective and situating many of his key concepts in relation to broader theory. In a sense it explicates and provides a rationale for what Brubaker (1992) has described as Bourdieu's sociological *habitus*, his characteristic mode of improvising in empirical analysis.

References

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1988. "Vive la crise! For Heterodoxy in Social Science," *Theory and Society*, 17(5), pp. 773-88.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 1992. "Social Theory as Habitus," pp. 212-234 in C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma, and M. Postone, eds.: *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

The Gendering of Social Theory: Sociology and Its Discontents

BARBARA LASLETT

University of Minnesota

.Original review, *CS* 8:4 (January 1979), by Rose Laub Coser:

This book will have consequences in sociological as well as in psychoanalytic theorizing at the same time as it may provide some of the underpinnings for a theory of feminism.

Nancy Chodorow and I have known each other for more than 15 years as colleagues and as friends. Part of that friendship has developed out of our mutual intellectual interests in gender and family relations and in social theory. In our many conversations that have engaged those interests, there has been mutual critique

as well as appreciation. This essay continues in the spirit of those conversations.

The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (hereafter, *Mothering*), published in 1978 by the University of California Press, was a major intellectual event in the emerging field of feminist scholarship and in social theory. Its

The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender, by Nancy J. Chodorow. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. 253 pp. \$15.00 paper. ISBN: 0-520-03892-4.

original success reflected, in part, the desires of feminists to find a grand theory that could address the normative questions with which they were so concerned—women's subjectivity, sexuality, and constructions of self in the contexts of gender inequalities. It came at the height of feminist struggles for intellectual space and legitimacy in the academy, and also argued for the potential of psychoanalytic theory to be incorporated into sociological thinking. Attention was almost immediate.

The intellectual contributions of *Mothering* were at least twofold. First, it presented an argument that problematized women's mothering—nurturance, child care, and socialization, as well as pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. Eschewing a biological explanation, Chodorow's central question was "Why do women mother?" Her answer drew on psychoanalytic theory, especially object-relations theory, and developed it using feminists' interest in and insights about the socially constructed nature of gender relations. Focusing on the pre-Oedipal period of development in which the primary relationship of infants is with their mothers, Chodorow argued that the development of gendered personalities in women and men is such that women have a deeply internalized psychological impetus to reproduce the intimacy of their relationship with their mothers, their primary and primordial caretakers, and are able to do so through becoming mothers themselves. In contrast, she contended, and especially in nuclear families built on a division of labor in which men are the primary breadwinners and women are the primary homemakers and nurturers (i.e., the Parsonian model of Western nostalgia, to paraphrase William J. Goode, 1963), personality development for men fosters separation, not connectedness, and the search for emotional distance, not emotional intimacy.¹ It is thus, Chodorow argued, that the reproduction of mothering in women occurs at a deep intrapsychic level, and cannot be adequately explained by the concept of "sex roles," by socialization theories, or by coercion in a male-dominated culture, in male-dominated institutions, or through male economic privilege.

¹ By providing such an abbreviated version of Chodorow's theory, I obviously cannot do justice to its nuances and complexities.

Second, Chodorow connected the development of gendered personalities in women and men not only to the reproduction of the desire to mother among women, but also to problematics in the relationships between women and men and to women's inequality. In so doing, she presented a powerful argument for the potential usefulness of psychoanalytic theory for sociologists in general, not feminists alone. In contrast to theories of social structure and/or the gendered division of labor in which women's mothering as socially, culturally, and biologically organized behavior was taken as a given, Chodorow raised a question to be answered, rather than one whose answer seemed self-evidently "natural." Gender relations, the gendered division of labor, and gender inequality—key concerns of feminists and feminist scholars—became, in Chodorow's hands, a theoretical problematic for social theorists in general, rather than a taken-for-granted dimension of social structure.

While *Mothering* was an event of moment for sociologists of the family and of gender as well as for feminist scholars across many disciplines, it became, almost immediately, the object of criticism among sociologists, including (perhaps especially) feminists. At the meeting of the American Sociological Association in Boston in 1979, I attended a panel session in which *Mothering* was discussed by prominent women sociologists then identified with the newly emerging field of feminist scholarship. I no longer have the program from those meetings but recall the participants to have been Alice Rossi, Judith Lorber, Rose Laub Coser, and Jessie Bernard. (Coser was the reviewer of *Reproduction* in *Contemporary Sociology*.) If my memory serves me, with the exception of Rose Coser, whose comments were both appreciative and critical, the commentaries were almost uniformly negative. Lorber argued that economic relations, not psychoanalysis, explained women's oppression and their decision to mother. Rossi was disturbed by Chodorow's rejection of biological explanations and evidence. Jessie Bernard commented on the need to just get on with it and test empirically if and how psychoanalytic theory might be useful to sociologists.² There was a

²The comments by Rossi, Lorber, and Coser were

way, however, in which *The Reproduction of Mothering* quickly became, despite (or, perhaps, because of) its widespread recognition and influence, a book that sociologists loved to hate. It has, nevertheless, continued to receive attention by scholars, both feminist and nonfeminist.³

The original and continued impact of Chodorow's theory needs to be understood within the intellectual context in which it developed—the Parsonian model of family life, with its taken-for-granted set of gender roles and relationships that were seen as “functional” for the society (if not necessarily always for women) and the concerns of contemporary feminist scholars to disrupt precisely what that model took for granted. But Chodorow's work posed a challenge to feminist scholarship as well. Making analytic use of Freudian-inspired psychoanalytic theory, she validated its usefulness to analyses of gender relations, rather than relegating the theory in toto to the dustbin of a patriarchal intellectual history, as some feminists were then doing. Chodorow was not alone either in her uses of psychoanalytic theory or in her questioning of the adequacy of functionalist theories of family life. Her rich articulation of a feminist critique, however, came at just the right moment to be taken up and noticed. Having identified “gender” as a theoretical category, *Mothering* became a classic work in feminist theory, and influential in many disciplines—e.g., political theory and literary criticism. Ironically, although Chodorow is a sociologist, it has been more resisted than embraced in that field.

Should Chodorow's psychoanalytically focused theory of gender relations be of sociological interest now, in 1996, especially since she has revised some of her ideas since the publication of *Mothering*?⁴

published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* in the Spring of 1981 (vol. 6: 482–514) and it is to those I have referred in preparing this essay. Chodorow's published response in the *Signs* symposium merits reading today as it did then.

³ As editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* between 1990 and 1995, I know that *Mothering* remains a major focus of debate among feminist scholars; recently, however, it is being considered in more positive, although not uncritical, lights. (See, for instance, Segura and Pierce 1993).

⁴ In *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, Chodorow discusses some of the ways in which her thinking has changed over time; she has, for instance,

My answer—that Chodorow's theoretical work continues to have major contributions to make to sociology—reflects current theoretical debates that are not about personality or microlevel social relationships, but about macrohistorical processes of social change and social reproduction, i.e., debates about social structures, human agency, and their intersections under concrete and historically specific conditions. (See Abrams 1981.) Quite simply, Chodorow's theory provides a way to theorize human action and the link between individual agents and larger social structures. She does so not by relying on a simplistic logic of market relations as unmediated by the subjective and interpretive capacities of social actors, but by directing attention to the power of emotions, to family relationships, to gendered cultures and experiences, and to the sociological relevance of sexuality and sexual identities as they are constructed by persons within patriarchal societies. Chodorow's attention to the ways in which personality develops and to the place of emotion in the construction of meaning contributes to our understanding of how and why people act as they do more richly than the theories either of “rationality” or of socialization that infuse many contemporary sociological models of action. She also gives, appropriately in my view, intellectual weight to gender relations, sexuality, and emotional life in ways that can inform the kinds of political, economic, cultural, and organizational questions with which sociologists have traditionally been concerned. Pierce's (1995) analysis of the gendered emotional dynamics in contemporary law firms, for instance, and my own work on the history of American sociology (Laslett 1990) use Chodorow's theory to understand organizational and historical dynamics.

Pierre Bourdieu (1977) argues that economics is everywhere, and that to differentiate the economic and symbolic, treating them as qualitatively different realms of social experience and activity, is to participate in a mystification of the links between them in all social formations. Chodorow's theory of “mothering” is a similarly radical

rejected her earlier implication “that women's mothering was *the* cause or prime mover of male dominance.” (See Chodorow 1989:1–19.)

and demystifying argument: "Gender" is present in all social relationships.⁵ We carry and construct "gender" in our multiple realms of experience and activity through the emotions that energize our actions, through the symbols and meanings we construct to make sense of those actions, through our explanations—to ourselves and others—of how and why we become the social actors that we do.

For all their rich potential to engage with contemporary social theory, however, Chodorow's interests have remained focused on, indeed have become more firmly attached to, theorizing the person, not linkages to social structure. This is, in my view, a limitation of her work, although it does not by itself invalidate its sociological relevance, especially as it has developed over the last 25 years. Yet she has, perhaps not surprisingly, given her fascination with psychoanalysis "for its own sake" (1989:6), become even more focused on persons as creative actors. In one of her recent publications, "Gender as Personal and Cultural Construction" (Chodorow 1995), part of a book-length project on which she is currently working, Chodorow expands on themes that have been present in her work since the beginning, but that also reflect her recent psychoanalytic training and her current work as a clinician as well as an academician.

In this work, Chodorow is more exclusively concerned with how persons construct meanings, in this instance the meanings of gender, within the highly specific contexts of individual lives and clinical experiences. But she does not, unfortunately, explicitly link insights from her present location at the intersection of sociology and psychoanalysis either to sociological analysis or to social theory. Her current focus, however, whatever its limits, has important things to say to those of us interested in understanding human agency, in learning how people use the available social, cultural, and organizational resources

and constraints to construct their own lives and become actors *on* as well as *in* societies. (See Chodorow 1994 for further elaboration of her argument in "Individuality and Difference. . ."; for another, related, theoretical statement see Mahoney and Yngvesson 1992; for empirical examples, see Lawrence-Lightfoot 1994.) Her case studies also illustrate how situations beyond the realm of personal life can become infused with meaning and the power of feeling. And her theory allows us to understand how jobs can become sites of struggle over masculinity and femininity (Pierce 1995), how sports and locker rooms can become sites of struggle over sexuality, and how both can become sites for struggles over control (Disch and Kane 1996).

Yet, some of the critique that Rose Coser articulated in the original *Contemporary Sociology* review of *Mothering*—that Chodorow does not pay enough attention to structure—remains. Although, from the outset, Chodorow has clearly recognized that meanings, actions, and relationships are constructed within particular social contexts, her fascination with persons has resulted in an inattention to how personal action and society connect. Drawing linkages between the questions that intrigue her and other approaches to social theory, however, is not necessarily Chodorow's responsibility alone, although not doing so may limit recognition of the relevance of her work to social theorists. Like us, she needs to be free to pursue her intellectual interests and sociological imagination where they take her. The challenge—to draw out the implications of Chodorow's contributions to social theory—is also ours. In 1996, it continues to serve our intellectual interests to take that challenge seriously, as did the publication of *Mothering* in 1978.

Works Cited

- Abrams, Philip. 1981. *Historical Sociology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chodorow, Nancy J. 1989. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 1994. *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexuali-*

⁵ While gender relations are present in all social situations—indeed, gender is present even when women are not (see Scott 1988)—it does not follow that gender is uniformly *salient* in all times and places; see "Seventies Questions for Thirties Women: Gender and Generation in a Study of Early Women Psychoanalysts" in Chodorow 1989.

- ties: *Freud and Beyond*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
- . 1995. "Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction." *Signs* 20:516-44.
- Disch, Lisa and Mary Jo Kane. 1996. "When a looker is really a bitch: Lisa Olson, Sport, and the Heterosexual Matrix." *Signs* 21:278-308.
- Goode, William J. 1963. *World Revolution and Family Patterns*. New York: Free Press.
- Laslett, Barbara. 1990. "Unfeeling Knowledge: Emotion and Objectivity in the History of Sociology." *Sociological Forum* 5:413-433.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, Sara. 1994. *I've Known Rivers: Lives of Loss and Liberation*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Mahoney, Maureen and Barbara Yngvesson. 1992. "The Construction of Subjectivity and the Paradox of Resistance: Reintegrating Feminist Anthropology and Psychology." *Signs* 18:44-73.
- Pierce, Jennifer. 1995. *Gender Trials: Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Scott, Joan W. 1988. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." Pp. 28-50 in *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Segura, Denise A. and Jennifer Pierce. 1993. "Chicana/o Family Structure and Gender Personality: Chodorow, Familism, and Psychoanalytic Sociology Revisited." *Signs* 19: 62-91.

What's Race Got To Do With It?*

ALDON MORRIS

Northwestern University

Original reviews, *CS* 9:1 (January 1980), by Thomas F. Pettigrew and Cora Bagley Marrett. From Cora Bagley Marrett's review:

The position of [the black middle class] may be far more precarious than Wilson suggests . . . [The Bakke] case and similar challenges to special minority programs indicate to many observers that affirmative action programs are not firmly entrenched . . . The progress of the middle class may be shorter-lived and less sweeping than the Wilson presentation might imply.

In 1978 the University of Chicago Press published William J. Wilson's book, *The Declining Significance of Race* (hereafter referred to as *DSR*), whose provocative title conveyed its stunning new message. The book's popular and scholarly impact was immediate and widespread, and it has remained on the press's top 100 bestsellers list.

Thanks to its success, Wilson became famous, securing millions of research dollars and winning a MacArthur "genius" award.

* Numerous colleagues provided critical feedback on this essay and I thank them all. I especially thank Christopher Jencks, Cheryl Johnson-Odim, Michael Schwartz, Charles Willie, Donald Brown, and Terry Murphy. I thank Clarence Page for agreeing to be interviewed. My greatest debt is to William J. Wilson who agreed to lengthy interviews and graciously provided relevant sources.

The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions, by William Julius Wilson. University of Chicago Press [1978] 1980. 204 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN: 0-226-90219-7.

DSR was important to his election as only the second Black president of the century-old American Sociological Association. Wilson's stature has also made him a valued consultant to President Clinton.

Why did *DSR* have such an impact? I argue here that this book had a huge impact because 1) it carried a message that was enormously appealing to many Americans; 2) its title skillfully alerted the public to its message; 3) Wilson's race and institutional affiliation legitimized the message; and 4) the message developed in the book allowed America's race problem to be conceptualized from a different angle of vision.

DSR is theoretically ambitious. It attempts by way of a macrohistorical argument to explain how racial stratification has worked in America, from slavery to the 1970s. For the modern period, Wilson argued that only some Blacks were at the bottom of the stratification system, and what kept them there was not their skin color or current racial discrimination. For Wilson, a brand new phenomenon had emerged in modern America that fundamentally changed racial