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THE BIRTH IMPERATIVE IN RADICAL
FEMINIST LITERATURE: A READER'S GUIDE

by

Faye Cooper

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1955

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Department
of
Women's Studies

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Abstract

Feminist theorists see the ability to give birth as an integral part of being a woman and as a legitimate subject for inquiry and analysis, no matter which theoretical base they use. Radical feminists, in particular, make this capacity central to their theories of women's oppression. Their theories about the social, economic, psychological and cultural significance of bearing and raising children have changed in response to conditions in society and to the development of feminist thought. Radical feminist analysis has also responded to men's increasing efforts to control females' reproductive capabilities. Radical feminists, for example, comment on the masculinization of medicine and the sexist bias built into the practice of "objective" science, as components of this control. At the same time, many factors influence or coerce women to have babies, creating what I call the birth imperative: for example, cultural and psychological pressure from men who want heirs, economic pressure from a society which wants to grow, pressure from government and military establishments to provide young people as tools for politics or wars, and religious ideologies. The focus for this thesis is the history and development of radical feminist analysis of the birth imperative.

Covering work of radical feminists from the late 1960's to the present, the thesis first defines radical feminism and situates the birth imperative within its main concerns. Then it surveys radical feminist thought on the subject of reproduction in early feminist anthologies, which were important means of circulating and popularizing feminist ideas. Third, it reviews important individual works by radical feminists, explaining similarities and differences, cross-fertilization of ideas, and areas of common concern such as new reproductive technologies. A detailed glossary provides the reader with definitions of

significant terms in radical feminist literature and in writings about reproductive technology. It also explains feminist meanings given to words commonly used with other meanings. In mapping a road through radical feminist writings, this thesis guides the reader through a significant and diverse body of literature on the birth imperative.

Dedication

To Amelia Hope Cooper and Victoria Margaret Ball,
who surprised and delighted me by appearing in the world
during the final stages of the preparation of this thesis,
with love.

They gave me a new focus on motherhood from my new locus in
grandmotherhood.

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Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One.....	6
Chapter Two.....	18
A Review of Early Radical Feminist Literature.....	18
Anthologies.....	19
Chapter Three.....	29
The Birth Imperative as a Spur to the Development of Feminist Theory.....	29
New Reproductive Technologies as a Focus for Contemporary Theory.....	69
Chapter Four.....	86
Conclusion.....	86
A Glossary of Terms Important to Reproduction, Birth and Motherhood.....	92
Bibliography.....	115

INTRODUCTION

For many radical feminists, the fact that women give birth to babies is overwhelmingly important. It has been historically true that it is women who give birth to babies, that if babies are to be born, they will be born to women, and that if the human race is to survive, babies must be borne, and by women.

Radical feminists link women's oppression to their function as bearers of children. Radical feminists also ascribe special qualities, such as greater empathy, intuitiveness, sensitivity, and increased emotional capacity to women because they bear and raise children.

For women, whatever their politics or personal beliefs, giving birth to babies has forever changed their lives, locking their destiny into childcare, childrearing, and the emotional commitment of creating and raising humanity's new children.

For men, whatever their politics or personal beliefs, not giving birth to babies has forever shaped their lives, too. For many, it has meant the freedom to go into the world and create change and greatness well beyond the confines of home and personal relationships. For some, it has meant a lack, a grief, a gaping hole they would have plugged with the joy of creating something supremely important. Many feminists postulate that from men's need to participate in the creation of humanity comes their need to control the creation of humanity. Throughout human history men have owned women and their (live) production, children, more or less totally, and exercised that control. Some women have wanted to avoid pregnancy, and,

if folklore and legend can be trusted, have managed it. But it is only since the means to avoid childbirth have become widely available to women, that the corresponding pressure exerted by men and their institutions in western society, has increased so dramatically. Two hundred years ago abortion was something men never thought about, let alone prohibited. Medicine was the province of mainly women, midwives, healers, wise women. Once men began to participate in the field they took control of medicine, and its pervasively masculine personality grew mainly during the last one hundred years. Authors Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English (1978) did pioneer research in this area; they and others such as Mary Daly (1978), Gena Corea (1985 b) and Sandra Harding (1986) fully document and comment on this masculinization of medicine. With the rise of male control of medicine, the focus of scientific and medical attention on the reproductive process has been extremely strong, an emphasis inexplicable except in terms of men's fear of losing control of women's reproductive capacity. There is no suggestion that the human race would die out, male control or no male control, so something other than -- or in addition to -- fear for the future of humankind, is at stake. The use of birth as a tool of war and politics has also been well documented, and may be part of men's desire for control of reproduction, but it does not explain men's obsession with reproduction.

The fact that women have babies, the fact that only women have babies, and the fact that men overwhelmingly wish to control and dictate the events and circumstance of human birth and therefore exert enormous cultural pressures to achieve both birth and their control of it, create a condition for

women I call the birth imperative*.¹ My definition of the birth imperative includes all these factors, and every element of compulsion that women face today to create babies. These range from cultural conditioning and role restrictions, to the confusion in most men's minds between the capacity to have children ("CAN") and the compulsion to birth children ("MUST"), from women's identification as mothers to their confinement within the role, from small girls' encouragement to play with dolls to a business establishment which fails dismally to provide daycare services for mothers who want to work. In 1851, John Stuart Mill (Rossi, 1974) speculates that men exclude women from most lucrative and satisfying professions in order to force them to become wives and mothers. In the mid- to late 1800's there is fear that educating women will harm their wombs, hormones or other female equipment and interfere with their reproductive capacities. These and similar conditions generate the birth imperative, a phenomenon whose origins go back as far as time and whose implications go as far into the future as it is possible to imagine. This thesis is not a straightforward litany of what damages to women flow from the birth imperative, however. Most radical feminists are very aware of the ambiguity of the birth imperative because birthing also represents a power not available to men. They are ready to see positive, as well as negative, consequences for the birth imperative. Similarly, while many radical feminists are instantly ready to condemn the new reproductive technologies and related work in genetics* and eugenics* on the grounds that they are further eroding women's control over their

¹This and subsequent words marked with an asterisk can be found in the Glossary.

bodies, some have expressed concern about dismissing arbitrarily their potential benefits.

In this thesis I examine radical feminist work on the subject of the birth imperative, from the earliest works of radical feminism* to the sophisticated analyses of new reproductive technologies and their impact on women. Three factors dictate my approach to radical feminist works. First, although the birth imperative appears in every kind of feminist theorizing, in radical feminism it is central, part of the radical feminist insistence that women must have control of their own bodies. Second, radical feminist analysis of the birth imperative changes over time, developing in response to feminist dialogue and practice as well as to general changes in society. Third, radical feminist analysis responds specifically and fully to developments in science, medicine and reproductive technology.

My purpose in reviewing radical feminist writing and thought about reproduction, birth and motherhood in this way is to provide a road map for understanding the theories of radical feminism and the issues surrounding the birth imperative. In order to acquaint readers with the literature, I summarize the concerns and viewpoints of radical feminist authors who have addressed various aspects of the birth imperative, attempt to clarify the issues raised and the authors' positions on them, and try to discern the developments and directions of the discussions. The exploration of the birth imperative and the review of radical feminist thought are therefore linked, but separate, giving this thesis both practical and theoretical applications. I include a detailed glossary to assist readers to become conversant with the

extensive feminist vocabulary attached to discussions of both radical feminist theory and reproduction.

In Chapter One three major source texts for understanding feminism are reviewed, in order to arrive at a definition of radical feminism and place it in relation to other kinds of feminist theoretical work. In Chapter Two early radical feminist writings of the *Second Wave* are reviewed through a study of work collected in anthologies. Anthologies of feminist work are historically important, having served a vital role in circulating and popularizing feminist ideas. In Chapter Three I review major radical feminist writings which have contributed to the formation of feminist theory on the birth imperative or which have explored new ways of dealing with its implications, and I sample radical feminist stances on new reproductive technology. Chapter Four contains brief conclusions and my suggestions for further exploration and investigation. Finally, I present a detailed Glossary of important terms within the feminist writings covered in Chapters One, Two and Three, emphasizing terms dealing with reproductive technology and terms now given special meanings in the literature of feminism.

CHAPTER ONE

Defining Radical Feminism

In order to investigate the positions of radical feminists on the subjects of the capacity to bear children and the consequences of that capacity for women, it is necessary first to establish a clear definition of radical feminism. To do this, radical feminism must be placed in context as one of several major groups of ideas within feminism. A good understanding of the issues, concerns and viewpoints that underlie and guide radical feminist authors' approaches to the birth imperative may be gained from seeing radical feminism as part of a larger whole.

Radical feminist theorists believe that women's oppression is the most important and most basic discrimination in most societies. They see women's oppression as a model and multiplier for other kinds of oppression. They want to eliminate, or at least drastically modify, women's subordination* to men. Most radical feminists believed originally that women's subordination to men has been achieved through the formation of gender identity*, through socialization which promotes gender privilege* for men, through male control of sexuality and reproductive powers, and through male control of the institutions which support all these processes. Radical feminism itself is constantly changing in response to changing conditions in society and the work of other feminists.

While a core of common beliefs remain, theorists often disagree with and criticize each other freely as radical feminism develops and grows. Three general feminist theoretical works are most useful in developing a basic

understanding of how radical feminism has established common grounds and what agreements and disagreements exist within it. All deal with how radical feminists stand on the capacity to reproduce and the relationships between that capacity and sexuality, and how both contribute to society's assumption that the rearing of children is the work of the gender that bears them.

Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Men and Women, edited by Alison Jaggar and Paula Rothenberg Struhl, describes five theories or frameworks, only four of which are usually called feminist. The five theories are conservatism, liberal feminism, traditional marxist feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism. Conservatism, the non-feminist theory, relies upon a shaky notion of a biological imperative dictating women's (proper) place in society. Women's grateful acceptance of their lot in life is termed their "freedom". Liberal feminists' definition of freedom for women means simply equality of opportunity in education and employment within the present system. Marxist feminists believe that the liberal analysis is too superficial and omits consideration of class oppression, which for them is the first and most important form of women's, as well as men's, oppression*. (Marxist feminists have taken their own ideology to task for omitting reproductive labour as a form of praxis*, and have spent twenty years trying to reconcile notions of female freedom and its relationship to reproductive and productive labour with marxist mainstream notions of "man's" relationship to labour being determinant of the human condition.) Socialist feminists respect the classical marxist connection between class divisions and oppression, but

deny marxist contentions that sexism* is less important than classism* as the source of oppression, insisting that both are important. Radical feminists believe oppression of women on the basis of sex is the most basic, most damaging and most pervasive form of oppression that women encounter. Radical feminists, in contrast to conservative, liberal, marxist and socialist feminists, believe that the patriarchy*, the name they give to the systematic oppression of women by men, adapts to whatever form of government is in power and that, therefore, sexism can exist within a class-free society, and that to solve class discrimination is not to attack sex discrimination at all. "For them, the liberation of women requires the abolition of the social institution of gender*, if not, indeed, the elimination of the biological fact of sex itself." (Jaggar and Struhl, xii.) Alison Jaggar's later book, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, (1983), extends the characteristics of each of these feminist streams in terms of their positions on human and political values, their analyses of women's oppression, their strategies for social change, and the problems with their thinking.

These characteristics account partly for Jaggar's analysis of radical feminism as "unmistakably a twentieth-century phenomenon," (Jaggar, 1983, 83) with its emphasis on the importance of feelings and personal relationships. Most importantly, although women have known about contraception for centuries, they could not avoid childbearing and childrearing and the ensuing drudgery until the twentieth century, when the first possibility of avoiding or easing these tasks emerged through improved health technology. Although Jaggar traces many of the beliefs of radical feminists to women's politicization in the leftist movement, she maintains that

radical feminism has changed since its birth in the 60's and no longer necessarily reflects leftist origins or political connections. Radical feminists have developed original and powerful analyses that reflect a wide diversity of theories about the origins of women's oppression. All agree, however, that the oppression of women is the most important problem which should be addressed in any society.

Radical feminism argues that gender is not only the way in which women are differentiated socially from men: they (sic) see it also as the way in which women are subordinated to men. The genders are not "different but equal." Instead, gender is an elaborate system of male domination. The theoretical task of radical feminism is to understand that system: its political task is to end it. (Jaggar, 1983, 85)

In attempting to understand gender as a system of male domination, one school of radical feminism sees women's biology as the problem, concluding that the sexual division of labour has a biological base, and that the "universal" nuclear family unit* dictates that women must depend on men, babies on women. Typical of this viewpoint is Shulamith Firestone, who postulates that biological imperatives, overlaid by social institutions, reinforce male dominance. Another school of radical feminism sees women's biology as the solution, not the problem. This school also sees men's biology as inherently flawed, since they cannot bear children. The glorification of male culture has led women to think subordination is cultural or social, not biological, and thus women's fine qualities are ignored and denied. These radical feminists accept the claim that women's biology is the unique solution and see it as a source of strength, knowledge and power to help women find their way back to a sense of themselves, as well as social

power. People who focus on the glory of women's biology and consequent special qualities and talents include Susan Griffin, Mary Daly, and lesbian feminist* Charlotte Bunch. Of special interest in the study of the relationship of women's biology to oppression and possible special powers possessed by mothers, (because the original article is no longer readily accessible), is Jaggar's citation of Jane Alpert's 1970s letter to *Ms. Magazine*:

It seems to me that the power of the new feminist culture, the powers which were attributed to the ancient matriarchies* (considered either as historical or as mythic archetypes), and the inner power with which many women are beginning to feel in touch and which is the soul of feminist art, may all arise from the same source. That source is none other than female biology: the *capacity* to bear and nurture children....Motherhood must be understood here as a potential which is imprinted in the genes* of every woman; as such it makes no difference to this analysis of femaleness whether a woman ever has borne, or ever will bear, a child. (Jaggar, 1983, 95.)

Many authors, like Cisler, (1970) define radical feminism through women's relationship to their own biology. They charge this relationship with either positive or negative values, some seeing women as socially constructed, either carrying gender differences superimposed on "natural" or "biological" differences between men and women, or as amorphous entities who have all their sex characteristics socially created after birth. For example, "One is not born a woman," is the radical feminist idea that originated with Simone de Beauvoir and her depiction of women as the Other, the Object, the mirror of the Subject, Man (de Beauvoir, 1970). Woman was created from social conditioning. The phrase is also the title of a paper given by French philosopher Monique Wittig, noted lesbian writer who is a leading member of the group of French feminists* pursuing "l'écriture

feminine", or feminine writing, at a Second Sex conference in New York in 1979. The "New French Feminists" with whom Wittig is associated see even the reproductive functions of childbearing, childrearing and female sexuality, as being a "created" part of woman. Their goal is to eliminate the sex (gender) distinction itself. The idea that "woman" is created only through the social construction of gender differences super-imposed upon the "natural" or "biological" differences between men and women, however, falls from favour with later radical feminists, who realize the depth and strength of misogyny* and sexism in our society and look for other ways to explain it. The idea that woman is primarily socially created now plays a central role mainly in liberal and socialist feminism. Radical feminists talk less about role-playing and being conditioned into womanhood than they do about the psychological, social, material, historical and biological roots of women's subordination. The development of the analysis by Adrienne Rich, of how the institution of motherhood* serves as a police force for the patriarchy, is one example of this trend. Another is the growth of feminist psychotherapy*, developed at least partly through the feminist understanding and critique of Freud, which shows how Freud's work is shaped by the patriarchy in which it is carried out. It also reinforces radical feminists' emphasis on the individual by helping to explain the internalization* of patriarchal values by women in patriarchal cultures in terms of their psychological and sexual development.

Recognizing the multiplicity of such approaches, Jaggar concludes that although radical feminists do not have a unified methodological* approach, there are some areas of fundamental agreement. They reject metaphysical

dualism*, concentrating on women's embodiment rather than abstract concepts, and they pay lasting and specific attention to human reproductive biology and sexuality and their relationship to social structure. The radical feminist focus on reproduction has enlarged the scope of political theory and action of radical feminists, but their biological determinism* has pushed childbearing, childcare and sexuality back into the realm of "nature", which is disastrous politically. It perpetuates the dichotomy* of nature and culture, a patriarchal construction that continues to inhibit change. Rapid and sweeping generalizations lead to the appearance of universality*, which is part of the ideology* by which male dominance sustains itself, says Jaggar, and she recommends inclusion of historical and materialist conditions for a better analysis.

Jaggar's criticism of radical feminism is a key part of Rosemarie Tong's fine survey of feminist theory, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction* (1989). Tong divides her discussion of radical feminism into two parts; radical feminist analysis of reproduction and motherhood, and radical feminist thought about gender and sexuality. Her route to an understanding of radical feminism is particularly appropriate to this thesis, since I share her reasoning about why these writings are important. Her choice of works and authors is made for the same reasons I made my choice of works and authors in this thesis:

My selection is motivated by two lines of reasoning. First, more than liberal and Marxist feminists, radical feminists have directed attention to the ways in which men attempt to control women's bodies. Whether this control takes the form of restrictive contraception*, sterilization*, and/or abortion* laws, or of violence directed against women (pornography*, sexual harassment*, rape*, woman

battering*), it constitutes an especially cruel power play. To the degree that a person is deprived of power over his or her own body, that person is deprived of his or her humanity.

Second, more than liberal or Marxist feminists, radical feminists have explicitly articulated the ways in which men have constructed female sexuality* to serve not women's but men's needs, wants and interests. (Tong, 1989, 72)

It is because radical feminists realize how much of their existence is spent seeing to men's needs that they realize sexual discrimination and all its concomitants happen to women, *as women*. Women must be studied closely to determine whether it is their differences from men, or the meanings assigned to their differences from men, or both, that are at the root of the sexual oppression of women by men. Since the capacity to bear children is still (in spite of new reproductive technologies*) the major difference between the sexes, it tends to attract the focus of functionalists who maintain that women are what they do. Since what women are able to do that men are not, is bear children, it is most often assumed that what they need and want to do is bear children. It has been a very short step from the assumption of this need and want to the further assumption and later, dictum, that women **MUST** bear children to be 'proper' women. How women's capacity to mother becomes their ascribed identity and their ultimate destiny can be compared to the process by which women's existence as sexual beings also becomes their ascribed identity and social destiny. While some discussion of women as sexual servants and lovers for men will occur in this thesis, sexuality *per se*, is not its focus, therefore Tong's division of her material into the broad areas of sexuality and motherhood especially suits this thesis.

Before considering Tong on motherhood, a brief review of relevant radical feminist theorizing on sexuality and gender, is in order. In Tong's overview, radical feminists explore biology as a cause and cure for oppression, the creation of social roles for women (or "gender") and the psychological creation of women to fit female roles. They theorize on the "goodness" of women (in their traditional weak/emotional/nurturing modes) and the "badness" of men (in their controlling/rational/aggressive modes), and provide penetrating analyses and a variety of solutions for the power imbalance between women and men. They look at sexuality and particularly heterosexuality*, as the system through which men maintain power over women, at pornography as the enforcer for that system, and at lesbianism* as the paradigm* for female-controlled sexuality in women. All point to the existence of a resilient and active patriarchy controlling women.

This idea of a "patriarchy" that keeps women under men's domination ironically creates the paradox highlighted by Elshtain, that the notion itself keeps women too much within traditional assumptions to be useful, yet provides a powerful conceptual tool that enables them to understand their own oppression. Acknowledging this power men have over women has constrained women's imaginations and damaged their theorizing. One of Elshtain's major critiques of radical feminists, described in Tong, is for their view that patriarchy is inevitable and universal. Elshtain criticizes Susan Brownmiller's theory that rape defines men, for example, for its totalizing definition of men and women as those who rape and those who are raped, respectively. Such polarization* leaves no room for men who do not rape, or for women who are independent, self-sufficient and capable of defending

themselves. A widespread early criticism of radical feminism is that naming patriarchy as the one true cause of women's oppression tends to obscure the diversity of the lives of the women themselves, as well as the diversity of the cultures and situations in which they live. Elshtain disparages Mary Daly's attempts to illustrate the existence of cross-cultural patriarchies by citing suttee*, footbinding*, clitoridectomies* and other cruel practices toward women. Daly fails to take into account the meaning of these rites to those cultures and fails to admit the possibility they might not indicate patriarchy at all. Elshtain's own biologically deterministic view (her belief that we are all "inescapably male and female" (Tong, 1989, 137), leads her to speculate that in glorifying women and their characteristics and censuring men and theirs, radical feminists are only attempting to suppress the evil, reprehensible characteristics of maleness which are contained within themselves. This "defensiveness" leads radical feminists to envision a utopian* women's society and lays the groundwork for the idea that women, because of their oppressed status, have extra insight into causes of their oppression and are somehow kinder, gentler and purer than men and will build a society to reflect that. The attitude, "I suffer, therefore I have moral purity," is really a Victorian one which has no place in modern feminist theory.

Despite such weaknesses in radical feminism, its insight that sexuality is the root cause of women's oppression is vital to any woman seeking to understand her personal and political position in society. (Tong, 1989, 137) Tong is important to this thesis in that she underlines the radical feminist

tenet* that it is *as women* that we are oppressed and it is *as women* that we must find solutions.

Trying to describe some of these solutions, Tong sets forth cases made by authors such as Shulamith Firestone, Marge Piercy, and Adrienne Rich about whether or not women should mother, and what mothering means to their oppression. Major critiques of their views by other authors are offered.

Making the important point that "the arguments on both sides of this debate are powerful ones; the issues of the status and function for *female* (her italics) mothering are enormously complex," Tong (1989, 84) acknowledges the profound questions about motherhood and the nature of sexual power that are raised by the discussion of reproductive technology* and its use and control. She concludes that a primary topic for investigation - both by individuals contemplating trying it, and scholars and groups trying to understand it -- is determining what about the process of mothering gives us power and pleasure, and what about it gives us yet another experience of oppression. Agreeing that the capacity to bear children is a central concern of radical feminism, Jaggar and Tong do, in fact, exhibit substantial agreement on the principles of radical feminism. Radical feminists are unanimous about the oppression of women being the most important problem to be addressed by any society. Radical feminists focus on sexuality and gender as the sites of most differences between men and women and as probable causes of the domination of women by men. There is a relationship between the capacity to mother and women's oppression. Jaggar and Tong all give substantial attention to radical feminists' biological determinism and claims of universality.

As found in these analyses, these are the radical feminist tenets expressed or assumed by authors considered in this thesis: that women's oppression is the most important and most basic discrimination in most societies; that women's oppression provides a model and multiplier for other kinds of oppression; and that women's liberation requires elimination or drastic modification of women's subordination* to men. Women's subordination to men is achieved through the formation of gender identity* through socialization which promotes and provides gender privilege* for males, male control of sexuality and reproductive powers, and male control of the institutions which support these processes.

These, then, are the criteria for the inclusion of an author in this literature review and the balance of this thesis, that: firstly, the author be a radical feminist whose beliefs reflect the radical feminist beliefs outlined above; and secondly, that the author have something definitive to say about women's capacity to bear children and its relationship to their oppression.

CHAPTER TWO

A Review of Early Radical Feminist Literature

With Special Attention to the Birth Imperative

It has been established that the capacity of women to bear children and the pressure from society for them to do so -- the birth imperative -- is an important issue for radical feminism. This chapter begins at the beginning, by examining works in the anthologies that deal with the birth imperative. Anthologies served as the movement's first newspapers, its first collections of feminist wisdom to receive any wide circulation. The early anthologies, most of which are now difficult to obtain, are historically important to feminism. Ideas which were emerging from informal discussion and formal conferences were articulated in these books. Anthologies were usually produced with very minimal budgets on underground presses and mimeographs, delivered by hand and mailed to carefully chosen friends of the movement. They were created in the first flush of enthusiasm by women making discoveries that thrilled and excited them. They are, of course, filled with a great variety of subjects of new interest to the women of the time. Many of their articles have since become feminist classics.

As well as authors included in anthologies, reviews of two key early authors, Charlotte Bunch and Ti-Grace Atkinson, are included in this chapter because they are representative of the genesis of important radical feminist ideas that influenced ideas about the birth imperative: Bunch that

heterosexuality is the police system of the patriarchy and the personal is political; Ti-Grace Atkinson that the personal is political and that women must have full control over their bodies. Neither author claims total originality for these ideas; rather each articulates forcefully what many of their friends and colleagues are thinking and talking of with them at this time. Their work, reacting to the climate of the time, becomes the stimulus for further elaboration on these basic ideas.

Anthologies

Products of the same social and emotional foment and upheaval that inspired Bunch and Atkinson, the anthologies reflect well the character of their time. It was a time of rethinking a stagnant society by a youthful population that was supporting civil rights and condemning war, expressing itself in marches, rallies, films, love-ins, sit-ins, a flower child morality, environmentalism, and renewed ethics of love and peace. While most concerned with sexuality, women's individual freedom vis-a-vis men, and women's economic independence, the anthologies nevertheless feature some work of early feminists in which short references to women's function and identity as bearers of children are found. One example of a helpful anthology in this regard is *Sisterhood is Powerful*, edited by Robin Morgan (1970). One of its best features (shared with some other anthologies) is its presentation of original texts of early feminist classics like the NOW Bill of Rights, excerpts from the SCUM Manifesto by Valerie Solanis, Principles of New York Radical Women, the original protest of the Miss America contests, Redstockings Manifesto, and others. While the anthology is extremely useful

in understanding the origins of radical feminism and the thinking of early strategists and theorists, it becomes obvious that the in-depth analysis of women's function as mothers, is yet to come. The one selection in this book which bears closely on the subject of this thesis is an article called "Unfinished Business: Birth Control* and Women's Liberation, " by Lucinda Cisler (1970, 245). Her launch into the subject is worth quoting.

Because women have wombs and bear children, and because technical control of the reproductive function has always been imperfect --as it still is today -- society has ultimately always defined woman as a childbearer -- that is, as she relates to children and men, rather than as an individual.

Since her basic function has been to bear children, whatever "extra" activities the culture and the economy have allowed her to pursue, anything that alters social control over her reproductive capacities is deeply and fundamentally threatening to societal and individual psyches: different reproductive roles are THE basic dichotomy in humankind, and have been used to rationalize all the other, ascribed differences between men and women and to justify all the oppression women have suffered. (Cisler, 1970, 246).

Cisler calls a woman's other "freedoms" tantalizing mockeries that cannot be exercised as long as a woman does not have the full capacity to limit her own reproduction. With reproductive control other freedoms cannot long be denied, since the chief rationale for denial disappears. Cisler unfortunately fails to credit the ingenuity of the patriarchal system for inventing new rationales to continue limiting women's freedom: the so-called "Sexual Revolution" of the 70's, for example, and the burgeoning use of pornography and violence against women to force compliance to patriarchal standards.

These are still in the future when Cisler presents her helpful look at different kinds of contraception and contraceptive history. Insisting that a woman's right to limit her own reproduction be the only consideration in

abortion laws, Cisler excoriates proposals for mere reform, correctly seeing them as window dressings for their basic premise that laws should 'protect' women against their own tendencies to 'abuse' the right to birth control. Unfortunately Cisler is wrong in thinking that expressed public opinion in favour of increased access to abortion would bring repeal of repressive laws and a new openness toward women wanting abortions. As we know to our sorrow, at least two right-wing anti-abortionists in charge of the White House have halted and reversed many gains in the interim, and the U.S. is in the grip of a right wing backlash toward women that is seeing hard-fought victories turn into depressing routs for women. Cisler suggests three major areas of society in which to press for change: the legal framework, the superstructure of medical practices, and the infrastructure* of public knowledge and attitudes. In spite of major efforts in all these areas, the ideas she proposed have had disappointing results and still need to be implemented and supplemented by new approaches. The article is an excellent example of how fresh, usable concepts still exist in early feminist writing, waiting to be discovered and implemented by modern feminists.

Similar valuable and fresh ideas are to be found in the anthology *Radical Feminism* edited by Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone. Selections by Naomi Weisstein, Anne Koedt on the Myth of Vaginal Orgasm, The Bitch Manifesto, The Woman Identified Woman, plus many more, are here. In a piece called "The Congress to Unite Women," a report from the New York City Meeting of November 21,22,23, 1969, reproduction and its control comes up as a subject in a workshop. Participants are to deal with:

the freedom to choose whether to bear children as a woman's basic human right, and as a prerequisite to the exercise of the other freedoms she may win; elimination of all laws and practices that compel women to bear children against their will (professional practices, public and private attitudes, and legal barriers limiting access to contraception and abortion); research in extra-uterine gestation. * (Koedt et al, 1973, 312)

In its recommendations the Congress recognizes the basic human right to decide whether to have a child and considers it basic to other freedoms women should win, decries using compulsion on any woman to bear a child, and accepts nine supporting demands. It is worth noting that more than twenty years later, none of those demands have borne unequivocal fruit.

A similar concern about compelling women to have children occurs in "Politics of the Ego: A Manifesto* for New York Radical Feminists" (Koedt et al, 1973, 381), wherein the institution of motherhood is named as an oppressive force. The discussion broadens to consider how women are oppressed by all sexual institutions:

Through these institutions the woman is taught to confuse her biological sexual differences with her total human potential. Biology is destiny, she is told. Because she has childbearing capacity, she is told that motherhood and childrearing is her function, not her option. Because she has childbearing capacity she is told that it is her function to marry and have the man economically maintain her and 'make the decisions'. (Koedt et al, 1973, 381.)

The Westchester Radical Feminists, in a later manifesto, comment on similar themes. Two of their stated beliefs are that women are no more inherently suited to child rearing than men, and that "the mutual dependence of mothers and children is in essence an act of tyranny which serves to thwart, retard and immobilize both mother and children. " (Koedt et al, 1973, 386.)

Speaking out against the same kind of tyranny over women and children she is encountering, Canadian feminist Bonnie Kreps proves that radical feminism is a cross-border phenomenon. Her article appears in both the anthology edited by Koedt (Koedt et al, 1973, 234) and the anthology, *Up From the Kitchen, Up From the Bedroom, Up from Under, Women Unite! An Anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement*. (Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1972, 71). Draft dodgers were crossing the border in huge numbers; so were the fresh and exciting ideas of feminism and the peace and love cultures that were rejecting the old straitjackets. Both countries seemed to catch fire on feminism all at once, with women exchanging dialogue through meetings and visits and discovering common ground in many underground publications. Canadian Kreps makes much of women's definition by their roles in society, quoting Aristotle's ancient definition of women's roles as the 'traditional' view.

As long as marriage and motherhood are conceived of as a woman's entire destiny and the fulfilment of her 'nature', her lot will involve the acceptance of a situation imposed from the outside rather than a free choice according to her individuality. (*Up From...*, 1972, 74)

Her four proposed solutions to the problem of the liberation of women call for freeing women from their present partial or complete slavery to the species. They must have the right to decide about their own bodies. There is to be no "token integration" (no relieving the symptoms of oppression without getting at the causes). Full economic rights for women are to be guaranteed. Girls and women must be encouraged to seek self-fulfilment as human beings rather than merely as females. Kreps tags radical feminism as being

concerned with the analysis of the oppression of women AS WOMEN (her emphasis) and explains how radical feminist analysis concentrates on institutions like love, marriage, sex, masculinity* and femininity. *

A similar concern that women be released from their servitude to men motivates Charlotte Bunch, but she is much more revolutionary about how this should be done. A member of a lesbian group called the Furies, Bunch writes as early as 1972 (Myron and Bunch, 1975, 29-37) about her goal to establish a lesbian feminist group to carry out political revolt. Bunch sees women's lives ruled by their subordination to men and women controlled through an enforcement system called heterosexuality. She talks less about any need for equality for women with men than about the absolute necessity for a radical feminist to be, or become, a lesbian in order to subvert and destroy the heterosexuality system. She is one of the earliest radical feminists to point to personal* life having political importance.

U.S. society encourages individual solutions, apolitical attitudes, and reformism* to keep us from political revolt and out of power....As the question of homosexuality has become public, reformists define it as a private question... in order to sidetrack our understanding of the politics of sex. For the Lesbian-Feminist, it is not private; it is a matter of oppression, domination and power. (Myron and Bunch, 1975, 31, 32).

Bunch insists that women who remain tied to men in any way cannot always put women first. Lesbianism is the basic threat to male supremacy because it destroys lies about female inferiority, weakness and passivity and denies women's "innate" need for men. Although Bunch largely ignores reproduction and childbearing in her analysis, she does remark that lesbians literally do not need men "even for procreation if the science of

cloning* is developed" (Myron and Bunch, 1975, 33) a comment which suggests she is looking to technological development for at least some help in the dilemma women face.

Whatever hope she invests in technology, Bunch's focus is on ending male domination of women. She urges the end of collective and individual male supremacy, achieved through withdrawal of women's support from men which in turn would result in men's re-examination of their destructive privileges over other humans. They "will have to build new selves that do not depend on oppressing women and learn to live in social structures that do not give them power over anyone." (Myron and Bunch, 1975, 34.) It is not clear what Bunch's ideal society will look like after this battle has been fought and won. Or at what point, if ever, lesbian women will rejoin men in building a world together.

Another early feminist who sends the same primary message as Bunch, that the personal is political, is Ti-Grace Atkinson. In the 1973 collection of her own works, *Amazon Odyssey*, she plunges right into the question of reproduction in the first paragraph of her first chapter, the Abortion paper given to the National Organization for Women conference of 1967 in Washington, D.C. "The reproductive function of a woman is the only innate function which distinguishes women from men. It is the critical distinction upon which all inequities toward women are grounded." (Atkinson, 1974, 1)

Atkinson's collection of speeches, presentations, statements and articles does not present a cohesive thesis, but the pieces included leave no doubt where Atkinson stands on a number of questions. She regards women as an Oppressed class, men as their Oppressors. She thinks of Feminism mainly

as a political force, and juxtaposes her work to illuminate the two "interlocking concerns" she has, the ideological (what is the problem?) and the tactical (how can this problem be solved?). (Atkinson, 74, xxi.) ² Like the anthologies, Atkinson's work ranges over many subjects: how the vaginal orgasm is women's mass hysterical response to the need for survival under their oppressors; why she resigned from the National Organization of Women; the relationship of lesbianism to the women's movement; and how the political woman makes her choices. A concept she calls 'metaphysical cannibalism' or self-creativity, she postulates is peculiar to humans (especially male humans). It is "to eat one's own kind, especially that aspect considered most potent to the victim while alive - its constructive imagination." (Atkinson, 1974, 59). Man is insecure, needing to alleviate his frustration through anger, hence he oppresses. When Man takes advantage of the social disability of the part of himself which bears the reproductive process, (i.e. Woman) he is able to invade the being of these individuals and achieve psychic relief in gaining potency and venting frustration. This process Atkinson characterizes as the original rape. Honesty, collaboration, self-deception, the nature of society, revolution, violence all come under her lens.

Honesty is the hallmark of her approach to abortion. Atkinson's analysis of reproduction as a function of woman draws an analogy with a sculptor who owns his artistic talent and work in progress, to help illustrate her point

²Her energy and personality as a fiery revolutionary come across vividly in the selections, as well as some of her personal growth as a feminist through the early and passionate disagreements of the women's movement. She writes as she doubtless spoke - with enough directness and honesty to inspire the verbal and physical brickbats she received from her associates, as well as her detractors.

that the woman owns the reproductive process and its product, the baby. Since woman owns the capacity and the process, any legislation interfering in any way with any woman's self-determination of her reproductive process is unconstitutional since the U.S. constitution clearly protects the life, liberty and property of every person. "It would interfere with her property since her reproductive process constitutes, in the most integral and strictest sense, her property." (Atkinson, 1974, 3.) The logic is almost twenty years old, as fresh and feisty today as it is then. ³

Atkinson takes her case that women own their own reproductive capacity to some 'sacrificial lambs' at a local college:

Women, unfortunately for them, are the only reproductive factories science has seen fit to develop... A woman's importance is her reproductive function; the 'mother' is the most politically, socially, and economically catered to woman in our society. God help her when she's passed her fertile years; not only does she cease being a mother, but there is reluctance to define her as even a woman. (Atkinson, 1974, 26.)

As part of her "class" analysis*, Atkinson postulates, in an address to students at the University of Rhode Island, that the oppressors practice 'sleight of hand' tricks to keep the oppressed subservient.

I think it's clear that the capacity to bear children, *as a capacity possessed by certain individuals in society*, is transformed into a *function necessary* for society. It's also clear that this individual capacity is politically, that is artificially, transformed into a *class incapacity* (her italics). (Atkinson, 1974, 104)

³Atkinson repays closer study. Her essays help to recapture the early fervour and excitement of the embryonic Second Wave.

Atkinson is a good example of a radical feminist whose feminism grows from her politics, naming the capacity to bear children as a specific mark of class in society. She and other early radical feminists think that females constitute an oppressed class, in contrast to socialist and marxist theorists, who buried women in existing class structures, not noting their reproductive labour or remarking in any way on their uniqueness. Later radical feminists theorize that sexism is more basic than classism; that it is possible for women to belong to an oppressing class and still be sexually oppressed by men in their own socio-economic stratum. The universalism* of later radical feminism may spring from the early radical feminist idea of women as an oppressed class or caste.

This review of early radical feminist anthologies and two key early authors, Charlotte Bunch and Ti-Grace Atkinson, has served to highlight early stirrings of several ideas which are now accepted radical feminist common ground. The interweaving of ideas about reproduction and ideas about women's oppression is already evident; it is part of the breakthrough realization that the personal is political. The idea that women should be in control of their own destiny, beginning with the essential control of their bodies, is there, too. So is the beginning of lesbian feminist ideology that heterosexuality serves as the police force of the patriarchy. So many realizations are there, in early writings, laying the foundation for analysis to follow.

CHAPTER THREE

The Birth Imperative as a Spur to The Development of Feminist Theory

Like Charlotte Bunch and Ti-Grace Atkinson, many radical feminist thinkers took to expressing their ideas in whole books, temporarily shelving their urges to write small, scattered articles in periodical publications in favour of collecting their thoughts into coherent theories. The interweaving of ideas about the birth imperative and its increasing importance within the central ideas of radical feminism continues with the burgeoning of radical feminist literature through the entire 1970's and 80's. In this chapter are featured many of the authors whose ideas have made important contributions to the development of feminist theory. The authors are presented chronologically in order to trace the way people's thinking developed about the birth imperative. The progression ranges from Shulamith Firestone, who presents the basic idea that women's biology is responsible for all their woes, and that androgynous society, achieved through technological wizardry, will dissolve them, to Andrea Dworkin, who insists that motherhood is just another kind of prostitution for women, warns of increasing evidence of hatred towards women and pleads for full humanity for women as well as men. A gradual loss of the innocence that pervades Firestone's idealistic solutions gives way to a rise of the realization of peril for women that runs through, for example, the proposal from Jeffner Allen that women 'evacuate' motherhood to save themselves. Of interest in this chapter is the point where the thesis turns to a fiction piece by Marge Piercy to illustrate graphically what a society like Firestone's might look like,

were it to exist. Piercy's book is a good example of the widespread acceptability of fiction works as real contributions to the general body of feminist theory. Many feminist ideas are being explored through contemporary fiction. Although Piercy's work is the only fictional book included, Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" or Sheri Tepper's "Gate to Women's Country" and many other fiction works could have been; they have served the movement well as feminist texts. Following the account of Firestone and her alter ego, Piercy, is a discussion of Susan Brownmiller's central thesis that rape is every man's weapon against every woman, and Susan Faludi's criticism of Brownmiller's work. Then comes Adrienne Rich's presentation of motherhood as institution versus motherhood as personal experience; Mary Daly's call to lesbian separatism, with her insistence that women achieve control of their own bodies and her indictment of the masculinization of medicine that is making this impossible; and Marilyn Frye's analysis of the insoluble dilemma the existence of women and motherhood pose to the patriarchy, and why. Each theorist gives us a new look at the problem of the birth imperative within radical feminist theory, but together, and in this order, they embody a capsule history of the progression of radical feminist thought around this subject. All of these authors lay theoretical foundations for the final section of this chapter, which presents practical radical feminist views of new reproductive technologies. Many of the same issues and concerns are apparent in the literature surrounding new reproductive technologies: the fight for control of women's bodies, with male control of science and medicine grabbing that control from women; harm done to women in the name of benefits; the role of technology in

women's lives, a question raised so well by Firestone; the reflection of societal values in reproductive choices and the current backlash from the extreme right; the exploitation of women through surrogate mothering and invasive medical procedures that make women objects of scientific experimentation and not much more; the dehumanization of women through medicine; the practical, ethical and moral dangers of genetic engineering; and the possible removal of reproductive capacity totally from women, begging the question of whether only that capacity has thus far saved them from complete destruction.

The complete destruction of women is very far from the minds of radical feminists in the early 70's, where the basic idea that the personal is political quickly expands into carefully-built ideological frameworks*. One of the earliest of these is *The Dialectic of Sex*, by Shulamith Firestone, first published in 1970. As is true of many radical feminist theoreticians, Firestone comes from the Marxist school of radical thought, and develops her initial feminist theory from her analysis of what Marxism overlooks and ignores. She adapts Marxist economic theories of class to theories of female oppression, citing all women as an oppressed class.

Firestone is one of the first critics of Marxism to realize that while Marx and Engels emphasize the fundamental importance of the relations of production to the creation of human culture (Marx and Engels' theory of historical materialism*), they largely ignore the really basic form of production -- reproduction -- and its centrality to humanity. With some temerity, Firestone sets forth her thesis by recasting Engels' definition of Marxist historical materialism:

Historical materialism is that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all historic events in the dialectic of sex: the division of society into two distinct biological classes for procreative reproduction, and the struggle of these classes with one another; in the changes in the modes of marriage, reproduction and childcare created by these struggles; in the connected development of other physically-differentiated classes [castes]; and in the first division of labour based on sex which developed into the [economic-cultural] class system. (Firestone, 1971, 12)

The original class distinction is between men and women, and comes directly from the division of labour based on their sex and the differing roles assigned to them as a result of their reproductive capacity. "The heart of women's oppression is their childbearing and childrearing roles."

(Firestone, 1971, 72). Women's biology is the root cause of their oppression.

Since women's oppression comes from their role as childbearers and rearers, its origin can be traced to the biological family and its role as the archetypal patriarchal grouping. As Marx and Engels' analysis identifies economic conditions as determinants of class oppression and prescribes economic revolution as the cure, Firestone identifies biology and its enabling structure, patriarchy, as determinants of the oppression of women and children and their cure is a revolution, the overthrow of both the family, the basic patriarchal unit, and biology.

Firestone cites Simone de Beauvoir that it is "woman's reproductive biology that accounts for her original and continued oppression, and not some sudden patriarchal revolution..."(Firestone, 1971, 73). In surveying how in different forms of family groups "throughout history, in all stages and types of culture, women have been oppressed due to their biological functions," Firestone explains how "the *patriarchal family* (her italics) is only

the most recent in a string of 'primary' social organizations, all of which defined woman as a different species due to her unique childbearing capacity. " (Firestone, 1971, 74).

Two facets of Firestone's analysis are unique in her time. First, she extends her discussion of women's oppression to include the oppression of children, and explains how the conditions which create and maintain one, create and maintain the other. She delivers a scathing indictment of childhood, and the institutions - the family and education - which perpetuate its deleterious effects on human development. The institution of childhood is an initiative tool for the patriarchy, not a means of growth and protection for children. Curiously, few radical feminists who have followed Firestone have treated her analysis of children's liberation seriously, or, at least, included children in their own analyses of women's oppression. The liberation of children, twenty years later, seems to run a very distant second to the still-elusive liberation of women.

Second, Firestone sets out a convincing account of the intersection of sexism with racism*, using a family analogy to put blacks and whites into an integrated hierarchy of oppression. She claims that "like sexism in the individual psyche, we can fully understand racism only in terms of the power hierarchies of the family. " (Firestone, 1971, 108) In contrast to her view of children's oppression, the sexism-racism connection so tellingly raised by Firestone has since been fully explored by other theorists and is still gaining in importance within the feminist movement.

Childhood and racism are only two of the evils Firestone highlights that she expects to disappear when her vision of an androgynous* society is

realized. It will bring a future that will be free of differing reproductive roles and the attendant power relations that translate into the familiar dichotomies of unequal power: master-slave, man-woman, parent-child, oppressor-oppressed, black-white, capitalist-worker, heterosexual-homosexual.

Firestone's androgynous society would remove all the bases for human conflict and, with a synergistic* energy, create a new society combining the best of male scientific/objective wisdom (her pragmatic Technological Cultural Mode) with the best of female warmth/artistry (her ideal Aesthetic Mode). Gone would be any distinction between men and women and the compulsory roles they play to support the biological family. Gone would be the need to impose genital heterosexuality to protect and ensure human reproduction. Lesbianism, homosexuality and heterosexuality would all be viable ways to relate if there are no sexual distinctions among people. The family, no longer necessary to ensure reproduction, would disappear as an economic and political unit as well.

Firestone's view of motherhood for women is unremittingly negative. She thinks motherhood is never good for women, or for the children they bear. Pregnancy she calls "barbaric" and childbirth, she says, "hurts." Natural childbirth, at its worst, is "like shitting a pumpkin", according to a friend of hers. Moreover, "until the taboo is lifted, until the decision not to have children or not to have them 'naturally' is at least as legitimate as traditional childbearing, women are as good as forced into their female roles. "
(Firestone, 1971, 199,200)

The birth imperative has to be abolished. Not only is birth an undesirable experience for women to go through, but it leads to more problems yet: it is

at the root of property greed in men. It leads to men's unhealthy desire to pass on their own precious things to their own precious sons. Women might gain political, legal and educational equality, but nothing fundamental will change for them as long as the birth imperative remains.

Women *must* be freed from responsibility for bearing children, and the route to this freedom will be technology. Firestone's discussion of feminism in the age of ecology is perhaps most illustrative of her primary objective: to move beyond living an animal life in a technological environment, which she sees as an historical anomaly, to full control of new technology for humane purposes. Firestone wants the "establishment of a beneficial 'human' equilibrium between man (sic) and the new artificial environment he is creating, to replace the destroyed 'natural' balance." (Firestone, 1971, 193). She thinks that our suspension in the transitional stage between simple animal existence and full control of nature cannot be sustained. We have to move forward into full exploitation of possible technologies to ensure our survival. There, at the intersection of feminist values with new ecological realities, Firestone situates her proposals for reform, plainly stated. She wants:

- 1 The freeing of women from the tyranny of their reproductive biology by every means available, and the diffusion of the childbearing and childrearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women.

- 2 The full self-determination, including economic independence, of both women and children.

- 3 The total integration of women and children into all aspects of the larger society.

- 4 The freedom of all women and children to do whatever they wish to do sexually. (Firestone, 71, 206 ff.)

When Firestone writes her book, more than twenty years ago, reproductive technologies are still in their infancy. Few controlling techniques are available freely, and although tight control by the medical and scientific community is kept on all reproductive technology, that control is much less obvious and far less suspect than it is today. Procedures are used according to strict guidelines that are rarely questioned, and access is very limited. Lesbians and unmarried women, for example, are unable to obtain artificial insemination*. Contraception, sterilization and abortion are used to some degree, but information on contraceptive methods is not disseminated, sterilization is often used punitively as a means of social control (as in the sterilization of mentally ill women and women of colour), and abortion is illegal and dangerous. In Canada in 1969, a law is passed which permits abortion under the Criminal Code, but only for women who meet stringent conditions, go through strict approval procedures, and have their operations in hospitals. By no means is access to birth control or abortion easy. In 1971 the capability exists to intervene in a fairly wide variety of ways with human reproduction -- these techniques have been practiced on livestock for some time -- but their use is confined and repressed.

Today a wide variety of "cures" for infertile* women (and frequently, infertile men) are carried out on women. Surrogate motherhood* is a fact of life, with a "going rate" established for women to bear babies for others; embryo transplant* is 'routine', and work proceeds briskly on stand-in wombs or extra-uterine incubators to provide a 'safe environment' for developing embryos and ultimately, babies. What looks fairly remote to

Firestone is already here, and shifts in attitudes among radical feminists reflect the complexity of moral and ethical choices confronting women. Firestone's attitude that technology will solve all our problems developing in its own way without controls, twenty years later, is regarded as foolishly utopian and even downright dangerous by some feminists who see control of reproductive technology by women as absolutely essential to their survival.

A too-narrow focus on what Firestone means by technology, and her touching faith in it, however, would obscure her belief that technology will liberate men as well as women. Her belief in the power of all technology - not just the technology for removing the biological birth imperative from women and hence the social and cultural birth imperative as well - leads her to think that both sexes will be released into a new freedom to discover new selves. She thinks choices made in the past have never been freely creative or self-actualizing. She seems not to regret the demise of the world-as-we-know-it, but to be very ready to embrace a utopian world whose strengths we can only imagine. These and other features of her book continue to repay study. Her ideas appear fresh and appealing, particularly when they can be considered vis-a-vis the societal changes of the past twenty years. Because it was so new, Firestone could only speculate where reproductive technology was going, for example. Its path and future are much clearer to this generation. Firestone's impact upon feminist theory cannot be denied.

A scant few years after Firestone set forth her vision, a creative novelist set herself the challenge of projecting what Firestone's world, a world with no birth imperative based on sex, would look like. Marge Piercy wrote

Woman on the Edge of Time (1976) to explore the look and feel of an androgynous world. That world is Mattapoisett. In this novel, Chicana New Yorker Connie Ramos is poor, desperate, underprivileged, unschooled, a person who has had no significant breaks in life. As is often the case for people trapped in her class, Connie runs afoul of authorities - first the police, during a violent episode in which she strikes her beloved child, and subsequently, the mental health system. Her precious child is taken from her, and the more Connie fights against the system, the less success she has. Connie is arrested and becomes an inmate, repeatedly, of mental hospitals. Such family as she has will not or cannot help her. After Connie is committed to a mental institution one more time, she is chosen for brain-control experiments.

Although initially a reader could suppose Connie really suffers from mental illness and has created Matapoisett in her mind, it quickly becomes clear to the reader that it is really Connie's growing desperation that catapults her into the mental connection with Luciente, an individual of indeterminate sex (who later turns out to be female) in Mattapoisett, and that the connection is real. In Mattapoisett two different lifestyles compete. The one Connie visits most often with her guide, Luciente, is communal, nonsexist, environmentally pure, filled with love, caring, ritual and magic. The one Connie visits as her situation becomes more difficult and her resistance less effective, is the extrapolation of everything feminists abhor: violence, misogyny, mind control, oppression. "So that is the other world that might come to be. That is Luciente's war, and she is enlisted in it." (Piercy, 1976, 301)

In the serene Mattapoisett, birth and mothering, as Connie knows them, have disappeared. Children are grown outside a woman's uterus; each child grows in an incubator, a "brooder", and is born when ripe, mature, to a world where it can expect to have three mothers. Mothering is an activity undertaken voluntarily (and often in sequence, for one child after another) by adults with an interest in rearing children. A group of Kidbinders provide an extended family for all children, who are beloved and cherished by everyone. A wide variety of racial, ethnic and personality types contribute genes to the children. Female ova, fertilized in vitro* with male sperm, grow in an artificial placenta*. Cultural bonds from one-to-one mothering are broken on purpose; genetic origins are obscured. Interestingly, denizens of Luciente's world do not agree on whether they should be doing genetic intervention. They keep watch for birth defects, for example, and they do not breed for selected traits.

Such technological reproduction, to Connie's horror, seems to have totally replaced biological reproduction. Connie looks with pity on the embryos*, thinking them something less than human because no woman will carry them in her womb and bring them into the world through her own blood and sweat. As she watches one of the three mothers (this one male) breastfeeding a child, she becomes angry. "These women thought they have won, but they have abandoned to men the last refuge of women. ... They have given it all up, they have let men steal from them the last remnants of ancient power, those sealed in blood and in milk." (Piercy, 1976, 134)

It is through Luciente that Connie learns to understand her own bias about bearing children, and why technological birth has replaced biological

birth. Luciente explains that the people of Mattapoisett only turn to technological birth, away from biological birth, to rid themselves of sexism as well as racism and classism.

Echoing Firestone's prescription, Piercy makes plain why:

It is part of women's long revolution. ...Finally there is that one thing we have to give up too, the only power we ever have, in return for no power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. 'Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding*. (Piercy, 1976, 105)

In the end, Connie believes in their method of mothering and sees, in a stunned moment, that any healthy, golden-eyed, brown-skinned girl can be and is her own Angelina, and "suddenly she assented with all her soul to Angelina in Mattapoisett, to Angelina hidden forever one hundred years into the future, even if she should never see her again. ...Yes, you can have my child, you can keep my child." (Piercy, 1976, 141)

As a work of feminist theory, Piercy's fiction book carries the same basic thesis and offers the same solution as Firestone: that biology is the problem behind women's subservient position, and its solution is technological birth and subsequent androgyny. In Connie's world, people are able to overcome their previous cultural backgrounds to embody the best of both sexes, each of them having all the attributes of both sexes and interrelating without reference to any constraints attached to their sex-determined biology or psychological makeup. The graphically drawn alternative is plain and repellent: violence, misogyny, coercion, mind control, hierarchy. Although

Connie herself never makes it to this ideal state, the implication is clear that women, as well as men, can achieve full and satisfying, independent lives.

The desire for women to achieve independent full lives, free of coercion, also lies behind Susan Brownmiller's thesis which is outlined in her first book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. (1975) She believes rape is "man's basic weapon of force against women, the principal agent of his will and her fear. ...It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear"(her italics). (Brownmiller, 1975, 14,15.) That basic thesis is important, for upon it Brownmiller draws her picture of early women as natural prey for natural predators, men, because of the "inescapable construction of their genital organs." Brownmiller points out that women have no way of retaliation against men for the basic crime; they simply do not have the same sexual equipment to invade them personally in the same way. She cites the 'risky bargain' that is struck: to find one among the predators to serve as a protector. So "it is not a natural inclination toward monogamy, motherhood or love" but female fear of an open season of rape that is "probably the single causative factor in the original subjugation* of woman by man, the most important key to her historic dependence, her domestication by protective mating. " (Brownmiller, 1975, 15.)

Brownmiller sees a very direct relationship between women's capacity to bear children and their oppression. The ownership of women begins with man's first violent acquisition of women as property through forcible seizure, when woman becomes the "original building block, the cornerstone, of the 'house of the father'. Man's forcible extension of his boundaries to his mate

and later to their offspring is the beginning of his concept of ownership." Brownmiller adds that "concepts of hierarchy, slavery and private property flowed from, and could only be predicated upon, the initial subjugation of women." (Brownmiller, 1975, 17,18.)

This well-documented history of rape covers its mass psychology, interpretation in law, and the part it plays in war, riots, pogroms and revolutions, as well as in American history, highlighting the importance of their total control over black women's reproductive services to the success of the slavers' enterprise.

The Patriarchal Institution took the form of white over black but it also took the form of male over female, or more specifically, of white male over black female. Unlike the Indian woman who is peripheral to the conquest of land, the black woman is critical to slavery. She in all of its parts, belonged outright to her white master. ...Total control over her reproductive system meant a steady supply of slave babies, and slave children, when they reached the age of six or eight, were put to work;.... (Brownmiller, 1975, 153-4)

Brownmiller explains how the psychological advantage gained from the sexual accessibility of black women affords slaveowners 'swaggering proof' of their masculinity while reducing and twisting the black man's conception of his. The psychological advantage contributes to economic advantage. Brownmiller underscores the ownership of women and children by men, explaining how the law sees rape as a crime against the man who owns the woman, not the woman herself.

In contrast to her first book, Brownmiller in her more recent book, *Femininity* (1984), mentions women's capacity to bear and mother children only once, in a chapter on women and ambition. Commenting on women's

nurturance - image and reality - Brownmiller sees a lack of ambition as 'virtuous proof' of the nurturant feminine nature.

When applied to women nurturance* embraces a love of children, a desire to bear them and rear them, and a disposition that leans toward a set of traits that are not gender-specific: warmth, tenderness, compassion, sustained emotional involvement in the welfare of others, and a weak or nonexistent competitive drive;When nurturance is given out of love, disposition or a sense of responsible duty, the assumption exists that whatever form it takes ... the behavior expresses a woman's biological nature." (Brownmiller, 1984, 221, 222.)

Brownmiller explains that in the original sense of nurture, where what the body can do to support new life IS nurture, then women are the nurturing sex by the design of their anatomy. "Few would deny that the nurturant responsibilities of motherhood begin as a biological process, and that suckling connects the labor of birth to the social obligation of continuing care." (Brownmiller, 1984, 222) This is biologically determined reproductive work, which becomes less central to the human endeavor, to the welfare of human societies, as men's freedom enables them to exercise more control over their environment. Childbearing and childrearing become peripheral, not central, to human activity, and it is not the fault of either men or women that this happens. She quotes anthropologist Sharon Tiffany:

The perception of motherhood as woman's sole valuable function goes hand in hand with severe prohibitions on other opportunities for work, and with a devaluation of womanhood in general, in economic systems where men unquestionably dominate the means of production and the balance of power. (Brownmiller, 1984, 223)

When motherhood and nurturing become ideal feminine characteristics that preclude paid work, rights to sexual expression and fertility are defined by

males and come under their control. Motherhood and ambition have been seen as opposing forces for thousands of years, claims Brownmiller, and she concludes that for many, if not most, women, motherhood versus personal ambition represents the heart of the feminine dilemma.

(Brownmiller, 1984 ,230) Brownmiller frames several questions about the relationship of motherhood to work. Is it unfair for a woman to expect the business world to accommodate her desire for children? Or should she sacrifice motherhood to business? Or should she try to have it all? She leaves the reader pondering the lack of easy answers to these questions.

This latest Brownmiller book is seen as a central example of the "revisionist murmurings" of feminists in the backlash decade of the 1980's by Susan Faludi, author of *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991). Brownmiller's assertion in the book that the women's movement may have overlooked "profound biological and psychological differences" between the sexes has been used by antifeminists in the recent decade to undermine the feminist movement. Faludi also points to Brownmiller's work, *Waverley Place*, in which she harshly criticizes the failings of the battered wife in her hastily-assembled fictionalized account of the celebrated case of Lisa Steinberg, the New York child beaten to death by her father, as an example of Brownmiller's rethinking of feminist principles.

Similarly, Jean Elshtain criticizes Brownmiller's early analysis for offering no potential for change and uses Brownmiller as an example of a radical feminist who has fallen into the trap of essentialism*. Even though Elshtain's criticism is based on Brownmiller's first book, it is perhaps even more

appropos for her second, *Femininity* (1984), for Brownmiller's exploration of femininity is carried out through body images - hair, skin, face, - the most traditional evidence for its existence, and focuses on the social construction of femininity and its (often mythical) relationship to biology rather than on its usefulness to men as a means of power and control. Target of criticism or not, Brownmiller has still contributed original thinking to the continuing dialogue about women and power, and how much of their oppression happens from their biological situation.

Brownmiller's depiction of force as the operative factor in relations between men and women is echoed by Adrienne Rich, who claims plenty of coercion, if not physical force, in the institution of motherhood as it exists within the patriarchy. Adrienne Rich is author of the landmark 1976 book, *Of Woman Born*, which is still the definitive analysis of motherhood within radical feminism. There is no doubt that what drives Rich to write the book is the discrepancy between how the patriarchy dictates she should think and feel during pregnancy and birth, and how she really does think and feel at those times, and about those experiences. She comes to realize the picture of motherhood described by the patriarchy is the picture that appears in scholarship, literature, art, and culture. She also realizes that this picture has little relevance to the way she and other women experience pregnancy, birth and motherhood. She rightly concludes that the real experience is given no place in so-called scholarship and accorded very little importance in the history and experience of "man," and her introduction tells us as much:

The new historians of 'family and childhood', like the majority of theorists on child-rearing, pediatricians, psychiatrists, are male. In their work, the question of motherhood as an institution or as an idea in the heads of grown-up male children is raised only where 'styles' of mothering are discussed and criticized. Female sources are rarely cited...; there are virtually no primary sources from women-as-mothers; and all this is presented as objective scholarship. (Rich, 1986, 16)

Rich, of course, sets out to correct this serious oversight by giving her own authoritative analysis of motherhood. *Of Woman Born* carries two major themes: that motherhood has at least two faces, the institutional face as defined by the patriarchy, and the personal face as defined by the mother; and that lesbianism is not a narrow sexual aberration but should be defined very broadly as an attitude of warmth, friendship and support for other women. Woman-loving* has new relevance for all women and gives them a practical way to escape the deprivations of the patriarchy.

Describing how the patriarchy determines women's experience of motherhood, Rich introduces The Kingdom of the Fathers:

What we see is the one system which recorded civilization has never actively challenged, and which has been so universal as to seem a law of nature.

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men -- by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male. (Rich, 1986, 57)

In her introduction in the 1986 revised edition, Rich admits that "like much radical-feminist writing of its period, this book relies heavily on the concept of patriarchy as a backstop in which all the foul balls of history end up." (Rich, 1986, xxiii) Although she tries to guard against the

concept being used as a catchall that would obscure, not clarify, the individual experience of individual women, it is hard to avoid. Yet she still thinks patriarchy a "concrete and useful concept" that is now "widely recognized as a name for an identifiable sexual hierarchy "(Rich, 1986, xxiii and xxiv). Using that concept, she identifies as parts of the larger institution of motherhood within the patriarchy: the myth of the primacy of the mother, the domestication of motherhood, the masculinization of the medical profession and its takeover and control of conception*, gestation* and birth, and the alienation of the mother* in the process of birth.

In describing the patriarchy, Rich builds a substantial case that men fear, hate and dread women for their ability to create life. They are jealous that only women can have babies. They fear the process because they mystify it. They did not understand it very well in early times, not even knowing their own contribution to it. Men extend their fear of women causing birth to fear that women might cause death, too, and this dread gradually solidifies into the Madonna/Virgin ideal versus the Whore/Virago categorization of women.⁴ Certainly motherhood is and has been idealized, and occupies the madonna/virgin slot in our society.

Myth and idealization are not the only roots of men's fear, however. Rich attributes men's fear of women as evil beings capable of killing them, to the very practical basis of women feeding boy babies. If a woman withholds her milk, her baby dies. Men realize that as children they have been dependent upon their mothers in the most basic way possible, and that as adults they

⁴See the discussion of the Virgin and the Whore in Susan Griffin's *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature*, 1981, 20 ff.

still have to depend on women to have and care for babies. To protect themselves from this vulnerability, men gradually develop ways of controlling women's sexuality, reproductive capacity, and the birth process itself, creating the patriarchal institution of motherhood.

This patriarchal institution of motherhood is described forcefully in the chapter on violence as the heart of maternal darkness. Conventional views of maternal violence are challenged, when the patriarchal mis-shaping of motherhood is named the direct cause of many of the conditions which drive mothers to violence. When we think of motherhood "we do not think of the power stolen from us and the power withheld from us, in the name of the institution of motherhood." (Rich, 1986, 275)

The institution of motherhood cannot be touched or seen: Rape and its aftermath; marriage as economic dependence, as the guarantee to a man of 'his' children; the theft of childbirth from women; the concept of the 'illegitimacy' of a child born out of wedlock; the laws regulating contraception and abortion; the cavalier marketing of dangerous birth-control devices; the denial that work done by women at home is a part of 'production'; the chaining of women in links of love and guilt; the absence of social benefits for mothers; the inadequacy of child-care facilities in most parts of the world; the unequal pay women receive as wage earners, forcing them often into dependence on a man; the solitary confinement of 'full-time motherhood'; the token nature of fatherhood, which gives a man rights and privileges over children toward whom he assumes minimal responsibility; the psychoanalytic castigation of the mother; the pediatric assumption that the mother is inadequate and ignorant; the burden of emotional work borne by women in the family -- all these are connecting fibers of this invisible institution, and they determine our relationship to our children whether we like it or not. (Rich, 1976, 276, 277)

Speaking as a personal victim of the patriarchal institution of motherhood she has discovered and described, Adrienne Rich discovers the displacement of her personal experience within the patriarchy very early:

When I try to return to the body of the young woman of twenty-six, pregnant for the first time, who fled from the personal knowledge of her pregnancy and at the same time from her intellect and vocation, I realize that I was effectively alienated from my real body and my real spirit by the institution -- not the fact -- of motherhood. This institution -- the foundation of human society as we know it -- allowed me only certain views, certain expectations....(Rich, 1986,39)

Rich's own experience in mothering is ambivalent, as, in her chapter on Anger and Tenderness, she makes clear. She analyzes the pushes and pulls in opposite directions that come from having children: her bliss and love for them; her anger at being restricted to their company and having sole responsibility for them; her surprise at the intensity of the experience of the pregnancy and the simultaneous feelings of power and powerlessness which it invokes. In a rare combination of scholarship and narrative personal-experience story-telling, Rich draws a distinction between the experience of motherhood as undergone by individual women, and the institution of motherhood which controls the procreation of humanity in our society. She concludes that women living within the patriarchy have no notion of what possibilities exist in the female body, of how they could become positive and exhilarating instead of negative and painful.

Patriarchal man created -- out of a mixture of sexual and affective frustration, blind need, physical force, ignorance and intelligence split from its own emotional grounding, a system which turned against woman; her own organic nature, the source of her awe and her original powers. In a sense, female evolution is mutilated, and we have no way now of imagining what its development hitherto might have been; we can only try, at last, to take it into female hands. (Rich, 1986, 127)

Women taking control of their own bodies, including reproductive powers, is for Rich the key to overcoming the ravages done to them by the patriarchal

institution of motherhood. Women's control of both childbearing and childrearing would enable them to experience biological motherhood on their own terms. Rich would not look to technology to remove the pain of biological childbearing until women discover whether or not it really is pain. Can childbirth, untrammelled by patriarchal expectations and understandings, become a totally positive experience? Similarly, the rearing of children must not be relinquished to achieve personal freedom. Instead, enhance the freedom of both mother and child by raising all children with feminist values. Change and improve the experience of birth and childrearing for women. Simultaneously destroy patriarchal control of both these processes and mitigate their harmful effects on both women and children. Part of the damage done to women through the birth imperative in patriarchal society is the alienation of women from each other and their children, as well as of children from their mothers. So part of taking control would be to develop new feelings for women, new definitions of how to work with each other, to love each other, to nurture each other. Woman-loving should become the way of life.

Woman-loving would solve another problem of motherhood within the patriarchy: its destruction of woman-to-woman intimacy, the "divide-and-conquer" effect of keeping women within their own homes with small children. In pre-patriarchal myth and perhaps historical reality, the relationship between mother and daughters is close and rewarding, even to being celebrated in the most secret and important rites. (Rich, 1986, 237 ff.) Under the patriarchy, however, which equates motherhood with femininity and therefore, worth, these relationships are inhibited or destroyed.

Mothers under patriarchy are expected to inculcate in both their sons and daughters the values of the prevailing patriarchy, a process which puts great stress on mother-daughter relationships. Where sons can be trained to take primacy in society, in worldly politics and statesmanship by mothers whose devotion they need not question, daughters must be taught to serve men, to submit themselves to second-class citizenship, to be content with trading off potential achievement for personal security, and generally to put their own welfare after their fathers', brothers', and sons'. Once a daughter understands that a mother cannot or will not save her from servitude, she is forced to question whether her mother has her best interests at heart or indeed, whether her mother even loves her. Given the number and kind of conflicts a mother faces trying to guide a female child to personal success and whatever happiness is possible for her, it is especially important to outline for her daughter the practical difficulties she faces in a patriarchal world. Courageous motherhood* and the mother's refusal to be victimized are the two essential factors in the special kinds of mothering daughters need.

It is one thing to adjure a daughter, along Victorian lines, that her lot is to 'suffer and be still', that woman's fate is determined. It is wholly something else to acquaint her honestly with the jeopardy all women live under in patriarchy, to let her know by word and deed that she has her mother's support, and moreover, that while it *can* be dangerous to move, to speak, to act, each time she suffers rape -- physical or psychic -- in silence, she is putting another stitch in her own shroud. (Rich, 1986, 248)

Within the patriarchy other women-to-women relationships suffer as much as mother-daughter ties do. A danger to woman-to-woman intimacy is the artificial hostility fostered by the patriarchy between women who mother

and women who do not. The latter suffer societal denigration into not just non-women, but *evil* non-women. If femininity and motherhood define a woman's worth, their lack means wickedness, guilt, ostracism and worse for childless women. "The gulf between 'mothers' and 'nonmothers' (even the term is pure negation, like 'widow', meaning *without*) will be closed only as we come to understand how both childbearing and childlessness have been manipulated to make women into negative quantities, or bearers of evil." (Rich, 1986, 249) To counteract such practical realities within the patriarchy, we must resume mothering each other by strengthening and accepting both the mother and daughter in ourselves, "no easy matter, because patriarchal attitudes have encouraged us to split, to polarize, these images, and to project all unwanted guilt, anger, shame, power, freedom, onto the 'other' woman. But any radical vision of sisterhood* demands that we integrate them." (Rich, 1986, 253.)

Making each woman whole can best be achieved through development of a generalized, diffuse lesbian sisterhood where "women, mothers or not, who feel committed to other women, are increasingly giving each other a quality of caring filled with the diffuse kinds of identification that exist between actual mothers and daughters." (Rich, 1986, 253) The integration of mothers and daughters into a single self-image will overcome some of the most severe restrictions on women in patriarchal society. "Women are made taboo to women --not just sexually, but as comrades, cocreators, conspirators.* In breaking this taboo, we are reuniting with our mothers; in reuniting with our mothers, we are breaking this taboo. " (Rich, 1986, 255)

While Rich looks at biology closely, she finds hope in it rather than blame, as Firestone does; optimism rather than fear, as Brownmiller does. She moves beyond both these theorists in discovering that personal reintegration, strengthening bonds between women, re-discovering the joys of pregnancy and birth and nurturing are all areas for women's control, expansion and opportunity. Her prescriptions for reversing taboos of apartness to come together, creating in love and cooperation with other women to become whole oneself, and becoming mothers and daughters in unity, earn continuing respect and admiration from women in every field for her as one of the visionary theorists of radical feminism.

Breaking taboos, cocreating, conspiring, and spinning headily together are Mary Daly's themes, too. (See *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, 1978). She, like Rich, sees the mother-daughter relationship, and particularly the universality of daughterhood, as the essence of radical feminism, the dynamic of friendship that will overcome the patriarchy to help in re-membering our Selves. And she also, like Rich, describes and strives for a different kind of lesbian separatism, urging woman-identified, Self-identified separation as a means of "paring away, burning away the false selves encasing the Self." (Daly, 1978, 381.) She does this with a particularly rich and original use of language. Her text urges us to see language and its construction and usage both as historical descriptive tools, the means of telling a tale to make us understand our oppression, and as weapons to fight the patriarchy and instruments to solidify sisterhood.

The language Daly uses to describe patriarchy as religion tips us instantly to her placement of the birth imperative. Writing from the discipline

she knows best, Daly describes the patriarchy wholly in religious terms. She is not subtle. "*Patriarchy is itself the prevailing religion of the entire planet, and its essential message is necrophilia *....*" (Daly, 1978, 39, her italics). She sweeps all the religions of the world together into a male-controlled group of structures which shelter males against anomie (a kind of disregard of divine law), and quotes Marilyn Frye: "'Women are the dreaded anomie.' Consequently, women are the objects of male terror, the projected personifications of 'The Enemy,' the real objects under attack in all the wars of patriarchy." (Daly, 1978, 39) Daly's proofs are myths (including the dismemberment* of women by patriarchal and Christian myth) and barbaric, woman-harming customs such as suttee in India, footbinding in China and the "unspeakable atrocities of African genital mutilation." European witchburning kills women as does the "Gynocide*" by the Holy Ghosts of Medicine and Therapy. Experiencing motherhood within the patriarchy is unnecessarily difficult for women and they are brutalized by the medical establishment in the process.

Daly's approach to the birth imperative, therefore, is to assume women must have the right to control their bodies, specifically their reproductive processes - conception, pregnancy, giving birth, raising children - while staying independent and whole. She takes for granted that because women can give birth they should control the process. Her main line of attack on the patriarchal institution of motherhood, therefore, is her critique of the medical profession, its continuing march toward masculinization, and the damaging and often fatal aggression that has accompanied its 'treatment' of women.

Daly's evidence for the presence of aggression toward women by the medical and related "healing" professions ranges through the historical "erection of gynecology over women's dead bodies." (Daly, 1978, 225) -- the replacement of wisewomen and burned witches by male gynecologists -- through sexual surgery, to the extension of this aggressive invasion of women's lives into the fields of chemotherapy and psychotherapy. The poisoning of women through the use of drugs and chemicals are attacks on women as effective as surgical cutting, by a patriarchal society whose objective is to control, cripple, humiliate and destroy women as individuals. Similarly, the conditioning of women into subservient, man-serving, docile creatures through so-called psychotherapy runs counter to women's own desires and efforts to be whole, independent, self-confident individuals. These three disciplines are engaged in related ways of destroying women. The massacre of women is a consequence of patriarchal ideology.

There is every reason to see the mutilation and destruction of women by doctors specializing in unnecessary radical mastectomies and hysterectomies, carcinogenic hormone therapy, psychosurgery, spirit-killing psychiatry and other forms of psychotherapy as directly related to the rise of radical feminism in the twentieth century. (Daly, 1978, 225)

Daly does not focus on female processes like menstruation, childbirth, menopause and other biological functions directly but only peripherally. They are important as symbols of womanhood and because they are obvious differences, they draw down upon themselves unwanted male attention and aggression. Daly does not single out the birth imperative as a focus for male aggression; rather she includes the ownership of the reproductive process and its fruits, children, by males as only part of the

picture of patriarchal control. She objects to the designation of "normal" womanly functions like childbirth, menstruation, and menopause as "diseases" by the medical profession. She deplores medical and related professional attempts to purify society by ridding it of the 'messy' moral and biological uncleanness of women, and perhaps, ultimately, of the women who personify it. One striking example of the desire to purify women is the shricing rite* undergone after childbirth by women in the Jewish religion. Another is the increasing occurrence of prophylactic* removal of the uterus and breasts, recommended by some doctors to guard against the possibility, not the fact, of cancer. In this enterprise of physical and moral scourging, professionals are driven by the impulse of moral purity mandated by the patriarchy. "The project of purifying society of women has been problematic for gynecologists.... To follow through too rapidly on the logical conclusion of these assumptions -- that is, the Final Solution -- would mean premature extinction of women before technological replacements for us could be 'discovered'." (Daly, 1978, 240).

Like Firestone, Piercy and Rich before her, Daly finds hope for the future in radical feminism, which is "not a reconciliation with the father. Rather it is affirming our original birth, our original source, movement, surge of living... Radical feminism releases the inherent dynamic in the mother-daughter relationship toward friendship, which is strangled in the male-mastered system." (Daly, 1978, 240) Thus, like Rich, she looks to sisterhood, engendered from the universality of daughterhood, as the way to break the patriarchy's stranglehold not just on the lives and reproductive capacities, but also on the minds, of women.

Much has been written about the theft of Mother-Right through the establishment of patriarchy. A consequence of this theft has been the institution of patriarchal motherhood. The destructive nature of this institution for mothers and daughters has in large measure been rendered invisible to women by the male supermothers who control and legitimate it." (Daly, 1976, 346).

The way to escape damage from the institution of motherhood is to establish Daughter-Right, to find the daughter within every mother, and to use it to strengthen and reassert the Self. Once the Self is found again, it can join with other women in sisterhood to spark* spook*, and spin* one's way to independent existence as a full and mature woman.

Daly's work builds upon and adds to Firestone, Piercy, Brownmiller and Rich, to help an understanding both of radical feminism and of the place of the birth imperative within it. While she concentrates more than Rich on the evils of the patriarchy and much less on the positive values of motherhood, Daly arrives at the same solution as Rich for moving women forward in the quest for full humanity. Her succinct critique of the masculinization of medicine is more complete and extreme than Rich's; both can be identified as strong influences on the group of feminists whose attitudes to reproductive technology are so important to feminist discussions in the 1990's.

Although Daly thinks finding the Self will be enough to propel women into independent existence as full and mature women, Marilyn Frye disagrees. It is not possible for anyone female to live that way under the patriarchal system. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, (1983) looks at power and oppression and the relationships between people involved in these dynamics. Because of its central theme, one might expect

to find in this book an exhaustive analysis of power relationships vis-a-vis the birth imperative, or at least motherhood. But it is not there. Rather readers are expected to make the basic assumption that force *is* exercised by men to control the reproductive functions of women as well as their sexuality and every other aspect of their lives, and therefore reproductive capacity is of no special significance. Frye comments on birth and motherhood only tangentially, mainly as examples of the powerlessness of women or of the mechanics of power-over exercised by men in a patriarchy. Each comment, however, puts women's capacity to bear children in a different light from analyses of other radical feminists. Here is a good early example of the genesis of the birth imperative and the identification of child-bearing by women as service to men:

There is a women's place, a sector, which is inhabited by women of all classes and races, and it is not defined by geographical boundaries but by function. The function is the service of men and men's interests as men define them, which includes the bearing and rearing of children. (Frye, 1983, 9)

Men, consciously or not, give loyalty to the patriarchy because they take for granted the services women provide for them. Perhaps without seeing why they do, for example, they object to abortion and move to control women's reproductive lives. The patriarchy has incredible characteristics of adaptability and creativity when it comes to survival, and "...at least from certain angles it looks like the progress of patriarchy *is* the progress toward male control of reproduction, starting with possession of wives and continuing through the invention of obstetrics and the technology of extrauterine gestation." (Frye, 1983, 102.) But even taken-for-granted control

of reproductive technology does not explain the hysteria surrounding abortion. Rather it comes from men's extreme reactions to female (non-hostile) practices of separatism (such as female decision-making about whether or not to have babies, or the seizure of reproductive technological knowledge or control by women, or even gatherings of women that exclude men). "They worry about the rejection by women, *at women's discretion*, [her italics] of something which lives parasitically on women [the fetus]. I suspect that they fret not because old people are next, but because men are next."

(Frye, 1983, 100.) Not only must women in patriarchy be perfectly benign where men are concerned, but they must also be perfectly accessible.

"Hence, heterosexuality, marriage and motherhood, which are the institutions which most obviously and individually maintain female accessibility to males, form the core triad of antifeminist ideology;... (Frye, 1983, 108.) Compulsory heterosexuality is named as the fifth principle of male supremacy, and fucking is "a large part of how females are kept subordinated to males." It is "also one of the components of the system of behavior and values which constitutes compulsory motherhood for women." (Frye, 1983, 140.)

Pursuing the idea of compulsory motherhood for women, or the birth imperative, Frye suggests that the fear of racial extinction is one of its major sources. That fear she regards as a primary source also, of white racism. Frye offers one explanation not found elsewhere for the existence of the birth imperative within patriarchy:

This suggests a reading of the dominant culture's immense pressure on "women" to be mothers. The dominant culture is white

and its pressure is on white women to have white babies. ... Feminists have commonly recognized that the pressures of compulsory motherhood on women of color is not just pressure to keep women down but pressure to keep the populations of their races up; we have not so commonly thought that the pressures of compulsory motherhood on white women are not just pressures to keep women down, but pressure to keep the white population up. (Frye, 1983, 122.)

Frye also sees the birth imperative as problematic for the patriarchy's 'project' to erase women. Frye describes two ways to erase women: conceive human history as the acts and organizations of men, and murder and mutilate women, as western civilization has done throughout its "long and sordid record".

Both of these erasures are extended into the future, the one in fiction and speculation, the other in the technological projects of sperm selection for increasing the proportion of male babies, of extrauterine gestation, of cloning, of male to female transsexual reconstruction. Both sorts of erasure seem entwined in the pitched religious and political battle between males who want centralized male control of female reproductive functions, and males who want individualized male control of female reproductive functions. (Frye, 1983, 162)

For Frye, the paradox is that because women and only women give birth, "woman's existence is both absolutely necessary to and irresolvably problematic for the dominant reality" (Frye, 1983, 166), and the patriarchy's solution is to keep women as a background for the 'phallographic reality' foreground of men. She concludes, much like Adrienne Rich, that woman-loving is "inimical to the maintenance of that reality...and perhaps the key to the liberation of women from oppression in a male-dominated culture." (Frye, 1983, 172)

Of authors being considered, Frye offers the first real warning that women's survival is questionable, in her opinion that the patriarchy is engaged in the project of "erasing" women; the first suggestion of powerful racist intertwinings with sexism; and backup for Charlotte Bunch's picture of compulsory heterosexuality as a policing tactic of the patriarchy. She is also very clear on the compulsion women face to bear babies for men. Her opinions, like Daly's, on the pressures of society that combine to force women into motherhood, are important influences on later radical feminist thought vis-a-vis reproductive technology.

Philosopher Jeffner Allen takes both the solution and the problem of the birth imperative much further than Frye, and bases it on a much more drastic, more esoteric* view of motherhood. For Allen, motherhood is the annihilation of women. (Joyce Trebilcot, ed., *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory*, 1983, 315-330). For the survival of women it is absolutely necessary to refuse motherhood itself to prevent the reproduction of patriarchal society that has been, and is being, achieved through motherhood. To do this women have to evacuate motherhood for a length of time, then seize control of food, education and energy sources, claim their own bodies as sources and resources, and define their own lives.

Motherhood is dangerous to women "because it continues the structure within which females must be women and mothers and, conversely, because it denies to females the creation of a subjectivity* and world that is open and free." (Trebilcot, 1983, 315). Motherhood as a patriarchal institution springs from males' sexual use of women's bodies as resources to reproduce their 'representations' of themselves. 'Representing' Allen

understands as the process of conceiving and grasping the world as a picture while simultaneously creating the picture to be conceived and grasped - a process that is reserved for men in our patriarchal society. "Captured by representational thinking, woman can never be genuinely pregnant [*pregnas*, akin to *gignere*, to produce]: she cannot provide her own life and world." (Trebilcot, 1983, 319). In addition, the passivity of woman's reproductive participation makes her invisible, interchangeable with every other woman or with some technological or scientific object, simply any entity that is marked as "Mother" by the patriarchy. "...The female's biological possibility to give birth is made to appear as the intrinsic* cause of women's place in motherhood and as the origin of women's social, economic, and political place in the world. The female's biological possibility to bear a child thereby becomes the defining characteristic of all women. " (Trebilcot, 1983, 321)

To correct that condition, and free women from the pain of forced existence within the 'Society of Mothers', Allen proposes mass evacuation from motherhood to establish the preconditions for women's effective survival through the creation of a self-chosen, self-motivated, independent existence. To do this, women choose not to have children - preferably all women, and for at least twenty years - to give themselves time and space to create their world. Mothers marked by patriarchal society need not be women; they can be machines. It is the marking itself, not the specific activities involved in either nurturing, giving birth, or rearing children, that puts women in such peril. Even if women are superseded by reproductive technological marvels of automatic and/or non-human reproduction, they

might still be needed by the patriarchy for the traditional nurturing and sexual services rendered to men. This will leave women still not pro-active, still living deadened in an unfree world, and in just as much danger. "The experience of our servitude takes seriously our danger and holds, firmly and strongly, to the conviction that together we must get out of motherhood."

(Trebilcot, 1983, 325) This look at how dangerous motherhood is in all its forms suggests to women how to get out of the group marked as mothers. The important key to evacuation from motherhood is active involvement in daily lives, coupled with collective action. Women who create their own lives achieve freedom from the mark of motherhood.

Carrying her theory about the mark of motherhood into the arena of choice, Allen says the fact that abortion may sometimes be permitted does not make abortion a genuinely free choice, for women have no alternative but abortion if they are already impregnated and do not want to reproduce. Nor does the right to abortion make motherhood voluntary, for a woman in patriarchy cannot abort, or do away with, the mark of motherhood itself. The right to abortion in patriarchy therefore cannot, in principle, recognize that women may choose abortion because they refuse to reproduce men and the world of men, because they are determined not to be mothers.

(Trebilcot, 1983, 322)

While no choice exists for women about abortion, Allen once again urges women to opt for the alternative choice to the doom predicted for those continuing to live under the patriarchal marking of motherhood. Women must establish female-defined access to food, education and energy that will

allow them to create and claim their own world. This is an essential precondition for the group evacuation of women from motherhood.

Allen echoes Frye on at least three counts: the compulsion to mother exercised by western society over women, the patriarchy's project to erase women and the need for women to create and define their own worlds. Both authors are endorsed in this last conclusion by Daly and Rich, who recommend cooperation among women to achieve self-definition and overcome problems foisted on them by patriarchal society. Allen recommends cooperation too, spelling out the cooperative decision to evacuate motherhood and the need to establish female control over the essentials of food, education and energy. Allen also gives clear warning of the threatened demise of women. Her concern is reflected fifteen years later in Gena Corea's work on the effects of reproductive technologies on women's freedom of action, just as Daly and Rich's warnings about male control of medicine, to women's detriment, influenced Corea and her colleagues.

As Rich, Daly, and Allen all recommend women be free to search for their own personality and wholeness, Andrea Dworkin calls for a similar feminist vision of the woman as whole and human:

...women are not their sex; nor their sex plus some other little thing -a liberal additive of personality, for instance; but ...each life - including each woman's life - must be a person's own, not predetermined before her birth by totalitarian* ideas about her nature and her function, not subject to guardianship by some more powerful class, not determined in the aggregate but worked out by herself, for herself. (Dworkin, 1983, 191.)

Dworkin focusses directly on motherhood as the most problematical area for women trying to establish the 'humanity of their individuality' in the face of oppression within a patriarchal society. Her ideas on motherhood are found mainly in her book, *Right-wing Women*, (1983) but they are also presaged in an earlier book, *Woman-Hating*, (74), which uses pornography and gynocide as evidence of the patriarchy's hatred for women and recommends full androgyny as the solution. "The object is cultural transformation," she says, "...the development of a new kind of human being and a new kind of human community. " (Dworkin, 1974, 192) Echoing Firestone, she cites two developments that are occurring simultaneously: women are rejecting the female role, and life is being created in the laboratory. She differs sharply from Firestone, however, in her view of the future. Where both authors see androgyny as destroying power imbalances between the sexes, Dworkin fears the extinction of women when their biological roles are eliminated:

Unless the structure is totally transformed, we can expect that when women no longer function as biological breeders we will be expendable. As *men* [her italics] learn more and more to control reproduction, as cloning becomes a reality, and as the technology of computers and robots develop, [sic] there is every reason to think that men as we know them will use that control and technology to create the sex objects that will gratify them. Men, after all, have throughout history resorted to gynocide as a stratagem of social control, as a tactical way of attaining/maintaining power. (Dworkin, 74, 191.)

Freedom from the work of biological reproduction for those fitted to do it (i.e. women) is consistent with developing an androgynous community. But it does not have to happen just because it is possible, and it is unlikely that it will happen. It is the relentless division of men and women into two polar-

opposite sexual groups with widely different functions, dictated by the patriarchy, that mandates the birth imperative for women, and only that. And that will not necessarily change even if reproduction is done technologically, not humanly. In spite of the case she makes for androgyny in her first book, Dworkin's viewpoint has altered slightly by the time she comes to write *Right-wing Women*. (1983), wherein she concludes that feminism, not necessarily androgyny, must be the route to cultural change. What led her to that conclusion? Within our patriarchal society only two routes for survival are open to women. One is to "honour the sexual and reproductive imperatives of men", accept self-definition as members of their sex class, and within those terms, attempt to find "crumbs of self-respect and social, economic, and creative worth." (1983, 189) The other is feminism, insistence upon a definition of self that recognizes women as fully human.

Clearly the first alternative is the one right-wing women choose, putting them squarely into the antifeminist mode. The birth imperative and its central importance to women's condition emerges as central within the context of right-wing choices. Dworkin presents the brothel model to describe sexual relationships between men and women and the farming model to characterize their reproductive relationships. Men value women, not as individuals but as members of a class to serve them sexually and reproductively. The "two poles" of women's existence -- their use as sex objects and their use as producers of children -- are only superficially polar. In reality they are very similar systems, differing only in their degree of efficiency. Dworkin describes the 'incredibly efficient' brothel model as a way of life in which men consume women, literally wear out their bodies. Men

control prostitutes through hunger, alcohol, drugs, manipulation, isolation, brutality. Prostitutes are coerced and forced to depend on their pimps totally for financial and emotional support. Husbands control wives, too, but in a much less efficient manner. Dworkin describes wives: "women as a class planted with the male seed and harvested; women used for the fruit they bear, like trees..." (1983, 174). But the men invest a certain amount of emotional capital in their wives and want them to last longer, last a lifetime. Women, once past their mothering stage, still feed men's emotional hungers and look to their creature comforts. Since most men want their wives' services to continue, that makes the process inefficient.

More important, "motherhood is becoming a new branch of female prostitution, with the help of scientists who want access to the womb for experimentation and for power. " (1983, 181)

While scientists are at fault, the state, too, is guilty of complicity in the birth imperative that faces women because it builds the social, economic and political situations in which women are forced to sell some kind of sexual or reproductive capacity in order to survive. Yet such a sale is seen as an "individual" choice, an "individual" decision that is vigorously defended by the aforementioned right-wing women (and men). "As long as issues of female sexual and reproductive destiny are posed as if they are resolved by individuals as individuals, there is no way to confront the actual conditions that perpetuate the sexual exploitation of women," says Dworkin. (1983, 182.)

State complicity to blame or not, women are now selling the use of their wombs, not just their vaginas, and there is probably less social stigma

attached to this kind of sale than the other. New reproductive technologies are changing the terms on which men control reproduction. "The social control of women who reproduce -- the sloppy, messy kind of control -- is being replaced by medical control much more precise, much closer to the efficiency of the brothel model " (1983, 187). Scientists and doctors are the new pimps, the third parties interested in the reproductive prostitution of women and their wombs. "The formidable institutions of scientific research institutes and medical hospitals will be the new houses out of which women are sold to men: the use of their wombs for money" (1983, 183).

There is no humanity for women living their lives within either the brothel model or the farming model. They "dispose of women as women" and are paradigms for the mass uses of whole classes. For the future, Dworkin's vision is not optimistic.

In the face of advancing reproductive technology, there will be even fewer women who dare claim their right to human life, human dignity, and human struggle as unique and necessary individuals, fewer and fewer women who will fight against the categorical disposition of women. Instead, more and more women will see protection for themselves as women in religious and devotional ideologies that formally honour the special sanctity of motherhood. This is the only claim that women can make, under the sex-class system, to a sacred nature; and religion is the best way to make that claim -- the best available way. (Dworkin, 1983, 190)

In the ranks of religion, of course, is where most right-wing women are found, choosing to strengthen and deepen the antifeminist convictions that work, finally, to their own detriment. The fate of every woman is tied to the fate of every other woman, whether she likes it or not. To be a feminist means knowing women are associated with each other and all in it together, not by choice, but by fact.

Dworkin's warnings of the vulnerability of women to complete annihilation are at least as strong as Allen's or Frye's, and her rationales more systematic and analytical. While she agrees with Firestone that reproductive technology will soon be capable of removing reproduction from women, she disagrees violently with the consequences of this for women. Although originally she seems to endorse Firestone's call for androgyny, she modifies that stance as she learns more about reproductive technology and recommends feminism, not androgyny, as the best route for the future. She is at least as critical as Daly and Rich of medicine and science as male preserves and blames them even more directly for their potential to destroy women's reproductive role and with that role, women. While they lack the subtlety of Allen's "mark" of motherhood concept, her brothel and farming models are nevertheless very effective in conceptualizing the place of the birth imperative in our society. Dworkin, with her serious concern for where new reproductive technologies are taking women, is the perfect bridge to the next discussion about new reproductive technologies.

New Reproductive Technologies as a Focus for Contemporary Theory

As we have seen, many radical feminist theorists have come to regard women's capacity to mother as a quintessential stumbling block to their liberation. Theorists who originally emphasized how women are objectified* because of their sex now stress that much of women's oppression comes from their capacity to reproduce and their restriction to that function. Radical feminist theorists have peeled away many layers of oppression affecting women, finding each time when they think they have reached the core that

there are more layers to it than they have yet discovered. Virtually all agree on one significant foundation of the oppression of women: the social, cultural and psychological implications of being able to give birth and being expected to nurture humankind. The state of feminist analysis surrounding the capacity to give birth, the well-documented takeover of the process of birth by science and medicine, and the way technology is outstripping the capacity of society's institutions to ground it morally, have all contributed to the focus of concern for radical feminist theorists in this decade: new reproductive technologies and their significance to women and women's oppression.

Literature on new reproductive technologies is widely available and gives a wealth of detail about questions surrounding the new technologies. Books by the various authors covered in this section help an understanding of the subject, but the approach here is to highlight questions, not to attempt comprehensive coverage of the subject. Specific information about the politics of reproduction in Canada is in Maureen McTeer's book, *The Tangled Womb: The Politics of Human Reproduction*(1992). There are helpful contributions containing both general information and conditions in specific countries, from authors in the United States, England and Australia which are easily accessible and broad in outlook. (See Bibliography.) Authors chosen for this thesis highlight some of the most interesting topics in reproductive technologies; again, they are representative choices, not comprehensive ones.

Concern for conditions surrounding birth and the consequences of

women's childbearing and childrearing activities are important to each author studied so far. From Firestone, who isolated women's biology as the source of their oppression and women's childbearing capacity as the prime factor of that biology, to Andrea Dworkin, who created precise models to depict the same conditions; the theorists collectively presage, describe and contribute to, the concerns of the radical feminist group which is opposing the march of irresponsible experimentation and treatment. Firestone prescribes scrapping reproductive activity among women and moving to total androgyny to escape sex-determined lives for both women and men. Piercy shows us what that looks like. Brownmiller wants women to fight back against men's rapist attacks, but because women lack similar means of attack, recommends they do it by developing their own full humanity. Adrienne Rich wants the patriarchal concept of motherhood rejected, and recommends embracing a feminist one and using it to create the integrative force of growing whole together. Mary Daly thinks lesbian separatism and control of their own bodies will free women to be whole in cooperation with each other. Jeffner Allen says that women's control of food, energy and education are prerequisites to women's self-creation. Frye and Allen point out that the existence of women creates a problem for the patriarchy which wants to sanitize women into its image of efficiency and neatness; they warn that the patriarchy may surprise itself and succeed in this project. All these ideas are being repeated, considered and used by the feminists currently writing about reproductive technologies.

So far absolutely no consensus, no "radical feminist view" or even "feminist" view of new reproductive technologies exists. However, it is

possible to highlight some of the major themes of radical feminists' concerns emerging from the current accelerated development of reproductive technologies: the danger to women that new reproductive technologies are just one more tool of the patriarchy to increase control over women through control of their bodies; the certainty that the scientific/technical establishment, particularly through the masculinization of gynecological and obstetrical medicine, exercises this control; and the dilemma that the role of technology vis-a-vis women's liberation is anything but clear.

Many feminists, such as Sandra Harding, (*The Science Question in Feminism*, 1986) challenge the idea that technology is neutral, embodying no particular value system or ideology. Technology does respond to the value systems that control it and is not neutral at all. For example, there is a feminist consensus that for most research, methods of investigation and validity of results are established according to conventional academic traditions, (which are patriarchal), the choice of subjects for research is influenced by funding, and research is funded by those most closely associated with vested power. Radical feminists regard technology as a tool for the ruling hegemony.* Most of the debate within radical feminism ranges not over this fundamental position, but rather over how to handle new reproductive technologies, given they are far from neutral. The questions are whether to try to grab control of them, to ban the use of infertility research or techniques, or to insist on influencing their control through the development of legislation or other forms of public morality.

Most radical feminists agree that the present use of reproductive technology, in a great variety of ways, is unacceptable to women. A major

concern of radical feminists is the meaning for society of fast-developing genetic engineering 'marvels'. Fears have been expressed that it is a very short step from producing the "perfect" baby to commercializing many of the processes that surround birth. The idea of tinkering with reproduction at the gene stage also raises fears that the sex of the baby may be known and/or chosen in very early pregnancy, indeed, even at fertilization, in or out of glass dishes. Given the bias of people (of both sexes) to choose males, a preference which is often culturally encouraged or expressed, radical feminists then turn to predictions of what could happen when men outnumber women. For example, Robyn Rowland draws an unpleasant, if extreme, picture of what life will be like after the number of women is depleted and men's ethics dominate our society even more than they do now. With more men, driven by male values of aggression, sexual pressure on women and alcoholism,

More ill health and early death will result. Women will be run off their feet supporting the sick and dying, as well as the wounded and battered, results of male violence and war. Already women are the less powerful, more exploited, raped, and the poor social group -- and we have the numbers! Imagine how tenuous will be our hold on life and security if our numbers are severely depleted. Women's culture, which is already systematically discarded, will be crushed....Without women we face a future without hope. (Rowland c, 1987, 362)

Men's ethics already dominate reproductive technologies. But what do authors mean when they talk about reproductive technologies, or new reproductive technologies? The first group of reproductive technologies is contraceptive technology, which is designed to prevent new life. Major methods include mechanical interference like diaphragms and condoms,

medical procedures like abortion and sterilization, and medications like the Pill.

Birth technology, the second group, is concerned with how doctors "manage" labour and childbirth. ("Manage" is the term doctors use to describe how they treat any pathology (disease); it has not escaped women that most of the processes of their biology are now considered "pathology" by medicine.) Examples of birth technology in routine use are labour induction, forceps, episiotomies, fetal monitors, and Cesarean sections.

Fetal technology, the third group, is the rapidly-growing group of treatment and research techniques which trace or modify fetal development. Examples are ultrasound, amniocentesis*, and surgery conducted on the fetus in utero.

The fourth group, closely related to fetal technology, is genetic engineering*. This consists of research and/or treatment procedures which attempt to diagnose and get rid of known defects in fetuses caused by disease or drug use or genetic conditions, as well as to provide the potential for selecting "desirable" traits to "improve" the "quality" of people. Another new and fast-growing technique in the field of fetal/genetic engineering is the use of the tissue of an aborted fetus to treat completely unrelated diseases. U.S. President Bill Clinton recently approved the use of fetal tissue for research and treatment; scientists are already experimenting with its use as treatment for Parkinson's disease.

Conceptive technology, the fifth group,⁵ is probably the best known of reproductive technologies, because it is most often cited as justification for

⁵I am indebted to Sue Cox for these broad groupings.

all the scientific research being done in all of the categories. Conceptive technology is touted as the answer to the pleas for help that infertile women (more often called "infertile couples") put to science. Conceptive technology, of course, involves causing pregnancies in women who have been previously infertile⁶ or unable to bear a child by their partners. (Sometimes the husband's infertility is really what is being "treated".) Examples of conceptive technology range from very simple things (like non-medical turkey baster insemination) to very sophisticated medical procedures that can be very invasive physically, and very damaging mentally, as well as potentially beneficial. It is noteworthy that artificial insemination can give conceptive help to those shut out of the medically- and socially-sanctioned mainstream of young, married parents who plan to raise their children within nuclear families. Lesbians, single mothers, career women, women of colour, and women on the fringes of society have had many successes with the private use of this technique. And it is not new. In contrast, access to medically controlled conceptive techniques is much more restricted, and almost always in the hands of medical or scientific experts. These methods include in vitro [in glass] fertilization (starting the fertilization of egg by sperm in a petri dish and then transferring the whole thing back into a woman); gamete intrafallopian transfer*, in which a woman's eggs are surgically collected, fertilized in vitro [in glass] and put back into her fallopian tubes, not her uterus; embryo transfer, when an egg fertilized either in vitro or in a woman [i.e. in vivo - live] is surgically removed - flushed - and/or inserted

⁶The medical definition of infertility has changed, over the past decade, from women unable to conceive after five years, to women unable to conceive after one year.

into the uterus of a second woman; and a variation, surrogate embryo transfer*, which is the same process except that a fertilized egg is flushed from the mother and goes into a substitute mother who has contracted to have a baby either for her or for a third infertile woman. Combined with freezing and banking eggs, sperm and embryos, the technology of in vitro fertilization stands ready to provide service to couples or women who want their own genes perpetuated but cannot or will not bear babies. All these techniques require years of attendance in clinics, hospitals and/or research facilities, and invasive procedures for women. Many have very low success rates, and the majority of fertility programs do not publish open statistics of their procedures or the percentage of births that result from them.⁷

It is conceptive technology and genetic engineering which have drawn the most interest, discussion and coverage in the media, hence the most controversy.

No strangers to controversy, the group of feminists who see male control of reproductive technology as a threat to women's well-being, autonomy, and indeed lives, is led by Gena Corea, working with collaborators and colleagues such as Rosalind Petchesky, Renate Duellie Klein, and Robyn Rowland. The group has worked internationally through an organization called FINRRAGE: the Feminist International Network for Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering, focussing on education, watchdogging research developments in many countries in relevant areas, and stimulating dialogue about moral questions, dilemmas and solutions related to the new reproductive technologies.

⁷See Gena Corea's *Mother Machine*, 1985, p. 120 or 330, for example.

The views of Gena Corea can be found in three books (see Bibliography). *Man-Made Women* notes how new reproductive technologies appear to be a gift to women, because they

give so-called infertile women the ability to reproduce. However, when women look this 'gift-horse' in the mouth, they will see that it comes accompanied by a persistent *medicalization* [her italics] of women's lives. ...The medicalization of female existence, begun with the nineteenth-century establishment of the specialities of gynaecology and obstetrics, becomes outrageously solidified in the new technologies of reproduction. (Corea, 1985, 12.)

If women have been deceived into thinking all reproductive technologies are coming into being at their request and for their benefit, radical feminists are ready to disabuse them of this notion. Corea's probing questions in her introduction summarize succinctly the chief concerns of radical feminists about new reproductive technologies:

Why do these fabulous medical techniques require that women adapt to the most painful and debilitating circumstances? Why do such technologies reinforce the bio-medical 'fact' that a woman's reproductive system is pathological* and requires an enormous amount of intervention? Why do these techniques reduce the totality of woman's being to that which is medically manipulatable (sic)? Under the cover of a new science of reproduction, how is the female body being fashioned into the biological laboratory of the future? And finally, will the ultimate feat of these technologies be to remove not only the control of reproduction, but reproduction itself, from women? (Corea *et al.*, 1985, 12)

Similar questions dominate *The Mother Machine* (1985), which urges women to ask, for whose benefit, at whose risk, and by whose analysis are reproductive techniques being approved or used? In a full discussion of various methods of altering reproductive circumstances and outcomes, there

are warnings of possible gynicide⁸, the killing of girl babies, which can happen as a result of technologies related to reproduction and infertility. Examples are female infanticide through parents' choice after amniocentesis has revealed the sex of the fetus, a sort of pre-victimization of women; laboratory techniques under development that predetermine the sex of a child with a similar result; and possibilities for asexual reproduction*. Commercial overtones in current reproductive practices are condemned, and the alienation and separation from their wombs women suffer in the male-oriented practice of medicine are deplored.

The search for an artificial womb represents for male medical practitioners and researchers an "escape from the dark and dangerous place" (Corea, *Mother Machine*, 250 ff.) that is woman's womb. The rationales used to justify research into artificial wombs are "wild and different": namely that women walk upright and this is unnatural; that it could be therapeutic, to treat the fetus in utero; that eugenics* would improve the quality of children; that abortions would be made unnecessary, thus sidestepping problems of morality; that a child's development could be benevolently supervised; that women could be saved the 'trouble' of having children themselves. A key rationale for artificial wombs is that paternity would be known, and there would be absolutely no possibility of mistake. Wombs for men would follow closely on the heels of ectogenesis*. Corea also worries that when women are seen in terms of their reproductive functions only, they become alienated from their own sense of humanity.

⁸ Jalna Hanmer's word for the killing of girl babies, which Gena Corea adapts to mean "the use of deliberate systematic measures (as killing, bodily or mental injury, unlivable conditions, prevention of births) calculated to bring about the extermination of women or to destroy the culture of women." (Corea, 1985,194)

Unsilence women. Expose the harm that is being done to women in the name of goodness, medicine, miracles, and motherhood. "When many women break silence, when many women finally speak their truth, and speak it again and again and again, the world will have to change." (Corea, *The Mother Machine*, 1985, 323)

How the world is changing visually is the focus of Rosalind Pollack Petchesky (Petchesky b,1987, 57), who gives us an interesting picture of the impact on obstetrical practice of ultrasound imaging and other kinds of visual thinking. She shows that while "images by themselves lack 'objective' meanings, meanings come from the interlocking fields of context, communication, application and reception." (Petchesky b,1987, 78) Women must be restored to a central place in the pregnancy scene, recontextualizing the fetus. Create new images that do this: place pregnancy back into the uterus, the uterus back into the woman's body, and the body back into its social space. Separate the power relations within which reproductive technologies (including ultrasound imaging) are applied from the technologies themselves. Pursue feminist discourse toward developing a feminist ethic of reproductive freedom that complements feminist politics.

Making her contribution to feminist discourse about reproductive freedom, Renate Duelli Klein asks "What's 'new' about the 'new' reproductive technologies?" in *Man-Made Women*. (1985). First, they must be recognized as "powerful socio-economic and political instruments of control" that play a role in the "multi-faceted exploitation and domination of women...But the 'new' technologies ..., reinforce the degradation and

oppression of women to an unprecedentedly horrifying degree." (65) Like Dworkin's, Duelli Klein's view of the future is very pessimistic: her central concern is that while the prospect of being further colonized by patriarchy is deeply alarming, she sees women losing the right to bear natural children and losing control over the key part of the reproductive process, namely "to decide if, when and how to conceive, carry and give birth to children." (71).

Making decisions about children has mainly been a paternal prerogative in western society. Sociologist Carol Smart looks at the issues of paternity and how they are handled in the courts of England and other western countries, in her article on the law and the problem of paternity in Stanworth's book, (1987.) Smart's conclusion :

Discussions on reproductive technologies in feminist literature have mainly focussed on the issue of male/medical control over the technology and the exploitation of women's reproductive capacity. There has been little on how it affects the issue of fatherhood and paternity and the meaning of these concepts in terms of control over women and children. There is a growing awareness of the centrality of children to an understanding of the position of women...

It is more than an irony that maternity is legally insignificant whilst motherhood is so important for the actual physical and emotional care of children. The importance of paternity seems to be in an *inverse relationship* [her italics] to the amount of physical and emotional care provided by fathers. As long as this remains unchanged women will be powerless in the face of the assertion, by men, of their claim to children. (Smart, 1987, 116)

The development of new concepts of legal paternity would only bind women more securely to the confines of the patriarchal, nuclear family -- not through marriage as in the past, but because women would continue to be dedicated to raising children in spite of their lack of legal significance.

Legal and personal significance is lacking for pregnant women, according to Ann Oakley (Oakley, 1987, 356-368) whose article focusses on the depersonalization of pregnancy by the medical profession. "It has now become technologically possible to ignore the status of pregnant women as human beings", making the case that in reproductive technology women are 'only' bodies. We must "think about the social location and meaning of technology. Who operates them (sic) and controls their use? Evaluates them? What kind of evaluation? Not much has been asked about effectiveness, safety and social responsibility re reproductive technology victims, women." (Oakley, 1987, 36) Medical professionals are bewildered by women's apparent lack of interest in the "benefits" of medicine. "Many doctors do not seem to understand, that what they have to offer are not universally desired goods." Historical evidence points to a "second agenda underlying the medical complaint about women's behaviour" -- the profession's complicity, and devastating success, in answering the "societal need to define the place of women and then keep them in it." (Stanworth, 1987, 55)

If women's place is in the home, artificial insemination has a role in keeping them there. Naomi Pfeffer, in "Artificial Insemination and Infertility," (Pfeffer, 1987, 81-97), explores the doubts and fears surrounding artificial insemination. Such matters as the lack of genetic information about anonymous sperm donors and the possibility (however remote) of meeting and mating with genetic siblings without knowing it, as well as the stigma of infertility and how it pushes would-be parents into desperate efforts to have children of their own, all concern potential participants. While these

questions are all legitimate and should be dealt with, "The real questions about infertility remain to be explored, " namely "why personhood is equated universally with the capacity to reproduce, " (Pfeffer, 1987, 97) and why women who are unable to reproduce, become less than human.

One answer for women who are unable to reproduce is surrogate mothering. Several writers express strong feminist reservations about surrogate mothering, pointing out the potential for increased and additional exploitation of women's bodies. Robyn Rowland in "Of Woman Born, but for How Long," says "surrogacy promotes the economic, physical, and emotional exploitation of women." (Rowland b, 1987, 77) The term is a misnomer because the surrogate mother is in fact the biological mother and not a surrogate at all. By calling her one, commercial entrepreneurs and professional middle agents minimize and deny her relationship to the child and may more easily exploit her as a non-feeling, non-caring, technological resource. The mother is selling functions of her body for money and giving control of her body to others earning money from the process. Personal grief, physical and spiritual communing between the mother and her baby, changes of heart, and other personal emotions are left out of the arrangements.

Gena Corea's position on surrogacy is similar. "Surrogate mothering is definitely NOT therapeutic for women," she says in *The Mother Machine* (1987), challenging the bruited image of such women as 'Happy Breeder Women'. Because surrogates are controlled and devalued -- Corea finds \$10,000 per baby a low wage for nine months' "work" -- they actually strengthen, not weaken, men's claims to paternity and thus are not seen as

morally outrageous. International traffic in women's selling their bodies for surrogate motherhood and families seeking children for this purpose, has already begun.

Selling women's bodies for baby-making may lead to worse abuses. One of the most powerful pleas that women confront the possibility of their complete demise at the hands of society comes from Robyn Rowland, in her article, "Reproductive Technologies: The Final Solution to the Woman Question?" (Rowland c, 1984, 356). Editors Arditti, Klein, and Minden in their introduction to this anthology (*Test-Tube Women: What Future for Motherhood*, 1984) warn, "If women do not act now, we may soon be marching for our RIGHT to bear children and give birth if we want to." (356) Rowland responds that "today we are about to see the separation of reproduction from women's bodies, and it is time NOW to consider the possibilities this opens up for women and the dangers to us which lie ahead. We should not wait as we did with the Pill, until we are twenty years too late." (Rowland c, 1984, 359) Men have always sought to control the life-force in women, who could "bleed and not die, who could grow another human being inside their own bodies." This power is "the last stronghold of nature which he can finally dominate." (Rowland c, 1987, 365) All women are guinea pigs for reproductive technological experiments. They are not asked if they want to participate and not included in the decision-making about what testing or procedures should or could be carried out.

What may be happening is the last battle in the long war of men against women. Women's position is most precarious....We need to draw a distinction between helping the infertile and experimenting

further with the most basic aspect of human life -- its creation.
(Rowland c, 1987, 367)

In a final appeal to feminist sisters to 'be vigilant', and echoing Jeffner Allen, Rowland concludes:

We may find ourselves without a product of any kind with which to bargain. For the history of 'mankind' women have been seen in terms of their value as child-bearers. We have to ask, if that last power is taken and controlled by men, what role is envisaged for women in the new world? Will women become obsolete? Will we be fighting to retain or reclaim the right to bear children? Has the patriarchy conned us once again? (Rowland c, 1987, 368)

Rowland's warning seems to hark back to the speech Connie Ramos, the fictional character, made in Piercy's book, struggling with the idea of women having given up to technology the only power they ever had.

Stanworth's concern, in her article, "Reproductive Technologies and the Deconstruction of Motherhood" (Stanworth, 1987, 1-10) is with feminist critics who, like Rowland and Piercy, fear reproductive technology in itself. Echoing Petchesky, Stanworth stresses the technology is "inanimate" (if not neutral) and what counts is its placement in social structures. She criticizes feminists for regarding users of the new technologies as impotent victims of the male conspiracy, failing to take into account not only the feelings of women relative to their pregnancies and resulting babies, but also the variety and depth of difference between women in their reactions to their own reproductive capacities. Lines of age, class, poverty, opportunity, education, demographics, affect each woman's experience of the birth imperative and reproductive life, and it is that reproductive life which determines her attitude toward both her fetus and her baby.

The range of opinions on the new reproductive technologies discussed here are representative of the writers on the subject in many countries of the world. The writings highlight issues for all women to explore: whether the systems controlling the use of technology reflect women's interests or are in conflict with them; how science and technology can be made more accountable to the societies which support them; whether technologies to correct infertility are boons and benefits to people, or expensive toys through which professionals achieve personal gain; who is to make the difficult decisions about whether poor statistical results justify continued invasive procedures to help infertility; how priorities are set, and how they should be set, for spending money on research and product development. Feminists must grapple with these questions and more: do the new reproductive technologies represent only another instrument for the entrenched patriarchy to further oppress women? How can women change the system to respond to feminist priorities in social structures and government organization? When will the legal system reflect the realities of women's reproductive lives? How do we ensure the welfare of children, both female and male, during the social upheavals caused by leaps in technology? How, finally, are women to achieve control of their own bodies? Radical feminists have expressed a wide range of opinions and ideas about the new reproductive technologies. They continue to organize, to inquire, to advocate, to fund, to work for change. They hold to their views that reproductive capacity is very personal, and that the birth imperative is very political, and they make many contributions to current feminist dialogue within that framework.

Perhaps the last word should be left to philosopher Anne Donchin, writing in *Hypatia*, who isolated current feminist controversy over new reproductive technologies as the issue over which "either the current 'wave' of the feminist movement will lose its momentum and disintegrate or feminism will emerge a far stronger, more unitary force for social transformation than ever in its prior history." (*Hypatia*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 137)

Unquestionably, radical feminists have made and are making important contributions in hopes that the second alternative will prevail.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Over the twenty years of feminist exploration, investigation and theorizing that has characterized the Second Wave, both the mythology and practical ramifications of motherhood have increasingly occupied the interest of feminist theorists. Authors who are initially concerned mainly with sex-role stereotyping, for example, gradually broaden and deepen their investigations to include psychological, cultural and biological sex differences and power relationships, as well as the earlier surface-social ones. The early theme of radical feminists, that the personal is political, establishes that women are being discriminated against and oppressed as women, simply on the basis of their sex. The objectification of women by men is explored. Radical feminist thinking explains how women and their sexuality exist for men's benefit instead of their own; how love is simply a concept to keep women emotionally enslaved to men; how heterosexuality serves as a prime enforcement system for male privilege. Gradually radical feminism broadens into the realization that all aspects of being a woman serve as a basis for the oppression of women by men, and that, since the personal is political, they all serve as political targets for control of women by men. These aspects include not only women's sexuality, but also women's position within the family and particularly, their importance to men as possessors of reproductive "equipment" and ultimately, the power to give birth. Consideration of radical feminist authors' positions on feminist precepts and the birth imperative contributes to understanding how they are

separate yet linked, mutually reinforcing each other yet each complex and interesting in its own right.

The purpose in reviewing radical feminist writing about reproduction, birth and motherhood has been to provide a road map for understanding the theories of radical feminism and the issues surrounding the birth imperative. In order to acquaint readers with the literature, the concerns and viewpoints of radical feminist authors who have addressed various aspects of the birth imperative have been summarized, attempts to clarify the issues and the authors' positions on them have been made, and similarities and differences in authors' arguments have been noted. There is a wide variety of opinions among radical feminist authors about the importance of the hallmark of being female - the capacity to give birth - to the oppression of women. In this thesis most authors agree that a major factor in women's oppression has been not their biology in itself, but the social and cultural meaning attached to the biology, and the birth imperative is part of that.

Radical feminists have been and still are concerned about very central questions: whether sex characteristics are inborn or culturally acquired; whether female biology creates the ability and the urge for women to nurture, or whether this is culturally taught; and whether the fact that women can create new life works to their advantage or disadvantage as the world enters the next century. Can the biological process ever regain, or be newly invested with, the richness of experience that can make it a plus instead of a minus for women? Radical feminists do not yet know how to lift birth and motherhood out of their social context to study that question. Nor do they

know how to create an idealistic utopia where the experience could take place without ideological baggage.

Answers to these questions might provide answers to the reproductive questions: how much of what is possible, is desirable? And how much of what is desirable, is women's free choice? Whose free choice ought having children to be? Are women's present values of care and nurturing in childbearing and childrearing likely to disappear if the biological capacity to reproduce is taken away from them? Or are these values so much a part of women's makeup or culture that they can be retained while simultaneously greater efforts are made to destroy the patriarchy within which they exist? Do reproduction and motherhood encourage and enhance these values, in spite of their institutional location within the patriarchy? Can men steeped in the masculinist values of aggression and competitiveness learn to be giving and caring in the supervision of children? Will their values persist when the patriarchy dies? And what becomes of children, subjected to these experiments in the reshaping of their parents? In considering the new reproductive technologies, are genetic or gestational links important to mothers? To children? What lines can be drawn to control genetic engineering experimentation? How are choices to be made between possible benefits in disease control, for example, against possible disasters resulting from manipulating genes with too little knowledge, too little responsibility, and no accountability to society?

Radical feminists also have to look at possibilities they may not have considered. In their flush of enthusiasm for individual freedom for women, do they ignore that some women have babies uncoerced? While it is possible

that most of the pressures, and therefore desires, to have children come from a society which exalts motherhood and limits most other kinds of creation for women, it is still true that not all women are intimidated all the time by the pressures of a patriarchal society. It is still possible for some women, some of the time, to want children of their own simply because they choose to be mothers for their own reasons, perhaps even in defiance of the societal norms which encourage or discourage them to do it. Their biology enables them to fulfil that desire. Radical feminism has been reluctant to make any allowance for free choice or free will exercised by women on their own behalf; it is time the realization took hold that although women have been victimized by a patriarchal society, they are not all necessarily victims. Patriarchy, like every other social system, cannot claim total success. Women still exist; women still think; women act independently on their own behalf; and many women understand perfectly well what kind of political system they live in. The fact that feminism exists is proof that patriarchy cannot colonize every part of women. So although our society largely deprives women of the power to choose, it does not prevent all choice. Choice is what is ahead of us. The speed of technological development in the fields of reproduction and genetic engineering is making choice urgent and critical.

Ideas for making intelligent choices about reproduction include: choosing to put a moratorium on further genetic engineering until we have created mechanisms to deal with the morality of technological genetic creation; choosing to put more techniques of conceptive technology under the control of women, as both consumers and professional providers; articulating more

clearly that women want input into decision-making in science as well as medicine, in social structures as well as individual values. Women can insist on overthrowing patriarchal institutions in all their subtlety, re-create places where women can dwell, and insist upon the acknowledgement of women's right to be half of humanity. And always, women can reflect the feminist ethics of integration and cooperation in their lives, working for power-to, not power-over; fighting the alienation from self and baby women suffer in the process of motherhood in patriarchy; stopping the fragmenting of our bodies; teaching men what it means to nurture and mother; and moving peacefully together into the next millenium.

While we hope for such changes, we note that things are happening around us that bode well for the future. Men's participation in the process of birth is increasing. Husbands in labour rooms are the norm, not the exception. Nurturing is being done by both parents. Fathers are being left solely in charge of small babies. The abuse of women and children by men is emerging much more quickly and fully into public view and drawing public condemnation. Non-traditional families are raising children successfully. Male homosexual and female lesbian partners, if not yet receiving legal recognition as couples, at least are suffering less persecution. Some awareness of the double and triple loads of poverty, sexism and racial discrimination carried by many women is increasing. Women are making inroads into political and professional decision-making.

We owe a debt of gratitude to radical feminism for making clear some of the choices people made in the past which will not serve well for the future,

and setting us on the road to investigation and analysis and perhaps, finally, participation, in worlds we have not yet dreamed of entering.

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS IMPORTANT TO REPRODUCTION, BIRTH AND MOTHERHOOD

ABORTION: birth of offspring before term, or procuring a premature delivery to remove or destroy offspring.

ALIENATION OF THE MOTHER: estrangement from herself in childbearing, in Adrienne Rich's meaning. Institutional motherhood within patriarchy requires distancing the mother from her own involvement in pregnancy and birth, undermining her self-confidence, removing from her any sense of achievement in giving birth.

AMNIOCENTESIS: medical test done by inserting long needle through the abdomen into the amniotic sac, the innermost sac surrounding the fetus, and extracting amniotic fluid for analysis. Amniotic fluid can reveal abnormal symptoms in the fetus in this test, which is often routine for pregnant women over 35.

ANDROGYNOUS: from the Greek for male, *andro-* and female, *gyno-* (from the word for ovary, hence woman); originally meaning hermaphroditic, a being of both sexes; used by radical feminists originally to describe men and women minus their sex roles socially and culturally but retaining their male or female biology. Has come to mean uniting the characteristics of both sexes or removing all psychological, social and cultural sex-linked differences in all individuals to create a society in which sex distinctions do not exist or matter.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION: putting male sperm into a woman's uterus by methods other than sexual intercourse.

ASEXUAL REPRODUCTION: reproduction without sexual intercourse or without the joining of sperm and egg.

BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM: a theory that what a person is and will become is determined mainly by biology, not social or cultural factors. Gena Corea sees it as a larger political movement which decrees that genes, hormones, or brains condemn "inferior" people (who turn out to be women of all races and men of colour) to less of the world's goods, power and status. The political movement masquerades as objective science, she says.

BIRTH CONTROL: would be better termed pregnancy prevention and birth control. All the "natural", mechanical, chemical, surgical and medical ways of affecting conception are called birth control.

BIRTH IMPERATIVE: author's term for all the factors that pressure women to have babies: husbands, politicians, culture, ideology, age, desires, conscience, sense of adventure and more. The birth imperative includes the realization that women are still the only people in our society who can have babies.

CLASS ANALYSIS: From Marxist and socialist feminist terminology; an investigation of how membership in a social class determines and frequently circumscribes what a person is and becomes.

CLASSISM: Inequitable treatment dealt to or suffered by persons as members of a certain class because they are members of that class and for no other reason.

CLITORIDECTOMIES: Removal of the clitoris, the principal organ of women's sexual pleasure, frequently by rough surgery at the hands of village elder women in certain cultures. Clitoridectomies are done to make young women more eligible in the marriage market and more manageable in general; also to ensure women do not "stray" from their designated partners. Some clitoridectomies are augmented by removing the labia and sewing up the girl's vagina, leaving only a very small opening. In this instance they are extremely invasive and cruel, make menstruation difficult, sanitation very problematical, and birth horrendous.

CLONING: making an exact genetic copy. The stuff of science fiction, not believed to have been achieved yet for humans, but appearing imminent with the modern discovery of DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid, the genetic blueprint for all living organisms. Some people are suspicious that scientists have already achieved it and have not made their work known.

COINSPIRITORS or CO-INSPIRITORS: people who joyously abet each other in achievements, satisfactions, ambitions, growth. Root word: inspire, inspirit, *spiritus* (Latin for 'breath'). Favourite way for Adrienne Rich and Mary Daly to describe what woman-loving feminists can be for each other.

CONCEPTION: in general terms, an idea in the mind, an origination, a notion; in reproductive terms, the union of sperm and egg in the fallopian tube to create an embryo. See Embryo entries.

CONTRACEPTION: Prevention of conception. See Birth Control.

COURAGEOUS MOTHERHOOD: what Adrienne Rich says mothers must practice to counteract girls' expectations of growing up to be second class citizens and feeling betrayed by their mothers, who could not or would not save them from such a fate. Courageous motherhood demands that mothers equip their girl children to face a hostile world and that mothers fight for themselves.

DETERMINISM: see Biological Determinism.

DICHOTOMY: dividing a whole in two parts. When used to describe pairs of polar opposites, as in male/female, master/slave, feminists find the concept repugnant. Most feminists prefer multiplicities to dichotomies. See Metaphysical Dualism.

DISMEMBERMENT: tearing limb from limb; cutting off limbs or members.

ECTOGENESIS: In feminist/reproductive context, conception, gestation and birth outside a human body. Gena Corea calls it the "machine-based gestation" of a fetus outside a woman's body, i.e. in an artificial womb.

EMBRYOS: Rudimentary things; in humans, the fetus before the fourth month. See Embryo Transfer, Surrogate Embryo Transfer, Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer.

EMBRYO TRANSFER or **EMBRYO TRANSPLANT:** Moving an embryo. An *in vitro* fertilization could produce an embryo which is put back into the womb of the woman who

supplied the egg, or some other woman; an *in vivo* fertilized egg could be surgically flushed from the woman in which it is growing, to be inserted into another woman. A **SURROGATE EMBRYO TRANSFER** is when the receiver is a 'surrogate' mother, or someone having a baby for someone else. See In Vivo, In Vitro, Surrogate entries.

ESOTERIC: communicated to, or intelligible to, only the initiated.

ESSENTIALISM: the idea that there is an unchanging core in a person which determines what the individual is like. In feminism, the attempt to explain behaviour simply by terming it "natural" or an essential part of the person/organism displaying it or of person/organisms of that kind.

EUGENICS: the science of improving the quality of children or the offspring of other animals or plants.

EXTRA-UTERINE GESTATION: providing a place for a baby to grow outside the womb. Fertilization is done in glass dishes, but so far no substitute womb is available that can handle the full-term gestation of a baby. See Gestation.

FEMALE SEXUALITY: the quality of being sexual; the possession of sexual powers; being capable of sexual feelings; modified by being female.

FEMININITY : the social and cultural configuration of expectations, behaviours, characteristics, and attributes assigned to the female gender.

FEMINISM: any set of values and practices which seeks rights and freedoms for women at least equal to those of men, values the characteristics and achievements of women, and insists upon an end to women's oppression. There are two distinct strands of feminism. One recognizes that men are the standard and women should be made equal to them in every way. The other puts women at the center of theories about what makes women women, and men, men, insisting that women already have value in their own right. Feminism concerns itself with where and how the oppression of women began and how it can be stopped, and how social, economic and legal conditions control women's lives. Feminism holds that women have the right to control their bodies and their lives. See Radical Feminists; Lesbian Feminism; Feminist Psychotherapy; French Feminists.

FEMINIST PSYCHOTHERAPY: the practice of traditional psychotherapy modified by feminist principles that include awareness of institutional sexism, awareness of the truth of women's experiences of oppression and abuse that have been ignored or minimized in the past, heightened sensitivity to the likelihood that women have suffered discrimination at the hands of men, willingness to affirm a woman's sanity, and a non-sexist, non-judgemental approach to treatment.

FOOTBINDING: the Chinese custom of binding little girls' feet tightly, preventing their growth and deforming and rendering them useless. The resulting "Lotus" feet were admired and thought sexy by Chinese men of the day, a disgusting example of the damage and disfigurement of women to accommodate some prevailing idea of desirability.

FRENCH FEMINISTS: name popularly used by feminists to describe several writers concerned with the role of gender in writing. The name should not be taken to mean that all

French feminists subscribe to the same ideas or are producing similar work -- far from it. Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig share only the desire to establish a woman's language free from having to participate in a system of meanings and symbols which leaves them marginalized, subservient, or absent, namely language as it presently exists. They search for this female language in very imaginative and complex ways and at very different sites.

GAMETE INTRAFALLOPIAN TRANSFER: placing into a woman's fallopian tube a reproductive cell taken from someone else. See Reproductive Technologies and New Reproductive Technologies.

GENDER: socially and culturally created definition of female and male. Feminists study the complex processes in institutions and individuals that produce and preserve gender definitions, in hopes of influencing them. **GENDER IDENTITY:** individuals' total picture of who they are, as women or men; and **GENDER PRIVILEGE:** exercised or not, is the sum of personal, social, economic and cultural advantages enjoyed because of gender.

GENES: the carriers of inherited characteristics in cells. See Genetics.

GENETICS: the study of origins and reproduction of the characteristics of living organisms. **GENETIC(S) ENGINEERING:** manipulating genes to produce particular characteristics in organisms for "better" specimens, to reduce diseases passed down through genes, or for other purposes. See Genes.

GESTATION: being carried in the womb from conception to birth; the period of development in the womb. See Extra-Uterine Gestation.

GYNOCID: the killing of women. Gyno- is from the Greek for pistil or ovary, hence woman. See Misogyny.

HEGEMONY: the ruling part, the leadership, of a state, or the authority of a person, group of people, or set of ideas. The word is also used more broadly to indicate the complex interaction of institutions that maintain the status quo.

HETEROSEXUALITY: sexual preference for the opposite sex; from the Greek, *hetero-*, the other of two, other, different, often used as an opposite to *homo-*, the same; to many feminists, a system that enforces patriarchal power by tying individual women to individual men.

HIERARCHY OF OPPRESSION: an order of power relationships based on various criteria for oppressing and being oppressed such as gender, race or class, which makes it possible to be oppressed, and oppress, at the same time. If white and male are high in the hierarchy, for example, white men would oppress white women and everyone of every other colour; white women might oppress both men and women of colour; and men of colour, women of colour.

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM: a kind of analysis, following Marxist theory that human nature must be considered in particular historical or economic situations. It also recognizes the

fundamental importance of the relationship between the dominant ideology and the mode of production, in the creation of human culture.

IDEOLOGY: a system of ideas and values, particularly in social relations; visionary theorizing. See Ideological Frameworks.

IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS: as above, a system of ideas and values which set the assumptions for further study. See Ideology.

IN VITRO: in glass, such as a dish or test tube.

IN VIVO: in a live environment.

INFERTILE: unable to conceive a child, unproductive, barren, sterile. The term is often mistakenly applied to a couple when only the man or woman is infertile, not both. In the last decade the medical definition of infertility has changed from five years, to one year, of being unable to conceive.

INFRASTRUCTURE: the structure below, underneath, or within a structure. The civil service organization that supports a ministry is an example. Infrastructure can also mean the group of interlocking and mutually supportive structures in a society which reinforce each other's value systems and activities such as government, business, professions, justice systems, or education systems.

INSEMINATION: See Artificial Insemination.

INSTITUTION OF MOTHERHOOD: in Adrienne Rich, the conditions surrounding motherhood, birth, and child-raising for women within the patriarchy, as distinct from the lived experience of motherhood. Includes traditions, strictures, rules, emotions, and behaviours that Rich claims women would not undertake, uncoerced. See *Courageous Motherhood*, *Surrogate Motherhood*.

INTERNALIZATION: the process of making external prescriptive mores in society part of one's personal psyche and behaviour, not necessarily in one's own best interests.

INTRINSIC: belonging to the thing itself, inherent, essential, proper. Used by Jeffner Allen to mean "inborn".

LESBIAN FEMINISM: a political ideology that overlays feminist practices with precepts that women must look to each other for love, sex partners, affirmation of their worth, and validation of their ambitions. The ideology can also include **lesbian separatism**, a branch of the women's movement that spurns heterosexuality because it functions as the enforcement system for the patriarchy, lives as completely apart from male society as possible, and works actively for the development of an alternative women's culture. Lesbian separatists, as well as lesbian feminists, often celebrate and glorify women, as women.

LESBIANISM: commonly means loving relationships between women that may or may not include sexual relations; used by Adrienne Rich and Mary Daly to mean woman-loving (see below). For Charlotte Bunch it has political meaning: lesbianism is political action that puts

women first and destroys the power of heterosexuality as an enforcement system of the patriarchy.

MANIFESTO: a public declaration, of individual, group or state, explaining its motives for past actions and future plans.

MASCULINITY: the social and cultural configuration of expectations, behaviours, characteristics and attributes assigned to the male gender.

MATRIARCHIES: societies where women head families and descent is traced through mothers; where women, mothers, rule.

MEDICALIZATION: the process of defining as pathology (disease), functions of our biology, such as birth or range of sexuality, and/or considering them in need of medical intervention.

METAPHYSICAL DUALISM: the doctrine that mind and matter exist as two separate entities; or that there are two independent principles, one good, the other evil. In contrast to this theory radical feminists reject the oppositeness of either/or classifications or choices. They see people as embodied. They reject dualisms in favour of multiple views that allow for the coexistence of differences, seeing sex distinctions, for example, not as opposites of male and female, but as a continuum along which individuals show characteristics of both sexes in varying degrees.

METHODOLOGY: the science of method. Feminists pay precise attention to how they investigate. Being very aware of sexist bias in so-called scientific or objective method, feminists tend to be very explicit about biases and their effects on both research and subjects/people studied.

MISOGYNY: hatred of women. Two Greek roots: *miso-* for hate, *gyno-* for ovary, hence woman. See Gynocide.

MOTHER: See Alienation of the Mother.

MOTHERHOOD: See Courageous Motherhood; Institution of Motherhood; Surrogacy or Surrogate Motherhood.

NECROPHILIA: love of the dead. From the Greek, *necro-* dead body or person; *phile-* lover. More specifically, sexual desire for or sexual intercourse with, the dead.

NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES: newest of the range of biomedical, surgical or technical procedures that affect the process of procreation. Often abbreviated NRT's by feminists, these may include experimental procedures such as pre-conception sex selection, post-conception sex determination, the development of a glass womb; the full gamut of test-tube techniques such as in vitro fertilization (the fertilization of an egg with sperm in a glass dish in the lab); transplant techniques such as embryo replacement, transfer and flushing, embryo and sperm freezing; prenatal tests such as fetal monitoring by ultrasound or colposcopy or amniocentesis; and birth-related procedures such as epidural

anaesthesia which knocks out a birthing woman's sensations from the waist down. See also Asexual Reproduction, Reproductive Technologies.

NUCLEAR FAMILY UNIT: father, mother and children.

NUCLEAR BONDING: the formation of emotional attachments between mothers and fathers and their children, or between siblings.

NURTURANCE: the process of supplying others with what they need for physical and emotional health and well-being. Much-touted as a feminine, if not female, characteristic, it appears to be a socially prescribed activity for women. Nurturance is said to embrace love of children, a desire to bear and rear them, the free dispensing of warmth, tenderness, and compassion, caring about others, and little drive to be competitive.

OBJECTIFIED: made into an object, de-humanized; denied agency to control or direct one's own body or life; prevented from being the subject who creates her own world, for herself.

OPPRESSION: the imposition of unjust constraints on the freedom of individuals or groups, by other individuals or groups (Alison Jaggar's definition). Feminists use the word to represent physical, economic, cultural, social and psychical restrictions placed and maintained on women and children by men within patriarchal society.

PARADIGM: a pattern, ideal example, or model.

PATHOLOGICAL: diseased.

PATRIARCHY: originally a system of rule by the father, which makes women and children subordinate. In radical feminist terms, a pervasive system re-inforced by law, custom, economics, politics, religion, social structure, artistic institutions and for some, heterosexuality, that keeps women and children at least subordinate, frequently oppressed, by men. The oppression may be total or partial. Rich calls it "an identifiable sexual hierarchy".

PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: an early slogan for radical feminists, who found, through careful observation and analysis, that women's oppression frequently existed in its most insidious forms within the so-called "private" institutions such as the home, motherhood, romantic love, sexual relationships, father right.

PLACENTA: the sac attached to the umbilical cord in which a baby develops and is fed, expelled after the baby at birth; the afterbirth.

POLARIZATION: tendency to develop or to cause to develop in two opposite directions; possession, exhibition or attribution of two opposite or contrasted principles or aspects. Feminists, as mentioned, do not like male/female, white/black, master/slave, polarities because they think such polarities tend to obscure individual differences. See Dichotomy, Metaphysical Dualism.

PORNOGRAPHY: originally descriptive of the life and manners of prostitutes; by extension, now used to describe obscene subjects in literature, art, the film arts, and modern

communications media. Feminists argue about what pornography is, and over civil liberties, anti-woman cultures that harm women, the virtues and pitfalls of censorship, and the line between eroticism and harmful smut. There is not a consensus in feminism about pornography, but in general more feminists are convinced it is harmful to women and children than not.

POWER OVER, POWER TO: Feminists repeatedly note that men often acquire power over others, while women often empower each other and concentrate on supporting and nurturing others in their efforts. Charlotte Bunch and Marilyn French both see a world tuned into Power To instead of Power Over as a world full of hope. The problem is not in having power, but in the manner in which it is used.

PRAXIS: conscious physical labour that transforms and modifies the world to meet the needs of human beings, so called by Marx, who contrasts this behaviour to animal behaviour. Feminists appropriate the term to mean the conscious interaction of people with their environment, particularly "working on" it for change by putting political principles into action.

PROPHYLACTIC: preventing disease; preservative; precautionary. As a noun, it is a name for a condom.

RACISM: unjust or unequal treatment dispensed or suffered because of race or colour. Many feminists draw parallels between racism and sexism, noting their similarities in effect and their meshing into a hierarchy of oppression. See Hierarchy of Oppression, Sexism.

RADICAL FEMINISTS: those who believe that the original, the model, and the central oppression in society is of women by men. See Feminism.

RAPE: The forcible sexual penetration of a woman against her will was once the narrow definition of rape used in the courts. In Canada, the legal concept of rape has been highly problematical because of the way the justice and penal systems expect men to use force on women as part of the sex act. The concept is more fluid in the writings of radical feminists. Ti-Grace Atkinson talks of the "original rape" in which men invaded the being of women to gain potency and vent their frustrations. Susan Brownmiller calls rape man's basic weapon of force against women, a process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in fear.

REFORMISM: movement to reform (i.e. improve the quality within), not revolutionize (i.e. change totally), a society through altering its institutions.

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES: the full range of biomedical, chemical, surgical, technical, hormonal or other procedures that affect the process of procreation, whether intended to help infertile women and men produce a child, prevent or terminate a pregnancy, or contribute to genetic knowledge or engineering. Methods which are often included in discussions of reproductive technology but do not qualify as "new" methods include mechanical and chemical contraception devices such as the intrauterine device, diaphragm, sponge, condom, or spermicide; hormonal contraception such as the Pill or hormonal implants; chemical contraception such as the morning-after pill; surgical procedures such as male and female sterilization, abortion; and birthing techniques such as episiotomies (surgical cutting to enlarge the woman's vagina to aid the baby's birth) and cesareans (surgical abdominal births). See also New Reproductive Technologies, Asexual Reproduction.

SEXISM: unjust or unequal treatment of people because of their sex (gender). Sexism is also a way of seeing and judging the world as though only men and their characteristics and needs are 'normal' and 'human'.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: making unwanted sexual approaches or threats which intimidate the receiver because of unequal power and possible threats to her/his job or well-being.

SEXUALITY: See Female Sexuality; Heterosexuality; Lesbianism; Necrophilia; Sexual Harassment.

SHRIVING RITE: a religious rite of cleansing Jewish women undergo after giving birth.

SISTERHOOD: a community of women, not necessarily blood sisters; can refer to religious community. The term is used by feminists to conceptualize the union of all women against their subordination or oppression.

SOCIAL CONTROL: pressures and coercions exerted on a society's citizens through institutions, laws, custom, or practice, to keep individuals within the bounds of desired behaviour; political plans and actions to implement the objectives of a government.

SOCIALIZATION: teaching a child to fit into society; any process which teaches socially accepted behaviour to inhabitants of a particular society. Feminists point particularly to how

women and men are inculcated into masculine and feminine roles by this process.

SPARK, SPOOK AND SPIN: what women should do to fight the deadening patriarchal system, according to Mary Daly. Oversimplifying: sparking is instigating; spooking is needling the system; spinning is creating oneself anew.

STERILIZATION: surgical procedure to make men or women infertile; for women, tying off fallopian tubes or removing organs necessary to conceive, and for men, usually vasectomy, in which tubes which carry the sperm are cut in half to prevent sperm from reaching the penis.

SUBJECTIVITY: consciousness of one's perceived state; viewing the world through one's own mind or personality. Jeffner Allen uses it in the sense that to create subjectivity is to become the creator, the mover, the doer, the dreamer who brings life into existence on her own terms to suit her own needs and desires.

SUBJUGATED: brought into bondage or under complete control; submissive, subservient.

SUBORDINATION: being made secondary, inferior, dependent; of an inferior rank, grade, class or order and dependent on the power and authority of another.

SURROGACY OR SURROGATE MOTHERHOOD: Surrogacy is the act of performing a role or duty for another person, or 'standing in' for individuals who cannot carry

out an important function for themselves. Surrogate motherhood is physically carrying and giving birth to a baby for another woman who cannot or does not wish to carry a child. Babies are usually but not always created from the sperm of the husband of the woman wanting, but not bearing, the baby, and sometimes created from fertilized embryos of the couple wanting the baby.

SURROGATE EMBRYO TRANSFER: transfer of an embryo (gamete or zygote - fertilized egg and sperm unit) into a surrogate mother's womb.

SUTTEE: the act of killing an Indian widow during the disposal of her husband's body, often on the funeral pyre.

SYNERGISTIC: acting together, as a combined or correlated group of body organs which have more strength combined than alone. A firm principle of feminism is that women working together achieve much more than they would be able to do alone, and synergism thus becomes both the result of this cooperation and the impetus to more success.

TENET: a doctrine, dogma, principle or opinion of an individual or group.

TOTALITARIAN: of a party, administration, state or other group which permits no rival loyalties or parties to exist.

TRANSFER, TRANSPLANT: See Embryo Transfer or Embryo Transplant; Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer; Surrogate Embryo Transfer.

UNIVERSALITY: being of or throughout the world, the universe, all nature; the quality of existing and occurring everywhere, in all things; or the collective whole of something. In radical feminism, universalizing is the practice of ascribing conditions evident in one culture's patriarchal structure to all others without taking into account differences in psychological background, cultural practices, economic status, geographical or demographical peculiarities, or other material conditions. Radical feminists are criticized by socialist and marxist feminists for generalizing too widely about women's experiences and calling them universal when they are not.

UTOPIAN: ideal, even impossibly so. Sir Thomas More created Utopia, an imaginary island with perfect legal, social and political systems. Feminists create their own utopias to project and dramatize what a world without sexism would look like. Once created, such utopias serve as models on which to judge present practices in social, government, legal and education systems and other institutions.

WOMAN BATTERING: becoming the generic term to replace wife abuse and family abuse, probably in recognition that many women other than wives are battered by men, and not always within the nuclear family.

WOMAN-LOVING: honestly respecting, revering and caring for other women; asking other women, not men, to validate one's existence if validation is necessary. This is the expanded meaning of lesbianism for Adrienne Rich and Mary Daly.

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