EMBRACING MOTHERHOOD: NEW FEMINIST THEORY

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Women give birth to children whom they then mother. Given the level of contemporary medical achievement, the former is an apparently inescapable biological fact, but nevertheless, from the moment of childbirth (and often before) women's role as mothers is historically malleable.[1] This complex of birthing and social action is not only the basis of a unique social relationship between the individual woman and her child/ren but of a social institution, motherhood. Because of the way it mediates between the biology of procreation and historical institutionalization, motherhood provides a prime site for exploring and constructing boundaries between nature and culture. Historically, the division in western thought has been dichotomous and drawn in such a way as to exclude women from the social and historical.

What to make of this apparently pre-social reality and its political and cultural institutionalization has always been a central question in the history of feminist theory and ideology. It also occupies a particularly vexed place in understanding the origins and basis of women's oppression. Much of the suffrage movement staked its claim on what was, after all, a demand that the domestic importance and private skills of women as mothers be officially recognized and given full reign in the public domain[2]. On the other hand, an ideological vanguard of the contemporary women's movement, confronting the possibilities of new contraceptive technology, rejected patriarchal prescriptions for compulsory motherhood to lead a struggle against both the socialization patterns and economic constraints that serve to restrict women's lives to ahistorical maternity. Despite differences in their global ideologies, both Betty Friedan and Juliet Mitchell found the family to be the lynch pin in an ideology which offered feminine fulfillment within the confines of the home and apart from a world of self-creative and paid work[3]. Extending the male option of

splitting public and reproductive life, Germaine Greer thought maternity possible — and even enjoyable — if it included an Italian hill farm where she could go to visit her child, carefully cared for by maternal peasants, once a month or so[4]. The most radically anti-maternalist position, that women's liberation requires extra-uterine reproduction, was argued by Shulamith Firestone in line with a generally biologistic analysis of the sources of male-female power differentials in patriarchal society[5].

More recently however, and linked to a larger concerns with biological and social reproduction, a quite different thematization has begun to emerge, one that reflects the evaluation of motherhood as an essentially positive activity and insists on its disalienating recuperation by and, in the first instance, for women themselves. A first step in this reconstruction has been untangling the social, historical, biological and psychological dimensions of maternity. Beyond formulating a critique of contemporary family, medical and state practices, the more radical proponents of this perspective have seen in sexual asymmetries with respect to birth and childcare a material key for understanding not only masculine and feminine character differences but also constituent features of dominant western cultural developments, including the coded relation between "man" and "nature" and the modality of formal knowledge systems. Understanding motherhood then is crucial for understanding the specificity of human self-constitution and has wideranging implications for theory whether feminist, political, psychological or philosophical. The critical appropriation of maternity also implies a transformation in human practice of truly redemptive proportions.

In this paper, I trace the way in which the new thematization of motherhood has emerged and has become manifest in three different areas of feminist discourse and then, against the background of some of the more global claims about the necessity of placing biological reproduction and social and psychological mothering at the centre of theory, consider some of the profound issues they raise for feminist and other dimensions of emancipatory theory.

The emergence of a feminist problematic of motherhood

In one sense, history not feminism has problematized motherhood. The relatively rapid development of medical technologies, collectively if somewhat inaccurately known as "the pill", dissolved the biological given which inextricably linked sexuality and reproduction for women. As a result of these developments, pregnancy and birth became a choice for women who to this extent were placed in a position of equality with men. What has made facing this decision awesome for individuals and impossible to absorb into the smooth operation of the child-centred nuclear family complex is that it arose in the context of a political, social, and demographic conjuncture which had already seen the patriarchal institutional model of motherhood come slowly to its full fruition and abort of its own contradictions.

Exclusive childcare by women, isolated in independant households is an

historically exceptional family form. The object of care, the child, and its location, the "non-producing" household, were fused over the flame of a naturalistic argument into a specialized role for women[6]. As mothers, women were defined as the moral guardians of western civilization with immediate responsibility for children's character development and ultimate responsibility for the moral texture of public life. With its origins in a rising European bourgeoisie, this family form owes its mass realization to the wealth generated by capitalist production and the requirement to shape a schooled and self-regulating labour force out of neonatal plasticity. The ideology of mother-child coupling pervaded the working classes at any rate only from the 1920s to the 1960s. However, even as the post-World War II boom, a reduction in fertility, and the development of housing and household technology combined to permit women to play out an intensified and extended "motherhood-per-child", its limitations began to become clear.[7] The cult of domesticity and the cult of the child proved too thin and too demanding to sustain its mystified feminine acolytes who were struck with "the disease that has no name" symptomatized in depression, over-medication, and loss of self.[8] These costs were noted by a deradicalized Freudianism but glossed as the problem *of* women.[9] At the same time, with changes in the structure of the labour market and attempts to maintain family-household incomes in the face of inflation, its material base began to be eroded as women with school age and then preschool children were recruited wholesale into retail, clerical and public sector employment.[10]

In the sixties, a growing women's movement defined the contradictory non-choice — housewives' syndrome or the double day — as a problem *for* women and attempted to intervene in the ideological and structural organization of marriage and family as central institutions organizing gender and generational relations. One of its central tactics was the contestative denial of sexist ideology, one of its central preocupations reclaiming free sexual activity for women. Whatever patriarchy had said "Women are . . ." feminists fought against. "Biology is destiny" was its cry; ours that biology could and more importantly *should* be transcended. Of course this abstract negation of patriarchal ideology was, in the first instance, reactive, a battle fought on the opponent's ground within given categories. In rejecting the hegemonic patriarchal construction of feminity whole hog, women were also led to deny the importance of motherhood as such and to devalue any specialized skills or values associated with this admittedly limited sphere of feminine practice. New conditions, not least the changes in the institutional framework and activity of mothering sketched above, have encouraged a positive revalorization of maternity that is at once radical and feminist. It has been the simultaneous coming into play of demographic, biographical and political changes that has permitted this kind of reformulation.

During the seventies, some potentially significant demographic patterns of delayed and reduced fertility became visible. Certainly, for at least a socially and ideologically important cohort of "middle-class" post-war boom babies now between twenty and thirty-nine, well into the "normal" range of fertility, a number of factors — the increase in post-secondary schooling for women, some

increase in the age at first marriage, the ideological impact of the women's and ecology movements and economic constraints — have contributed to an initial postponement of and a likely reduction in chilbearing.[11] The early indications of these changes have already been culturally significant; for example, a rapid increase in first births among American women over thirty received the cultural cachet of a *Time* cover story.[12] Altogether, these changes have brought the encouragement of population replacement to the attention of the state as well as cultural interpreters.

The psychological ramifications of aging of this population cohort are complex: they involve not merely aging, nor just a change in status and life style for those who have actually given birth, but also a major impact at the level of the unconscious on all women. Those of us who were and have remained daughters (by age and family relationship) are becoming mothers (again by age and even if only vicariously). If as Nancy Friday suggests from her "daughter's" perspective, sexuality is "a powerful force in the fight to separate from [the mother] and grow up" and our first jobs provide the opportunity "to prove to ourselves that we are agents in our own lives", then marriage provides a formal structure to repeat parental models and childbirth "speeds up" "the unconscious drive to become the mothers we dislike."[13] If we have acquired through work, economic independence and feminism a certain measure of the autonomy we sought as individuals and as a movement, then encapsulated conflictual relations with our mothers no longer need dominate practically or psychologically in any simple sense. This situational autonomy also makes possible greater empathy in reconsidering and reevaluating the mother-daughter relationship.

The release of powerful psychological processes of fantasy, displacement, regression and desublimation which invert and blur mother-daughter differentiation need not be triggered by a real decision to give birth, a real pregnancy, a real child. Being with the children of our friends, reading the articles on childbirth, late, voluntarily unpartnered or lesbian motherhood can be enough.[14] We begin to regard our mothers, our — real, fantasied, potential — daughters and ourselves from a new position fulcrumed on three generations. Signe Hammer describes this perspectival shift as a maturational imperative:

> Not all women become mothers, but all, obviously are daughters, and daughters become mothers. Even daughters who never become mothers must confront the issues of motherhood, because the possibility and even the probability of motherhood remains.[15]

Finally, the political and ideological maturation of the women's movement demands more rigorous and comprehensive theories of motherhood and family. In a situation where women's cultural, economic and political gains have been met with inertia, resistance and, in the extreme, right-wing opposition gilded in the glories of motherhood and apple pie, the further development of feminist theory of family and motherhood is both politically important and constrained. It must be both offensive and defensive. Susan Harding argues that the conflicts

between feminists and their opponents are rooted in the adoption of conflicting "family strategies" that are either egalitarian (emphasising the individual and a breakdown of roles) or hierarchical (stressing "the symbolic authority of the father" and "protecting and celebrating the role of the family in defining a woman's life and identity").[16] Exploiting the contradictions in a contested ideological terrain, the mass media tell large numbers of women who attempt to develop social strategies to juggle work, childcare, conflicts with men, and personal life and psychological strategies to resolve conflicts over sexuality, femininity, competition, accomplishment and children that this whirlpool which saps energy is the result of feminism. Indeed, the easy public acceptance of some aspects of the new motherhood discussion as witnessed by the *Time* cover story still rests on assumptions of the propriety and endurance of gender divisions of labour.

Here the women's movement walks a tightrope strung between offensive and defensive poles: it must assert feminist theory in our own terms, validating "what women do" (and have done historically) in mothering at the same time as it contests patriarchal glorification of the role at the expense of the occupant. It must also offer insightful support to those women and men caught in the toils of institutional transition who place a high value on having and caring for children as well as on their own individuality and gender equality — those who "believe in" day care, maternity and paternity leave, equal pay and reproductive freedom but do not yet identify themselves as feminists — if it is to gain their political allegiance and active support for both liberated family structures and the larger feminist programme.

In developing the theoretical underpinnings of the new problematic, feminism has woven together lesbian-feminism, psychoanalysis, and as yet untheorized female experience. The first of these, radical lesbian ideology, adopted matriarchy as an idyllic and strategically useful myth.[17] Since this focus is congruent with a more sociological interest on the part of marxist-feminism in pre-class social formations, it provides a rare point of agreement between these competing politico-theoretical tendencies, which has allowed it to be more easily popularized. Its adoption by a radical feminist current also served to undercut the anti-maternalism of Firestone's version of radical feminism. The second, psychoanalytic theory, shares an object with feminist theory — the role of the mother-child-father triangle in producing sexual difference. The form of investigation which grounds both these theories was also congruent; that is, uncovering socially illicit but sociologically normal experience in the interests of therapeutic catharsis.[18]

The third strand has been, however, perhaps the most provocative especially linguistically. Using motherhood as a metaphor/m, melding analysis and poetics, outside the rule of phallocentric linear logic, it has striven to delve down and back through body, sexuality and time to create new rationality capable of uniting nurturing and strategy, past and future, the conscious and unconscious:

> Somehow the questions raised here did not take on a problem-solving or strategy-laden dimension but rather concerned mothers, mothering, motherhood. As we found them inside of us. No feminist theory of motherhood? Well, we will start to invent one. We start with our hands on our pulses.[19]

Much of this writing has been formally experimental, in Hélène Cixous's term, "woman writing woman"[20] and so more easily ignored than assimilated by traditional disciplines with their fundamentally sexist foundations and territorial jealousies. While no systematic integration has been made of these theorical foundations increasingly the themes overlap in feminist discourse.

Obviously, given the uneven development and ideological differences of the women's movement as a whole, the refocusing has been uneven. But as well as tracing a general movement in feminist theory, a change of orientation appears in the work of individual writers. Robin Morgan is a case in point. In 1969, mother is "emptiness," the person who won't let you wear a bra, the abstraction who "spent her days with kids and housework." Her characterization is perhaps surprising only when we recall that Morgan, already a mother, who defended her right to raise a boy against separatist attacks, helped to organize collective childcare and faced conflicting demands of work, mothering and politics. Like that of the movement as a whole, her attitude to motherhood changed by confronting first lesbian, matriarchal theory and then the ecology movement — Mother Nature indeed. Ultimately she rejected "the notorious correct line which ... conceived of turning real babies into real soap" so that "throwing out the baby with the bath appeared to the correct liners as both sensible and sanitary." In her artistic endeavours, she began to play a maternal theme, lamented Mary Wollstonecroft's death in childbirth and celebrated her love for her son. She was moreover quite aware of this transformation:

> They said we were "anti-motherhood" — and in the growing pains of certain periods some of us were . . . Patriarchy commanded the women to be mothers (the thesis), we had to rebel with our own polarity and declare motherhood a reactionary cabal (the antithesis). Today a new synthesis has emerged; the concept of mother-right the affirmation of child-bearing and/or rearing when it is a woman's choice.[21]

Motherhood: a patriarchal institution

Conceptualizing motherhood as an institution has had three main effects. First, it was removed from the biological and invariant and placed in the social and historical. Second, on the basis of historical and anthropological comparisons, a categorization has been developed of two distinct orders of motherhood — matriarchal and patriarchal — which echoes in psychoanalytic and metatheoretical discourses. Third, it has helped to clarify programmatic demands for the women's movement. For it uncovers an apparent paradox: as

patriarchal ideology has relegated mothering to women, women have lost control and authority in childbirth and childraising.

In her influential book, Adrienne Rich denies that the "patriarchal institution" is a necessary part of the human condition:

> Motherhood . . . has a history, it has an ideology, it is more fundamental than tribalism or nationalism. My individual private pains as a mother, the individual and seemingly private pains of the mothers around me and before me, whatever our class or colour, the regulation of women's reproductive power by men in every totalitarian system and every socialist revolution, the legal and technical control by men of contraception, fertility, abortion, obstetrics and extrauterine experiments — are all essential to the patriarchal system, as is the negative or suspect status of women who are not mothers.[22]

Here she specifies themes central to feminist investigation: prescriptive ideologies of motherhood, the medicalization of chilbirth and the experience of women as mothers.

Breaking with academic convention, many feminists scholars contend that female-dominated mother-centred social formations existed historically. Obviously they recognize that their reconstructions of matriarchal societies through an interpretative synthesis of evolutionary biology, archeology, myth, law and comparative anthropology are necessarily speculative, but perhaps no more than received views. In any case, the images of "matriarchal" and "patriarchal" motherhood presented in the literature are in sharp contrast.

Rereading the evidence of archeology and evolutionary biology "to visualize how the hominid line could have arisen," Nancy Tanner and Adrienne Zihlman propose a theory of early hominid evolution centred on and dynamized by the exigencies of the mother child relationship.[23] As a result of complex interactions that followed the early development of bipedalism and neonatal dependence, infants needed to be carried, supervised, fed and protected. In response, mothers, as the most consistent food-gatherers, developed material and social techniques to make their tasks more efficient: storage containers, carrying slings, digging sticks and regular patterns of food sharing. As primary socializers, they also taught these patterns to both daughters and sons who replicated them in turn with siblings and in wider social groups. With increasing evolutionary complexity the intimacy of the mother-infant relationship and the necessity of communicating complex technical and environmental information facilitated language development. Given a flexible kin-based family structure most likely to be congruent with gathering as a mode of subsistence and the implications of loss of estrus, these evolutionary tendencies were reinforced through kin and sexual selection. Males who shared with, carried,protected and played with their siblings helped them to survive. In addition, "mothers chose to copulate most frequently with these comparatively sociable, less disruptive,

sharing males — with males more like themselves."[24] Zihlman later concludes that the success of the human species was made possible only through a reproductive strategy that combined independence and innovation for females with the cooperation of males and females in caring for their young through both sharing food and nurturing.[25]

The Mother-Goddess appears as a compelling image of female power and creativity, especially in radical-and-lesbian-feminist writing. Merlin Stone's interpretation of the significance of Mellarrt's excavation of the late neolithic site at Çatal Hüyük is representative:

> The definition and worship of the female divinity in so many parts of the ancient world were variations on a theme, slightly differing versions of the same basic theological beliefs . . . It is difficult to grasp the immensity and significance of the extreme reverence paid to the Goddess . . . But it is vital to do just that to fully comprehend the longevity as well as the widespread power and influence this religion once held.[26]

Representations of female figures, pregnant or in childbirth, with plants or weaving provide archeological evidence of the association of females with social power, technological innovation and birth that Zihlman and Tanner saw as central to human evolutionary progress. In a scholarly article, Anne Barstow warns against extrapolating social conclusions from archeological remains but concurs that a civilization whose religious and social life centred on female fertility and accomplishment flourished at Çatal Hüyük.[27]

The defeat of women and the imposition of newly elaborated forms of power may have come about in two ways. Stone suggests that women were deprived of the direction of religion, public welfare and commercial activity as a result of military defeat by northern invaders who imposed patrilineal clan systems and their patriarchal religious superstructures triumphed and increasingly repressive and mysogynist practices towards female sexuality.[28] In an examination of pristine state formation at Sumer, Ruby Rohrlich identifies a different dynamic of internal subordination by militarily organized males. Although "matriarchy seems to have left more than a trace in early Sumerian city states" where women once owned land and were trained in professional and religious occupations, warfare and military organization undermined their status and, incidently that of some males. "What seems to have happened is that as class society became increasingly competitive over the acquisition of commodities . . . warfare became endemic and eventually led to the centralization of political power in the hands of a male ruling class."[29]

Our concern in evaluating this problematic is not the "scientificity" of these reconstructions, for in one sense their accuracy is beside the point, but identifying the associational clusters connected with patriarchal and matriarchal motherhood. Matriarchal society and motherhood are thought to be cooperative, natural, sex positive and permissive, peaceful and able to integrate males on a basis of equal exchange. In contrast, patriarchy is hierarchical,

ultimately technologically rational, sexually repressive and violent for women, associated with militarism and the state and based on the oppressive exploitation of female productive and reproductive powers. Evidence of these configurations continue to be found in periods where the historical record is more detailed and comprehensive.

In these periods, when motherhood is appropriated by male theoretical authority, these correlations become conscious social norms. This theft did not of course include the work of childcare, which was left as before to women, but it did include control; thus the female activity of childcare was subordinated to male expertise operating within a reified, mechanized and sexist paradigm. While medieval theology had considered maternity as an aspect of the problem of Christology, feminist theorists suggest it was only in the early phases of capitalist development that political and medical theory deemed the issue worthy of theoretical attention.[30] Within a post-Renaissance patriarchal optic motherhood was construed as at once biological and transcendental — an instinct and so less than fully human yet infused with a redemptive morality of sacrifice and altruism as a counter to the competitive behaviour of political-economic man. These theories consistently sought legitimation in the welfare and social utility of the child, not the mother's happiness or autonomy; they posited a tension between mother and child, which was to be resolved in favour of the child.

Although couched in a rhetoric of natural necessity, these developments in nineteenth century patriarchal theory in fact broke the "naturalness" of the mother-child connection in order to permit the intervention of progressive "scientific" childraising practices.[31] The break between the natural and social and the consequent expansion of the realm in which the social takes precedence over the natural was disguised not just by language but by the prescriptions for intensive and exclusive mothering elaborated in these theories. Alarmed, on one hand, by high rates of infant mortality revealed by early population surveys and, on the other, enraptured by Rousseauian views of childhood educability, medical and social theorists expanded the role of the good mother from one who suckled her child to one who was all to her child — teacher, companion and devoted nurse. If comparisons of mothers to hens and plants were sometimes dehumanizing, nevertheless, this role offered certain rewards:

> Motherhood became a gratifying role because it was now a repository of the society's idealism . . . . The mother was frequently compared to a saint, and it was believed that the only good mother was a "saintly" woman. The natural patron saint of the mother was the Virgin Mary, whose whole life bespoke her devotion to her child.[32]

For the woman limited by middle-class social horizons and newly excluded from work in family-based production, the new role as the central axis of the family also offered improved personal status and power over her children.[33] But sainthood precluded sexuality and power in the family meant isolation, however

glorified, from social life outside it.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English trace the growing ascendency of similar patriarchal prescriptions in North America. For them, the transition is a response to the industrial revolution's disruption of an "Old Order" where women's centrality to household-based production modified formal patriarchal power. A shift to centralized production posed "the question of how women would survive and what would become of them in the modern world."[34] Two answers were offered. The first, a radical ideology of sexual assimilation and rationalism extended middle class liberal ideals of individual freedom and equality to women. The second, a romantic reaction that, linked to a strategy to contain class conflict, became dominant after the Civil War, promoted a sentimentalized vision of women as half outside the world of men which was derived also from liberal social philosophy.[35] In pragmatic America medical and technical "experts," not political philosophers, were the advance men for scientific domesticity and exclusive maternal child-raising:

> The idea that the child was the key to the future . . . had a definite political message . . . By concentrating on the child — rather than on, say, political agitation, union organizing, or other hasty alternatives — the just society would be achieved painlessly, but slowly.[36]

This solution was weakened by the internal contradiction between triumphant romantic ideology and the needs of industrial society. "In the sexually segregated society built by industrial capitalism . . . there is, in the end, no way for women to raise men", that is, according to proper patriarchal principles.[37] Thus, the connection between exclusive child care by women and its domination by male experts articulated in France was reinforced by North American social developments.[38] Although the scientific fashion in childcare changed in reponse to changing infrastructural needs, its various perceived failures were all blamed on mothers who were alternately castigated as too sentimental and overprotective or as too ruthless, the power-hungry Mom.[39] Overall, the modern patriarchal construction of parenting was, like its enlightened romantic predecessor, based on difference and inequality and the domination of private relations by public requirements for order in a sex and class stratified society.

In contemporary motherhood, the contradictions which have emerged from competing patriarchal, feminist and ecologist ideologies on the one hand and structural transformations which have bisexualized the labour market without similarly affecting childcare on the other have created a recurrent dilemma for women: "I hate motherhood, but I love my kids."[40] An enormous literature, ranging from practical self-help books, through the wryly recuperated accuracy of Lynn Phillips' cartoons to a professional literature seeks to explain this tensions and develop a programme for ideological and institutional reform. Insofar as this work seeks to reclaim women's experience, define women as individuals and expand the area of legitimate female activity, it operates within a

feminist paradigm. In the main, it views conflicts in mothering — between emotional nurturance and the work it entails or paid work in the labour force and unpaid childcare, for example — as rooted in social changes that it analyses at best only scantily.[41] These tensions are compounded for women in paid employment who are most often the primary or "psychological parent" responsible not only for the material functioning of the household but also "for the whereabouts and the feelings of each child."[42] Other problems, like the contradiction between adult, particularly sexual, identity and ideologies of motherhood are described if not analysed.[43] Unlike patriarchal prescriptions, however, it seeks to resolve them equitably to the benefit of both mother and child.

Despite the severity of the problems uncovered by listening to women, the popular and scholarly literatures generally remain reformist. For the most part they continue to accept the inevitability of motherhood-in-the family and offer apparently moderate solutions suggesting, for example, that women engage in a developmental process of identity synthesis because "the models of femininity... presented . . . do not fit [women's] current adult lives" which in fact seek to resolve these structural and historical contradictions at the psychological level.[44] The most consistent "feminist" influence is found in the treatment of the "working mother". Paid work, while still occasionally justified by an appeal to financial need, is increasingly construed as good in itself. The failure to analyse structural determinants fully and to explore possibilities for institutional reorganization leaves this literature vulnerable to suggesting new "permissive" norms which may turn out to be new performance criteria for women.[45] These will not alter an experience of motherhood which is at best ambivalent, at worst masochistic: "Motherhood simply confirms what we knew before — that pleasure and pain are rarely far apart."[46]

If some historians and sociologists bewail the effects of exclusive mothering, others decry the loss of female control over the ideological, mystical and practical dimensions of childbirth. Several studies trace the rise of obstetrics and gynecology as male dominated professions, which they contend "desexed" and denaturalized childbirth. In this process, women healers were forced from their last niche as midwives in the name of paridigmatically scientific and mechanical norms, as a result of interprofessional rivalry, in the interest of private profit and in an attempt to tame female creativity.[47] The specialization and professional self-defense of "male-midwives" began with the invention of obstetrical forceps — "hands of iron" — by the Chamberlen family in the late sixteenth century and their subsequent generalization after 1773. Although male midwifery based its claim on cleanliness and superior knowledge, its practices were often medically irrational and, indeed, dangerous. The supine position, which inhibits control in contractions, was introduced in order to afford Louis XIV a better view of his mistresses giving birth and later adopted for the convenience of the physicians. Under male control, birth was all too often a precarious experience in part as the result of technical innovations like destructive obstetrics and in part from the systemic blood poisoning called "puerperal" fever caught when surgeons imported germs from cadavers to the

birthing room.

Contemporary medical management of childbirth continues to claim scientific rationality as a cover for practices that from the point of view of women are irrational and costly. Shiela Kitzinger contends that pre-labour prep — shaving, enemas, obstetrical masks and gowns, the exclusion of the husband and episiotomy — are mainly of ritual significance. They serve to purify the woman, exclude her from her normal community, return her to a prepubertal and dependent state and, above all, confirm the obstetrician's control over birth. "The previously mysterious power of childbirth has been analysed and he bends it to a masculine purpose and according to a masculine design."[48] Based on her findings in a psychoanalytically influenced study, Dana Breen argues that the redesign of the birth process undermines a woman's confidence in herself and in her ability to care for her infant:

> When a woman can only have a child by her body being provoked into it, by substances being continually pumped into it and more substances injected to dull the pain which has been thus increased, finally giving in to having the baby pulled out by forceps because she is paralysed from the waist down, she feels she hasn't given birth to her baby.[49]

Stripped of this gift and separated from her child who is appropriated by the hospital staff, she loses all sense of the essential goodness of her body. In addition to psychological costs, the technological transformation of birth increases the risk of medical complications in many cases.[50]

The alternatives proposed to the over-medicalization of birth reveal the degree to which critical problematics are biological, social, or, indeed, feminist. "Natural childbirth" and call for the revival of lay or professional midwifery fits several strategies from reinforcing the hierarchical or nuclear family, to widening the family-community or the repossession of female power.[51] Despite the biological essentialism and the assumption of the exclusivity or dominance of mother-infant care that it imports, bonding or immediate skin to skin contact between the mother and child is promoted enthusiastically as a way of overcoming the alienation of hospitalized delivery.[52] A certain faith in the wider importance of unmediated biological influences is accorded more general significance as well. Although she does not elaborate her position theoretically, Rich thinks that birth can be a source of knowledge and discovery of "our physical and psychic resources, one experience of liberating ourselves from fear, passivity and bodily self-alienation.[53] At the extreme Alice Rossi's call for "A biosocial perspective on parenting" rejects cultural and historical explanations of the persistence of gender divisions of labour along with egalitarian family values and childcare arrangements in favour of a theory of biologically determined, sexually differentiated learning capacities, particulary with regard to childcare and a return to not merely female, but mother-care for children.[54]

Despite its limitations, this literature substantiates the claims made in campaigns for day care, midwifery and the reorganization of the relationship between paid labour and childcare among other issues. Addressing these concerns is one step in advancing feminist strategy so that in responding to the everyday issues of sexual and maternal politics in the eighties, it can bridge the ideological gap between politicized feminists and the women who are their constituency and transmit its larger transformative vision.

Minoan-Mycenean revivification

A feminist psychoanalytic archaeology has set out to uncover the preoedipal mother-daughter relationship and to consider its significance for contemporary gender arrangments. Freud thought that feminity was fundamentally shaped in this region, "so grey with age and shadowy and almost impossible to revivify", which was inaccessible to men.[55] The effect of this work is first, to move the analysis from historical, social relations to their representation in the unconscious and, once there, to displace the creation of heterosexual feminity from the anatomical difference between the sexes, the father and the feces-penis-baby connection of classical Freudian analysis, onto the mother and her relations with infants of either sex. Because they weigh cultural and biological realities differently, Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnerstein, the main initiators of this project, arrive at somewhat different conclusions. But their common view that asymmetries in parenting serve to reproduce gender differences, substructure mysogyny, and connect masculinity with productivism has been highly influential.

Rejecting all biological or libidinal determinations, Chodorow adopts object relations theory to relativize and historicize distortions in Freud's own work.[56] She argues that gender asymmetries in parenting shape differentiated female and male capacities and desires to mother. Because they are of the same gender and because of taboos against sexualizing the mother-son relationship, women tend to experience their daughters more intimately, more ambivalently and as less separate than their sons. The experience of maternal identification and ambivalence sends girls through preoedipal and oedipal development preoccupied with "those very relational issues that go into mothering — feelings of primary identification, lack of separateness or differentiation, ego and body-ego boundary issues under the sway of the reality principle."[57] In the oedipal resolution, female personality structure embeds relational capacities and a sense of self-in-relationship necessary to fulfill the psychological role of mothering and the desire for a triangular relational configuration which encompasses both the masculine object and patriarchal power of the father and the merging identification with the mother. Since the boy is unlikely to have been intimately "fathered" by a man his adult character structure is less shaped to be able to "mother" or, indeed, to want to.[58] He is also less able to provide a return to the mother in coitus that women offer men.[59] Adult women then feel a double sense of incompleteness in dyadic relationships with men that they seek

to mend by replicating the mother-infant-father triangle, this time in the position of mother.

Influenced both by Melanie Klein's more biologically oriented theory of the inevitable infantile discovery loss, powerlessness and rage and Norman O. Brown's historical pessimism, Dinnerstein's picture is altogether more bleak.[60] The infant's dependence is more frightening, its rage greater and adult heterosexual alienation starker. For Dinnerstein, the exclusive power that mothers have over biologically dependent infants of both sexes leaves a residue at the level of the unconscious of the infant's ambivalent attraction to women: a desire for their nurturing and a fear of their will. Thus, the source of mysogyny is identified with matriphobia arising from a dialectic of absolute power/powerlessness:

> Power of this kind, concentrated in one sex and exerted at the outset over both, is far too potent and dangerous a force to be allowed free sway in adult life. To contain it, to keep it under control and harness it to chosen purposes, is a vital need, a vital task, for every mother-raised human.[61]

Chodorow agrees that a wellspring of mysogyny lies in the contradictions of power and sensuality in gender arrangements that leave mothering exclusively to women but disagrees about its source. For Chodorow, the absence of fathers from child raising allows masculinity to be glamourized. Seeking autonomy, the girl turns to her father to open up the relationship with her mother.[62] Boys, forced to seek masculinity through a positional identification with its cultural symbols rather than a personal identification with a nurturing father, find continuing identification with the mother threatening yet attractive.[63] Their quandry is resolved by the creation of psychological and cultural mechanisms to cope with their fears without giving up women altogether.

> The structure of parenting creates ideological and psychological modes which reproduce orientations to and structures of male dominance in individual men, and builds an assertion of male superiority into the definition of masculinity itself.[64]

Both see bisexualizing parenting as a way to overcome mysogyny, mutual heterosexual erotic dissatisfactions and issues of autonomy endemic to "mother-raised" children, although neither offers a strategy for the restructuring of the psychic structures of "non-nurturant" males. In addition, such a reorganization of parenting would go some way to overcoming the ambivalence among mother-raised *women* that, as Jane Flax has persuasivly argued, constrain the political development of feminism.[65]

More theoretically intriguing, however, are the implications of the gender differentiated unconscious in shaping a relation to production and nature. Here, Dinnerstein makes explicit a thesis that is merely implicit in Chodorow

that gender differences in values and consciousness are not superficial but go so deep as to be of epistemological and anthropological significance. Chodorow's perception is limited to adaptation; female personality structure is adapted to the diffuse multi-phasic demands of childcare, male to class differentiated relation to economic participation. Dinnerstein argues that matriphobic mysogyny substructures a destructive relation with nature that cannot be explained by mere economic rationality. It is to this difference in consciousness that feminist metatheory turns.[66]

Motherhood and metatheory

The most provocative of all the initiatives at recentering feminist theory on the maternal are the metatheoretical revisions of O'Brien, Daly and Dinnerstein all of which are predicated upon a conviction that patriarchal theory has ignored and suppressed the importance of motherhood. They carry the themes of matriarchal motherhood, the historicization of mothering and gender differences in consciousness to a more general, indeed universal, level. For all three, the denigration of motherhood in political theory is symptomatic of a global deformation of consciousness which substructures a potentially catastrophic opposition between culture and nature which at its limit threatens life on this planet.

At the centre of O'Brien's analysis is a claim that "genderically differentiated processes of human reproduction itself" give rise to gender differences in consciousness and the theoretical and political projects they invoke.[66] Her brilliant relocation of Marx's production-centred alienation problematic in the fatalities and constraints of sexual reproduction should make it impossible to think of alienation in simply workerist terms any more. Distinguished from Rossi's biologism, she sees sexual differences in reproduction as material, mediated by consciousness and labour, further conditioned by historical development in productive and reproductive relations.[67] For both men and women, reproduction contains a moment of alienation to be overcome, but the modalities differ. After the discovery of the male role in reproduction, "negation [for men] rests squarely on the alienation of the male seed in the copulative act" with the result that male reproductive consciousness and the rationality to which it gives rise is fraught with dualism, separation and opposition from the race, from its continuity and from nature.[68] Overcoming this alienation and separation have been been male projects which can be traced in the attemps of political theory to create artificial forms of community and continuity and, in the face of uncertain paternity, to organize social systems designed to appropriate the child and to ensure control over female sexuality and reproductive powers in marriage and the family. The structures of patriarchy and male potency which accomplish this task have than a particular relation to nature; both rest on the capacity to transcend natural realities, whether benign or malign, with man-made realities.

In contrast with paternity, O'Brien sees maternity not as an abstract idea but a material relation. Although women also face a moment of alienation in birth it is

mediated by their own voluntary and involuntary labours. "Women, unlike men, do not have to take further action to overcome their alienation from the race, for their labour assures their integration" and structures a consciousness informed by suffering and labour that unites the actual with potential and confirms the integrations both of women with the generationally renewed species in both nature and history.[69] These synthetic dimensions of consciousness are, like the child, values created by labour in birth. Unlike men who are doomed by biology to a destiny of attempts to mediate reproductive alienation, women have lived their alienation in the private sphere of family and household.

These differentiated relations and consciousnesses have, however, been undermined by the development (from within the male sphere of alienated technology) of new contraceptive techniques incompatible with proprietary right to women and children. Because of their new ability to control reproduction by separating the "moment of copulation" from the "moment of conception" women are now placed in a situation of equality with men, thrust into a world of freedom. Women must begin to evolve their second nature and develop a feminist philosophy of freedom in the particularly difficult and urgent historical conditions inherited as a result of masculine hostility to nature; that is, a world "choked with technological sewage, a wasteland strewn with the garbage of the brotherhood's machines of war and electronic chatter."[70] For O'Brien, the growth of feminism as a revolutionary historical force permits and requires a theoretical elaboration of its synthetic consciousness in an integrated social science which comprehends birth not metaphorically but as a critique of power.[71] The women's movement must proceed from individual consciousness-raising to the political expression of transformed universal feminine consciousness, which demystifies the opposition of alienation and integration, the particular and the universal in the real world. In effect, she offers one version of the new form of rationality that Cixous sought and that feminist strategizing requires. Her project, although dependent upon women's practice is open to men who can be reintegrated into the genderal harmony of people and nature by cooperative decisions between reproducing adults.

For Dinnerstein, too, masculine subjectivity is bound up with the entrepreneurial control over nature and exclusive female mothering with its insane elaboration. Weaving together de Beauvoir's notion that women mediate men and unconscious uncontrollable nature and Brown's pessimistic reading of Western culture as obsessed with fear of the body, she argues that women appear as a Dirty Goddess, representing but repressing nature.[72] It is not simply the burden of childcare but also a greater sense of compunction for the mother, which grows out of a more intense identification with her on the part of girls that has served "to keep women outside the nature-assaulting parts of history — less avid than men as hunters and killers, as penetrator's of Mother Nature's secrets, plunderers of her treasure, outwitters of her constraints."[73] Although the male project appears to be freely chosen and equally valued for its technical results by both genders, it reveals a hollow core. Uncontrolled, the drive for transcendence that both sexes can assign to males because their power is less

contaminated with the sediment of infantile angst threatens to produce a world that is totally denatured and fit only for machines.[74]

Reflecting her training as a Catholic theologian, Mary Daly's problematic centres on a critique of religion and its underlying mythologies, a critique that subsumes Christianity under a notion of patriarchy as itself, "the prevailing religion of the entire planet."[75] Although her interpretation and solutions change radically in the course of her work from *Beyond God the Father* to *Gyn/Ecology: the metaethics of radical feminism*, their common core is a perception that male-dominated theologies have attempted to excise Goddess religions and their devotees and to substitute "the honour of the father" to take over her maternal powers.[76] Thus, Apollo, Dionysis and Athena who respectively control, madden and betray women and later Christ are moments in the evolution of legitimating patriarchal myths of "Monogender Male Motherhood".[77] In this process women are, like Mary, raped and emptied or, like Joan of Arc, a real Dianic heretic defeated by an alliance of French and English patriarchs whose common masculinist interests are stronger than those dividing their warring states.[78] The site of this struggle for control is typically medical knowledge acquired from childbirth and handed down through Goddess cults. Today the struggle is with role enforcing practices of gynecology and psychiatry.[79]

As her analytic position evolved, Daly's solutions changed. In her early work, she urged a transvaluation of "phallic morality" to give women existential courage to face ontological nothingness. Male-female/paternal-maternal differences were to be overcome through "a qualitative leap into psychic androgyny" which would integrate the repressed figure of the Goddess into new symbols of transcendence and provide the religious basis for an emancipatory politics that avoided the "idolatry of single issue limited goals."[80] Later, however, she rejected God as a pseudo-totality contaminated with necrophiliac patriarchy and androgyny as an abominable semantic suppression of totally woman-identified concepts.[81] Instead of mundane political action, she offers Hags and Crones, Spinners and Searchers a metapatriarchal journey into self-discovery and collective ecstasy.[82] In both cases, the building of female solidarity requires rejecting mother-daughter relations as at least ambivalent and at worst destructive, for "mothers in our culture are cajoled into killing off the self-actualization of their daughters" who learn, in turn, to hate them.[83] Her first metaphor for female solidarity is a cosmic convent where the realization of the mother-daughter relationship entails its destruction: "mother and daughter look with pride into each other's faces and know that they have both been victims and are now sisters and comrades."[84] Later she offers the vision of a celebratory coven united by Daughter-Right, since daughterhood is the universal social condition of women and the disalienated condition of mothers.[85] Either way, the dissolution of mother-daughter ties and the exclusion of men represents the positive sublation of motherhood, but at the cost of maternity.

In *Gyn/Ecolgy*, Daly's analysis of the effects of the biological division of labour in reproduction is extended from religion to science. Unable to incubate their own connections with immortality through pregnancy and birth and

preoccupied with the reproduction of their own male selves, men envy, not just the womb but women's creative energy in all its forms. Their envy gives rise to an identification with the foetus for, like the foetus, they draw on female energy to fuel projects of pseudocreative technology. Because Apollonian science feeds parasitically on women, loves only those victimized into a state of living death and ultimately deals deathly pollution to the heavens and the earth, it results in necrophilia:

> Since the passion of necrophilia is for the destruction of life and since their attraction is to all that is dead, dying and purely mechanical, the fathers fetishism with "fetuses" (reproductions/replicas of themselves) with which they passionately identify, are fatal to the planet. Nuclear reactors and the poisons they produce, stockpiles of atomic bombs, ozone destroying aerosol spray propellants, oil takers "designed" to self-destruct in the ocean.[86]

Even without the final solution of war, technology fosters the mechanization of life, a living death.

There is no doubt that these totalising visions have extended the power and range of feminist theory, but as metatheoretical elaborations of the motherhood problematic they each in different ways suffer from a one-sidedness at variance with the global complexity they aim to embrace. Thus, despite her ground-breaking rethinking of alienation theory, O'Brien's reassessment of classical political philosophy lacks historical concreteness (for all its appeal to History) particularly in its failure to specify the mechanisms which permit the patriarchal appropriation of motherhood to continue. In her work the move from the experience of reproductive biology to consciousness, whether formalized or spontaneous, is not mediated by a psychoanalytically understood unconscious. On the one hand, this analytic strategy avoids the necessity of imputing particular psychic motivational structures to political theorists whose texts can then be read for crucial absences (of reproduction) and demarcations (of nature/culture) which reveal political and ideological committments. On the other hand, it cannot elucidate the ways asymmetries in reproduction and childcare generate fears of empowered women which divide women not just from men but from one another.

The same ahistorical historicism flaws Dinnerstein's work, but in contrast there a disregard for the historical constitution of motherhood and production relations leads to an overinflation of psychical power, its confusion with social power and a reinforcement of the matriphobia she wants to contest. Despite their different emphases on the relative importance of biologically-based power and social powerlessness, both Chodorow and Dinnerstein can be read as reinforcing the mother-bashing of conventional psychology. Because it does not encompass actual biological reproduction and in fact rejects any male participation, Daly's theological transcendence of motherhood remains

congruent with Firestone's earlier radical feminist rejection of the mother. Furthermore, her assertion of instant recognition among women has been only partially substantiated by the actual political dynamics of feminist struggle. Prescriptively neutral with respect to other dimensions of political action, her retreat to a coven cannot stop ecological disaster. Concerned as they are with the dynamics of heterosexual reproduction, neither O'Brien nor Dinnerstein articulates the implications of lesbian sexual choice that Daly values. It seems, then, that both a focus on maternity and a concern with the practical organization of human reproduction are necessary if the full theoretical implications of the transformation implied by critically revalorised motherhood are to be fully and successfully drawn.

Conclusion

There is some irony in the fact that feminist theory is renewing itself by embracing motherhood. After all, did not nineteenth century feminism hold a similar perspective? And was this not a mark of its cooptation and containment? The thesis that there is a redemptive moment in feminine psychology which is connected with birth and nature is disturbing to the contemporary feminist emphasis on the similarity of women and men. Yet, as an authentic extension of radical, feminist critique the new motherhood problematic's assertion of the superiority of feminine modes of action and interaction holds a certain appeal. Rethinking motherhood begins a process in which feminist not androcentric theory defines what is good mothering and good in mothering.

While there are some obvious similarities in the maternal feminism of the first wave and the new motherhood problematic of the second there are also crucial differences that are more telling; they may theorize the same object but they do so with different values and strategies. In general, limited by a lack of effective contraceptive technology and a commitment to an anti-sexual moral propriety, nineteenth century feminists did not challenge contemporary hegemonic claims that gender differences and labour divisions were biologically determined facts of life. Instead, they made the ideology of difference their own. Women's moral, cultural and practical skills and values were meant to *extend* the boundaries of differentiated spheres, not break them down; men were not to diaper babies, although women were to read latin. The social conditions in which earlier feminist political ideologies arose also inflected their approach to maternity, particularly in relation to the woman/nature dialectic, and the tendency to identify these terms. While there were certainly problems arising from the relation of an industrial society to nature and from the dislocations of workers in the course of its development, these were, except for prolonged high rates of infant mortality, usually seen as local and specific.

The ideological character and historical situation of second wave feminism mitigates against an automatic equation of its new focus on motherhood with conservatism. Its commitment to a radical extension of egalitarian principle is supported by a sophisticated understanding of the oppressiveness of imposed gender divisions. Moreover, its radical transformative project is to create a

feminized world. Although there is now beginning to be some pressure to return women to the family, the liberatory character of the new motherhood theory is reinforced both by the historical and anthropological discourses examined above and by some aspects of practical life. Adopting the first wave metaphor of spheres, we can say that the second wave of the women's movement wants not merely to *overflow* boundaries but to *abolish them altogether* by extending the feminine sphere until it becomes coterminous with the human totality. In this optic, the liberation and integration of men lies in their reintegration into such a transformed world, not least, as full participants in the reproductive practices of childcare and birth, no longer as experts nor just as "fathers". Second wave motherhood theory goes beyond that of the nineteenth century not just to the extent that it envisions men as, among other things, also nurturers — mothers, if you like — but also insofar as it defines their assimiliation as necessary for human and planetary survival.

In narrower terms, a number of practical and political questions about the organization of birth and the social reproduction of human beings are posed. The critique of medicalized birth points to a need for the appropriation of knowledge and technology of the birth process by women and those with whom they wish to share it from its thrall in the hands of medical specialists. Existing contrasting outcomes of population policy in capitalist and self-identified socialist states also raise a democratic question of what social structures are necessary to empower individuals freely to make decisions about their reproductive lives and how to ensure a balance between population and resources.

Perhaps the most interesting contribution of the new motherhood problematic is its critical re-examination of the culture/nature distinction in relation to the prospects for a liberated technology and its location of this intersecting problematic at the point of birth. Here it shares the malestream philosophical perception of the unity of women and nature but interprets this as an evolutionary strength rather than a less-than-human weakness. It argues that birth, nature and female power and creativity are indeed linked and moreover that they each and all conflict with the outcomes of the male reproductive condition: exploitation, mechanistic rationalization and death. This strategic juncture has evidently become of immense political significance in a biosphere threatened with the exhaustion of resources, pollution and nuclear war, and in a situation where microtechnology is about to reduce drastically and globally the demand for productive labour. In these conditions, simply increasing production will neither end the gender division of labour nor ensure distributive justice on a world scale. The anti-malthusianism of early marxism and the technological faith of the soviets to which it gave rise absolutely need revision. The analysis offered by the new theories of motherhood underlines an intimate connection among women's liberation, global social emancipation and bio-spheric renewal. Whether elaborated in philosophical or psychoanalytic modes, these arguments, although they have visionary moments, are more than sentimental and must be examined by other currents of emancipatory philosophy.

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Notes

1. Although medical technology, for example in vitro fertilization, is increasingly capable of intervening in the process of conception in contemporary society the chief means is still adoption. Popular movements ocasionally gave women such as Mother Jones the title as an honorific. Non-western cultures have widespread and varying practices of prenatal social intervention including food tabus, beliefs about sexual intercourse, rituals, and musical or oral communication with the unborn child.

2. Aileen Kraditor, *The ideas of the women's suffrage movement.* Garden City 1971, pp. 52-55, 91; Wayne Roberts "'Rocking the cradle for the world': the new woman and maternal feminism" in L. Kealy ed., *A not unreasonable claim.* Toronto, 1979.

3. Betty Friedan, *The feminine mystique.* Harmondsworth 1972; Juliet Mitchell, *Women's estate.* Harmondsworth 1971, p. 36. Mitchell was the first to challenge the view that reproduction is "an atemporal constant — part of biology rather than history" p. 107.

4. Germaine Greer, *The female eunuch.* New York 1972, pp. 32, 232-3. She has since revised her views in part as a critique of the imposition of western technological rationality in the form of population control imposed on third world women and thus also become a political exponent of the transformed view of motherhood. *Sex and destiny.* New York, 1984.

5. Shulamith Firestone, *The dialectic of sex, the case for feminist revolution.* New York 1970. Marge Piercy, *Woman on the edge of time* translates this view into fiction; in contrast, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's nineteenth century feminist utopia, *Herland* relies on parthenogenic reproduction in a world of mothers and daughters.

6. Philippe Aries, *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life.* New York, 1962; Lawrence Stone, *Family and childhood in England.* Harmondsworth, 1979. Zillah Eisenstein, *The radical future of liberal feminism.* New York, 1981 links this theory with bourgeois liberal political theory.

7. The phrase is Jessie Bernard's, *The future of motherhood.* New York 1975 p. 20; see also Dolores Hayden, *The grand domestic revolution.* Cambridge, 1982; Helen Z. Lopata, *Occupation: housewife,* Oxford, 1971 for its full flowering and Meg Luxton, *More than a labour of love.* Toronto, 1981 for its contradictions. She demonstrates that production — of labour power — takes place in the home and that new technology has increased standards for rather than reduced the time spent in housework. Fertility peaks in Canada in 1961 and in the U.S.A. in 1957; Monica Boyd et al., "Family: function, formation, and fertility" in G. Cook ed., *Opportunity for choice.* Ottawa, 1976 and Bernard.

8. The phrase is Friedan's; Pauline B. Bart, "Depression in middle aged women" in V. Gornick and B. Moran, eds., *Woman in sexist society.* New York, 1972.

9. Helene Deutsch, *The psychology of women.* New York, 1944, 1945; Phyllis Chesler, *Women and madness.* New York, 1972.

10. For Canada, Pat Connelly, *Last hired, first fired.* Toronto, 1978; for the USA, Bernard, 1975, p. 144 ff.

11. Educational achievement for women is typically linked with lower marriage rates, late marriage and fewer children. Similarly, later marriage reduces the time "at risk" for socially legitimated pregnancy and childbearing. Effective contraception permits more control over family numbers and helps to eliminate the "extra" child; see Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada to-day.* Toronto, 1983.

12. *Time,* Feb. 22, 1982; the reception of Oriana Fallaci's *Letter to a child unborn.* Garden City 1978 was a similar instance.

13. Nancy Friday, *My mother/myself.* New York, 1978. pp. 342, 343, 450.

14. *Chatelaine,* the largest Canadian women's magazine and the *Globe and Mail* in its soft news sections have carried stories on late motherhood among the famous, unpartnered motherhood and, more recently, lesbians choosing pregnancy and motherhood. Even *Toronto Life* September, 1984 got in on the act with an article on "muppies" — mid-thirties yuppy mothers.

15. Signe Hammer, *Daughters and mothers.* New York, 1976 p. xi.

16. Susan Harding, "Family reform movements; recent feminism and its opponents" *Feminist Studies* 7:1, 1981.

17. "Female homosexuality is inseparable from the very qualities which were the perogative of women in early history. It is of no consequence to these conclusions whether the matriarchate existed as a definite period of history, which I believe, it did, or is mythology. Mythology is history, transcending concrete data and revealing their true meaning." Charlotte Wolf, *Love between women.* New York, 1971, p. 82; Jill Johnson sees mythology as a model for "theory, consciousness, and action", *Lesbian Nation.* New York. 1978 p. 249; Paula Webster, "Matriarchy: a vision of power" in R. Reiter *Toward an anthropology of women.* New York, 1975.

18. Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and feminism.* New York. 1974 helped focus this interest, although her committment to psychoanalysis predates its development.

19. Rachel Blau Duplessis, "Washing blood", *Feminist Studies* 4:2, (1978). p. 2.

20. Hélène Cixous, "The laugh of the Medusa", *Signs* 1:4 (1978) p. 877; the criterion of exploring the unconscious for a new rationality is also hers. Duplessis, 1978; Anita Barrows, "The chart"; Mary Oppen, "Breath of life"; and Alicia Ostriker, "From the mother/child papers" in the same special issue of *Feminist Studies*; and Jane Lazarre, *The mother knot.* New York, 1977 illustrates this approach.

21. Robin Morgan, *Going too far: the personal chronicle of a feminist.* New York, 1977, p. 8. et passim.

22. Adrienne Rich, *Of women born.* New York, 1977, p. 15.

23. Nancy Tanner and Adrienne Zihlman, "Women in evolution, part I; innovation and selection in human origins" *Signs* 1:3 (1981).

24. Ibid., p. 606.

25. Adrienne Zihlman, "Women and evolution, part II: subsistence and social organization among early hominids" *Signs* 4:1.

26. Merlin Stone, *When God was a woman.* New York 1976, p. 23; Sarah B. Pomeroy persents a counter view for a later period, *Goddesses, whores, wives and slaves: women in classical antiquity.* New York, 1975.

27. Ibid., Chapter 4.

28. Anne Barstow, "The uses of archeology for women's history: James Mellaart's work on neolithic goddesses at Çatal' Hüyük", *Feminist Studies* 4:3 (1978).

29. Ruby Rohrlich, "State formation in Sumer and the subjugation of women, *Feminist Studies* 6:1 (1980).

30. Charles T. Wood, "The doctors' dilemma: sin, salvation and the menstrual cycle in medieval thought" *Speculum* 56:4 (1981).

31. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *La nouvelle Heloise, Julie or the new Eloise.* trans. and abridged J. H. McDowell University Park, Pa. 1968; on Rousseau see Susan Moller Okin, *Women in western political thought.* Princeton, 1978; and Eisenstein, 1981, chapter 4.

32. Elizabeth Badinter argues that social practices among the aristocracy in eighteenth century France — wetnursing, governesses of tutors and boarding schools — indicate that mothers were relatively indifferent to the child's social welfare preferring to emerge from social seculsion into court circles of political power, intellectual enlightenment and sociability. These were later adopted by the Parisian bourgeoises: *The myth of motherhood.* London, 1981 p. 180.

33. The extent and character of maternal power is debated. Badenter, pp. 168ff, accepts it uncritically; Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, N.Y., 1979 and Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World.* N.Y., 1977, see it allied with state and expert agents; Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntavish, *The Anti-Social Family*, London, 1982, criticized their anti-feminism but failed to note their matriphobia.

34. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *For her own good: 150 years of the experts' advice to women.* Garden City 1978, p. 15.

35. Ibid., pp. 63, 19-20. Both of these solutions remain androcentric, assuming that the real world lies outside the home in spheres of production, politics and science occupied by men.

36. Ibid., p. 172.

37. Ibid., p. 174.

38. Mary P. Ryan, "Femininity and capitalism in anti-bellum America" in Z Eisenstein ed., *Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism.* New York, 1979.

39. See Phillip Wylie, *A generation of vipers.* New York, 1955.

40. Shirley Radl, *Mother's day is over.* New York, 1978 p. 207; a content analysis of 15 mass market books published between 1972-1980 revealed that all referred to the women's movement and that the most frequent citation was Ellen Peck *The baby trap.* New York, 1971, which argues an anti-natalist position in part on ecological grounds.

41. For example: Virginia Barber and Merril M Skaggs, *The mother person.* New York, 1977; Barbara Belford ed., *Redbook's The young mothers.* New York, 1977; Jean Curtis, *Working mothers.* New York, 1976; Elaine Hoffer, *Mothering: the emotional experience of motherhood after Freud and feminism.* Garden City, 1978; Lazarre, 1977; Angela Barron McBride, *The growth and development of mothers.* New York, 1973; Liz Smith, *The mother book.* Garden city, 1978; exceptions are Luxton, 1981; Harriet Rosenberg, "Motherhood and social reproduction" unpublished paper, Anne Oakley *Becoming a Mother.* New York, 1980.

42. Curtis, 1976 p. 42.

43. Barber and Skaggs, 1977, pp. 15, 98; Susan (Contrertto) Weisskopf, "Maternal sexuality and asexual motherhood," *Signs* 5:4 (Summer, 1984); "Maternalism, Sexuality and the New Feminism" in Zubin and J. Meney eds, *Contemporary Sexual Behavior: Critical Issues in the 1970's.* Baltimore, 1973.

44. Doris Bernstein, "Female identity synthesis" in Alan Roland and Barbara Harris eds., *Career and motherhood.* New York, 1979. This volume, which collects papers presented at the 1976 meetings of the National [USA] Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, presents the newly hegemonic position validating the "working mother"; see also, Esther Menaker, Harriett Podhoretz and Barbara Harris in the same volume.

45. As well as the citations in footnote 44, see Jessie Bernard, *Women, wives and mothers.* Chicago, 1975; Sydney C. Callaghan, ed., *The working mothers.* New York, 1975.

46. Barber and Skaggs, p. 217.

47. Barbara Ehrenreich and Diedre English, "Witches, nurses and Midwives," New England Press, n.d.; Jean Donnisen, *Midwives and medical men: a history of interprofessional rivalries and women's rights.* London, 1977; Anne Oakley, "Wisewoman and medicine man: changes in the manage-

ment of childbirth" in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley, eds., *The rights and wrongs of women.* Harmondsworth 1976, pp.; Rich; Jane Lewis, *The politics of motherhood.* London and Montreal, 1980; for Canada, *Ontario History 75: 1 (1983), Anne Oakley, "A case of pregnancy: paradigms of women in maternity cases" Signs* 4:4 (Summer, 1979).

48. Sheila Kitzinger, *Women as mothers.* Glascow 1978, p. 50.

49. Dana Breen, "The mother and the hospital" in S. Lipschitz ed., *Tearing the veil: essays on femininity.* London: 1975, pp. 25-28.

50. Suzanne Arms, *Immaculate deception.* Oxford, 1975; Kitzinger, 1978; Rich, 1977; Selma Fraiberg, *Every child's birthright: in defense of mothering.* New York: 1977; T. Chand and M. Richards, eds., *Benefits and Hazards of the New Obstetrics.* Heinemann Medical, 1977.

51. See Arms, 1975, Bridgitte Jordan, "Birth in Four Cultures", and Ruth Watson Lubic, "The Politics of childbirth today", *Second Motherhood Symposium Proceedings.* Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1981, pp. 151-166.

52. William Ray Arney, "Maternal-infant bonding: the politics of falling in love with your child," *Feminist Studies* 6:3 (1980).

53. Rich, p. 237.

54. Alice Rossi, "A biosocial perspective on parenting" *Daedelus* (1977).

55. Sigmund Freud, "Femininity" *New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis.* Harmondsworth, 1973 p. 153.

56. Nancy Chodorow, *The reproduction of mothering: psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender.* Berkley and Los Angeles, 1978, pp. 33, 40.

57. Ibid., p. 206.

58. Ibid., p. 175 ff.

59. Ibid., p. 194.

60. Dorothy Dinnerstein claims close kinship with Asch and gestalt theory, but she relies on Freud, Klein and Brown, *The mermaid and the minotaur: sexual arrangements and human malaise.* New York 1977, pp. xi, 43-44, 119.

61. Ibid., p. 161.

62. Chorodow, 1978, Chapter 7.

63. Ibid., pp. 173-177.

64. Ibid., p. 185.

65. Jane Flax, "The conflict between nurturance and autonomy in mother-daughter relationships and within feminism," *Feminist Studies* 4:2, 1978.

66. Mary O'Brien, *The politics of reproduction.* London, 1981, p. 21.

67. Ibid., p. 50.

68. Ibid., pp. 29, 34.

69. Ibid., p. 32.

70. Ibid., p. 194.

71. Ibid., pp. 169 ff; for O'Brien, women's struggles for daycare, abortion and rewards for domestic labour and against legal restrictions and violence help to consolidate rational control over the process of reproduction. The further strategy she recommends, socializing children to new modes, seems inadequate to her wider vision; it is not articulated with, for example, the need to control state agencies of socialization.

72. Dinnerstein, 1973, pp. 124 ff; Sherry Ortner follows de Beauvoir to a similar conclusion, "Is female to nature as male is to culture?" in M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere eds., *Woman, culture and society*. Stanford 1974.
73. Ibid., p. 103.
74. Ibid., p. 160 ff.
75. Mary Daly, *Gyn/ecology: the metaethics of radical feminism*. Boston, 1978 p. 39.
76. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the father: toward a philosophy of women's liberation*. Boston, 1973 p. 14-15.
77. Daly, 1978, p. 87.
78. Daly, 1973 p. 146.
79. Daly, 1979 pp. 215-216.
80. Ibid., pp. 27-28, 149.
81. Daly, 1978 pp. xi ff.
82. Ibid., chapter 10.
83. Daly, 1973 p. 129.
84. Ibid., chapter 6, p. 150.
85. Ibid., pp. 346-347.
86. Ibid., p. 63.

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