MOTHERIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES: THE EXPECTATION OF MOTHERHOOD AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

By

LACI NICHOLE HUBBARD-MATTIX

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of LACI NICHOLE HUBBARD-MATTIX find it satisfactory and recommend it be accepted.

Claudia Leeb, Ph.D., Chair

Matt Stichter, Ph.D.

Amy G. Mazur, Ph.D.

William P. Kabasenche, Ph.D.
MOTHERIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES: THE EXPECTATION OF
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Abstract

by Laci Nichole Hubbard Mattix, Ph.D.
Washington State University
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Chair: Claudia Leeb

Mainstream feminist theorists have argued that motherhood is no longer a theoretically important topic. This is simply not true. Women are expected to become mothers and this expectation has important consequences for society at large. This project develops the concept of motherization which is the process by which women are trained and conditioned within a societal context to expect and desire motherhood. Motherization not only controls the population through biopolitics, but also produces women’s bodies as docile bodies. It is also important to note that not all women experience motherization. Motherization is generally relegated to white, educated, and well-off women while minority, uneducated, and impoverished women experience the reverse, or demotherization.

This study examines, through an intersectional approach, the various ways in which the expectation of motherhood occurs within the United States. I examine the ways in which specific aspects of American society are involved with the motherization process. Specifically, I analyze the culture industry, current business practices, and reproductive technologies to demonstrate that certain privileged women are expected to become mothers while underprivileged and minority women are not.
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Chapter 1: Introduction: Why Motherization?

This project began as an investigation into my own thoughts and conflicted feelings about motherhood and has evolved into a response to feminist thinkers that have argued that motherhood is no longer an important expectation that women experience. For instance, Sandra Lee Bartky argued that “[n]ormative femininity is coming more and more to be centered on woman’s body—not its duties and obligations or even its capacity to bear children...” (Bartky 1990, 416). And Lisa Guenther similarly argues “‘[i]f Levinas merely reinscribes a tired myth of women’s suffering and lack of choice with respect to maternity, then what can be ethical about maternal substitution” (Guenther 112, 2006). I argue that while the expectation of motherhood may not be as overt as it once was women still undergo motherization. Motherization or the process by which women are trained and conditioned within a societal context to expect and desire motherhood is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed within feminist theorizing. The propagation of the expectation is not explicit as it was in the past and has different consequences, however, it does still exist. This work aims to explore several points at which motherization occurs within the United States and to demonstrate that motherization varies across populations. Furthermore, motherization is not something that occurs to all women all the time. Rather some women experience the reverse process or demotherization. I examine both processes and problematize them by demonstrating their negative impacts on the women involved. Both phenomena are not neutral and fit into a racist and classed background in the United States that need to be examined. For instance, motherization is a phenomenon experienced mostly by white, educated, middle-class women while demotherization is experienced by minority women and those living in poverty.
Inherent to my argument is a critique of the liberal notion of free choice and the individual, autonomous man. The expectation of motherhood is experienced for women throughout their lives and in many different ways. Motherhood is not a choice but practically an inevitable outcome for many women. I argue that societal norms push particular people into particular situations and so the idea that anyone is able to freely choose is a myth. This fits within the feminist critique of liberal construction of autonomy. (Kirarly 2015, 12) Rather the way in which power is reproduced creates a certain kind of reality that produces particular types of people who live particular types of lives. According to Foucault power is productive in that it shapes individuals. He argues “[t]his form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life legalizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and other have to recognize in him, it is a form of power that makes individuals subjects” (Foucault 331, 2000). For the women I am describing this means that they are produced as mothers.

In chapter two I establish the theoretical foundation I will be using throughout the work. I discuss the ways in which I use the Foucauldian framework of power to demonstrate that women are produced as mothers and that they are produced as particular types of mothers with particular consequences. As I am using the Foucauldian framework this means that the power experienced in the process of motherization is not unilateral and so resistance is innate to it which explains why some women do not become mothers, even the ones that experience the expectation of motherhood. In this chapter I also indicate the ways in which motherization is a manifestation of biopower in that it works to control the human population. The following
chapters are not meant as an entire survey of the process of motherization but rather to
demonstrate that it exists and that it occurs at multiple junctures in society.

In chapter three, I introduce Adorno’s conceptualization of the Culture Industry to
demonstrate that motherization begins at an early age. I use the Twilight and Hunger Games
series to demonstrate how the portrayal of motherhood in the novels indicates that motherhood is
inevitable and beneficial. I also analyze the thought experiment “Herland” in which the author
Charlotte Perkins Gillman describes her vision of a society containing only women. I also
analyzed works representing minority representations of motherhood in order to demonstrate that
the message of the Culture Industry defers between people. I then turn to depictions of
motherhood in Beloved by Toni Morrison and The Mothers by Brit Bennett. I use these stories
to argue that not all audience members of the culture industry experience motherization.

In chapter five I explore the ways in which women experience motherization in the
business realm. From the fetal protection policies in the 1990’s to current maternal leave
policies women on the job experience the expectation of motherhood. As women working in the
capitalist economy the message they receive is clear that their importance as workers is less
important than their importance as mothers. Women receive this message before they become
mothers in fact, they receive it even when they never become mothers. Women were banned
from certain positions in factories that were potentially hazardous to fetuses. If a substance was
known to cause issues for fetuses women were prohibited from working in the positions that
exposed them to these chemicals. Only women were banned from these jobs even though
medical evidence suggested exposure to fathers was just as damaging as exposure to mothers
with certain chemicals. It is important to note that all potential mothers were banned from
working with the chemicals even those who had already had children and were unlikely to become pregnant again. The implementation of the FPP demonstrates the imbalance of the parental expectation. Women live to exist within a familial context as mothers and men exist outside their parental nature independent of their identity. It is women’s ability to procreate (identity as mothers) that must be protected. Maternal mother policies often push women out of work and into the home. The fact that women are unpaid for their maternity leave combined with the expense of child care push women into the home.

In chapter six I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to demonstrate that the academic discourses of policy and ethics surrounding Assistive Reproductive Technologies is complicit in the motherization of women. Many studies of the medical field and otherwise, especially surrounding motherhood, have directly or indirectly been influenced by Foucault. According to Foucault academic and scientific discourse create a false binary that indicates only two possible suggestions exist when there are many more possibilities. These other possibilities are delegitimized in the discourses because they remain “not said”. As they are “not said” it becomes as if they do not, in fact exist. In the discussion what is not discussed at all is what is most important because they are what indicate what is truly happening within the discourses. In the discussion about reproductive technology voluntary sterilization is ignored. What is “not said” is that women are conditioned into becoming mothers. This emphasizes the fact that particular women are supposed to procreate. To demonstrate that there is need for a discourse in

1 These policies led to the desire in some women to become sterilized so that they could return to the jobs they had prior to FPP being implemented. It is important to note that these women did not desire sterilization prior to the FPP. They sought sterilization because the women who were removed from their positions because of the FPP were not given equitable pay/positions to the ones that were held prior to the policies but rather were demoted which led to a loss in pay and prestige. In one telling example a supervisor was demoted to a laundry worker. She went from managing her male colleagues to doing their laundry.
both policy and ethical journals I turn to anecdotal evidence provided by blogs, a radio
documentary, and online news articles to demonstrate that there are access issues to sterilization.
To demonstrate that these things are left not-said I completed an analysis of the top five bioethics
and policy journals to demonstrate that the rate of conversation about ART as opposed to
voluntary sterilization signals the importance of pregnancy and motherhood for women. I did a
similar analysis of the top-five journals in the United States. I have chosen these mediums as
they are two places we would expect the issues surrounding voluntary sterilization to be brought
into attention. The fact that they do not is demonstrative that there is an emphasis on procreation
as opposed to not having children.

This offers a stark contrast to the experience of nonwhite women who have historically
experienced involuntary sterilization and are discouraged from having children. This
underscores that only certain women experience the pressure to have children while others
experience the pressure to not have children. It also offers a stark contrast to programs that still
exist in the United States that give small sums of money ($300) to women who are drug addicts
to become sterilized. The women in these situations are generally minority women with little
education who live in poverty.

In chapter seven, I investigate the ways in which current surrogacy arrangements in the
United States motherize certain populations while demotherizing others. Connected to the
conversation on assisted reproductive technologies in the previous chapter I connect the ways in
which surrogacy is marketed to intended parents, and surrogate mothers to demonstrate that
current practices and portrayals of surrogacy arrangements implicitly privilege certain lives over
others.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Methodology

In this chapter I set up the theoretical and methodological frameworks that will be used throughout the dissertation to set up the exploration of motherization within the United States. Types of women (white, bourgeoisie, educated, who are citizens) are pushed into motherhood through a process that I term motherization. Motherization is the process by which women are trained and conditioned within a social context to expect and to desire motherhood. Motherhood as a social construct has specific expectations and forms that are produced within the women that experience the process of motherization. Women experience motherization in a variety of ways and at differentiated points of time. Motherization is not a hegemonic and constant discourse removing the choice of women to be mothers. Rather it acts as a legitimating force pushing women towards motherhood of a particular type throughout their lives.

Throughout the dissertation I establish why motherization is important through introducing how it occurs and why we need to acknowledge the phenomenon and its consequences. I begin by developing the importance of motherization, proceed to explain the connection of the process with its consequences, as well as indicate the ways in which the phenomenon fits into biopolitics and biopower.

Foucault defines modern power as “…situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race and the large-scale phenomena of the population” (Foucault 2010, 260). The evolution of power took two forms as Foucault explains

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2 Motherization within the United States society incurs a specific type of motherhood that leads to the specific consequences discussed in later chapters. Given a different context for the motherization process the consequences of motherization could be vastly different than those being discussed here. However, there is no reason to expect that motherization only occurs within the context of the United States.
In concrete terms, starting in the seventeenth century, this power over life evolved into two basic forms….two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles…centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body. The second…focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological process: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population. The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed. The setting up, in the course of the classical age, the great bipolar technology- anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the process of life-characterized a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through (Foucault 2010, 262).

Power became concerned with the control of the individual body and with controlling the characteristics of the population. Anatomico-political power involves the power that is exerted over and by the body making sure that it functions within the demanded parameters of the society and the economy, whereas biopolitical power functions over and through the population. For women, this means their bodies are produced as mothers. As mothers, they ensure that the next generation of workers are born fulfilling their function in the economy that is always in need of workers. The docile-utile body is produced after this shift in the meaning of power.

“The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it. A ‘political economy,’ which was also a ‘mechanics of power.’ Was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility and diminishes the same forces (in political terms of obedience” (Foucault 2010, 182).
In other words, it creates a dichotomized body that through discipline is dissociated from the body “it turns it into an ‘aptitude,’ a ‘capacity,’ which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reserves the course of energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (Foucault 2010, 182). Throughout this dissertation I argue that through the phenomena of motherization woman’s body is created as a docile-utile body as mother.

Motherization creates a closed circle for women. Women are produced as mothers. Mothers are produced as docile bodies their bodies, as mothers, are subject to regimented control. Furthermore, docile bodies are produced as women. Within this closed circle, the domination of women within a patriarchal system is maintained creating a self-perpetuating domination of women. The circle of docility also justifies itself through the production of women as mothers. Women are mothers and are produced as docile bodies. As such, they must be treated in a particular manner. Relegating women to motherhood and creating motherhood as a constraining rather than empowering force means that the continued subjugation of women is furthered contemporaneously through the continued primacy of motherhood as the appropriate and necessary role for women. To demonstrate how women are produced as docile bodies through motherization I turn to Simone Beauvoir’s (1989) depiction of motherhood in The Second Sex and Rebecca Kukla's (2013) analysis of the docile body produced by the depiction of nationalism during the French Revolution. These are connected to Bartky’s feminist critique of Foucault for ignoring the specific ways in which women are produced as docile bodies differently and more fully than men. Bartky acknowledges the tour de force of “Discipline and Punish” and of the docile body; however, she argues that Foucault treats the body as if it were
one and so is blind to those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is particularly feminine. She points to women’s magazines and beauty regimens to demonstrate that women are produced as docile bodies in ways that men are not. She is to be heterosexual and to make herself object and prey for man. Bartky affirms that femininity is a spectacle in which every woman is required to participate. Specifically, she argues that Foucault tends to identify the imposition of discipline upon the body with the operation of specific institutions, the military, schools, or hospitals, and because of this he overlooks the extent to which discipline can be bonded outside of institutions as is the case with women. Discipline is something, according to Bartky, that is imposed in an “essentially inegalitarian and asymmetrical system” which can be both voluntary and involuntary. Therefore, women have internalized patriarchal standards of body acceptability. (Bartky, 1990) Being internalized means that it is incorporated into the structure of the self. There is no need for the power to be exerted over the body. Rather women themselves make sure that their own bodies fit into the appropriate framework. For women extreme obedience to beauty regimens means that they undergo a form of extreme self-surveillance under the panopticon which demands obedience to the patriarchy. I argue that women are produced as mothers in a specific form of docile body as well. Being a good mother requires that a woman breast-feed which is a physically demanding task requiring strong discipline of the body. However, it is not enough that mothers breastfeed their children they must also do so in an appropriate manner demanding further discipline of the body3. This leads to a contradiction of obligations within mothers, which causes them difficulties that need to be addressed.

3 Pregnancy itself is also highly constrained.
I apply Foucault’s insight that disciplinary power produces docile bodies to my analysis of motherization. The pregnant body, as described by Simone Beauvoir, is a particularly feminine docile body produced by the current expectation of motherhood. There is no reason to expect all women to experience pregnancy and motherhood as it is described by Beauvoir. This is evidenced within Kukla’s own work. *The Lady Liberty* (whom ideal motherhood was based upon during the French Revolution) was not a docile body. Rather, she stands, hand raised proudly, bare chested, armed for the revolution stoically holding the French Flag. She is not a docile body who “feels it as at once an enrichment and an injury; the fetus is a part of her body, and it is a parasite that feeds on it; she possesses it, and she is possessed by it; it represents the future and, carrying it she feels herself vast as the world; but this very opulence annihilates her, she feels that she herself is no longer anything” (Beauvoir 1988, 495). These deviations from motherization do not nullify the existence of the process. For the power that exists within motherization was explained by Foucault “…that never exhaustively determines a subject’s possibilities, and it specifies the relevant field of possibility as that of conduct or behavior, taking the latter in the widest sense of the term” (Davidson 2007, XXIV). No one physically forces women to become pregnant and to remain pregnant, but power works to ensure motherhood as women’s relevant life work. The stress on the importance of motherhood manifests itself in various ways. It indicates to women that the only legitimate role for them within society is as a mother. Resistance is inherent in all forms of power relations according to Foucault and motherization is not different. For the process to exist there must be pressure that works against and through.
This dissertation also furthers the work done by feminist thinkers like Sandra Lee Bartky while offering a challenge to their frameworks as well. Bartky describes the particular gendered docile body and argues that no longer is it disciplined to be a mother but to be a sexual object of men. (Bartky 1980, 416). However, the examples of the ways in which mothers are pushed into a particular sort of docile body in the workplace demonstrates that the importance of motherhood to women is not yet past. The regimented regimes of breastfeeding, and the expectation of control of morning sickness and the general expectation of motherhood that is omnipresent in the workforce demonstrates that at least one manifestation of the gendered docile body is that of the working mother. Such docility has been perpetuated by the ways in which philosophers and theorists have described birth. Patriarchal forces have connected birth to death in order to undermine the singular power of women to provide life through birth. Women are not only the bringers of life but also the bringers of death according to this interpretation (Guenther 2008). Bringing forth life is a powerful act that patriarchal powers could not leave in the hands of women.

Motherization is not an all-encompassing power relation that all women experience in a particular way at specified times even by those women who are produced by it. Rather it is a differentiated process that occurs in various ways over various relations and contexts. It is not experienced by all women and it is not experienced all of the time. There has in fact, been a decline in birth rate in the United States. More and more women are not becoming mothers at all. There is evidence of a movement to not have children. Various memoirs created in the last few years address the ability to live a fulfilled life without children. These are subversive works
that resist the status quo. The women (and they are all written by women) acknowledge that by not having children they are resisting societal expectations. Women who do not have children are told that their lives will never be complete, to feel guilty, and that they are inherently selfish. Cafépress even has offers merchandise to celebrate “being child-frees.” The majority of the merchandise available, even for women, focuses on men’s voluntary sterilization. The focus on men’s ability to ensure that they do not become parents undermines the ability for women to make the same decision. Men’s bodies are allowed to ensure the inability to become pregnant. Women are not afforded the same allowance. Motherization is evident even within contexts that resist the inevitability of motherhood. Not becoming a mother is still viewed as a subversive act whereas a focus on men not becoming fathers is tellingly absent. It is often an unquestioned assumption that women are to become mothers. In order for women to celebrate the fact that they are never going to have children they must do so through their partner’s sterility.

Motherhood has become an increasingly popular field of study. Theorists and philosophers have argued for the acknowledgement of the importance of women as mothers and critically analyzed the production of women as mothers. Many feminist thinkers, who explore motherhood, only investigate the consequences of the institution of motherhood or a way in which the institution is propagated. For example, Janice Raymond (1994) in her work “Woman

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4 These works include:
Hughes, Aralyn, 2014. “Kid Me Not: an anthology by child-free women of the 60’s now in their 60’s (boomers remember).” Violet Crown Publishers
Mantel, Henriette, “No Kidding: Women Writers on Bypassing Motherhood” Seal Press
Daurm, Megan, “Selfish, Shallow, and Self-Absorbed: Sixteen writers on the Decision Not to Have Kids” Picador

5 This merchandise ranges from coffee-mugs to t-shirts. http://www.cafepress.com/+childfree+gifts
as Wombs” establishes the ways in which ART (Assisted Reproductive Technologies) have reduced mothers to wombs (or in other words, their reproductive capabilities) and the consequences that this has on women in the East and West. She acknowledges that women as mothers are produced within society. Her emphasis on ART as producing mothers helps to establish that there is a pronatal technological society. A society in which reproductive technology works to support the evaluation of women primarily, if not solely, through their ability to reproduce. However, she does not acknowledge the other ways in which motherization occurs. For instance, she does not acknowledge that the process of motherization that occurs in the culture industry or through common business practices. Thus, she does not recognize that the destruction of ART is not a comprehensive solution to the problems addressed in her works.

The acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of motherization throughout society distinguishes my analysis. The overall argument of this work demonstrates the current contexts that train women (in the United States) that motherhood is an inevitable and desirable part of their existence. The various ways in which Motherization occurs has specific consequences. It is a dynamic process with outcomes that are generally negative. They are negative because they create a particular feminine docile body and expectations that are impossible to fulfill. This analysis is a significant addition to feminist theory because it demonstrates an important, and previously ignored, way in which women are constrained within patriarchy and capitalism. Feminists have demonstrated that motherhood is produced by patriarchal society to produce particular types of bodies as mothers. I acknowledge that there are various ways in which motherhood is produced and by acknowledging that motherization occurs through various facets offer a more complete explanation of the process and its consequences. However, I in no way
finish the complete analysis of the ways in which motherization occurs. By leaving the process open for further analysis the term is benefitted as it can expand and change for different temporal and cultural realities. Specifically, it is not just patriotism or nationalistic language that creates the conceptualization of an ideal motherized society but a complex interwoven process. Motherization and the discourse involved in it permeate society in a various ways that are connected and pervasive.

I explore multiple places where motherization is manifested. By investigating multiple points across society I demonstrate that motherization is pervasive and cuts across various levels of society exerting different productive pressures at different points. Academic discourses indicate that motherization occurs at an institutional level to adults whereas the culture industry’s portrayal of motherhood aimed toward adolescent women indicates that the process begins at an early stage of life. Adult women, both those who are mothers and those who are not, are encouraged to be mothers (or shamed for not being mothers). Adolescent women are trained to accept their future as mothers. Women as members of the economic community are secondary to women as mothers. I am by no means arguing that these are the only manifestations of motherization. This process occurs in several ways at once. Motherization is pervasive and must be examined from multiple levels to be fully understood. Additionally, motherization is dynamic and as such it is imperative to acknowledge that it can and does change.

My analysis includes several different instances of motherization in order to demonstrate that it is a pervasive process that has many manifestations. I connect the ways in which that motherization occurs throughout a woman’s life. It begins in the culture industry that
formulates the expectation of motherhood but also acts as a model for motherhood and creates a particular kind of motherhood. The pervasiveness of motherization allows us to investigate the consequences of motherhood and to connect them to the ways that motherhood is reproduced. In other words, motherization can and does exist in different contexts that change at the individual, societal, and cultural levels. It is in flux and has the ability to develop new manifestations.

Specifically, motherhood is the production of a *pronatal technological society*.6 Motherhood is not an option that women choose, rather it is a position that they are required to accept given the current construct of the described society7. The expectation of motherhood is perpetuated in various ways and avenues throughout Western culture. I identify some of these avenues in my analysis, and expose the ways in which disciplinary power is connected to discourse (academic and otherwise) surrounding motherhood, pregnancy, and sterilization in the production of motherhood.

Here I introduce specific examples of motherization as it occurs in the United States. The brief outline demonstrates a glimpse into the multifaceted manifestations of motherization. The summarization of the intersectional aspects of motherization is intended as an introduction to the concept and is not intended as a conclusive representation of the process. Rather, I work to establish that, as a process, motherization occurs in various ways and that focusing on only one of these ignores its pervasive nature.

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6 I borrow this phrase from Carolyn Mcleod in *Self-Trust and Reproductive Autonomy* (2002)
7 I do not want to argue that the experience of all mothers in Western Society should be seen as coerced and negative but rather that the current construct of motherhood is problematic and damaging.
**Methodology**

First, I conceptualize an approach to motherhood, which I call "motherization."

Theoretically, I build the argument both that the process exists and that it has negative consequences for those involved.

Once the concept has been properly defined and theoretically situated, I engage in a series of interlocking evaluations of places within American society where motherization occurs to build the argument that the concept both exists empirically and that the implications of its existence are measurable and real in the world. Each investigation employs a different method, designed best to capture the relationship between "motherization" and academic discourse, business, the Culture Industry, and the target audiences of surrogacy marketing. These investigations are in themselves not complete. That is to say, they are not intended to capture each instance in which motherization exists but to demonstrate that the expectation of motherhood is ubiquitous and connected to actual effects in the real world. Each case is intended to indicate that the expectation of motherhood plausibly exists in the real world as opposed to conclusively arguing that each case by itself establishing motherization as a concept on its own.

This project works to demonstrate that motherization does not occur solely in one area in society but rather in a multiple places at once. The chapters work together to draw a picture of motherization that exists in American society at large. My approach is similar to a mixed methodology approach because it uses the assumption that “using several methods is more suitable than relying on a single method. Being open to using those techniques that work with respect to different research questions and propositions gives us the chance to more fully explore the validity of state feminism” (McBride and Mazur 2010, 37). While my project does not relate
directly to state feminism, my incorporation of multiple analyses examined from different avenues is still more suitable than relying on a single method. Specifically, it relates to triangulation in that it is not an attempt to test each methodology used in the following chapters against or to prove one another but to “integrate the findings from each method to contribute to the validation…” (McBride and Mazur 2010, 38) of motherization. Furthermore, this is not an attempt to prove a theory using empirical means. Rather, it is an attempt to build a theory using evidence from the empirical world. The methodological approach used in this study acts as a stool with multiple legs. (Pachirat 2009, 42) Theoretical concept of motherhood is conceptualized and then it is demonstrated in each investigation acting as a leg to provide support. It is an attempt to demonstrate that there is a preponderance of the evidence that, unlike what is argued by Lisa Guenther and Sandra Lee Bartky, there is an expectation of motherhood impacting women in the United States that needs to be acknowledged and problematized by feminist political theory.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that my approach is not traditionally multimethod. Rather than using multiple methodologies to approach the same problem, I approach the same concept from multiple angles. In other words, I am using different methods on distinct issues that all point to the same overarching theme—that of motherization. Each angle is an attempt to approach the specific avenue in the most plausible way.
Chapter 3: Expected Motherhood in the Culture Industry

In this chapter I apply Maxwell Horkheimer’s and Theodor Adorno’s (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002) theoretical framework of the culture industry to modern literary works to demonstrate the ways in which motherization is deployed to certain girls and demotherization is deployed to others. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the Culture Industry destroys choice and alternative action to its audience. This process affects both the creator and the observer. It binds the choice of the artist (writer, composer, etc…) and legitimizes the prescribed choice of the observer. Neither the creator of the piece nor the viewer is free. As Adorno explained “everything somehow appears ‘predestined’” (Adorno 1991, 161). In other words, the Culture Industry exists outside of the people who produce and consume it. Horkheimer and Adorno were mostly concerned with general characteristics and consequences of the Culture Industry. In this chapter, I advance a more specific version of the Culture Industry. I argue that contemporary portrayals of motherhood in the Culture Industry are an integral part of both the motherization and demotherization processes. This is especially insidious in works targeting young women. Using Twilight, Hunger Games, and Herland, I demonstrate that motherhood is portrayed to young adolescent affluent white girls that becoming a mother is not a choice but a necessity. I juxtapose that analysis with an analysis of Beloved and The Mothers to demonstrate that the message is different to adolescent minority girls. I begin the chapter with an analysis of the

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8 These are not the only examples I could use. From the popular show Grey’s Anatomy to the Dragon Riders of Pern, the portrayals of women in the Culture Industry underscores the notion that a woman’s only societally acceptable choice is to become a mother.

9 I choose to focus mainly on works that target young adults as these sources will shape their views on motherhood. However, another way of looking at it would be to use the works as a legitimation of the adult woman’s choice to become a mother. And to accept the “beatings” that occur once one becomes a mother.
Culture Industry and then proceed to a descriptive analysis of the chosen works to demonstrate the existence of motherization within them.

The Culture Industry creates a powerlessness within its population. “Anyone who does not conform is condemned to be an economic impotence which is prolonged in the intellectual powerlessness of the eccentric loner. Disconnected from the mainstream, he is easily convicted of inadequacy” (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 106). This has been the impact of capitalism on the Culture Industry, only now the consumers are workers, salaried employees, farmers and petty bourgeois, who in turn are unable to resist whatever ideas are offered to them. The culture industry encompasses music, art, literature, in television, and the big screen, and as such the culture industry is representative of society. “The whole world is passed through the filter of the culture industry. The familiar experience of the moviegoer, who perceives the street outside as a continuation of the film he has just left, because the film seeks strictly to reproduce the world of everyday perception, has become the guideline of production” (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, 99).

Conformity to the culture industry’s message is mandatory. To do anything but to obey this decree is to be inadequate. Or in other words, to not be fulfilling one’s proper role in society.

To the extent that cartoons do more than accustom the senses to the new tempo, they hammer into every brain the old lesson that continuous attrition, the breaking of all individual resistance, is the condition of life in society. Donald Duck in the cartoons and the unfortunate victim in real life receive their beatings so that spectators can accustom themselves to theirs (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 110).

The Culture Industry has a controlling effect on citizens in society: to their particular places but also regulates the actions that they are to take, given their places. The audience is prepared for the negative aspects of their lives, their “beatings” because they have watched their counterparts receive endless beatings on stage. In other words, the Culture
Industry normalizes actions and consequences. Conformity is the name of the game and whoever does not play is forced into impotence.

The ideals of conformity and conventionalism were inherent in popular novels from the very beginning. Now, however, these ideals have been translated into rather clear-cut prescriptions of what to do and what not to do. The outcome of conflicts is pre-established, and all conflicts are mere sham. Society is always the winner, and the individual is only a puppet manipulated through social rules (Adorno, 1991 164).

The Culture Industry provides a guideline of what to do and how to act. Maintaining the norm is what one must do.

Adorno, himself, argues the eminence of womanhood/wifedom in the Culture Industry. He argues that the Culture Industry has at least in part created a world where marriage is a given for the “right” type of woman.

Whether maintained values derived from religious ideas obtain a different meaning when severed from their root should be carefully examined. For example, the concept of the ‘purity’ of women is one of the invariables of popular culture. In the earlier phase, this concept is treated in terms of an inner conflict between concupiscence and the internalized Christian ideal of chastity, whereas in today’s popular culture it is dogmatically posited as a value per se. Again even the rudiments of this pattern are visible in productions such as Pamela. There, however, it seems a by-product; whereas in today’s popular culture the idea that only the ‘nice girl’ gets married and that she must get married at any price has come to be accepted before Richardson’s conflicts even start (Adorno 1991, 193).

I take this argument one step further. The Culture Industry, in its portrayal to young women, does not end with marriage as the ultimate goal for womanhood, but rather, with motherhood as an ultimate and inevitable achievement. Using the work of Simone Beauvoir I demonstrate the parallel nature of the portrayals of motherhood in these works to this end. Beauvoir argues, “[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female
represents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature…” (Beauvoir 1989, 267). In this chapter, I argue that part of the way that civilization produces women as specifically mothers is through the culture industry.

**Motherhood in the Culture Industry**

This idea of the importance of motherhood for every female viewer is portrayed and conveyed through the culture industry. Anyone who can see herself as the heroine of the work is invited to receive this message. It works to legitimate the nation’s discourse on the importance of reproduction. The Culture Industry has worked to maintain this relationship of women to the state. It has supported the idea that a woman must be a mother in order to fulfill her function in society. As Adorno described the phenomenon “[t]he more strongly the culture industry entrenches itself, the more it can do as it choses with the needs of consumers- producing, controlling, disciplining them; even withdrawing amusement altogether: here no limits are set to cultural progress” (Horkheimer and Adorno 116). The culture industry has entrenched the idea of motherhood as inevitable in a variety of ways that are explored below.

**Motherization**

*Twilight*

In the series “Twilight” Bella Swan’s character emphasizes the importance of motherhood to a woman.¹⁰ She partially does this by following the trajectory of a female as exemplified in Simone Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*. This work demonstrates that women are

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¹⁰ Anastasia Steele in the “Shades of Grey” fulfills this requirement in almost the same manner as Bella Swan. However, it is not discussed here because the stories follow each other so closely it would be redundant.
secondary in a male dominated society and explores what this does to their psyches. It is easy for
the contemporaneous reader to believe that in the last 63 years we have moved on and that
women have gained true equality and that life is no longer oppressive to women and that
marriage is now truly equal for the wife and for the husband. However, we are not as far
removed as we would like to believe. Through the viewing of popular culture and an analysis of
female characters in books like *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyers we are able to determine that we,
the second sex, are not as far removed as we would like to believe from Simone de Beauvoir's
viewing of society. The protagonist Bella Swan who is portrayed as a strong feminine character
in reality is a grotesque epitome of Simon de Beauvoir's reality. Young girls want to emulate the
protagonists they see in the Culture Industry this is why an analysis of popular fiction
demonstrates that women's experiences are still able to be framed by Simone de Beauvoir.
Women are still the Second Sex and are produced as such in the Culture Industry.

In the beginning of the novel, the heroine Bella Swan sacrifices her own happiness and
the life she loves in order to allow her mother to be happy in her own marriage. Upon arrival in
the new town of Forks, Washington, she instantaneously begins to wait on her father. She feels
it is her responsibility to cook his meals and clean up after them. She takes sole responsibility
for the order of the house. Within the first few pages of the book, her position as a member of
the second sex is established. The following passage demonstrates a perfect example of what
Beauvoir describes:

(i)n woman, on the contrary, there is from the beginning a conflict
between her autonomous existence and her objective self, her
'being-the other'; she is taught that to please she must try to please,
she must make herself object, she should therefore renounce her
autonomy. She is treated like a live doll and is refused liberty. (Beauvoir 1989, 280).

On the cusp of womanhood, Bella, in the beginning of the story at least, is still somewhat of a girl. Her experiences are that of a child and yet she is reaching for adulthood and is emulating what she believes woman to be. Bella constantly treats herself as the Other. She saw herself as the Other in her mother's house when she was no longer the one that was solely responsible for her mother's care. The advent of a new husband made her feel out of place and unnecessary. She becomes the Other with her father as she automatically takes her place as the caregiver, her place as a member of the Second Sex. "A child overburdened with work may well become prematurely a slave, doomed to a joyless existence" (Beauvoir 1989, 385). Through having to be responsible for her whimsical mother at an early age, Bella lost her ability to have joy and a meaningful life. She was conditioned to become a member of the Second Sex from birth.

Immediately upon meeting the male love interest, Edward, Bella becomes infatuated. She has no resistance to him and upon their second encounter she fancies herself in love. Simone de Beauvoir explains this as "[t]he girl, since childhood and whether she intends to stay within or go beyond the bounds of femininity, has looked to the male for fulfillment and escape...he is the liberator; he is rich and powerful, he holds the keys to happiness..."(Beauvoir 1989, 328). Bella embodies this as Edward is both exhaustively rich and powerful. As a vampire he has the ability to read minds. A forceful power that allows him to in fact understand each person intimately. He is also unbelievably wealthy. Acting as an embodiment of that which can save her from her monotonous life and her physical imperfections.

Her physicality is a quintessential example of a female acting as a member of the Second Sex. Not only does she compare herself to others of her sex always in an extremely negative
light, she is also extraordinarily physically deficient through a debilitating clumsiness. Her physical weakness in comparison to her will-be lover makes him become her literal savior as well. Using his preternatural abilities, he reads people's minds to save Bella from being physically raped as she had walked solitarily along the street. This demonstrates Beauvoir's explanation that young girls are not able to walk happily in the street, but must fear the attention of males. "Careless gaiety is in itself bad deportment; the self-control that is imposed on women and becomes second nature in 'the well-bred you girl' kills spontaneity; her lively exuberance is beaten down. The result is tension and ennui" (Beauvoir 1989, 335). This ennui is amplified in Bella, who is not challenged in the town of Forks. She has no social outlet except for through Edward. In school she repeats lessons she has already learned; her existence is meaningless and futile. She eventually loses all of her female human friends and is sucked into his world entirely, with no contact to the outside world and her old life including her own family.

He saves her physically from being crushed by a van taking on the van himself using his superhuman strength. Although, she excels scholastically she is not able to compete with Edward, who has forever gone through high school and college periodically at whim forever remaining youthful in appearance. Additionally, he is adamant that she will not be turned into a vampire and she is left pleading with him to give her his strength. She is convinced that her life and happiness are entirely dependent one man, Edward. Her significant other defines her; she is nothing without him.

Bella Swan is the contemporary embodiment of the Second Sex. The Culture Industry works to reproduce a particular society in this way. And has thus far been wildly successful. This is important because while it may be tempting to declare that we are beyond the days that
Beauvoir wrote about that our literature forces us to realize that this is not true. That our society has allowed books such as these, and many more, with explicitly stereotypical women characters demonstrates that we are not so far removed. Beauvoir, herself was aware of this phenomenon. She demonstrates the myth of feminine otherness that certain writers specifically promulgated. Women as sexual objects for men is perpetuated and created through literary works. (Beauvoir 1989, 199). She even acknowledges the way that certain literary works reflect women’s experience of motherhood. (Beauvoir 1989, 196). Women are still the Second Sex but even more they are not permitted to decide not to have children. We follow heroines that are superficial and dependent upon man. Young girls and adolescents are trained that a boy can give their life meaning and that their purpose to is to provide solace and comfort to this person. Society adores women that are the worst of what Beauvoir explains as "(t)he imbalance of her hormones creates nervous and vasomotor instability. Menstruation is painful: headaches, over fatigue, abdominal pains, make normal activities distressing or impossible, psychic difficulties often appear; nervous and irritable, a woman may be temporarily in a state of semi-lunacy;" (Beauvoir 1989, 329) through popular culture. The fact that these caricatures of real people are idolized by society means that we need to seriously reconsider our belief that Simone de Beauvoir’s work is an explanation of women's experience now. Until girls and women are no

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11 I am focusing on the connection between Beauvoir’s work and *Twilight* because it emphasizes the role that the Culture Industry plays in informing person’s desires. “Normalcy is perpetuated in film. Everyone must show that they identify wholeheartedly with the power which beats them…Everyone can be like the omnipotent society, everyone can be happy if only they had themselves over to it body and soul and relinquish their claim to happiness” (Horkheimer and Adorno 124).
longer told their heroines should be complacent and maternal through the heroines of story, we cannot break the bonds which makes us the Second Sex.

Bella Swan’s particular experience with motherhood is an exemplar on the importance of motherhood to a woman as it is portrayed by the Culture Industry. Her pregnancy follows Beauvoir’s description uncannily. She experiences what is explained by Beauvoir exactly as a girl in her formative years. She is not sure how her half-vampire baby will be born. Her confusion is exactly that of the girl who does not know the facts of life and is therefore terrified of them. "Often it no longer seems marvelous but rather horrible that a parasitic body should proliferate within her body; the very idea of this monstrous swelling frightens her. And how will the baby get out?" (Beauvoir 1989, 299). Bella's baby is a parasite that almost kills her for it to be born. It forces her to need to drink blood which is against Bella's nature as a human. The magic of birth is not dissipated for her leaving her little more than a confused young girl as described by Beauvoir. The child literally ends up ripping its way out of Bella's body. The only reason Bella does not die is because Edward saves her by turning her into a copy of himself, a vampire.

What is perhaps more important, however, is the way in which the child miraculously provides solutions for all of the problems in Bella’s (and her family’s) life. The fact that she wants to fulfill the pregnancy fixes the issues that she had had with Edward’s sister, Rosalie. Rosalie had always wanted a child, which is significant enough by itself, but due to her vampire nature was physically incapable of having a child.12 They formed a bond through the protection

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12 This is seen as a tragedy. To not be able to be a mother is a reason to become embittered and combative. The Culture Industry’s message here is that there is something sad when the ability to reproduce is robbed from a woman.
of the unknown creature living inside Bella. This bond would last well beyond the pregnancy. The fact that Bella was determined to have her child made Rosalie her ally. The only matter of contention between her and her in-laws was solved through the creation of a child.

In a very similar manner the tension between Bella and her best friend Jake is also resolved by the birth of her child. Bella could not be friends with Jake as long as he was madly in love with her and she did not return the sentiment. However, Bella could not bear the thought of not having Jake in her life. This tension was miraculously solved when Jake imprinted on to Bella’s child, Renesmee. Imprinting is a mystical process by which a werewolf is alerted to his soul mate. A process that completely attunes the couple to one another needs and gives them a sense of completeness. She was able to keep her best friend in her life and to keep the love of her life; another problem solved.

In the culminating scene of the series, the Cullens are (finally) on the verge of being attacked by the Volturi. While they are being attacked, at least on the surface, because of vampire child, they are also saved by her. Her unique existence is able to bring to an end an inevitable battle for survival. Moreover, Renesmee also won over almost every character she met; there was something so special about her. This accentuates the fact that the even though her birth seemed to be at least something to be plausibly concerned about in reality there was nothing to fear. The message is clear the creation of a new life is always something to be celebrated.

One does not even have to carefully read between the lines to find this message. It is acknowledged within the story itself. In Bella’s own mind, “[s]he laughed quietly, amazed at how quickly everything had turned right when it had looked so nightmarish just a week ago” (Meyer 478, 2008). The denouement of the story, post Renesmee’s birth, demonstrates to
readers that having a child solves all of one’s problems. This is underlined by the fact that a pregnancy that was dangerous in two ways became the solution to everything. The pregnancy even relieved Edward of his guilt for turning Bella into a vampire. Birthing the baby killed Bella. The only way to save her life was to turn her into a vampire. This means that there was suddenly no reason for Edward to be conflicted by his need to turn Bella. This part of the story has an underlying message. This message is that it does not matter how seemingly dangerous a pregnancy is there is no reason to worry. Whatever reasonable the worry is about a pregnancy the result of the pregnancy will be good. No such child had come into existence prior to Bella’s conception and no one was sure what the result would be. Given the nature of vampirism, it was entirely plausible that the pregnancy could have gone an entirely different way. The message to the reader is that it is normal to be worried about a becoming a mother, but that it will work out in the long term and that children are something to be wanted and protected regardless.

Pregnancy and childbearing will all work out in the end for the better. This completely ignores the possibility that it can and does go the other way.

*The Hunger Games*

The use of motherhood as a positive thing that all women must experience, and an overt message about the weakness of women, is blatant in the *Twilight* series. However, it is more insidious in the *Hunger Game* trilogy and I would argue much more dangerous. Within the

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13 The message is just as clear in the movies if muted due to the fact that you do not get to “hear” Bella’s thoughts in the same way as you do in the book. However, the immediate protective mother instinct, the unknown fetus that threatens the mother’s life, and the everything being resolved through Renesmee’s birth, in other words, the overarching message that motherhood is inevitable, desirable, and a solution to life’s difficulties remains in tact.

14 I am attempting to restrain my topic to the portrayal of motherhood in this discussion. However, there is much that needs to be analyzed about Katniss Everdeen. From her political impotence to her hysterical persona Katniss represents a weak woman being portrayed as a strong one. This is a very dangerous message to young women and teaches them that to be weak is to be strong.
first ten pages of the first book, in the three-book series, Katniss has established the fact that she does not want to be a mother. She is irritated by Gale’s assertion that he might like to have children given different circumstances. This is part of a reader’s introduction to the character of Katniss. As such, it highlights an integral part of her being. It is not as if she gradually came to a different realization as she grew and matured. Katniss repeats this theme throughout the series: “I know I’ll never marry, never risk bringing a child to the world…My kids’ names would go right into the reaping palls with everyone else’s. And I swear I’ll never let that happen” (Collins 311, 2009). Katniss does not what to have children and she has legitimate reasons for not doing so. She does not want them because she must protect them from a horrendous fate. Having a child is not worth the risk.

Her determination to not bear children is something she takes with her throughout her tribulations. In the second book she thinks “[I]like a reminder to me that I could still one day have kids with Gale? Well, if that was it, it was a mistake. Because for one thing, that’s never been part of my plan” (Collins 2009, 351). Again there is an emphasis that Katniss, the moving and acting participant in the world, does not want children. She is cognizant of this, and it is important to her. Katniss focuses on this throughout the books. Not having children is not something she is unsure of and that she will consider at a later date. She is determined that having a child is something that she will never do. When she imagines a future she imagines one in which other people’s children are happy not her own. She drifts off to sleep imagining a world where Peeta’s children can be happy and safe. This demonstrates that even in a world that is safe and secure, the world that she is fighting for, she does not imagine a future where she has children. This desire to not have children is a part of her being.
This part of herself is denied in the epilogue of the books. Her passionate desire toward not becoming a mother is turned against her. In the epilogue of the final book, not only does Katniss marry, she becomes a mother as well. The epilogue begins (as epilogues often do)\textsuperscript{15} with a description of her children. In her own words Katniss describes the process as a long and terrifying one. “It took five, ten, fifteen years for me to agree. But Peeta wanted them so badly\textsuperscript{16}. When I first felt her stirring inside of me, I was consumed with a terror that felt as old as life itself. Only the joy of holding her in my arms could tame it. Carrying him was a little easier, but not much” (Collins 2014, 389). Here there is a disturbing parallel to *Twilight*. The problems that the character originally had with motherhood disappear after the child is born. Becoming a mother is yet again the solution to all of the reasons that one should not have had a child. The questions should I become a mother and am I capable of taking care of my children are nullified once the child is born. The message is “fear not once you have a child all will be well.”

What is demonstrated here is that popular portrayals of motherhood demonstrate to young women that motherhood is an inevitability. Furthermore, it is an inevitability to be embraced. The message to the young woman is whatever fears you have, even if they are reasonable, will vanish once the child comes into being. The young readers of these novels are to identify with these women. That is their very purpose. Horkheimer and Adorno argued that “[b]ecause of his ubiquity, the film star with whom one is supposed to fall in love is, from the start, a copy of himself” (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, 119).

\textsuperscript{15} For example, JK Rowling in the epilogue of *The Deathly Hallows* too chooses to focus on the next generation as if that is the most important thing for the readers to know after the conclusion of the book.

\textsuperscript{16} Here is another message that a husband’s desire outweighs the wife’s. Katniss has made it clear throughout the series that her desire not to reproduce was just as strong if not stronger than Peeta’s desire for children.
As Bella and Katniss are copies of the young women who are consuming the works of fiction they come to seem themselves as mothers. Bella Swan and Katniss Everdeen are supposed to be every girl. While their stories may be extraordinary the young readers are still to identify themselves with these characters.

**Herland**

*Herland* is distinct from the other works because it is not merely a novel. Rather, it is a thought experiment by Charlotte Perkins Gillman about what a world would look like if it were only comprised of women. What is most important, however, is that even as a feminist, Gillman was not able to perceive of a world where womanhood was not defined by motherhood which is especially interesting given the way in which she problematized the life of a woman at home and a woman as wife throughout her works.\(^{17}\) In her utopia everything is centered on the idea of being a mother. Those that did want to become mothers were deviant. It was considered a good thing that they did not procreate because such attitudes were seen as dangerous to the community and unnatural. The idea of being childfree as a valid and rewarding life style was not something that could be allowed to continue. Eventually every woman was born with a child-longing that allowed them to become a mother. This longing came naturally to most women. This again emphasizes the fact that to want to be a mother is a natural state. All women want to become mothers or there is something inherently deficient about her.

\(^{17}\) For instance, in *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a scathing report on middle-class marriage and the gendered roles therein.
Even the domesticated animals in Herland had become tamed; the cats no longer felt the urge to hunt birds. It was a world without adventure. But all of these things are less interesting than the fact that the entire society was centered on motherhood. The narrator describes it as the raison d’etre in Herland. The importance of motherhood is underlined by the fact that one of the male interlopers in Herland who articulates an idea about when they escape their instructors “when we get out of this and get to where the real women are-- the mothers, and the girls” (Gilman 1998, 27). This emphasizes that real women are mothers and their children. Real women are not the matriarchs or educators but the mothers. “Motherhood was the dominant note of their whole culture. This led me to very promptly to the conviction that those ‘feminine charms’ we are so found of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity….and in no way essential to the real fulfillment of their great process” (Gilman 1998, 58). Again, the narrator emphasizes the fact that while women in normal society are not in their natural state due to their male counterparts and only in the absence of men as mothers do they come to their natural state. In fact, that is all that women are in their natural state. Or to put it into the words of one of the inhabitants of Herland:

‘The children in this country are the one center and focus of all our thoughts. Every step of our advance is always considered in its effect on them- on the race. You see, we are MOTHERS,’ She repeated as if in that she had said it all (Gillman 1998, 57).  

In fact, in this world she had said it all. All that mattered was that they were mothers. Motherhood consumed every act of their lives. The narrator speaks of how even the agriculture was interwoven with motherhood. Nothing in the society was not based on that very idea.
These three works in the Culture Industry work to champion motherhood to its readers.

One must confirm to its demands. As Horkheimer and Adorno explain

The culture industry sweeps aside objections to itself along with those to the world it neutrally duplicates. One has only the choice confirming or being consigned to the backwoods: the provincials who oppose cinema and radio by falling back on eternal beauty and amateur theatricals have already reached the political stance toward which the members of mass culture are still being driven (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 119).

The sweeping aside of any objection of a woman reading these works to becoming a mother are rendered insignificant. It is natural and good to want to become a mother. All women want to do so. If they don’t they are merely confused and once they become a mother all will become clear. Motherhood is a panacea to relationship woes and is the ultimate fulfillment. To be a part of society every female must become a mother is the message.

But anyone who goes hungry and suffers from the cold, especially if he once had good prospects, is a marked man. He is an outsider, and- with the occasional exception of capital crime- to be an outsider is the gravest guilt (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 121).

For the young women reading these works, this quote should read but any women who chooses to not have children and denies her responsibility, especially because she alone bore the opportunity of birth, is a marked woman. She is an outsider. To want to not have children is completely delegitimized through the Culture Industry. It is often the case that any woman who does not want to become a mother feels as if she is an outsider. It has been portrayed to her over and over again that motherhood is the highest desire and fulfillment. If she does not see her fulfillment in this way there must be something deficient about her. This is what the current (and past) portrayals of women in the Culture Industry has done to those girls and women who partake in it.
Demotherization

However, the message of motherhood as inevitable and ultimately desirable is not ubiquitous. Only certain women must become mothers and the message described above is only for them. Women who are not the right type of person to become a mother receive a different message. In these books motherhood is portrayed as a complicated and involved relationship between people rather than a fixes-everything-cure-all. The audience for these books is different than that of either Twilight or The Hunger Games. I was unable to find a comparable series with a minority audience. This lack in the literature is indicative of the fact that whiteness is often assumed. I chose Beloved Toni Morrison is one of the most famous African American writers and the first to win a Nobel Prize in Literature. Her work is not only important but is also a strong representation of literature about African American women with an important depiction of motherhood. I chose The Mothers because it was is a very recent work (2016), deals specifically with the topic of motherhood, and was a best-seller on the New York Times. Both works offer a more reserved and nuanced portrayal of motherhood that does not have the same message of inevitability or fulfillment. The message in these works is not entirely demotherization, as the novels do not clearly send the message that their audiences should not become mothers. The portrayals complicate motherhood by leaving the question open. The audience of these works are not required to see themselves as mothers and motherhood is not seen as an inevitable end of their lives. However, the portrayal of motherhood demonstrates the complex societal arrangements that the audience will be a part of and provide a cautionary tale of motherhood.

18 In fact, the color of Katniss’ skin in the book series is never specifically mentioned and yet in the movie portrayals she is of course, white. Furthermore, the default option of whiteness is perpetuated by the culture industry.
In her explanation of her motivation to write *Beloved*, Toni Morrison wrote that she was motivated by her own sense of freedom that came from quitting her job in order to become a full-time freelance writer which motivated her to write about “what ‘free’ could possibly mean to women. In the eighties, the debate was still roiling: equal pay, equal treatment, access to professions, schools…and choice without stigma. To marry or not. To have children or not. Inevitably these thoughts led me to the different history of black women in this country…in which birthing children was required, but ‘having’ them, being responsible for them—being, in other words, their parent—was as out of the question as freedom” (Morrison, XVII 1987). She found the answer in the story of Margaret Garner who, rather than allowing her children return to slavery once they had escaped, murdered one and attempted to kill the others. Thus the story of *Beloved* was born. According to Toni Morrison she decided to explore Garner’s thoughts to create a story of freedom “…to relate her history to contemporary issues about freedom, responsibility, and women’s ‘place.’ The heroine would represent the unapologetic acceptance of shame and terror; assume the consequences of choosing infanticide; claim her own freedom” (Morrison XVII, 1987). Each character has his or her own relationship with motherhood each of which acknowledges the complexity of the scenario and each problematizes motherhood.

*Baby Suggs*

The grandmother of the murdered child, Baby Suggs, herself has a conflicted history as a mother. As a slave she had eight children, but was unable to maintain a life-long relationship with any of them. Furthermore, she argues that her plight is that of African American women broadly construed. The unhappiness that is the ghost-child is not unique to her experience and
she argues that there is nowhere, no house, no home, that is free from such a haunting. In her words, “[n]ot a house in the country ain’t packed to its rafters with some dead negro’s grief. We lucky this ghost is a baby. My husband’s spirit was to come back in here? Or yours? Don’t talk to me. You lucky. You got three left. Three pulling at your skirts and just one raising hell from the other side. Be thankful, why don’t you? I had eight. Every one of the gone away from me. Four taken, four chased, and all, I expect, worrying somebody’s house into evil…My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that’s all I remember” (Morrison 1987, 6).

Baby Suggs’ mother, while on the slave ship that brought her to the United States, threw her nameless children overboard, except for Baby Suggs who she gave a black man’s name. She was unable to keep her children that were the result of her rape by a white man. Her story parallels Sethe’s who was unable to allow her children to go back into slavery at Sweet Home.

Denver

For Denver, Beloved belongs to her. Her sister, the dead one, is the person she feels the greatest connection to and has a savage jealousy toward.

Shortly afterward Sethe and Denver tried to call up and reason with the baby ghost, but got nowhere. It took a man, Paul D, to shout it off, beat it off and take its place for himself. And carnival or no carnival, Denver preferred the venomous baby to him any day. During the first days after Paul D moved in, Denver stayed in her emerald closet as long as she could, lonely as a mountain and almost as big, thinking everybody had somebody but her; thinking even a ghost’s company was denier her. So when she the black dress with two unlaced shoes beneath it she trembled with secret thanks. Whatever her power and however she used it, Beloved was hers. (Morrison, 1987, 123).
Denver, who had nothing, had her dead sister. Her hope for companionship was solely in her dead sister. This is ironic because it was her sister’s death that blocked her from companionship outside of the family.

Paul D

Paul D, a character from Sethe’s past, knows her and her experience. He knows the pain that they all experienced as slaves at *Sweet Home* and has more information about the people they both knew there together than Sethe. He has an understanding of her history that none of the other characters do, except for that which made Sethe kill her own daughter *Beloved*. What is interesting is that even before he was told the story of Sethe killing her daughter to protect her from the white man and slavery he found her love for her children to be dangerous. “Risky, thought Paul. D, very risky. For a used-to-be-slave woman to love anything that much was dangerous, especially if it was her children she had settled on to live. The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you’d have a little love left over for the next one’ (Morrison 1987, 54). Paul D understands that the love of a mother is dangerous when the child can be taken away at anytime. The life of slaves was full of loss and so to put too much love in a child opens one up to too much pain.

Sethe

Sethe, the mother who loved too much, finds that she was not able to fully establish herself as a loving mother until after she had escaped slavery. Freedom brought her great love that led to the eventual execution of her own child. “I was that wide. Look like I loved em more after I got here. Or maybe I couldn’t love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn’t mine to
love. But when I got here, when I jumped down off that wagon—there wasn’t nobody in the world I couldn’t love if I wanted too…” (Morrison 1987, 191) She felt a fierce need to protect her children. “Years of haunting had dulled her in ways you wouldn’t believe and sharpened her in ways you wouldn’t believe either. The consequence was a timid but hard-headed daughter Sethe would die to protect” (Morrison 1987, 117).

**Beloved**

Beloved, the dead daughter, the murdered daughter appears in *Beloved* as the titular character appears throughout the book even when she is not physically present. Her attachment to her mother, the one who murdered her, is deep.

Beloved heard them as soon as the door banged shut behind her. She jumped at the slam and swiveled her head toward the whispers coming from behind the white stairs. She took a step and felt like crying. She had been so close, then closer. And it was so much better than the anger that ruled when Sethe did or thought anything that excluded herself. She could bear the hours—nine or ten of them each day but one—when Sethe was gone. Bear even the nights when she was close but out of sight, behind walls and doors lying next to him. But now—even the daylight time that beloved had counted on, disciplined herself to be content with was being reduced, divided by Sethe’s willingness to pay attention to other things (Morrison 1987, 119)

Here we see the first time in which Beloved begins to show her desperate need to possess Sethe. This culminates at the end of the book when the townspeople run off her spirit. She and Sethe become so enraptured in one another. Their relationship is so demanding that neither can break the cycle. Beloved in her anger cannot forgive her mother and Sethe cannot explain herself even though the reason that she had murdered her daughter was to save her from the being a slave, a fate worse than death.

The relationship with motherhood and parenthood is much more complex than in either the *Hunger Games* or *Twilight*. However, the overarching message is that once you already have
hit the point of happiness, when Baby Suggs and Sethe reunite with all of the family’s children together they both experience a happiness and a love that they did not know was possible. Their joy quickly turned to sorrow showing the emptiness that comes from joy and satisfaction. Baby Suggs had a celebration with her bounty that ended in her becoming ostracized by her community, a community where she had found happiness, because she in her celebration and happiness was too happy and was found to have too much. The moment of happiness brings about her greatest sadness. Similarly, Sethe who found that she did love her children with a deep and abiding love that brought her joy only after she was free did she truly have something to lose which she did. In this story, happiness is still found through the family and through children; however, this happiness is more tenuous and brings about the possibility of great loss and pain. Some degree of pain and loss is portrayed as inevitable. The inevitability of suffering is demonstrated by each character in the story. Their experience of loss is what connects them together. The repetition of this message is not a direct instance of demotherization as it leaves the possibility of motherhood open. The ghost of Beloved is vanquished by the community, which Denver, for the first time, is able to join because of the catalyst that was her sister. Paul D. rejoins Sethe who is able to move on once Beloved was no longer there. Those audience members that can see themselves in the story receives the message that motherhood, as Paul D. explains, is very risky especially when one loves one’s children. Motherhood, far from being inevitable, puts women like Sethe and Baby Suggs at risk for powerful loss. Loss is inevitable and the loss of children is quite possibly the worst kind of loss however unavoidable it may be. Motherhood rather than a panacea to all of life’s problems is a complicated relationship that opens one up to great pain and vulnerability.
The Mothers

*The Mothers*, similarly to *Beloved*, demonstrates a complex relationship between motherhood, community, and individuals. The connections are not easy to untangle. One mother kills herself, leaving her daughter to never become a mother at all, and another becomes a mother, which forces her husband to remain with her even though he loves the never-a-mother. Nadia Turner the woman who is never-a-mother has a complicated relationship with her own mother that leads to Nadia having an abortion and eventual motherlessness. “‘Sometimes I wonder—’ She paused. ‘If my mom had gotten rid of me, would she still be alive? Maybe she [Nadia’s own mother] wouldn’t been happier. She could’ve had a life’ (Bennett 2016, 97). She imagines a world where she had not been born but where her mother would have been able to continue to live. “Nadia had invented versions of her mother’s life that did not end with a bullet shattering her brain. Her mother, no longer cradling a tiny, wrinkled body in a hospital bed, an exhausted smile on her face, but seventeen and scared, sitting inside an abortion clinic, waiting for her name to be called. Her mother, no longer her mother, graduating from high school, from college, from graduate school even. Her mother listening to lectures or delivering her own, stationed behind a podium, running a toe up the back of her calf. Her mother traveling the world, posing on the cliffs of Santorini, her arms bent toward the blue sky. Always her mother, although in this version of reality, Nadia did not exist. Where her life ended, her mother’s life began” (Bennet 2016, 97). Nadia’s experience of her own existence, which she sees as having ruined her mother’s creates her relationship with motherhood. Rather than become a mother, like her mother, when pregnant at the same age she chooses to have an abortion. She graduates from high school, college, and graduate school. She travels the world and goes on to gain her
own independence and vision of the world. However, this does not bring her the joy that she had imagined for her mother had she had an abortion.

“This would be her life, accomplishing the things her mother had never done. She never celebrated this, unlike her friends who were proud to be the first in their family to go to college or the first to earn a prestigious internship. How could she be proud of lapping her mother, when she had been the one to slow her down in the first place” (Bennet 2016, 115).

Nadia who goes further than her mother was able is not able to celebrate joy in her success as it was Nadia that prevented her mothers success. And yet, when her decision was to abort her child it was not clear that her life was any better either. Motherhood and remaining child-free both have negative consequences.

Nadia spends her life running from connection and hiding from her past decisions. She yearns to know what could have been for both her mother and her. As she speaks to her friend, Aubrey who has the baby that would not have been born if Nadia’s had not been aborted, Aubrey describes being pregnant. “It’s strange,” Aubrey said. ‘Your body isn’t yours anymore. Strangers will just touch your stomach and ask how far along you are. What makes them think they can do that. But you’re not just you anymore. And sometimes it’s scary because I’ll never just be me again. And sometimes it’s nice because I’ll be more than that.’ She leaned against the wall. ‘But other times I think, what happens if I don’t love this baby’” (Bennet 2016, 196). Here again motherhood, even though it had been much desired previously, is not a cure-all. It is not something to go toward blindly with joy, but rather, something to be considered and approached cautiously. Aubrey and her husband, Nate (the father of Nadia’s aborted child), had attempted to have children for several years prior to the pregnancy. Had she not been pregnant it seems that their marriage would have dissolved and Nate would have returned to his relationship with
Nadia. They all share a history and friendship that complicates the relationship of mother to child. However, in each of these relationships there is not a message that calls forth motherhood as the solution to life’s problems. Aubrey’s pregnancy means that she gets to keep her husband, but their relationship will never be the same. She is not entirely sure that she will love her child and is afraid of causing the same problems she had with her parents to her children. She has lost her friendship with Nadia. Nadia does not become a mother and yet is still not happy. Similar to Beloved, the prescription given to audience of The Mothers is more complicated than that of any of the other works described. Nadia often wondered what her life would have been like had she decided not to have an abortion but it is not assumed that she would have been happier. There is no clear message that motherhood is the way to happiness. The message again is not directly demotherization. The story does not indicate that Nadia or Aubrey would have been happier as not-mothers but the story of Nadia’s mother combined with the tribulations that occur through motherhood do demonstrate that motherhood has negative consequences. The juxtaposition of the portrayal of motherhood in Beloved and The Mothers with that in Twilight, Hunger Games, and Herland at the very least demonstrate that white affluent women experience motherization through the culture industry while minority women do not.

Conclusion

In his work, The Culture Industry, Adorno describes the stereotypical dictator, rebellious girl, and the irresistible girl. These act as guides to their audience. Each person fits into an already written character in a predestined play.
The attitude in question seems to be indicative of a universal penchant. In another sketch that belongs to a series dealing with the confidence racket, the attractive girl who is an active participating in the racket not only is paroled after having been sentenced to a long term, but also seems to have a good chance of marrying her victim. Her sex morality, of course, is unimpeachable. The spectator is supposed to like her at first sight as a modest and self-effacing character, and he must not be disappointed. Although it is discovered that she is a crook, the original identification must be restored, or rather maintained. The stereotype of the nice girl is so strong that not even the proof of her delinquency can destroy it; and, by hook or by crook, she must be what she appears to be. It goes without saying that such psychological models tend to confirm exploitative, demanding, and aggressive attitudes on the part of young girls… (Adorno 1991, 174).

The audience knows the truth about the character and that truth is confirmed through the repetitive story portrayed by the culture industry. Even when there is evidence to suggest that the girl is not what she appears her innocence must be reaffirmed. She must be what she appears; there is no alternative. Similarly, the prescription for the young girl is written in the stories mentioned above. For young (predominately-white) girls, they are to become mothers where motherhood is not something to fear; it is inevitable. Even for a girl who has not quite realized her desire, she too will someday become a mother and find her fulfillment therein. She will find her husband and they will have children and then her life will come together. Whatever ill will she has experienced throughout her life is not unsurmountable once she has taken her true place as mother. This destiny is shared by all women who can see themselves as heroines in books like Twilight and The Hunger Games. Yet, there lays a more complex message for those (minority women) who do not relate to the messages given by these stories. For them, the ones that do not fit into the stereotypical ticky-tacky houses in suburbia motherhood is complicated and leads to a harder path that will bring pain and hardship. This connects to the phenomenon demotherization because it provides an alternative to motherhood by portraying it as not inevitable. Motherhood, for minority women, is not a foregone conclusion and if there are reasons not to become a mother that is something that is a possibility for their lives. While the
analysis of *Beloved* and *The Mothers* is not as clear of an illustration of demotherization as the examples given in other chapters, it is still important to acknowledge the differentiation in treatment among the populations. The juxtaposition of the portrayal of motherhood in *Beloved* and *The Mothers* with that in *Twilight*, *Hunger Games*, and *Herland* at the very least demonstrate that white affluent women experience motherization through the culture industry while minority women do not. Minority women are not forced to become mothers in the same manner as white, affluent women. However, the different message is somewhat unclear. While minority women are not barred from motherhood by the culture industry the message they are given is significantly different. The fulfillment expected from motherhood for white, affluent women as portrayed by the culture industry is tellingly lacking in the depictions of minority motherhood. This is part of the overall process of demotherization that will be discussed in the following chapters.
Chapter 4: The commodification of life and the gift of birth

Lwaxana- What about the responsibility for taking care of the elderly?

Timisin- It would place a terrible burden on the children

Lwaxana- We raise them. We care for them we suffer for them. We keep them from harm their whole lives. Now eventually it’s their turn to take care of us.

Timisin- No parent should expect to be paid back for the love they’ve given their children.

Lwaxana- Well, why the hell not?!

*(Star Trek: The Next Generation)*

The topic of birth is interesting to feminists because women’s singular ability to birth children has been used to limit women in society and to relegate their place to the family.¹⁹ Scholars, including Lisa Guenther (2012), have worked to positively change how women, as mothers, are viewed and to reconceptualize the relationship between mother and child. Guenther argues that birth should be a gift given through hospitality rather than a gift within the commodity of exchange with an expectation of return. However, she does not give recognition to how the birth process has come to be treated as if it occurs through this closed economy of exchange. Opening the possibility for change as Guenther does is only truly possible after one recognizes the ways in which motherhood is framed both as a gift and as a necessity for women. Motherization is the process by which women are trained within a societal context to expect and desire motherhood. This process treats the gift of birth (and the gift of life for that matter) as though there is a debt of being. It also conditions women to expect a particular construct of motherhood that includes a commodity of exchange. The image of motherhood in this light is

perpetuated by the culture industry. In order to remove the consequences of this commodity of exchange in motherhood we must understand the societal structures that allow it to take place.

In this chapter I begin by examining Guenther’s exploration of birth and her acknowledgement of the importance of Derridian Hospitality (Derrida, 2001). Next, I address the ways in which birth is often treated as part of a closed economy or in the commodity of exchange and how this is inherently problematic. I then establish the fact that Guenther’s work under examines the ways in which birth is viewed as a gift within a closed economy. She implicitly critiques this occurrence in her writing; however, I work to make this critique explicit and to establish why this explicitness is important. Finally, I connect Guenther’s “The Gift of the Other” with Derridian Hospitality to demonstrate that it is possible, as Guenther argues, to separate birth from the commodity of exchange but that to do so requires a public acknowledgement of motherhood and the ways in which motherhood has been structured through capitalism.

**Guenther and Birth**

Guenther’s work demonstrates the need to investigate the relationship between mother and child and to broaden the connection that exists between the two. She focuses not on being a mother, but on being *like* a mother. In delimiting the term mother she creates a space for ethical motherhood that requires making a space for the Other and giving more than one has available to give. This is the aporia of the gift. In order to be a gift it has to be an impossibility. This impossibility is available through motherhood. No longer are biological mothers the only ones for which the term is used. Part of her argument is that relegating only women to motherhood is problematic as it merely furthers the idea that women can only be mothers. Anyone who acts
like a mother can be placed into this category expanding the term and allowing for more women to exist outside of motherhood. She criticizes how maternity has been used to limit women by compelling them to accept the sacrifices of motherhood (Guenther 2008, 122). However, biological mothers do not solely experience these sacrifices. Rather anyone who becomes like a mother experiences similar difficulties. She concludes that delimiting the term is required in order to acknowledge the personal costs that ensue from being like a mother. This is advantageous in that it expands motherhood from beyond the feminine-body while still acknowledging that only women can physically birth children. Her framework acknowledges the importance of women in the birthing process while allowing everyone to experience the responsibilities and rewards of motherhood.

In “The Gift of the Other” she denies that the gift of birth can be treated as if it were a gift that requires an exchange or a return in kind. She forecloses the ethical possibility that birthing exists within a closed economy where the commodity of exchange treats it as if it were capitalistic in function.

That this response is not immediately recognized as a response, but rather represented as the autonomous mastery of the self, is the genius of a feminine gift that refuses to circulate in the closed economy of debt and repayment, and that thus allows- or even commands- the engendering of welcome for another stranger” (Guenther 2006, 72).

Furthermore, this means that “I only become but perhaps this means that I only become responsible by becoming somehow, like the feminine Other who welcomed me- becoming receptive, discrete, and withdrawing for a stranger without expectations of return. In this sense to respond ethically to the stranger in a face-to-face encounter would mean opening up a feminine economy of nonreciprocal, asymmetrical generosity” (Guenther 2006, 72). For Guenther this
would be a demasculinzation of the gift of birth where there is a “circular exchange that compromises the radical gift of birth” (Guenther 2006, 1994). This lies in the alterity of the Other whom one loves wholly without an expectation of return. The commodity of exchange includes the expectation of return because gifting has been corrupted by capitalism. “Love remains a relation with the Other whose alterity interrupts any closed economy of exchange; when I love the Other, I give the love without demanding equal compensation” (Guenther, 2006, 87).

Guenther also explores the fact that the gift is circular. The mother gives birth to her child but the child gives the mother the gift of its own appearance into the world. However, the child’s presence, which has been gifted, is also a demand for care and time. This is connected to her implicit critique of birth as a gift.

A gift that automatically circles back to me—whether by extending my existence ‘through time and through eternity’ as in Plato’s Symposium, or by returning in the form of filial devotion, social prestige, or even unpaid household chores—would not be a gift in the true sense of the word. To understand the significance of giving, birth we must attempt to think reproduction otherwise; not as the circulation of individuals through the species, nor as a debt of familial obligation incurred by the credit of birth, but as an open circuit of generosity that gives more than it could possible possess (Guenther 2006, 50).

She rejects the treatment of birth as a gift. However, it is not clear, at least in the case of the child, how this will be possible. There are things that child demands (and must demand) after being born. These demands are connected to the birth of life and I will discuss them alter in this chapter. It is important to note that the demands of the child (upon the one who is her mother) are inevitable. The gift the child is given is limited by the realities of the gift. The gift is also limited by the fact that the gift itself cannot be forgotten. The gifting of the mother is constantly
remembering as it exists and the gift-giver the mother cannot be forgotten as this would relegate the mother to invisibility which is also problematic for Guenther.

Her analysis of birth focuses on one aspect of pregnancy that is also an exchange- the exchange of air. The birth itself cannot be returned to the mother as this is not physically possible. There can be no immediacy with the return, which is one of the ways that it fits the category of the Derridian gift. The existence of the child is not sufficient to resolve the debt that is accrued due to one’s birth when it is treated as if it occurred within the closed economy. This is why the expectation of returns survives throughout the relationship as a gift in the commodity of exchange. The birth can never be returned, and so the debt remains unresolved. Guenther acknowledges that the gift of birth cannot be returned in kind even though she does not explicitly acknowledge that it is the nature of capitalistic gifting that creates this problem:

"... in the beginning at least, the maternal gift of air is not an exchange but an asymmetrical donation: 'This gift is received with no possibility of a return. She cannot pay her back in kind. this is not to say that no obligation is given along with the first breath of life, but only the debt cannot be read through a simple reciprocal exchange; I cannot give birth to the mother who gives birth to me" (Guenther 2008, 100).

The mother cannot purposefully withhold air from the child. The same occurs in regards to food. Other than aborting the child the mother cannot ration those things that are hers that go to the child. She does not control the gift that she is giving unless she refuses to give anything. It is not entirely clear what demands can be placed on the child in regards to the exchange without treating it as if it were occurring in a closed economy. Perhaps (as Guenther advocates) the obligations come from being born at all and not having any part of the actual gifting process.

There is a temporality to the gift in that the child cannot receive the gift as she is not able to experience the moment of gifting. No one remembers her own birth. Rather one’s birth is
something that is handed down through other people’s memories. “The newborn child is not already present in such a way that she could ‘take’ birth in the instant when it is given; rather, she comes to presence in and through the gift of birth” (Guenther 2008, 52). The child is only able to experience her birth through the accounting of it through another. She receives the gift of birth (well) after it has been given.

Part of Guenther’s rethinking of motherhood is an emphatic argument rejecting motherhood as an exchange. While her rejection of motherhood occurring in a closed economy is apt, it does not fully acknowledge the ways in which motherhood has been relegated to the commodity of exchange through its treatment and portrayal as such. The culture industry often portrays the expectation of return for the gift of birth and gift of life and parents often expect their children to care for them as they age in return for these gifts.

However, while she implicitly acknowledges the importance of exploring the ways in which women are trained to be mothers sometimes she seems critical of this situation. For example, she is highly critical of Levinas’ restructuring of birth and women’s place within birth. “If Levinas merely reinscribes a tired myth of women’s suffering and lack of choice with respect to maternity, then what can be ethical about maternal substitution” (Guenther 2006, 112). Here Guenther seems to disdain the study of women being compulsory pushed into motherhood calling it a tired myth. However, an exploration of the phenomenon of motherization indicates that it does indeed happen; and as such, we must understand how birth has come to be construed in a closed economy in the commodity of exchange in order to call for an ethical gifting of birth through motherhood. We must first establish that motherization occurs and what its consequences are in order to find solutions to the problems that it brings about. It is important to
note that in other places within the same work Guenther herself seems to acknowledge the relevance of motherization.

We must not overlook the long history in which women have been coerced, both directly and indirectly, to produce children; yet if we do not imagine different ways of thinking about relation between women and birth, then we might never find a way of repairing this history in the hope of a different future. Substitution may not be the final word on birth, but reflection on the ethical significance of substitution allows us to move the discourse about birth from a biological burden toward an ethical gift, without thereby forgetting the flesh” (Guenther 2006, 140).

There seems to be a contradiction in Guenther’s work. On the one hand, she acknowledges that women have been coerced to become mothers, and on the other she calls it a tired myth. Additionally, to come to an ethical understanding of motherhood we must understand what the expectation entails and how it has been corrupted which means acknowledging how it has come to be viewed as if it requires a return in kind as a Derridian gift.

**The Gift of Birth in the Commodity of Exchange**

Guenther relies on both Levinas and Derrida in order to explore the gift of birth. However, she does not fully indicate the gift of birth as existing within the Derridian commodity of exchange. Derrida begins with an examination of the necessity of forgetting when gifting is placed into the commodity of exchange. A gift is to be given freely and without expectation of return; however, this can only occur when both parties forget that the gift has been given.

"This madness would also be that of forgetting...but as the affirmative condition of the gift. How, without madness, can one desire the forgetting, of that which will have been, like the gift, a gift without ambivalence, a gift that would not be a pharmkaon or a poisoned present, but a good, a good that would not be an object (a good given as a thing) but the good of the gift, of giving or donation itself? How does one desire forgetting (Derrida 1992, 36)?
Neither the gift-giver nor gift-receiver are allowed to forget that the gifting occurred. The gift is not truly a gift; it is a poison that destroys the relationship between those involved in the exchange. The gift sits between them with an expectation to be returned in kind. (Derrida 1992, 41). In this way the gift becomes the defining point of the relationship for those involved. This often occurs in the parent-child relationship. Those involved are relegated to their roles of gift-givers and gift-receivers. They are not allowed to escape their roles. The gift remains between them unforgotten and unforgettable.

This unforgettable nature of the gift is amplified due to the nature of birth. The mother is constantly reminded of her gift by the presence of her child. The mother views a gift (and birth as such a gift) as something that must be returned. This has a consequence in that she often holds the expectation of return over her child. She makes demands on her child due to the fact that she has given birth to her. As it is up to the mother to set the terms of the exchange, she can make undue demands of her child throughout the child’s life. These demands are made in the name of returning the gift. The child will be expected to conform to the mother's expectations for performance, behavior, and beliefs. These expectations are enforced through the use of guilt or the constant reminder of what the mother has given to the child. Even when the child attempts to meet these expectations, the mother often finds that she is not fulfilled in the way she had hoped or expected. The daughter cannot fulfill the mother’s unfulfilled dreams. Simone de Beauvoir highlights the disappointment that comes from such relationships “[l]ike the transitions of puberty, sexual initiation, and marriage, that of maternity gives rise to a feeling of morose disappointment in subjects who hope than an outward event can renovate and justify their lives” (Beauvoir 1989, 509). Mothers have been trained to define themselves through motherhood (and
thereby through their children) and so they have unfair expectations of their children. Having an external focus for their identity places them into a morose disappointment as it is impossible to find self-worth through another. Although her attempts to find self-worth fail, she continues to demand that the child meet her expectation. This begins a seemingly unending process straining the relationship between mother and child.

The particulars of the exchange are set up by the gift-giver as the one who is owed. This process has come to be seen as natural and inevitable in a similar way to the thrall of capitalism.

"It is nature that gives, and one must show oneself worthy of this gift. One must take and earn the gift of nature. From giving nature, one must learn to give, in a manner that is both generous and ordered; and by given as nature says one must give, one will give it back its due, one will show oneself to be worthy, one will make the right equivalence....is nothing other than that of the giving-returning or of the giving-taking (Derrida 1992, 66).

By defining the process as natural, it becomes an inherent part of the system and, as such, unchangeable. It seems that a person has no defense against it. To question it is to question that which is natural itself. Thus one is required by nature to both give gifts and to return gifts in kind. The ascribing of the gift-giving, gift-receiving, gift-returning process as natural means that those who have been given gifts must prove themselves worthy of the gift. Because the gift demands that it be returned in kind, this proof of worth becomes more difficult, exponentially, in relation to the perceived value of the gift. (Derrida 1992, 41) The seeming naturality of the gift is what grants it with such power which is heightened in the mother-child relationship. Combining the twinned naturalness of the process means that it is felt doubly by the child as the debtor in the relationship. The seeming naturality of the process means that the child and mother often do not see an alternative way of constructing the relationship.
The asymmetric debt that is enforced by the mother exemplifies how a gift can become poisonous. By expecting an equal payment for the gift, the mother sets up a debt that is not repayable and so will loom ominously between mother and child indefinitely. By viewing this process as natural it becomes seemingly inevitable; and so, the mother’s expectation of repayment seems inescapable as well. Part of the requirement for the gift giving commodity of exchange is that the return not occur with any immediacy. Rather, because the gift caries debt-like implications, it is up to the gift-giver to determine when the gift will be returned as it is she who is owed the debt.

In the gift giving commodity of exchange part of the requirement of the return is that it not occur with any immediacy. Rather, because the gift-giver has given you a gift with debt-like implications, it is up to the gift-giver to determine when the gift will be returned as it is she who is owed the debt.

*There where there is gift, there is time.* What it gives, the gift, is time, but this gift of time is also a demand of time. The thing must not be restituted immediately and right away. There must be time, it must last, there must be waiting-without forgetting. It demands time, but a time determined by a term...the gift gives demands, and takes time (Derrida 1992, 41).

In this way the gift is not to be forgotten; it perpetuates itself. The gift which demands time of both the gift-giver and the gift-receiver leaves an imbalance in the relationship that will never truly be eradicated as the demands of the gift can never be fully met. The demand that the gift not be returned immediately means that the gift-receiver can feel as if she is accruing debt as an unreturned gift seems to acquire interest as it remains unpaid. (Derrida 1992, 45) And yet she is unable to return the gift immediately and is unable to determine how the gift is to be returned. Both conditions are set by the gift-giver. The gift-receiver ends up feeling powerless in her
position and the repayment of the gift becomes frustratingly futile as the debt continues to accrue interest and repayment must be attempted. This is the paradox of the gift when given with an expectation of return.

This process leads to what Derrida describes as madness. "There is always a moment when this madness begins to burn up the word or the meaning of ‘gift’ itself and to disseminate without return its ashes as well as its terms or germs" (Derrida 1992, 47). The implication here is that under current gift-giving conditions the gift becomes almost inevitably dangerous. The changed nature of a gift contradicts its own definition in a way that consumes the gift itself and turns it into something negative. There is nothing left of the positive aspect of the gift. Whatever positive emotion or thought was behind the gift is turned to ashes.

There is another aspect of the gift-giving process that has been corrupted by capitalism. Not only is the gift-receiver responsible for the gift she has been given, but she must also take responsibility for the gift which she has received. "It is necessary to answer for the gift, the given and the call to giving. It is necessary to answer it and answer for it. One must be responsible for what one gives and what one receives" (Derrida 1992, 63). She that has been given a gift feels responsible for that gift even though she had no control over it being given to her. The more important or valuable the gift, the more angst the gift-receiver will feel due to her obligation as the gift-receiver. The child finds herself in a world where she has little choice in her surroundings and yet she is to take responsibility for the fact that she was born. This is further complicated by the fact that she cannot meet the terms of her existence. She is responsible to return the gift and yet this is entirely outside of her power as an individual causing her to feel as if she has failed to take responsibility for the gift.
The vernacular phrases that are within the popular knowledge of how motherhood is portrayed display the failed responsibility for the gift. Billy Cosby’s famous utterance “I brought you into the world and I can take you out” has been popularized and reiterated frequently in portrayals of motherhood. This is often encountered when a child is not acting within the parameters that the parent (often the mother) expects of the child. There are similar accounts of the birthing process. I went through X amount of hours of labor for you (you ungrateful brat) the very least you can do for me is get back by curfew, go to medical school, have children of your own, etc…. In other variations, the difficulties of pregnancy are sometimes brought up as well. Mothers indicate that morning sickness, being forced to stay in bed, or painful labor are things that they are owed for. A child must respect these things and fulfill the expectations of the mother in order to pay the mother back for the sacrifices made during pregnancy. Mothers will often mention the sacrifices they made while pregnant in order to induce guilt in their children in order to produce certain behaviors. The child owes a debt even before birth. The debt begins to accrue from the moment that the child comes into being. The expectation is also indicated in various sitcoms and periodic television shows including the quote mentioned in Star Trek at the beginning of this paper where the expectation of return is not only acknowledged but promoted as a positive thing. One gives so much for a child, is it not logical to expect something in return?

The expectation of return for the pregnancy and birthing of a child is part of the capitalistic framework of motherhood. The framing of birth as a gift fits into the capitalist paradigm. Virginia Held points to the fact that the mother-child relationship cannot be seen as

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20 Billy Cosby first uttered this phrase in 1983 but it has taken on a life of its own and has been reiterated through memes and various references in the Culture Industry. The importance of the phrase is important and implies an expectation of return for the gift of life.
strictly contractual. This is because neither party sets the terms of the agreement as is required in a contract. The mother, while she may be the birth giver, does not have the ability to enforce the repayment of that debt. She cannot force the child to yield to her expectations or to attempt to repay her. Before the birth of the child, the mother can do nothing to ensure that the child will meet the expectations of her birth. The only tool she has in collecting the debt is guilt. Guilt can only be used after the child is born, meaning no contract can be formed as the terms of the arrangement cannot be agreed upon before the child is conceived. Thus the relationship cannot be seen as a contract between two economic persons as neither the child nor the mother have complete control over the exchange and cannot agree to the terms prior to the relationship being manifestation of the relationship.

The mother does not get to choose the characteristics that her child will have. She does not get to choose the child’s intelligence, physical characteristics, or personality traits. Even as this changes slightly with the advent of technology, the mother’s choice as to who her child will be is still severely limited. The child also lacks the ability to dictate the circumstances in which she finds herself. She cannot agree to anything prior to being given life. The mother, at least marginally, chooses to give birth to the child but there is nothing the child can consciously do to reject this gift. The mother (and father) have predetermined, though not consciously, the genetic characteristics that the child will have. There are many aspects surrounding the birth of the child over which no one has any direct control. In fact, her genetic characteristics are the reason why the infant begins to owe a sort of debt to her parents as it is these coming together that create the child. As the child has no control over being placed into the world she has no control over her basic characteristics in the world. This is why, as Held argues, the relationship is not contractual.
In a contract each party has the ability to set the terms of the agreement and neither mother nor child has this ability. (Held 1987, 486).

So, while the gift of birth cannot be viewed as a venture in capitalism that is strictly contractual it can be viewed as a capitalistic one as it has been transformed into a gift in the commodity of exchange. It is attempting to treat it as if it were a contract with an expectation of return that causes the strife between mother and child and causes the negative aspects as expressed by the commonly accepted contemporary gift exchange. The impossibility of giving birth within a capitalistic framework is reiterated by Guenther who acknowledges that

Maternal generosity can spill over into resentment and anger, even to the point of becoming violent. Women and men who raise children, like anyone else, have moments of impatience, fatigue, distraction, selfishness; those moments do not indicate a failure of particular mothers to reach the ideal of maternal sainthood… (Guenther, 2006 158).

What this ignores is the fact that anger is often derived from the fact that women are trained that motherhood is compulsory. They are conditioned to have certain expectations for being a mother like a return for the gift that they have given and to view the gift as though it occurred within the commodity of exchange.

The capitalistic nature of the gift of birth is what leads to it being treated as if it occurs within a closed economy. The problems inherent to the commodity of exchange are underlined by the fact that capitalism has been used for the continued subjugation of women. While capitalism cannot fully explain the subjugation of women, it has perpetuated their continued subjugation in society. The capitalist system consigns women to the position of unpaid laborers and relegates them to the private sphere through the use of women’s reproductive systems. There are many different arguments that highlight the ways in which patriarchal subjugation and
capitalism become intertwined. However, there is no doubt that they are interdependent. (Arruzza 2013). It behooved men to keep women in the home and secluded from others. This worked not only to ensure paternity, but to maintain male economic dominance as well. That there is an explicit connection between capitalism and subjugation of women is clear. Claudia Leeb makes this clear in her writing on working-class women and Marx.

Throughout his works Marx advances the argument that one can judge the level of human emancipation achieved in a society by male/female relations and the position of women in society…Such inhumanity is for Marx the consequence of the primacy of having in capitalist society, where women, especially in bourgeois marriages, are reduced to being private property of men” (Leeb 2007, 844).

Through their ability to reproduce, women have been enslaved by their male counterparts unable to become productive equal partners in the workforce. Production is what matters under capitalism. By placing the gift of birth in the commodity of exchange with its capitalistic nature women are more limited by this process as they cannot produce economic value in the same way as do their male counterparts.

As if it were not enough for the child to have the gift of birth and the debt that ensues, the child will also be held accountable for the gift of life. The gift of birth refers to the actual birthing process a mother endures to bring forth the life of a new human. The gift of life refers to the things provided by care takers of the child that the child requires to continue living and to flourish in society. Both of these acts have come to be treated as gifts. Thus the child has the negative experience of being a gift-receiver from birth. An infant needs care to survive. In fact, human children need care for several years if they are to survive, much less thrive as human beings. Though not necessarily the case in every situation, general care of the child is most often provided by the mother. It can be provided by other relatives and in some cases adopted parents.
These types of care are viewed as a gift, and there is something expected in return for it. Here again the child has little or no say in the terms of how she will be raised and what care she will receive. Yet she is expected to appreciate the gift and return it in kind when possible. Because she was given the required care as an infant and a child, she is expected to give care to those who provided care to her. This process continues to be gendered. Daughters are expected to care for their care-givers more so than sons. The child provides care for her caregiver, not as a free choice, but rather as it is something one is expected to do in an attempt to erase a debt that is owed. The caregivers expect certain behavior from the child and if she strays from this preconception she is often reminded of all the things that have been done for her by the caregivers. The loving actions are treated as a gift with an expectation of return.

The gift of life is manifested in similar ways to the gift of birth. The child is often literally expected to care for her caregivers at the end of life as she was taken care of in the beginning of her own. Whenever her mother (or those who are like-a-mother for her) provides the child with something she needs to flourish it can be held against her in order to form a particular expectation of action upon her.

The debt becomes both corporeal and incorporeal. The child owes the mother for the act of giving birth and owes her caregiver(s) for the nurturance provided and for the physical things that she was given as a part of this care. She has a physical obligation to attend to their mundane needs, and an emotional obligation to provide support for them in their dotage, and to behave in the way that they expect. By treating these actions as a gift, rather than as an act of love, the expectations of the caregivers become a demand of return for their care. This causes resentment and poisons the relationship between the gift-givers and the gift-receivers. The physical act of
receiving the gift of birth does not necessitate a demand of repayment. However, as it is treated much like the gift of life, the relationship changes into one between a creditor and a debtor. Throughout the child’s life, she is often reminded of the support that has been given whenever she is not behaving in the way her parents or caregivers expect something from her. These reminders serve to undermine the gift, turning it into poison as the impossibility of returning the gift or forgetting it becomes the foundation of the relationship. Neither the mother nor the child is allowed to forget that a gift has been given and so the gift becomes the defining moment of their relationship.

Even those children that are adopted or have surrogate mothers experience the indebtedness of the gifts of birth and life. If they know their biological mothers they owe her for the gift of birth. The adopted/surrogate child must attempt to fulfill the expectations and wants of both of her mothers (and fathers). This is exceptionally difficult. As discussed previously, it is impossible to satisfy the desires of one’s mother. If the mother is not known to the child, but the child is aware of her adoption/surrogacy, the child then owes a debt to the biological mother who will never even receive an attempted payment for the debt, causing the child even more anxiety. Whereas all children can feel that they owe the debt of the gift of birth and the gift of life these children experience the debt doubly.

Viewing of birth in this way is further supported by the fact that it is the gift-giver that is to set the terms of the relationship. In a sense, the mother is the owner of the means of reproduction in the exchange of birth. This is why she feels that she should be able to set the terms of the agreement; she has given her child its existence. This can cause her frustration because, as the gift-giver, she feels she is owed because she has given a great gift—birth. She
gives the gift of birth in exchange for something of her own choosing to be called in at an unspecified point in the future. She is the only person that can ensure that the child will attempt to repay her. The child, as a second party in this agreement, has no say in the terms and conditions. She does not yet exist when the mother begins to have expectations regarding what she wants in return for giving birth. Even though women do not always mean to become pregnant and can enjoy the process by which they become so upon conception the relationship begins and the debt process is initiated when there is an expectation of return of the gift.

**The Forgotten (?) Mother**

Guenther acknowledges that the way we view birth is problematic and includes in her analysis the problem of forgetting. “To the extent that I deny or forget this gift, (my birth) I stake my own individual existence on the mother’s disappearance and silence. *She* must remain in the dark so that I may emerge into the clearing; *she* must remain mute so that I may dwell in language” (Guenther 2008, 101). Contemporary Western culture makes us forget the mother. Her children are only able to make their own appearance after her disappearance. This contrasts Derrida's conception of the inherent forgetfulness to the gift. It is a dichotomy. The mother cannot forget the gift, and the child cannot forget the mother as gift-giver, and yet to come into being the child must forget the mother.

This causes a tension that affects the relationships between mothers and their children. For a child to become a subject it is required that the gift be forgotten. However, in a gift exchange this is not allowed. Guenther questions this fact and argues that to change the conception of the relation of birth we must not commit it to
impersonality. We need to remember our mothers and the breath they have given us. For Guenther it is imperative that we do not consign her to nothingness. The mother is more than the mere giver of birth. To resolve the tension that Guenther articulates of needing to forget the mother and the impossibility of such a task it is imperative that we no longer construe birth as a gift. That way a child no longer has the compulsion to forget the mother or to relegate her to nothingness. Rather if the gift is forgotten then a child can embrace the part the mother played in bringing her into being.

Guenther also demonstrates that the current conception of the birthing process and its forgetting reinforces the patriarchal paradigm of the family which is part of the framework of capitalism.

This approach maintains the maternal gift at the root of masculine subjectivity… without recognizing this gift as such, but also without letting the mother emerge as anything other than a selfless gift-giver (Guenther 2008, 101).

By this she means that ignoring the gift given by the mother to the child perpetuates the negative and masculine aspects of life. Yet, she positively construes the birthing process as a gift which is problematic. This serves to further the patriarchal hierarchy in which the mother has an extremely limited voice. The mother is relegated to the function of selfless gift-giver.

I also forget the gift of the mother and my dependence on another who cared for me when I could not take care of myself. This forgetfulness overlooks the ethical significance of birth as a generous gift, and feels only the intense pain of separation of abandonment (Guenther 2006, 121).

In this function she has no role to fulfill other than that of the forgotten mother who gave the gift of birth. This process is negative for both sides of the gift exchange. It is bad for
the mother if she has to be the selfless gift-giver, and it is bad for the child if the mother has to be repaid for the gift. If we are able to reframe birth as no longer a gift, the mother’s role in the family is expanded. The child will not feel the resentment of having a debt-like obligation. The mother no longer has to be the selfless gift-giver.

However, this conflicts how the gift of birth is currently treated and with a strand of thought within Guenther’s own work. She recognizes that “[w]e need a new and altered relations to the past for mothers in particular: a me when maternal generosity is no longer forgotten or discounted” (Guenther 2006, 76). The paradox is that in order for the gift to be a true gift it must be forgotten with no expectation of return. But this forgetting relegates mothers into nothingness.

This is complicated because motherhood becomes her only means to define herself. The mother can find herself lacking the fulfillment she expected upon the giving of the gift. She may even experience a time of great depression after she has given birth to her child. She is required by the nation to reproduce; yet, she is quickly forgotten by the nation once she has fulfilled this duty. This can exacerbate the state of depression following birth. Often the happiness she expected to feel because of the birth of her child eludes her. Clinically, this has been termed postpartum depression. The mother also bears the responsibility for the life of the child as (both before and after the gift of birth is given) the child is completely dependent upon the mother. This is yet another facet of the responsibility the mother takes on as the giver birth. She is to be responsible for the gift that she has given; and so, it is her responsibility to take care of the child. The way in which the gift of birth is construed works to reinforce the fact that the mother, as gift-
giver, is uniquely responsible for the life she has given birth to. Mother’s that choose not
to care for their children are negatively viewed as shirking their responsibility. Her body
will permanently bear the scars of the pregnancy. For the rest of her life she will,
presumably, feel responsibility for the child; the child’s happiness, actions, manners, and
demeanor are all a reflection of the mother. Not only is her time dedicated to the child
for the duration of the pregnancy, but her body is forced to pay for the process as well.
Also, she often must sacrifice her career to become a mother. If she is unwilling to do so,
she may be viewed as not meeting her obligation to her children or not meeting her
responsibility as the gift-giver. She is relegated to motherhood through the capitalist
system her only seemingly legitimate choice is motherhood. If she finds fulfillment in a
career she is to feel guilty about it for she is not fulfilling her obligation as a mother. If
she cannot find fulfillment within motherhood, she has failed. As the gift-giver the
mother feels an obligation which can create resentment for her children which is perhaps
why she feels that they must meet her expectations. Releasing birth from the gifting
process would free mothers from the sole responsibility of their children and refocus the
responsibility of parenting to both people involved in the creation of life.

Both mother and child are connected negatively through the exchange even if the mother
is also joyful with the existence of her newborn. “I…my existence presupposes both an initial
gift of breath and a continuous supply of air. For the time being at least, I receive air for free
without having to pay for it or ration it” (Guenther 2008, 100). Here she glosses over the
implication that, for the time being, the fetus does not have to pay for the air she consumes. This
ignores the fact that the current conceptualization of gift means that an attempt to pay for the gift
must be made because the gift cannot be forgotten and that it is not to be paid with immediacy. Rather it is added to the accumulated debt the child is already never going to have the ability to repay. What is more, as Guenther stresses, this debt is increased because the child who is given the gift of birth has no choice in the matter of its birth. (Guenther 2008, 109) The mother gives birth to the child for a variety of reasons, and there is nothing the child can consciously do to reject this gift. Even the desperate act of suicide does not count as a rejection of the gift because the gift itself has already been given. Suicide is rejected as a legitimate choice because it is an attempt at willingly defaulting on the debt that is owed to the mother and thus is a willful rejection of the gift. The rejection is impossible because the gift has already been given. In the capitalistic gift exchange of birth, this is not allowed as defaulting on the debt is unforgivable. By nature, the gift is something that cannot be refused. It is a debt that accrues and that one must continuously attempt to repay, even though any attempt will prove itself futile. Children can be seen as accumulating debts (which cannot be repaid) throughout childhood when acts of care are treated as gifts. By framing the process of birth as a gift we have greatly constrained the conception of birth and its effects on the family and society.

The purpose of critically evaluating the term gift of birth is to demonstrate its infeasibility on two levels. The first involves evaluating the problems inherent in the term gift itself and the dilemma caused by using the term in conjuncture with the process of birth. The second is to investigate the negative effects on both mother and child. After both of the relations have been established it is necessary to demonstrate that they are not inevitable.
A Derridian Solution

It is obvious that, when placed in terms of a gift, the birthing process takes on many negative aspects of a gift within the commodity of exchange. A new way of forming familial relationships and to erasing the indebted nature of parent-child relations lies within the works of Derrida.²¹ Treating the child as an arrivant is difficult, as we have come to treat child as a gift in the commodity of exchange in a closed economy. Thus, the child is born into a debt-like existence.

Just as the cult offers no atonement for guilt, capitalism offers no redemption from, nor any forgiveness of, debt. As a cult, capitalism offers no liberation from debt. The cult may not redeem guilt: like a deficit within the soul that becomes guilt’s cause, both justifying the existence of debt while ensuring its perpetuation (Dodd, 56 2012 Paraphrasing Harnacher & Wellers 2002).

The very nature of capitalism means that all debts must be reconciled. However, the debt of birth is not repayable by its very nature. As such the repayment of debt is not possible and defaulting on debt is unforgiveable. According to Derrida this is the very reason it must be forgiven. The solution is to give the gift without expectation of return. This would also mean an aporetic sense of duty.

“…a responsible decision must obey an ‘it is necessary’ that owes nothing… that must owe nothing in order to be a duty. a duty that has no debt to pay back, a duty without debt and therefore without duty... the necessarily aporetic analysis of a duty as over-duty whose hubris and essential excess dictation transgressing non only the action that conforms to duty but also the action undertaken out of a sense of duty…Duty must be such an over-duty which demands acting without duty without rule or norm (Derrida 1993, 23).

²¹ Guenther, Lisa. 2013. The most dangerous place: Pro-life politics and the rhetoric of slavery. Post Modern Culture. 22 (2). Is an excellent argument of the importance of the need to reform familial bonds and the societal rhetoric forms the way in which the birthing process is viewed.
With this description of duty in mind it is now possible for the child to take care of their parents in old age (should they choose to do so), but instead of being out of any sort of obligation, it can now be done freely. Or in Derrida’s words aporetically.

Instead of treating the child as a debtor from out of the womb, the child would be treated as an arrivant. Derrida argues for forgiveness of the unforgivable and for true hospitality without an expectation of return. It is clear that Derrida did not mean the coming of a child to be the coming of the true arrivant, however; it seems that this fact does logically follow from his description of the arrivant.

No, I am talking about the absolute arrivant, who is not even a guest. He surprises the host- who is not yet a host or an inviting power- enough to call into question to the point of annihilating or rendering indeterminate, all the distinctive signs of a prior identity, beginning with the very border that delineated a legitimate home and assured lineage, names and language, nations, families and genealogies. The absolute arrivant does not yet have a name or an identity (Derrida 1993, 34).

Later on in the passage Derrida explains that the arrivant is like a new born baby, which implies that it the unborn child is excluded from being an arrivant. However, there does not seem to be a legitimate reason for this exclusion. Who is more “unknown” than the unborn child? Even if the child is planned, surely, the child itself will be surprising to its parents. It does not have a name nor does it have an identity.

This ties into Derrida’s ideas on hospitality. Hospitality must be offered in the same way as a gift must be given and forgiveness must be offered. In other words, they must happen outside of the commodity of exchange.

It is a question of knowing how to transform and improve the law, and of knowing if this improvement is possible within an historical space which takes place between the Law of unconditional hospitality, offered a priori to every other, to all
newcomers, whoever they may be, and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which The unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency, and even being perverted at any moment (Derrida 2012, 23).

I suggest that the child be treated with Derridian hospitality. This means that they are openly greeted unconditionally without expectation of any return much less with an expectation of return in kind. Derridian hospitality will allow parents and their children to step out of the commodity of exchange and to enter into better relationships when they are not duty bound to take care of one another but instead are able to do so aporetically outside of the commodity of exchange.

Applying the idea of gift to the conceptualization of the gift of birth, I have demonstrated how placing birth into the commodity of exchange negatively constrains mother and child. They are forced into capitalistic roles, rather than forming relationships based on trust and affection.

By answering Derrida’s call to forgive the unforgivable and for open hospitality, it is possible to create mother-child relationships outside of the economy of exchange. The mother will greet the child freshly as an arrivant and form a relationship with the child with no particular expectations placed upon the child. The mother will provide birth with no assumption of return. She will forgive the debt as soon as the gift has been given. The child will grow up not thinking of itself as a debtor but rather as a guest who was warmly welcomed into her mother’s home.

However, this solution does not resolve the problem of forgetting the mother. With the forgetting of the gift comes the forgetting the mother. As Guenther argues

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22 This may be similar to what Guenther means by generosity her denial that focusing on the ways in which the gift of life and gift of birth have been placed into the commodity of exchange undermine her argument.
When the feminine Other offers me a home in which to dwell, she does so without any assurance that she will get something in return or even that her gift will be recognized as such. To give in this way is not the same as self-sacrifice: for even sacrifice brings with it the prestige, and even the pleasure, of being a martyr. Rather the feminine welcome gives what was never hers to have or possess; she gives time and space to the Other for the sake of the Other. This welcome is the ethical gesture par excellence because it is a truly generous gift: a gift that was never mine to give, and does not claim to give me anything in return” (Guenther 2006, 64).

To be a true gift, the mother cannot expect anything in return. Where does this leave the mother?

It seems that the solution is to somehow remember the mother while acknowledging the great deed that she has done while not treating it as a Derridian gift occurring in the commodity of exchange. This is why it is imperative that we analyze the ways in which birth is treated within society. The gift of birth must be treated within the relationship between parent and child as a true gift meaning that the child is to be treated as an arrivant and the mother is to have no expectation on the child in relation to the giving of birth. However, the gift of the mother can be acknowledged outside of that relationship. Structurally, she is constrained to motherhood but this is why birth has been treated as if it occurs within a closed economy. We must place motherhood into a different structure. Perhaps, as Arendt describes, the solution is to treat birth at a societal level; this will allow change to occur within society. (Arendt 1958) That is as the thing that allows change to occur within society. Change that allows for better and new opportunities. The mother/child relationship can exist outside of a commodity of exchange and does not have to lead to the problematic forgetting of the mother.
Chapter 5: The Emphasis on Motherhood in Business

The expectation of motherhood is experienced by women in various places throughout their lives. The message to women is clear; a fulfilled life is causally linked to motherhood. Furthermore, the only path to fulfillment is through motherhood. In this chapter I investigate several ways in which current and past business practices in the United States have actively fortified and continue to send this message to women, especially professional, white women. I also investigate the ways in which this focus on motherhood devalues women as members of the workforce while also creating a particular gendered docile body. The negative consequences of creating a particular gendered docile body as well as the damaging effects of the expectation of motherhood are also added to the analysis.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the connection(s) between patriarchy, capitalism, and biopower. These connects are indicative of the ways in which motherization is experienced and explain the recurrence of practices that contain motherization as a message. I then move to an analysis of recent practices that have carried the message of motherization. These include Fetal Protection Policies that were popular in the 1990’s, current parental leave policies, and policies restricting breastfeeding in the workplace. These are important because each one underlies the message that motherhood is a foregone conclusion of womanhood. Women are first and foremost mothers and only secondarily employees. Under capitalism, people are judged primarily on the value of their work function. This has caused a distinctive problem for women as their work typically is unpaid and undervalued leaving them at or near the bottom of the hierarchy. I look at these specific policies because they are directly related to motherhood in the workforce as opposed to other policies that may also indicate the subordination of women in the
work place. For the purpose of this chapter I am only interested in the ways in which women, as mothers (or potential mothers) are subordinated in the United States. The final portion of this chapter will address the negative consequences for women that these policies have upon women in the workforce.

**Patriarchy, Capitalism and Biopower**

The connection between capitalism and patriarchy was largely acknowledged from the feminist critique of Marxism for not fully acknowledging the interconnectedness of the two phenomena. (Vogel 2013, Arruzza 2013, Leeb 2007, and Hartmann 1981) Women can work only insofar as being in the workforce does not impede their wifely and womanly duties. The forces that work to support capitalism enforce patriarchy and the reverse is also true. “The oppositions that Marx declared as characteristic of capitalist societies cannot be thought as independent from those oppositions that sustain patriarchy and the rule of a white society” (Leeb 2007, 853). More specifically, “[c]ontrolling women’s access to resources and their sexuality in turn, allows men to control women’s labor power, both for the purpose of serving men in many personal and sexual ways and for the purpose of rearing children” (Hartman 1981, 175).

This connection between labor and patriarchy is not only found within spousal relationships, but also within the workplace through implemented policies. The patriarchal forces are connected to the jobs that women are generally allowed to have in the workforce. These specific connections will be discussed during the policy analysis portion of the paper.

Those theorists that have connected patriarchy and capitalism have focused on the ways in which capitalism has specifically been centered around the women’s body. However, what has not been as thoroughly explored is the connection between capitalism, biopower, and the
creation of the docile body. Foucault argues that power under capitalism is not expressly concerned with power over death; the power of the state is no longer primarily focused on who to execute, but rather is focused on the creation of docile utile bodies that work within the system. The bodies are docile in that they are disciplined into being controlled enough to efficiently working in the capitalist economy and utile in that they are productive. In other words, power “is no longer…dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion is death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave powers its access even to the body” (Foucault 1990, 265). Part of this process means that sex becomes a political issue.

It was the pivot of the two axis along which developed the entire political technology of life. On the one hand, it was tied to the disciplines of the body: harnessing, intensification, and distribution of forces, the adjustment and economy of energies. On the other hand, it was applied to the regulation of populations, through all the far-reaching effects of its activities. It fitted both categories at once, giving rise to infinitesimal surveillances, permanent controls, extremely meticulous orderings of space…to an entire micropower concerned with the body (Foucault 1990, 267).

Capitalism’s main goal is the mechanization of the body through disciplinary force. No longer is the main course of power relegated to deciding when life must end. Modern power is focused on governing the body. People are not important for their being but rather for their bodies that continue the capitalist machinery. Working bodies are not to be considered human with interests of their own; instead they are to be optimized for production of the company. Or in the case of women, to be created as docile mothers primarily and docile workers only secondarily.

Foucault’s insight that disciplinary power produces docile bodies explains the way in which women are treated within the workplace. The pregnant body, as described by Simone
Beauvoir, is a particularly feminine docile body that is produced by the current expectation of motherhood.

A new life is going to manifest itself and justify its own separate existence, she is proud of it; but she also feels herself tossed and driven, the plaything of obscure forces. It is especially noteworthy that the pregnant woman feels the immanence of her body at just the time when it is in transcendence: it turns upon itself in nausea and discomfort; it has ceased to exist for itself and thereupon becomes more sizable than ever before...she and the child with which she is swollen make up together an equivocal pair overwhelmed by life. Ensnared by nature, the pregnant woman is plant and animal, a stock-pile of colloids, an incubator, an egg (Beauvoir 1989, 495).

Here the mother is not a strong vibrant creator of life but a conflicted docile body. Such docility has been perpetuated by the ways in which philosophers and theorists, including Beauvoir, have described birth and is reinforced by current business practices and policies. An indication of the docility produced in motherhood is that women are not given paid maternity leave. Women are not to be employees (or productive members of the workforce) but rather, good docile mothers. In this manner, the importance of motherhood is highlighted. The ideal of motherhood is perpetuated by business practices that are discussed later in this chapter. Women suffer negative consequences due to both the forced expectation of motherhood; as well as, the assumption that the woman will (and even further must) be a particular kind of mother.

The association between capitalism, patriarchy, and the gendered docile body of the mother in the world of business is evidenced through several aspects of women’s experience in the workforce.

Reproduction of labour-power is a condition of production, for it repositis or replaces the labour-power necessary for production. Reproduction of labour-power is not, however, itself a form of production. That is, it does not necessarily involve some determinate combination of raw materials and means of production in a labour-process whose results is the product labour-power (Vogel 2013, 144).
For capitalism to function there must always be enough labour potential. There must always be another generation; women must have children in order for the workforce to continue its existence. The business policies discussed below emphasize the importance of motherhood for women. Women must have children in order for the workforce to continue its existence and guarantees that there are new bodies to be exploited. The patriarchal forces at work are indicated in the tension that occurs between the expectation of women to become mothers and the fact that motherhood and (care work generally) are seriously undervalued in a capitalist system. As Nancy Frasier points out

“…the core of androcentrism in a gender division of labor that systematically devalued activities, both paid and unpaid, that were performed by or associated with women. Applying this analysis to state-organized capitalism, they (socialist-feminists) uncovered the deep-structural connections between women’s responsibility for the lion’s share of unpaid caregiving, their subordination in marriage and personal life, the gender segmentation of labor markets, men’s domination of the politically system, and the androcentrism of welfare provision, industrial policy, and development schemes.” (Fraser 2013, 215).

Not only are women negatively impacted in the unequal distribution of wages and feminized work they are further disadvantaged through their expectations in the workplace.

**Business Policies Complicit in Motherization**

*Fetal Protection Policies*

Companies banned women from working jobs that put their potential fetuses at risk for birth defects with the purported goal of protecting the unborn fetuses. Women, who were considered potential mothers, were removed from their jobs because of exposure to materials (like lead) that are thought to be connected causally to birth defects. Under fetal protection policies, the likelihood or desire of pregnancy was not taken into consideration. If a woman had the biological ability to become pregnant she was banned from doing jobs that would expose her
to those materials. Preservation of the fetus is a worthwhile goal. However, the fetal protection policies were problematic because they were coercive in the way that they treated all women as potential mothers and nothing else.

The purported purpose of these policies were to protect unborn fetuses; however, a simple analysis of how they were implemented demonstrates that this was not the underlying goal at all. Rather, their ultimate goal was control of the women’s bodies as mothers. The toxins in question were found to have equal potential for causing birth defects when either parent (mother or father) were exposed to them prior to conception. The policies were particularly unfair primarily because they conflated womanhood with motherhood and were arbitrary. Women because they are associated with child bearing and rearing were precluded from certain jobs. Their potentiality (real or imaginary) as mothers outweighed their actuality as productive employees.

The arbitrary nature of these policies is further demonstrated by the age range of women that were banned as potential mothers under these policies. The range set by Johnson Controls (the company that had its FPP eventually overturned by the Supreme Court) of 30-70 years seems to demonstrate a secondary goal that of removing women from the workplace and to establish women primarily as mothers. To be a woman is to be a mother whether or not this is a physical reality or likelihood. The probability that a woman past the age of 50 is going to have a child is fairly negligible and so to ban her from exposure to hazardous materials on the job does not offer fetal protection. However, it is highly likely that a woman under 30 could have children. The justification of preventing birth defects is a cover the other motivations discussed here. The policies highlight that women are to be kept out of the workforce through the reducing of them to their bodies as wombs. The woman is inseparable from her status of potential mother
even with this potentiality is not a practical or physical reality.

The treatment of women banned from working with potentially fetus-damaging chemicals underpinned the message of women as mothers. Firstly, the women affected by the policies were forced out of jobs that they had sometimes held for years. They were then placed into menial positions that were almost always lower paying and held less prestige than the jobs they had originally. The policies were enacted to ensure that women were in the subordinate position to men in their class. In other words, “[t]he material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men’s control over women’s labor power. Men maintain control by excluding women from access to some essential productive resources and by restricting women’s sexuality… Controlling women’s access to resources and their sexuality, in turn, allows men to control women’s labor power, both for the purpose of serving men in many personal and sexual ways and for the purpose of rearing children” (Hartmann 1981, 174). Their bodies’ potential to bear children was more important than their ability to produce in the workforce. The patriarchal nature of capitalism placed them under the men they had once worked beside using the conflation of womanhood with motherhood as its justification. The fact that women were not content with the policies and were being forced into an alternative they did not desire is further established by the fact that a significant number of the women affected by the policies chose to become sterilized instead of taking the alternative positions offered to them by their employers.23 (Grossman, 1991). The fact that they went through the sterilization procedure instead of giving up their jobs is another example of biopower being expressed in the workforce. Sterilization can

23 Voluntary sterilization is rather difficult to obtain in the United States and that a significant number of women were able to obtain it is an interesting in that, it can often take years for women to find a doctor or to finally convince her doctor that she truly wants the procedure.
be seen as the ultimate form of biopolitical control. This is especially true of involuntary sterilization which will be discussed in the following chapter. The differences between voluntary and involuntary sterilization is also blurred here as the women were coerced into this decision. Women who chose to remain in the workforce gave up their right/ability to become mothers denying their position as women within their own societal context. There is no reason to believe that in other situations these women would have chosen to undergo this procedure. The fact that they chose to become sterilized rather than giving up their positions demonstrates that they were in fact coerced by their employers. The fact that these women sought out sterilization over demotion demonstrates the power the companies had over the women.

One particularly harrowing example of the exertion of capitalist power over women is demonstrated by a female employee who had held her position in a company for over 30 years. A mother of a teenager in her late 30’s who was not likely to have another child was pushed off the assembly line and forced into a position doing the laundry of the men she had worked beside, many of who she had seniority over. (Sprozter, 1992 731) The position that she was placed in because of the policy not only paid less it also did not have the same opportunity for overtime which negatively impacted her paychecks to an even greater degree. Doing laundry is also a servile role to the men she had once led. She was negatively impacted both financially and emotionally. This example demonstrates that the alternatives given to women were undeniably inferior to the jobs that they had once had. It again highlights the particular and gendered exploitation of women and the fact that their importance in the workforce is undermined by patriarchal forces within capitalism.

Secondly, the women were threatened with their livelihood if they chose not to take the demoted status of the position that was offered to them. The only alternative they were given
was to find another job which often proved difficult to do especially as similar jobs were likely to have similar restrictions prohibiting women from the higher paying jobs. The example also highlights the fact that “free choice” is a myth of capitalism that coercively exploits workers, in this case specifically women workers qua mothers. However, what is interesting in this situation is that the connection to patriarchy works to both demean women as workers and pushes them into motherhood. To act as if jobs are easily disposed of and easily gained is to fundamentally misunderstand the pressures of the job market and the lack of choice a person has. The worst threat that an employer can make to an employee is toward her livelihood. Most employees are dependent on their jobs to provide them with the things that they need to survive. This dependence means that these threats by employers actually end up severely limiting even the illusion of choice.

The options left to these women were to either take a pay decrease (along with a decrease in prestige/respect), to find another job, or to no longer have the biological ability to give birth. All of which are not positive alternatives, demonstrate the devaluing of women in the workforce. This is further demonstrated by the arbitrariness of the policies’ implementation. The women are dependent on their jobs but the employers are not dependent on the women having jobs. The employers are able to find men to take the place of women and so feel as if they can treat women in whichever way they choose. A fact that underlies Marx’s point that there must always be a reserve of unemployed people willing, because of their desperation, to take the jobs left by those that have been forced to leave them. Marx establishes this necessary surplus of labor as that which “belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation” (Marx
Capitalism demands workers which means that women must reproduce. The policies that devalued women as workers and that essentialized them as mothers were couched in terms of removal of liability. The employers argued that they believed they were less likely to be legally accountable if they prohibited women from working at hazardous jobs that may lead to birth defects. In other words, they made a calculation and determined it would be easier and more cost-effective to ban women from jobs that may lead to birth defects rather than allow women the choice of working for them. The fear of tort liability for possible birth defects motivated employers to decide that women are not worth the legal risk and to hide the underlying message of motherization. The fact that both men and women are equally likely to give birth defects indicates the conflation of women with mothers. The protection of motherhood for women and the devaluing of women as employees is revealed by the fact that men (who are just as likely to cause birth defects with exposure to the toxins) were not included in the policies. Exposure of men to the toxins opens the employer to the same possibility of being held legally responsible as exposure of women. The fact that only women were considered demonstrates how they are considered to be mothers first and workers second.

Further evidence of motherization under this policy is provided in an instance in which one man who was attempting to have children requested to be placed in a position where he would not be exposed to the birth-defective inducing chemical only to be refused by his employer. (Kirp 1991, 73) If fetal protection (or avoidance of legal liability) were actually the goal the man who was actively attempting to have children would not have been denied. The goal of the policies was not fetal protection but the furthering of women as mothers and devaluing of them as workers.
The reason that fetal protection policies are important, even though they were overturned by the Supreme Court, is that after the abolishment the motivation behind them (devaluing and essentializing women) became even more clear. The Supreme Court (1991) ruled that these policies violated the Equal Protection Act (requiring that all policies apply equally to both men and women unless a reasonable explanation for such a policy is provided). The policies were abolished altogether.

Maternity Leave Policies

The pro-family/noninterventionist model of parental leave of the United States also demonstrates the ways in which women are devalued as employees and are essentialized as mothers. The current tax system incentivizes having children while the expense of child-care and focus on women as mothers demotivates women from returning to the workforce. The fact that the United States is the only developed country to not offer paid parental leave also demonstrates the importance of workers under capitalism while also creating a subordinate and impossible position for mothers.

The reasons that the bill were passed by both parties demonstrate again the subordination of women in the workforce.

When the FMLA was finally passed in 1993, it was not touted as a feminist bill; in fact, neither political party was willing to frame it as a “pro-woman” issue. Instead, the Democratic Party claimed it as a “pro-labor” measure, while the Republicans who helped pass it used the legislation to bolster their image as a “pro-family” party. In the end, both labor and families ended up with the least generous benefits of any country in the OECD, and, some would argue, the world” (Henderson, 2014 159).

The fact that the law had to be degendered to be passed evidences that women are ignored and devalued. Neither party was willing to put forth parental leave as a policy to help women who are expected to be the ones to remain at home with the child. Women are expected to be the
ones that take advantage of parental leave but cannot be explicitly benefited by it.

That leave is unpaid in the United States is also telling. Women, again, are mothers first and workers second. If women were truly valued as workers in the capitalist system of the United States they would be granted paid maternity leave to insure 1) that they had motivation to leave the workforce, thus guaranteeing the next generation of workers and 2) that they could transition back into the workforce. In other words, the companies would work to protect women workers and to assure that they would return after providing birth.

Ruth Colker examines the case Maganuco v. Leyden community High School District 212 in her analysis of the connection between pregnancy and capitalism. She indicates the ways in which the importance of being a good worker and being a good mother come into conflict for women. In this case a mother and teacher who wanted to combine her earned paid sick time with her unpaid maternity leave was denied the request to do so by her school district. She in turn argued that this rule violated the PDA as it created an unfair disadvantage for women in the workplace. The court denied her request by arguing that she should only need ten-days of recovery time post-pregnancy to recover and any time exceeding that was a choice that need not be supported by an employer. “Purportedly, she should then have returned to work full-time, although no daycare center will even consider taking a child until he or she is at least six weeks old. Once ten days have passed, and her medical needs have purportedly ended, the PDA’s concern for her treatment at the workplace expires” (Colker 1997, 345). Further court interpretations demonstrate a similar point. By focusing on the Pregnancy Disability Act (PDA) on the supposed disability of the mother the courts ignore the person who actually generally benefits from the extended (four months) time determined by the courts to be covered, that is the
child. This focus on the mother, rather than the child, also works to essentialize the woman as mother.

Further examination of cases that have been challenged in court demonstrates the further biopower that businesses hold over the pregnant body. One woman’s experience is described in the following manner

…Kimberly Thern Troupe, was employed as a saleswoman in the women’s accessories department at Lord & Taylor. Her employment record was ‘entirely satisfactory’ until she became pregnant and began to experience what the court calls ‘morning sickness of unusual severity’. Her nausea, however, does not appear to have been limited to the morning. Even when she received an adjustment in her schedule so that she did not need to report to work until noon, she frequently reported late to work or had to leave early. She was fired the day before she was to begin her maternity leave. Citing a statement by her supervisor, Troupe argued that she was fired because her employer did not want to leave her position open during her maternity leave…The court of appeals affirmed, concluding that she had failed to sustain a prima facie case of discrimination because she could not ‘find one nonpregnant employee of Lord & Taylor who had not been fired when to begin a leave similar in length to hers…the court explains her morning sickness by suggesting that she caused it to last until noon because ‘she slept later under the new schedule, so that noon was ‘morning for her’ (Colker, 1997, 347).

The decision to fire Thorpe and the court’s justification of it demonstrate the control of the body necessitated by women which is confounded by the fact that motherhood is expected for them. Women are to control the natural processes of their body (like morning sickness) as employees. If they fail to do this, they are bad employees and can be forcefully removed from their employment. These practices again highlight the connection between patriarchy, capitalism, and biopower and motherization. The capitalist system removes women from the workforce qua mothers while simultaneously undervaluing them as employees.
Breastfeeding at work

To be a good mother one must breastfeed. To be a good employee one must be constantly available to one’s customers, one’s superiors, and be able to constantly provide output. These two demands often come into conflict for working mothers who want to be both good mothers and good employees. Attempting to do both requires a regimented routine that creates a unique docile body for working mothers. Breastfeeding becomes a task that requires constant monitoring and control especially when breastfeeding must not take place in a public way. As was evidenced by women who attempted to go back to work and breastfeed. There are multiple behaviors that indicate the exertion of biopower upon these women who feel constrained by both narratives. (that of the good employee and the good mother) (Payne and Nicholls 2009)

Stock piling breastmilk is the first example of both biopower and disciplinary power. “In becoming breastfeeding workers, women who were not able to access their baby through the working day, needed to think ahead and prepare for providing breastmilk in their absence” (Payne and Nicholls 2009, 1813). A solution to this problem is stockpiling milk which requires that women build up a supply of milk which can take weeks of preplanning and rigorous scheduling. Specifically, “[s]tockpiling breastmilk required anticipating the amount of milk they would need to provide on their return to work, thus engaging in forward planning and establishing goals for breastmilk production. [It] also meant learning how to express milk. This required learning a new set of skills so that extra breastmilk could be produced…”(Payne and Nicholls 2009, 1813). In order for women to work and still be considered good mothers, they must have a regimented schedule that trains their body on the ways in which it should behaves.
According to Foucault this is directly related to efficiency and the emphasis on positive economy which “poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of time: exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments, and from each moment ever more useful forces. This means that one must seek to intensify the use of the slightest moment, as if time, in its very fragmentation, were inexhaustible or as if, at least by an ever more detailed internal arrangement, one could tend towards an ideal point at which one maintained maximum speed and maximum efficiency” (Foucault 1995, 154). Maximum speed and efficiency must be maintained. The maintenance of her body and the production of breastmilk. She must be inexhaustible. She must be a good mother and a good employee both of which take more time than she has especially if she has to take care of the responsibilities at home. Mothers are under a self-perceived panopticism to find a more detailed internal arrangement working with maximum speed and efficiency to provide breastmilk to their children while in no way disadvantaging their employers.

The second exercise that proves incredibly difficult for working women is maintaining the supply of milk they produced. The nature of the work environment means that keeping a schedule, a requirement for sustained and bountiful milk production, is already difficult and is often made more difficult by employers. One women explains the level of care and regimentation required of her once she returned to work

I expressed twice a day at work and put it in the freezer. I had a little chilly bin I carried to and from work. I sterilized [in containers] in the mornings and kept them chilled with plastic cling wrap over them, and things, during the day.

I started off using a manual pump, which was fine in the beginning. But then I thought, ‘This is taking too long. I’d better get a double pump’. Then I was able to do it in half the time. Basically I expressed for every feed. So I did at morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. That just meant I didn’t have a morning tea and an afternoon tea. And it meant that I probably ate my lunch as fast as I possibly
could. I expressed three times a day until she was around eleven months. So I was quite dedicated (Payne and Nicholls 2010, 1814).

The dedication necessary to maintain this schedule for eleven months and the sacrifice of two breaks for the sake of procuring the best nourishment for the child indicates a control of the body that is quite regimented. These women were further regimented by the focus of efficiency and the importance of being non-disruptive in the work environment. The pride in which the women indicated that she was quite dedicated rather than complaining about the fact that it took so much time and effort to maintain the schedule demonstrates the importance of breastfeeding to women. Other women found themselves in physical discomfort when an important deadline or project was closing in as they felt that they could not find time to express when their bodies demanded. Breastfeeding woman also constantly feel surveilled, an important aspect of disciplining the body. They felt themselves as constantly being watched by their fellow employees who would time how long they were gone during their breaks in which they breastfed their babies. The arrangement and self-discipline fulfills the purpose of the panopticon.

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (Foucault 1995, 201).

The feeling that the women were being watched and judged for expressing milk at work led to self-discipline and self-regulation functioning as well as if they were being watched by the guard in the middle of the panopticon.
If women were truly valued as workers and mothers in the capitalist system breastfeeding would be facilitated for them. As argued earlier women must reproduce to create a new generation in the labor force and so they must be supported as mothers. Women that continue to breastfeed are more likely to stop working (Rippeyoung and Noonan 2012). If women were valued as employees, it seems that concessions would be made allowing them to breastfeed at work more easily. These concessions would not even necessarily require women being allowed to work less than their male counterparts but rather that they would be allowed to take breaks when their body demanded and to not feel as if their jobs were in jeopardy when they gave way to their body’s demands.

Other studies have found that women who breastfeed for longer are negatively impacted by their “decision” to do so. Women are often forced into choosing either to be a good mother or to be a good employee. Once the child is born the woman is a mother. Her importance as a mother greatly outweighs her importance as an employee. Studies indicate that this expectation is also classed and raced. Kimbro (2006) finds that women who have professional jobs are more likely to continue breastfeeding than women in low income jobs indicating that poor women, who must remain in the workforce, do not have the ability to be a good mother as breast feeding is not an option for them. In other words, there is no “win” for women. Either they will fail as a woman- by not being a mother, fail as a mother- by not breast feeding their children, or fail as an employee because they are breast feeding their children. As minority, women are more likely to work in jobs that earn less money than white women (Painter 2010) they are more likely to face this dilemma.
Conclusion- Consequences of motherization in the workforce

Women are placed into a difficult situation in the workforce. On the one hand, workplace policies and assumptions, through their reinforcement of the expectation of motherhood through motherization, carry the message that motherhood is a foregone conclusion of womanhood. And on the other hand, women are degraded as inferior workers due to their ability to bear children. Neither of these messages are positive and both create a dilemma that women in the workforce must face.

The docile body is not the docile body of a male laborer who must force his body into submission; rather, it is a motherly body. Women are not equal to their male counterparts as employees because of their ability to have children, which must be protected through the sacrifice of their ability to work. Women who return to work after childbirth are seen as damaging their children and not being good parents. Women who choose to breastfeed their children must create a routine more regimented than anything required of their male coworkers.

Current and past workforce policies are complicit in the motherization process and work to reinforce the message that for women the only way to achieve a fulfilled life is motherhood. When combined with the other factors that are influenced by motherization it becomes clear that there is an ongoing societal pressure that pushes women towards motherhood which is damaging to women.
Chapter 6: Denying the Rejection of Motherhood Through Discourse

In this chapter I discuss how academic discourse, especially in public policy and ethics journals, demonstrates another aspect of motherization. Using Foucault, I argue that the lack of focus on voluntary sterilization in both disciplines indicates that academic discourse proliferates the idea that motherhood is the only option for real women. By denying this alternative’s legitimacy, privileged women again experience motherization.

I begin the chapter with an analysis of Foucault’s insights on discourse and its impact on the real world. I then provide evidence, from blogs and a radio documentary, that there are good reasons to expect that both policy experts and ethicists would be interested in voluntary sterilization. There are issues in access and availability that they are concerned with in other areas meaning that leaving voluntary sterilization “not-said” is significant. To determine that voluntary sterilization is left as a “not-said” option with academic discourse I provide an analysis of journal articles published in both policy and ethics journals. Subsequently, I move to an analysis of news media to demonstrate that the problem occurs outside of academic discourse. Finally, I synthesize both analyses to demonstrate that motherization occurs through discourse.

Foucauldian Discourse

Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse analysis focuses on the fact that in any discourse there are two sides set up in opposition to one another. And so, discourse acts as if there are only two sides creating a false binary. The false binary produces a reality in which only two options seem available. In reality, there are multiple sides and possibilities that through the creation of discourse are ignored. Discourse is a productive power. It produces a certain
conception of reality and an idea of permanence. The idea of permanence creates the illusion that the current way of viewing a topic is the only way to do so. He argues

“[t]ake the notion of tradition: it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical (or at least similar); it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same…” (Foucault 2012, 21).

Foucault points to the way that tradition and discourse work together to create an idea of the inevitability and stagnation which leads to a feeling of unchangeability. In other words, the way in which the world currently is, is the way that it has always been and the way it must continue to be. By the end alternatives have been destroyed, even plausible ones. “The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presences of what it does not say; and this ‘not-said’ is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said” (Foucault 2012, 25). In other words, that which is not-said is repressive and works to produce something. There is something important in the blank spaces of that which is not-said within a discourse that is difficult to identify because of its very absence. The importance of the absence means that one can find the true aim of discourse by looking for that which is “not-said.”

In this chapter I demonstrate that the ethical discourse surrounding Assistive Reproductive Technologies (ART) is pronatalist in that they work toward an increased birth rate through delegitimizing a women’s ability to not become a mother. I do so by using what is ‘not-said’ in the discourse surrounding ART. In so far as the discourse sets up two sides and ignores other alternatives it reduces them to insignificance. The discourse surrounding what is the best use of ART ignores that not having children can be the best option. Scientists, ethicists and journalists who discuss ART have fallen into a pattern of Foucauldian discourse that leaves the option of childlessness “not-said”. They have created a false binary that ignores a multitude of
possibilities. Currently ethical debates either focus on (and this is overwhelmingly the case) issues in fairness in access to fertilization technologies or access to impermanent birth control procedures. The next focus within the discourse is on impermanent measures that prevent pregnancy (either abortion or birth control). The discourse on these two technologies similarly focuses on issues of fairness in access. The binary focus on ways to (permanently) have a child or impermanently not have one ignores the option to never have one entirely “not-said.” This not-saidness is further established with the continued inability to access sterilization procedures by those who desire it.

The evolution of the term ART also demonstrates the contemporaneous focus on having children. When the term first started being used it was simply NRT (new reproductive technologies) a category that held all reproductive technologies including abortion, sterilization, and fertility treatments. The term later evolved into ART (artificial reproductive technologies) and still designated the same technologies. Now the same abbreviation ART (assisted reproductive technologies) heavily emphasizes fertility treatments over the other two options even though sterilization and abortion still technically fall under the ART umbrella within academic discourse. Ethicists focus on the importance of access to ART and the implications of its use. One side focuses on the importance of equality the other on the possibility of its misuse. Scientists focus on the danger of the use of ART to mother and fetus. Those concerned with these issues debate how much of a risk is too dire to allow for the use of fertility treatments. Both of these sides assume that the desire to become a parent is natural and that having a child is inherently a positive experience. The language and concepts that are used highlight and support the idea that human beings naturally want to procreate and that this desire should not be questioned. This in and of itself is indicative of motherization as it follows the assumption that
procreation is the default option, in other words, that it is expected and desired. The assumption is particularly telling as reproductive technologies are generally focused on women’s bodies as opposed to men. This is the case except with sterilization procedures where it is significantly easier (seemingly) for a man to be granted access to the procedure than a woman. The importance of women as mothers is highlighted by this differentiation.

Sterilization technologies and their use are almost entirely missing in the ethical discourse about reproductive technologies. The juxtaposition of the experience of women seeking ART versus those seeking sterilization demonstrates that the discourse disallows the consideration of not having children. There is a dearth in academic discourse, specifically in policy and ethics, about issues in access to voluntary sterilization procedures. The women’s depictions of their experiences in blogs and news articles demonstrates their frustration about their inability to gain access to the sterilization procedure. They are denied sterilization because the healthcare professionals assume they will “change their minds when they are older” or “everyone wants to have children” or they don’t want to do make such an “irreversible decision.” In other words, the option to never become a biological mother is nonsensical even when women, themselves, purport to have this opinion about their own lives

*Sterilization Denied*

Sterilization, when it is considered a legitimate option, is only to be considered after a woman has already become a mother. A recent news article explains why some women

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24 Christine Overall’s *Why Have Children* acknowledges the irony of these statements that occurs by ignoring the fact that having children is in many ways a less irrevocable decision than not having children and indicates the emphasis of having biologically connected children.
(especially women in impoverished areas) sometimes choose sterilization as their family planning method:

In countries where people have their children early, if they want two or three [children], they have completed their desired family size quite early. To stay at that family size, they would have to use some form of contraception for maybe 25 years. [With permanent contraception] they don't have to come back, buy supplies or worry about stock-outs [stores running out of desired products]. (NPR).

In other words, sterilization is the most viable option if one has already reproduced an “appropriate” number of times.\(^\text{25}\) The discussion that ensued about this article mirrors this idea. For example, one participant’s commentary emphasizes this point. “There's nothing inherently wrong with using this if a family has thought it over and decided OK, we're done, no more kids thank you. My own parents had it done when they decided they had enough kids” (NPR).\(^\text{26}\) The responder implies that deciding to not have children is a legitimate option once one has already had children. By leaving the option to not have children ‘not-said’ that option is thereby undermined.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has published guidelines for medical experts to use with their patients that desire sterilization.\(^\text{27}\) These guidelines emphasize the fact that women who seek sterilization should be forced to consider the option at length. This requirement in itself is part of motherization as it emphasizes the importance of motherhood for women. What is ‘not-said’ here is that this implies that women have not already thought about the decision enough prior to visiting the medical practitioner. Denying motherhood is not something that can be easily done and should not be considered as

\(^{25}\) It is important here to notice the population that is being discussed.


\(^{27}\) http://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Ethics/Sterilization-of-Women-Including-Those-With-Mental-Disabilities
legitimate immediately upon inspection. Women who desire to become sterilized must defend their decision in a variety of ways to a variety of persons. Doctors that are against the procedure for personal beliefs are not required to do it. The belief of the doctor outweighs the personal preferences of the women who often find it impossible to obtain their desired medical outcome. Their importance as mothers is highlighted by their inability to ensure that they will never become mothers.

The physician performing the procedure has the responsibility of ensuring that the patient is properly counseled concerning the risks and benefits of sterilization. The patient should receive comprehensive and individualized counseling on reversible alternatives to sterilization. The procedure's intended permanence should be stressed, as well as the possibility of future regret. An estimate of the procedure's failure rate and risk of ectopic pregnancy should be provided. (ACOG).

The recommendations by the board are seemingly rather lenient. However, they still stress the fact that the women seeking sterilization are forced to consider the fact that they are making a permanent decision no matter how sure they that it is the decision they want to make. Control of the body through biopower is an ongoing part of this process. Women do not have control over their own bodies rather the experts in the medical field are granted that control. These women are also encouraged to have their male sexual partner be sterilized over themselves. The differentiation between men and women demonstrates a larger point of the importance of becoming mothers for women. Fatherhood is not of the same importance to men as motherhood is to women indicating that biopower works to produce women as mothers.

There is significant evidence on the internet of frustrated and angry women who have wanted the sterilization procedure and have faced reluctance and refusal from the health care 28 It is important to research whether or not men experience a similar discussion when they seek sterilization for themselves.
providers. The barriers to access would logically interest both ethicists and policy specialists.

Although the individual stories of women shared on the internet are anecdotal they establish that there is at least an issue that needs to be examined. The women who were denied the procedures by medical experts are outraged by the experiences they were forced to undergo to have their desires met. Often they give up without having the procedure done. One blogger describes her experience

Not only was it against the policy of the hospital, but it was against his PERSONAL policy to give any woman under the age of 35 a tubal ligation (aka “childproofing the baby shute”). Yup, even if that woman has three kids already and is positive she wants to make her uterus a recreational fun-zone only. The hospital itself said that even if I found a doctor willing to do the procedure, I would have to wait until age 30 to have it done there (Locke).²⁹

In this instance, a woman who had already had the amount of children she desired was denied the guarantee that she would not have more children. It did not matter that she had already fulfilled her “biological obligation” to reproduce rather because of her age she was denied the ability to guarantee her body would not again go through pregnancy. Another woman had a similar experience that she also felt the need to share:

My doctor got angry with me when I told her, after she kept pushing, that I was sure enough that I would abort if I got pregnant now. I also told her that I realized that if I REALLY regretted it, IVF or adoption were both options. Probably the clincher that made her slam the door though, was when she told me if it were up to her, she wouldn't do it… (Charlie).

They are important because both women were denied the ability to become sterilized even after

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³⁰ Here it is interesting that the doctor refusing to perform the sterilization procedure was herself a woman.
³¹ The focus here again highlights the accepted importance of having biologically connected children.
they had already had children. Both women’s bodies are being produced as mothers through the prohibition of allowing them to become something else.

Women who seek out sterilization are forced to justify their desire and to confront adversarial judgment amongst the medical community who seems to be unable to believe, that for women, the desire not to have (anymore) children is not something that is a real possibility.

A radio documentary released “Tie My Tubes” focuses on the fact that women cannot receive sterilization when it is desired. One of the producers, Brie Ripley, who has tried every type of birth control available and found they made her life not livable, has been attempting to undergo sterilization for some time. Infuriated and galvanized by her experience she has co-created the documentary focusing on the fact that women are still not allowed by their doctors to choose sterilization as a permanent birth control method. In an interview with Feminist Current she describes her experience and the experience of the women that she has interviewed. She found a similar trend that women were not allowed by their doctors to have the sterilization procedure, especially if they did not already have children. They were either told that they were too young to know if they wanted to have children or that their “biological clock” would reverse and they would regret their decision. It is important to note that even when women were given different age barriers by their doctors the barriers were consistently raised once the prescribed age had been reached. For example, on women who was told at 19 to wait until she was 22 to have the procedure was told at 22 that she would have to wait until she had to wait until she was 27. Of course, at 27 she was told to return to the doctor when she was 35 to have the procedure.32 One women portrayed in the trailer of the film, stated that she has been attempting

32 Tie my Tubes is not currently available online and there is no scheduled viewings of the documentary on its site tiemytubes.com. I have reached out to the producers of the documentary and am waiting a response.
to get the sterilization procedure for 17 years. The producers of the documentary focus on the fact that women are not allowed to make decisions based on their own knowledges of themselves. They also stress that even if (some) women do regret having the sterilization procedure it is not by itself a catastrophe as it is portrayed by many medical professionals. In fact, in their view, regret is an inevitable part of life. Furthermore, the focus on the regret of the women who may or may not in the future have regret is no more important than the regret of the women who are forced to either use a birth control they often detest including abstinence or abortion (if they do become pregnant), or motherhood, all of which also in these cases lead to regret. It seems that the regret of not being a mother is valued over these other types of regrets which is another example of motherization. Women are expected to want to become mothers and not doing so seemingly inevitably leads to regret and this regret outweighs any regret that one might have once one becomes a mother.

In the interview the producers also discovered that many women, once they have managed to find a clinic that will provide the sterilization procedure, must drive over 70 miles meaning that it is an arduous and time consuming process. They focused on the fact Planned Parenthood does not include sterilization as one of its options while acknowledging the difficulty that Planned Parenthood would have in doing so. The difficulty in legally providing the procedure is also indicative of motherization and biopolitical control. Through the heavy use of bureaucracy, biopolitical control is established as women who might be interested in sterilization are denied access through regulation. This denial is especially important when compared to the

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33 The ironic parallel between this story and the story of so many women seeking abortions was not lost on the producers who acknowledge the irony that if fewer unwanted children are conceived then there would be less demand for abortion services.
government sponsored involuntary, and more recently coerced, sterilization procedures. Some women seen as unfit are prevented from becoming mothers at all while those that are seen as fit for motherhood are denied the ability to not become mothers.

Together these examples demonstrate that certain women are pushed towards motherhood and the option not to have children (for women at least) is delegitimized. The discourse around sterilization focuses on regret and immaturity. It emphasizes the fact that women are supposed to want to become mothers; that is natural for women to want to have children. It does not occur to the doctors or the ACOG that to not become a mother is a real possibility for women.

This differs greatly from the conversations that women experience when considering IVF. Here the concern is how dangerous is too dangerous to have children and not whether or not having children is something that will lead to regret. Women who are considering ART are counseled on possible birth defects and other risks associated with ART.

International data confirm the high rates of prematurity, low birth weight, and infant mortality in ART conceived births. Most of the adverse outcomes associated with ART are directly attributable to the increased rates of multiple gestations. Multiple births are frequent with ART, both with technologies using embryo transfer and ovulation induction (Green 2004, 256).

Both the scientific and the ethical literature surrounding this subject are concerned with the possible risks to the fetus(es). The discourse pushes towards procreation and ignores in a

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34 The history of involuntary sterilization and coercive sterilization practices will be explored more thoroughly in the following chapter.
35 There is evidence that some women do end up regretting their decision to become mothers. See https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/may/09/love-regret-mothers-wish-never-had-children-motherhood, and http://jezebel.com/we-need-to-talk-about-women-who-regret-motherhood-1635470629 for analyses on women that regret motherhood. This regret is also indicated in a Facebook group entitled “I regret having children” which is a forum for parents to talk about their regret for having children and an appeal for this topic to not be considered taboo.
Foucauldian sense the possibility of not procreating. Even an ethicist who argues that not all possible parents should in fact become parents falls into pronatal discourse:

> These opportunities are important enough: states should try not ordinarily to obstruct them - except to the extent that treatments can endanger the health or well-being of their users or the lives and health of the children born through their use (Murphy 2007, 16).

Women seeking ART are not forced to legitimate their choice to procreate in the same way in which women who want sterilization are. Nor are they encouraged to consider the permanence of the decision to become a mother. The debate surrounding ART demonstrates the fact that the discourse focuses on pronatalism. Ethicists have focused on the inequity that occurs when public funds are used to pay for ART and when those funds are not accessible to all. Others focus on the fact that due to the high risk of birth defects with ART that it is not fair for the public to have to pay for those children to be born. The women considering the use of ART are not forced by their families, medical practitioners, or psychological experts to fully understand the significance of becoming a mother. The ethical discourse surrounding ART does this as well. A woman is not asked to justify her decision to use ART to become pregnant as she is asked to continually justify her decision to never become pregnant.37

Another part of the discourse surrounding the ethicality of ART involves the equity of distribution. Murphy (2007), Carter & Braunack-Meyer (1991), and Harris (2011) are all concerned with the fact that because these technologies cost money they are not accessible to

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36 It is also significant that there is a robust ethical discourse surrounding ART and practically none surrounding the ethics of sterilization. This is part of the discourse that presupposes that women should and want to have children.

37 It may be argued that women seeking the use of ART have already thought about becoming pregnant and this is a last resort to give them a chance at this and that it would be unfair to make them go through the similar hoops as the women that want sterilization go through. However, I argue that is part of the overarching discourse of pronatalism that justifies women having children and delegitimizes not doing so. There is no reason, that has yet been justified, to think that women who desire sterilization have given less thought to their decision that women who desire to become mothers through the use of ART.
everyone who could possibly make use of them. These ethicists are concerned by this idea because it means that only the wealthy or the healthy could be reproduced using these mechanisms. Ethicists are concerned that this is unethical and promotes inequality. This concern is justified. Limiting who can procreate has negative outcomes. However, by focusing on who is going to be using these technologies they end up ignoring the possibility that it may be better for no one to use them. This is the pronatal discourse.

It also delegitimizes the act of adoption through its emphasis on biological procreation. Rather than focusing on the fact that people can become parents without biologically reproducing they focus on the fact that persons naturally and necessarily want to have their own biological offspring. Women (and men) must want to have their own children and ART allows them to do so. There is no question, as there is with sterilization, if the technology itself should be given to many of those who want access.

There are several theorists who do not fall into the pronatal category indicating it is not the only option. Christine Overall (2012) investigates the many reasons that people use to justify their desire to have children and rejects them as immoral. Using both utilitarianism and deontology she argues that the reasons given for wanting to have children have both negative consequences and force mothers and children into becoming means to an end. She argues that the entire justification for having children needs to be reexamined and that persons should only have children under specific circumstances.

While expanding the dialogue surrounding ART will not necessarily make an exit from leaving certain options ‘not-said’ in a Foucauldian sense it will at least legitimate more options. Doing this would hopefully release the women seeking sterilization from their frustration at their
treatment upon seeking the procedure. It would also open up the discourse to the possibility that the better option, at least part of the time, is to not have children.

**Methodology- Journal Analysis**

In order to demonstrate that academic discourse leaves the option of not having children for women “not-said” I conduct an analysis of the frequency of discussion of all reproductive technologies within major policy or ethics journals according to google scholar. I then compare the frequency of articles discussing IVF versus those discussing abortion, involuntary sterilization, birth control and finally voluntary sterilization. To do this I read the abstracts and headings for all articles in the specified journal for the past 3 years. I have chosen three years in order to capture a realistic snapshot of the contemporary discussion surrounding ART. These years were also chosen as they were after the Affordable Care Act was passed. The passing of the ACA is important because it brought national attention to the issues of access to family planning which is demonstrate by the news analysis that follows. If either the abstract or the article titles/headings mention any form of reproduction I read the article to determine what technology was the focus for the article.

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38 In the case of both policy and bioethics a journal outside the original parameters were added as the top five journals were not the most likely to have articles about reproductive issues. *The Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* was added to the policy analysis and *The International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* was added to the bioethics analysis in order to give the best chance to capture articles covering the issues. I chose these journals specifically because they are two fields where there are a lot of debates about assisted reproductive technology and are both heavily concerned about reproductive issues. In other words, these are two fields where one would expect to find conversations about both sterilization and fertility procedures.

39 Due to journal embargos, I did not have access to the most recent years of journal publication and so the time span covered is 2012-2014.
Journal Analysis

Results by field

Percentage of Articles Discussing ART (Policy Journals)

- Journal of Policy Analysis and Review
- Environment & Planning C: Government and Policy
- Science and Public Policy
- Public Management Review
- Governance
- Policy Journal

Percentage of Articles Discussing ART (Bioethics Journals)

- International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics
- Hastings Center Report
- Bioethics
- The American Journal of Bioethics
- Nursing Ethics
- Journal of Medical Ethics
Synthesis

As is indicated in the graphs above the frequency of discussion about ART is severely limited in all of the journals. At least within the top journals in both policy and bioethics it can be said that the option of sterilization is left “not-said” within academic discourse. The highest percentage of mention is in The International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics that refers to ART approximately 26.4% of the time. However, what discussion there is that is concerning reproductive technologies overwhelmingly focus on assisted reproductive technologies, over 60% of the time. In fact, in policy journals voluntary sterilization is entirely

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40 The percentage equals more than 100% because some articles focused on more than one type of technology. These articles focused on abortion and birth control.
“not-said” and for bioethics journals precisely one journal article was concerned with voluntary sterilization. The one journal article that was concerned with voluntary sterilization, it is important to note, finds that even when there is a well-established medical reason for foregoing pregnancy doctors often still refuse to do the procedure arguing that women will later regret the decision (Richie 37, 2013). Another trend Richie found in her research is that women are more likely to be able to obtain sterilization procedures if their birth control, especially if it is the “semi” permanent and “highly” effective IUD, fails and they then undergo a selective abortion. (Richie 37 & 38, 2013). Both of these trends indicate the prevailing expectation of motherhood for women. Further conclusions could be drawn about academic discourse more broadly with further examination of medical journals, public health journals, and health policy journals as well, which goes beyond the scope of this chapter.

By ignoring voluntary sterilization or leaving it “not-said” academic discourse perpetuates motherization. Sterilization, much like fertility technologies, involve specific issues that are important to both those interested in policy and those interested in bioethics. As with reproductive technologies there are significant issues of access and availability that have significant implications in both fields. For IVF procedures ethicists and policy analysts are concerned about how old is “too-old” before there should be a prohibition on the technologies use. Experts in both fields are also concerned with public funding for fertility procedures. Equality of access is important, for many reasons discussed in the following chapter, and there have been several proposals over the last decades that call for government funding for fertility treatments. Voluntary sterilization has similar issues when it comes to access and funding and yet these issues remain largely unaddressed within the literature. There is not a parallel discussion of how young is “too young” to be granted sterilization by medical professionals and
there is not a discussion of public funding for the procedure, even though access to sterilization as is demonstrated in the anecdotal analysis is raced and classed. Poor women and minority women are more likely to be allowed access to these procedures. And for these reasons a discussion of fairness would be appropriate in both discourses.

The focus on fertility treatments leaving sterilization “not-said” in discourse indicates a larger societal trend of denying the ability of women to not become mothers. Motherhood is seen as the default option and this is reflected in academic discourse.

**News Analysis**

**Methodology**

To demonstrate that voluntary sterilization is left “not-said” not only in academia but in the larger public discourse I performed an analysis of the use of the term sterilization in the top five newspapers by circulation according to Audited Media[^41] in the United States. The search was performed in the Lexis Nexis archive for the following papers: *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, New York Daily News, and The New York Post*[^42].

The search hits were organized into three different categories: forced/involuntary sterilization, voluntary sterilization, and other[^43]. Articles that mentioned both forced and voluntary sterilization were placed into the voluntary sterilization category to create as many opportunities to explore the language used to describe voluntary sterilization a possible.

[^42]: The current analysis only includes the search term “sterilization.” More newspapers and more search terms or a more thorough search of each newspaper would have led to stronger conclusions however, given the breadth of the task were deemed beyond the scope of this chapter.
[^43]: The majority of the other category refer to sterilization in animal populations or sterilization of instruments in medical procedures or hospitals and are not included in the results section of this chapter.
After organizing the articles in this manner, I identified trends within the articles that focused on voluntary sterilization, which led to the following categories for article themes: birth control, ambiguous, voluntary sterilization, both, and other. As with all discourse analysis the categories were fluid and modified iteratively with the source material. The birth control category involved those mentions of sterilization in a list as one type of birth control option with the rest of the article focusing on more traditional forms of birth control. The “other” category is the most ambiguous however; this category included any article that mentioned voluntary sterilization but did not focus directly on a reproductive issue. A lot of the articles that received this label focus on “Obamacare” and mentioned sterilization only once in a list of procedures/treatments that were being required under the health mandate. I decided to place the articles on the health mandate into the “other” category as opposed to the ones concerned with birth control as a majority of the articles focusing on Obamacare were not concerned directly with access to reproductive services but rather with infringement of religious freedom and the church’s response to the mandate.

Articles that were labeled as “both” mentioned voluntary and involuntary sterilization while those that were labeled as ambiguous were unclear if the procedures they were referring to were voluntary or involuntary.

The articles that focused primarily on involuntary sterilization were then selected out for further analysis to determine if there were any significant commonalities of language and treatment of the procedure within the newspaper. I have treated each newspaper as a separate case below and then have compiled a synthesis of the results to find trends across the printed news.
To streamline the results and to not have repetitious entries I have excluded both reviews and blogs from the search. Reviews were purposefully excluded as they are an analysis of a specific art type and not a direct statement by a journalist. Blogs were ignored as they are not part of the traditional print media and tend to have the same writers who tend to focus on particular issues which would have been overrepresented if they were included in the analysis. Editorials were included in the analysis as they indicate what the general populace thinks about sterilization issues and do not tend to be as repetitive as blogs.

Results
Analysis

Even though most of the newspapers analyzed had several articles that mentioned voluntary sterilization the occurrence of articles that were primarily focused on voluntary sterilization were few. Additional analysis of these articles indicates that issues of access and the availability of the procedure is not the primary concern of the articles.

The New York Post which had significantly more articles than any other newspaper that focused primarily on sterilization. The first article “I’m not smart enough to stay off drugs’: why I took $300 to be sterilized” by Ginger Adams Otis focuses on one woman’s decision to go through with a sterilization incentive program in North Carolina that pays women (and men) who are drug addicts to have the sterilization procedure done. The woman, Kelly, describes her decision-making process. The article highlights her opinion that “babies and drugs don’t mix” and that she does not regret her decision. The existence of such programs, and their expansion to Great Britain and Kenya, indicate that even within the discourse of voluntary sterilization there
are raced and class implication. Women who are deemed unfit as mothers are paid to have a procedure that women who are seen as mothers are denied even upon request.

The second article “DOWN THE TUBES” After having two kids with Singer Ne-Yo, Monyetta Shaw agreed to be sterilized-only to have him leave her and start a family with someone else” by Tashara Jones. The article focused on the couple’s decision to no longer have children and show their commitment to one another by both going through the sterilization procedure, however, only Monyetta went through with the agreement. Monyetta focuses on the regret she has for going through with the procedure and the fact that she knows that someday when she finds a new husband she will want to have children with him and that she is filled largely with regret for her decision. Motherization is the overarching theme of this article which is especially interesting as Monyetta already had children. Her ability to have children with future partners meant that she regretted her decision.

The USA Today also had an interesting mention of voluntary sterilization even though it had no articles that focused primarily on this aspect of ART. The article “IUD’s, implants are changing birth control; Long-acting, reversible methods gain in popularity” by Kim Painter focuses on three women who have chosen to use long-term methods of birth control which according to the article, and others, is gaining popularity in the United States. In the discussion of why more women are using long-term birth control options the journalist mentions, that one of the women decided to go with Norplant once discovered her insurer would not cover the cost of the sterilization surgery. However, this acknowledgement was only as an example of the rationalization for the use of long-term birth control and not part of a larger conversation about issues in access. It following the Foucauldian discourse pattern of leaving things “not-said” indicates that voluntary sterilization is not an important topic for public discussion.
Conclusion

There are other angles that can be added to the discourse which would allow for an opening that would give more legitimate options to women and parents. I acknowledge that this new discourse would not entirely escape the Foucauldian pitfalls. We must not create false binary. It is not merely a choice between having children and not having children. It should not be used as an excuse to exclude certain types of people from having children. Rather we must bring many different aspects into our conversations. While it is difficult to enter into a dialogue that has all of these problems acknowledged it is important to remember that not all arguments must use all of the possible variations. Rather an acknowledgement during the discourse that it is an oversimplification and a willingness to consider alternate options is necessary. Foucault himself marks this possibility in his own attempts to clarify knowledge he articulates that “[i]t is an attempt to define a particular site by the exteriority of its vicinity; rather than trying to reduce others to silence, by claiming that what they say is worthless, I have tried to define this blank space from which I speak, and which is slowly taking shape in a discourse that I still feel to be so precarious and so unsure” (Foucault 2010, 17). It seems that it is imperative that we keep the dialogue open and to maintain the blank space and to keep it open for the future.
Chapter 7: Compensated Surrogacy: Buying Motherhood

The ethical and economic implications of compensated surrogacy relationships (exchanges) have been largely discussed by gender scholars and ethicists alike. Transnational surrogacy relationships have been especially problematized within ethical discourse as they allow for more people in developed countries to participate in these exchanges creating a greater demand for surrogates in the developing world. The debates addressing positive aspects tend to emphasize the emotional benefits granted to those parents who would not have otherwise had children and the economic benefits to surrogate mothers. The debates addressing the negative aspects focus on either the exploitative aspects of surrogacy contracts or work to problematize the commodification of the body inherent in such agreements (Phillips, 2017). However, this chapter continues in the tradition of black feminist theory. Compensated surrogacy arrangements are examined and the ways in which surrogacy clinics within the United States market surrogacy to their potential clients and surrogates is emphasized. I place this marketing within both a biopolitical framework and within a discourse of biopower. Surrogacy clinics greatly control who is allowed to use their products and, therefore, who is able to reproduce using this technology. As such, they are an important part of the biopolitical power relations. (Roberts 1998, 253) Biopower and creation of the docile body is experienced through the control of the surrogate body.

I begin with a discussion of feminist theory on the biopolitical nature of reproductive technologies and surrogacy agreements in the United States to ground the discussion within its intersectional framework. I proceed to critique the current surrogacy literature that, through its focus on the costs or benefits of compensated surrogacy, ignores the larger issues of biopolitical
control that privileges one kind of life over the other. Using evidence from surrogacy case studies, I illustrate a pattern indicating that differences in race and class in compensated surrogacy relationships create arrangements that are not neutral. No research has yet been done to determine the impacts of surrogate motherhood on family numbers or the ways in which surrogacy clinics control who can reproduce. Due to these systematic gaps in the literature on surrogacy, I will proceed to an analysis of current online visual marketing by surrogacy clinics in the United States. I use this information combined with the case study evidence presented earlier as a plausibility probe to indicate that something beyond the exploitation and commodification of the body that currently dominates the ethical discourse is occurring. I then problematize the current marketing schemas that alienate certain surrogate mothers and privilege white lives over others.

Motherization and Feminist Theory

At some level, the very existence of assisted reproductive technologies demonstrates motherization. Feminist scholars point to the pro-natalist tendencies of the technologies as a means of emphasizing the rhetoric that white women must produce biologically connected children. (Roberts 1998) Current surrogacy practices highlight this fact and their compensated nature highlights them even more because only the elite have access to and can afford surrogacy. Motherization in this context must be examined intersectionally or there is a risk of ignoring millions of women who do not easily fit into the category of expected mother. Awareness of this is especially important given the societal context of the United States where, as Threadcraft explains,

Racial domination has also advantaged whites with regard to bodily integrity and reproductive health, that is, it has allowed whites to hoard the benefits not only of
the labors that typically fall to women, but also of state-sponsored, positive liberty-style support the protection for women’s own unique bodily needs.

Take the capability of Life. Life does not simply appear into the world. It must be reproduced and sustained. Whites have long been advantaged relative to blacks in their efforts to reproduce and advantaged in coming into being. They have also been advantaged in their efforts to keep the body alive. And, if producing and keeping the body itself alive forms a major part of ‘so-called’ women’s work’ the body politic helped white women a great deal in their efforts while at the very least neglecting black women in their efforts to do the same. Whites have hoarded support for bringing life into being and they have done so in a racialized social context where black women were far more likely to suffer disabling reproductive intervention. Whites have therefore hoarded opportunities to produce healthy infants (Threadcraft 2016, 153).

There is a systematic process of biopolitical control that privileges the lives of some over others. This chapter places compensated surrogacy arrangements into this framework.

Reproductive technologies have been a way of establishing biopolitical control throughout the history of the United States. (Roberts 1998, Threadcraft 2016). In her recent work, Threadcraft juxtaposes the liberal feminists call for reproductive freedom during the Civil Rights Era with the compulsory sterilization of black women that was commonplace during the same period. In her words, “[s]o useless was the black uterus in both the doctors’ and the wider community’s opinion that this (involuntary sterilizations) came to be known as a ‘Mississippi appendectomy” (Threadcraft 2016, 2). Control of the black female body was so prevalent that its forced sterilization became a euphemism underlying its normalcy. Dorothy Roberts, on the other hand, specifically looks at fertility clinics and reproductive technologies. She finds that “…these technologies reflect and reinforce a racist standard for procreation as well. Similar to technologies that prevent births, the politics of technologies that assist births is shaped by race” (Roberts 1998, 250). Furthermore, she demonstrates the importance of racial purity in an analysis of the ways in which fertility clinic mistakes are portrayed through the media. Several
cases of sperm “mix-ups” at fertility clinics resulted in white intended parents birthing a Black child. These mistakes were described as startling and damaging by the news media. This in and of itself is telling. “The stories exhibiting blond-haired blue-eyed babies born to white parents portray the positive potential of the new reproduction. The stories involving the mixed-race children reveal its potential horror” (Roberts 1998, 252). The message is clear: surrogacy arrangements are intended to propagate the white race.

Even when black feminists and activists have worked toward abortion, arguably, it has not been for the same reasons as liberal feminists. Reproductive technologies have been used both officially and unofficially to control who reproduces. “When Black and Latina women resort to abortions in such large numbers, the stories they tell are not so much about their desire to be free of their pregnancy, but rather about the miserable social conditions which dissuade them from bringing new children into the world” (Davis quoted from Threadcraft 2016, 20). The emphasis of this control has been on creating white, elite women as mothers and preventing minority women, through either physical force or psychological manipulation, from becoming mothers. Surrogacy clinics within the United States are complicit in this process.

Surrogacy is very expensive. An intended parent in the United States can expected to pay between $60,000-100,000. With complications, the actual costs can go much higher. Of that money, the gestational surrogate (in the United States) generally receives between $20,000-25,000. (Twine 2011, 21) Although, advertisements on fertility clinic websites generally indicate a surrogate will receive at least $30,000. These numbers differ greatly when looking at minority compensations transnationally. For instance, Indian surrogates receive approximately
These discrepancies in actual compensation indicate the power dynamic that exists between intended parents and surrogate mothers.

Surrogacy is also a major part of the global economy. In India alone, the surrogacy industry is estimated to bring in five billion dollars annually. (Twine 2011, 6). A surrogate pregnancy in India costs approximately one third of a surrogate pregnancy in the United States (Pande 2014, 5). The price differential causes intended parents to go outside of the Unite States to look for surrogates, which has resulted in the growth of reproductive tourism. This indicates that motherization and demotherization have far-reaching implications at the international level and, therefore, provide an excellent opportunity for future research.

The cost alone of having a surrogate indicates some level of motherization but only for a particular group of women. Most people cannot pay the minimum of $60,000 for a surrogate pregnancy and only premium (and thus expensive) insurance policies cover fertility treatments. There are two common types of surrogacy. “Traditional” surrogacy occurs when the intended father’s sperm is placed into the egg of the surrogate mother; there is no genetic relationship between the intended mother and the child. “Gestational” surrogacy occurs when the sperm and egg of the intended parents are placed into a surrogate; the child is genetically connected to both intended parents.

**Demotherization and Biopolitical Control**

Surrogate mothers obviously cannot have children of their own during the surrogate process. While no systematic work has yet been done to determine the impact this has on the number of people in surrogate families (and such a systematic search would have been beyond
the scope of this dissertation) there is evidence indicating that women forego having their own children, even when those children are wanted, in order to fulfill their role as surrogates. (Pande 2014, 116)

Motherization and demotherization also occur through the expectations of the surrogacy clinics that recruit intended parents and surrogate mothers. For instance, Twine found that a surrogate clinic denied an African-American woman the ability to act as surrogate for white intended parents, even though the couple was planning to use gestational surrogacy. In fact, the surrogacy agent went so far as to tell her that she would be selfish if she were a surrogate for a white couple when an African American or other minority couple was in need of a surrogate. (Twine 2011, 19) This is one example that demonstrates the ways in which surrogacy clinics act as “gate-keepers.” The “racial integrity” of the child must be maintained despite the fact that there would have been no biological connection to the surrogate mother. The biopolitical control exerted by the surrogacy agencies is indicative of the racial constraints placed upon surrogates.

In some cases, racial boundaries are perpetuated by the surrogates rather than the surrogate agencies. Goslinga-Roy found that many of the surrogates she interviewed worked to maintain racial purity within their own bodies even when there would be no direct biological connection between themselves and the child. For example, one white surrogate indicated to Goslinga-Roy that she was horrified by another (Hispanic) surrogate who was providing birth for an African American child. She told Goslinga-Roy that she could imagine having a Japanese or Chinese baby as she saw them as white but never an African American baby. The surrogate in this example emphasized consistently and passionately that she was not selling a baby as it was not hers to begin with. However, this distinction disappeared when she contemplated having an
African American child. Furthermore, many people from China (some even who are fertile) come to the United States in order to have a “Eurasian” child. Whiteness is prized and sought after (Twine 2011, 63). Chinese couples who chose to use a white surrogate listed the following reasons for going to the United States:

several motivations that inspire Chinese couples to seek (White) American surrogates including: 1) they want a second child and need to circumvent China’s restrictive child policies; 2) they are unable to conceive and/ or bear their own child; 3) they are seeking a child who will have United States citizenship; and 4) they are seeking a tall Eurasian child who in their view will be smarter and better looking than a Chinese child with no European American ancestry (Twine 2011, 64)

The fact that fertile couples come to the United States to have a Eurasian child is indicative of motherization and demotherization. White women in the United States are expected to have children for Asian couples while Asian women are de-incentivized from having children due to racial stereotypes.

Another clear example of demotherization is found in Pande’s work in a surrogacy clinic in India. In her research, she discovered several surrogate mothers who aborted their own (desired) children in order to get the financial compensation available to them through surrogacy (Pande 2011, 114). In one particularly harrowing instance a surrogate, who had wanted another child with her husband for years, found out that she was pregnant with her second desired child when she went to get the testing to become a surrogate. She had an abortion because her husband had been laid off from work and they desperately needed the money. This situation is indicative of the exploitative nature of surrogacy. Rather than becoming parents of their own (desired) children, women in these, and similar, circumstances are pressured to facilitate and enable other women to become mothers. (Pande 2014, 116) Specifically, Pande acknowledges
that this is part of the anti-natal policies promoted by the Indian government, “as these women [surrogate mothers] align their own reproduction to meet the needs of commercial surrogacy, as they undergo abortions and forgo having their own children, they end up conforming to the state imperative of selective anti-natalism” (Pande 2014, 164). If this trend occurs systematically across surrogate markets it is perhaps the strongest evidence of demotherization.44

What is possibly most interesting in these stories is the conflation of parenting, being a parent, providing birth, and biological reproduction. Even when the surrogate mother has no biological connection to the child, there are internal and external pressures that privilege whiteness over other racial/ethnic groups. These connections and conflation have not yet been fully established in the literature. There simply is not enough systematic research done on these issues to make any definitive conclusions; however, these stories paint a troubling picture of surrogacy relationships. In what follows, I begin the process of teasing out these difficulties to determine how much of the framework described so far can plausibly stem from surrogacy clinics current marketing strategies.

Methodology

Surrogacy clinics, as demonstrated above, have at least some control over who is allowed and encouraged to become a surrogate mother and who is allowed and encouraged to become intended parents.45 In fact, Roberts specifically argues that “racial disparity appears to stem from a complex interplay of financial barriers, cultural preferences, and more deliberate professional

44 Unfortunately, there has not been any systematic research that explores whether this is a consistent trend among surrogate mothers.
45 Dorothy Roberts brings attention to this fact in Killing the Black Body where she also indicates that news media is complicit in the relegation of fertility options to white parents.
manipulation” (Roberts 1998, 253). Surrogacy clinics perpetuate professional manipulation of the surrogacy market. However, again no systematic research has investigated the ways in which surrogacy clinics participate in deliberate professional manipulation through their marketing, specifically their manipulation of images representing the surrogacy process.

The lack of information led to three specific research questions regarding surrogacy clinics’ marketing techniques.

1. What is the target population of surrogacy marketing? (Who are the expected intended parents?)
2. Who is expected to become a surrogate mother?
3. Who is portrayed as the end result of surrogacy arrangements?

In an attempt to begin addressing these questions, I have analyzed the pictorial representations of each of these roles on various surrogacy webpages.

Using the search term “American Surrogacy Clinics” in Google I analyzed the top 20 search results. I analyzed each page of the website that applied to surrogacy relationships and recorded the race/ethnicity of the intended parents, surrogate mothers, and children portrayed. I also recorded the number of pictures that each site had and what percent of these were white and what percent were minority women. The images portrayed on the sites reflect the expectations of the surrogate agencies. If the images of surrogates and children are overwhelmingly white, the concept that clinics use technology to market to whites is supported. It provides evidence that there is a pressure for white women to reproduce (motherization) that is

46 Pages explicitly denoted as pertaining to fertility treatments, or explanations of infertility were ignored because while it would be interesting to obtain the information contained in them they do not directly correlate to the information that was sought on surrogacy.
47 Pictures of children were only coded as such if the child/children were not accompanied by an adult in the picture. If the child/children was/were accompanied by an adult the picture was coded as an intended parent or surrogate depending on the context of the picture.
non-existent or minimalized for minority women. In fact, minority women experience an opposite pressure not to reproduce (demotherization). I placed each picture into one of the following categories: white, minority, or unknown/ambiguous/interracial. I recorded the information for each site and then totaled them as follows.

**Results**

*Intended Parents*

On the twenty websites analyzed there were 224 portrayals of intended parents. Of those 193 were of entirely white families/parents (86.1%), 21 were of minority families/parents (9.4%), 10 were ambiguous, unknown, or interracial couples/parents (4.5%).

*Surrogate Mothers*

On the twenty websites analyzed there were 132 portrayals of surrogate mothers. Of those 121 were white (91.7%), 9 were minorities (6.8%), and 2 were ambiguous or of unknown race (1.5%). Overwhelmingly, (counterintuitive to my hypothesis) there are more white representations of surrogate mothers than there are white representations of intended parents. This demonstrates the biopower expressed over their bodies creating them as docile bodies. It seems that the whiteness of the surrogate is more important than the whiteness of the intended parent. This is doubly interesting as there is a continuing trend for gestational surrogacy to be significantly more popular than traditional surrogacy (Phillips 2017). I discuss the implications

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48 In future analyses of the data these categories need to be separated out to determine the different rates that each occurs. A picture that is unclear as to the race/ethnicity of the person(s) pictured is different than a picture that is ambiguous in its racial/ethnic make-up and a picture of an interracial couple as intended parents indicates something else again. In future iterations of this work the coding should be done through anonymous survey techniques to combat coder biases and to come to stronger conclusions.
of these findings in the following section entitled surrogacy and the docile body. Additionally, the differences in the way intended parents and surrogates are portrayed intuitively makes sense as the depiction of intended parents is there to help those seeking surrogates to identify themselves as those who use the clinics. Twine’s findings support this. Surrogacy clinics, after all are in business to be profitable. If more people see themselves as possible clientele, the clinics may get more business. The depiction of white surrogates is intended to help the target population (intended parents) feel more comfortable because they can identify with the surrogates.

Children

On the twenty websites analyzed there were 111 depictions of children, of those 107 (95.4%) were white children, 4 were minority children (4.6%), and 0 were unknown or ambiguous. These findings are striking in that the portrayals of the product of surrogacy arrangements are overwhelmingly white. This fits into the evidentiary explanations mentioned previously as there is an emphasis on whiteness of children in China. Anyone can use surrogacy to reproduce but the racial integrity of the population will be maintained. The underlying message is a biopolitical one. Surrogacy clinics are a way of controlling the population through the control of future generations. In the words of Threadcraft, surrogacy clinics are an agent in granting an advantage in the Capability of Life to white women over minority women. (Threadcraft 2016, 153).

49 The importance of profits is highlighted by the fact that many of the surrogacy websites have direct connections to financing options for intended parents.
Limitations

There are several issues with the methodology that seriously impede the generalizability of the results. Twenty is not a sufficient number nor was the search criteria sufficiently randomized as the results were skewed by the IP address provided and my prolonged research on motherhood. However, the work provided does act as a probability probe to establish the need for further research and, at least tentatively, establishes the existence of motherization and demotherization within compensated surrogacy arrangements. In order to make stronger conclusions on this subject, the websites analyzed need to be truly randomized. Possible bias would need to be combated through the use of surveys to identify the perceived race/ethnicity of people in the photographs.

Conclusions

However, the limitations of the research methodology do not mean that there are no conclusions that can be drawn from these findings. The website analysis acts as a probability probe that fits the purpose explained by Harry Eckstein in Regarding Politics

After hypotheses are formulated, one does not necessarily proceed immediately to test them. A stage of inquiry preliminary to testing sometimes intervenes and ought to do so far more often than it actually does in political study (or in other social sciences). It involves probing the "plausibility" of candidate-theories. Plausibility here means something more than a belief in potential validity plain and simple, for hypotheses are unlikely ever to be formulated unless considered potentially valid; it also means something less than actual validity, for which rigorous testing is required. In essence, plausibility probes involve attempts to determine whether potential validity may reasonably be considered great enough to warrant the pains and costs of testing, which are almost always considerable (Eckstein 1991, 117).

50 For a discussion of generalizability and its importance and limitations see Goertz and Mazur Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology
The analysis of the websites in combination with the individual stories presented from the case studies indicate that the marketing practices of surrogacy clinics in the United States emphasize the motherization of one type of person while simultaneously demotherizing the rest. Further research will determine the strength of these claims in conjunction with the work that has currently been done.

The expectation is that white (affluent) persons use surrogacy to procreate. What cannot be fully explained is the motivation behind this expectation. Obviously, it is connected to the history of racism and biopolitical control that has been theorized by Roberts (1998), and Threadcraft (2016).

**Further implications**

*Surrogacy and the Docile Body*

As mentioned previously, white surrogacy is portrayed in marketing at a higher percentage than that of white intended parents. This makes sense when one considers the distinct creation of a docile body that occurs through surrogacy practices. While surrogacy clinics in the United States do not generally mandate that surrogate mothers live in hostels where they are forced to control their daily intake of food and adhere to regimented schedules, the surrogates in India are required to do so. The schools described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* provide an example of this lifestyle. “The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible” (Foucault 1995, 171). The prisoners and school children are observed and regimented.
Life was partitioned, therefore, according to an absolutely strict time-table, under constant supervision; each moment of the day was devoted to a particular type of activity, and brought with it its own obligation and prohibitions: ‘All prisoners rise at daybreak, so that, after making their beds, cleaning and washing themselves and attending to other needs, they generally begin their work at sunrise. From that moment, no one may go into the rooms or other places except to the workshops and places assigned for their work. At nightfall, a bell rings to mark the end of their work—They are given half an hour to arrange their beds, after which they are not allowed to converse aloud or to make the least noise (quoted from Turnbull, 15-16) (Foucault 1995, 124).

Time is something that must be regimented and controlled. This regimentation and control is found in the hostels that Indian surrogates are forced to live in by the surrogacy clinics.

The doctor encourages surrogates to live in dormitory-style hostels. In 2013 there were three such hostels, financed and managed by the clinic. A matron appointed by the doctor monitors the diet, health, and even the leisure-time activities living in the hostel (Pande 2014, 24).

Pande considers this as part of “manufacturing a perfect mother-worker body.” (Pande 2014, 74) Control of the surrogate population is considered important and hostels are the most efficient way of doing this. This is reminiscent of the boarding rooms described by Foucault.

Part of the discipline of the regime is centered around ranking each student according to his/her ability and creating a well self-disciplined self. Competition and efficiency are of the greatest importance in the military and in capitalism.

In the eighteenth century, ‘rank’ begins to define the great form of distribution of individuals in the educational order: rows or ranks of pupils in the class, corridors, courtyards; rank attributed to each pupil at the end of each task and each examination; the rank he obtains from week to week, month to month, year to year; an alignment of age groups, one after another; a succession of subjects taught and questions treated, according to an order of increasing difficulty. And, in this ensemble of compulsory alignments, each pupil, according to his age, his performance, his behavior, occupies sometimes one rank, sometimes another; he
moves constantly over a series of compartments - sometimes one rank, sometimes another; he moves constantly over a series of compartments - some of these are ‘ideal’ compartments, marking a hierarchy of knowledge or ability, others express the distribution of values or merits in material terms in the space of the college or classroom (Foucault 1995, 147).

Further control is established by placing the students or military personnel in order allowing further discipline and observation.

The surrogates are also ranked much like the ranking systems described by Foucault.

Surrogates are organized into ranks: the first are surrogates recovering from embryo transfer, those who are awaiting confirmation of pregnancy, or those who are in the first months of pregnancy. These women are usually kept in a small room at the clinic under close surveillance. They are actively disciplined to be docile workers - rest, eat, and take injections and medicines on time…The surrogates in the second, bigger room have confirmed pregnancies usually in their second or last trimester. The atmosphere is more relaxed and the surrogates are allowed to roam freely on that floor of the clinic. The quiet hours for this room are only after lunch and dinner, and these surrogates are allowed more visits from their families. As the surrogates move up in rank, the emphasis moves from disciplinary rules to more subtle surveillance and an emphasis on self-supervision of everyday lives and daily activities (Pande 2014, 78).

The similarities are uncanny. The ranking of each group allows for competition.

Furthermore, there are still specific physical, psychological, and economic requirements that the surrogacy clinics require the surrogate mothers to meet that also require a docile body.

The following list comes from the surrogacy clinic, ConceivAbilities, however, it is representative of the requirements that most surrogacy agencies list on their websites as requirements for women who decide to become surrogates.

1. Age between 21-39 years old
2. BMI between 18-34
3. Not currently on government financial support
4. Must have given birth to and be raising at least one child
5. Must provide OB/GYN records and a clearance letter
6. Uncomplicated pregnancies and deliveries as documented by prenatal and delivery records
7. Non-smoker living in a non-smoking home
8. No history of criminal activity
9. No history of clinical mental illness
10. Surrogate and partner must agree to psychological testing
11. Must agree to a home visit with all persons and pets currently residing in the home
12. Stable, responsible lifestyle
13. Financially sound

Some of these requirements are arguably connected to the health of the child. While others (lack of criminal activity, having a stable and responsible lifestyle, and being financially sound are superfluous to the surrogacy process entirely. The embodiment of surrogate mothers being depersonalized is indicated by the ubiquitous picture of a white woman wearing white underwear with an almost entirely white background that occurs in some form on almost every surrogacy website. The purity of the surrogate is reified in these ways. Her disconnection to the child is emphasized again and again while her fitness as a mother is also highlighted. She is not to be the parent of the child and yet her moral worth and fitness as a breeder is an important aspect of the surrogacy process. Furthermore, the requirements of financial soundness, having a stable lifestyle, and being responsible are ways to force the mother into the framework of capitalist expectations. The body must be disciplined and docile in order to be a productive member of the modern economy (Foucault 1995, 144). She who is not part of the financial apparatus must not

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51 While this list is representative of the requirements put forth by most agencies ConceiveAbilities does not explicitly require that surrogate mothers have dependable transportation. This may be because many clinics are in metropolitan areas where reliance on public transportation is not indicative of poverty and does not impede the ability of a surrogate to get to doctors’ appointments throughout their pregnancy.
be allowed to enter it through surrogacy. The connection between the docile body and discipline is furthered by the fact that the women who wish to become surrogates must permit themselves to be surveilled. They must grant observers from the surrogacy clinics the position of guard in the panopticon where their lives are open for the guards to see.

**Conclusion**

Compensated surrogacy relationships create a negative relationship between motherization and demotherization that is guarded by surrogacy clinics in the United States. By dictating who gets to become both the intended parent and the surrogate mother, these clinics are a continuance of the biopolitical control practices that have been perpetuated in the United States through both explicit and implicit biopolitical control.

Explicit control occurs through sanctioned government actions including the legalized forced sterilizations of the past. Women who were deemed unfit were forcefully, often without their knowledge, barred from becoming mothers through sterilization programs. The history of population control began at the country’s founding and has become more implicit as time goes by. No longer are there de jure immigration laws prohibiting certain races or ethnicities from entering the borders of the United States nor are there government sanctioned sterilization programs. However, what now exists are de facto biopolitical controls. One of which is acted out by surrogacy clinics. Surrogacy clinics through their acting as “gatekeepers” on who is allowed access to the services, both as intended parents and as potential surrogates, fit into the long-time history of biopolitical control that privileges white affluent lives over others. As the message of motherization is being sent out to that population the subtler more insidious message is that of demotherization that works against minority and underprivileged women procreating.
This is furthered by programs, such as the one in North Carolina, that incentivize women who are deemed unfit from having children at all.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This dissertation was designed as a response to recent feminist claims by Sandra Lee Bartky (1990) and Lisa Guenther (2006) that the expectation of motherhood is no longer a useful or appropriate topic for feminist theorists. I demonstrate that far from being a “tired-myth” the expectation of motherhood is a lived-in experience for women in the United States leading to negative consequences, which feminist theory must address. I developed the term motherization, or the process by which women are trained to treat motherhood as an expectation, to encompass the many issues that are connected to the phenomenon and its negative consequences.

Motherization requires intersectional inquiry. Not all women experience motherization at every moment in their lives. The blank-spaces, where the phenomenon does not occur, contain much that needs to be addressed and problematized. The expectation of motherhood acts as a biopolitical force that privileges and encourages some lives more than others. As I show in chapter six, white, middle-class, and educated women are actively barred from sterilization procedures while drug-addicts are actively incentivized to have these procedures. These differences paint a larger and more troubling picture when placed into a historical context of racism where forced sterilization of minority was promoted for decades.

Motherization does not just have the direct consequence of creating some women as mothers; it also creates expectations around what motherhood should be and is. These consequences include placing birth into the commodity of exchange, as I discuss in chapter four. Women are constrained to motherhood, and as mothers, to a particular feminine docile body that is undervalued and pushed aside. Contemporary feminist theory addressing the situation of women in the United States must acknowledge the importance of motherhood.
Motherization

Motherization occurs in various aspects of society and throughout a woman’s life. It begins when a girl is young through her play at being a mother (Beauvoir 1988, 298) and continues through her introduction to the culture industry where she learns that motherhood will bring her true fulfillment, as I discuss in chapter three. The culture industry portrays motherhood as the ultimate path of fulfillment and an inevitable consequence of womanhood. The culture industry also establishes a picture of motherhood that includes playing it into the commodity of exchange. Placing birth into a commodity of exchange requires an impossible return for the gift of birth that the child will be forever in debt for causing resentment to occur in both parties. Business practices that I explore in chapter five, reinforce this message by creating a contradiction in a professional woman’s life; she can either be a good employee or a good mother; but not both. The policies implemented emphasize the importance of motherhood for women. Motherization ensures that motherhood is the obvious choice. Language and discourse also put forth the message of motherization, as outlined in chapter six. Leaving a child-free life “not-said” academic discourse reinforces the idea that women must be mothers. Furthermore, academic discourse ignores the real lived experiences of women who are denied access to desired sterilization procedures. As examined in chapters six and seven reproductive technologies offer a particularly strong way to gain biopolitical control in that they prevent certain people from having children while encouraging others to do so. In chapter seven I demonstrate the way that surrogacy clinics have established by controlling who is allowed to become a surrogate mother, who is encouraged to use their services as intended parents, and the surrogate mother’s body. All of these forces work together to create women as mothers.
Demotherization

Demotherization which pertains to minority, poor, and non-Western women, is a more difficult phenomenon to illustrate than motherization partially because it is not as ubiquitous. Any girl who pictures herself as Katniss Everdeen or as Bella Swan experiences motherization through those stories, even though in other stories (like Beloved and The Mothers) she will be demotherized. However, as I discussed in chapter three, the message to minority women is not that to privileged women. They do not receive the message that motherhood is the ultimate path to fulfillment. Similarly, if a minority woman works in a field where she is able to breast-feed or have paid maternity leave, as discussed in chapter five, she too will experience the dichotomy experienced by working-professional mothers. However, this is significantly less likely as minority women, specifically black women, are less likely to be working in these higher paying professions. (Threadcraft 2016, 154) In both of these examples, demotherization is complex. Demotherization is most obvious in chapters six and seven that discuss the lurid history of racially biased reproductive control in the United States. The control today is less explicit than the forced sterilization of the past; however, the control exerted is still through incentivized sterilization programs. Surrogacy clinics, through implicit messages in their marketing, act as

52 The overwhelming majority of protagonists are white, which is part of what Iris Marion Young portrays as Culture Imperialism. Cultural Imperialism means “[t]o experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one’s own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and market out as Other” (Young 1990, 59). Which means that it all audience members are encouraged to see themselves as Bella Swan and Katniss Everdeen even while it is entirely impossible for some audience members leaving them invisible.
gatekeepers allowing only those who are seen as fit access to reproductive technologies. They also control who is able to act as surrogate.

**Further Research and Implications**

The picture painted of motherization was intended to establish that the expectation or discouragement of motherhood exists and that it has consequences for the women involved. This project is not a complete survey of all instances of motherization or demotherization within the United States. Rather, it is an exploratory examination of various avenues within the United States where motherization and demotherization takes place. I established that the concepts of motherization and demotherization are useful and important concepts for feminist theory. Many more avenues can be developed and some of the avenues explored in my dissertation would be bettered through more thorough methodological examination, which I intend to pick up in future projects.

One of the advantages of the concept is that it will also have the ability to “travel” (Goertz and Mazur 2011) outside of the United States in future research. The ability of motherization and demotherization to travel outside of the social context of the United States for future research is especially important given the context of reproductive tourism and a globalized world. More in depth research needs to be done in the area of transnational compensated surrogacy. This research needs to include a more systematic look at the recruiting mechanisms used by surrogate agencies (including those outside the United States), the direct impact on surrogate families, and the long-term impacts on surrogates’ bodies.

The discussion from chapter six on academic discourse can also be expanded to include the areas of religion, feminist theory, and health policy. Direct work with OB/GYNs and other
medical professionals who provide sterilization and other reproductive services would also be beneficial in future research. Experiences of women who have been denied sterilization indicates that their doctors often deny the procedure because they are concerned that the patient will later regret her decision. This assumption would be more clearly addressed by speaking to the actual medical professionals involved in the procedure. Additionally, there may be other systemic blocks to access that are complicit in motherization occurring outside of the doctor’s control. For instance, the news article analysis in chapter six indicates that the dramatic increase in the number of catholic hospitals due to the ACA has led to a sharp decline in clinics and hospitals that offer sterilization. *Tie My Tubes* also supports this finding. A complete analysis of the various factors that block access to sterilization procedures would include both of these issues.

It would also be advantageous to explore other aspects of motherization that are not discussed within this project. These include, but are not limited to, the treatment of girls in daycares and elementary schools (pertaining to discipline, play, and lessons), current sexual education curriculum and practices, and a more thorough investigation of the financial incentives (and disincentives) for having children. These opportunities provide ample room for future research into the multifaceted effects of the motherization and demotherization processes.

Motherhood is an important philosophical concept that needs to be acknowledged and considered within feminist and political theory and philosophy. Motherization needs to be better understood and further explored. The consequences of the motherization and demotherization also need to be more fully acknowledged and examined. Similarly, demotherization also needs to be further examined as the negative impacts need to be acknowledged and addressed.
APPENDIX A: Coding guidelines for academic discourse and the media

The purpose of this project it to code newspapers and journal articles (bioethics and policy) in order to compare the rates at which assisted reproductive technologies and voluntary sterilization are discussed. In order to establish the rate it is imperative that the possible number of mentions must also be determined.

Rather than using a search term which would only produce results that have a particular phrase or particular phrases the base number will be established by looking at all possible entries. Due to embargoes the chosen years of my research is 2012-2014. To keep the inquiries parallel the same years will be used within the newspapers.

Journals were selected by google scholar ranking as no other ranking factor included both bioethics and policy journals. Policy journals were selected from policy and admin ranking. I disregarded the admin journals. I read only the abstracts of each journal article to determine if there was a high likelihood of any of the terms appearing in the article. If such an indication is noted the article will be saved for further review. I did not count articles that were corrections or pertained to “house-keeping” issues as to not inflate the number of articles in the analysis.

After the articles that concerned ART were selected for further review I read each article to determine what type of ART were mentioned and what the focus of the article was.

Journals
Bioethics
1. Journal of Medical Ethics
2. Nursing Ethics
3. The American Journal of Bioethics
4. Bioethics
5. Hasting Center Report
6. Int’l Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics

Policy
1. Policy Studies Journal
2. Governance
3. Public Management Review
4. Science & Public Policy
5. Environment & Planning C: Government and Policy

I also coded policy journals for whether or not they covered a health policy issue. However, those findings were not included in this project.
**Spreadsheet: Existing Variables (Journals)**

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<td>1 = Journal of Medical ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Nursing Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = The American Journal of Bioethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Bioethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = Hastings Center Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 = International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 = Policy Studies Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 = Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 = Public Management Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 = Science and Public Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 = Environment &amp; Planning C: Government &amp; Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 = Journal of Policy Analysis and Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

date- journal information
title- title name
ART-

0 = No indication that article will mention ART in anyway
1 = Clear indication that ART is in the article

**ART_type_mention**[^54] (Not mutually exclusive) Which of the following ART are mentioned in the article

0 = Not about ART
1 = IVF
2 = Birth Control
3 = Involuntary sterilization
4 = Voluntary Sterilization
5 = other

**ART_type_Focus** (not mutually exclusive) Which ART is the primary focus of the article?

0 = Not about ART
1 = IVF
2 = Birth Control
3 = Involuntary sterilization

[^54]: While this information was gathered it was not presented in the results.
4 = Voluntary Sterilization
5 = Other

Ster_frame (if trend is noticed more variables can be added throughout iterative process) (NOT mutually exclusive)

1 = Obamacare
2 = Access Issue
3 = Policy/ethical recommendation
4 = Religious
5 = Other
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<th>Total Number of Journals</th>
<th>Number of Articles focused on ART</th>
<th>Involuntary Sterilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Bioethics</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Hastings Center Report</td>
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APPENDIX C: Results of website analysis

Results by Website for Intended Parents

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References


Hartmann, Heidi, 1981. “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More


Hughes, Aralyn, 2014. *Kid Me Not: an anthology by child-free women of the 60′s now in their 60′s (boomers remember).* United States of America: Violet Crown Publishers.


