Reproductive technologies: the owned child and commodification

Article

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Reproductive Technologies

The Owned Child and Commodification

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I want to suggest in this article some complexities in and around the idea that the child, in several recent discussions on reproductive technologies, is constantly brought in relation to the market and commodity, and yet is not simply equated with commodity. When and how is the child a commodity and not a commodity?

Polemics concerning the child as "commodity" include many well-known books such as Naomi Wolf's *Misconceptions*.[1] The concern of arguments such as those of Wolf is that the child be viewed as something more or other than a commodity. Wolf writes, for instance:

> I couldn't help but wonder why we could not see babies for themselves, rather than seeing them as extensions of ourselves, our lifestyle preferences, our heritages, our fantasies. I became scared by what appeared to be a distorted value system in which fetuses and newborns were mere commodities. And if they were commodities, who "owned" them?[2]

The commodity, and commodity-ownership, here is a diminishment of babies, who should be seen for "themselves". This way of being seen is contrasted with being considered as "extensions [...] lifestyle preferences, our heritages, our fantasies", but at the same time is the result of Wolf claiming a double vision, both of how babies are seen, and how they should be seen. Babies are constituted in the present as "extensions of ourselves", but are already also knowable as "themselves", apart from "ourselves", even if this is also projected as a vision of the future. Wolf continues:

> I started to see eggs, fetuses, and babies as little coins, little chits used in a modern currency system; they had the meaning and value we assigned to them. Healthy or unhealthy? Mother's or father's? White or black? Related to you or unrelated? The baby's value seemed to shift, to rise or fall accordingly. The economy was based on what adults longed for and needed. But what about the babies, I thought. What about what they needed? [...] What is lost in a market economy of "best" and "seconds", in a society where babies are a form of currency, is the central paradox of true parenthood, which should be defined as our absolute commitment to a creature of whom we can claim no rights of possession. Is there any other relationship in which we have to love not for ourselves or the return on our investment, but for love's own sake?[3]

There is a temporal reversal here. Where the child previously needed to be divested of a commodity status it already had, here it is introduced into that commodity economy. What can be noted, then, is that the child and parenthood are consistently defined as inappropriate to "a modern currency system", but also therefore defined in relation to, or as already part of, this system. The babies are part of a "value system", but it is "distorted" in terms of seeing them merely as commodities. Wolf can "start to see" babies "as little coins, little chits", where the diminutive seems to merge, by qualifying jointly, money and babies. Nevertheless, this is what the babies are not to be, although they can be seen as such. Babies are not the coins of a modern currency system because "value" is something "we assigned", but inappropriately. The assignment is done by "we" adults, in terms of our longings and needs. But babies have their own needs, are not to be owned by their parents as money is owned, and ought to be loved "for love's own sake".

As Sara Thornton notes of such views, "the child is seen as a sacred object, outside of the market…"[4], and Viviana Zelizer suggests that "[after] the nineteenth century, the new normative ideal of the child as an exclusively emotional and affective asset precluded instrumental and fiscal considerations. […] The economic and sentimental value of children were thereby declared to be radically incompatible".[5] Rachel Bowlby, in her discussion of reproductive technologies, childhood and consumerism in *Shopping with Freud*, further argues that

> What is interesting […] is that the attribution of consumerly qualities, unlike the attribution of a language of individual choice, is assumed to be automatically damning. […] This also […] has the effect of implicitly separating the choice to have children into two classes, the pure and the impure. If some people want babies the way they want cars, then somewhere else there are genuine parents-to-be, whose desires, whether rational or natural, remain untainted. In neither case, the genuine or the consumerly, is the wish taken as requiring any further analysis.[6]

Although it may be clear, then, what Wolf (and the many other similar writers) is pleading for on one level, the difficulty is to know exactly what this means, and how such recommendations are to be implemented. For Wolf's baby, on the one hand seen by Wolf from her perspectives, is for her ultimately self-constituted, apart from adult definition or interpretation. It can be known as itself, in terms of itself, and – and *although* – these terms are in relation to, and part of, the terms of a certain contemporary money-economy. The baby, then, declares itself as not a commodity, not merely to be owned or valued in monetary and property terms. This positions Wolf as a privileged viewer of the babies' selfhood, a privileged reader of that which, on the other hand, is self-declared by the baby. As such, babies are no longer owned and interpreted by Wolf, but can be seen by her through an unmediated, direct vision. This is "true" parenthood, but it is also a parenthood to which so many are blind, that Wolf must instruct others into it. Wolf is both part of the "we", and outside of it. Wolf begins by also not being able to see the baby for itself, and becomes able to do so through her personal journey of conception, delivery, and child-raising, and she wishes to introduce others to this new or other vision. A paradoxical pedagogy of experience therefore operates here too, in that the having of a baby is at one and the same time the revelation of a unique and minority vision, and part of a universal experience of the having of children. We can see that this dual view of the having of children that we have already encountered before occurs here too: it is formulated as both unique and ubiquitous, highly personal and the ultimate shared experience. In these terms, the having of a baby is both an ultimately private act, a personal pursuit of a private aim, and the underpinning of a joint humanity. Wolf's narratives of family and friends who are alternately either in opposition to, or confirming extensions of, her own experience, act out this oscillation between isolation and commonality.

Wolf's self-declaring baby, then, announces itself only to the few, who are true parents already. True parents and the true baby, who is neither property nor money, nor a production of adults, go together and recognise each other. Further, the baby which is not to be property, or necessarily related, or the mother's or the father's, or white or black, still has "parents". This "parent" must be not an owner of the baby, nor necessarily related to it. A true parent, then, is no more than the perfect student of the true baby which it already knows in order to be such a true parent. This true baby known in and of itself – and the true parent defined in relation to its ability to know such a baby – is self-evidently distinguishable from "our fantasies". This baby, as I suggested before, is an aspect of a real which is known as the real, distinct from "unreal" things such as money, or value, or fantasies. It is reality itself, speaking itself, simultaneously self-evident, and yet known to only a few. Experience here is the access to the real, but experience, at the same time, can only be accessed in turn through non-experience: texts about childbearing and raising in this case.

Wolf, and many other writers' efforts at separating out of the child from a money economy or fantasy by identifying their real child are part of their efforts to value equally all children or "any child". But it is the already included acceptance of value that dogs their attempts in several ways. Even within their own discussions, children are already split into differing kinds of children, some of whom are wanted, some of whom are not; some, therefore, valued (more), and some not (or less). The value which they attempt to ward off as appropriate only to money, not to the child, which is not to be a commodity, or part of an economy, makes a troubling constant return. Just to begin with, Wolf's narrative of her own pregnancy and delivery rests

on her acknowledged wish for an "own child". Germaine Greer, for instance, similarly recounts her efforts to conceive a child, conceding an inability to account for the wish for such a child, even when she forcefully condemns that "[o]ur world already manifests a dangerous degree of contrast between the fertile rich and the fecund poor".[7] As Rachel Bowlby argues: "the psychological and social conditions of consumer choice are anything but obvious: the problem is rather in the way that consumer choice can come to function rhetorically as a category taken as being both simple – in need of no more discussion – and negative, if not corrupt".[8]

We can consider the problem of the value of the child further in relation to a rare instance where commodification is seen as a positive process. Dion Farquhar argues that opposition to commodification is based on a

> [f]undamentalist feminist contempt for the liberal market model [which] is parasitic on a fantasy of an unproblematized edenic pre-market unmediated maternal body. The market, in this view, sullies and cheapens an essentially true or real transcendent reproduction by abstracting its functions and dividing its elements for exchange and economic compensation. Donors are paid; body parts are alienated. This critique of commodification is essentially a softened-up version of the Marxian account of reification. As such, it is not exhaustive, but quite one-sided. What such accounts miss entirely is the *exhilaration* and productivity – of identities, pleasures, and options – that are inherent in commodification. "'Commodification' of reproduction refers to the processes by which economic relationships of various kinds are *introduced* into the social patterns of human reproduction". The implication that before the development of reproductive technologies, reproduction [...] did not entail oppressive political and economic relationships of dependency and exploitation [...] is ludicrous.[9]

One difficulty that arises from Farquhar's points here is that the "exhilaration" seems to me a displacement from the "natural", rather than a disruption of it. This rests on Farquhar's acceptance of exhilaration as "inherent in commodification". This in turn seems to me to result from an equating of economy with proliferation, which, as I also argued earlier, is then valued as exhilaration and productivity. For me the problem lies in both the assumed equation, and the claimed inherence of such a valuation. Furthermore, Farquhar's critique here of an opposition to the market relies on the assertion of the market as also having these positive aspects, rather than primarily on questioning further the way the market is involved in identity. Farquhar does propose that a true or real maternal body is produced in opposition to the market, but she then, in critiquing Christine Overall, does not further consider the construction of the market in its own terms, instead inserting that market, or economics, as having been always present anyway as oppressive political and economic relationships of dependency and exploitation. Motherhood and parenthood to her have therefore always been implicated in an economy. In terms of Farquhar's prior positive evaluation of commodification, it is a release from ("social and political") oppression for women which differentiates her exhilarating commodification from economies of dependency.

Farquhar's argument, in formulating identities (gender, in this case) as involved in economic relationships, does not clarify how any identity could necessarily be read as economic or not economic. If economies have always, to her, mediated reproduction, primarily in terms of oppressive gender relationships, then this still does not address how women or children, for instance, are themselves seen *as* commodities. Re-inserting economy into the past can only further confirm that babies have always been commodities. I can assume either that Farquhar intends such a status as commodity to be the product of oppression, or that this commodity-baby has also always been part of the exhilaration of commodification. In the first case, this surely re-instates commodification as a problem, a production of oppression. But this would re-instate a true or real identity beyond the status of commodity that Farquhar rejects, at least with respect to the maternal body.

Metaphor is often brought in to discussions as the perceived mediating connection between

identities and economies. Janelle Taylor, for instance, argues that;

> One reason, perhaps, that these two streams [consumption and motherhood and reproduction] have tended to run in parallel is that the body metaphors of eating and digesting food remain implicit in theories of consumption, which mix rather badly with the metaphorical associations of procreation, making it difficult [...] to bring theories of consumption to bear specifically upon motherhood. [...] This metaphor [of eating] shapes – and, I would argue, hinders – our understanding [of pregnancy and motherhood].[10]

But I would suggest such deployments of metaphor, as with Farquhar, raise the questions: what does it mean to say that an identity is either *like* an economy, or that it *is* (part of) an economy? Note, for instance, Zelizer's definition of the child as an "emotional and affective *asset*" in the midst of a formulation attempting to diagnose the extrapolation of the child from an economy of the "instrumental or fiscal".[11] I read this problem as an ongoing determinant of arguments in Taylor's further discussion when she would seem, interestingly, simultaneously to be rejecting (or avoiding) and restating Freud's[12] theories of the wish for the child when she continues further by asserting that;

> The fetus … may … "satisfy human wants of some sort or another", [but] it is difficult to imagine these wants as "springing from the stomach". This makes it rather difficult to conceptualize pregnancy, and by extension motherhood, in terms of consumption. How can the bearing of children be likened to the ingestion of food? The very suggestion seems to invoke that most frightening of all monsters, the mother who eats her own children.[13]

Taylor therefore attributes her field's (anthropology) "ideological opposition"[14] of two topics (consumption and motherhood) to its difficulty in conceptualizing or likening motherhood to consumption, although she then promptly does so conceptualize motherhood, as, moreover, "that most frightening of all monsters, the mother who eats her own children". In other words, I can read "metaphor" here – even, or especially, in Taylor's own formulations – not as a source of the separation of motherhood and consumption because they "mix rather badly"[15] with one another, but as a source of separation because they mix *rather too well*. Indeed, the very formulation of "ideological opposition" itself suggests this: as a warding off, as a *keeping* separate of that which belongs or belonged together and threatens to re-merge. Or, to put it differently, and in line with my overall arguments here, the question is what constitutes "metaphor" when it can be read *itself* as the very reality it is supposed to have only an indirect, derivative, or secondary, relation to? At stake in this discussion, again, are ideas of *relationship*, simultaneously in terms of ideas of "economies" (markets, consumption) and the child and/or mother as being "related", and ideas of kinds or levels of languages and the real as being related, or about relationship. As Taylor herself writes;

> Scholars of consumption [...] have given the topic of motherhood comparatively little consideration. One reason for this, perhaps, is that consumption studies have tended to be cast as studies of "material culture", exploring the social and cultural role of material *objects* – while motherhood is understood to be a relationship between *persons*. The dividing line separating people from objects would seem, in this perspective, to be quite clearly bounded, fixed, and stable: the question is merely how they affect one another. The task of the analyst, then, becomes one of specifying relationships. Reproductive technologies and the controversies that swirl around them clearly suggest, however, that such distinctions – between persons and objects, bodies and commodities, mothers and consumers – are not so clear-cut.[16]

Relationships, it would seem, are ready to collapse, or be collapsed, in on themselves. It is notable, however, that in Taylor's argument the fetus (amongst other things), after all, is reconstituted as outside of metaphor, as must inevitably occur in terms of metaphor's own relationship with non-metaphor; "the consumer of social theory inhabits a body that, if not necessarily male [...] is at least not as easily imagined as a specifically pregnant body. The fetus is emphati-

cally *not* 'an object outside us'".[17] This seems to situate the fetus as, inevitably, in a "biological" sense, "within" the body, while it may be (and has been) read in several ways as either not part of a (maternal) body – as a autonomous "object" or "subject" – or not "within" a body.[18]

The reaffirmation of relationship as, then, after all, a necessary mediation preventing unification is confirmed, moreover, as in many writings, by Taylor's perceptions of the limitations of theory;

> The relationship between motherhood and consumption is, however, far more than merely a theoretical question – it is a vital matter with which ordinary people struggle on a daily basis: What must I (and what *can* I) do and have and buy in order to properly love, value, educate, nurture, provide for, raise – in a word, *mother* my child(ren)? *Consuming Motherhood* takes this up through ethnographic and historical explorations of how ordinary women, striving to build and maintain relations of kinship in the context of globalizing consumer capitalism, live out motherhood in and through, as well as against, ideologies and practices of consumption.[19]

The split (re)introduced by metaphor is here elaborated as the split between the theoretical and the vital, ordinary, and daily, where motherhood is apart from consumption, whether positively or negatively: "mere" theory against, or apart from, life as it is "lived out".

Farquhar's argument too seems to me to leave this kind of a question unresolved. It is relevant in this respect that her section on these issues is entitled "Demonology of the Consumer and the Market". This confirms certain understandings of these terms (as with Janelle Taylor's formulations), while critiquing an enmity towards them. Where a possibility is introduced of questioning what and how commodities and markets are constructed in relation to, or *as*, motherhood, reproduction, and the child, Farquhar's argument halts at confirming the market and economics as positive proliferation, as long as the woman is free to choose (how) to consume. As Farquhar quotes Michelle Stanworth approvingly in conclusion;

> it is not technology as an "*artificial* invasion of the human body" that is at issue – but whether we can create the political and cultural conditions in which such technologies can be employed by women to shape the experience of reproduction according to their own definitions.[20]

Much as I sympathise with the critiques that Farquhar and Stanworth are making of a polarity between a "natural" and a "technological", in which either one or the other is privileged, an approval of the market as a liberal, non-oppressive mechanism where women can freely choose their definitions of reproduction seems to me problematic in the ways that I have noted previously.

Jacqueline Rose illuminates several aspects of the complexities of the child and commodity in her discussion, in *The Case of Peter Pan*[21], of children's literature as a field which defines the child as knowable for its own purposes. The child in children's literature, Rose argues, is assumed as an autonomous reality, in that it is to be known as the appropriate recipient of a book to which it is equated. The child as the book reads itself, and this is seen to constitute the ultimate in education without force. A disinterested and "noble" altruism is upheld here too, with the adult knowing the child in the child's best interests and on its own behalf. Rose instead reads the adult as that which creates the child: in producing children's literature, it produces the child for that literature as well as in the literature. Rose suggests further that "in the case of children's fiction, this relationship between the business of the trade on the one hand, and the self-generating body of the innocent child on the other, is of an essential, rather than a contingent nature".[22] For Rose, the relationship of the commercial value of children's books and the value of the child is one suppressed in the service of

> a wholly generalised concept of culture which cannot see the divisions on which it rests. The aestheticisation, the glorification, the valuing of the child [...] act as a kind of cover for these differences [...] If we look at the children's book market, its identity falls apart, exposing the gaps between producer (writer), distributor (book-seller or publisher), purchaser (parents, friends and/or children) and the consumer (ideally, but only ideally,

> the child). These spaces, missed meeting points, places of imposition, exploitation (or even glorification of the child) are not entirely different in kind from those which characterise other aspects of the literary life of our culture. They are not exclusive to the world of children's books.[23]

Nor, I would add (as Rose herself also does later), are they exclusive to the literary life of our culture, even if the gaps might be located between slightly shifted locations. Where Rose notes how the child in children's literature serves to gloss over differing values in terms of class and literacy, the child in reproductive technologies, I am arguing, serves to gloss over differing valuations according to ideas of the own and not-own, which in turn are manifested in a variety of ways, as we will continue to explore. The warding-off of the market through the child which is to be exclusively self-constituted as a reality apart from, or in opposition to, a symbolic or fantastic currency, fixes the child as existing in and of itself for itself. In this respect, the market is established as paradoxically constituent of, and inherent to, culture and society, and at the same time as marking, in those cases, a suspect encroachment on, or degradation of, a purer private life, demarcated by the family and the sphere of emotions. As Rose adds,

> [*Peter Pan*'s] material success [...] and corresponding status [...] say something about the fantasies which our culture continues to perpetuate – about its own worth, its future and its traditions – through the child[;] [...] the whole question [...] of what – in general – *can* survive, of what *is* endurance, perpetuity, and eternal worth.[24]

The wish for the child, and the child that is wished for, are called up as guarantors of the eternal and endurance of repetition: true re/production, undiluted or contaminated by other interests or investments. The credit is to belong wholly to the child. In this way, the parent is released, from property ownership, and is simultaneously retrieved dialectically as merely the servant of the child. And this all is to be due to the child.[25] As Rose concludes,

> Freud's theory of the unconscious is a challenge above all to just this sameness in that it undermines the idea that psychic life is continuous, that language can give us mastery, or that past and future can be cohered into a straightforward sequence, and controlled. Above all it throws into question the idea that the child can be placed at the beginnings of this process (origins of culture, before sexuality and the word), or, indeed, at the end (the guarantee of a continuity for ourselves and our culture over time).

I also understand this problem of the child as both commodity and not-commodity to be parallel to, or part of, the argument by Judith Butler, in her consideration of kinship, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, that

> [t]he Hegelian legacy of Antigone interpretation appears to assume the separability of kinship and the state, even as it posits an essential relation between them. And so every interpretive effort to cast a character as representative of kinship or the state tends to falter and lose coherence and stability. This faltering has consequences not only for the effort to determine the representative function of any character but for the effort to think the relationship between kinship and the state [...] For two questions that the play poses are whether there can be kinship – and by kinship I do not mean the "family" in any specific form – without the support and mediation of the state, and whether there can be the state without the family as its support and mediation. And further, when kinship comes to pose a threat to state authority and the state sets itself in a violent struggle against kinship, can these very terms sustain their independence from one another?[26]

For "state" read also "market", and, in terms of "character", read also: child. Butler is here questioning these terms as autonomous and separable entitities, caught up in a politics of representation which presupposes language as a transparent conveyor of prior "images", "structures" or "objects". Further, the possibility of *relationship* is at stake. What is read as legitimized and legitimating relationship, or what constitutes relationship at all? Legitimation is dependent on

authority, but here unstably constituted as the state or family, or family as through the state and the state as through family. Butler suggests that "although Hegel claims that [Antigone's] deed is opposed to Creon's, *the two acts mirror rather than oppose one another*, suggesting that if the one represents kinship and the other the state, they can perform this representation only by each becoming implicated in the idiom of the other".[27]

Or as Rose concludes:

> For *Peter Pan* has appeared not just as a part *of* history, but equally it has served as a response *to* history, [...] No divisions of culture and literacy (the cry of a literature asserting its freedom from the world), no impingement on the family by the state (the reaction of the state to its earlier policies), no differences finally between children (the same the world over – no class barriers here). Instead the eternal child.[28]

Linked further to this, Butler suggests that there is a possible reading of Antigone "in which she exposes the socially contingent character of kinship, only to become the repeated occasion in the critical literature for a rewriting of that contingency as immutable necessity".[29]

Thus I read Rose's child and Butler's Antigone as the occasion of a parallel critical practice, with parallel aims and ends. Specifically, in this context, the own child of reproductive technologies is to shore up a division between – or rather, a dividability of – the state and the family, and kinship and the state, at the same time as it establishes the mutual implicatedness of the state (and the market) and reproduction, family, and kinship. In doing so, the child underpins, through and as the family, gender, heterosexuality, and nationality. The "right" child is the child of the Western market, even, and because, it is not itself only or simply a commodity. Or, to put it differently, it is precisely a condition of this market that there is a non-market which is implicated in it, and in which it is implicated. I do not think it is coincidental, then, that Butler's text echoes a phrase of Rose's from the quotation above, when she notes in her discussion of Hegel's reading of Antigone that the "public sphere, as I am calling it here, is called variably the community, government, and the state by Hegel; it only acquires its existence through interfering with the happiness of the family".[30]

Notes

1 Naomi Wolf, *Misconceptions. Truth, Lies, and the Unexpected On the Journey to Motherhood* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003, orig. pub. 2001). See, for just a few of the many possible further examples: Germaine Greer, "Afterword" in: Jane Haynes and Juliet Miller (eds), *Inconceivable Conceptions. Psychological Aspects of Infertility and Reproductive Technology* (Hove and New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003), pp. 207-16; Stephen E. Levick, *Clone Being. Exploring the Psychological and Social Dimensions* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004); Thomas H. Murray, *The Worth of a Child* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Barbara Katz Rothman, "Motherhood Under Capitalism" in: Janelle S. Taylor, Linda L. Layne, Danielle F. Wozniak (eds), *Consuming Motherhood* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp.19-31.

2 Wolf, *Misconceptions*, p. 54.

3 Wolf, *Misconceptions*, pp. 55-6.

4 Sara Thornton, "The Vanity of Childhood: Constructing, Deconstructing, and Destroying the Child in the Novel of the 1840s", in: Karín Lesnik-Oberstein (ed.), *Children in Culture: Approaches to Childhood* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 122-51, p. 131. See for a discussion of some issues related to those I raise here also: Janelle S. Taylor, Linda L. Layne, and Danielle F. Wozniak, *Consuming Motherhood* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004); as Taylor writes

Motherhood is supposed to be a special kind of relationship, uniquely important because uniquely free of the kind of calculating instrumentality associated with the consumption of objects. It stands for 'love,' in sharp contrast to 'money' – a simple but persistent opposition that structures American middle-class cultural values concerning family, parenthood, and child-rearing. (Taylor, "Introduction", in: Janelle S. Taylor et al., *Consuming Motherhood*, pp. 1-17, p. 3.)

5 Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child. The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 11.

6 Rachel Bowlby, *Shopping with Freud* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 90.

7 Greer, "Afterword", p. 208. My references to Wolf and Greer (for instance) are only in relation to biographical narratives (and their meanings) that I read as such in texts, and are not speculations on the authors' intentions.

8 Bowlby, *Shopping with Freud*, p. 90.

9 Dion Farquhar, *The Other Machine: Discourse and Reproductive Technologies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 125-6. Farquhar is quoting from: Christine Overall, *Ethics and Human Reproduction: A Feminist Analysis* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 49.

10 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, p. 10.

11 Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, p. 11. My emphasis.

12 See: Sigmund Freud, "Anxiety and Instinctual Life" in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, vol. XXII of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964, orig. publ. 1932-36), pp. 81-112.

13 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, pp. 10-11.

14 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, pp. 10-11.

15 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, p. 10.

16 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, p. 11. Emphases Taylor.

17 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, p. 10. Emphasis Taylor.

18 Alison Clarke's chapter, for instance, in Taylor's own volume, consid-

ers one version of such a fetus: "'things' emerge as the principle means by which women "make" (often far in advance of the anticipated birth) their babies and themselves as mothers: "Through the buying, giving, and preserving of things, women and their social networks actively construct their babies-to-be and would-have-been babies, real babies and themselves as 'real mothers,' worthy of the social recognition this role entails". (Alison J. Clarke, "Maternity and Materiality: Becoming a Mother in Consumer Culture", in: Taylor et al., *Consuming Motherhood*, pp. 55-72, p. 57, quoting from: Linda L. Layne, "'He Was a Real Baby with Baby Things": A Material Culture Analysis of Personhood and Pregnancy Loss", *Journal of Material Culture*, 5(3), 2000, 321-45, 321). Lynn M. Morgan too provides a formulation of this issue in relation to the political problems around abortion in the USA: Feminist philosophers … watch uneasily as the American public is distracted, enthralled, incited, and sometimes literally crazed by proliferating images of fetuses, increasingly depicted as free-floating, disembodied little babies at the mercy of their uncaring or vindictive mothers. Feminist philosophers rightly want to bring women back, literally 'into the picture,' to point out once more that 'a fetus inhabits a woman's body and is wholly dependent on her unique contribution to its maintenance" (Lynn M. Morgan, "Fetal Relationality in Feminist Philosophy: An Anthropological Critique", *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 11(3), 1996, 47-70, 50, quoting from: Susan Sherwin, *No Longer Patient: Feminist Ethics and Health Care* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992, p. 106). Morgan continues by discussing several of the implications of these ideas, including assumptions around the body and the child, in a way related to several of my analyses in this book.

19 Taylor, "Introduction", in: *Consuming Motherhood*, p. 12. Emphases Taylor.

20 Farquhar, *The Other Machine*, pp. 126-7. Farquhar is quoting from: Michelle Stanworth, "Reproductive Technologies and the Deconstruction of Motherhood" in: Michelle Stanworth (ed.), *Reproductive Technologies. Gender, Motherhood, and Medicine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 35.

21 Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan or: The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, series Language, Discourse, Society, series eds. Stephen Heath and Colin MacCabe (London: Macmillan, 1984).

22 Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*, p. 90.

23 Rose, *The Case of peter Pan*, p. 134.

24 Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*, p. 109-10.

25 I am not a fan of punning for its own sake. I hope it is clear that I am here elaborating the, apparently automatic or inescapable, appropriateness of the terminology – its ability to suit the issues under consideration in a range of ways.

26 Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 5.

27 Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, p. 10.

28 Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*, p 143.

29 Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, p. 6.

30 Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, p. 35. Butler is referring to: G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).