POST-ROE:
IN DEFENSE OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

by
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Dig down deep and light a Mary candle before you go.

Sonya SmithWong

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ABSTRACT

Second wave feminists almost necessarily withdrew from the quagmire of motherhood politics to focus more directly on reproductive rights policy. Many third wave feminists have not yet experienced the hardships and heartache of attempting to balance career and motherhood, so there is a generational rift at play within the feminist movement. Being inclusive of all women's experiences and choices will help feminists create a reproductive rights policy that meets the needs of more women in their decisions to mother (or not) and provide invaluable information feminists need in seeking to address disparate measures of economic and social stability mothers are subjected to. By meeting the needs of more women, the feminist movement creates a sympathetic political constituent base to draw from when backlash efforts are enacted against such policies.

PROLOGUE

Thrown Away

My daddy loved me when I was little. He called me his 'sugar' and came to me for 'sweets' that I readily gave away to him. Growing up, I never understood that I was really the girl who didn't matter, a girl the world could throw away. My mother was jealous of our relationship and made clear to my dad and me that it could not continue. So it didn't. It wasn't long after that my older brother replaced the affections and attentions I received from daddy, but his treatment of me felt worse from the start. I had no idea why he touched me that way in the night when I was sleeping, why he blackened my blue eyes, and scarred my little body -- eleven years smaller than him. I didn't know that what my father taught him was wrong to do to me. When my brother touched me, I thought he was being nice to me. When his touches hurt me, I thought *I* had done something wrong – that *I* was bad in some way and I wanted to do better, be better. Even though it was our secret, I felt that it had been my personal secret. I had to share so much, like my room, my birthday – even my clothes weren't new to me– and there were so many secrets in our house that it made me feel special, somehow, to have something that felt like mine. When my older brother left home, there wasn't anyone who made me special anymore. And my daddy had given up long before telling me, showing me, that I was his sugar.

So when Jake came along and showed an interest in me, it was a relief. I felt worthy. Jake wasn't so special. He was never so nice to me, but he thought I was pretty. He really liked my big blue eyes and golden hair. It seemed to me that he liked the same things my daddy liked about me. After some time with Jake, he shaved off all of my hair. He didn't want anyone to look at me and cutting off all of my hair was a way to ensure that I would be less attractive. I was hoping that Jake would be the man who loved me no matter what, and I thought that his affections after I had no hair was some kind of proof of his love. How stupid was I? I was just 14, so how could I have known? So I let Jake do the same things to me that my older brother had done. I didn't understand exactly what caused pregnancy, although I did have a remote idea of the sperm and egg business, but I also had real knowledge through my experiences with my older brother that it just wouldn't happen to me.

And I knew that I *should* not get pregnant! Of course I knew that!!! My sister was always a good example of what NOT to do. She was 10 years my senior, then, living at home with the product of her second pregnancy. Her daughter was the cutest little thing, but she was one out of three horrible pregnancies for my sister. All of the fathers (sperm donors, really) were completely irresponsible at best and horribly abusive at their worst. They beat her, they drank up the diaper money or used all the rent money for drugs. My sister had her first abortion when she was 15 years old, she had my adorable niece at 17 and had another child whom she gave up for adoption when she was only 18. She had nowhere left to go. When she'd finally had enough of the men in her life, she

had to come back to my parents house. She had been running *from* my parents since *she* was fourteen, and coming home was a disaster for her. She hated my parents, they hated her, and they took out their anger on my niece. We lived in a house full of hate. So I really understood the complications of teen pregnancy. I knew that it would screw up my life forever and leave me with no chances to be better. All hope would be lost if I was 15 years old with a baby.

My mom was pissed when she realized. She knew before I did. I was always really skinny (another fact that separated me from everyone else at home). Missing my periods was nothing unusual. I had been menstruating since I was 9, but my monthlies never did come regularly. I never even thought about the fact that I wasn't having my periods for several months. It never occurred to me to worry. I don't know how she figured out my condition because I was almost never home during that summer, even for the mandatory 5 o'clock dinners. My dad was so angry about my hair that he told me that I wasn't allowed at the table until it grew back. By that time, I really didn't want to eat with the family anyway so I kept letting Jake shave off my hair every third or fourth week. I first let him shave it the night before cheerleading tryouts, just before school let out for the year. I had gotten a kick out of the gasps and shocks my new look created. Not too many girls who were pretty and blonde like me could claim to have heard from the coach, during tryouts held every spring, that they were "not high school cheerleading material." And that made me different and extraordinary too.

When my mother asked me if I wanted to be on the pill, I said yes. I didn't think that I needed it, but I knew lots of girls at school who were on it so I didn't think it would hurt either. I thought it was a 'rite of passage,' like getting my first period, or something. That's how she got me to go to the doctor for a test. They said it was routine so I peed in the cup. It didn't seem like I waited that long at all, I hadn't even had time to disappear into the book I brought with me before I was back in the doctor's cheesy office with that weird foliage 70's lookin' wallpaper. The doctor just came right out and said it. He was so snotty when told me that I wasn't taking care of myself. That he knew my mother from her fine work at the hospital and he was just sure she hadn't raised me to turn out like this. I was so shocked that I couldn't respond. I couldn't even formulate a sentence to tell him about my sister, how my mother raised her! So there I was, sinking into his plastic "leather" couch hoping that I would die. Knowing that this couldn't happen to me, I didn't have a single thing to say now that it had. The doctor and my mother made all of the arrangements. My parents had already planned to take a vacation, so it would be inconvenient for her to schedule anything before my school was back in session. Then the doctor's schedule was full. We would have to wait even longer. We didn't have too much time left; that was the big thing to worry over. I was too far along to be dragging this out. The two of them found a date in early September which they finally agreed upon. It had to be a Thursday night and early Friday morning, "because of the procedure," the doctor said. No one told me what the *procedure* was. He said that he wanted to be discreet, that he didn't want his staff to know what they were planning. My

mother thanked the doctor, telling him how relieved she was that he was willing to do this for her. I waited for them to tell me what was going on, but no one did. Later, after I got home I heard my mother and my sister fighting. Their heated discussion was finished when my mom said that I shouldn't know, otherwise I probably wouldn't do it.

When the day finally came, I went to the doctor's office after it had closed. To me it was even more creepy than it had been before, now that there was no staff around and most of the lights were off. He assured me that all he would do was insert a "tampon-like" object into me. I didn't know why he had to do that, because I had been using tampons since the seventh grade and could do it myself, thank you very much. It hurt so badly and I was sure he was doing something wrong, but my mom had told me in the car on the way over that the doctor was helping me and that if I knew what was good for me, I wouldn't complain. I just lay there looking at more of that ugly 'foliage' on the wall, imagining that I was in a nice tropical forest far away from his rubber gloves and that poking down below. He told me that I might have some cramping overnight and that when I came back in the morning he would take out the 'tampon' and clean me up. Then I wouldn't be having a baby anymore.

That night was long. My dad told me and everyone else at home that I was wasn't to have any Tylenol or pain relievers, that I deserved to be hurting. Of course, he would never know what it's like to have cramps, so it was really easy for him to punish me. And hurt I did. All night long, worse and worse. Sitting, walking, soaking, rocking in the fetal position. I was in pain. When the dawn finally started to creep across the cold

linoleum tiles and onto my body I felt such a sense of relief. I hadn't seen what the doctor needed to clean up, but I wanted to go to his office to have that 'tampon' taken out! When my mother and I arrived at the doctor's office, he wasn't there yet. He pulled up shortly after we did and let us in. He turned on all of the lights, and took my mother and me back to his examination room. After it was over, I would always remember that damn 'astronaut' juice. But when we turned the corner into that room, for the first time, I saw the machine... *the vacuum*. Nobody told me they were going to vacuum my insides. It was just horrible! How can he vacuum a baby and not take out the rest of me! I had no idea, and I was frightened to death. When that machine turned on, and that loud suction noise began, I really thought that I might actually get to die after all. I learned that day that there is worse pain than dying. It hurt me so badly and my mother kept saying over and over again that I was acting like a baby. I WAS a baby!

Before the procedure, the doctor and my mother reassured me that I would be better for school again by Monday. I didn't feel like I was ready. I was bleeding and still hurting a lot. I didn't know how I was supposed to feel, but if everyone thought I should be hurting... I can promise that I got what they thought I should! The doctor had written a note for me not to participate in P.E. The coach looked at me suspiciously over my doctors' note but she let me wear my gym clothes and sit in a chair on the sidelines during volleyball. My best friend was in the class with me. She thought that I didn't look so good, but she didn't know what to do either. So she promised to just keep an eye on me during the class, because she could tell that I was hurting so badly. As the class wore on

the pain got really ugly. I guess I must have looked pretty bad because my best friend told the coach that I needed to see the school nurse. At first the coach thought we were trying to scam her, but since I had a doctor's note, she said she had to let me go.

I'm not really sure how I made it from the gym to the nurse's office. I don't remember walking there. But when we got into the office I just went straight for the bathroom. I thought my insides were falling out. I left my best friend at the door to talk to the nurse. I quickly shut the bathroom door behind me and when I looked down at myself, now that I was alone, I realized that I was covered in blood. I guess it had been coming out of me all the way to the office, dripping off of me as I walked through the halls. I didn't have much time to think about where the blood came from, because the searing pain was getting worse so that I *knew* where it was coming from. I passed out on the floor then. When I came to, the nurse was knocking on the bathroom door wanting to know if I was okay. She didn't come in, she didn't ask any other questions, and she didn't knock on the door again. I have no idea what she thought or what my best friend told her, but she left me alone and that's what I needed right then. I was scared that she would call my mother's doctor. And I knew he had done this to me!

By time the pain was over I felt certain that it was my insides that had fallen out. I was so freaked out about the bloody mass puddled on the floor, but I didn't want for anyone to know, so I got a wad of brown paper towels. I scrubbed myself and the floor with the pukey disinfectant soap in the dispenser. I carefully wrapped up the mass in a mess of tissue paper and flushed it down the toilet. I was really horrified when it all

didn't go down right away. I was afraid the nurse would come in and that I would get caught. Finally the toilet swirled with clean water and I was shaken, but could emerge from the bathroom. The nurse asked if I was okay and I told her that I was so she sent me back to class. I threw my gym clothes away, took a shower with the rest of the girls in my class and changed back into my regular clothes like nothing had happened. But the blood in the hallways hadn't been cleaned up by the time the bell rang for third period. That confirmed the rumors that had been flying all over the school about me since the new year began. Everyone knew. I couldn't go home because my parents wouldn't let me miss any more school for this, so I just went to all of my classes.

I don't remember another thing about that day. The rest of it blurred into the next few years at my high school. At least one time a month afterwards I received a note quietly passed to me in the hallway or in class asking for my help. Because everyone at school knew about me, they all assumed that I would tell them what to do. I did, too. I found out where girls could go for birth control. I investigated the abortion clinics in town, and I became the peer expert about high school contraception. Teen birth control is always a hot issue in Arizona; and it seems as though there is always at least one girl who told everyone else what could and could not be done without a parent's permission. I became that girl.

The sex ed. teacher at school wanted us to practice abstinence. We laughed so hard right in front of him during class. It was naïve to believe that a girl could just say no. We knew it was dumb, but he was so sure that he was right, how could we argue? We

thought he was so foolish that we never bothered to ask him what was legal and what was not. We stuck to our own information and when somebody told us we couldn't do something, like get an abortion without parental permission, we figured out another way to get it done. Oftentimes we took advantage of help given from other adults. There always seemed to be somebody's mother willing to rescue us by showing up at an appointment to sign a form, taking the place of the real mother the girl was afraid to ask for help. I tried to stay away from the girls who felt that they could go home for help once they knew. They really didn't need me because they felt that their choices were going to be supported by their families. I didn't really know what to do for them.

After I had the abortion, I knew my mother didn't think much of me. She thought that I just messed around. She never asked what I was doing when I didn't make it to my fifth period class, or my second or my fourth. She didn't know that I was taking all of those girls from school past psycho-christians like those we saw on the TV news and into the clinics for their monthly package of pills. My mother didn't know that I held hands with those girls during their first examinations and that I sat in waiting rooms when it seemed necessary. If I could borrow a car, anyone was guaranteed my company if they wanted it. I never asked any questions. I kept everybody's secrets and I helped anyone who asked for it. Even when the captain of the cheerleading squad came to me for help, and she was a girl whom no one wanted to throw away.

One Saturday Morning

I just get a feeling for people, deep in the pit of my stomach. It begins with a small twinge and then it overwhelms me with thunderous rumblings. It's instinctual. My body interprets others before my brain has time to decide about them. Sometimes, I just go with that feeling; or worse, sometimes I try to fight it. I come up with reasons that what I'm feeling is wrong, or somehow mistaken. That feeling I have when I encounter new people can be something big, or it could be a small incident that later I realize was really important. It happened that Saturday. I felt an uneasiness.

The seasons come and go, people come and go. Some of them come into these kind of movements as quickly as they leave. Most stay. Whatever drove them to do this in the first place makes them keep coming. Usually, when they begin escorting patients from their cars to the entrance of the clinics, they can see that they're are making a difference. The ones who leave find that the work is too hard or the cause doesn't mean the same to them that it once did, so they stay away from our organizational meetings.

It was a pretty rough time as far as the seasons go at the clinic. The growing chaos we felt immediately before Dr. Gunn had been murdered was different than it was the seasons before. I really don't know what was worse about his murder, waiting for the inevitable shooting or the reality of his being blasted in cold blood. The shooting that we all quietly knew was going to occur, that we tried to trivialize at every meeting, the one we refused to acknowledge to our loved ones. We never wanted to

concede that the reason for the really intense arguments concerning bullet-proof vests was our fear exposing itself. Then we were loath to admit that our wearing those vests would prove our fear to *THEM*, the enemy, those 'pro-lifers' on the other side of the line we drew each Saturday morning.

Before Dr. Gunn was killed I felt like the violence and hatred was beginning to erupt on the sidewalks in front of the entrances at the clinics.

"Baby-killer!"

"You're going to burn in hell!"

"Give us your baby!"

Those words, in themselves, weren't any different than in the past. But during the time just before Dr. Gunn's murder, things got much more intense. Words sounded stifling and more dangerous in my ears than they had before. While we were waiting for the inevitable violence more angry bodies came crowding and yelling at the clinic doors. And in that time I had more to worry about, I had to consider the safety of the little one inside me. During that season, I was pregnant again and Clinton's election had made abortion the really hot political debate. Abortion was something controversial enough to spark an argument and just emotional enough to keep the interest of the viewing audience. I put more than just my own life on the line to be there. That fact blared in my ear every time I heard them say "murderer". When they promised that they would pray for me, I was relieved because it seemed to me that praying never hurt anyone, but some of the other things they did... well, there isn't enough grace in the world for that.

The first time I went to a clinic in Washington, DC, I was just a grunt. I hitched a ride with someone who had a map and knew the streets really well. The clinic was in a nauseating neighborhood. I saw the old dirty, dilapidated buildings. I smelled that nasty, aged garbage smell and the toxicity of the streets as it wafted into the car. The buildings had been burned down in the riots of '68, in another killing time. Looking through the window, I realized that those streets had never been repaired. The neighbors there just made do. Congress doesn't have any loyalty to constituents whose votes don't count. In the neighborhoods of D.C., there are no votes.

On the first morning I went out to defend the clinics, I received a quick training and a bright orange t-shirt with the words "pro-choice escort" emblazoned on the front. Everyone there received one. Then we were given our assignments. I was just one individual in the mass of politically interested people who wanted to do something, make a change in the world, and who actually showed up for a training at 4 am. I had so little understanding of what could happen then. I arrived at *Southeast Women's Clinic*, as the sun topped the building. I brought my coffee along with me to keep my hands warm. The noise was overwhelming. I still hadn't gotten used to city noise then - having only recently left the small-town-like atmosphere of Tucson and adventured to Washington, DC. The constant yelling and honking, car alarms' incessant ringing. Throngs of people invaded the street. I could see them as soon as we turned the corner. They were an explosion of noises and bodies. The kind of crowd I later grew used to.

Southeast had been a madhouse. Completely turbulent and I didn't know how to do what I had just been trained to do.

> "Form a line. Make buddies with the person next to you. Circle your arm through your buddy's arms. Place your right foot in between your buddy's feet. Have the person to your right do the same with you and so on. Get to know your buddies. You're gonna need them."

The first time I actually had to practice this, I remembered the words, and I knew what they meant. I understood what I needed to do, but my feet were planted in the snow, I couldn't take my place in the line. I was afraid. And now still each time I am part of forming the line, each time I help maneuver patients through the protesters. I know that I am taking a risk.

When the first clinic was bombed in '82, my mother turned to me as we watched the carnage during the TV-dinner news. She said, "Kathy, you know that one of these days you are going to have to take a stand." It seemed so genuine and sincere when she said it, but she never brought up the topic of abortion rights again. It was like she was afraid to acknowledge what had happened to me, what she had done to make it happen. Later when she found out how I was spending my Saturday mornings, she was furious! She had not meant for me to *become a part* of the movement. She really did not want for me to be standing here, in the middle of this mob of protesters. My mother thought that a

small check in the mail or a signature on a petition would be charitable enough. Though I think she was right about my having to take a stand.

As I walk towards patients and their partners, sisters, mothers or friends I have to explain why I can help them. In the maddening noise and the fearful crowds I have to be calm and reassuring. I explain that:

> "My friends who are here wearing these t-shirts like mine, they are going to form a circle around us. They are going to put themselves between you and the protesters. And I'll be inside the bubble with you, talking to you all the way, until we are safe inside. You have to move within our bubble, you must keep your arms tucked in. Do you think you can do that?"

When they don't know what to do I have to help them decide quickly. The longer they are out of their cars, the longer we are discussing what to do, the anti-choice protestors become more agitated, pushing and shoving, they make it hard to do our jobs.

> "I don't know 'bout that.. "
>
> "Well, obviously you can reschedule your appointment..."
>
> "Naw, I gotta be at work on Monday mornin'."

The women who come to clinics are desperate. They have to come here rather than have the procedure done in the privacy of a doctor's office. They don't have any choices about what kind of care they receive, or even who their doctor will be. Whichever doctor is working that day performs the abortion. Sometimes when the doctor

finally meets a patient they don't even stop to say "hello" to the woman whose legs are trapped in stirrups. They rush in, does their business and leave. A doctor does not get paid much for being here and he has a full roster of patients who come in with their last dime. They will do anything to ensure that they aren't saddled with a baby that they cannot take care of. There is no support for these women or any of the choices they make. Their votes don't count. And just like the people in the neighborhood, they make do, as best they can.

None of the women I escort ever tell me their names. I never ask, either. Manners don't feel relevant in situations like these. But there was a woman I helped to escort into the clinic who seemed to want to make an impression. When it fell from her mouth, "My name's Patty," the sound felt like it was creeping deep down inside of me. She did pretty well getting into the clinic. She relied on me and did everything she was supposed to do to keep herself safe. Most women panic when they leave the shelter of their beat-up cars and enter the frenzied, shoving bubble as it begins to move. They are afraid to trust us. I don't blame them. The women who come here don't know anything about us, except that we are crazy enough to come out here and do this when they don't want to be here themselves.

We all know something big is going to happen at the clinic today. Eric is here, again. Unlike other Saturdays, today Eric is antsy. None of us feel comfortable when Eric appears nervous. He is one of those crazy protesters. Rumor is that he carries a gun when he comes to the clinics. Eric is the reason that we talk about kevlar fashion gear.

The news got around just this morning about the visit Eric paid me last night. He came to my highrise apartment, where it turns out the doorman was pro-life. Eric knocked on my door and when I opened it, I was facing down a shiny black barrel.

> "You should know how your baby feels, goin' down to that clinic evey sat'day and killin' them babies... you just threat'ing your own."

I slammed the door shut. Eric coming to my door seemed to confirm the criticism I was receiving from my peers in the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force. There had already been a very heated argument about whether or not it was 'okay' to have an obviously pregnant escort. The appearance of showing off my wanted pregnancy was of great concern. And some escorts worried that the image of my pregnant belly protruding from under an escort shirt would look like a publicity stunt. They were all right, but I believed that my being pregnant did not preclude me from my desire to help other women make the choices they believed in. Ultimately, my perspective won most of the activists over so they continued to let me escort during clinic days at less public sites. But in the emergency meeting that immediately followed my confrontation with Eric it was decided that if he had wanted to kill me, he could have. Easily. Afterwards, I felt that he had accomplished what he came for. He succeeded in scaring the hell out of me. When early the next morning, I got a page on my beeper from the clinic and I knew that I had to come. I was still needed there, whether I'm scared or not. Eric's wandering around back and forth, watching me so intently. I feel sick, but it's so crowded so that I know in a

strange way I am safe. When he came to my apartment he knew that I was alone, and no one could identify there, except that damn doorman.

We can never know what a patient will do. If a patient does something out of the ordinary, like insist on speaking to their escort after they are safely inside the clinic, everybody gets nervous. We have to be attentive to each woman's needs. But the reality is that 'pro-life' activists sometimes make appointments for procedures and then come into clinics to sabotage the facilities. On days when the chaotic protests overwhelm the clinic and surrounding neighborhood everyone is especially edgy and the clinic defenders are on high alert.

Later, when we saw the CNN reports about Dr. Gunn, we were so afraid. We were apprehensive even though his office wasn't anywhere near us. He was in Florida and had been shot by one of the local protesters there. The discussions at our meetings which followed his death became much more intense. The fear was the same for us as it was for the clinic escorts in his hometown, and the same as it was for escorts in other cities around the country. The seasons still come and go, but after Dr. Gunn's murder, mostly people left. No one wanted to be the next one to *die volunteering*, now that our worst fears had been confirmed.

Eric proved himself to be the "psycho-christian" we all thought he was. He used Dr. Gunn's murder to vindicate killing another doctor. He didn't take much time in doing it either. We had heard a rumor that Eric's girlfriend went to Georgia where she had an abortion without his knowledge. Less than six month's after Dr. Gunn's funeral,

Eric left that doctor who performed her procedure in an alley behind a nightclub to bleed to death. Eric didn't even steal that poor doctor's wallet - that's how the police knew it wasn't a robbery.. When I saw the "F.B.I.'s Most Wanted" in the post office, I had that same fear I felt when Eric came to my door. I began to feel a sick relief that Eric had vented his irrational hatred somewhere else. He sought glory at a bigger target and so he had killed a doctor and not me, just a clinic escort. After I helped escort Patty back to her car, I found out later that she knew Eric. She had come to sabotage the clinic. When the staff and pro-choice activists treated her with respect, when we helped choose *not* to have an abortion, she didn't know what to do. While being escorted away from the shelter of the clinic, she was stunned when she was given a number for a crisis pregnancy center.

Parts is Parts

I returned home to my native Tucson feeling accomplished and radicalized from my volunteerism in Washington DC. I immediately got involved with NOW and visited the Margaret Sanger Planned Parenthood clinic to see how I could help them. From my earlier experiences in Tucson, I knew the local NOW chapter was run by a bunch of old crones, but I figured I could spark some interest and inject the organization with some new blood, young volunteers. I also knew from my high school experiences that none of the abortion clinics in Tucson liked clinic escorts. They allowed the anti-choice activists to harass patients, thinking that any opposition to that harassment was tantamount to a 'scene.' Luckily for them, the local police department was fairly supportive (unlike in other areas of the country), so they didn't have too much trouble with demonstrators beyond really loud prayer vigils and some aggressive leafleting.

Neither 'feminist' group seemed really receptive to change. At the local NOW meetings I persisted in my efforts to bring in new recruits. I managed to get a large number of very interested young women to attend meetings and then I formed an 'Action Committee.' The regular meetings were incredibly boring, but we had to go to those to get access to NOW's long-standing resources in the community and large financial coffers. When Operation Rescue planned to descend on Tucson during their 'summer of love' my group of young activists within the NOW chapter got engaged and ready to

respond. Operation Rescue intended to 'hit' the Margaret Sanger Planned Parenthood in downtown.

While I was involved with the local NOW chapter I was also volunteering in the Margaret Sanger Planned Parenthood clinic. I made childcare arrangements for my one-year-old son so that I could work in the clinic every Saturday and as possible on Wednesdays, when my daycare schedule permitted. At Planned Parenthood, they were not too keen on my experience as an escort. In fact, I was prohibited from going into the parking lot at all on clinic days except to come in and leave. They were afraid I would begin ad hoc escorting – and they were adamant about not wanting any of that on their premises. So I began by answering phones and then I trained to be a patient advocate. As a patient advocate I did pre-abortion counseling which included a description of the procedure and an opportunity to address why the unplanned pregnancy occurred, I held hands with patients and explained the procedure as it was happening, I offered post-operative support, birth control counseling, and I counted parts. Each abortion has to be verified as having been successfully evacuated so the state requires that someone in the clinic count parts of the fetus after it has been removed. This is a simple process of rinsing the fetal tissue, but counting those parts certainly is a test of one's pro-choice resolve.

The irony of counting the remains of fetal tissue and then afterward going home to my little boy was not lost on me. Yet, my experiences in the pre-abortion counseling sessions were invaluable toward my understanding of abortion. Prior to volunteering at

Planned Parenthood, I felt I was a pro-choice activist by default. After all, when I had my own unplanned pregnancy, I did not exercise my "right to choose" to have an abortion and I never intended to become a peer counselor. It was only after my mother forced me to have an abortion, everyone at my high school found out and then asked advice of me, that I became knowledgeable about abortion and birth control. I didn't even consider myself a feminist until some guy who tried to rape me, because he'd heard I was 'easy' and about my abortion, called me one as a nasty slur after I kneed him in the nuts really hard in protest. At about that same time a girl I knew and thought was very cool quoted Rebecca West saying, "People call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute." Then I began to think there might be something to this feminism movement. At Planned Parenthood I learned from the women I talked to how helpless they felt because they were pregnant. For some women, this sense of helplessness was part of a lot of helplessnesses they felt in their lives having to do with their families and community. For others seeking an abortion, they felt this was their only source of vulnerability - once they were single again they could resume their pursuits in career or academia. I could see when I became a peer counselor and then a clinic escort how helpless women were when it came to reproductive choices. Some young women I knew found out through the process of telling their families of their pregnancies that they would not get support and it was quite a shock. Other young women learned that they had to rely on their families to help get them through the experience of an unplanned pregnancy. And no woman who entered an

abortion clinic by way of a clinic escort felt empowered in their right to choose abortion as an alternative to bearing an unwanted child.

Getting to go home to my very-much-wanted son, provided an ironic contrast to the women I met in the clinic. While I at that time I was married into a very wealthy family and had from them the financial support and familial expectation to be a stay-at-home-mom, I knew that I was in a place of privilege. Most women cannot afford to stay at home to raise their children. As I counted the remains of unwanted pregnancies I was forced to reconcile my own desire to have children with the reality that each woman I interviewed had her own life circumstances which brought her to the clinic. In thinking about what the women said to me and what I felt about my own situation at that time, I came to understand the broader issues involved in the personal abortion decision. I made sure that the work I did with NOW helped me to articulate the importance of reproductive rights as a community issue. When Operation Rescue decided to target our local Planned Parenthood, they didn't know that they would come up against someone like me.

I planned a Block Party for Choice in response to Operation Rescue's demonstration. They were to arrive on a Friday evening and picket a major street from downtown Tucson that led out toward the surrounding suburbia during rush hour traffic. I immediately set up meetings with NOW, the Planned Parenthood Board of Directors, and the local police. Every organization wanted to ignore O.R.'s presence in the city, hoping that by disregarding it they would not encourage a public response on either side (pro- or anti-choice). I personally thought this was an idealistic and Pollyanna-ish tactic.

I knew that the morale of the regular anti-choice activists in front of the Margaret Sanger Planned Parenthood Clinic would be buoyed by the media attention, I decided that action was needed. I managed to convince all of the institutions that what I wanted to do was create a family-friendly response. I wanted to present abortion as a choice among a variety of choices concerning birth control options. In order to make it happen, I had to convince the city and local media outlets that our Block Party for Choice was more important than a visit from the national Operation Rescue organization. I arranged family oriented entertainment and we provided family-style foods. I trained local activists to be peace-keepers as specially trained activists at demonstration sites who know how to de-escalate violence as it is occurring in order to prevent furious outbursts from anti-choice activists.

The event turned out to be a huge success. Operation Rescue was presented in the local media as "coming into our community and usurping our family values" as one reporter put it. We had a major turn out from many pro-choice groups, individuals, and families who thought we were doing the right thing. Our kid-friendly activities made it easy for families to participate and we provided lots of birth control and reproductive choices material to everyone. However, all of the young women I had recruited to help me faced conflict at the local NOW chapter meetings. The older women wanted to impose restrictions on the young women's involvement, "in order to secure the safety of all the members," they said. They determined that the younger members would have to have permission from their families in order to go to the NOW offices to check messages

or mail or to do business outside of the regular meeting times. A major generational dispute ensued. The young women felt that their autonomy and individual choice to participate in NOW was being under-minded and disrespected by the older feminists. The older feminists felt concerned for the safety of the young girls (some of whom were still in high school) and worried that having women in the downtown offices of a not-so-safe-neighborhood would be dangerous. Although I could see both sides, I positioned myself in alliance with the young women. I was not so much older than they were, and I rather resented the idea that the young women could not practice self-defense in order to be responsible enough to care for their own safety. This argument led to more arguments about the kinds of issues that the young women thought were important in contrast to the issues the older women thought were important. Most of the young women left the meetings and refused to come back.

While I continued my participation in NOW, I made an important connection to yet another organization and my desire to transform the local chapter into a modern inter-generational activist organization waned. I slowly disengaged from the arguments that seemed to take up so much time at the meetings, and I relied on my work in the clinic to feed my craving to do community service. As I spent less time at NOW, I was able to volunteer in a therapeutic children's center more. With La Frontera's Child-Family services I could take my son with me when I volunteered. I began to see an even broader picture of the reproductive rights movement in my work there. The Child-Family clinic's work involved creating a therapeutic environment for children who were in the court

system – children who were given up to the foster care system and social services programs – children who were thrown away.

All of theses experiences - my own 'thrown away' status and 'Saturday morning' efforts led me to feminism and then toward considering the 'parts is parts' mentality of feminist activism. No matter where I have turned, there has been some intergenerational conflict over who is the better feminist. Young women often are ignorant of the hard work, even the failures of the feminist movement because they've grown up in the successes of feminism. For instance, today many women go to school, play sports, vote, and have some access to reproductive services because of the feminist movement that came before them. Childcare and a genuine family leave policy are still far from being secured and most women do not have adequate financial resources or community support to care for the children and families they already have. Add to this dynamic the prominent career feminists who chose to pursue work accolades over having children and family. They have little understanding of the trials entailed in attempting to balance work and kinship relationships. Older feminists have garnered many successes, but the work of creating a more equal society for all is far from over.

APOLOGIA

The Call

Nearly fifteen years after Marlene Gerber Fried asked if feminism would, "be a movement that confines itself to the legal right to abortion or one that fights for all rights needed to make reproductive choice a reality" can we claim to have responded to her question? In the introduction to From Abortion to Reproductive Freedom she states that, "we have an opportunity to move ahead with a positive reproductive rights agenda... one that is broad-based in its membership, its leadership, and its politics; a movement that goes beyond reaffirmation of *Roe* to demand access not just to abortion, but to the full range of reproductive rights; a movement that is based on a class- and race- conscious feminism" (Fried, ix). In my activist experiences with the abortion rights and reproductive rights movement, I have found that the opportunity Fried encouraged feminists to undertake, nearly 15 years after she first articulated it, continues to be a missed chance for feminists to transform public policy.[1] In the same time frame, feminists have not been able to make sweeping changes to public policy regarding access to abortion for all women or provide adequate childcare solutions to the majority of families, and there continues to be a race and class division in feminists projects. In contrast, the conservative right in its opposition to feminist policy efforts has worked very hard to provide abortion alternatives by way of crisis family counseling, aid for

childcare in individualized circumstances, and has made a strong effort to reach out to minority groups for participation and involvement in their movement.

In my own life experiences, I have moved from being economically disenfranchised toward a position of educated elitism. I have also moved away from the conservative right and the southern Baptist Christian values of my upbringing into a more humanist non-religious based consciousness. In that transitioning, I have faced many of the struggles encountered by women who continue to be less economically secure and educated than I am now. Yet I still need adequate and appropriate childcare solutions, I need access to reproductive services to differing degrees at different times, and I need the support of my fellow activists and academics in order to help me manage my career and familial goals. Were I to have continued as an uneducated lower-class woman in the Christian community, I would have been able to secure some of the assistance I need to support my family and meet my economic needs. Yet, ultimately I believe that the conservative right would not have been accommodating toward my academic and career goals centered in equality because of their overwhelming patriarchal structure. I do know that they would have provided the means and help for me to work and manage family responsibilities. While I am deeply committed to feminist politics, I have not had that same support in the feminist movement. When I need childcare, I have had to manage such issues on my own, when I consider my children's needs in tandem with my own needs to study and work, I have been told by some feminists that I "did not have my priorities in the right place." And I know if I were to give up my feminist politics, I

could find a prominent place in the political structure of the conservative right. They have made room for strong women like me and readily welcome what I call 'turncoat' feminists into their ranks.

I am not interested in supporting conservative right ideals, but I have to acknowledge the struggles I have encountered while moving through an uneducated lower-class status to where I am today as an educated radical feminist has not been easy. Historically, the feminist movement has largely been about discerning overarching social problems and providing generalized solutions to those problems. For feminists, the process of understanding broad social ills had occurred in intimate consciousness-raising groups[1] that involved studying the whole gamut of women's lives, starting with the full reality of one's own. The idea of political organizing in such a manner originated with the New York Radical Women Consciousness-raising who were, in effect, repeating the 17th century challenge to science to scholasticism: "study nature, not books," and put all theories to the test of living practice and action. Conciousness raising sessions were fundamental in recognizing and addressing what had been formally considered private or family matters. Markedly, middle class white women began to collectively respond to the invisible nature of their experiences due to the separation of women in the home from men's social and work environs, their voicelessness within society at large. Feminist

[1] From the text, notes and comments of a talk Kathie Sarachild gave on consciousness-raising to the First National Conference of Stewardesses for Women's Rights in New York City, March 12, 1973. Sarachild outlined the original program for "Radical

'cell' groups whose goals were to engage in direct action sprang from consciousness raising groups who had addressed issues such as domestic violence, welfare discrepancies, and child abuse.

Over the last few decades, the feminist movement has made important inroads into institutions like universities, so that small collective strategizing groups which practiced activities like consciousness-raising have all but disappeared. Additionally, while women of color have been able to expand the goals of the feminist movement, they have not been able to secure all of the accommodations they seek. According to Jennifer Nelson in her work about and entitled Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement, "most people believe that the movement to secure voluntary reproductive control for women centered on abortion rights. This perspective is understandable given that most of the writing concerning this movement focuses on the fight for legal abortion. It is essential, however, that we understand that for some women abortion was not the only, or even primary focus" (Nelson, 1-2). Additionally, the call from Fried to address the fact that "reproductive rights takes different forms in different communities" and that "women's survival needs are being threatened in so many ways" has not been sufficiently attended to in reproductive rights political policy since *Roe* was first won (Fried, xiii). Fried goes on to assert that "the abortion rights movement essentially folded after abortion became legal" and that "it was not until the threat of a constitutional amendment

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Feminist Consciousness-Raising" which was presented at the First National Women's Liberation Conference outside Chicago, November 27, 1968.

that would ban all U.S. abortions was posed in the eighties, that a visible mainstream abortion rights movement re-emerged... focusing on the ambiguous language of 'choice' and 'personal freedom' " (Fried, 5). I agree with Fried in her assertion that the pro-choice movement has been so wrapped up defensively in trying to maintain the right to abortion,[1] even an eroded right, that they failed to pursue new rights in an effort to support those women who are most vulnerable in our society (Fried, 6).

There are organizations such as Everywoman's Center in the University of Massachusetts that continue to use the elements of consciousness-raising and psychotherapy to support post-operative abortion issues such as grief counseling. They attempt to provide a space where women can "view themselves in a larger context," in order to "translate personal experiences into a broader understanding of the need for social change and political action" (Buttenweiser and Levine, 124). While this service is extremely important work, groups like this are not widely available in all communities or to all women. We must recognize that most women who seek an abortion do not view their experiences in the scope of feminist political action. They are managing their private lives and individual experiences the best that they can. Additionally, most of the people who support abortion, statistically numbered at about 51% of the US population since 1974, do not consider themselves feminist. Ironically according to statistics from the Alan Guttmacher Institute in 1996, "Catholic women have an abortion rate 29% higher than Protestant women; and one in five women having abortions are born-again or Evangelical Christians" (Alan Guttmacher Institute). It is important to recognize the

perspective of women who seek abortions in order to provide real changes in individual women's consciousnesses about abortion which can then be translated into a larger social conscienceness.

During my work on reproductive rights issues for nearly twenty years, I have continually asked myself why more women do not get involved in the feminist movement. I readily admit to having been frustrated at times with the many women I have helped to escort into clinics and provided support to through their abortions who did not recognize how feminism could change their lives. However, I also know that it is sometimes easy, even for me, to view my own and other women's experiences as personal problems rather than to see the larger social constructs at play. That is why the fight for justice and equality in reproductive rights work is so very difficult. Women who seek abortions in clinics are often limited in their ability to see the larger picture and are overwhelmed by those social structures that limit them. Reminding us of the difficult experiences of women with an unwanted pregnancy, Stanley K. Henshaw writes,

> We have little quantitative information on why unintended pregnancies are carried to term. Some become wanted or at least accepted by the couple or the woman, and some women or couples decide against abortion in spite of a strong preference not to have a child. In other cases, financial, physical, psychological, social or other obstacles to obtaining an abortion are undoubtedly important, as is lack of knowledge about the availability of abortion services. Barriers to services affect the abortion rate. The lack

> of an abortion provider within easy traveling distance is an important barrier for many women. The greater the distance a woman lives from an abortion provider, the less likely she is to be able to use the provider's services. Other barriers include the impact of the federal funding restriction found that 18-23% of women on Medicaid who would prefer to have an abortion instead carry their pregnancies to term when Medicaid abortion funding is unavailable; in another study, that figure was 35%. State legislative barriers that apply to all women, regardless of their income, include waiting periods, counseling requirements that involve more than one visit to the provider and, for minors, parental notification and consent requirements. (Gutmmacher)

In the last twenty years the feminist movement's "decision to fight for choice rather than justice is itself an appeal to those who already have choices" (Fried, 6). Women who live in urban areas or for whom travel is not an obstacle and women who have access to healthcare at regular intervals (such as women who are insured) do not have to endure waiting periods and counseling requirements in order to have abortions. Women whose social arrangements provide them with a choice of outcomes to unwanted pregnancy; including marriage or quiet abortion procedures, are not mired in the consequences of abortion restrictions. That is what, as Fried reminds us, "keeps the visible movement primarily white and middle-class despite the fact that the abortion rights of poor women,

of whom a disproportionate number are women of color, have been, and continue to be the most vulnerable" (Fried, 6). Women who are left without adequate reproductive choices struggle with the few options they have to make the best decisions possible for themselves.

As a movement we need to acknowledge our own failings in order to challenge the successful strategies of the conservative right. Unfortunately, right now it is the conservative right which has been successful in focusing on the needs of many women in their provision of childcare centers, post-abortion counseling and private social services that aid dependent families from locations such as crisis pregnancy[2] centers which are "clinics that seek to attract women faced with unintended pregnancies who are 'at risk' for abortion. Although some centers do provide an open and honest setting to ensure that women facing an unintended pregnancy receive the support and information they need," however, "many of these centers entice women under the pretense of providing the full range of reproductive options, including abortion and unlike clinics which provide abortions, CPCs are staffed by anti-choice volunteers" (NARAL). These centers have been successful at providing individual women with the multiplicity of services and care

[2] According to NARAL, anti-choice activists have mobilized on a grassroots level to restrict access to abortion by setting up "crisis pregnancy centers" (CPCs) around the country. These fake clinics seek to attract women faced with unintended pregnancies who are "at risk" for abortion. The staff at these deceptive centers use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, and intimidation to dissuade women from exercising their right to choose. Unlike clinics which provide abortions, CPCs are staffed by anti-choice volunteers who refuse to refer for abortion or birth control, preaching abstinence as the only method of preventing unwanted pregnancies. From.NARAL, 2004.

during the dilemma of an unwanted pregnancy. There are few feminist centers left who offer such a wide variety of services to women. Feminists have been unable to have the same successes in meeting the needs of individual women.

While I continue to believe that the abortion rights movement is extremely important, I also have also come to recognize that women are in great need of a whole lot of other services as well. Some of those services are being provided, but no issue relating to women seems to carry as much urgency or public debate as the right to abortion. I began to expand my notion of feminist work after my first wanted pregnancy. I sought to expose my beautiful boy to feminist consciousness so I began to examine how ideals of equality could be manifested in his life. I continue to do feminist work in order to provide a good example to my children about community service and responsibility. To that end, I have been volunteering at some of my local high schools. While working there, I have seen too many young girls whose pregnant bellies protrude underneath the weight of the schoolbooks they carry. Though they are not yet ready to have their stories told, these are young women whose lives are now forever changed. They are encouraged by their communities to revel in the new life that grows within their bodies. They do not yet know of midnight feedings, of missed Friday nights and of being needed at home to change dirty diapers and *give* love. The groups of giggling girls who encircle and admire the one of them who has become pregnant do not understand the consequences. These girls believe that they can *receive* love, unconditional love from a child. Girlfriends throw baby showers and enjoy the preparations as they themselves continue to prepare

for their own lives, their own futures. They do not recognize the loss of opportunity, the power that comes from personal strength. These young, pregnant girls who are dependent on their parents, skip individualism and move directly toward responsibility. All of these girls need more education and support. They, too, need to feel their worth in the world as women. They are more than girls, they are more than daughters and they are more than mothers. It is our responsibility in feminism that every person be valued and every life decision be supported.

In my own life, I feel that I came into feminism almost by mistake. There are times when I can see with perfect hindsight, of course, that had I taken another turn, made another decision, closed myself off and isolated myself after my abortion experience, tainted with choicelessness – that I could have been an entirely different person and with very little conditional distinctions in my life to differentiate me from my mother, my sister, and many of my old childhood friends. I don't have a recipe for why I behaved unlike them, or what pushed me to be 'better' and unlike the statistics about women born into circumstances so similar to my own that I have grown familiar to reading. Whatever drove me to it, the fact is that I did make life-changing determinations that have completely separated me from the community that I was born into. I see feminism as a positive movement providing me with the ability to do that. And yet, it is because of my experiences, where I come from and where I am now, that makes my perspective about reproductive rights unique. I have encountered similar plights felt by poor women who feel trapped by their choices – or lack thereof – and I have also been

able to utilize my privileged-eye to survey the landscape of abortion rights and reproductive rights activism. My work is an attempt to offer something valuable to the feminist movement to which I am so dedicated.

In my work, I have the difficult task of attempting to differentiate the terminology of abortion rights, reproductive rights, feminism, and feminist advocacy. Obviously, these terms cannot be interchangeable at all times. Yet, in my activist experiences and within many of the activist organizations I have worked in, the terms were often conflated and interposed thereby sometimes rendering a definition of the same or so similar as to be indistinguishable. In the 1970's, feminists termed their work for legalized abortion as simply 'abortion rights.' In the 1990's, feminists extended their notion of abortion activism from a movement about abortion rights to encompass what has been nebulously termed 'reproductive rights.'[3] I came into the feminist movement at the same time that these terms and feminist advocacy about abortion and reproductive rights were dramatically changing. During the 1980's and even into the early 1990's many activists and grassroots organizations that I worked with used the terms 'reproductive rights' and 'abortion rights' interchangeably. Much of my activist career and feminist ideology has been shaped by the moment that I entered the movement.

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[3] In 1990, Marlene Gerber Fried, in From abortion to Reproductive Freedom addressed the transformation and related terminology by articulating that, renovating "the abortion rights movement from a relatively narrow one focused on defending the legal right to abortion to a movement for reproductive freedom... are key political tasks facing reproductive rights advocates" (Fried, x).

Therefore, I too, find it difficult to separate the terminology and my work into tidy theoretical categories.

Activists and writers like Rickie Solinger and Marlene Gerber-Fried were prominent voices in support of an expanded reproductive rights agenda during the same period that I came into the movement. In their work, they advised feminists that the right to reproduce, or not, as well as the factors involved in doing so, be important supplementary projects associated to abortion rights advocacy. They campaigned for an expanded concern of women's lived experiences and recommended that feminists working on abortion rights should accordingly address the varied needs of women's lives. Unfortunately, as Rickie Solinger argues in Beggars and Choosers, an early "optimistic sense of how Roe v. Wade would affect women's reproductive lives reflected the utopian egalitarianism of many in the women's movement at the time. In the struggle to win reproductive freedom, many activists didn't think about the fact that pregnancy and childbearing have historically and dramatically separated women by race and class in this country" (Solinger, 5). As evidenced by the lack of a cohesive reproductive rights policy, it would seem that Fried and Solinger's advice was not heeded. Solinger writes about "the complexities of 'choice,'" stating that she is, "convinced that choice is a remarkably unstable, undependable foundation for guaranteeing women's control over their own bodies, their reproductive lives, their motherhood, and ultimately their status as full citizens" (Solinger, 5-6). Solinger and Fried are among a few, vocal activists whose concerns match my own about abortion advocacy as rights-based, and therefore legally

constrained project of feminist activism rather than an inclusive women's-needs-support-structure within the feminist movement.

Of post-*Roe* activism, Solinger writes that the language and primacy of 'choice' in reproductive rights activism became an "invitation to focus on individual desires and to ignore the relationship between women's resource-full choice making and other women's choicelessness" (Solinger, 33). Furthermore, in the post-*Casey* framework of reproductive rights, 'choice' has been redefined so many times by forces external to feminism such as courts and legislatures who place age qualifications, waiting periods, parental notification, counseling/education requirements or the increasing technological advances that allow us to view the fetus at earlier stages and even by popular opinion which stigmatizes women who seek abortion (Solinger, 34-35). In 1990, Fried recognized the political landscape of abortion rights activism as crucial to reproductive choice but remarked that "the pursuit of a full reproductive freedom agenda is necessary if we are to build a movement *of* and *for women*" (Solinger, xiii emphasis mine). She hoped that the mobilization efforts to resist the attacks on abortion rights and the demands for more services to meet women's needs would equate in a strong reproductive rights movement. She warned that in the future, the "reproductive rights movement must insure that abortion rights will not be won at the expense of the rights of any group of women" (Fried, xiiii.). Our work in feminist policymaking must develop an inclusive strategy that utilizes the important knowledge individual women bring to the movement about their experiences with reproductive options (or lack thereof). We must structure

feminist organizational efforts to serve the disparate many and not just the prominent few. In order to legitimize and strengthen all women's decisions to have a child, feminists engaged in reproductive rights work must be accountable to diverse groups of women and their individual needs.

Deeply contested and related to my work is the struggle between theoretical knowledge and experiential knowledge in abortion provision. There have been many theoretical debates regarding the lack of feminism, or feminist intent within for-profit abortion service providers and clinics. The work of Kristin Luker and Rosalind Petchesky chronicle the nature of abortion availability and provision during the later half of the 20th century and expose the lack of feminist ideology found within the for-profit abortion service industry. While I agree with their astute analyses, I have to acknowledge that in my own experiences within these environments I was constantly being reminded about the very 'radically feminist' nature of my work there. During my activist endeavors, I had the privilege of working with both non-profit and for-profit abortion providers. Overwhelmingly each entity saw themselves and their work as necessarily feminist. While I am in absolute agreement with the work of Luker and Petchesky – that the for-profit abortion providers I worked with did not exercise a feminist, or sometimes even a woman-centered – abortion practice, I have to speak out to say that most of the providers saw themselves as part of the feminist movement. Particularly for-profit abortion providers saw themselves as *necessarily* feminist because they had been ostracized in nearly every other quarter of their professional lives which Carol Joffe

pointedly writes about in her work, Doctors of Conscience. I do not feel that it is my place to deny the self-definition and identity of these dedicated abortion providers – even while I recognize that some of them earn their living at the expense of poor women. It's a difficult moral quandary for myself and I believe the feminist movement at large. I feel very strongly that what these abortion providers need is more encouragement to understand women's needs, empathetic criticism of their practices, and structural support for feminist praxis rather than theoretical lambasting from myself or anyone else.

While my criticism of the reproductive rights and feminist movement may seem anti-feminist, I speak from a place of deep respect and devotion to the movement that has provided me with opportunities that were unimaginable to me when I was young. And I believe that my work is rooted in the tradition of dissenting feminist writings like those in This Bridge called My Back, To Be Real and Manifesta which contradict the work of many elitist feminists prominent in the movement. At the end of the day, I do believe in experiential knowledge and its ability to inform theory. I do believe that the *personal is political*. I just think the slogan better serves feminism when we return to our roots and learn from women's lived experiences. Returning to our roots is the only way to address the needs of women, and it is the best method we have of breaking the political deadlock in abortion policy. It may be the only way to garner a broader political support base that is so important to healthcare funding projects. So for me to offer feminist-friendly criticism of the movement from within seems a far better situation than to fight the

pointed and sometimes painfully accurate denigrations made by the anti-choice movement.

In fact, my perspective on the failure of the reproductive rights and feminist movement adequately to address issues such as sexuality, childcare and parenting are not new. In 1990 Kathryn Kolbert called for a new "reproductive rights agenda for the 1990's," suggesting a "comprehensive approach to reproductive rights issues" and stating that "the process must be as inclusive as possible, and the dialogue must be genuine" (Kolbert, 298-297). She said, "developing broader-based coalitions that reflect the diversity of women and a wide spectrum of reproductive experiences will enable us to expand both our ranks and our success, and to nurture choice as a basic social value" (Kolbert, 299). My assertion is that the feminist movement in general and the reproductive rights movement specifically failed to fully heed Kolbert's call. As feminists, we have not placed providing to all women a full range of reproductive options, safe and quality care, informed consent and informed refusal, sexuality, reproductive and life skill education, freedom to express one's sexuality, and to adopt varied family arrangements or lifestyles; economic equity; freedom from violence, family law and services, and finally, political participation. Granted, these are incredibly huge projects, but they are equally important toward moving forward with a reproductive rights policy that can change the very fabric of society and continue to transform the lives of individual women.

I have met some amazing people, doing incredible work in this movement. They are dedicated to feminism and are very hard-working, but it's hard to devote your life to one thing only. I've seen some of my old clinic-defending friends become short-sighted and narrow, working only for the benefit of abortion rights. They have forgotten that the right to abortion encompasses only a single *issue* intended to relieve the trials of womanhood (and an unwanted pregnancy *is* a trial). It was never intended to become the only or most important issue in which organizations created for women are engaged. Those of us who choose to labor in this movement, who provide our diverse talents for the cause of feminism are all valuable. Our shame, our secret in this movement is that some of us have forgotten what it is that brought us to feminism. We have fostered alienation between generations of feminists and different colored feminists. It would seem that we are unable to accept a changing of the guard, to pass on the responsibilities of leadership within our own movement. The cause of this miscarriage might be derived from our failure to propagate equality within the society at large, so that we hold onto what little power we have earned. We still have so much work to do and therefore must foster engagement between older and younger women. Like a lot of women I know, I became disillusioned about my work in the movement. I have not felt appreciated for the energy, enthusiasm or intelligence I bring with me about what it means to be a woman. And I am not alone.

We are role models to all who will come after us. And the model for feminism should not be a rigid ideal. New members who come into the movement have a

profoundly different experience in the world precisely because of the successes that the feminist movement has garnered thus far. My mother never intended for me to become so intimately and actively involved in the abortion issue, nor did her mother intend for her to ever hold a job outside of the home. Their ideals about what it is to be a woman could never work for me. The new wave of feminists... third-wavers and riot grrls and those who come afterwards, should not be held accountable to those ideals given us by the '70's feminist movement. An older feminist ideology cannot work in this society that has changed so dramatically in the last 30 years. It is now time to integrate the achievements of the feminists who came before, to learn the lessons of our history, and to participate in a new kind of feminism. And this new feminism must be inclusive of the diversity of membership, experience and ideals of the women invested in its continuing success.

Introduction

Ultimately, my work is an appeal to the feminist community to continue its efforts to make women's lives better. It provides a commentary on my experiences as a feminist within the movement while drawing a comparison to the universal stressors that I believe led Norma McCorvey to 'switch sides' in the public debate on abortion. My own life experiences are presented here to help illustrate my struggles as a feminist and to draw a connection between Norma McCorvey's feelings about mothering. Her story compels me to empathize with her because my own sense of mothering feels as though it sometimes veers toward disaster. I realize that this dynamic in my own life is in play because my motherhood seems to be constantly under threat of impending doom and continuing scrutiny. Because of this dynamic, I am also deeply influenced by Naomi Wolf's concern about the pushes and pulls both from within ourselves and society at large that influence our experiences as mothers – particularly feminist mothers. For me, Leslie Cannold's work was equally significant in my thinking about abortion, motherhood and feminism. I picked up her book thinking that I would be disappointed by yet another anti-feminist-feminist diatribe against abortion rights and surprisingly, Cannold seems to want to avoid doing just that, so she works faithfully to connect the dots with feminist analysis of her findings about abortion beliefs among pro- and anti-choice women. Since the early days of my own feminist activism, I have been indebted to the work of the Alan Guttmacher Institute. They always have an interesting article or

some important information that helps me to think through some particular aspect of my work in the reproductive rights movement. Additionally, I have utilized several works collected by Malcolm Goggin in order to demonstrate the conflicts that continue to plague the feminist movement in relation to abortion and reproductive rights.

The string that winds all of the evidence together for me is Janet Jakobsen's work and I have to admit that I am very disappointed in missing the chance to study with her when she was at the University of Arizona. While the study of theory is often viewed as the ultimate divide between activist and academic feminists, Jakobsen's work cuts through that dynamic to advise us that both sides of feminism are necessary and useful toward continuing feminist projects. Also, Jean Hardisty's work was invaluable in furthering my understanding of why and how the Conservative Right has been able to exploit and in some cases explode leftist politics. This project would never have gotten off the ground had I not read Carol Joffe's and Laura Kaplan's accounts of abortion. I read each of those works for the first time as a clinic defender in order to understand the broader issues of women's efforts to control abortion. I had wanted to think through the problem of violence around abortion clinics, hoping that there might be some means of diminishing the terrorism that women experience when trying to obtain legal healthcare. While I have not been successful in my own endeavors on that issue, I hope that my work challenges feminist activists/academics to view abortion not as a single issue, but as one option in cooperation with many competing and conflicting influences in women's reproductive capacities. Like many other feminist academics writing about abortion, my

work is rooted in the works of Rosalind Pollack Petchesky and Kristin Luker. Without their important research on the politics of abortion and mothering, many significant facts regarding the 'progress' of abortion politics and the feminist movement would be lost to history like so much of women's experiences since patriarchal social organizing took hold. Another very noteworthy author should not escape attention here; Rickie Solinger's books have shaped my feminist activism and my theoretical understanding of abortion in so many ways. She continues to be an original thinker on how abortion impacts women's social and political movements. Her profound analysis of women's experiences with abortion and adoption provide a better understanding of the platform of women's issues and provides compelling insight into family formation in America over the last half century.

CONFLICTS IN THE MOVEMENT

Jane Roe: the Trouble with Motherhood

There is a feminist ideology of the woman as host-body. But that does not negate the emotional and physical attachment the host-body has with cell-formation and its potentiality for life, in other words, the relationship between the woman and her growing fetus. The simple truth is that women are physically attached to the embryonic cell-formation just as the inverse is true. So to abort is to separate oneself physically from baby-formation. The physicality of abortion is no simple task for any woman. Even while the decision about the necessity to abort may seem easy, the actuality of abortion renders that decision difficult. Even anti-choice 'feminist' Frederica Mathewes-Green acknowledges of the decision to have an abortion that, "no one wants an abortion as she wants an ice cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal, caught in a trap, wants to gnaw off its own leg" (Mathewes-Green, 11). Commonly overlooked in the abortion debate of recent years are the very important reasons that many women choose abortion. According to researchers for the Alan Guttmacher Institute,

> The analysis of the reasons women give for why they had an abortion shows that the most commonly reported ones are postponing childbearing to a more suitable time or stopping altogether to focus energies and resources on existing children; the second most commonly reported reason

> consists of socioeconomic factors, such as being unable to afford a child—either in terms of the direct costs of raising a child or the opportunity costs to a woman who, to care for a child, must interrupt her education or work; also, relationship problems are among the most important reasons why women seek abortion, where many women are in consensual unions, the issue of being able to support the child should the relationship end is probably a major concern; while at least a small proportion of women in most countries mentioned the risk to their health as their primary motivation for the abortion; only small proportions of women mentioned a risk to fetal health either as the most important reason for having an abortion or as a contributing one; and finally, social acceptability may play some role in determining the reasons women give for seeking abortion (Bankole).

Many of those decisions are based on the very real political implications of the woman's community or social structure. Without the necessary funds and resources to raise a child, or the familial community support of interaction with children, or without the emotional/ psychological wherewithal to nurture children, the ability to bear children may seem ridiculous.

Feminists have been negligent in voicing and addressing these issues. A strain of feminism even negates the difficult work involved in becoming a mother by "focusing

overwhelmingly on women's allegedly special quasi-biological traits and a mystical relationship that they presumably have with nature – a 'nature' conceived as an all-nurturing and domestic Great Mother"(Beihl). While "becoming a mother requires supreme focus and profound discipline, our culture prefers to give women doggerel by suggesting that motherhood is effortless and 'natural,' casting maternity as a biological unfolding" (Wolf, 4). Having secured the legal right to abortion, the political and social factors that lead women to choose abortion have been largely ignored by many women's groups and much feminist political activism. The anti-choice movement has been able to exploit those factors effectively by addressing them with political community. They have provided diapers, shelter, funding and supportive communities for women who are in need. The anti-choice movement offers solutions that include: fighting isolation with friendship by becoming a friend to pregnant women; encourage "natural" bonds such as marriage to baby's father as well as mending fences with parents; encouraging consideration of adoption by assuring women that adoption delays for older foster children do not extend to babies and that their children will not be rejected; help to build employment plans that allow the woman to mother her child; and finally prepare for a phasing out of welfare benefits to single mothers by addressing the economic needs of the family (Mathewes-Green, 175-177). The anti-choice movement has intentionally targeted vulnerable women and provided them with aid, in turn asking only that their efforts be repaid in loyal political support, and indeed, the anti-choice movement's ranks are filled by women faithful to their cause. Norma McCorvey (Jane Roe in the *Roe v.*

Wade case) is a prime example of a woman whose needs were not wholly met by the feminist movement. For Norma McCorvey the right to abortion would have provided her with only one a solution for a myriad of problems in her life. Yet, she was repeatedly helped and supported by the anti-choice movement until her life was substantially changed. It was after she felt secure in her situation that Norma McCorvey began to voice the political rhetoric of the movement that had helped her. Unfortunately, it was not feminists. In, Won By Love, written by Norma McCorvey and Gary Thomas, Norma alleges that she "reluctantly became the poster child for the pro-choice movement. [After *Roe* and] over the next two decades, Norma experienced the grief and despair of thousands of women who chose to abort their babies." She claims that she, "witnessed the destruction of thousands of human lives in the abortion clinic where she worked. She found out that the real choice she had been burdened with was not about abortion but about eternal life. It was a choice that would shock the world and change Norma's life forever" (McCorvey and Thomas, dustjacket). The issue that eventually made her famous did not help Norma McCorvey get out of the circumstances that led to her unwanted pregnancy in the first place. It was the anti-choice movement that worked hard to make Norma McCorvey's life better. Presently, she continues to repay them with loyal support in their cause by speaking out against abortion whenever she can.

Gary Thomas who helped Norma McCorvey write her memoir claims that when Norma signed the affadavit becoming Jane Roe in the *Roe v. Wade* case she was, "poor, pregnant, and desperate." That she "fell into the hands of two young and ambitious

lawyers. Though she was touted as a symbol of everything women could gain by being free to choose abortion, the real Jane Roe was an embarrassment to the image that the Ivy League feminists tried so hard to project. Norma was uneducated, unskilled, a drug user, and an alcoholic. She became a helpless pawn in a powerful game" (McCorvey and Thomas, dustjacket). While I feel highly dubious about McCorvey's and Thomas' account of Norma's victimization at the hands of the feminist movement, it does make a twisted kind of sense that Norma thought she should be important to feminists. This opinion was in direct conflict with the idea that her situation as an 'everywoman' case. By calling her Jane Roe the feminists-attorneys in the case sought to emphasize the fact that Norma's individual circumstances could have happened to anyone.

Several times in Won By Love Norma is quoted as saying that being part of the feminist movement was "not worth six bucks an hour" which is the amount she was being paid by her abortion-clinic-employers (McCorvey and Thomas, 112). Norma also ruefully states that when the *Roe* case was actually argued she "had already delivered [her] baby and placed her for adoption, [that she] couldn't abort a child who had already been born." She further claims that, "As soon as Sarah Weddington [the attorney who argued *Roe*] had my name on that affidavit, I had served my purpose. This lack of relationship was not a disappointment to me, though Sarah had passed herself off as my friend, in reality she used me. I was chosen because they needed someone who would sign the paper and fade into the background, never coming out and always keeping silent. Ideally in their minds, I would have just stayed quiet, got on with my life, and quietly

suffered, perhaps even eventually committing suicide" (McCorvey and Thomas, 28, 29 and 33, 34). McCorvey and Thomas paint a very grim picture of Norma's experiences of being a pro-choice activist. What is more disturbing is Norma's account of the terror she endured by anti-choice activists who knew her to be Jane Roe. Yet, remarkably absent from McCorvey and Thomas's version of events and feminist accounts of Norma's story, are feminist activist efforts to curtail the violence that Norma experienced at the hands of anti-choice activists. Although later in the text, McCorvey and Thomas attempt to minimize the attacks Norma endured at the hands of anti-choice activists by questioning whether it was in fact related to her persona as Jane Roe, these statements ring hollow in the horror of the descriptions of the violence. McCorvey and Thomas write of Norma's experiences with anti-choice terrorism;

> I was targeted for "execution" by anti-choice terrorists on the night before I was scheduled to participate in the biggest rally ever organized in support of legalized abortion. Violence against abortion clinic doctors and personnel had been increasing for the last several years, making me a prime target. Pro-lifers did their best not to let me forget what I had done." (47, McCorvey and Thomas).

Once it became known that she was Jane Roe, Norma says that she "found baby clothes scattered across her lawn, photographs of cut up fetuses in her mailbox and dolls with arms or legs ripped off thrown onto her porch" (McCorvey and Thomas, 47). So after the

radical pro-life group, Operation Rescue, moved their local offices next door to the abortion clinic where Norma McCorvey worked she states, "the rescue people proved more resilient than cockroaches. We simply could not scare them off. We couldn't humiliate them. We couldn't get them to leave" (McCorvey and Thomas, 69).

Norma recognized that she was unable sufficiently to respond to anti-choice tactics. In becoming a 'born-again Christian' and seeking refuge with her 'enemies,' as she called anti-choice activists, Norma says, "though I was ready for a war with Rescue, I was not ready for rescue's weapons. The war that went on in front of our clinic became a war of love and hatred. While they showed a rock hard opposition to everything I stood for, at the same time they displayed an incredible openness to reach out to me as a person" (McCorvey and Thomas, 77). Frederica Mathewes-Green explains that surprising twist in logic referenced by Norma that goes against the stereotypical anti-choice rhetoric by noting that, "the bored reluctant middle [American constituent] is not the pro-life's movement's best ally. Instead pro-choicers are" (Mathwews-Green, 178). Mathewes-Green believes that in order to break the political deadlock concerning abortion rights, anti-choice activists should engage pro-choice activists in a genuine dialogue about their experiences as women. Therefore, when Norma claims that it was that *incredible openness to reach out to her as a person,* I believe her.

Norma McCorvey did not want to be an 'every woman.' She says of about her work in the abortion clinic, "I had some very antagonist feelings at this time. I knew exactly what we charged for each abortion... and for bringing all these abortions in,[and

she pointedly repeats that] I got paid six dollars an hour" (McCorvey and Thomas, 150). Norma wanted the feminist movement to treat her with the same respect that it treated the *Roe* decision. She wanted to be as important to the feminists as she felt abortion rights were, and she saw herself as crucial to the movement in their efforts to bring about the legal right to abortion. Coupled with her personal feelings of significance, she needed individualized help to keep her from taking drugs and in gaining financial stability in order to change her life. While some feminists did reach out to Norma, she states that during a very prominent rally in support of abortion rights, "not a single person from the [pro-choice] organizing committee came to greet me at the airport. I knew that many other events were going on around the march, but I wasn't invited to a single one" (McCorvey and Thomas, 17). Her work in the movement was not economically compensated, and it certainly was not publicly rewarded.

Additionally, Norma recognizes that her "attempts at mothering always ended in disaster." She says that, "my children had always come at inconvenient times. I had viewed their conceptions with alarm and their births with dread." Yet in giving up her children, she says, "I ached for what I had done" (McCorvey and Thomas, 107). Norma's experience is just one example that illustrates how many women are attached to children, and that the act of having an abortion, physically separating oneself from the process of making and growing a baby is incredibly difficult. Recognizing that Norma did not, in fact, have an abortion, but gave her three children up for adoption does not negate her feelings of connectedness to her children or that she felt mothering was a disaster for her.

While the distress she claims to feel about her own children may stem from post-adoption guilt, rather than the post-abortion variety, Norma sees her work in the abortion clinic as a continued destruction of her self image as 'mother.' For Norma and many other women, an unwanted pregnancy poses difficult decisions. Even if abortion is viewed as a necessary alternative to raising an unwanted child, the aftermath of that decision can be a painful experience. Though not all women who undergo abortion are afflicted with post-operative guilt, Norma McCorvey's guilt about her children and her work as an abortion provider cannot be seen as an individual experience. Post-abortion counseling does serve a public need in assuaging some women's guilt about the potentiality of children and should not be seen as singular sentiments. Even if a few clinics offer services such as post-abortion counseling, the few are not enough. The feminist movement has to address the feelings of women like Norma and produce overarching changes to policies that do not overlook women's intimate experiences and long-term isolation with abortion.

Feminist Family Values

Motherhood and abortion are seemingly diametric opposites. Feminism and femininity are perceived as not being compatible. In popular politics and media, abortion is viewed as ending a 'life' while motherhood is about nurturing a life; femininity is associated with caring for others while feminism is viewed as selfishly attending to one's personal development. What kind of world would we live in if abortion and motherhood were seen in cooperation with one another; if to be feminist, one could also embrace what is feminine? Women are in need of support to overcome and, maybe, conquer the general lack of social and political assistance as potential mothers. Even those women who lack any desire or drive to bear children are socially pressured to acknowledge their ability to do so. Raising children continues to be 'women's work' despite the radical social changes occurring which seemingly foster closer emotional attachment between men and their children. The day-to-day responsibilities of caring for and about children are largely the concern of women, even if I do see more fathers taking their children to doctor's appointments. Women are not completely sustained financially and socially to raise children and families (the minority who remain intact). They must increasingly resolve child-rearing and economic stressors in varied and creative ways. Abortion is the quiet option that many women undergo in an effort to resolve the conflicts they face regarding child-rearing and family-formation.

In Abortion: Between Freedom and Necessity, Janet Hadley shares her experience that is so similar to my own, stating that "abortion is still not talked about much in everyday conversation. Few women admit to having had one without being sure they are among friends. It is too personal and still too taboo." Before telling anyone what I am working on or writing about, both she and I "have had to take a deep breath before [we] say the word 'abortion' and then wait to see if [we] get a hard stare, an embarrassed smile, or a transparently dissimilating story about a 'friend who had one.' And yet this intimate and personal issue has become sensationally and bewilderingly public" (Hadley, xi). While the decision to have an abortion is viewed as a private matter, the debate and public protestations regarding abortion make it difficult for women to feel as though they are making confidential choices about their reproductive lives. Abortion and reproductive rights work is extremely difficult under such public pressure. The private sexual encounter that leads to the creation of an unwanted pregnancy is stigmatized by the need of partuition options. Even though "public pronouncements about morality often diverge greatly from private behavior" the public policy and bureaucratic implementation of such policies are often "more extreme than the actual preferences" of most people (McFarlane and Meier, 4). Public mores of women's sexuality connect between the politics of abortion and the *virtue* of mothering that ultimately converge in reproductive rights activism.

My work in the reproductive rights movement and my experiences as a mother in the feminist movement fly in complete contrast to what I know about abortion. While the

decision to have an abortion is viewed as a private matter, the debate and public protestations regarding abortion make it difficult for women to feel as though they are making confidential choices about their reproductive lives. Theoretically, in the feminist/reproductive rights movement, I am provided with choices that make child-rearing easier. Theoretically, I can choose when and how to have children, and I can continue with radical feminist work while managing a household, career and family because abortion has provided me with the option of delaying childbearing until I am financially and socially secure in my ability to provide for children. The impact of very real children on theoretical knowledge has shattered what illusions I had about abortion and motherhood. Politically, there is a basic perspective that abortion is an individual right[4] secured by women. This perspective is lambasted by anti-choice advocates and lauded by pro-choice activists. But I've worked many years in different facets of the reproductive rights community: as a lobbyist, a clinic defender, a patient advocate, an action coordinator and educator. In each of these roles, I was connected with women. I connected to some women who faced the actuality of determining whether or not to continue with an unwanted pregnancy and some women for whom such a decision was an important intellectual exercise that they could afford to balance with other significant choices in their lives. I came to this work as a victim of sexual abuse and having needed

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[4] Individual rights are the right to life, liberty, economic freedom, and the "pursuit of happiness." They are considered fundamental to American constitutional democracy and it is the purpose of government to protect these rights, by not placing unfair or

an abortion myself, so I understand that there are many complicating factors in the decision to have, or not have, an abortion.

For the first ten years of my advocating role in the reproductive rights movement, abortion had been a simplified political question, marked by ideology that Leslie Reagan explains:

> As women entered the professional abortion discourse they brought their own experiences and insights to bear on political analysis. Feminists retheorized the meaning of abortion. Abortion, as the new feminists analyzed it, was more than an individual need, private crisis, or public-health problem; it was a collective problem for all women. Furthermore, the criminal status of abortion was a fundamental feature of the subordination of women. Feminists found that the assumptions underlying the law and medical practice toward abortion denied women's right to make decisions about their own reproduction, denigrated their moral judgment, and limited their freedom (217, Reagan).

Yet when I met with women who were grappling with the decision about whether or not to have an abortion, the simplified political dialogue about individual rights seemed absurd at best. I realize through my own experiential knowledge that there has been a

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unreasonable restraints on their exercise. Many of these rights are enumerated in the Bill of Rights.

large difference between most political discourse and the reality of every day experiences, but the feminist movement has always claimed to have a grasp on such dichotomies by declaring that the personal is political (and the political is personal). Feminists have engaged politically on issues such as child abuse, abortion, and domestic violence. These efforts were originally coordinated to address the needs of individual women because of the consciousness-raising groups from which many feminist organizations grew. But in order to make the feminist political agenda palatable to the American voting public, the message (and political influence) – like most leftist politics – has been relegated to a sound-bite formula that negates the complicating factors affecting each of these issues, such as slogans like "one world-one people" which fails to recognize the diversity found among groups of people throughout the world.

Anti-choice activists are grappling with the very same concerns. While providing post-abortion counseling, the anti-choice movement is forced to reconcile the very real reasons women choose to have an abortion. Anti-choice author Frederica Mathewes-Green concedes that "for nearly every woman, the abortion decision is a result of many reasons, not just one. Relational, practical, emotional and material problems all jumble together in a dense knot, and *abortion can appear the most efficient – if not the only* – way to solve them all" (Mathewes-Green, 174 emphasis mine). But Mathewes-Green articulates the failing of the feminist movement by pointing out that "pro-choice rhetoric presents the decision for abortion in terms of autonomy. The woman acts alone, choosing for herself what will best empower her. It is her body, her life, her right to decide, and no

one else is concerned. This rhetoric imagines women unfettered, empowered and free." In her research of post-abortion counseling Mathewes-Green listened to women who said "instead that they felt isolated, endangered, and sad" by the circumstances of their unwanted pregnancies. She determined that, "loneliness and fear of abandonment pushed them toward [abortion], decked out in its first-person-singular bunting," and that the isolationist rhetoric of the feminist movement fails to visualize the true situation: "The woman considering abortion doesn't feel autonomous, but enmeshed in relationships which bind and constrain her decision." In order to "overcome the forces that drive her toward this tragedy we must explode the shell of her isolation, making her problems our problems, building concentric rings of support from the mother-child dyad outward to all society. Pregnancy is about connectedness. It spins the wheel tighter and tighter, and centrifugal force draws the players together, more aware than ever of their mutual dependence. Pregnancy problems have to do with broken connections: broken trust, fear loneliness abandonment" (Mathewes-Green, 23-24 & 34). These are very important messages that feminists working in reproductive rights must acknowledge in order to fully address the needs of more women.

To support women, the feminist movement must undermine the anti-choice rhetoric that emphasizes the notion of abortion as a 'tragedy.' Pro-and anti-choice activists must acknowledge that neither side is able to turn its reproductive strategies into comprehensive public policy. Mathewes-Green grants, "the middle's emerging consensus is to tolerate abortion as a necessary evil, hedged about with restrictions

concerning parental consent, waiting periods and so forth" (Mathewes-Green, 21). A recent *Newsweek* article entitled "The War Over Fetal Rights" provides a shrewd look at the current debate about abortion and the problems pro- and anti-choice activists face in overriding the other's political agenda: "Activists on both sides are struggling to tread this new territory without losing their political footing" (Rosenberg, 42). For decades, abortion opponents have offered moral and ethical arguments about protecting the fetus, up to and including criticism of the new embryonic technology (for IVF), but equating infertility treatments with murder alienates many American from such extreme attitudes. Inversely, abortion rights supporters are finding it increasingly difficult to claim credibly that a fetus just a few weeks or even days from delivery is not entitled to at least some protections under the law, but have vigorously argued against such laws anyway, fearing that giving a fetus rights will lead to the collapse of abortion protections (Rosenberg, 42-43). From this recent popular article, it would seem that most Americans' perspectives regarding abortion are just as muddied as my own experiences in the reproductive rights movement.

Even as we acknowledge anti-choice activists' successes in serving some women's interests, we should not forget that anti-choice efforts to restrict and deny abortion accessibility does not restore society to a 'better' time before abortion was readily available. Leslie Reagan reminds us that, "making abortion hard to obtain will not return the United States to an imagined time of virginal brides and stable families; it will return us to the time of crowded septic abortion wards, avoidable deaths, and the

routinization of punitive treatment of women by state authorities and their surrogates." She notes that, "the past will not be duplicated in every detail if abortion is again made illegal, for the historical circumstances differ. [Since *Roe*], abortion has been politicized in new ways. Women could be routinely prosecuted and imprisoned for having abortions, which they were not during the era of illegal abortion" (Reagan, 250). In our efforts to enhance and build rebuild abortion rights for all women, however, we can utilize the criticism of anti-choice activists like Mathewes-Green in understanding how to challenge the current consensus about abortion. Being defensive in pro-choice strategies will not work, but incorporating what the anti-choice movement has learned does not harm the pro-choice agenda because ultimately there is an important difference between pro- and anti-choice arguments. Anti-choice activists do not want to support abortion "whether or not the child is wanted, whether or not [contraceptive] prevention is attempted" (Mathewes-Green, 35). Feminists can take, what I deem to be, the morally superior 'high road' by offering a variety of services and reproductive choices to all women.

A pro-choice political ideology is not just about a woman's individual decision to have a child or not. This is because no woman lives in a vacuum, experiencing her life unto herself. In pregnancy, women are surrounded by a community of people who may have an attachment to them and their impending child. It is the very nature of this social paradigm in which we presently live that limits our (women's) decisions about abortion and child-bearing. The advances in technology and the science of conception have dramatically changed the landscape of reproductive rights, thereby encompassing far

more than just the issue of abortion. Life is marked at an earlier gestational stage specifically because of the advancements in ultrasound technology. Women can peek into the proliferating cells much earlier now than ever before. With this new perspective of fetal development also comes a new consciousness about the potentiality of life. It has become much more difficult for pro-choice activists to claim that early cell formation does not equal a life. And yet, in the early years of abortion rights activism such bold rationalizations were utilized in order to minimize the impact of a pregnancy being equated with a baby. In my view, early pregnancy should be equated with the potentiality for life rather than simply as cell formation. But is it a life? In and of itself it is not, because the host body (or woman) is still necessary for baby-formation to occur. My view of the fetus as potential person is closely related to Marjorie Reiley Maguire's as she defines it in her article, "Symbiosis, Biology and Personalization." Maguire states, "that the only way a fetus can become a member of the human community, and therefore a person, prior to birth, is if the woman in whose body it exists welcomes it into the human community by her consent to the pregnancy. It is the consent of the woman to continuing the pregnancy that marks the beginning of personhood" (Maguire, 15). There are limits to the viability of the fetus in relationship to the decision-making powers of the host-body (woman) and her agreement to create another life.

In acknowledgement of the pro-choice movement's broadening political aims toward childcare and family issues, Naomi Wolf makes the argument that "we need real flextime that allows mothers and fathers to more easily cycle in and out of the workforce;

real Family Leave - up to six months off with pay; on-site daycare; and tax deductions and benefits to underwrite the costs of caring for families" (Wolf, 284). But it almost feels like too little effort, too late to begin such projects. I'm not suggesting that feminists should back away from this work, but to expect immediate political response would be foolish at best. I would take Wolf's arguments even further by demanding that we are given social, economic and legal protections in creating our families. We must recognize, as the Conservative Right has done, that extraordinary social transformations can be achieved through electoral processes (Hardisty, 191). We must recruit new or undecided constituencies through coalition building; and utilize institutionalization strategies for movement-building by multiple strategies of national and state/ secular and religious interventions (Hardisty, 192).

What came about as the 'sisterhood' of the '70's grew older was a distrust between those aging feminists and their youthful counterparts. The young activists looked at the rights and privileges that feminism had afforded them without knowledge of the hard work it taken to establish them, while at the same time the older feminists felt displaced from the movement they felt they had created. This is precisely the sort of division that the anti-choice movement has easily exploited. Because the anti-choice movement organizes from a site of religious enterprise, they have very little division in their ranks. When there is division, overarching unity is derived from general commonly held moral values. While feminists address issues of reproductive rights, equal pay, affirmative action, and gay rights, the Conservative Right has fostered a brand of equality

feminism that "promotes the lifestyle of what they call the new 'traditionalist woman' who chooses to stay at home to raise her children, is too smart to fall for the idea that she can 'have it all,' jokes about sex, answers her children's questions about condoms and is *never* a doormat to her husband" (Hardisty , 92 emphasis hers). The Conservative Right has managed to undermine Progressives' principles of equality and fairness while the Left formed into distinct groups that "mobilized around the profound nature of their shared oppression" (Hardisty, 196). Feminists were one such group that had not yet transformed into a lasting movement. It seemingly ebbed and flowed with issue-specific projects. What made the feminist movement of the 1970's unique was its seemingly broad-based approach to women's issues of equality. While some feminist groups tackled reproductive rights, others tackled the plight of battered women, while still other groups addressed equal opportunity issues. This was not true of the suffragettes[5] and the temperance activists[6] Their platforms were largely single-issue based programs that when accomplished rendered the organizations working on them unnecessary. Though earlier groups of feminists did work on other issues, they did not maintain a strong constituency

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[5] The international movement for Women's suffrage, led by suffragists and suffragettes, began as a social, economic and political reform movement aimed at extending the suffrage (i.e. the right to vote) to women, advocating equal suffrage (abolishment of graded votes) rather then universal suffrage (abolishment of discrimination due to, for instance, race), which was considered too radical. A catch phrase was "one man, one vote!" The term tends to connote acts of defiance, protest, self- sacrifice and sometimes violence." From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.Wikipedia (2004)

[6] Temperance activists, also called teetotelers, Pro-prohibition activists - often religious women. "n. One who abstains from strong drink, sometimes totally, sometimes tolerably totally." Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914) 'The Devil's Dictionary' (1911)

base once their core issue was seemingly resolved. In her work, Kathryn Kolbert frames reproductive freedom as the "ability to choose whether, when, how, and with whom one will have children. Choice means not only having a legal option, but also the economic means and social conditions that make it possible to effectuate one's choice." She reminds us that single issue politics such as abortion rights does not provide help to all women. As she puts it, "reproductive freedom is necessary if all persons are to lead lives of self-determination, opportunity, and human dignity. Because women have historically been [and continue to be] defined by and valued almost entirely for their reproductive capacities, and all persons, especially women, have been expected to express their sexuality in ways that satisfy society's norms for childbearing and childrearing, the fight for reproductive choice is essential if women are to become full and equal partners with men in this society, and is a crucial part of a larger struggle for liberty and equality" (Kolbert, 297-299). The feminist movement must return to a reproductive rights agenda that encompasses the varied needs of individual women in order to maintain its slim majority position in abortion rights politics.

Alternatively, in (Mis)Conceptions, Naomi Wolf focuses on the needs of pregnant women and their connected relationship to the world we live in and to their fetuses. Women who continue their pregnancies despite recognizing their negative socio-political and economic situation are subjecting their unborn to the same socio-political influences with similar negative consequences. In this manifesto of feminist motherhood Wolf acknowledges the many mind-body connection studies performed that seek to prove the

relationship between pregnant women and their fetuses. She further argues that women's well-being is at the heart of children's well-being. My grandmother used to say "When mama's not happy, ain't nobody happy." And it would seem from the research that Wolf notes in her book, she agrees. Wolf states that given 'new research' "about the interconnection between a pregnant woman's emotional state and a baby's well-being, it would make sense that the happiness of pregnant women should be of paramount importance in the medical care given them. Yet hospitals and doctors (not to mention policy-makers) seem to ignore or downplay the possibility that the mother's state of mind is important in determining the medical outcome." Additionally, Wolf notes that "several studies conclude that one of the most basic determinants for a good outcome at birth was the mother's feelings about the pregnancy. How much more revolutionary and transformative it would be for [women's advocates] to tell fathers-to-be, and grandparents-to-be, policy-makers and employers, and the culture as a whole that it is important to nurture and value pregnant women and new mothers as it is to ensure that they are properly fed, weighed, and medicated." (Wolf, 113-14).

In my own life, the issue of abortion has had a unique impact. At fifteen, I was forced to have an abortion I wasn't so sure at the time I wanted. I have subsequently come the conclusion that it was the best outcome possible for me at the time, but it was a decision that I did not make. My parents made the decision for me, in large part, to hide the abuse I endured in their home and my ignorance about sex based on that abuse. After I left their home, was married and became joyfully pregnant, I encountered an

obstetrician who determined it was medically necessary to abort my very wanted pregnancy because while under her care I had been very sick and received less than adequate treatments due to my HMO insurance authorization process. The doctor concluded that my would-be child was defective and scheduled a therapeutic abortion without my knowledge or consent. Ironically, this doctor was an important medical practitioner in the abortion-rights movement of the early 1990's and I was a leading local abortion-rights activist in our community. When I was finally informed of the scheduled procedure, I refused. The doctor could not believe that I wanted to continue my pregnancy despite the complications I was having. In response to my decision to continue what became a high risk pregnancy, my doctor refused to continue to provide care and I was forced to change doctors under very stressful circumstances and without important medical information (which she 'lost' after I left her practice). Most recently, in the women's studies department at the University of Arizona, I have attempted to be a working mother, a graduate student while also being pregnant and received criticism about the creative administrational efforts I use in meeting my familial and professional goals. In the department, my studies and academic career were often viewed as far more important than my work as a mother. In contrast, I view my academic work and my mother-work as equally important. I want to be an influential role model for my children. I strive to maintain a balance of the two positions for my own sanity and for the best interests of my family. Yet, the reproductive choices I have made seem to make some older feminists uncomfortable.

This issue strikes at the core of feminist politics. It speaks to the prevailing feminist philosophy that women should have control over their own bodies. Yet, many feminists are extremely judgmental about the actual choices women make. Many friends have asked me why I choose to work on abortion-rights when I have children. The irony of being pregnant while researching abortion is not lost on me. I feel strong in my assertion that it is not just the right to choose when and how to have children, it is nevertheless also the responsibility of the individual to make those difficult choices for herself. My colleagues in the women studies department who were not supportive of my methods to manage my decisions and those who were obstructive in my attempts to continue working are precisely the kinds of feminists who need to return to consciousness-raising activism in order to understand the different choices women make. Feminists and academic programs such as Women's Studies Departments have turned to the more socially palatable study of Theory even as they were turning away from their roots of studying women's lives through experiential knowledge. To *study nature, not books*, has fallen prey to *publish or perish* professorships and modes of inquiry. While theoretical knowledge is an incredibly important endeavor (and I find much joy in studying Theory), it should remain in balance with the successes of feminist inquiry based on women's real lived lives. Ultimately the struggles I have faced in my program are the struggles that the Conservative Right has effectively manipulated to their advantage.

The origins of the reproductive rights movement lay in individual women who wanted more out of their lives, who wanted to feel productive about a variety of things, in a variety of ways. Even Naomi Wolf, who has a successful career in popular feminist publication, bemoans the status of mothers and individual choices in her most recent work (Mis)Conceptions. In it she states, "I want to record and do honor not to the fantasy but to the real thing. Real mother love is more impressive than the fantasy of it. That actual, specific, fierce maternal love that grows in the wake of that immense psychic and physical tremor that is pregnancy and birth should inspire awe, not sentiment.... But *there is a double disappointment in the startling constricted circumference of our lot*" (Wolf, 8-9 emphasis mine). We experience a loss of ourselves, not in a pre-feminist world that sentimentalizes motherhood. We lose ourselves in a post-feminist world in which we expect – and are expected – to participate in modern relationships, based on equality. But we are not equal. Childbearing and motherhood are bastions of biological determinacy, alternatively idealistically perceived as a 'natural' state of being for women on the one hand and equally physically marked as 'different' from men. Motherhood forces us to renegotiate our position as we lose the very sense of self upon which the idea of equality was based. In pregnancy (wanted or not) we are ourselves, plus more. In motherhood, we are ourselves plus one (or more). Yet if the framework of liberal individualism that currently upholds the right to abortion, does not work in the 'multipled' state of pregnancy, what do we have instead? Ultimately, anti-choice activists attempt to 'stand for another' defending 'fetal rights' above legitimate decision-making powers of

women coping with unwanted pregnancies. Anti-choice activists have utilized the successes of the Conservative Right in order to press their beliefs in government policy. As the government does have a compelling interest in the protection of potential life, anti-choice activists have been able to assert their morality into policy-making. Feminism needs to address this reality in order to progress beyond the stalemate of abortion rights.

Where Have All the Second Wave Feminists Gone?

Many women around the country were excited about the changes that reproductive technologies coupled with the *Griswold*,[7] *Eisenstadt*[8] and *Roe*[9] and *Doe*[10]

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[7] *Griswold v. Connecticut* (381 U.S. 479) 1965
Nature of Case: Challenge to a Connecticut law prohibiting use of contraceptives.
Holding: The law is unconstitutional. The Constitution contains a "right to privacy" that protects the decision of married couples to use contraceptives. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2004)

[8] *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (405 U.S. 438) 1972
Nature of Case: Challenge to a Massachusetts law allowing the sale or distribution of contraceptives only to married persons.
Holding: The law is unconstitutional. The right to privacy extends to individuals and protects the right of unmarried persons to obtain contraceptives. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2004)

[9] *Roe v. Wade* (410 U.S. 113) 1973Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2004)
Nature of Case: Challenge to a Texas law prohibiting abortions except to save the woman's life.
Holding: The law is unconstitutional. The right to privacy extends to the decision of a woman, in consultation with her physician, to terminate her pregnancy. During the first trimester of pregnancy, this decision may be effectuated free of state interference. After the first trimester, the state has a compelling interest in protecting the woman's health and may reasonably regulate abortion to promote that interest. At the point of fetal viability (capacity for sustained survival outside the uterus), the state has a compelling interest in protecting potential life and may ban abortion, except when necessary to preserve the woman's life or health.

[10] *Doe v. Bolton* (410 U.S. 179) 1973
Nature of Case: Challenge to a Georgia law, based on the model proposed by the American Law Institute, prohibiting abortions except in cases of medical necessity, rape, incest, and fetal abnormality. The Georgia law also required that all abortions be performed in accredited hospitals and that two doctors and a committee concur in the woman's abortion decision; and that only Georgia residents may obtain abortions in that State. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2004)

[all itals.] decisions, brought to their lives. They had access to birth control pills and to abortion should their birth control fail. Reagan points out that, "The legalization of abortion brought immediate benefits to women. Open access to legal abortion replaced the world of illegal abortion. After *Roe v. Wade*, women in the United States could look in a phone book for a physician-abortionist. Abortion clinics made the procedure widely available" (Reagan, 246). At the same time that the medical establishment began to split over the abortion issue, women's groups began effectively to challenge the medical establishment's hold over their reproductive healthcare needs. Many women felt that the nearly all male medical establishment did not have their best interests at heart and sought to challenge healthcare delivery as they knew it. In their previous experiences, many women were denied or were unaware of the crucial decision-making powers they could employ regarding their health (Kaplan, 40). Doctors and women were socialized to enact the physician/patient relationship as that of actor and acted-upon. The women's movement came to see this division as a false one and sought to work in partnership with their doctors. Part of the rationale for challenging the traditional medical relationship was due to the successful intervention of medical services by groups like the Jane Collective in Chicago who offered abortion services performed by lay-women in the group who had no previous medical training prior to their experiences with the abortion

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Holding: The law is unconstitutional. It violates a woman's right to choose abortion as recognized in *Roe v. Wade* (see above). The residency requirement violates the Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Constitution. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2004)

procedure (Ginsburg, 56). Another factor that disrupted the "traditional" medical relationship was the large success of alternative birthing practices throughout the late 1960's and early 70's. Many women sought herbal therapies and home-births as a means of controlling their labor and delivery (McFarlane & Meier, 38). The opening of free-standing[11] health clinics to meet the reproductive needs of women was a natural extension to these movements after the *Roe* decision in tandem with the roots of independent birth control clinics like those opened by Margaret Sanger during the 1930's which were in direct opposition to Comstock Laws.[12]

The powerful alliance between the women's movement and the doctors who were offering abortion services was a priceless connection. Unfortunately, those doctors began to be marginalized both within the medical community and in society at large. The economic downturn of the late 1970's and the advances of the women's movement in areas of law, education, and work made some of those advances easy targets for oppositional groups to dismantle (Reagan, 1). These oppositional groups were made up of members of conservative political, religious and medical communities. Since the *Roe* decision, such groups have stepped up their efforts to hinder the work of feminists. On no issue is this more dramatic than that of abortion provision. Immediately following the

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[11] free-standing abortion clinic are clinics located in free-standing facilities versus for-profit clinics, and clinics for which abortion constituted over 75% of their practice. www.feminist.org (2004)

[12] Comstock Act was a law in 1873 that made it a federal crime to use the U.S. mail to distribute anything considered " obscene, lewd, lascivious, indecently, filthy, or vile"

Roe decision, political pressure was placed on Congress to limit the availability of abortion by limiting government funding for abortion services. Also, some oppositional groups learned grassroots organizing and formed energetic forces of their own in an effort to motivate the greater community to resist abortion in their local communities (Ginsburg, 44). These groups also pressured legislatures, participated in referenda, and organized marches, demonstrations and speak-outs throughout the country against the abortion issue.

Some of these groups began to utilize more outrageous and radical forms of agitating for ideological change on the abortion issue in their local communities. In 1983, the Human Life Amendment was proposed, which would "permit– but not require – states to ban abortion. The vote was 49 to 50, 18 votes short of the two-thirds majority necessary for approval." (Wilder, 80). Anti-choice activists did not stop their efforts to criminalize abortion with the failure of the constitutional amendment. During the 1980's, their efforts began to culminate in strategic acts of violence such as bombings and physical intimidation of doctors and their staffs at free-standing clinics throughout the country. According to the feminist.org's *1997 Clinic Violence Survey Report* completed by the Feminist Majority, "Clinics located in free-standing facilities accounted for 66.7% of clinics experiencing severe violence, whereas only 56.5% of the clinics in the survey sample were free-standing. An overwhelming proportion of arsons and arson threats

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including information about contraception, abortion and sexual health. From Planned Parenthood Glossary of Terms, 2004.

reported in the survey-- 100% and 66.7%, respectively--occurred at free-standing clinics" (FeministMajority). The growing exposure and volatile response by anti-abortion activists culminated in pressuring doctors to discontinue providing abortion services, as well as discouraging medical schools from teaching abortion procedures. Additionally, Marcy Wilder reports that anti-abortion forces called for "a measure more extreme than anything before: a constitutional amendment to criminalize abortion nationwide." They began to pressure the Supreme Court through proposals and restrictive abortion legislation in an effort to expose the limitations of the Roe decision. "Between 1989 and 1992, more than 700 anti-choice bills were introduced in state legislatures across the country." (Wilder, 85). One such law was the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act, which would require a woman seeking an abortion to give her informed consent at least 24 hours before the abortion is performed. The law mandated the informed consent of one parent for minors, but provided for a judicial bypass procedure. A married woman seeking an abortion must sign a statement indicating that she has informed her husband. The law imposed reporting requirements on abortion facilities. (112 S.Ct. 2791). While the reporting restrictions did not specifically and directly impact women's access to abortion, the court did make it difficult for women to challenge existing laws. Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania challenged the Act, and the lawsuit progressed to the Supreme Court under the name of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in 1992. Parts of the law were upheld by the Supreme Court so the decision proved to be a blow for pro-choice activists. The Supreme Court did not overturn the *Roe* decision but the anti-choice

activists succeeded in securing states rights to impose burdensome obstacles in abortion provision.

As grassroots pro-life organizations were gaining momentum and political power, the feminist movement was facing a crisis from within and without. In the 1980's, just as the pro-life organizations were fulfilling their aims to exert strong political influence on national politics, young women who had never lived without abortion provision were coming into the feminist movement. Many of these young women had only heard stories of the 'bad' days before legalized abortion, they did not have experiential knowledge of sex without some sort of birth control availability (Reagan, 250). Because of the successes of second-wave feminists, the strategies and political ideals of young feminists clashed with older feminists who felt they were losing ground in their own political movement. In my own experiences with the local NOW chapter, there were many conflicts related to the keen pressure felt by older feminists of the political attempts like *Casey* to repeal abortion rights. They understood that their strategizing and organizing efforts had been successful and they blamed young feminists' issues and efforts as distracting to the movement. Young women grew up in an atmosphere where it seemed inevitable that abortion rights would erode into non-existence. Brenda Joyner in From Abortion to Reproductive Freedom articulates the struggle that young feminists face by describing the political moment of the *Casey* decision. She says that abortion rights mobilizations became "more of a stand off than a victory. We won because we did not lose, but no gains were made" (Joyner, 207). In sharp contrast to older feminists efforts to

forge abortion provisions, the best accomplishments that young feminists could provide was to force a stalemate between anti- and pro- choice strategies.

Equally important factors in disrupting feminist politics were calls from women of color to acknowledge the reproductive abuses they experienced and the outright ignorance with which feminists responded to their range of mothering strategies. During the late 1970's and early 1980's, according to Evelyn Nakano Glenn in Mothering, "much feminist theorizing about motherhood has failed to recognize diversity in mothering, and has projected white-middle-class women's concerns as universal." This is problematic because it assumes that "mothers and their children enjoy some degree of economic security and that women have the luxury of seeing themselves as individuals in search of personal autonomy, instead of as members of communities struggling for survival." Because of these beliefs, "white feminists have been concerned primarily about such issues as the effects of maternal isolation on mother-child relationships, all-powerful mothers as conduits for gender oppression, and the possibilities of an idealized motherhood freed from patriarchy" (Glenn, 6). This political clash has failed to be resolved in the new millennium. To many women, myself included, motherhood would be an incredibly wonderful experience if the only constraints to our mothering had to do with ideologies of gender oppression and patriarchy. The very real concerns of physical survival of children and community, dialectics of power and powerlessness in race and class construction of our society play an important role in our mothering choices and agency. Working middle-class women, historically, have been able to divert household

labor to lower-class women and women of color. Many women continue that dynamic today because they gain privileges and have less impetus to challenge a system that releases them to careers and personal pursuits outside the home (Glenn, 7). I can attest that it is incredibly difficult to find affordable and merely adequate, let alone exceptional, child care. It is quite expensive so child care choices are out of reach for most families. Women who do mothering and other domestic labor in other people's homes do so because they lack other choices. Middle-class women, who could not otherwise afford household help or live-in nannies can only do so because they pay less than minimum wage – which continue to fall far below living wages. Middle-class women who retain service from minority and lower-class women continue an oppressive dynamic. They are viewed as what Glenn calls 'mother-managers,' so that the "notion of mothering as women's responsibility is left unchallenged" because "middle-class men can keep the illusion of home as a private haven, while enjoying the services of their wives – or their wives' substitutes in maintaining that haven" (Glenn, 7). White middle-class women are enjoying the privileges of oppressing other women – even feminist white middle class women.

Yet, Glenn notes that, "mothers of all classes have not simply acquiesced to oppression, but have struggled to gain resources to nurture and preserve life. They have asserted the validity of their own knowledge and skill in the face of messages that they are inadequate mothers. For this reason, it is important to look at the way women are oppressed as mothers and yet continue assert their own standards of mothering and work

to attain means necessary to sustain their children's survival" (Glenn, 18). Viewing abortion as a viable and appropriate choice, among many, in the face of mothering decisions would be a radical change in public policy for society at large and even feminists in particular. Because employment and financial stability is such an important facet of women's mothering experiences it is important to acknowledge and understand in detail how women manage family and work. Glenn notes that even as feminists engage in the much-heated dialogues about 'mommy-track' approaches to work and family, they envision a workplace that that distinguishes mothers from other working women (Glenn, 2). While I believe this may have some positive impact for many working women, it does not change the language or ideology about minority and working poor women who leave their own children to care for other women's children – in fact, I would argue that this dialogue fails to recognize working poor or minority women altogether.

Second-wave feminists entered the workforce with other women in record-breaking numbers during the nineteen seventies and eighties. They were the first generation of women who overwhelmingly by choice or necessity worked outside the home. Though many underprivileged and minority women had been in the workforce prior to the seventies, they were not joined by their white-middle-class counterparts until education and employment possibilities were open to them. Shari Thurer states that "almost 70 percent of today's educated mothers with young children are in the labor force, most of them full time" (Thurer, 287). When the second-wave feminists entered

the workforce, they faced formidable problems "in a job market that discriminates against woman and makes no concessions to for the needs of mothers and children," many feminist mothers stumbled (Thurer, 266). They fell into the trap of 'trying to have it all' only to have their careers 'sabatoged by motherhood.' Many feminists came to be seen as ambitious, which in turn, was viewed as oppositional to the very nature of the mothering experience. The criticism mothers received seemed to be steeped in hypocrisy, given that during this very same period men where encouraged to recognize their roles as fathers and caretakers to children, despite their ambitious behavior in career ventures (Thurer, 263). It became much more difficult not to view their problems as personal failures and to analyze the societal structures that created such problems. They withdrew from the landmine of attempting to balance work and motherhood politics.

THEORY FOR ABORTION ACTIVISM

Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?

Abortion has been debated from nearly every imaginable perspective. Since the *Roe* decision that legalized abortion, "the battle has been fought on the harshly lit stage of political power, disconnected from the intimate narratives of sorrow and loss" (Mathewes-Green, 17). Yet moral perceptions about abortion do not arise in a vacuum but rather are socially constructed over time, because ultimately one's view's about fetal personhood and abortion are determined by moral beliefs, and not case law (Schroedel, 6). Attitudes about abortion involve a whole array of expansive values concerning sexual morality, the role of men and women in society, and broad life-style questions involving social and moral traditionalism. According to Frauke Schnell, "abortion can activate several and sometimes competing values within a personal value system so that abortion attitudes are not only a function of pro-life and pro-choice values, but are also based on a tug-of-war among multiple values" (Schnell, 25-26). For every unintended pregnancy, there is a woman who must decide the fate of herself and the prospective child. All of the decisions related to continuing a pregnancy or to terminate that pregnancy weigh heavily on most women. Even women who have repeat abortions tend to want to avoid abortion as a contraceptive method. A large number of women who have had repeat abortions do so because they find it difficult to access family planning services, or utilizing

contraception effectively every time proves to be difficult (Tietze, 286). According to further research done by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, "repeat abortion patients were significantly more likely to be using a contraception at the time of conception and to report that they always or most always used a contraception method." The majority of women with repeat abortions, "had no personal physician and did not receive follow-up care after their previous abortion and few women received contraceptive counseling" (Westfall, 162). This research shows that contraception failure and lack of adequate medical care are the most important reasons for women to choose abortion as a family planning option more than once. Yet each woman experiences her situation uniquely, responding to her own judgment, circumstances, and moral/ethical standards.

Over the last thirty years, the debates about abortion have become very simplified; on the one side are pro-choice arguments and on the other are pro-life arguments. These arguments have become simplified because discussion about abortion has become political. On the one side are "traditional Anglo-European principles of individualism, Christianity and self-restraint." Female anti-choice activists see issues like abortion as "threatening to the structure of the conventional family because it: "rewrites the traditional marriage contract that assures women protection and support." Furthermore, such feminist policies "are a dangerous reordering of gender roles that leaves women insecure in a menacing world" (Hardisty, 85). On the other side of the argument are feminists who believe that, "all of women's aspirations - whether for education, work or any for of self-determination - ultimately rests on their ability to

decide whether and when to have children" (Faludi, 414). In the current social and political climate abortion has become a dichotomy; like the arguments, most people's thinking has become simplified too. One is either for or against abortion. But how does this ideological stand-off help individual women? What are the ramifications of such a political dichotomy? And how do activists work to change the simplification of such important, life-changing decisions?

Activists engaged in pro-choice work have fallen prey to the oversimplification of abortion as a 'choice' issue. In part, the formation of 'choice' in relation to the abortion debates came from the legal and political work done in the late 1960's and early 1970's to expand abortion provision to all women. Nelson says "because feminists were the first to hold rallies, marches, and direct actions for abortion rights they placed the issue directly before the public... feminists consciously decided to make their demands for abortion rights attractive to the media in order to gain the attention of a general audience. This strategy succeeded in making feminist arguments for abortion rights a central aspect of the national opinion on abortion" (Nelson, 15). Of course, this work culminated in the 1973 landmark Supreme Court case, *Roe v. Wade*, but because of the language in that decision, abortion came to be regarded as a rights-based concern open to political interpretation. The Court's published decision regarding the abortion provision did not provide strong support (McFarlane, 38). The Court's determination that the right to abortion should be placed in balance with government interest in the potentiality of the fetal life at issue obscured the rights of women to make such a decision. The Court

attempted to ameliorate the confusion by structuring a trimester approach to abortion regulation, however that tactic has served to pose a challenging question about when life begins. Political backlash against abortion was swift and destructive. Prior to this, abortion had been a private matter. According to women interviewed by Kristin Luker in Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood, before the Roe decision, "abortion was illegal but not immoral..." (Luker, 108). After the Court's decision the morality of abortion came to be hotly debated in public. The debates continue today, but because of the longevity, the public discussion and the varied means of supporting or denying abortion, the debate has become basic. Women have complex logic for choosing whether or not to have children at any given time. By making the abortion debate simple, each side (pro- and anti- choice) is guilty of duplicity. There is hypocrisy on the side of anti-choice activists in claiming that abortions are "concessions to moral corruption, secularism, sexual 'deviance,' lack of responsibility, or multiculturalism threats to society" (85, Hardisty). However, that hypocrisy has "been matched by pro-choice attempts to quash the moral ambiguity around abortion with deceptive language or by ignoring the fetus" (Cannold, 131). Each side of the political question about abortion jockeys for superiority, attempting to secure the most support in any given venue. Savvy activists, who attempt to gain the support of the most people attempt to reduce the complicated and personal issues around abortion to a single phrase, the 'right to choose' – a sound-bite that is seemingly easy to understand. According to Leslie Cannold, because of this reduction, "[w]e have come to share [the pro-choice] assumption that rights are the only ethical

currency that can be used to discuss abortion, and to accept the anti-choice piece of absurdity that pregnant women are their fetuses' adversaries" (Cannold, 22). According to Eileen McDonagh in Breaking the Abortion Deadlock,

> "basing abortion rights on the notion of privacy defined by choice, rather than consent, treats abortion in terms of only one autonomous individual, making it impossible to think of pregnancy and abortion in terms of a relationship, though mounting evidence demonstrates the necessity to identify legal issues in exactly such terms. Despite the profound relational reality of pregnancy and abortion, the law, as it now stands, establishes a woman's legal right to an abortion on the same individualistic grounds of decisional autonomy that guarantee her the right to read a book without interference from the state. Switching from a principle of choice to a principle of consent, however, recognizes that pregnancy necessarily involves a relationship between private parties, even while establishing stronger grounds for women's right not only to an abortion but also to state funding" (McDonagh, 186).

Yet, according to Petchesky, 'abortion on demand' became a primary political goal for the women's movement because it addressed an important aspect of "women's issues" in its "relation to their situation as professionals or students or their involvement in other movements for radical social change" such as the civil rights and the antiwar movements.

Working towards "abortion on demand" had much to do with the advances and the setbacks of the women's movement. Noting that women's conformity to the redefined conditions of "normal life" was a reflection to their of their widening sphere of opportunities, in an era of radical changes and household economics, in education and employment while also a raising of the threshold of their basic needs for childcare responsibilities (Petchesky, 116). Women were expected to 'have it all' and the pressure to do so came about without any supports for their efforts as worker and mothers.

I agree with Marcy Wilder who states that, "the challenge for the pro-choice movement today is to reengage the many Americans who are ambivalent about abortions but believe the procedure should be safe, legal, and available." (Wilder, 87). At this point, over half of all Americans do believe that abortion should be available. (Goggin, 2) But there is much hesitation as to whether abortion should be available on demand, that is, whenever a woman wishes to seek one, under any circumstances. Ultimately, most women whom Leslie Cannold interviewed for The Abortion Myth: Feminism, Morality, and the Hard Choices Women Make did not discriminate between different types of abortions, but rather the different types of women having abortions. They were more than willing to judge one another for what they did and the way they did it. One can guess that this holds true for the greater society as well (Cannold, 85-7). "Pro- and anti-choice women have fundamentally different views about the trustworthiness of other women, their assessments of which abortions fall within and outside the perimeter of the moral circle differ. For anti-choice women, almost all abortions - except perhaps those

had by rape and incest victims and women whose lives are at stake - would fall outside the circle. For pro-choice women, most abortions would fall inside the circle," yet they "hope and expect that each woman's abortion decision will be made thoughtfully, sorrowfully, and with respect for the sacredness of pregnancy and with love for their could-be child" - that responsible women choose to kill from an ethic of care (Cannold, 134). These sociological limits as well as the ideological dichotomy about abortion, restricts creative action on the part of feminist activists. Because every woman's experience of abortion is unique, whether or not she chooses to have an abortion, the complexity of her situation is lost in the pro-/anti- dichotomy. The complex relationship of the abortion procedure for most women is not addressed in recent pro-choice demonstrations or legislation. Although pro-choice activists began to engage in a reproductive rights policy that encompassed the needs of women at different stages of their reproductive lives, this work did not address the very real moral concerns of everyday women in choosing whether or not to have an abortion. According to Leslie Cannold,

> When you are pregnant, you and the baby are a unit. A woman who is pregnant is more than a woman who is not pregnant. It's not you and the baby: the two of you are a single unit. Therefore, women consider the rectitude of their abortion decisions in terms of their impact on themselves and the fetus as a unit. (Cannold, 85-7).

Many women facing the decision whether or not to abort an unwanted pregnancy have feelings related to this ideology of interconnectedness and feel unsure about whichever decision they make. Also, regardless of one's situation, abortion is one of several competing rights, such as those of the father and the state. Even if the competing rights of the father and the state are considered less compelling in a legal sense, the woman who must live with the consequences of her decision (either to abort or not) is faced with a heavy emotional burden.

Whether reproductive rights activists like it or not, "[w]omen make up the bulk of membership in the anti-choice movement (though not the majority of its leadership)... women are often patriarchy's foot soldiers... all too aware of the sanctions awaiting those that visibly defy the system that seeks to control them, these women mistakenly believe that things will be easier for themselves and their daughters if they do as they are told and don't cause any trouble" (Cannold, 130). Additionally, anti-choice organizations have taken advantage of their "morally superior" status by creating a television campaign [that] targets women considering an abortion. The ads don't deliver a preachy message or include photos of fetal development. They focus on the woman, not the unborn child, and subtly suggest that motherhood is an empowering choice. This focus on women complements the latest trend in crisis-pregnancy counseling where anti-choice advocates claim that they "try to minister to women rather than manipulate them," says Romy Crawford, development director for Pregnancy Services of Greater Lansing, "The message is: Respect the mother, don't abort the woman in her time of trouble." Rather

than intimidate unsuspecting pregnant women with provocative photos or fire-and-brimstone lectures, counselors try not to appear "judgmental." "We cry with them when their pregnancy tests come out positive," says staffer Sheryl Patry. Understanding the ambivalence of abortion at the personal level as well as the socio-political is important in challenging the successes of the anti-choice movement. Feminists need to utilize the complex moral issues surrounding abortion to facilitate breaking the abortion deadlock. According to Janet Jakobsen, "Complexity is necessary to the story of relations between . . . movements. Social movements are not working in a completely open social field, but are working in and between norms and materializations that both empower and constrain activism." (Jakobsen, 64 & 149). The present-day reproductive rights movement must place complexity at the center of its analysis about women's lives, recognizing that diversity can be the source of, rather than a threat to, activism and democracy related to abortion or reproductive rights politics. Even Frederica Mathewes-Greene who is an articulate anti-choice activist admits that "the middle appears to be cornered by the two sides' rhetoric into simultaneously agreeing that abortion is child-murder and wishing it to remain legal" (Mathewes-Green, 174). It is young women swayed by the 'thoughtfulness' of crisis pregnancy counseling and the message of equality feminism[13],

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[13] Equality Feminists believe that discrimination against women still exists in North American and European nations, as well as worldwide. How much discrimination and whether it is a problem is a matter of dispute. There are many ideas within the movement regarding the severity of current problems, what the problems are, and how to confront them. Dissidents within the movement identify themselves as feminist but accuse the movement of anti-male prejudices. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.(2004)

which I believe is ultimately anti-feminist, that the reproductive rights movement has failed to reach and desperately needs in order to challenge the deadlock on political opinion about abortion in the US today. Reproductive rights activists have to garner some measure of security for the women (and their daughters) who might otherwise choose to stay in the anti-choice movement.

Additionally, acknowledging the accomplishments of the second-wave feminist movement and the inventiveness of third-wave feminists will go a long way toward creating a long-lasting and successful reproductive rights / feminist movement. Marlene Gerber-Fried points out that age, race, and class issues have undermined the continuity of feminism. She reminds us that "the mainstream and predominantly white middle-class pro-choice movement has always responded weakly, if at all, to restrictions [on] abortion rights. It was only in the 1980's, when *all* women's rights were threatened that hundreds of thousands of women leaped to defend abortion clinics [from violence] and *Roe v Wade* (Fried , 211 *emphasis original*). All kinds of feminists came together during the eighties in response to the political backlash against abortion rights. Regrettably, the coalition of feminists who came together broke down under the pressure of single issue politics. By the 1990's that formidable coalition became several splinter groups addressing single aspects of feminist policy. In order to resolve the sharp division within the feminist movement about how to respond to the anti-choice movement, all feminists need to exploit the multiplicity of moral viewpoints in our society so that we can successfully allow individuals to make difficult and differing decisions regarding reproduction.

Clash Between Feminism and Motherhood

The fact is that the anti-choice movement has done a fairly good job of addressing the needs of young women "in trouble." Adoption services and free prenatal care has sought to address the needs of young women who find themselves pregnant and unable/unwilling to raise their children. In contrast the reproductive rights movement has not always been willing to address all the aspects of an unwanted pregnancy, which incidentally also discourages some women from taking part in the movement. According to Marcy Wilder in the Abortion Wars, "not until the early 1990's did pro-choice activists began to fight *more aggressively* for policies," to "reduce unintended pregnancies, promote comprehensive sexuality education, encourage contraceptive research and development, and increase the availability of prenatal care and early childhood health services" (Wilder, 87 emphasis mine). It is these services and similar activist projects that contribute to an increase in the social reputation of the reproductive rights movement. These efforts take time to work, and the reproductive rights movement has become occupied with providing such services too late to create an immediate impact. Nevertheless these activities do provide strong support for pro-choice efforts and should be continued.

Because the reproductive rights movement is seen as ignoring the needs of at least half of all American women, a rethinking of public perception is crucial.

> "Attacks on sexual deviance and feminism historically have been a part of right-wing, or backlash movements. Modern authoritarian movements have not failed to link a rigid patriarchal family structure, including repression of sex outside heterosexual marriage and procreation, with the values of militarism, national and racial chauvinism, and sacred private property; and as feminists know, they are perversely correct. It is not merely that there are 'cultural' aspects to right-wing politics but that those aspects are connected to the 'economic' and 'political' aspects in a deep-lying and complicated ways" (Petchesky, 243).

Addressing the needs of women where they are in the social and political hierarchy is a crucial method to garnering far reaching political support. The US right-wing movement (of which pro-life activism has been a strong force) has been able to provide continued support to women. They work in contrast to the feminist movement and have a strong influence on the political landscape of this country. Even though, "About half of all U.S. women will have an abortion at some point in their lives. Abortion rates among young, unmarried, poor and minority women are the highest, while rates among those of religious, racial and ethnic groups thought to oppose abortion are high as well" (Alan Guttmacher Institute). Yet in many states, the crisis pregnancy centers outnumber legitimate abortion providers by ten to one. Anti-abortion groups boast that crisis pregnancy centers in the U.S. now exceed 4,000. Their ability to lure women into their

facilities is due, in part, to their stealth tactics. They promote themselves as women's health clinics that offer the full range of reproductive health services from pregnancy testing to information on abortion, when in fact they are part of the particularly anti-choice covenant (Center for Reproductive Rights). The anti-choice movement has been able to shore up a political base because they meet women in crisis and offer a (somewhat) holistic environment for solving the factors that led to the unwanted pregnancy. Receiving support during a personal catastrophe is a very powerful determinant of loyalty. Women who felt betrayed by crisis pregnancy center's tactics are not loyal to them. Dissimilarly, Frauke Schnell argues that women seems to "subscribe to a more complex view on the issue that is based on equally important values that can come easily into conflict. The result of subscribing to equally important and conflicting values is a decrease in the strength with which abortion attitudes are held. The weaker the attitude, the less likely were the respondents to engage in any kind of political behavior related to abortion" (Schnell, 38). Women who think that the staff of crisis pregnancy centers care about them are converted to a more softened stance about the strategies of the anti-choice movement – which can include even violent tactics.

In order to capitalize on its successes, the pro-choice movement needs to change its structure of organizing and advocating reproductive choices. Adequate medical care is needed for all women. Until every woman, regardless of race or economic circumstance can afford high quality healthcare, few changes in contraceptive and abortion delivery will take place. Unfortunately, according to Mark Graber in Rethinking Abortion, factors

that can hinder the involvement of minority groups' participation in reproductive rights work are that "...the persons who most strongly favor legal abortion are the traditional winners of American politics: males, whites, and persons of high socio-economic status..." (Graber, 142). Often, minority groups are at the lower rung of socio-political and economic status in this country, and yet the Alan Guttmacher Institute's research states that minorities utilize abortion and reproductive medical care services in what appears to be greater numbers. We must recognize that while the numbers for abortion services may be telling, they may also be misleading. Marc Graber asserts that, "the central strategic problem abortion rights activists actually face is how to convince most affluent Americans to use their resources to further pro-choice preferences" for all women, regardless of minority status or economic status (Graber, 142). White women, in general, have more opportunity to avoid publicly documented abortion and reproductive services because they have private health insurance that may obfuscate the statistics about abortion procedures. This leads to a difference in the quality and availability of services for most Americans.

Over the last thirty years, the right-wing has been able consistently to provide services to women in need and can claim some moral high ground in regard to their rigid stance in the abortion debate. Such backlash movements require an aggressively moralistic stance and will find it somewhere. The rightist movement has provided an abortion-related backlash by directly opposing the tenets of feminism that foster individualism and self-determination. The right-wing movement has been able to limit

the debate about abortion to one that suits their political needs at the expense of feminist projects. And yet we note the feminist movement has retained at least half of the popular support of abortion rights. Abortion still remains an important option for women with an unwanted pregnancy, so "there needs to be invoked some system of good and evil which transcends the political or social process..." (Petchesky, 244). The women who are not attracted to a feminism that encourages an individual self, separate from others may feel more at ease working on women's issues in a goal-specific group that fosters and ideologically supports their communities. Because "working in feminist ethical paradigms does not necessarily mean that such work must be done only within feminist groups" (Jakobsen, 121). Working outside of strictly feminist groups and thinking outside of strictly abortion rights paradigms might enable women to come together across social or economic barriers

Feminist groups could benefit from a new approach to addressing women's issues. Because, as Jakobsen states, "counter-public movements are contained within the public by not extending beyond or effectively challenging its frame, and contained as units of difference separated from each other" (Jakobsen, 128). Feminist organizations have become contained and therefore cannot reach women who see themselves as different from the perceived archetypal feminist – independent, decisive and strong. In order to reach women who feel as though they need support, feminists need to extend beyond what has been viewed as traditionally feminist work and engage in work that addresses traditionally "feminine" issues as well. So that "sharing the language of

motherhood means that pro- and anti- choicers are no longer talking apple (the right to control their bodies) and oranges (the right to life of fetuses)." Reasoning that, "ultimately what women are really arguing about is motherhood and the lack of social and political resources to make that responsibility among the many others women have, easier for all women" (Cannold, 131). Addressing the responsibilities of women in their individuality and in their roles as (potential) mothers is important for breaking the political deadlock about abortion in the US.

As Jakobsen reminds us, "social movements have been unable to form alliances effectively not just because they face such economies of social differentiation in relation to an economy of the same, but also because these economies are moral economies. Social differentiation is accomplished not simply by producing persons, groups, and communities as different from one another, but by doing so through the power "regulatory ideals" (Jakobsen, 98). The key for a reproductive rights political movement that serves the needs of most women (as no agenda can be perfectly suited to all) is to challenge the moral economy and the economy of the same to which Jakobsen refers. To challenge such economies is not just to disrupt the 'regulatory ideals' that manifest in controlling behaviors of individuals and thereby enforcing behavioral norms within society, but to disrupt the ideology of the norm itself. What worked for religious/doctors/women's groups in the 1960's and 70's is this very disruption. Women who were seen only as mothers or mothers-to-be challenged that ideology as a norm and came to create some successes for all women to be able to choose (in some measure) the

kind of life they wanted to have. Unfortunately, even within the liberated feminist paradigm, women were still obligated to choose from a limited set of norms. One was obligated to choose from being either a career-oriented individualist or a mother. In the 1980's the political rhetoric about women's roles was even more stressed because women were expected to 'have it all,' to be mothers and successful career women. For those women who felt overwhelmed and that they needed support in their responsibilities of working and mothering, conservative (rightist) and traditional models for family life seemed appealing.

While feminists paid lip service to the idea that "every mother is a working mother," most women in the US were expected to work both in and out of the home. According to the a study published in the The Guardian, "Working mothers spend more hours a week on housework than on their full-time job, a survey revealed yesterday. Full-time working mothers spend 56 hours a week on housework, part-time working mothers do 68 hours and housewives put in 76 hours, while fathers do only 31" (Guardian Unlimited). This economic dynamic has always been true for economically or socially disadvantaged women. Women in the workforce had always been expected to provide moral integrity within the home as well as help finance the economic integrity of the household. In the 1980's and 90's middle-class white women were newly inducted into the dual role of homemaker and worker. These mostly white women were suddenly thrust into the same overworked and under-appreciated status as lower-class, often minority, women had been dealing with for many years (Cook, 84). Though their jobs

could afford middle-class women with nice cars and gated communities, many of these women have been bridling under such difficult expectations about balancing work and home life.

There is a real danger for working women who have children to become part of the callous middle constituency in the American political landscape. Thurer writes in The Myths of Motherhood that, "today's steady rise of divorce and a recessionary economy (mandating a dual paycheck for a middle-class lifestyle) collide with our failure to get flexible work hours, [paid] maternity and paternity leaves, federal financial support, uniform standards for daycare, reliable help from men, and finally, a rational child-care ideology that is sensitive to both children and mothers" leaves many women "childless or mixed up" (Thurer, 288). Additionally Rickie Solinger, in Beggars and Choosers, notes that the resourcelessness and 'dependency'... mothers experience raises the question of whether all women "lack the independence required of citizens" (Solinger, 166). Solinger also observes findings that reveal " among poor mothers, the ones who fared best as parents where the ones with more resources, such as higher levels of literacy, more years of schooling, and greater social supports" (Solinger, 216). More reproductive rights activists in the feminist movement might utilize Solinger's observation to expand their policies and political strategies to include education and social supports to meet the needs of more women.

Activist Naomi Wolf, revealed her own frustrations with this balance of career and motherhood stating, "as new mothers and mothers-to-be, our feminism was

undergoing a kind of triage; whatever was inessential got hauled overboard so as not to rock the fragile, all-important boat of the new family. I was still a feminist. But I understood, at this point in my life, it could be dangerous to be one" (Wolf, 124). The danger in juggling the ideology of motherhood and the ideology of feminism is that to do so is to be at odds with oneself and the world. The idea of individual exploits and a singular identity is impossible under the constraints of motherhood that *requires* a kind of selflessness and duality. In her work, Wolf further acknowledges that she "came to feel that it was brutal to be content with a feminism that was compelled to fit into [a] traditionally masculine definition of accomplishment." She said that, "True revolution would come about only when we demanded that the world conform to our needs as women, and that it deal fairly with the fact that we are weakened as well as strengthened by childbirth. Stopping short of that meant that no revolution deep enough had been achieved" (Wolf, 121). This maternal sense of responsibility and community is new to feminists like Wolf who had been able to put off childbirth until it suited their needs. But Wolf's acknowledgement about the difficulty in balancing work and home gets at the heart of many women's efforts to integrate the ideals of feminism with their everyday struggles.

The Long View

Heaped with the frustrations of managing their careers and attending to family responsibilities, many women have nothing left over to give to the feminist movement. Like Wolf, they experience changing life-circumstances in becoming mothers that equate to changing priorities. Furthermore, it is much more difficult to participate in activist projects when there is no overarching structure in place to continue that work while managing childcare concerns and familial responsibilities. There are few resources for mothers and unfortunately, "pro-choice commitments do not significantly help (or harm) most [political] candidates because only a small minority of the public sees abortion as one of its central concerns" (Graber, 138). Feminists have convinced themselves that they are "battling for the victims of American society against their powerful oppressors. Additionally, "proponents of legal abortion see their main strategic problems as first identifying the institution most likely to favor the politically disadvantaged and then obtaining the resources necessary to mobilize women, the poor and racial minorities into a pro-choice majority coalition" (Graber, 142). But according to Mark Graber in Rethinking Abortion, when women, poor persons, and persons of color are mobilized to political action, they are more likely to support restrictions on abortion rather than abortion on demand. More women than men oppose abortion and persons of color have not been very concerned up this point with the status of *Roe* (Graber, 136-7). Ultimately, reproductive rights activists must recognize themselves to be "disproportionately drawn

from the ranks of the well-educated, well-paid, and elite professionals. Abortion, then, is part of a larger cultural conflict between certain strata of the upper-middle-class – the highly educated professionals, scientists, and intellectuals – and the mass of Americans who compose the working and lower-middle-classes" (Graber, 144). So this leaves proponents of legal abortion stuck with a limited and unsatisfactory set of strategic alternatives for realizing reproductive choice. "They cannot rely solely on litigation, because abandoning the political process to pro-life forces will eventually result in a federal judiciary hostile to *Roe*" (Graber, 141).

A feminist praxis toward abortion must be complex regarding reproductive rights activism. Because "while the reproductive rights law needs to be very specific (black and white) regarding the rights and privileges it conveys, the feminist movement does not need to be so rigid" (Wolf, 57). Birth control clinics can and should work hand in hand with adoption agencies and birth centers to provide holistic reproductive care for women. Simply reacting to anti-abortion allegations, timidly blurring the edges of arguments in the hope of winning allies in the 'middle-ground' of the abortion debate is a dangerous game (Hardy, 185). Because, according to Janet Jakobsen, "the question of norms is central to the problem. If the [feminist movement] cannot work with diverse and complex norms, then the uses of norms to materialize simultaneously the normal and the normative will produce this type of dominative social relations within the moral economy of the same" (Jakobsen, 137). Normalizing abortion as an alternative among a host of reproductive options challenges the current 'norm' of abortion as separate from other

family planning choices. The feminist movement has maintained abortion as a single issue (rather than part of a lot of options), which has, in effect, eliminated the issue of choice - even though it is called a choice movement. It has alienated the very women who are so critical to the success of abortion rights (Beahr, 57).

Holistic centers of reproductive care can also be a site where there is "supportive counseling that offers a great deal in helping women clarify conflicting relationships and responsibilities, and the opportunity to reassess what really counts can be energizing and empowering; so that the crisis can be put to good ends and is not invariably a tragedy" (Hardy, 164). These entities, adoption and abortion agencies, which seemingly work at odds with each other are really providers offering services to address the needs of reproductive aged women. While "many defenders of abortion present it in negative terms and never talk about how, for some women, the decision to have an abortion is a tremendously positive experience, even if an unplanned pregnancy is not a prospect to be welcomed in itself. An unplanned pregnancy confronts a woman with a decision between alternative futures and for some women their crisis is the first time in their lives that they have weighted up their lives and their priorities" (Hadley, 164). Women, in a supportive atmosphere, can come to see that to be a mother is "to defy self-interest, to the level of your very bones, your very reflexes." The services and care women need at all reproductive junctures in their lives should be an important component of reproductive rights advocacy (Wolf, 57). Providing a variety of care-oriented services can help move the feminist movement from being viewed as a strictly individualist–centered faction

toward an all-encompassing movement that addresses the needs of women from disparate backgrounds. "Although abortion is under siege from a constituency claiming a monopoly on morality – defenders of the fetus, family values, and so on – it does not serve women well to defend abortion by excoriating it as 'a necessary evil,' the resort of the desperate, the unlucky and the merely 'foolish' never a legitimate method of birth control" (Hardy, 164-65). The feminist movement, in meeting the needs of all women, could expose the rightist 'moral majority' as being anti-woman in nature. At the heart of the 'moral majority's' actions, the traditional ideology of women as homemaker and support to men still reigns. The feminist movement could usurp the right by providing a variety of services for women in care of herself, and her children, if she has any.

By ensuring holistic reproductive care to all women, the feminist movement might undermine the successes of the conservative right and an "alternative (and perhaps ultimately more 'effective') strategy is to rework [the socially deviant] movements so that they are constituted in alliance with and among the radical aspects of civil rights struggles and other movements for social justice. This alternative implies a shift in movement agendas from issues focused on reiterating [socially deviant] as the general public to issues which are constituted primarily in alliance (in other words where alliance precedes or guides the issue)" (Jakobsen, 139). It is imperative to the success of any reproductive rights policy that the ignored wrongs of women globally are addressed. Important issues such as forced sterilization, sex-selective abortions or forced abortions are among the pressures women continue to experience around the world and we know about only

because "black women criticized white women second wave feminists for failing to make" these issues "central alongside their campaigns for legal birth control and abortion (Nelson, 73). Inversely, the right *not* to choose an abortion is equally important for garnering international support of an abortion-friendly feminist movement. Reproductive rights activists must address the idea that "safe and accessible abortion needed to accompany a total health program that allowed women to have all the children they wanted" (Nelson, 129). Because the feminist movement has lost sight of the fact that the impetus behind much of the anti-abortion movement is the bolstering ideology of motherhood itself, it then is imperative that the feminist movement also supports the choices of all kinds of women to be mothers. The feminist movement must work toward addressing all of the reproductive needs of women. Only then will it be able combat the 'awfulness' socially ascribed to abortion as a necessary means of fertility control.

The pro-choice movement has to come to terms with their own successes in creating a single-issue association regarding abortion. Because abortion has been seen as a single-issue the role of conflicting values for individuals has to be taken into account. "Thinking about complex policy choices such as abortion, involves conflicting values and can be an extremely difficult task for the [individual] decision maker so that finally, the experience of conflicting values results in a decrease in the strength with which the abortion attitudes are held" (Schnell, 37-8). Taking Schnell's assertion to the socio/political level reveals why abortion policy is so strongly deadlocked. The mass public does not always share the reproductive ideology offered by extreme anti- or pro-

choice activists. The majority of people don't want to get involved in the politics of abortion because they are conflicted about it. This is a severe limitation that is seemingly ignored by the radical extremes of the abortion movement. The feminist movement must recognize this limitation and begin addressing the needs of all women through a woman-centered reproductive-health/childcare rights public policy.

Despite the efforts of feminist groups to support and expand abortion rights "mobilization by women has shown independent impact upon the enactment of policies supportive of equal rights for women. States supporting feminist policies today did so in the 1970's. Conversely states that enacted abortion restrictions in the 1970's have fewer women" in powerful positions to propose and support liberal abortion policies (Hansen, 242-3). Without the political activism efforts of more women, it seems that little will change in public policy for abortion rights. The feminist movement has to become better suited to the needs of all women, who make all kinds of choices. Without a broader support-base, abortion policies are likely to become more limited as some states utilize the powers given them by *Webster/Casey* to restrict abortion access as much as possible. "Younger whites' support for elective abortion has waned in recent years... because young people have grown so accustomed to the availability of legal abortion that they have taken it for granted; they do not perceive a credible threat to abortion" (Groggin, 286). Because people my age and younger have not experienced a world where public policy refuses the right to abortion, they are more willing to accept restrictions to abortion policy without complaint. Reaching these young people as their reproductive

needs become more pressing concerns for them, offering a women-positive space for a variety of reproductive choices, from adoption to abortion is one important means of gaining their political support and guiding future political activism.

Abortion-rights-feminists have been short-sighted in their political aims. The division between younger and older feminists within the movement has deterred progress that could have been made shoring up abortion rights. Now it is clear that "appeals to absolute, core values, have difficulty attracting and mobilizing those members of the public [the majority] who hold more ambivalent position, that is, who prefer neither abortion on demand nor a return to criminalization, but are willing to accept some sort of restrictiveness" (Groggin, 288). Reproductive rights advocates need to strengthen their positions while abortion rights advocates need to expand their work toward other reproductive choices, offering a variety of services in women's health clinics. Pro-choice advocates do not reverse religious and moral arguments put forth by pro-life advocates. Yet, there was a backlash that followed the *Webster*[14] decision and Schnell argues that,

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[14] ***Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*** (492 U.S. 490) 1989.
Nature of Case: Challenge to Missouri's 1986 Act: (a) declaring that life begins at conception; (b) forbidding the use of public funds for the purpose of counseling a woman to have an abortion not necessary to save her life; (c) forbidding the use of public facilities for abortions not necessary to save a woman's life; and (d) requiring physicians to perform tests to determine viability of fetuses after 20 weeks gestational age.
Holding: (a) the court allowed the declaration of when life begins to go into effect because five justices agreed that there was insufficient evidence that it would be used to restrict protected activities such as choices of contraception or abortion. Should the declaration be used to justify such restrictions in the future, the affected parties could challenge the restrictions at that time; (b) the court unanimously declined to address the constitutionality of the public funds provision. The court accepted Missouri's

the continued "success of pro-choice groups will depend on their ability to mobilize those members of the public who hold ambivalent attitudes on the issue of abortion" (Schnell, 40). The means of attracting new advocates to the pro-choice camp is to form effective alliances despite some social differentiation on the issue of abortion in order to create a more powerful opposition against abortion restrictions.

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representation that this provision was not directed at the conduct of any physician or health care provider, private or public, but solely at those persons responsible for expending public funds, and that the provision would not restrict publicly employed health care professionals from providing full information about abortion to their clients; (c) the court upheld the provision that barred the use of public facilities. It ruled that the state may implement a policy favoring childbirth over abortion by allocations of public resources such as hospitals and medical staff; and (d) the court upheld the provision requiring viability tests by interpreting it not to require tests that would be "imprudent" or "careless" to perform. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2004)

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