

VOL. 19, NO. 6

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RADICAL AMERICA

TECHNOLOGY: **The Tarnished Promise**

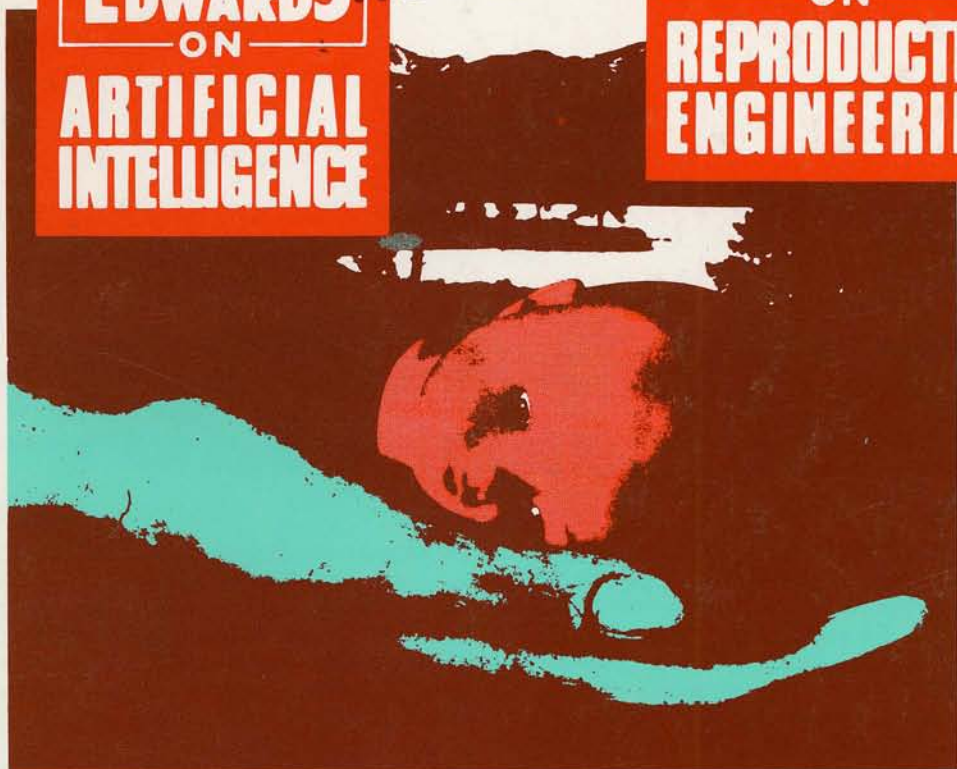
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PAUL EDWARDS
ON
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

RITA ARDITTI
ON
REPRODUCTIVE ENGINEERING



REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ACTIVISM

RENOUNCING THE SIXTIES

HOLLYWOOD'S NEW RED SCARE

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RADICAL AMERICA

VOL. 19, NO. 6

1985

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INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of popular magazines about computers and “hi-tech,” and the central role of robotics in movies, comic books, and television point to the rapidly changing place of science and technology in mass culture and the popular imagination. The youth cultures reflect this transformation: the rigid postures in pogo and robot dancing; the rapid, driven beat of the music; the “unnaturalness” of punk style. Performers like Laurie Anderson who become electronic beings on stage comment on the changing boundaries between people and machines. The articles we are presenting in this issue begin an analysis of this transformed techno-landscape which Left politics must address.

In the past, *Radical America* has discussed the development of technology as it affected the labor process—the impact on the character of work and on the individual and collective worker.¹ The traditional left assumption that technology is neutral, available equally for humane or repressive purposes came into question; rather analysts revealed that the technology itself embodied a particular division of labor tied to capitalist development and capitalist goals. A shift was marked from overt repression of unions to programming decision-making into the technology. The question of democracy in the workplace thereby changed form. The disassembly of the work process and the export of its segments all over

the world marks a further fragmentation. At stake is the definition of work and whether the labor movement can mobilize against management's hi-tech strategies for labor control. For management, the fantasy is to eliminate dependence on workers—the variable and uncontrollable aspect of production.

Paul Edwards in "Border Wars" addresses and alerts us to a qualitative leap in the elaboration of this fantasy. Today the drive is to create computer programs and technology that allow machines to "reason," hear, see and command. As scientists seek a technology that can artificially replicate "human intelligence," they envision robots that can evaluate information and thus not only take but *give* orders.

Fifth generation computers cannot be evaluated simply in terms of their impact on discreet arenas of social life, the workplace, or even the battlefield. Instead, Edwards is arguing, they signal a deeper social and cultural transformation, fundamentally altering the possibilities of exchange between humans and machines. "Our machines are alive; we become inert."² The imagination which identifies this scientific enterprise is grim. It reflects the existing priorities of our society: economic and military superiority.

For the military, in the post-Vietnam era, the fantasy is a war without soldiers—an automated battlefield. Today the line between reality and science fiction is hard to draw. Edwards presents the specter of naval commanders arguing strategy with battle management computers.

Artificial intelligence, the cutting edge of computer development, makes stark the way in which science has always been political at its core. In the effort to embody "intelligence" in technology, scientists/engineers mirror their own thought processes. What they encode, Edwards proposes, is not "human intelligence" but the rules guiding western, male-defined rationality. As feminist scientists have dramatically argued, politics enters science not when it leaves the laboratory, not in its applications, but in its very methods and conceptual frameworks. In particular the grounding claim of western science, objectivity (i.e. a value free, disinterested, impersonal process of understanding), is revealed as a masculine construc-

tion. The robots of the "fifth generation" turn out to be gendered; the fantasy they encode is a world without women (as subjects).

The shifting boundaries between human and machine, civilian and military, and man and woman, are being reconstructed by the technological/scientific project. This change is not addressed by harkening back to nature, wholeness, or innocence before "the fall."³ And yet, it is difficult to avoid invoking just such standpoints—e.g., the craft worker, pre-industrial community—in projecting alternatives to the fragmentation that is the hallmark of the current rationality. Artificial intelligence represents one boundary shift in the interplay of society and nature. Reproductive technology represents another. Here the contest is over the relationship between biology, reproduction, and motherhood.

Within the feminist counter-claim, "Biology is not destiny," lies the struggle for reproductive rights and the re-definition of the role of motherhood in society. In contrast, the feminist slogan, "Women have the right to control their own bodies," has been complicated by the intervention of reproductive technologies since biological science now works to separate the egg and the embryo from women's bodies. In this issue, articles by Rita Arditti and Linda Gordon consider the implications for feminists on two related fronts: the impact of reproductive technologies and the historical roots of the reproductive rights movement whose achievements are now every day under attack.

Rita Arditti, a feminist biologist, describes and confronts the daunting array of reproductive technologies now available and being developed. Daunting, because technological control and medicalization has kept the exact nature of these procedures from wide view. In this instance, technological "progress" seems to separate not only reproduction from sexuality, but reproduction from women's bodies. Is it a feminist utopia or a eugenics nightmare? Artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, embryo transfer, amniocentesis, ectogenesis: Arditti asks the overarching question, "Whose Brave New World is this?" Her straightforward summaries of the technologies also contain an important critique of the disturbing political and social currents underpinning their control

and direction.

Arditti recognizes the liberatory potential of some technologies—such as artificial insemination—for women to determine when and how they become pregnant. At the same time, she emphasizes that economic status, sexuality, and lifestyle legislate women's access to these procedures. Sex selection and surrogate motherhood reinforce repressive cultural norms. These offshoots of reproductive technology enter and heighten a global culture which prefers boys over girls, believes that disabilities preclude a good life, institutes the racist notion that Third World women are good at *bearing* children but that white women should raise them.

Indeed, technology is embedded in the structures of power—medical, legislative, economic—which control our bodies. In turn, reproductive technology surgically fragments the female body in order to control it, and, as a technology of social control *par excellence*, it reinforces the definition of womanhood as motherhood. Within these terms, “true” motherhood is a biological and/or genetic state of being, rather than a social one.

Reproductive rights, historically, hinges on the social, political, and economic definition of motherhood as *choice*. We are printing a speech given by our Associate Editor, Linda Gordon, to a Planned Parenthood event which marked the anniversary of the legalization of birth control. As the pro-choice movement gears up to resist the anticipated legislative move to repeal abortion rights, the question of the tactics and vision of the movement is important. The Right has linked the scientific capacity to separate the embryo from the woman's body to the legal claim for “fetal rights”—directly challenging a woman's right to choose. The liberal defense against the Right-wing “abortion, a personal choice” obscures the radical vision of women's freedom that inspired the struggle for reproductive rights. For both 19th century feminist and Second Wave feminists, reproductive rights included not only birth control, but day care and alternative family arrangements as well. Gordon makes the case that a radical vision of choice is necessary to the survival of any reproductive rights movement.

As a social movement, the confining struggle for the control of reproduction reverses the

current technological design which directs women to reproduce at any cost, within the terms of dominant culture. In contrast to Arditti's analysis, Gordon provocatively argues that contraception, as the control of reproduction, has a eugenic impulse that can be historically separated from the eugenics of racism.

The Editors

FOOTNOTES

1. Harley Shaiken, “Numerical Control of Work: Workers and Automation in the Computer Age,” in *Radical America*, Vol. 13 #6.
2. Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” in *Socialist Review*, #80.

* * * * *

In Anthony Ashbolt's “Requiem for the Sixties?” and Jim Hoberman's “Fascist Guns in the West,” we found echoes of a number of questions that we had posed about West Germany in our last issue. Ashbolt's critique of the well-publicized defection of former New Leftists David Horowitz and Peter Collier to Ronald Reagan's last vote count presents a window onto the relationship of this country and the legacy of the 1960s. As *Radical America* prepares to enter its 20th anniversary year, it is an opening that strikes particularly close to home. For despite the fate that has befallen Horowitz and Collier (and a number of other former activists who have recently offered their public recantations¹), there are plenty of individuals, and institutions, who have emerged from that era with visions and projects intact.

As for Horowitz and Collier, their orbit for the Sixties comes not so much as a bolt out of the blue, but as another thread in a tapestry of rhetoric that runs from attempts to rewrite that era's history and transform the lessons of Vietnam, to a calculating politics of denial and, as Ashbolt terms it, “forgetting.” The latter infects not only the Right and liberal-center, but certain sections of the Left as well. As one writer recently commented,² we obviously need to take such testimony to task for its blatant falsehoods: that the Left of the 1960s was wrong in its analysis and selfish in its motives; that the Left does not criticize Communist states; and, that we all “grow out of” the

radical follies of our youth. As that writer added, "Indeed, it is difficult to think of a single cause which the broad Left promoted in the Sixties which was not resisted by those with whom Horowitz and Collier have now aligned themselves, and which has not been vindicated by events."

But our task does not lie solely in rebuttal, but also in demystification: "to cut away the mystical periodizing and deal with the issues that cut across eras, to show what is meaningful that still remains."³ It is to such a task that we will commit ourselves as we enter this anniversary year. In fact, it was useful in preparing Ashbolt's article, to return to back issues of *Ramparts* for a sense of the period when the now-Republican editors were at the helm. Both in graphics and text, the most glaring sense was of a movement publication removed from the influences of a feminism that was swelling in reaction to such "leadership." Similarly, the glorification of Third World people and events, while superficially attentive, demonstrated a none-too-subtle racism that was also to be challenged in coming years. Gay politics was barely a footnote. The transforming influences of the Civil Rights and Women's movements, in particular, passed right by the textbook radicalism of these men.

It is ironic that, in their "forgetting" of the lessons and experiences of that period, what was also lost to them was the critique offered then of their present selves.

Jim Hoberman's review of the cinematic face of America's "warnography" industry, on the other hand, provokes thoughts about this society's future—or, at least, the attempt to shape a popular consciousness of what that future will be. It is, after all, a society in which "Star Wars" has leapt from the screen onto the Pentagon's drawing board, and in which Ronnie Raygun's screen idol, "Rambo," appears headed to Central America.⁴

French documentarist Marcel Ophuls ("The Sorrow and the Pity") recently described U.S. foreign policy as "an organized campaign of cynicism." If the April 1986 events in Libya demonstrate anything, it is that this "policy" has reached new heights. Reagan's assumption that the actions of "a looney tune crackpot" are sufficient to excuse an act of war as a



Margaret Bourke-White.

"defense of Western Civilization" against "barbarians" found little protest in either media or political circles. The "outrage" of the likes of Horowitz and Collier at "Third World atrocities" and the images presented in the media, present a blatant apologia for imperialism and a rationalizing conceit to excuse U.S. terrorism.

As Hoberman's critique of the "political wish fulfillment" endemic in the current crop of American action films indicates, the battle is raging on the popular culture front as well. Ironically, it is here that the effort is also predicated on a reversal of the cultural dimensions of the Sixties legacy. The cinematic treatment of Vietnam⁶ offers but one example: from glorification, to cynicism and lesson-finding, to realism, and back to glorification. It has travelled from John Wayne, to Jane Fonda, and now to Sylvester Stallone.

Placing the films in a historical and cultural context, Hoberman enables us to examine their political sources and audience receptivity in a period when the liberal opposition, in both Hollywood and Washington, continues to retreat. In the face of rightwing lawsuits and fundamentalist-inspired censorship campaigns, any assumption we might have had that the media or entertainment industries are other than one side of a multinational, conglomerate self, is disproven. But while the film industry hides its collective head in the sand, granting Oscars to "Amadeus" and "Out of Africa" while "Rambo" and "Rocky IV" top the

money lists, we need to seriously look at these latter films, their message, and their makers. We are reprinting the Hoberman piece in that vein.

John Demeter, for the editors.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jerry Rubin and Eldridge Cleaver are perhaps two of the better known "born-again." The list grows, with even minor characters like Jeff Herf ("The New Left and its Fading Aura," in *Partisan Review*/2, 1986) able to find receptive publishers.
2. John Herouvim, in the Australian Marxist journal *Arena*: *Arena*, 74, "Crossing the Bridge: Left to Right."
3. Paul Buhle, letter to author, April 29, 1986.
4. At a press conference after receiving the "Man (sic) of the Year Award" from the Harvard University Hasty Pudding Theatrical Club, Stallone reported that in his next "Rambo," the character will "probably go somewhere in the news, maybe Central America." *Boston Herald*, Feb. 19, 1986.
5. These phrases have been used, interchangeably, by Reagan, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane.
6. The underside of the depiction of the history of the Vietnam war is the current rage of racist hysteria it is provoking. The current crop of xenophobic action films, with faceless hordes of "yellow peril" as the enemy, have provided for a "Vietnamization" of communities of recent Asian immigrants. In the Boston area alone, numerous gang attacks, harassments, and two murders of Cambodian, Vietnamese, and other immigrants have taken place. Community activists cite this incidents as having their inspiration in the racist message of the films that "Asian life is cheap."



Alternative Media.

CORRECTIONS

In Vol. 19, No. 5, we misspelled Andrei S. Markovits' name in our acknowledgements. Andrei teaches political science at Boston University and has been involved in research on the Federal Republic of Germany for over ten years. He was helpful in suggesting sources for the special section on anti-Semitism and Germany.

In our last issue, Vol. 19, No. 5, we erred in crediting the work on the interviews for "LIFE AND WORK AT EL CRUCERO: Interviews with Nicaraguan Coffee Workers." The interviews were translated and edited solely by Julia Lesage. Additionally, Julia's biography should have read:

Julia Lesage is a co-editor of JUMP CUT, a review of contemporary media. She has travelled to Nicaragua to shoot videos and has recently completed two works: "Las Nicas," on Nicaraguan women, and "Homelife," on Nicaraguan families.

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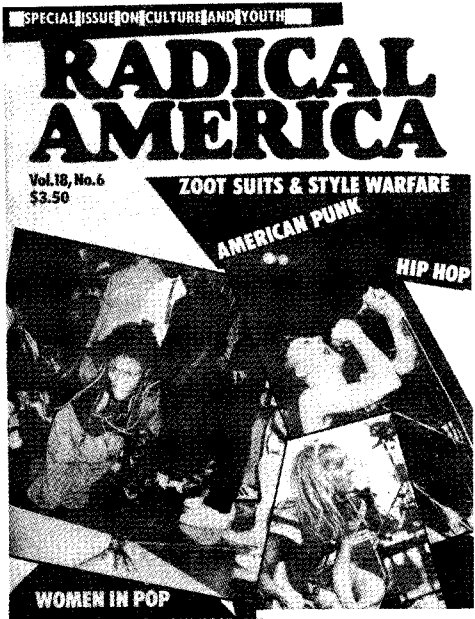
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VOL. 18, NO. 5

SPECIAL ISSUE ON WOMEN AND LABOR ACTIVISM with articles on Comparable Worth; the Yale University Strike; Trade Unionism and Feminism in Italy, Canada, and Britain.

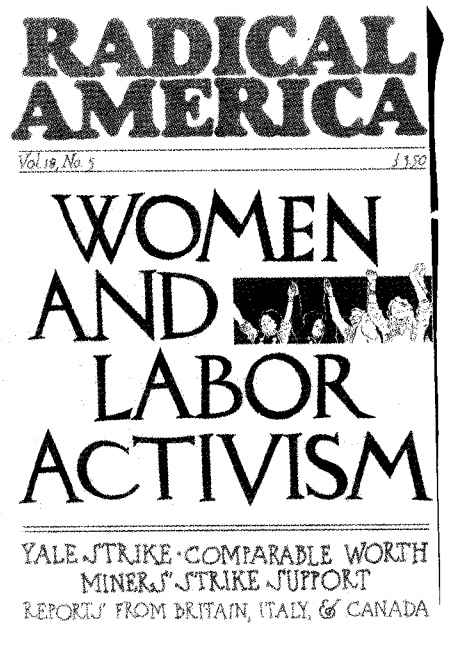


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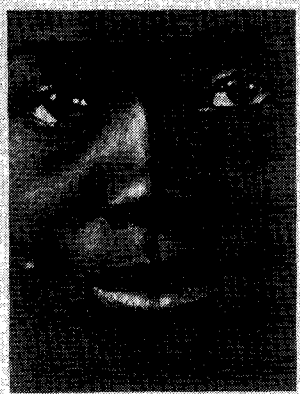


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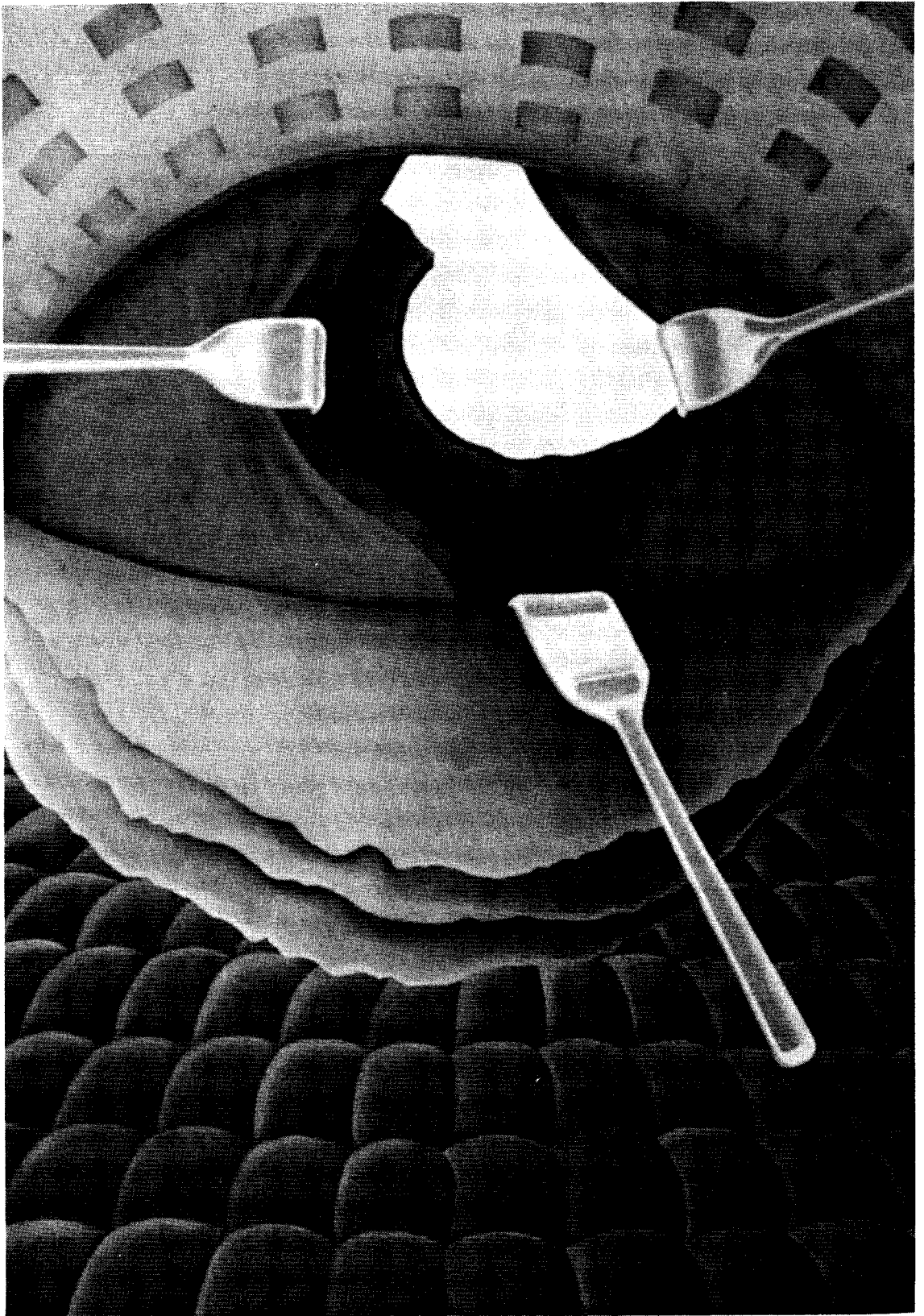
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VOICES OF BLACK FEMINISM



Opposite: *Untitled*, Cynthia Carlson, 1970.

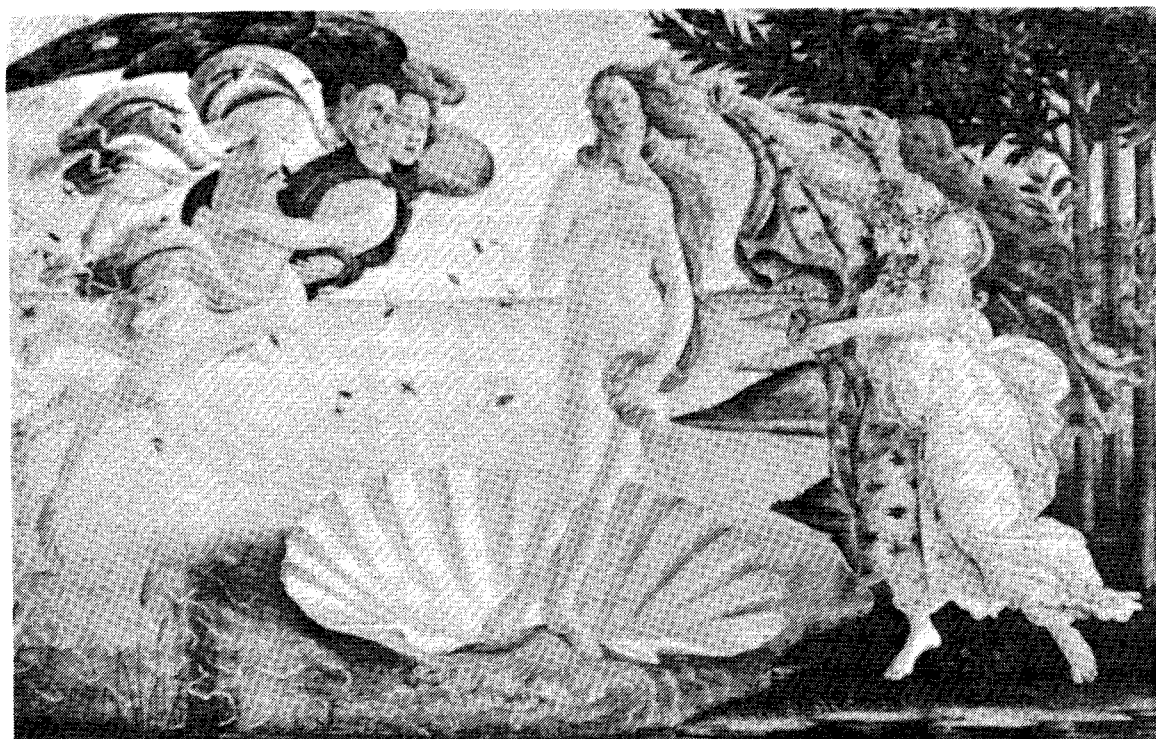
REPRODUCTIVE ENGINEERING AND THE SOCIAL CONTROL OF WOMEN

RITA ARDITTI

“In order to live a fully human life we require not only *control* of our bodies (though control is a prerequisite), we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence.”

Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*

In the last twenty years there has been an explosion of knowledge in the area of reproductive biology. New reproductive technologies have been developed that permit scientists to arrange for fertilization to occur outside the womb; to implant the embryo in a different womb from the woman who donated the egg; to freeze the embryo for storage until later implantation; to determine the sex of the embryo; to screen for genetic abnormalities during pregnancy and even to “flush” embryos out of a womb so they may be transferred into another womb. These technologies are already with us, their use quickly expanding from a few “exceptional” cases to groups of women with *no* fertility problems. Given the accelerated trend in this area of research, it is likely that in the not too distant future we will have to deal with some form of cloning, genetic engineering of embryos, sex selection and maybe ectogenesis (complete development of the fetus outside of the womb).



"The Birth of Venus," Sandro Botticelli, about 1480.

Some of these technologies allow for a separation between intercourse and reproduction. We have had sexuality without reproduction as a universal phenomenon in practically all cultures and now we are presented with the possibility of reproducing without sexual intercourse. This has been presented as a liberation for women. Other technologies are splitting the unity of the reproductive process for women into a number of discrete steps, each of them amenable to intervention and manipulation. These are new developments in the history of the human species, and they appear at a historical moment when women's reproductive rights are being undermined by conservative forces and when feminists are seriously questioning some of the basic features of patriarchal society. The "new" reproductive technologies need to be seen in the context of the general struggle for women's reproductive self-determination.

One of the basic questions confronting women is the question of the role of these technologies in the struggle for the liberation of women. Can the oppression of women in patriarchal society be solved by technology? If

biological reproduction is seen as the basic reason for women's oppression, will reproductive technologies be a step in the direction of liberation?

Some feminists, most notably Shulamith Firestone, have argued that pregnancy, for instance, is "barbaric" (Firestone, 1970). It is ugly, it hurts, and we should do away with it. She believes that reproduction outside the womb should be an option for women and that it would allow "an honest reexamination of the ancient value of motherhood." She sees ectogenesis as a way to free women from their biology which she thinks is responsible for the subjection of women.

Other feminists challenge the idea that if the "new" reproductive technologies were in the hands of women, they would have a liberating potential. They see the technologies themselves as destructive of a human relation to our bodies, nature and other people. Maria Mies (Mies, 1985) powerfully argues that exploitative and oppressive relations cannot be overcome by more sophisticated technology. She sees an ideology of control and domination embedded in the *technologies themselves*.

The control of reproduction is moving outside of the home. As Carol Brown has pointed out we are currently witnessing a shift from "private patriarchy centered on the family to public patriarchy centered on industry and government" (Brown, 1981). The "new" reproductive technologies offer the possibility of controlling the reproductive lives of women at a level previously unheard of, through the public patriarchy's support, control and regulation of the technologies. Though at first glance, some of these technologies may appear to be presenting more "options" for women, I believe that an analysis of their origin, development, use and availability indicate that they will increase patriarchal control over reproduction and in the long range diminish women's reproductive freedom.

In what follows I will briefly describe the "new" reproductive technologies and their relationship to the problem of infertility. One concern that runs through the paper is that of the eugenics² potential of these technologies. I will also discuss some possible implications for the struggle for abortion rights and control of women's bodies, particularly Third World women's bodies.

the newer technologies and some of the issues that surround its use reveal the general medical-scientific-legal thinking in the area of reproduction. Today, more than 30 years after sperm-freezing techniques have been introduced, there are only 17 sperm banks in the US. The fact is that while AIH (artificial insemination by husband) has not met much opposition, AID (artificial insemination by donor) has been seen as equivalent to adultery and a threat to male dominance within the traditional family. In fact, until 1963, AID children were considered illegitimate by courts in the US (Corea, 1985). It was ruled that the practice of AID was equivalent to adultery and as such provided grounds for divorce.

The issue of patriarchal control of women and children has contributed to the scarcity of donor sperm. Physicians have been hesitant to accept frozen sperm banks, and while in 1974, "twenty years after the birth of the first child through frozen sperm, the American Medical Association declared that use of frozen sperm 'must still be recognized as experimental,' within four years of the first test-tube baby's birth, physicians were proclaiming that *in vitro* fertilization was no longer experimental"



"The creation of Adam," Michelangelo, 1508-12.

THE TECHNOLOGIES

Artificial Insemination

Artificial Insemination (AI) is not a "new" reproductive technology (the first reported human artificial insemination took place in 1884), but it is often used in conjunction with

(Corea, 1985). In fact, *in vitro* fertilization clinics are proliferating rapidly in spite of their low success rates and the unknown long range effects of their hormonal treatments on the health of women (see later).

Clearly, if single women can get inseminated,

women will be able to create families on their own, without males. This, as Joan Kelly-Gadol has stated, "runs contrary to the most basic tenets of the patriarchal state, where women function as the property of men in the maintenance and production of new members of the social order" (Kelly-Gadol, 1976).

Eugenic thinking pervades much of the practice of AI. The American Fertility Society in their 1980 guidelines in their "Donors" section state: "Medical students and faculty, hospital house staff, or graduate students in the allied health sciences are traditional donors and preferred because of their understanding the biological need of the program, accessibility and selection with regard to health and intelligence" (Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Insemination, 1980). Currently, 80 percent of physicians use medical students or hospital residents as donors all or most of the time.

Eugenic thinking affects sperm banks. For those who only want the "best," there is the Repository for Germinal Choice, founded in 1976 where sperm from Nobel Prize winners is collected. One of the sperm donors to this bank is William Shockley, a leading proponent of the idea of the genetic inferiority of blacks². The Repository has now been accepting sperm also from high-IQ, high achievement scientists who have not received the Nobel prize. Twenty children have been produced through this bank and as of October 1985, 17 more are on the way (Garelik, 1985).

Artificial insemination is, actually, a very simple procedure; it is a "low technology" that can be performed without medical intervention. In 1980, women in London organized the Feminist Self Insemination Group and produced a 50 page pamphlet discussing the process of self-insemination and the very simple techniques needed to put it in practice. By 1983, more than 1000 copies had been sold and several children had been born (Duelli Klein, 1984). However, the American Fertility Society guidelines propose a draft for legislation regarding AI with donor semen, and it recommends that AID be performed only by a licensed physician or a health practitioner under the direct supervision of a licensed physician, and that any person who does not meet

those qualifications and performs AID be subject to a fine and to a jail sentence. Single women have been denied AID by the medical profession but in the last few years feminist health clinics have begun to make AID available to heterosexual single women and to lesbians (Hornstein, 1984).

It is not surprising to learn that the public patriarchy is quickly moving to try to institutionalize AID and to maintain male dominance. In England, the Warnock commission (a commission chaired by Mary Warnock and set up in 1982 to look at the issues raised by the new reproductive technologies) released a report in 1984 making its recommendations to Parliament. Regarding AID, the report recommends that it should be made available to heterosexual couples who are unable to have children, that the sperm be obtained through a licensed physician and that use of sperm obtained in any other way be made a *criminal offense*⁴. It gives physicians the power to refuse treatment to anyone. Heterosexual single women and lesbians will be denied access to AID and it is questionable how much access minorities, poor, disabled and other women will have.

In Sweden, things have gone even further. The committee appointed by the government to investigate the need for new legislation presented its report (Barn Genom Insemination, 1983) and in March 1985 a new law based on the suggestions of this report was enacted. It allows only married or heterosexual couples living in stable relationships to receive insemination treatment. It also recommends that the importation of frozen sperm from other countries for AID purposes be prohibited. We see clearly how AID becomes a crime if women use it to enhance reproductive self-determination.

AID is also an integral part of the "surrogate mother" process. Infertile couples where the female is infertile, can obtain a child that is genetically related to the male, by using AID on a fertile woman. She is then called a "surrogate mother," which as Somer Brodribb points out is a misnomer reflecting a male perspective: "The woman who carries and labours to give birth to a baby with her own ova and from her own womb, is clearly a real mother. She is,

however, a surrogate wife to the man whose legal wife is infertile" (Brodrribb, 1984).

There are no laws currently regulating surrogate motherhood in the U.S. But there are drafts of proposed legislation, raising troublesome questions about women's reproductive rights. For example, in one draft proposed in Michigan, if the surrogate changes her mind and refuses to give up her child the judge would have a hearing. While the question is being decided the rights to the child would remain with the sperm donor. Unless the woman could demonstrate "by clear and convincing evidence" (according to whose criteria?) that her child's best interests would not be served by terminating her parental rights, the judge would enforce the contract and order the baby given to the sperm donor and his spouse (Corea, 1985).

The surrogate mother business currently pays about \$10,000 as a fee for surrogates but it is likely that this fee will come down as surrogates become more common. What will also bring down the price is the expansion of the business in the Third World: Central America and the Orient are being explored as new areas for recruitment of surrogates. As John Stehura, president of the Bionetics Foundation puts it, "Often they're (the women) looking for a survi-

val situation, something to do to pay for the rent and the food. They know how to take care of children." The plan is to provide the surrogate with travel and living expenses, and no pay (Corea, 1985).

***In vitro* fertilization (IVF)**

This is the technology that has produced the so-called "test-tube babies." This is, again, a misnomer, because the babies are not produced in the test-tube but in the body of a woman. (IVF means literally, fertilization "in glass" because the union of the egg and the sperm takes place outside the woman's body and into a flat glass dish called a petri dish. After fertilization in the petri dish, the early embryo, usually at the 8 or 16 cell stage, gets implanted in the woman's womb or stored and frozen to be used at a later date.) Developed mainly in Britain and in Australia (Edwards and Steptoe, 1980) (Wood, 1984) it is now beginning to be widely available in the United States, where as of January 1985, more than a hundred clinics were offering their services to couples wanting IVF.

Hundreds of babies have been born with this procedure, almost all in the so-called "developed" world. Up to now there is no evidence that these babies have any abnormalities, but the



You can't keep baby in a huge sterilized bottle to safeguard him against harmful germs that are in the air everywhere. But you can help protect his delicate skin with Mennen Antiseptic Baby Powder, vital because germs play a part in many common baby-skin rashes.

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ANTISEPTIC
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25c 50c

Mennen ad, Life June 21, 1943.

issue is not quite settled yet. For one thing the number is still too low for anyone to be entirely confident that the rate of abnormal children is no higher than with natural reproduction. The other reason why the issue is not settled is that no baby has been followed up to maturity. The oldest one, Louise Brown, was born in 1978, so she is now only 7 years old. This is an important concern rarely discussed in the media's presentations of IVF and it raises the issue of the right of scientists to experiment with future generations (Singer and Wells, 1984).

IVF is presented as the "technological fix" that will solve the problems of women who are infertile because of blocked oviducts. So, what does IVF involve? IVF is a sophisticated technological procedure, where women's bodies are subjected to intensive testing and highly interventionist manipulations. It involves hormonal treatments to stimulate the ovaries in order to produce several eggs (superovulation); daily ultrasound monitoring of the ovaries; an operation described as "relatively minor surgery" (Edward and Fowler, 1970) under general anesthesia where an inert gas is pumped into the abdomen to distend it and the woman's head is tilted down 20 degrees so that her intestines fall back by gravity then insertion of an instrument through 2 or 3 incisions made in the abdominal wall to retrieve the eggs (laparoscopy). After fertilization in the lab, the embryo is implanted in the uterus through the cervix and hormonal treatments are usually given in order to increase the chances of implantation. Then, if the treatment has been successful and pregnancy ensues, there usually is amniocentesis (removal of a sample of fluid surrounding the fetus), more ultrasound visualization, with the whole process often ending with a Caesarian section, to insure optimal recovery of the baby. IVF also has a higher rate than normal of ectopic pregnancies (implantation out of the womb) a condition that if not detected on time, can be fatal (Corea and Ince, 1985).

The cost of IVF ranges from \$3000 to \$8000 per attempt. The success rate claimed by the clinics is between 10-30 percent (Olson and Alexander, 1984). However, a recent investigative report reveals that some clinics claiming 25 percent success rates have not produced a single baby. The definition of "success" seems to

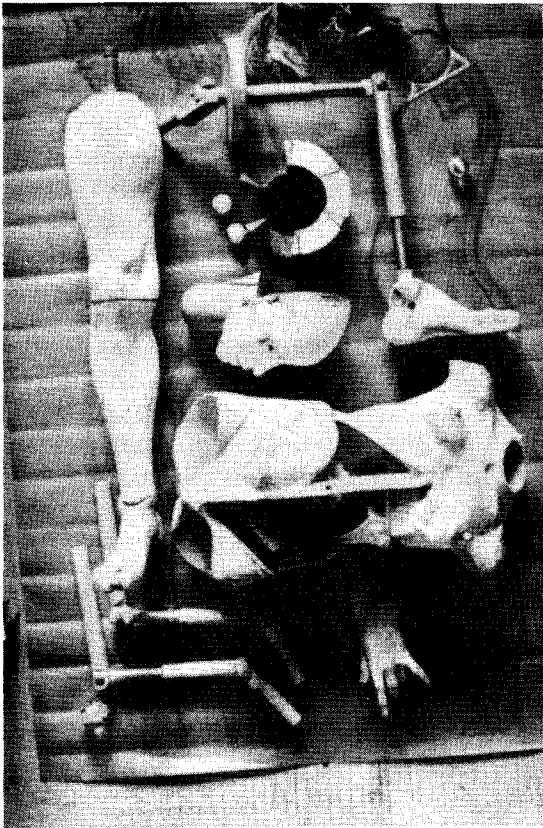
vary widely and it would appear that data is being manipulated to present a favorable image of the procedure (Corea and Ince, 1985).

Though IVF was originally presented as a technology to "help" women with blocked oviducts, its use is spreading rapidly to other categories. In fact women who are in a couple relationship with an infertile *male* are now the population where IVF is being introduced as the solution. (Less sperm is needed for IVF so men with a low-sperm count could fertilize an egg in the lab.) IVF is also being used for couples where the infertility is of unknown origin.

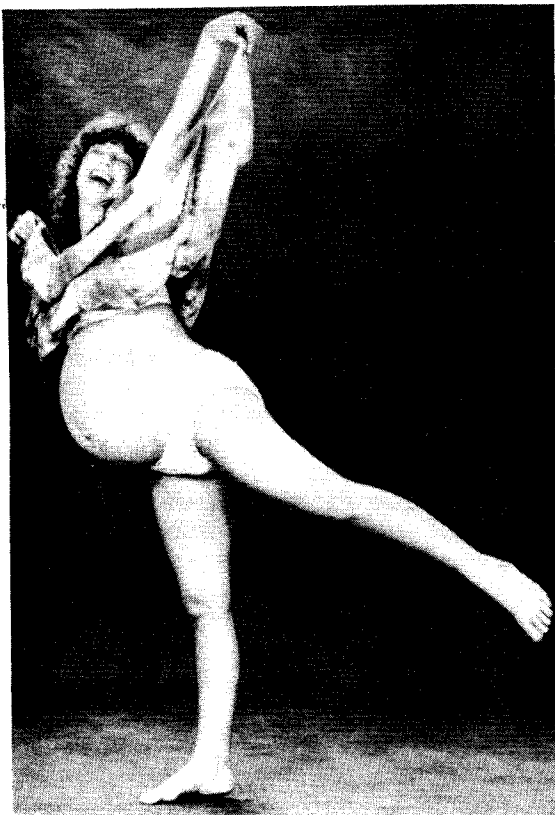
As in the case of AI, the Warnock report in Britain recommends that only heterosexual couples be eligible for IVF and that physicians should have the discretion to refuse anyone treatment. In the U.S., for the moment, no such regulations exist, but the practice of IVF seems to follow the recommendations of the Warnock report regarding its availability to couples only.

An important point to keep in mind is that IVF opens the door to genetic manipulation of the embryo. The eugenics potential of IVF is enormous, since it offers the possibility to choose eggs and to screen for genetic characteristics of the embryo. In fact, IVF with "donor" eggs (an egg from a different woman from the one who would carry the pregnancy) has already become a reality (Corea and Ince, 1985) (Wood, 1984).

In the public discussion about IVF there does not seem to be much concern about the health and well-being of the woman. The discussion around ethical and social issues has centered on the problems that the professionals face and on the status and rights of the fetus. For instance, while the Warnock report recommends that ET by lavage (see next section) should not be used at the present time because of the risks to the egg donor, the superovulation, ultrasound treatments and surgery that are part of IVF are presented as established and safe treatments and no caution is suggested about their use. This, in spite of the fact that Edwards himself (Edwards and Steptoe, 1980) refers to the hormones as "extra-powerful hormones," and says that the fertility drugs produced "devastating effects on the womb." It is interesting to



La Poupée, (1936) Hans Bellmer papier mache.



David Alexander photo, Our Bodies, Ourselves.

note that his female assistant, Jean Purdy, “felt uneasy sometimes about the powerful hormones we had to give our patients in order to control their menstrual cycle” (Edwards and Steptoe, 1980).

And in a paper on the risks of IVF in humans, the author states, “the risks to the patient are not considered because there is little evidence to suggest that commonly used surgical and other techniques applied to her are likely to cause her unacceptable side effects” (Biggers, 1983). Instead, the protection of embryos has become an issue for the political Right, and in Britain, Enoch Powell is promoting legislation to require that all embryos fertilized *in vitro* be implanted in a woman’s womb (Law, 1985). In short, IVF fits well into the medical model of pregnancy—a model that tends to view pregnancy as a pathological condition requiring complex technological, surgical and pharmacological intervention for its successful resolution.

Embryo Transfer (ET)

Embryo Transfer is a “USA made” technology where two babies have already been born through its use. In this procedure, a woman’s egg is fertilized via AI with the sperm of the husband of an infertile woman and the embryo is subsequently “flushed out” (lavage) of her body and implanted in the uterus of the infertile woman. ET is a widely used technology in the cattle industry where it is used to obtain more progeny from a valuable cow than could be obtained the natural way. Quoting John Buster, an ob/gyn who headed the first human transfer experiment in Harbor UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, California, “you’ll understand that this is done in the cattle business all the time. There’s nothing new in all this. It’s all very feasible. It’s just a case of setting it up” (Corea, 1985).

And that is what they are doing. Setting it all up. The firm for which he works, Fertility and Genetics Research (FGR) is planning to open a *for-profit* human embryo transfer chain of clinics across the country. One of the biggest problems they face is having enough human egg donors. They plan to solve this problem by having the clinics linked by a computer with a national data base so that they can have access to

successful in humans. However, work continues and it will probably be available in the not too distant future. It has been advocated as a useful technique for population control (Postgate, 1973), since a shortage of females would limit the number of babies born to the next generation, reducing population growth. A shortage of females is already a reality, as we have seen in the case of India.

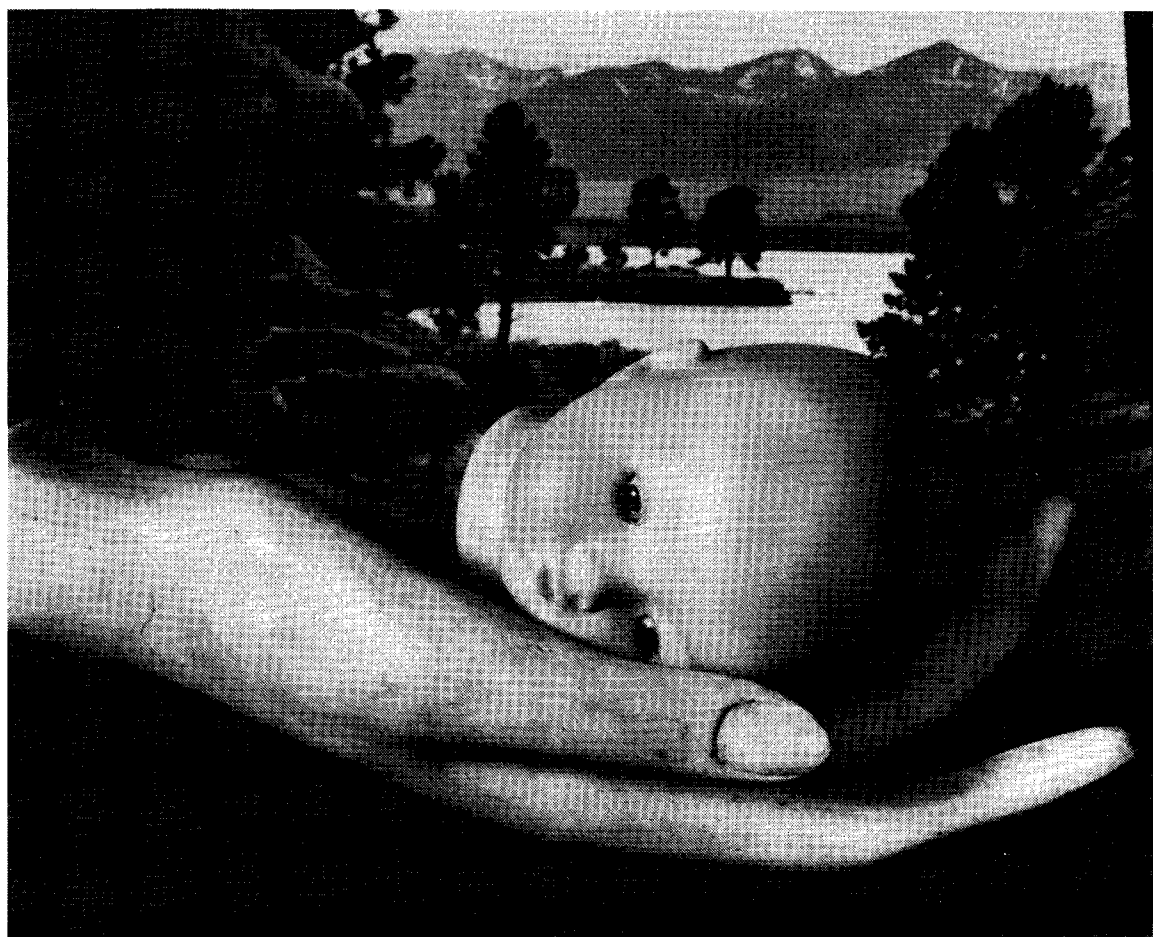
Seen in this light, sex-determination may become one more sophisticated tool to reinforce the secondary and subordinate status of women. Under the guise of "choice" the number of women could be manipulated according to the needs and wishes of the public patriarchy.

Cloning and the Artificial Womb

Though these technologies are not yet ready for use in humans, work in other mammals and in the early stages of human development may result in rapid progress. It is now possible to

have the first week of embryo development take place in the lab. At the other end of the pregnancy, advances in neonatal care have made viability possible at 24 weeks, with survival occasionally possible at 23 weeks. The artificial womb, when finally developed and perfected, would give complete and final control of human reproduction to the medical-scientific establishment.

Cloning, a technique for producing genetically identical individuals has often been presented by the media as giving males the possibility of single parenthood, of reproduction without females. However, this is not strictly true, since women would still be needed to provide the cytoplasm of the egg. Cloning has been successful in amphibia and there is disagreement about its success with mammals. There might be some real obstacles to the possibility of cloning adult animals. However, a form of cloning using the technology developed for IVF might be possible in the not too distant future:



"Doll's Head," Ruth Bernhard, 1936.

an embryo, at the two-cell stage, could be, in the lab, divided in two and genetically identical individuals could, in this way, be produced.

BUT WHAT ABOUT INFERTILITY?

In vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer have been presented as technologies that will "solve" the problems of infertile women. But the whole area of infertility deserves a close look before accepting that technology will be the answer. Infertility and its treatment (or lack of) are plagued by lack of good information and research (Eck Menning, 1977). We know virtually nothing about infertility and lifestyle, employment patterns and standard of living. We know even less about the wider causes of infertility though there is clear evidence that pollution and chemical poisoning of the water, air and work environment affect human fertility. Possible causes of infertility for women that are usually neglected are: stress, drugs and alcohol, smoking, weight and nutrition. More importantly, are all the causes of infertility that could be totally prevented — infertility that has been induced by the previous use of medical intervention: *iatrogenic infertility*. Abdominal surgery, mistreatment of endometriosis, previous Caesarean section can all lead to infertility. Lack of proper treatment, for instance, of sexually transmitted diseases can produce infertility as well. And two of the most widely used contraceptives, the Pill and the IUD have been shown to damage the female reproductive system, permanently or temporarily. In fact, there is a very strong association between the use of the IUD and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), one of the leading causes of infertility in the USA.

In discussing infertility it is also crucial to remember that male infertility is responsible for the problem in about 50 percent of the infertile couples. However, male infertility is rarely studied or researched. Much of the knowledge that we have about reproduction stems from work done while studying contraception, so a consequence of the lack of research on male contraception is almost total ignorance about male infertility (Arditti, 1977). And as I said above, in the Technologies section, IVF is being used on women who are themselves fertile whereas the problem lies with the male.

In the U.S. there has been an increase in the number of infertile couples and, interestingly, there is a greater proportion of couples in higher socio-economic brackets with infertility problems. This probably has something to do with the increased interest that physicians are showing in infertility. The publicity and advances in IVF and microsurgery have attracted physicians who, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s had seen the number of births decline rapidly. Doctors, whose primary specialty was in women's health were faced with a decreasing volume of patients requesting obstetric services (Aral and Cates, 1983). It is in this context that we need to look at the emergence of new reproductive technologies and infertility.

Why is infertility such a painful experience for some women? It seems that in many cases, infertile women feel that their whole life and identity are in question, that there is no purpose without a child "of their own." Lesley Brown, the mother of the first "test-tube baby," repeatedly offered her husband an opportunity to divorce her so that he could go and have children with somebody else (this despite the fact that he already had children from a previous marriage). This is how she saw her future: "Years of just weighing and packing cheese and coming back to a quiet, empty flat stretched before me. John and I would be so lonely with no child to share and make plans for. There was no future for us anymore" (Brown and Brown, 1981). She had tried to get pregnant for 14 years and was never helped to consider a lifestyle without a child or given support for her feeling of inadequacy. And as she said, she was willing "to go through anything to have a child."

So, one could argue, isn't this then what women want? Aren't women freely "choosing" these technologies? The fact is that in a society such as ours that has strict sex role definitions, where the feminine role is essentially maternal, emotionally supportive and expressive, the pressures, internal and external, to have children are enormous. We have all been conditioned to regard having children as normal and desirable and the idea of a woman without children elicits feelings of suspicion, pity, mistrust and even hostility. How "voluntary" then is the "choice" of women to go through "anything" in order to have a child?

a national pool of women. Women from different geographical areas could be matched for their physical characteristics, their ovulation times synchronized through hormones, and sperm from the husband of the infertile woman could be flown to the area where the egg donor lives. After insemination and lavage, the early embryo could be flown back to where the recipient lives and implanted. The firm has applied for patents for their procedure and they are paying \$50 per insemination and \$50 per lavage. In case of recovery of a fertilized egg, the donor would receive a \$200 bonus (Corea, 1985).

The risks of this procedure are numerous: hormonal treatments with unknown long-range effects; pelvic inflammatory disease as a result of the "flushing"; ectopic pregnancies at higher than normal rates; the unknown risk (for the recipient) of carrying an embryo whose genetic make up is totally foreign to her own. There is also the risk that the "donor" ends up with an unwanted pregnancy because the embryo does not come out with the "flushing." (This has already happened but the woman subsequently aborted spontaneously.) In fact, as I have mentioned before, the Warnock commission has acknowledged that this procedure presents too many risks and recommends that it not be used at the present time.

In the cattle industry it is now possible to freeze the embryos, to twin them (producing two identical animals from just one fertilized egg) and to sex them (determining the sex). There is no reason to believe that these developments are not going to be explored in humans as well.

Pre-natal screening and sex-selection

Amniocentesis (the removal of a sample of amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus) is the procedure commonly used to screen for genetic abnormalities in the fetus. Usually performed during the second trimester of pregnancy, it allows for the termination of pregnancy if so desired. It is now possible to screen for some 200 metabolic diseases, most of them diseases with a very low incidence, but screening for more common disorders is already becoming a routine part of pregnancy. Currently, women over 35 are routinely counselled to have pre-

natal testing because of their increased chance of having a child with Down syndrome. Most recently the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology has alerted its members that screening for neural tube defects should be offered routinely. (The test to detect neural tube defects involves screening for a substance called alpha-fetoprotein, AFP, which is produced by the fetus and passes from the amniotic fluid through the placenta into the mother's blood. Neural tube defects vary widely in seriousness and range from spina bifida to anencephaly, where the baby is born without a brain (Saltus, 1985).) This recommendation from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology is designed to prevent physicians from being sued over the birth of babies with neural tube defects.

Prenatal screening raises many issues which shed light on our priorities as a whole, how we view differences between people. Because of the high status and influence that physicians have in our society, prenatal screening may tend to reflect their values and concerns instead of the values and concerns of the pregnant woman. Pregnant women, for instance, could be pressured subtly (and not so subtly) to abort a child of "inferior" quality.

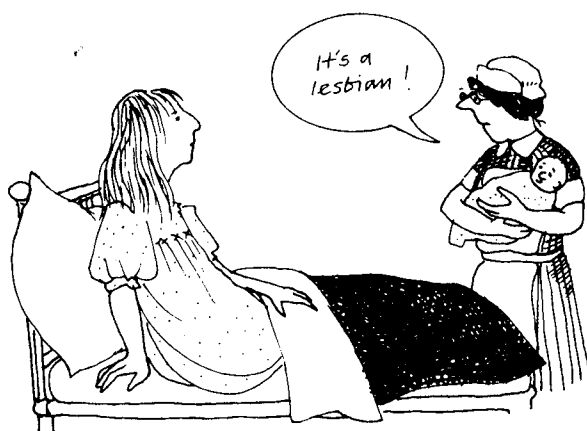
Women activists in the disability rights movement have pointed out that the stereotypes and myths about disabled persons influence parents and medical practitioners in the decision-making process regarding abortion. They have also argued that the struggle for abortion rights has often led to the exploitation and stereotyping of disabilities (Finger, 1984) (Saxton, 1984). The reproductive rights movement has, by and large, ignored the denial of reproductive rights to disabled women and men and it has also used fears about disability to stress the need for abortion rights. It is clear, though, that much of the burden of disability is due to oppressive social structures and to the ideal of a lifestyle in our society that does not accept differences in mental and physical abilities as part of life.

One of the reasons that women during pregnancy are so vulnerable to medical control is the fear of having an abnormal child. Not only that, but also the fear of being blamed for it: for not having subjected themselves to enough testing, for having the wrong diet, or drinking

too much alcohol, or exercising too much, or having the wrong attitude.

New tests are being developed that would allow for prenatal screening to be carried out during the first trimester of pregnancy. This will probably cause a great expansion of prenatal screening (Smith, 1985). Because the public patriarchy controls the production of new members of the social order (Kelly-Gadol, 1976) it can shrink or expand genetic screening according to the economic, political and ideological needs of the society. Different groups in the society could, in a truly Brave New World fashion, be affected in different ways and "routine screening" could become another tool for social control. Yet the causes of many genetic defects are, at least in part, environmental in origin, and we need to provide better services and treatments for individuals and families with disabilities.

There is one type of genetic screening that has particular relevance for women—screening for the sex of the fetus. It is possible to analyze the chromosome composition of the fetus and to find out if the fetus is female or male. It is also widely known from studies carried out all over the world that there is a world wide preference for male children and that though men prefer sons much more strongly than women, women still want their first child to be a male (Steinbacher, 1983).



This could lead to an extremely stratified distribution of the sexes in the population: a typical family having an older brother and a younger sister. As Roberta Steinbacher has

said, "Inferiority, now socially dictated by women as a class, would be further internalized and externalized as 'big brother, little sister' became institutionalized. An increase in the number of male firstborn . . . could not only sharply reduce the number of females born, but could relegate those born to powerlessness" (Steinbacher, 1983).

In India, for example, there is a long history which views the birth of daughters as a curse. Female infanticide as well as neglect and malnutrition of female children have been shown to happen in northwest India, among land-owning and upper-caste groups. There is a sex ratio imbalance in the population: from 972 females per 1000 males in 1901 to 930 females per 1000 males in 1971. The total deficit of the female population has grown from 3 million in 1901 to more than 22 million in 1981. It is in this context that technology for prenatal screening inserts itself. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that when the sex of the fetus is female there is an overwhelming abortion rate. The clinics that have opened in areas like Punjab, Haryana and eastern Marahastra are blunt in their advertising: "Come for this test so that you don't have an unwanted daughter born to you." Their procedures are relatively inexpensive and they are performing the test on a massive scale.

The economic situation for women in the areas where the tests are being offered has deteriorated greatly in the last few years. The introduction of new industrial technologies has displaced women by the millions. Traditional women's jobs, such as grinding corn or threshing rice have disappeared as machines are being introduced and men take over the jobs. Women, then, are under tremendous pressure to produce male children because they will become an economic asset for the family (Rogencamp, 1984) (Kishwar, 1986). This is a particularly sinister use of prenatal testing because it offers women the possibility to act on the surface as "having made their own choice" when in reality the context and the circumstances of their lives have practically forced their "choice."

Sex-predetermination, which will give the possibility of fertilizing the eggs with sperm of either X or Y kind, has not yet been completely

In *The Experience of Infertility*, a book written by two women who have been through the infertility experience themselves, Naomi Pfeffer and Anne Woollett say, "For women the links between femininity and fertility are very strong: real women are fruitful. . . . Pregnancy and childbearing provide women with an identity, with a source of achievement, one of the few open to women. In pregnancy, a woman becomes the center of attention in the hospital and in her own family. Motherhood gives her a new identity, one that is female and adult. Only in a society where *all* of women's qualities and achievements are more highly valued can motherhood be seen as just one of many goals" (Pfeffer and Woollett, 1983).

In short, infertility is an area where the concept and meaning of "choice" needs to be carefully analyzed in terms of the real options that our society offers to women. The new reproductive technologies offer a "technological fix" to a social and political problem.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ABORTION RIGHTS AND CONTROL OF WOMEN'S BODIES

The "new" reproductive technologies also have immediate implications for women's reproductive rights. There are already effects on women's rights to abortion and the control of one's body during pregnancy.

There have been a number of attempts to use prenatal technology to legislatively limit, rather than enhance, women's reproductive choices. In Pennsylvania and Louisiana lawmakers tried to pass laws that would have made it practically impossible to obtain late abortions. The Pennsylvania bill was vetoed by the governor, while the Louisiana legislation enacted an anti-abortion law which openly "declared that, but for *Roe v. Wade*, the state would outlaw all abortions in order to implement its policy that human life begins at conception" (Lynn, 1982). Provisions of these laws would have required that pregnant women undergo an ultrasound test prior to the abortion (the idea is that ultrasound visualization enhances bonding with the fetus and women will not then choose abortion), a 72-hour waiting period, annual revisions of the fetal viability limit, etc.

The *Roe v. Wade* decision (rendered on January 22, 1973) tied the right to abortion to

the state of medical science. It established the trimester framework and did not give women an absolute right to abortions. It follows that as new developments in fetal diagnosis and fetal surgery take place and as the line of fetal viability gets pushed back, the stand on abortion will necessarily be re-evaluated. Sandra Day O'Connor's dissent in the recent *Akron* case⁵ in June 1983, set the Court up for overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision when she wrote, "It is certainly reasonable to believe that fetal viability in the first trimester of pregnancy may be possible in the not-too-distant future" (Spake, 1985). The "new" technological developments would be used to contribute to the erosion of *Roe v. Wade*.

Because the "new" technologies contribute to the separation between the mother and the fetus, a woman could conceivably be ordered to have tests done for the benefit of the fetus, even if these tests have to be carried out on her own body and she wants to refuse them. It has already happened in one case where the Georgia Supreme Court ordered a Caesarean section for a woman who had denied her consent. Fortunately, the woman delivered vaginally, before the order was implemented (showing that the Caesarean was unnecessary). The Court order was creating a dichotomy between women's rights and "fetal rights." It was pitting women's rights against those of their own children (Hubbard, 1982).

In another case, at the hospital of the University of Colorado in Denver, a woman, who refused a Caesarean section because of her fear of surgery and was considered capable of rational decision by a psychiatrist, had a judicial hearing in the hospital presided over by a Denver juvenile court judge. In that hearing court-appointed attorneys represented "the patient and unborn infant." The court found that the unborn baby of the patient was a dependent and neglected child within the meaning of the Colorado Children's Code. It was then ordered that a Caesarean section be performed to safeguard the life of the unborn child (Hubbard, 1982).

These decisions establish a dangerous precedent for women. They could be interpreted to mean that women have no right to decide about diagnostic or therapeutic procedures for their



"Enigma," Ruth Bernhard, c. 1975.

fetuses after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Such decisions could be entirely in the hands of physicians, backed by the courts. They refuse to consider that while the child is in the woman's body, choices about treatment ought to be made with her informed consent. It is, of course, possible that there may be a situation where a woman refuses treatment that would be beneficial to herself and her child, but right now the number of medical interventions during pregnancy and labor is so high and overuse of technology so widespread that concern about this possibility does not seem too justified. Particularly around the issue of Caesarean sections, there is strong evidence that the medical profession is not acting in the best interest of women and their children (Cohen and Estner, 1983).

The Embryo Transfer technology has opened the door to another nightmarish possibility regarding women's right to abortion. It has already been proposed that this procedure (like

the artificial womb) will dismantle the opposition to abortion because women's aborted fetuses could be implanted in another woman's womb or into the artificial womb. As Bernard Nathanson (who was director of the Center for Reproductive and Sexual Health in New York in the seventies and subsequently became a champion of the anti-choice movement) says in his book (Nathanson, 1979): "The abortion of the future then, will consist simply of early detection of the alpha, removal of the alpha from the unwilling mother, and transfer either to a life-support system or re-implantation into a willing and eager recipient." (He calls the fetus "alpha".)

Much of our thinking about reproductive rights has been shaped by the assumption that pregnancy can occur only in women's bodies; when women talk about the right to choose, they are talking about choosing what happens to their own body. But what happens when what used to happen within women's bodies is

not happening there anymore, when fertilization and embryo development take place outside of women's bodies? Do women have the right to control the future of the fetus in another environment? In other words, who "owns" the embryo? (Murphy, 1985)

Shelley Minden (Minden, 1985) has pointed out how gene therapy⁶ could also become a technology that would control women's lives to an unprecedented degree. Unlike genetic screening, genetic therapy of embryos would be acceptable to the religious right, because it would not lead to abortion. As I have said before (in the section on IVF) the right has become concerned with the "rights" of the embryo, and this combined with the availability of gene therapy could lead to women being coerced into these procedures against their will. As Minden puts it: "Should women be held legally responsible to undergo 'embryo therapy' we would indeed lose all freedom of choice."

DEVELOPING A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Reproductive engineering is being offered to women as enhancing women's choices. But the reality is that there currently is an all out attack on abortion rights and there is the definite possibility that legal abortion will be banned. Abortions have already been restricted in the cases of poor women and adolescent women. Women have died because of the lack of funding for public abortions and currently (December 1985) there is a proposal to eliminate federal funds for family planning clinics that *inform* clients that abortion is an alternative to unwanted pregnancy (Mudd, 1985).

The most important reproductive technology desperately needed by millions of women all over the world—a safe, inexpensive, reversible contraceptive—is still an illusion. Contraception is still almost entirely a woman's burden and dangerous contraceptives and sterilization abuse are rampant in the Third World. The same medical-scientific establishment that has experimented on women in the past is now developing the tools for reproductive and genetic engineering.

If indeed there is a concern for the welfare of mothers and children, why is there not a massive research effort on the needs of children that are already among us, on the women who

are mothers now? In the U.S., infant mortality among the black poor is four times the mortality of wealthy white babies; the concentration of infant mortality in the black population has become so marked that the ranking of states by infant mortality generally corresponds to the percent of their population that is black. The main reason for this is the high percentage of infants born at low birth weights, which is due in large part to poor nutrition prevalent among black and low income mothers. This is the background against which the new sophisticated technologies are being developed (Wise, 1984).

As I said in the introduction, feminists are confronted with the question of the value of these technologies in the struggle for the liberation of women. Can a technology based on separation and control, on manipulation and domination, be of use to women? Is there a need to rethink *both* the control of the technologies and the technologies themselves?

I believe that just as women (and men) question technologies that are not appropriate for the environment and for their health, they should question the reproductive technologies that are designed to be used on the bodies of women. Technologies do not fall from heaven. Technology is a *social* institution and its development reflects the social and political system of which it is an integral part. Technology reflects and perpetuates the values that are upheld in society. Scientists, the overwhelming majority of whom are white men based in industrial countries, are an integral part of the public patriarchy and work within a framework that ignores the cultural forces that shape their ideology. But a separation between scientific and technological developments and the world in which they are applied is unreal. It is but one world (Arditti, 1980).

Science and technology are not "neutral" activities that take place in an environment where power relations do not exist. The scientific establishment is part of the power structure. It has played and still plays a crucial role in offering "scientific" rationalizations for the secondary status of women. Because of this role, "science," at least in its present form, often denies women's potential. Scientists have accepted the myth of the neutrality of science

and have consistently ignored the fact that the basic assumptions of our culture permeate their work and act as guidelines for their interpretation (Rose and Rose, 1980). The tradition in which most scientists operate derives from the model proposed in the 16th century by Francis Bacon—a model in which Nature was the enemy and science was the instrument for its control and domination, a way of recovering the lost dignity of “man.” The model of technical and scientific progress is a linear one; its model is the machine and it is based on the manipulation and domination of nature, women and people other than affluent white males. It is a model that is part and parcel of the industrial system and its accompanying pattern of exploitation (Merchant, 1980). The view of science as a value-free activity has produced nuclear weapons, damage to the environment, and it poses serious risks to the health of all human beings. Our food, air and water are damaged by the relentless expansion and creation of new technologies. Reproductive technologies are just one example.

Underlying reproductive engineering is the assumption that science can and should make “improvements” in women’s reproductive lives and that the new knowledge will give us more



The Goddess Tlazolteotl in the act of childbirth.

control over our imperfect bodies. The “new” reproductive technologies reflect a worldview and a vision of nature that is characteristic of the patriarchal mentality. That is, they are based on the principles of separation and control, instead of balance and integration. The separation of motherhood into separate components weakens women’s relationship to maternity. Because it is possible now to have a woman who donates an egg (genetic mother), a woman who carries the embryo (physiological mother) and possibly a woman who raises the child (a social mother), maternity loses its unique integrity and motherhood becomes questionable, as paternity used to be. As Barbara Katz Rothman says poignantly: “Women never before were able to think about genetic motherhood without pregnancy, or pregnancy without genetic motherhood: if we were biological mothers (carrying babies) then we were genetic mothers. But making the inseparable separate is what the technology of reproduction is all about. And it is this issue that we are now facing: women, for the first time, have the potential for genetic parenthood without physiologic motherhood. At all. No pregnancy. No birth. No suckling. Women are about to become fathers.” (Katz Rothman, 1982). At the same time that mothering becomes split and weakened, the father remains one. And the scientific “fathers” assume a pivotal role in the production of new life.

It is true that the experience of pregnancy in a patriarchal society may make some women desire to get rid of pregnancy. But the fact is, we don’t know what pregnancy would be like in a non-sexist society and in a culture that allowed people a truly human relationship to their bodies.

When we look at the “new” reproductive technologies from an international perspective, we see a polarization between the industrialized world and the Third World. While women in the West are offered technologies that reinforce a pro-natalist ideology, women from exploited countries are being massively experimented on with dangerous contraceptives like Depo-Provera and bombarded with anti-natalist ideology. The fertility and reproductive rights of women are constantly under the control of national population policies, economic status and



"The Annunciation," Fra Angelico, Museum of San Marco, Florence.

legal situation. These are the factors that truly control women's choices and the "new" technologies clearly operate within the context of these factors (Bunkle, 1984) (Clarke, 1984) (Teitelbaum and Winter, 1985).

As we struggle with these questions, there is the possibility of disagreement arising among women. Clearly, the effect of these technologies and their potential for abuse and control varies, in the short range, with the different groups of women that they may affect: heterosexual or lesbian, rich or poor, fertile or infertile, married or single, white or Third world, disabled or able-bodied, etc.

In England, feminist groups have given contrasting testimonies to the Warnock commission, some groups arguing for the offering of IVF, for instance, to all women, as a step in the direction to protect women's reproductive rights. Others have criticized this position.

Azizah al-Hibri in her article "Reproduction, mothering and the origins of patriarchy" (al-Hibri, 1984) proposes that the fear of death in the context of the male's experience of the world has produced a desire for continuity or immortality which has led to the emergence of

patriarchy. Seeing reproduction as a path to immortality and seeing women reproduce produced feelings of inadequacy, jealousy or hostility towards the female. This led to the desire to control reproduction and to the development of technology. In her view, the obsessive desire for immortality has spread also to females and has produced the "need" for children which "has traditionally chained women to the monogamous family and contributed significantly to their oppression." The "new" reproductive technologies would be the latest version of the attempts to take over reproduction by the men.

The importance of developing a feminist perspective on these technologies has become a priority for women in many countries. In April, 1985, 2000 women from all parts of West Germany got together in Bonn in a meeting against the technologies. The conference condemned them as an attempt to take over women's bodies' unique potential to create human life, an attempt which, if successful, would harm women. Understanding that there is a need for international communication and exchange of ideas, a group of women has created an interna-

tional organization which organized a gathering in July, 1985, in Sweden. Seventy-four women from 16 countries attended a 5 day meeting to discuss and create strategies on the "new" reproductive technologies." Much of the discussion around these technologies has taken place among prominent *male* ethicists, lawyers, scientists, physicians and philosophers, in the rarefied atmosphere of professional associations' meetings. The meeting in Sweden represents the beginning of a series of international meetings designed to publicize, scrutinize, and expose the experimentation done on women under the guise of "offering choice."

The women at the gathering passed a number of resolutions speaking against the division and fragmentation of the female body into distinct parts and against eugenic policies. The resolutions acknowledge that women do not need to transform their biology, that they need to abolish patriarchal social, political and economic conditions. They recognize that fertility is often determined by political, social and economic conditions and express support for infertile women and intensive study into the prevention of infertility.

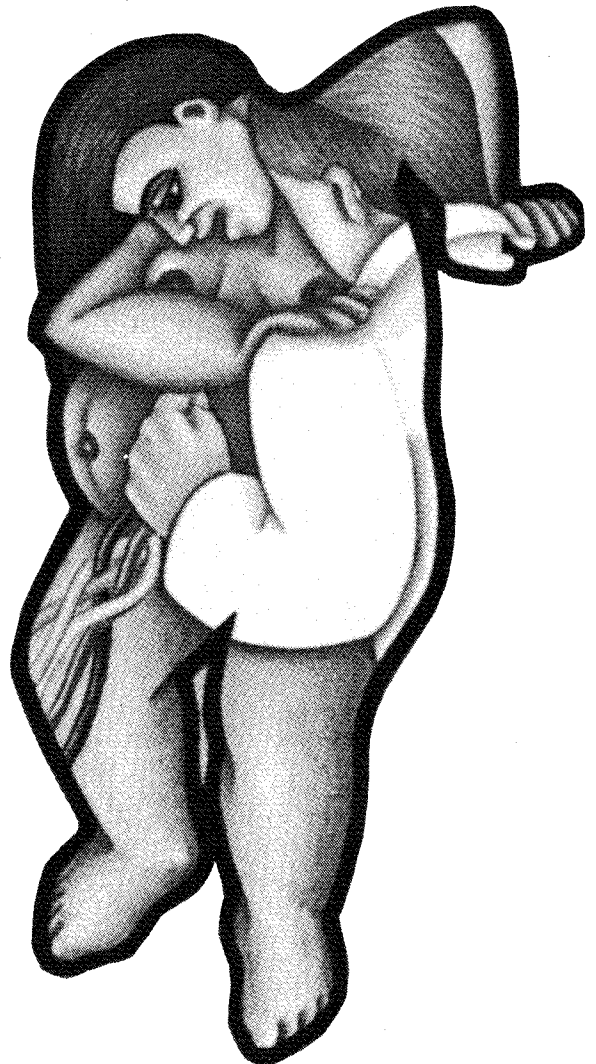
Often, when women (and other groups) criticize and raise questions about scientific developments they are branded as "anti-science," "Luddites," opposing progress. But this tactic is beginning to wear off; women at the gathering stated that "we seek a different kind of science and technology that respects the dignity of womankind and of all life on earth. We call upon women and men to break the fatal link between mechanistic science and vested industrial interests and to take part with us in the development of a new unity of knowledge and life."¹⁰

I believe that the "technological fix" that reproductive engineering proposes will increase the control of women's lives by the public patriarchy. The promise of eliminating the oppression of women by going "beyond" or "overcoming" biology seems shortsighted and reflects a belief in technology as the only solution of political problems. I find it ironic that the excesses of an interventionist technology developed in a sexist society can be seen as important for the liberation of women. We need to challenge our society's oppressive construc-

tion of motherhood instead of accepting it as a biological fact and then romanticizing it in order to live with it.

Footnotes

1. Carol Brown in her 1981 article "Mothers, fathers and children: from private to public patriarchy" in *Women and Revolution*, edited by Lydia Sargent, makes a very useful difference between public and private patriarchy. She says: "The private patriarchy includes the individual relations between men and women found in the traditional family, in which the individual husband has control over the individual wife, her daily reproductive labor and the product of her labor, the children. But patriarchy is not just a *family system*. It is a *social system* which includes and defines family relations. It is in the social system that we find the



Cover design and illustration by Mandy Hall.

public aspects of patriarchy: the control of society—of the economy, polity, religion, etc.—by men collectively, who use that control to uphold the rights and privileges of the collective male sex as well as individual men. The husband's family-centered control over his wife's daily labor is upheld by the publicly-centered monopolization of jobs, law, property, knowledge, etc. by men.

"The intersection of public and private patriarchy comes in family law." Because medicine, science and technology are also male-dominated spheres and have great potential for control over women's lives, I consider them as part of the public patriarchy also.

2. Eugenics (the attempt to improve the human race through selective breeding) has a long history. Plato advocated both negative eugenics (limiting the propagation of the "defective") and positive eugenics (increasing the reproduction of the "best"). Eugenics blossomed in the UK and the USA from roughly 1900 to 1930 and in Germany especially during the Nazi period. In the USA, eugenicists advocated sterilization of the "defective." Who



Pregnant, Barbara Morgan, 1940.

were these "defectives"? Primarily people who did not fit nicely into the white male capitalist system: the poor, the physically challenged, people with drinking problems, people from foreign cultures and black people from this very USA. A recent book that analyzes the racist history of eugenic thought is *In the Name of Eugenics* by Daniel Keyes, 1985. Knopf, New York.

3. The Repository for Germinal Choice sends a questionnaire to its prospective donors, reflecting a strange view of heredity. Among its 81 questions, there is question 9: Do you generally enjoy the company of: Colleagues? Ordinary

people? Children? Dogs? Pretty girls?; question 32: Which arouse your sexual desire?: Women only? Mostly women? Both men and women? Mostly men? Men only? Other (Please specify); question 33: allowing for your age, how do you rank your interest in normal sex: important, average, unimportant; question 68: do people often mistrust you?; etc.

4. The Warnock Report's full title is: *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Human Fertilization and Embryology*, and it can be ordered from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6HB, Great Britain. Cost £6.40.

5. This was a case in 1983 between the City of Akron and the Akron Center for Reproductive Health, Inc. By a 6-3 margin the Court declared unconstitutional the following provisions of the 1978 Akron Ordinance: a 24-hour waiting period as arbitrary and inflexible; a requirement that all abortions be performed in hospitals; and an "informed consent" provision which specified what information an attending physician must personally provide to the patient, as "beyond permissible limits" and an intrusion "upon the discretion of the . . . physician."

6. Gene therapy is a biomedical technology not yet fully developed in human beings. It would allow for the replacement of a "bad" gene in human beings with a "good" gene. Some geneticists predict that it will be used in the future to treat genetic disorders resulting from a single gene.

7. In the cases where AID is used, and the social father and the genetic father are different, it is common practice to keep the whole process confidential. The guidelines of the American Fertility Society, in presenting an "Agreement of Understanding" between couples and physicians state: "It is further understood and agreed that the nature of this agreement is such that it must remain confidential. There is no benefit and considerable risk to informing the relatives, friends, ministers, and the offspring of the procedure, and other physicians involved in the care of the recipient need not be informed of the procedure."

8. For the conference reports see *Women's Studies International Forum (Feminist Forum)* Vol. 8, No 3, 1985.

9. The meeting was organized by FINNRET, Feminist International Network on the New Reproductive Technologies. At the Sweden meeting the group changed its name to FINRRAGE, Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering. International Coordinator: Renate Duelli Klein, 7 Carlingford Road, London, NW3 1RY, England.

10. From the Resolutions passed at the Women's Emergency Conference on the New Reproductive Technologies, July 3-8, 1985. Vallinge, Sweden.

Rita Arditti is on the faculty of Union Graduate School and has co-edited *Test Tube Women: What Future for Motherhood?* She is a member of the editorial advisory board of *Science for the People*.

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LETTER

Dear Editors,

I hope that readers of Bob Sutcliffe's article "The Battle for Britain" (*RA* Vol. 19, Nos. 2-3) will not accept his summary judgment on the book *The Great Strike* by Alex Callinicos and Mike Simmons, but will look at the argument for themselves. (The book is distributed in the USA by the International Socialist Organization, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, Illinois 60616).

Sutcliffe claims that the book, by two members of the Socialist Workers' Party, is an "object lesson in what is wrong with the British left" because it sees the strike as an "unambiguous defeat" in order to find someone to blame for it.

Some recent events (since Sutcliffe wrote his article) would seem to confirm that the strike did indeed end in bitter defeat:

1. The National Coal Board has announced the closure of Cortonwood colliery. It was a previous announcement that Cortonwood was to close that sparked the strike in March 1984. Now a large majority of Cortonwood miners have voted not to resist closure, as have miners at several other collieries in the militant areas of Yorkshire and South Wales.
2. In Nottinghamshire, 72 percent of miners have voted to join the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers, which cooperates closely with the Coal Board management.
3. At this year's Labor Party Conference, Labor leader Neil Kinnock viciously attacked not only the miners but the Labor councillors in Liverpool who are refusing to make cuts in spending and services. He was warmly applauded by delegates who the previous year were backing the miners.

British miners went on strike to defend their jobs and their unions. They knew very well what they were fighting for — and they failed to win. It seems to me an insult to thousands of courageous women and men to suggest that they did not suffer a defeat. It is, moreover, very dangerous for socialists to refuse to recognize a defeat. We may recall those German Communists who thought Hitler's accession to power was a victory for them.

The point of the argument is not to find someone to blame, but rather to analyze the available alternatives. If the defeat that occurred was some sort of sociological inevitability, then the whole struggle, glorious as it was, was futile. What Callinicos and Simmons are concerned to ask is: how could the strike have been won? To do this they need to examine political alternatives; as they write (p. 247): "What matters though, is less to condemn individuals' failures, than to draw the correct political conclusions."

It is thus grotesque to allege, as Sutcliffe does, that they argue that Scargill "betrayed the strike." Nowhere is such a position suggested. What Callini-

cos and Simmons do attempt to analyze is Scargill's role as a trade union leader, situated as a mediator between workers and employers, and the limits that this necessarily imposed on the way the struggle was conducted.

Sutcliffe deplores "divisive sectarianism," and this sentiment will undoubtedly gain much approval. But unity is useless unless we know *with whom* and *for what*. Sutcliffe welcomes the fact that large numbers of miners have joined the Labor Party. Yet Kinnock is drawing the Labor Party rapidly rightwards. And the record of previous Labor Governments offers little hope that Labor in power will solve the miners' problems. As John Field points out in the same issue of *Radical America*, one of the causes of disunity among miners in 1984-85 was that the "common pay system" had been replaced by a range of local incentive schemes. He might have added that this was the work of the last Labor Government, notably of Tony Benn, then Energy Minister and now hero of the Labor left.

There are indeed many lessons to learn from the miners' heroic struggle. But those lessons will be wasted unless they are used to build a political alternative to the rightward-moving Labor Party. Unfortunately Bob Sutcliffe's article, despite many interesting insights, does not offer any basis for that alternative.

Ian Birchall
London, England

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ONE YEAR

After Charley Howard was
Flung from the bridge
(like a handkerchief)
Perhaps they thought
He could float, dainty
Lightweight, a Fairy
Not sink
Screaming for help
Sink
His heavy body
A MAN'S
Waving and flailing
In the dark water
As they smirked
Three teenagers
An arms length away
Already proven innocent
By the girlfriends
Who watched with
Silent complicity
Huddled in the car,
Did they question?
Flung
Like garbage, trash
In Bangor, Maine
One year after
Three teenagers
Acted out the general
Belief in masculinity
Which became redefined
as 'MURDER which became
Further redefined
as KIDSTUFF and
Therefore easier to
Shrug off than
QUEERNESS which
Has only one definition

And that one is as
Persistant as
The man who spoke
His love too loudly
How DARE he,
Who is not here
To learn about JUSTICE
Being redefined as
Wrist slapping,
Stern talkings to
And finally,
MARTYR
Which is what the
Verdict came out
Reading
One Gay Man is
Expendable.

Kathryn Eberly

On July 7, 1984, Charles Howard, a gay man, was beaten and thrown off a bridge in Bangor, Maine by three local teenagers. After initially confessing to the murder, the youths changed their pleas to innocent, then even later pleaded guilty to reduced manslaughter charges. The three boys, aged 15, 16 and 17, were sentenced to terms in the Maine Youth Center, where they will be released on their eighteen birthdays. Charles Howard was 23 at the time of his death.

TEMPORARY JOB

Freshly pressed pants and a
Smile that just won't quit
Puts you into the driver's seat
Behind a new fangled computerized
Ticket into the eighties,
Word processing is the name of
The game but sixty percent of
Secretarial work is still pushing
Someone else's papers and
Everyone in this office is
Snapping their Carefree gum and
Smoking Salem cigarettes exhaling
Wistfully into the infinite
Corridors that lead to the open
Doors of the doctor's office
Located next to the closed doors
Of the conference room and
There's always the green chipped
Bathrooms where you can sneak
A quiet moment and lament the pay
Which is ok but never ok.
Luckily, there's an hour for lunch,
An hour to think about where
This will all get you.
You especially need to know
Where the number two pencils are
And the carbon copies and who has
Their own extension and when
They're really here or just pretending
To be and you may have already
Anticipated a certain dullness,
A lethargy, what exactly happens
In this workplace where you
Shuffle, type, file, compute,
Add, subtract, and justify
Wonder is every other woman
Pretending, please, thanks,
Smile, wonder
Is every other woman
Alienated with
Freshly pressed pants,
Attitude and adaptability
Are a must.

Kathryn Eberly

Kathryn Eberly currently lives in San Francisco.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM, WOMEN'S POWER:

Notes for Reproductive
Rights Activists

LINDA GORDON

*What follows are excerpts from a speech given at a conference sponsored by Planned Parenthood of New York City in January 1986. The gathering commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the 1965 Supreme Court decision, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, establishing birth control as an individual right. The audience was composed largely of clinicians and activists in areas of family planning, reproductive rights, and women's politics. The speaker, Linda Gordon, is the author of *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America*, published originally in 1976, a book which sharply criticized Planned Parenthood—for its support of imperialist population control programs, and for its lack of support of sexual equality in its birth control programs. The invitation to Gordon to be the keynote speaker at this conference indicates several historical changes: the women's movement has considerably influenced Planned Parenthood; the rightward social and political mood of the country, particularly the attack on abortion rights, has put Planned Parenthood on the defensive and forced it into implicit alliance with feminism; and that same rightward drift has made feminists seek allies even among those groups who support only some aspects of a feminist program, such as birth control. At the conference there was widespread support among birth control and women's health service providers and lobbyists for re-integrating reproductive rights work into a larger feminist agenda.*

The Editors

In addition to commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the court decision recognizing birth control as a legal right, this conference marks for me a personal anniversary, ten years since the publication of my book on the history of the birth control movement. If I were rewriting that book now, I might shift its emphases somewhat, in the light of the events of the last decade.

History, Consensus, Change

First, I would underscore the historical continuity of the situation in which we find ourselves today. Reproductive rights have been one of the most consistently controversial issues in US domestic politics for nearly 150 years.

Second, I would emphasize that a stable guarantee of women's reproductive freedom will require a new social consensus regarding gender and family arrangements; and third, to win reproductive choices for all women is to ask for a profound change in our whole society, and it is better to recognize, to ourselves and to others, the radical implications of what we are asking.

Let me argue for these conclusions with a bit of history.

The 20 year anniversary, of *Griswold v. Ct.*, that this conference marks, calls our attention to the fact that the political struggle for abortion rights is inseparable from a longer history of campaigns for birth control rights in general. When I was first involved in the late 1960s revival of the women's movement, and then learned that our nineteenth century predecessors had also worked for women's reproductive freedom, I looked first for a simple story of feminists against anti-feminists. No such luck. Moreover, I began to see that oversimplifying the story into "us against them" would disadvantage us today as well in building effective political strategies.

Women, and occasionally men, have attempted to regulate their fertility since ancient times, but the first *political* movements about reproduction occurred in the nineteenth century. In Europe a few neo-Malthusians attempted to argue for birth control to reduce the population of the poor. In the US, underpopulation meant there was little basis for that logic. Instead, the

first US reproductive struggle was the anti-abortion campaign that began in the 1840s. Led primarily by physicians, who used the abortion issue simultaneously as a weapon against midwives and other popular medical practitioners, by 1880 a previously legal and extremely common practice was rendered illegal for the first time in all state laws.

Meanwhile, in the 1870s, the first organized expressions of pro-birth control sentiment emerged among feminists. The birth control motive was accompanied by another of equal intensity: to give women control over their sexual activity as well, and to subvert the norm that marriage meant women's sexual submission to men. Thus the first birth control campaign, called "Voluntary Motherhood," demanded women's right to refuse sex altogether. In other words, their birth control technique was abstinence. No doubt these women were "prudes" by contemporary standards, but their basic premise continues today: campaigns for *women's* reproductive rights have usually been accompanied by demands for sexual self-determination as well.

By the twentieth century, the need for birth control outstripped available methods. The result was a renewed, "second wave" birth control campaign, beginning around 1910, demanding legal contraception. This campaign was also accompanied by sexual freedom demands, although these emphasized women's right to heterosexual sex rather than their right to *refuse*.

From the 1930s on, several contraceptive devices—mainly condoms, diaphragms, and spermicides—were widely commercialized and became the sources of great profit for pharmaceutical companies. It was this consumer demand and the profit motive, and *not* an organized women's reproductive rights demand, that prompted the development of hormonal and then intrauterine methods. (It seems likely that the poor safety record of these methods had to do with the motives behind the scientific developments.) Until the 1960s there remained an anti-abortion consensus that included feminists as well as nonfeminists. But in the last twenty years the need for birth control again outstripped available technology. The importance of small families and the spacing of

children, to middle-class ambitious fathers and mothers, the impact of women's increased employment, and the increasing acceptance of a more permissive sexual ethic, created a new political base for the legalization of abortion. The 1962 rubella epidemic and the thalidomide cases crystallized a sentiment of entitlement not just to *planned* but also to healthy babies (a sentiment that must be criticized and rethought today in the context of a growing movement among the disabled). Adding later to the pro-abortion conviction was the feminist discovery of the danger of hormonal and intrauterine forms of birth control.

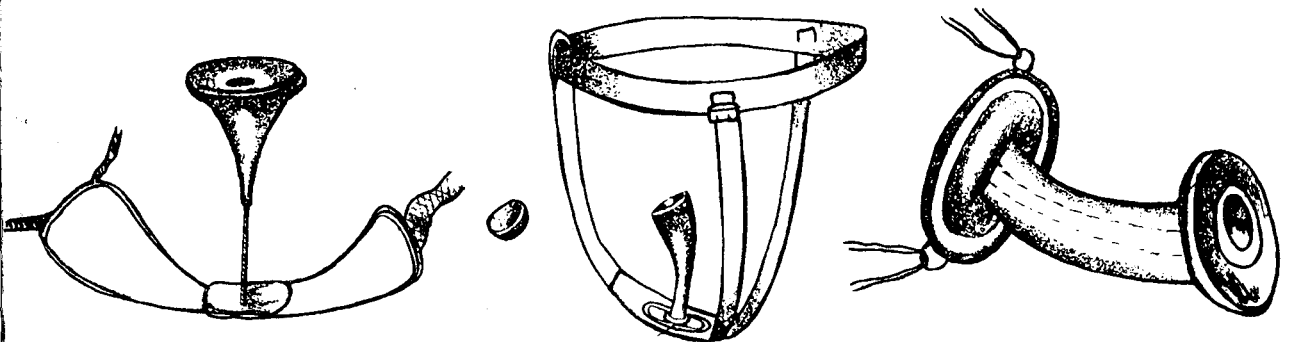
Feminism and Women's Demands

All three birth control campaigns produced backlashes. In every case the anti-birth control conservatism was but a part of a general opposition both to organized feminism and to the changing practices and demands of women. At the same time the opposition was also responding negatively to many aspects of modernity, including its sexual standards and, of equal importance, its secularism.

The political battles did not form two neat sides. Reproductive control had appeals to many political causes. Let me cite three. First

spread of syphilis, to ending feeble-mindedness, to preventing the multiplication of the "inferior races," (whether those were immigrant Catholics, Afro-Americans or Jews). Thus beginning in the 1890s, the entire array of opinions on the birth control issue has been affected by racism. However, what was wrong was the racism, not the eugenic impulse. We practice eugenics today when we recommend amniocentesis to identify certain genetic defects, or blood tests for syphilis. Hereditarian thought—the belief in the inheritance of socially acquired characteristics—was wrong, but it was not the only area infected with racism. Education and other environmental reform programs in this period were equally racist. Learning to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate uses of genetic testing is vital today as we are faced with new technological possibilities of prenatal diagnosis.

Second, after World War II came the population control campaign. Founded on the premise that overpopulation *caused* poverty—a premise which I and many critics believe to be virtually the reverse of the true causal connection—big foundation money attempted to spread population control in the Third World as a means of preventing social "disorder" (e.g. the *reordering* of property relations). Few population con-



From Augustus Gardner, "On the Use of Pessaries," Transactions of the American Medical Association, 1865.

came the eugenic motive—one shared by nearly all nineteenth-century reformers (a point entirely missed in Germaine Greer's very bad book *Sex and Destiny*), who believed that most human qualities were biologically hereditary. They argued for the use of birth control to improve the human race. The political motives of the eugenicists, from the 1870s through the 1940s, ranged from attempts to control the

control enthusiasts had much passion for the individual reproductive rights of women; in the Third World they promoted permanent forms of birth control and in the First World took no interest, at best, in women's struggles for autonomy.

Third, World War II also brought the revival of a domestic birth control campaign with a new theme—planned parenthood. The

organization dating from those years has changed greatly. Today it is, in many of its groups, part of the larger movement for women's rights. But this was not its origin, and it is useful to understand its history. The original premises of planned parenthood included or emphasis on planning, on strengthening the nuclear family, on defending the "American



way of life," on preaching for small families—a set of white, prosperous norms. It was not committed to strengthening women's choices.

A Legacy of Politics and Theory

These complexities—the conservative opposition to birth control as well as programs of reproductive control quite devoid of feminist purpose—meant that when feminism revived, we did not have immediate access to the feminist legacy of birth control politics and theory. This separation from our history confused us, made us unclear about exactly what our demands were. In the early 1970s few feminists could distinguish birth control from population control movements, and most of us had never heard of eugenics. Abortion was not usually conceived as part of the long campaign for contraception (with the consequence that we have been too slow to understand that the leadership of the anti-abortion movement is ultimately against contraception too). Abortion rights activists had to rediscover belatedly the suspicion and anger of minority groups against the eugenic tradition in birth control work, and the resentment of Third World groups against the population control tradition.

There is danger also of losing sight of the larger social significance of what we are after. Abortion and contraception have been presented as civil liberties, as rights of privacy, as strengthening to marriage, as enhancing sexuality, as public health measures. All of these claims are correct, and need saying.

But the underlying principle of our reproductive rights demands is increasing women's freedom and power, and if we lose this focus, we weaken our movement. In Boston in the late 1970s, when many of the heterosexual feminists I knew had become politically less active and were spending more time on family, education, and jobs, I used to marvel at how many lesbians were active in the Abortion Action Coalition. These women, not involved in "traditional" family life, having little personal need for legal abortion, were perhaps for that very reason less distracted from the main goal of *our* reproductive rights movement: women's freedom and power.



The opposition sometimes appears to know better than us, to be more honest than our side, about the radical implications of reproductive rights for women. We are talking about undoing the basic gender organization of society, traditional "femininity," and the particular and inevitable attachment of women to domesticity and child-raising. Conventional definitions of gender are products of a near-universal division of labor in which women bear and rear children without much choice. We are talking about reconstructing not only femininity but masculinity, in the process altering the bases of our culture. In many ways our

nineteenth century predecessors were clearer about this than we have been. The suffragist Elizabeth Oakes Smith said in 1852, "Do we fully understand that we aim at nothing less than an entire subversion of the present order of society, a dissolution of the whole existing social compact?"

When the pro-family movement says we are *anti-family*, they are in a way right, given what they mean by family. We must not let accusations of being anti-family silence our grievances against the kind of family structure that perpetuated male dominance, a family structure that required women's fulltime domesticity and men's monopoly on economic power and removal from household responsibility. The reproductive rights movement is implicitly calling for the "disestablishment" of this kind of family. Let us be clear what disestablish means. I refer to the sense that the Reformation disestablished the church, separated religion from the state, and offered citizens free choice in religious activity. Disestablishment does not mean that we are out to destroy the family or to criticize "traditional" families when they are freely chosen. Rather it means that people deserve free choice in family formation as in religion, from which free choice in reproductive decisions flows.

Fostering Equality, Fighting Norms

This will not be an easy demand to achieve. Far more deeply than the Catholic church ever was, certain family forms have become required and others branded deviant. The one



From Gender Advertisements, Erving Goffman.

correct sort of family has been established by societies and then by states as the unit of economic, political and social responsibility and authority. Today in economically advanced countries a process of "disestablishing" the normative family has been proceeding for decades. Since the beginning of the century, 20 percent, on average, of families have been "female-headed" in big cities. As the population gets older, and as marriage is delayed, more and more single people live alone or with roommates without children. In some cities now, gay couples are demanding legal recognition as alternative families. This disestablishing process is fueled not by feminism or by a reproductive rights movement but by the nature of industrial economies and the individualism they produce. This process can hardly go smoothly, without reaction, and it is annoying that we feminists and pro-choice advocates should be blamed for its upheavals. But this transformation to a variety of voluntary familial and household forms is ultimately right, and we should stand up for it.

Not only are the consequences of reproductive freedom profound, but so are the prerequisites. In all these social changes birth control is both effect and cause, usually in that order. Birth control did not create women's employment, rather the demand for birth control followed from it. Birth control did not create extramarital sex or divorce, but followed them. Yet, for individual women, birth control has been empowering. Birth control is a necessary condition for women's freedom, and women's freedom is a necessary condition for taking advantage of birth control. We often find this a vicious cycle: Those of us who have worked with teenagers, for example, on birth control and sex education know that women cannot use these options until they want them, and cannot want them until there are other more attractive alternatives. These alternatives would need to be very attractive to compete with motherhood's attractions. There is still a tendency in modern reproductive rights propaganda to ignore the pleasures of raising children, or to assume that those pleasures are only realizable by the affluent. A reproductive rights movement should be equally vociferous about opposing AFDC cutbacks and demanding

public responsibility for high quality child care services. On the other hand, the long history of birth control use and demographic trends suggests strongly that where women have the options of useful and interesting education and work, most will choose to limit their child-bearing. In other words, the vicious cycle can become a growth cycle, in which the opportunity for a bit of autonomy creates the demand for yet more.

Reproductive rights has always had a more complicated message to send to the so-called "right to life" movement. It has meant supporting motherhood as a choice but opposing it as a compulsory womanly condition or consequence of heterosexual sex. Today free motherhood must mean shared parenting as well, shared not only by personal partners but also by a societal acceptance of responsibility for the welfare of children where parents alone cannot provide it. Making motherhood entirely voluntary would actually raise its status, just as workers who can choose what they do can demand higher salaries and more respect. Women's actual practice of reproductive freedom would go a long way towards undermining the imprisonment of women as a low-wage labor force.

Conclusion

Strategically, this history suggests that the struggle for reproductive rights is a multi-issue struggle, whether we like it or not. I don't mean that it ought to be multi-issue; I mean that it *is* if it is serious. There is no other way to get reproductive rights for women except to consider us all as whole, indivisible, human beings whose problems are overlapping. We need good jobs to use birth control; we need birth control to get jobs. We need education to have jobs and self-esteem; we need birth control to get those things. Similar causal cycles exist with respect to education and political activism. Historically, the problem of realizing this stance in the reproductive rights movement has been that women are not a unified subject. We are individually different and differentiated by class and race. To some extent, the whole birth control movement was created by women who already had enough other "privilege so that



The great escape, photomontage by Cath Tate © 1985.

contraception or abortion could really help. For many women, the prerequisites for taking advantage of birth control are not there. The more our movement avoided and denied the multi-issue implications of what we have wanted, the more we narrowed our base of social support.

I do not mean that organizations ought to give up particular focuses and take on all the needs of women. Or that women should work only for the needs of women and girls, ignoring those of men and boys. I do believe that single-issue reproductive rights organizations ought to understand and acknowledge their historic position as part of a women's rights movement, and express in the underlying philosophy of their words and actions a commitment to equality and freedom for women.

Others disagree, and say we cannot afford any moral purism, and must take all the support we can get. But my concerns are less moral than practical. I think it doesn't work to attempt to disguise the radicalism of what

feminists want, because our opponents sense it anyway. The society is in rapid change and we can only win if we make clear our commitment to one direction of change rather than another.

Recently some have spoken of "post-feminism." This seems to mean that feminism is outdated, a conclusion that does not fit my observation. I find there is a revival of the stereotyping of "feminists," although the stereotypes are confused and contradictory: dykes; elegantly dressed businesswomen; "prissy" women with no sense of humor. Certainly there are some who are no longer active in women's politics, but there are many now active who weren't previously. There is the usual—and, I think inevitable—phenomenon of women who say they "aren't feminists but..." and go on to agree with most feminist demands. Having recently moved from the East to the agricultural Midwest, I meet a less sophisticated group of college students. They are less accustomed to political activity, or political identification, than students were fifteen years ago. They also have a tendency to believe that they can count on gains for women that we now know to be evanescent and unreliable. Yet this very confidence, their goals, their style, their values have been deeply affected by the feminist movement. I see no reason to doubt that they will resent discrimination and constriction of opportunity just as bitterly as my generation did. And I see no reason to doubt that they will discover also that the only way to battle is through collective action. Feminism has always been a changing historical phenomenon, different in content and form, ebbing and flowing for nearly 200 years now, as the reproductive rights struggle has for 150 years. I do not believe that we are "post" either of these.

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NEW NOTECARDS

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This letter has been sent to you for good luck. The original copy is from the Netherlands and has been around the world nine times. Luck is now in your hands. To ensure your not losing this luck, you must send this out within four days. Send copies of this letter to people you think need good luck.

DO NOT SEND MONEY, for fate has no price. Do NOT keep this letter. Do NOT throw it away.

Tom Mattingly, National Lawyers Guild member, received the letter and settled a lawsuit out of court for over \$75,000. A community organizer in Oakland, California, received over \$40,000 in funding for her group, but lost it when she broke the chain. A Boston-area college teacher was denied tenure shortly after failing to circulate the letter. Bob Avakian was elected chairman of the RCP after receiving the letter but was railroaded by the government when he threw the letter out. Winston Wellington, a DSA member, was elected to the city council of Waukesha, Wisconsin four days after getting the letter. Ann Templeton received \$45,000 in settlement of a suit against the Iowa State Police. Pat Nelson's article was accepted for publication by *IN THESE TIMES* three days after receiving the letter, but she threw it out and has yet to be paid by them.

Since this chain must continue to tour the world, you must make identical copies of this and circulate them to friends, parents, or associates. After a few days, you will get a surprise. This is true even if you are a materialist and not superstitious. Take note of the following: The Tucson Community News tossed out the letter and lost a libel suit shortly thereafter; the Illinois Democratic Party ignored the letter and was infiltrated by Lyndon Larouche; *Liberation*, *Seven Days*, and *democracy* refused to print this letter. David Horowitz, of *Ranparts* lost the letter. He found it several years later, circulated it and got a job with *Working Papers*. He received another one later on, lost that copy, and is now a Reagan voter. For no reasons whatsoever should this chain be broken.

REMEMBER NO MONEY.



BORDER WARS:

The Science and Politics of Artificial Intelligence

Paul N. Edwards

In 1981, the science of artificial intelligence strutted out of academic obscurity to take up a leading role in the imminent global market struggle around “fifth-generation” computing. This unprecedented phase of computer evolution is beginning to reverberate, today, throughout high-tech industry and science. This essay speculates on the social, political, and cultural implications of its development, with special attention to certain social categories whose meanings it is likely to affect.

As artificial intelligence (AI) advances, certain borders between minds and machines; men and women; science and politics; and technology and militarism start to crumble. Contests around their reconstruction, under the new rules of meaning in post-industrial cybernetic society, represent a conceptual politics and a nascent epistemology. In this sense AI is far more than a tool. It is also a discourse or world-view with an inherent political dimension. The sociologist Sherry Turkle has called AI an “imperialistic” discipline, in the sense that it “invades” other disciplines “not only to carry off natural resources (i.e., to borrow concepts and methods) but to replace native ‘superstitions’ with [its] ‘superior’ worldview.”¹ It has “invaded” psychology, linguistics, and philosophy, changing the nature of debates about consciousness, behavior, language, and thought by bringing the power of formal

systems and computer modelling to bear on those subjects. AI is beginning to affect our understanding of the boundary between the rational/deliberative and emotional/intuitive aspects of human thinking. If it also alters the values associated with those capacities, it may have profound effects on stereotypes of masculine and feminine characters. AI is now “in-

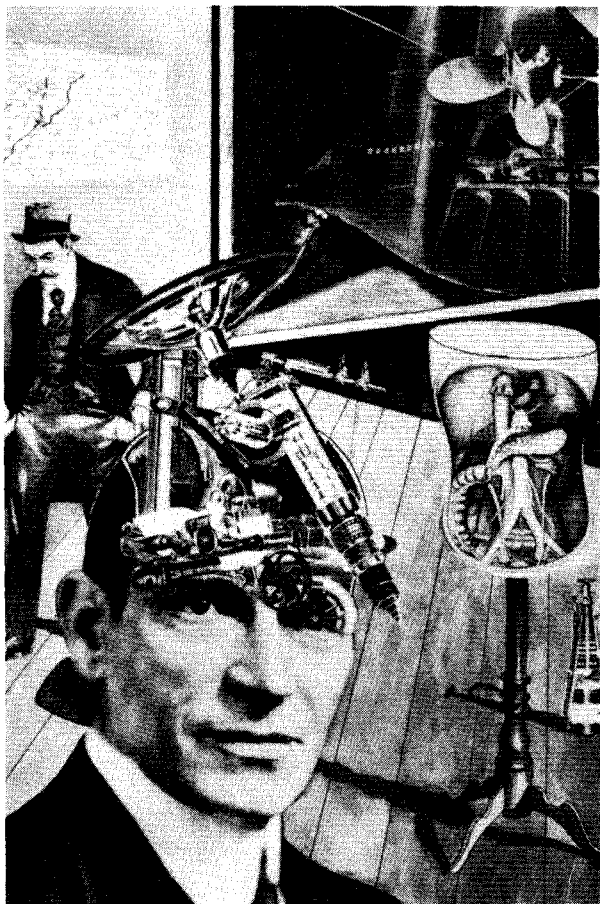
begun in October 1983. By studying its rhetoric, goals, and conceptual apparatus, I want to show how one science is political through and through—not just in its “applications” or its “implications,” but in its most central activities—and how deeply the very practice of AI hinges on the systematic construction and deconstruction of boundaries.

1. The Fifth Generation

The first four “generations” of digital computers were, in essence, successive hardware innovations leading to order-of-magnitude reductions of scale: vacuum tube, transistor, integrated circuit (IC), and very-large-scale integrated circuit (VLSI) technologies superseded each other at roughly ten-year intervals. Ever more sophisticated programming languages and techniques accompanied the vastly increased storage capacities and execution speeds. The results comprise the familiar paraphernalia of the computer age: timesharing systems, word processors, microcomputers, optical scanners, industrial robots, video games.

But the fifth generation, though it hangs on continued technological innovation, is essentially a conceptual transformation. The electronics of fifth-generation computers are being designed around decentralized “parallel processing” architectures, which execute numerous instructions simultaneously. This represents a fundamental shift away from the well-understood sequential control processes named after their originator, the mathematician John von Neumann, on which virtually all computer logics have so far been based. Engineers envision increases in speed of several orders of magnitude, because parallel-process structures need not wait for one operation to be completed before beginning the next. Fifth-generation microchip designers face the immense task of creating the new *logical* architectures necessary to coordinate large numbers of relatively simple microprocessors, more than the physical problems of packing their circuitry onto minute silicon surfaces.

The ultimate fifth-generation goal is to build “intelligent knowledge-based systems” (IKBS’s). Instead of numbers and arithmetic, IKBS’s use rules, symbols, and concepts as



Tatlin at home, 1920. Raoul Hausman collage.

vading” both commercial and military technologies. But the culture of the invaders is always affected by that of the invaded, and AI is no exception. Its peculiar nature—a science that is a technology; a technology that is a science—involves the politics of its development with its cultural impact and its scientific status, calling traditional divisions among those spheres into question.

A case in point is the five-year, \$600 million Strategic Computing Initiative of the Defense Advance Research Projects Agency (DARPA),

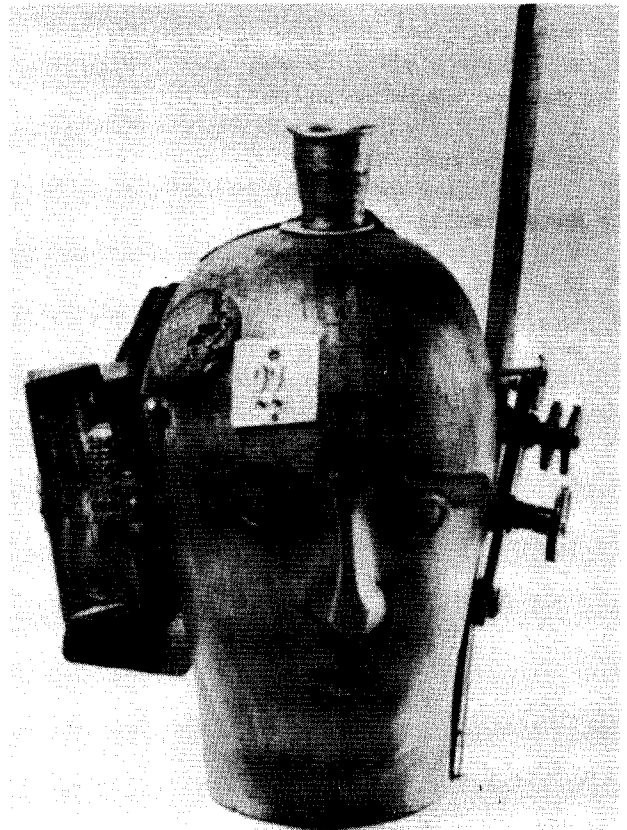
building blocks, and logical inferences as basic operations. A discipline known as “knowledge engineering” is emerging, whose practitioners spend their time analyzing particular domains of knowledge and codifying expertise into the explicit rules, symbols, and concepts needed for the computer to model a human expert in a specific domain of knowledge, whether it be medicine or auto mechanics. A few such expert systems already exist, though estimates of the number of actually functional systems varied, in 1983, from 50 or more to fewer than four.² Among the most well-known are Stanford University’s MYCIN, a medical expert system that diagnoses blood-borne bacterial infections and recommends therapeutic regimes, and Digital Equipment Corporation’s XCON, which plans optimum configurations for large computer systems. In addition, fifth-generation computers are expected to understand natural language, “reason” like human beings within limited domains of knowledge, “see” with high acuity, and command other “intelligent” processes.

Fifth-generation computing became an industry buzzword when the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry announced in 1981 a joint government-industry-university research project with a budget of \$855 million over 10 years. The project defines the breakthroughs needed for the fifth generation to make its appearance and provides teams of researchers with funding and facilities. Officially, the effort has four goals:

- (1) enhancement of productivity in low-productivity areas, such as nonstandardized operations in smaller industries;
- (2) conservation of national resources and energy through optimal energy conservation;
- (3) establishment of medical, educational, and other kinds of support systems for solving complex social problems, such as the transition to a society made up largely of the elderly; and
- (4) fostering of international cooperation through the machine translation of languages.³

Like most of Japan’s recent technological initiatives, the plan raised the hackles of American business and government leaders. They saw in this seemingly benign list another gauntlet cast down on the commercial battlefield by an industry unfairly patronized

through vaguely un-American government support, as well as a major potential threat to “national security.” The popular-press version of the controversy, *The Fifth Generation: Artificial Intelligence and Japan’s Computer Challenge to the World*⁴ proposed a U.S. version of the same project called the “Center for Knowledge Technology.”



The Spirit of our Time—Mechanical Head, 1919, Raoul Hausmann.

2. Machine Intelligence and Military Force

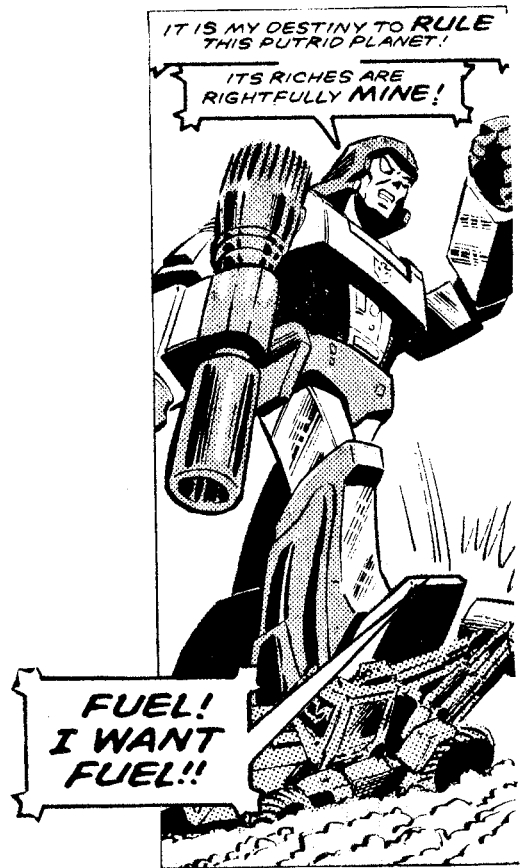
But soon after *The Fifth Generation* went to press in 1983, DARPA announced its own Strategic Computing Initiative (SCI), aimed at producing military machines far more intelligent than even “smart” weapons like the cruise missile. The project involves universities, industry, and government research centers. Its budget for the first five years is \$600 million. Costs are conservatively estimated at \$1 billion over the next decade⁵—by far the largest amount ever spent on artificial research in this country.

The SCI has three applications as research goals. The first is an autonomous vehicle guidance system, which might be used in a robot tank or automated supply convoy. The second, an intelligent fighter-pilot's assistant, would be voice-operated, able to understand spoken English even amidst the noise of a jet cockpit, capable of performing some of the tasks presently left to the pilot and of rerouting electrical signals and fluids in the event of damage to the plane. Finally, DARPA hopes to create a battle-management system which would not only maintain an analysis of battle-field configurations, interpreting the vast quantities of data supplied by air-, land-, sea-, and space-based sensors, but also plan response strategies, evaluate risks, and assist in response execution, possibly by launching automatic weapons under its own control.

These projects involve vast leaps forward in almost every area of computer science: micro-processor design, parallel processing architectures, expert system technology, pattern recognition, language and speech analysis, and so on. The magnitude of DARPA's ambitions can be seen through the following comparison:

an expert system to guide an autonomous land vehicle moving at 60 kilometers per hour would probably require 6,500 rules firing at a rate of 7,000 rules per second. . . . Current expert systems generally contain only about 2,000 rules and fire at rates of only 50 to 100 rules per second. Even the vision (image understanding) system that would interpret sensor data to help the vehicle navigate would itself require computational abilities on the order of 10 billion to 100 billion instructions per second—at least two orders of magnitude better than the fastest that can be offered by the computers of today.⁶

The plan's success depends on a large number of "scheduled" breakthroughs, both scientific and technological. Many, if not most, American computer scientists are highly skeptical of DARPA's ability to reach its goals—or even to come anywhere close—within the SCI's ten-year plan. Even scientists sympathetic to DARPA, such as the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center's Mark Stefik, give little credence to the plan's timetables.⁷ While few would go so far as to say the plan's goals are unachievable in principle, many computer professionals believe the



next century may be well under way before such accomplishments as fully functional computerized image analysis for an autonomous vehicle moving at high speed through unfamiliar, hostile terrain are realized. Nevertheless, the program has proceeded at full steam since work began in 1984.

3. Border Wars

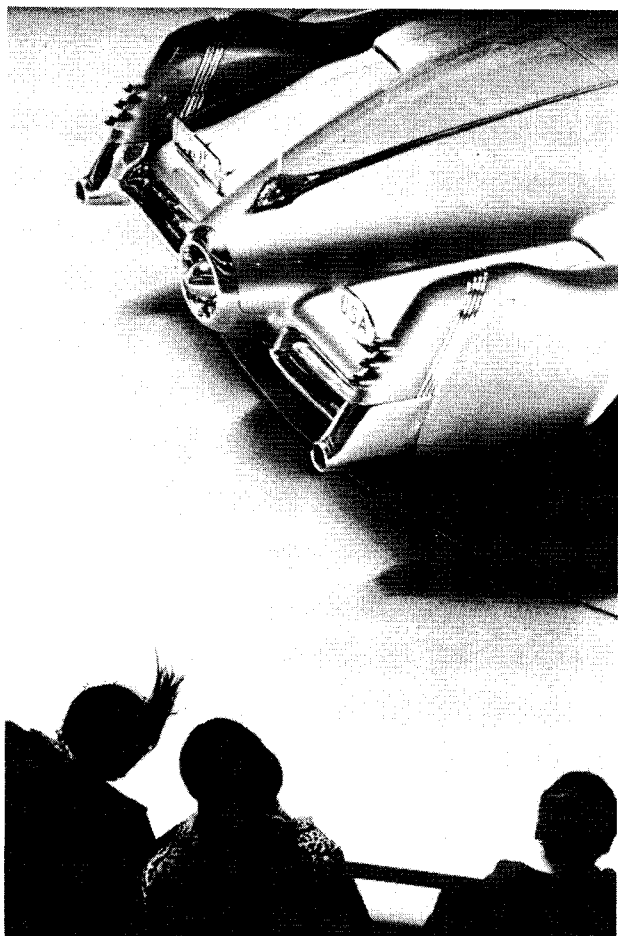
The Strategic Computing Initiative ties together the primary American military and capitalist goals: strategic superiority over the U.S.S.R. and economic superiority over Japan. The tired argument pressed to this service holds that since Japanese merchants will trade with anyone, the U.S. must lead in artificial intelligence to preserve a strategic military edge based on technological rather than numerical superiority. To remain "free" economically—so the story goes—America must remain militarily superior; therefore, in this case, military and commercial goals coincide.

The boundary between the interests of private U.S. capital and those of the Department of Defense, a high-tech public bureaucracy with established imperatives of its own (among them, to create and continually refine weapons systems), is itself strategic. In public discourse we can watch it be alternately erected and dismantled. When DARPA talks to one branch of government as an agent of another, the barrier stands. The purpose of the SCI is “solely ‘to retain our national security lead over the Soviet Union’,” DARPA’s then-director Robert Cooper stated before the House Science and Technology Committee in 1983, emphatically denying economic competition to be a purpose of the program.⁸ Military research funding, even amidst the current climate of hysteria, remains politically touchy, contested in Congress since the Mansfield Amendment of 1970 restricted Pentagon support for basic research to areas with “potential relationship” to military needs. So Cooper defends the SCI by pointing to its specifically military technological goals. He makes it clear that this is a special, carefully directed science, not a “pork barrel” grant for “basic research” by freeloading academics or businessmen. Congress demands that the military state restrict itself to the defense of the national dignity in crisis, leaving civil society to pursue its own ends—ideologically defined as economic success—under the aegis of free enterprise. Military science, industrial R & D, and “pure research” are differentiated; they ought to have nothing to do with each other, except by coincidence.

But when the agency functions *outside* the bureaucracy, representing government as a whole to particular public interest groups, it justifies its work in a different set of terms, pointing to commercial benefits—dismantling the border between military and civilian science. The same Robert Cooper, writing for an IEEE report on fifth-generation computing, characterized the SCI as “a simultaneous response to military needs and the maintenance of a strong industrial base”⁹; SCI project director, Robert Kahn, wrote of its benefits in productivity, competitive advantage, health care, education, and “opportunity in the space environment.”¹⁰ The same science bringing us robot tanks will also, apparently, churn out

cheaper cars and more effective doctors. From this viewpoint DARPA’s function appears no different from the civilian research agencies. It can even claim an aura of economic heroism for taking on a screwball project too expensive and farsighted for industry. Indeed, the SCI’s supporters can point to the numerous new technologies created under other DARPA-sponsored research programs, such as computer time-sharing and computer networks, many of them brought into commercial use before finding their way into military systems.¹¹

In this realm of discourse, support for military science takes place on the grounds of the overarching need for security, and opposition takes the form of principled objections to the domination of science by the military (for example, through the idea that science should be “pure” or should support only peaceful and beneficial technologies). Both support and



Motorama, New York City, 1953. Dennis Stock photo.

opposition focus on whether it is *right* that the military take a leading role in scientific research, with all the implications of such a role for research directions, the competitive position of private enterprise, government interference, and so on.

Thus the various discursive strategies depend more on the purposes and roles of the speakers than on the "actual" character of the project under consideration. The question is not simply "whether there is a difference" between military and civilian science, but when, why, and for whom making or denying the distinction becomes important. Reconnecting contested boundaries to human interests and enterprises in this way allows us to understand how the categories presupposed by political debates are fluid, mobile ones, freeing us to recognize alternative political meanings within the new conceptual borders of AI.

So far this is just politics as usual in the modern state, reflecting the different ways state and civil society relate in providing us with economic benefits, on the one hand, and securing our collective dignity, on the other. The question remains: what about the science? What relationship does the diplomacy of a Congressional hearing have to the actual research DARPA sponsors, and why does it matter?

Let us look at some examples. Gallium arsenide (GaAs) semiconductors are the centerpiece of DARPA's fifth-generation device technology program. While some circuit designers claim GaAs chips will reach speeds up to five times as fast as silicon while consuming one-tenth as much power, at present they are a clumsy, costly, underdeveloped technology. Yet two of the first SCI goals were to build, by the end of 1984, a pilot fabrication plant for



From ad for Northrup Corporation aerodynamics.

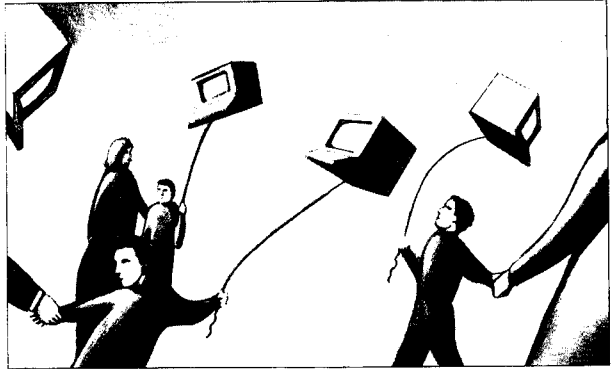
GaAs chips, and to set design rules for GaAs VLSI technology. Military buyers took 70 percent of the gallium arsenide market in 1983. Though commercial development is expected to raise the civilian market share, GaAs chips "will not significantly affect the market for silicon devices until well into the next century."¹²

Why did DARPA commit itself so heavily to a product whose current advantages seem relatively slight? The answer lies in a key military advantage of this technology: extreme "radiation hardness," which would make GaAs microchips highly resistant to the so-called electromagnetic pulse (EMP) effects of nuclear weapons. So there are two reasons for DARPA's commitment. The first, increased speed, crosses the military science/civilian street border. It can be trotted out to intrigue the IEEE or AI researchers hungry for microprocessor power, justifying the military research programs on utilitarian grounds. The second—perhaps the most important—is strictly military in nature¹³: preserving military electronic capacities in the event of nuclear war. This serves to justify the SCI to a Congress interested in keeping military applications and "basic research" apart for reasons of principle. Gallium arsenide, then, is doped with politics. The military intent behind its development will be literally built into the machinery of artificial intelligence.

Why, to take another example, does the military need the kind of "automated battlefield" strategic computing might bring to perfection? Lenny Siegel and John Markoff claim that

though proponents of the automated battlefield concept argue that technological warfare is more effective than human combat, the Army's desire to automate is derived from politics. As the Vietnam War . . . demonstrated, Americans—be they soldiers or civilians—are hesitant to support wars of intervention in which the lives of American troops are threatened.¹⁴

Military planners plead the case for artificially intelligent weapons to Congress in terms of "productivity"—they are "force multipliers." But making warfare less demanding in terms of soldiers' lives may make it more acceptable as a tool for political intervention.¹⁵



This frightening prospect seems especially relevant today. Many Third World debtor governments are walking an economic and political tightrope. Yet they possess scarce, politically and ecologically volatile resources necessary to support high-tech culture (petroleum, "strategic" metals, etc.) whose free flow in world trade the U.S. is committed to preserve. They also import significant quantities of U.S.-made high-tech goods, both military and non-military, and provide the cheap, largely female labor that keeps U.S. industry alive. From the history of war after World War II, it seems apparent both that Third World nations will become dumping grounds for "intelligent" weapons systems they cannot afford, and that machine intelligences may eventually play decisive roles in armed political struggles, tying the participants ever closer to the superpowers through the borrowed funds necessary to buy them.

4. Militarizing the Mind

The move to automate warfare should make us wonder about another shifting border, the line between human and machine.¹⁶

The rise of systems theory, operations research, and cybernetics during and after the Second World War postulated that human intelligence could be based on a machine model and vice versa. Weapons systems such as anti-aircraft guns, bombers, and submarines were theorized as integrated human-machine units: cyborgs¹⁹, where the distinction matters only as a barrier to the efficiency of the whole mechanism:organism. Perfecting systems of "C3I"


(command, control, communications, and information), critical to the functioning of command chains, surveillance, targeting, and nearly everything else of military importance, also involves theorizing and coordinating the behavior of both humans and electronic devices in information exchange and decision-making. This is not just a theory: the practical importance of C3I can be measured by its \$31 billion share of the 1984 defense budget.

The DARPA initiative erases even further the boundary between human and machine processes, as robot tanks roam battlefields by themselves, fighter pilots talk to their jets, and naval commanders argue strategy with battle management computers prepared to defend their recommendations with reasoning. Fighting units, like factories, are places where the socio-political nature of machines becomes glaringly obvious. The line between soldier and

weapon, person and tool, blurs rapidly under these conditions. Many young people already think of computers as alive, with personalities, thoughts, and feelings of their own¹⁸; in such a world, will they be wrong? What will be the point of maintaining an ideology of that border? Personhood may no longer exclude those without a cortex and a housing of skin, just as weapons may no longer be construed only as inanimate objects.

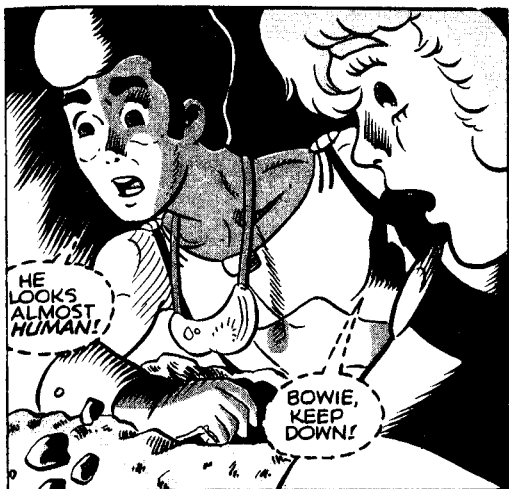
In any event, these trends represent the progress of what could be called the *militarization of knowledge*. This has several senses. First, and most obviously, AI depends historically on military financial support. Second, AI, like other sciences before it, is now being asked to take its directives straight from military strategists, thus becoming to some extent directionally captive. As DARPA puts it, technological visions "pull" scientific development.¹⁹ Third, as I have argued elsewhere, the rule-based, formal-mechanical mode of understanding AI promotes is profoundly suited to military social structures using rigorous discipline and narrowly constricted methods and domains of action to combine humans and machines in large-scale cybernetic systems.²⁰ Fourth, perhaps most important, is the sense in which our self-knowledge is altered by the military purposes behind SCI-directed AI research. *The being who holds the conceptual location nearest to our own will no longer be, say, God, or an ape, but a walking, talking electromechanical weapon like the killer robots so popular in recent years as children's toys.* This new anthropomorphic mirror, like those that preceded it, will provide us with metaphors for understanding our place in the world. We may not yet be able to see what those metaphors will be, but their importance is predicted by the significance of the two others just mentioned.²¹

Throughout most of the past 2000 years, Western "man" gauged his moral worth and the value of his material products against divine perfection and omnipotent creatorship. This resulted in the imagery of the Great Chain of Being, a hierarchical arrangement of the natural order justifying a fixed and absolute moral standard, and allowing for human moral perfectibility in an afterlife. After Darwin, this image was replaced by an ecologically oriented



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AND WHEN WE DO THE ROBOTECH MASTERS WILL AGAIN RULE THE GALAXY!



vision of our place in the world, one governed by our resemblance to other living creatures, by the puzzle of our extraordinary abilities, and by the demand to make moral sense of a universe built on chance and natural law. In the age of artificial intelligence, we are already confronting—in science fiction and military fantasy, if not (yet) in fact—the profound questions of our ultimate reducibility as biological machines, of the implications of our seemingly implacable drive to reproduce ourselves in *artifactual form*. At issue in the DARPA program is the degree to which these questions will reach their concrete resolution in the form of weaponry. The militarization of knowledge implied in these systems and the power that they wield leads to the militarization of our self-concept as human beings.

5. Gendered Robots

The militarization of the human/machine border is intimately linked to another boundary tortured by artificial intelligence research. It comes to light in the question, what *is* this “intelligence” that scientists are constructing?

Two somewhat divergent strands of effort compose AI work. One is “intelligent machines,” where scientists try to write programs whose activities would be called intelligent were a human to perform the same cognitive tasks. This “intelligence” mimics only the achievements, not the methods, of human thinking. The other is “cognitive science,”

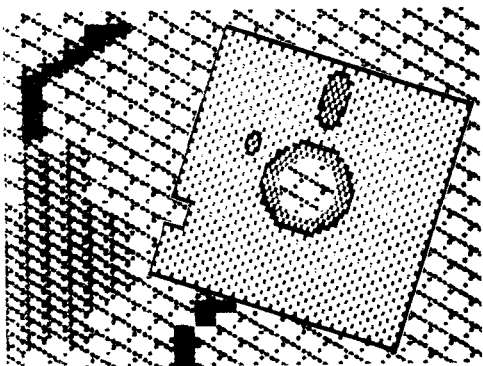
which seeks to model, accurately and in detail, the ways human thought processes are actually organized. But the basic paradigm of intelligence is the same in each: “knowledge-based problem-solving.” Most conceptions involve sets of facts, expressed as propositions, and rules for inferring relations among them. By connecting its facts using these rules, the system can answer questions by actually generating “new” knowledge not directly expressed in the data base.

The box below sketches the different styles of thinking many cognitive psychologists believe are employed by the left and right hemispheres of the human brain. Note the result of replacing the headings “Left Brain” and “Right Brain” with “Man” and “Woman” respectively: a near-perfect picture of the cognitive qualities of stereotypes challenged by feminism. But while true human intelligence presumably reflects a fusion of these sets of qualities, the “intelligence” being produced in artificial form is purely “left-brain”—purely “masculine.” AI is a kind of pure intellect or rationality, incapable of emotional responses or of comprehending situations in any other way than as “problems” reducible to instances of general rules.

Left Brain	Right Brain
Intellect	Intuition
Convergent	Divergent
Intellectual	Sensuous
Deductive	Imaginative
Active	Receptive
Discrete	Continuous
Abstract	Concrete
Realistic	Impulsive
Propositional	Imaginative
Transformational	Associative
Lineal	Nonlinear
Historical	Timeless
Explicit	Tacit
Objective	Subjective

Characteristics of Left- and Right-Brain Cognition
 From Joseph Bogen, cited in Jeremy Campbell, *Grammatical Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), pp. 242-3. These adjectives were culled directly from journal articles on hemispherical differences.

In other words, DARPA's robots are gendered. They are "masculine" in the full ideological sense of that word which includes, integrally, the soldiering and violence for whose sake men have had to give up much of their in-born intuitive and emotional capacity. This, of course, is a metaphorical claim, but it points to the fundamental connection high technology makes between masculinity as instrumental rationality, as "mind" in its most abstract sense,



and masculinity as violence. Like other stereotypes, this picture of men is false to the core—but this one, besides being embodied in men themselves through culturally enforced internalization, has also been embodied in high tech weaponry. These "male machines," however, lack the fundamental human possibility of recovering from the damage done by stereotypes. There is nothing far-fetched in this suggestion that much AI research reflects a social relationship: "intelligent" behavior means the instrumental power Western man has developed to an unprecedented extent under capitalism and which he has always wielded over women. Thus the mind/machine boundary and the man/machine boundary are the same, aspects of the historically bifurcated notion of "intelligence" which identified a narrow rationality with masculinity, and DARPA's artificial intelligence appears as a modern attempt to melt the two together. Again we discover a politics literally embodied in science.

The first generation of the fifth generation will, then, appear in the guise of militarized, "masculine" intelligences: technological soldiers. The presence of such beings among us will have powerful effects on the construction of psychological realities. Metaphors of man-

hood associated with war may find new forms, different from the virtues of courage and heroism, in the complete replication of masculinity in intelligent combat machines. DARPA's robots will be the best approximation we have, outside a comic book, to Superman. Rather than fight in the flesh, men are programming manhood into armored alter egos.

6. Looking for the Edges: Science, Technology, and Politics

Is AI research "science"? Most of its practitioners would probably claim such status for it, though they might liken it to mathematics or psychology more than to biology or physics. Seeing science as a systematic construction and deconstruction of boundaries makes it easier to understand why they are justified, if anyone is, in naming themselves scientists.

The final border I want to discuss here, then, marks "science" off from "technology" as pure from impure, mental from manual, creative thinking from speculation.

Every science is implicitly engaged in marking out its own domain, in separating itself from the "mere" technologies it spawns, and in articulating, defending, and promulgating the systems of concepts—ways of marking up the world—whose manipulation leads to understanding. Most sciences with military connections also take up directly political efforts, in their discourse about themselves, to distance their "real" interests from their "spurious" military applications. High-tech science must, then, police its boundaries: those between science and technology, or between the scientific/technical elite of places like California's Silicon Valley and the minority and female workers who perform the manual work that keeps that elite in wealth and power. Especially, the form of knowledge called science must be kept separate from all other forms, such as ethics, art, engineering, tinkering, magic, politics, religion, poetry, or common sense.

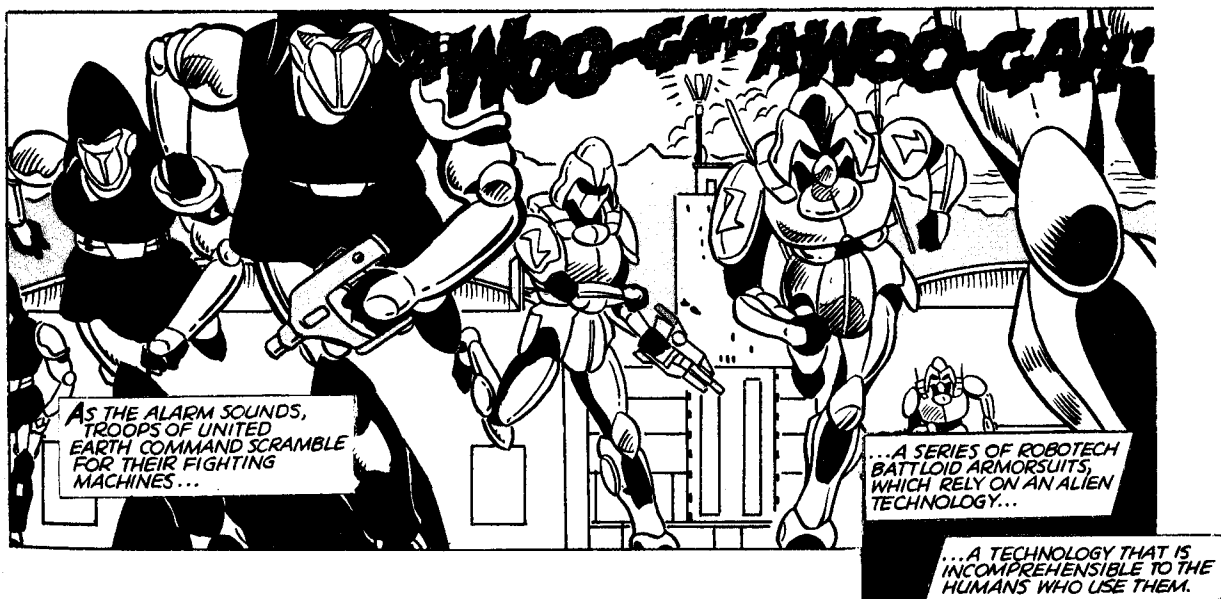
"Get to the science" and get away from its mere "technological applications": this is how talking about AI as an element of high-tech militarism tempts us, in impatience, to respond. Curiously, for artificial intelligence work the science/technology division appears at once as

a driving force in its research program and as one impossible to locate within it. AI researchers erase the human/machine border when they *practice* science. The dogma is that since a human brain is *some* sort of machine, there *must* be a way for some other machine to imitate its functioning. So AI research (science) *consists of* the attempt to build an imitative machine (technology). But they write it back in when they must defend the scientific character of their work—when to have created a functioning model would diminish them to the status of mere technologists. Steve Woolgar reports an AI workers' aphorism which holds that "if it's useful, it isn't AI." Scientists bring the difference between human and machine into play as a way of perpetuating the search for the "true nature" of intelligence—the genuine scientific quest—via the claim that any machine able to perform real-world cognitive tasks cannot be "actually" intelligent *because it is a machine*.

We could also say that because behavioral criteria are the only ones available for assessing whether a device (or a person) actually *is* "intelligent," AI workers must produce *powers* to act intelligently simultaneously with their *knowledge* of the nature of intelligence. Yet to picture themselves to the world and to each other, and to justify their own social positions as (mostly) university-based scientists, they *disso-*

ciate knowledge from power by asserting that the abstraction (the program), not the intelligent activity it produced, was all they sought. In the case of DARPA's robots, such a thesis would amount, in my view, to self-deception at best: it would be like claiming that the massive U.S. technical and economic investment in particle physics research has nothing whatever to do with the technology of nuclear weapons.

A computerized embodiment of "intelligence" is a technological defense of the concepts it embodies. There may be no such thing as a "science" of artificial intelligence, differentiable from a production of technical objects and consisting of some kind of disinterested or generalized "knowledge" about intelligence or cognition. Nor will focusing narrowly on making machines smarter keep AI pure of implications for human self-knowledge, since we supply the motives for every task we ask machines to do. But this is probably true of most other sciences as well, at least to the extent that the history of scientific instruments has been arbitrarily separated from the history of their "non-scientific" employment. Political struggles and powers, and social relationships, are built into scientific tools and research programs, just as they, in late 20th-century America, are built into the political contests and social identities that compose our world.



Footnotes

1. Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 251.
2. The reason for this large variation is widespread disagreement over which systems qualify as "expert," how well they work, and sometimes over whether they work at all. See Steve Woolgar, "Why Not A Sociology of Machines? An evaluation of prospects for an ethnography of machine intelligence informed by themes in the recent social study of science," discussion draft. Program in Science, Technology, and Society, MIT, 1984.
3. Tohru Moto-oka, "The Fifth Generation: A Quantum Jump in Friendliness," *IEEE Spectrum* 20 (11): 46-47.
4. Edward Feigenbaum and Pamela McCorduck, *The Fifth Generation: Japan's Computer Challenge to the World* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1983).
5. DARPA money has backed a major proportion of cutting-edge computer science research in the U.S. ever since its creation in 1958. Robert Sproull, a former DARPA director, maintains that "a whole generation of computer experts got their start from DARPA funding" and that "all the ideas that are going into the fifth-generation project—artificial intelligence, programming—ultimately started from DARPA-funded research." (Quoted in *IEEE Spectrum* 19 (8): 72-3.) Computer scientists at major universities confirm this assessment.
6. Janet Raloff, "DOD Targets Fifth Generation Too," *Science News* 125: 333.
7. Mark Stefik, "Strategic Computing at DARPA: An Assessment," (unpublished ms., Xerox PARC, 1984).
8. Raloff, *op. cit.*
9. Robert Cooper and Robert Kahn, "SCS: Toward Supersmart Computers for the Military," *IEEE Spectrum* 20 (11): p. 53.
10. Robert Kahn, "A New Generation in Computing," *IEEE Spectrum* 20 (11): p. 36.
11. See Don Nielson, "DARPA's Strategic Computing Initiative: An Overview," in Paul N. Edwards and Richard Gordon, eds., *Strategic Computing: Defense Research and High Technology* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming).
12. F.J. Catalano, "Gallium arsenide vendors look to the future," *High Technology* 4 (7): 52.
13. Radiation hardness is a factor in a few non-military applications, such as satellite communications hardware. But these do not urgently require the extreme sophistication of the results DARPA hopes to achieve.
14. Lenny Siegel and John Markoff, "Military Micros," in R. Gordon (ed.) *Microelectronics in Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming), ms. p. 9.
15. Also see the analysis of Jonathan Jacky in Edwards and Gordon, *op. cit.* Jacky argues that another rationale for automated systems is the military's inability—both financial and political—to train and keep enough highly skilled operators for its increasingly complex systems.
16. Much of my conceptual framework here, as elsewhere in this essay, derives from the work of Donna J. Haraway on the wider meaning and importance of the introduction

ticular her "The High Cost of Information in Post-World War II Evolutionary Biology," *The Philosophical Forum* XIII (2-3): 244-278, and "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's," *Socialist Review* 80: 65-107.

17. For more on the implications of this concept, see Paul N. Edwards, "Technologies of the Mind: Computers, Power, Psychology, and World War II," (Santa Cruz, CA: Silicon Valley Research Group Working Papers Series, 1985), and Haraway, *ibid.*

18. Cf. Turkle, *op. cit.*

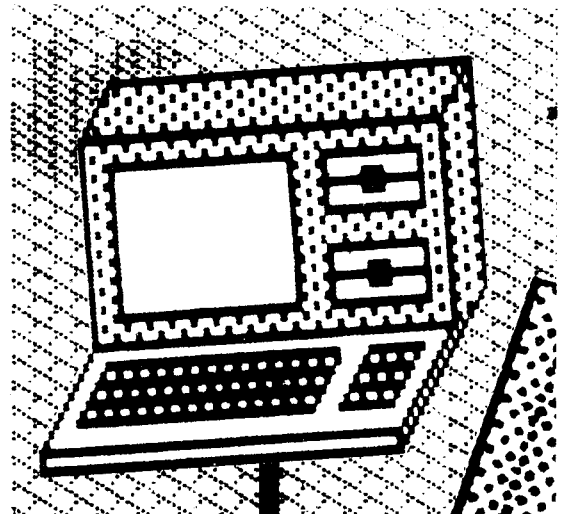
19. Cf. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, *Strategic Computing, New Generation Computing Technology: A Strategic Plan for its Development and Application to Critical Problems in Defense*, (Washington, D.C.: DARPA, 1983).

20. See Paul N. Edwards, "The Perspective of the Formal Machine: Artificial Intelligence and High Technology War," in Edwards and Gordon, *op. cit.*

21. See Turkle, *op. cit.*, for a detailed analysis of the effects of the computer mirror on contemporary consciousness. The fruitfulness of the brain/computer analogy and its less literal descendents in information processing psychology provides one example of how metaphors like these can affect science. An analogy between eyes and anti-aircraft guns helped create an entire subspecialty of psychological science, research on visual "tracking." See Edwards, "Technologies of the Mind," *op. cit.*, pp. 40-47.

22. Bruno Latour, "Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World," in Karin D. Knorr-Cetina and Michael Mulkay, eds., *Science Observed* (London: SAGE, 1983), p. 165.

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THE FASCIST GUNS IN THE WEST

Hollywood's "Rambo" Coalition

J. HOBBERMAN

If the decline of the western deprived American movies of what was once their preeminent ideological mode, ideology itself has scarcely vanished from the screen. Not since the Nixon-era cop/vigilante cycle, has the action film become so blatant an arena for political wish fulfillment. In the early 1970s, however, the demons were American. These days they strike from the outside.

Given the current climate, it seems remarkable that, as recently as 1983, *Octopussy* employed James Bond's first Russian antagonist in two decades. With the informal detente of the mid 1960s, Russians were supplanted by Chinese or East Germans as screen villains. In films and TV series like *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!* and "The Man From UNCLE," they even appeared in a sympathetic light. These days, the only good Russian is either a dead Russian or a defector. Either way, Main Street is the enemy's goal, infusing movies as otherwise disparate as *White Nights* and *Red Dawn*, *Moscow on the Hudson* and *Invasion U.S.A.* with a backbeat of paranoia and an undercurrent of narcissism.

Over the past four or five years, the propagandist modes of the early 1950s have lurched back to life, one after another, the extraterrestrial (or Soviet) invasion film, the evocation of nuclear apocalypse, the fun-loving foreign adventure flick, the Asian war drama, and the escape from Eastern Europe caper. Even though *Invasion U.S.A.* takes its title as well as its premise from a 1953 Albert Zugsmith "B movie," there are differences between the anti-communist films of Cold War I and those of Cold War II.

Movies like *The Red Menace* or *I was a Communist for the F.B.I.* were pseudo-didactic exposes of communist cells and fronts; similar films portrayed Soviet spies and espionage rings. Just as contemporary spies are motivated by money rather than ideology, so are contemporary exercises in anti-communism. The anti-communist films of the early '50s were produced less because the market was clamoring for them (on the contrary), than to prove that the film industry was now free from the taint of communist infiltration. These days, even though American communists have been sympathetically portrayed in a number of mainstream movies (*Reds*, *Daniel*, *Zoot Suit*), Hollywood's loyalty is hardly an issue. Conversely, *Rambo* and *Rocky IV* are nothing if not crowd-pleasers, catering to the Reagan-era spirit of nationalist aggression.

The new *Invasion U.S.A.*'s notorious tree-trimming scene, wherein Russian monsters gleefully bazooka a tot-and-dog-filled home on Christmas Eve (the same night *Rocky* pulverizes the monstrous Drago), taps into something more basic than a dislike for dialectical materialism. *Red Dawn* and *Invasion U.S.A.* don't pretend to be arguments against the Marxist-Leninist system (or even for more defense spending. They're contemporary war films that, like video games, require an enemy—evil, abstract, and essentially arbitrary.

Something besides Spielbergism must have been happening over the past few years, and there must be a way to describe the Manichean moral schema, vengeful patriotism, worship of the masculine torso, and rabid emotionalism of

these recent Stallone vehicles and the military scenarios that postulate either a Soviet occupation of the U.S. or Vietnam II. Last summer, critic David Denby created a minor flap in the letters column of *New York* magazine by terming *Rambo* and *Red Dawn* "fascist" films. Readers wrote in accusing him of being glib and ignorant, as well as confusing fascism with anti-communism.

Denby replied that, although neither film was fascist in "the textbook sense of celebrating a dictatorial government of extreme nationalist tendency," both displayed a mixture of demagogic resentment and messianic promise (not to mention bellicose patriotism) recalling that of European fascism. "Made in the wake of an American military defeat, *Red Dawn* and *Rambo* attempt to exorcise that defeat, as did Hitler after Germany's defeat in World War I, with theories of betrayal (the 'stab in the back') and with goofy rituals of purification—the drinking of deer's blood in *Red Dawn*, the experience of torture in *Rambo*. Purification leads to renewal—a new type of American superkiller. . . ."

"It's possible," Denby concluded, that "we're seeing the stirrings of an incipient fascism—a distinct American variant combining paranoia, military fantasy, and a style of individualism so extreme as to be pathological. If readers can come up with a better term, I'll gladly use it." (So far, he reports, they haven't.)

European fascism was an authoritarian, anti-democratic, profoundly militaristic, and violently nationalistic movement—at once a reaction against Soviet communism and a response to the worldwide economic crisis. In Germany and Italy, fascist ideologues spouted theories of imperial expansion and racial superiority. Their mystical worldview projected a Manichean struggle between the powers of light and darkness. Patriotic pageants, megalomaniacal architectural plans and glorified neo-classical sculptures aside, there is very little which can be considered fascist art. Was there such a thing as a fascist film?

Historically, the official fascist cinema is

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Douglas Fairbanks fights the Nazis in *Liberty Bond* promotional photo.

mainly negative—although German fascism was acutely movie-conscious. (Goebbels dreamt of producing a Nazi Battleship *Potemkin* while Hitler even went so far as to credit the cinema, along with radio and the automobile, for his victory.) A few overtly political films like Leni Riefenstahl's staged documentary *Triumph of the Will*, the viciously anti-semitic *Jud Suss*, the story of wartime melodrama parodied in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and an occasional fuhrer-type biography aside, the Reich's motion picture production was geared essentially towards escapist romances and comedies. The same was true of fascist Italy and Franco's Spain.

But, if *The Birth of a Nation*, D.W. Griffith's inflammatory, white supremacist, pro-Ku Klux Klan masterpiece—a favorite of Hitler and Goebbels's, as well as the first film to use melodrama for propagandist ends can be termed proto-fascist, over the years there have been a handful of Hollywood films which seem

transparently fascist either in their inspiration or their affect.

Released in early 1933, *Gabriel Over the White House*, which was produced and reportedly written by William Randolph Hearst, was a virtual call for an American Mussolini: After a new fatal car accident, the new president of the United States assumes divinely mandated dictatorial powers. Declaring martial law, he conscripts the unemployed, summarily executes the nation's gangsters, and strong-arms the powers of Europe into paying off their war debt. Cecil B. DeMille's 1933 *This Day and Age*—in which, outraged by a wealthy man's evasion of a murder charge, a mob of "5000 stalwart youths" proudly disdain due process to elicit his confession in a torchlit, midnight tribunal—was clearly influenced by the moral purity of Hitler's boyish stormtroopers.

The President Vanishes, released in 1934, was a more benign version of *Gabriel*—with an American president forced to employ some

extra-constitutional powers to combat a right-wing militarist threat while, *The Next Voice You Hear*, starring James Whitmore and Nancy Davis, had God commandeering the airwaves to endorse the American way of life, stress the importance of regimentation and underscore a faith that authority (be it the radio, the police, the factory boss, or the church) is always right.

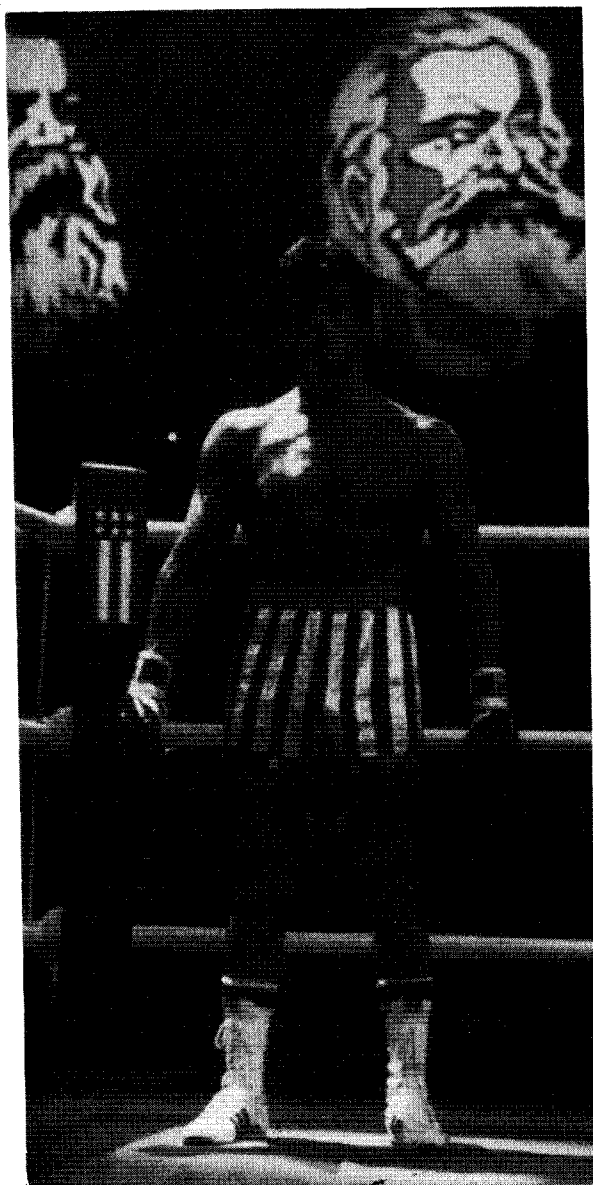
Released at a time when Soviet communism was under attack for its godlessness, *The Next Voice You Hear* was designed to accentuate

America's godfulness. At once reassuring and apocalyptic, the film not only features the future Nancy Reagan, but strikingly anticipates the temper of her husband's regime.

The movies Denby terms "fascist"—as well as various Chuck Norris and Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicles—need to be seen in the context of *Star Wars* fun (the revival of military spectacle), Spielberg feelgood (the valorization of childish fantasy), *Ghostbusting* insouciance (what me worry?), and the reactionary racial and sexual politics of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* on one hand and *An Officer and a Gentleman* on the other. Rather than fascist, these films are, as Robin Wood recently wrote of *Star Wars* and *Rocky*, "precisely the kinds of entertainment that a potentially fascist culture would be expected to produce and enjoy."

In a sense, both Denby and Wood have transposed the methodology and thesis of Siegfried Kracauer's 1947 book, *From Caligari to Hitler*, to contemporary America. (Wood's title, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, seems a deliberate echo.) Kracauer analyzed the German silent and early sound cinema in terms of its emerging fascist themes—the submissive longing for a strong leader, the purity of the mountains versus the tawdriness of the cosmopolitan city, the increasing obsession with military history. (During the final three years of the Weimar Republic, no less than eight films were produced on the German "war of liberation" against Napoleon.)

Rather than recall a glorious past, however, our born-again war film is concerned with alternative universes and (as yet) undeclared wars. Three battlefields—Main Street, outer space, and contemporary Vietnam—haunt Hollywood. If the representation of conventional (or intergalactic) combat is comforting in an age of potential atomic annihilation, the dramatization of victory in Vietnam has a kind of lunatic piquance, symbolizing the restoration of a lost national honor. John Wayne and the Green Berets notwithstanding, the Vietnam War has had an odd history in American films. Almost from the beginning, movies wished the war over. Vietnam films were far less obsessed with battlefield sacrifice than with the plight of the returning veteran—using him as either the



Sylvester Stallone awaits the Russian champion in *Rocky IV*.

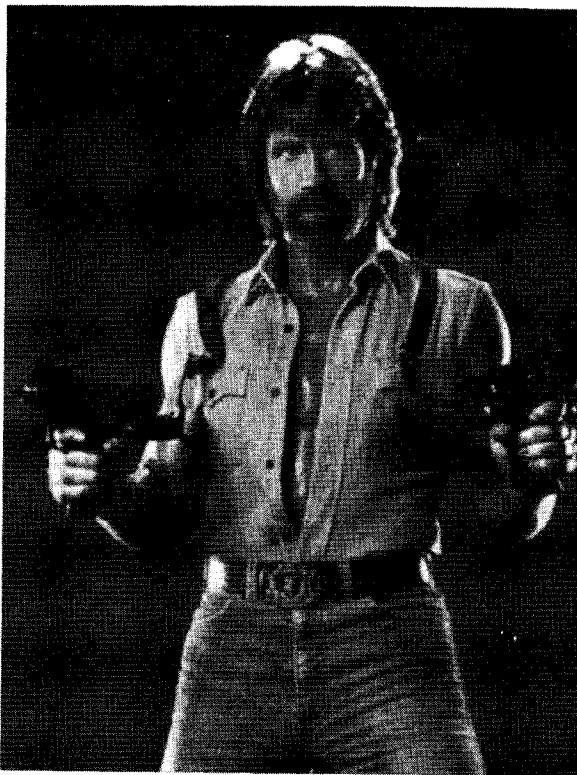
scapegoat for or redeemer of a guilty society.

The 1967 *Born Losers* not only introduced the messianic half-Indian, ex-Green Beret Billy Jack—a leftwing precursor to *Rambo*—but spawned an entire subgenre in which alienated Viet vets either joined up with or battled marauding motorcycle gangs. (With the rise of blaxploitation* the turf shifted so that ex-Green Berets played by Jim Brown and Paul Winfield came back to war against ghetto dope-dealers and exploitive gangsters.) Meanwhile, movies like *Welcome Home Soldier Boys*, *Taxi Driver*, and *Rolling Thunder*, not to mention scores of TV shows, made the psychotic, violence-prone Viet vet a mass culture cliché.

Not until well after the fall of Saigon, did Hollywood attempt to recuperate the war as period spectacle. Despite the success of *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*, however, their unresolved ambiguities proved far less attractive than the clear-cut fantasies generated by something like *Good Guys Wear Black* (1977), an early Chuck Norris vehicle in which the ex-karate champ searches for the Washington politicians who betrayed him and his commando unit, or *First Blood* and *Uncommon Valor*, both directed by Ted Kotcheff.

First Blood, the surprise hit of late 1982 and a property which spent a decade on Warner Bros.'s shelf, was the ultimate Viet vet film. This incendiary plea for tolerance, designed to appeal to both hawks and doves, introduced Sylvester Stallone as John Rambo—a taciturn, hippified ex-Green Beret driven to acts of insane violence by the persecution of a redneck sheriff. In the novel from which the film is adapted, Rambo is clearly a Frankenstein monster. He kills the entire posse that chases him up into the hills, returns to burn down Main Street, and is finally terminated by the very Green Beret officer who trained him. The movie Rambo, who anticipates Bruce Springsteen in his ambiguous mixture of left and rightwing symbols, is more like a neutron bomb—destroying property rather than lives—and when he's hauled off to prison, it's clearly for our sins.

The inference was that Rambo and, by extension, all the grunts who fought in Vietnam, had been sold out on the homefront—and then “spat upon” when they returned. One year



Chuck Norris and his bullet-proof chest in *Invasion, U.S.A.*

later, this line was consolidated with the unexpected success of *Uncommon Valor*, co-produced by John Milius, in which a retired officer trains guerrillas to spring his son and other MIAs held captive in a Laotian prison camp. However salted with references to *The Searchers*, *Uncommon Valor* basically appropriated the premise of *The Losers* (1970) in which a group of bikers returned to 'Nam on their motorcycles to rescue a captured presidential advisor from a Chinese prison camp. (Anticipating the self-pity endemic to '80s Nam films, the surviving gang members have to hear themselves denounced as “trash” for their troubles.)

With its emphasis on patriarchal authority, mutilated genealogy, and male rites of passage, *Uncommon Valor* took the lead in visualizing Indochina as the site of America's symbolic castration. Unlike *Apocalypse Now* or even *The Deer Hunter*, it offered itself as a clear-cut

*Ed note: “Blaxploitation” is a term used to describe a sub-genre of B-movies appearing at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s featuring predominantly black casts and, in the case of most, black producers. They disappeared by the mid-1970s.

exorcism of the shame and dishonor of American defeat. Although some critics, notably Pauline Kael, scored *Uncommon Valor's* underlying racism—Kael cited the “exultant, patriotic music” that burst forth during the climactic massacres of the film’s “little yellow peril targets”—most praised it as a solid, old-fashioned action flick. When it came to the subtext, audiences were definitely more alert: *The New York Times* quoted one patron leaving the theatre who explained: “We get to win the Vietnam War.”

This fantasy recalls the softer version of redemption offered by *E.T.* and *Close Encounters*, or the comic aversion of Armageddon in *Ghostbusters*. (The compensatory nature of the new American war film is aptly demonstrated in the fantasy underlying *Let's Get Harry*, a film currently in production. Here, according to the studio press release, a group of “small town factory workers” strike back at the South American terrorists who have kidnapped their best friend. What’s startling, of course, is that many more American factories than factory workers have been forcefully relocated to the Third World.) There is a strikingly solipsistic quality to current American patriotism. As the 1983 conquest of Grenada and 1984 Olympics demonstrated, Reagan-era chauvinism celebrates itself; it thrives very well, and perhaps even better, in the absence of a clearcut opposition. So it should come as no surprise that current action heroes exhibit an individualism bordering on the psychotic.

One need only to compare *Rambo*, *Invasion U.S.A.*, or *Commando* to such World War II films as *Air Force*, *Bataan*, and *The Story of G.I. Joe* to see the change in emphasis from selfless teamwork to the glorification of a supernaturally endowed, barely human *Urbemensch*. (Similarly, in the '50s, communists were defeated by cool, often colorless, double-agents or the bureaucratic operatives of the FBI while, in the '80s, it takes lone American guerrilla-fighters or solitary supermen to handle the red menace. In this sense, *Big Jim McLain*—with John Wayne as a two-fisted investigator for the supposedly hamstrung House Un-American Activities Committee—is the Cold War I precursor to the films of Cold War II.)

As action heroes, Stallone and Norris make Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* look like Adlai Stevenson (the source perhaps of Eastwood's current nostalgic appeal). Arnold Schwarzenegger, who had his first major role in the ubiquitous Milius's mock-Nietzchean *Conan*, appears to have carved out a career playing humanoid killing machines. Schwarzenegger achieved icon status as the lethal robot in *The Terminator*—one of the surprise hits of 1984—and consolidated it as another sort of ultimate weapon in the following year's *Commando*.



John Wayne in *Rooster Cogburn*.

These two trends, the implacable hulk and the Vietnam exorcism, converged first with the two Norris vehicles—*Missing in Action* (a more simpleminded version of *Uncommon Valor*) and its “pre-quel, *Missing in Action II*—and then, with world-historic force, in *Rambo: First Blood II*, a film endorsed by no less an authority than Ronald Reagan. As Susan Sontag wrote in her 1974 essay on the Nazi director Leni Riefenstahl, fascist films are concerned

with “the rebirth of the body and of community, mediated through the worship of an irresistible leader.” Box office figures tell us they don’t come any more irresistible than John Rambo.

Sontag’s analysis of the fascist worldview, deduced from Riefenstahl’s films and photographs, takes on a particular resonance in the light of *Red Dawn*, *Rambo*, and *Rocky IV*. For Sontag, fascist films are “tales of longing for high places, of the challenge and ordeal of the elemental, the primitive: they are about the vertigo before power, symbolized by the majesty and beauty of mountains.” Fascist aesthetics “flow from (and justify) a preoccupation with situations of control, submissive behavior, extravagant effort, and the endurance of pain; they endorse two seemingly opposite states, egomania and servitude.” If *Red Dawn* is founded on the “longing for high places” and the “ordeal of the elemental,” both *Rambo* and *Rocky IV* are notable for Stallone’s fusion of suffering and megalomania.

Fascist ideology is also characterized by the valorization of the physical and instinctual over the intellect (“thinking with the blood” as Goebbels put it), attitudes Stallone has taken as his own. “What I try to do is interpret the longings of the everyday proletariat, the blue-collar man,” he explained to *Rolling Stone*. “I think the intelligentsia should understand that this country now is functioning on emotional energy more than intellectual energy.” To another reporter he confided, “I don’t work these things out intellectually. I go by intuition, my emotions.”

It’s striking that *Red Dawn* and *Rambo* (not to mention *Rocky IV*, *Missing in Action* and *Invasion USA*) emphasize the purity of their heroes. The chaste atmosphere of *Red Dawn* is matched by Chuck Norris’s imperviousness to sex in *Missing in Action*; while the presence of a beautiful female guide in *Rambo* is less a pretext for eros than revenge. “The fascist ideal,” Sontag has noted, “is to transform sexual energy into a ‘spiritual’ force, for the benefit of the community.” In the early 1930s, when Nazi propagandists were concerned with creating an ideal image of their movement, an aversion to sexuality was particularly pronounced. Subsequent propaganda used the

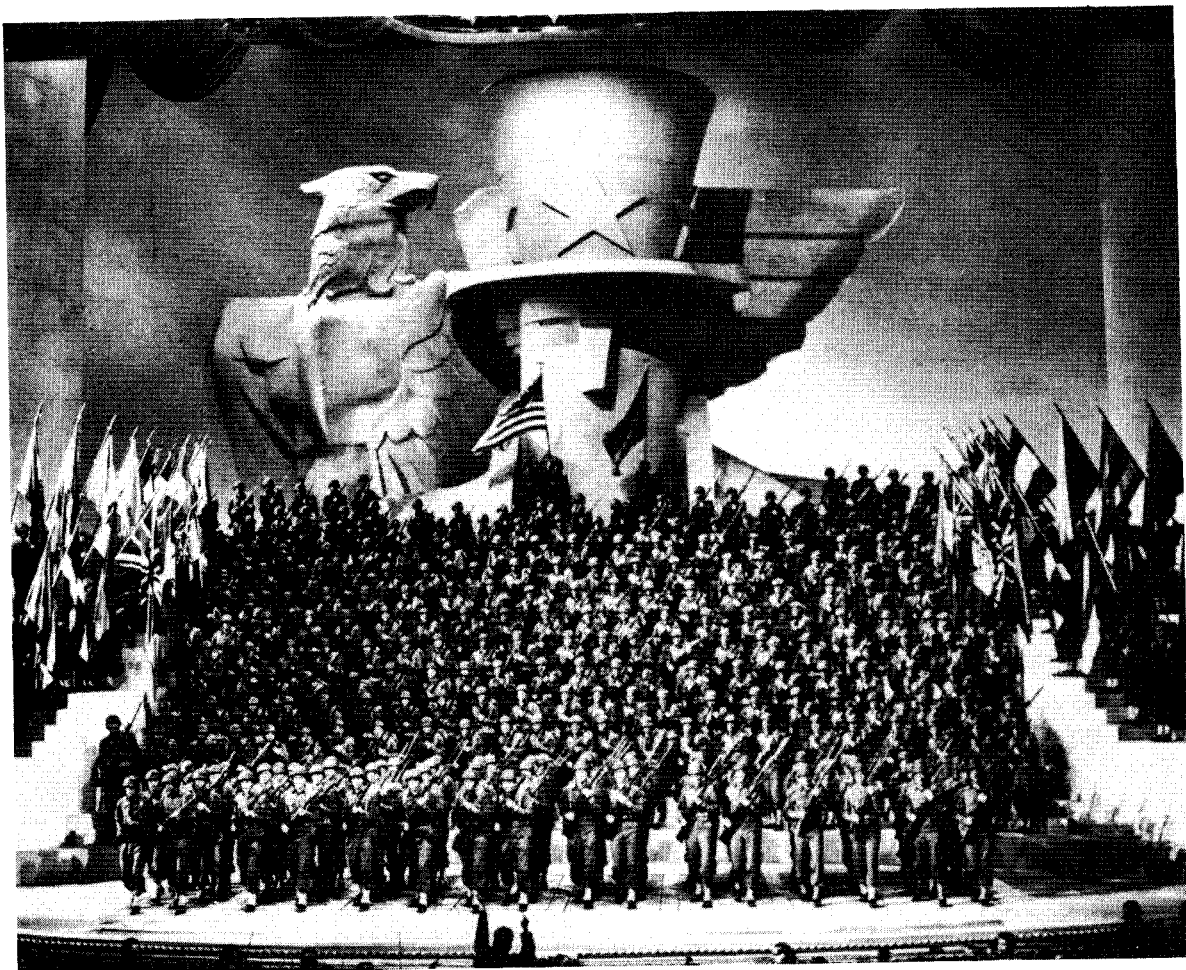


We Like to Play War, Bill Owens, ca. 1970.

emotional power of romantic love to create a hierarchy of values in which love could ultimately be subsumed to a transcendent loyalty to the Fuhrer and the Fatherland.

In '80s America, this becomes a paranoid loyalty to the self. Rambo’s complaint, after all, is that his country has failed to love him (and all MIAs) as much as he loves it. As decked in the accoutrements of patriotism as they are, neither Rambo nor Rocky is an endorsement of the status quo. Indeed, there is a powerfully nihilist aspect to Rambo’s climactic assault on the computerbank that presumably planned his mission. (This fear of technology is reasserted in *Rocky IV*.) *Terminator*, on the other hand, is nihilistic to the other extreme, setting up an implacable murderous robot as a not so covert anti-hero.

It is often forgotten that fascism began as a protest movement. Before taking power, fascists attacked every aspect of the existing order—from profit-hungry businessmen and treasonous liberals to myopic intellectuals and grubby politicians. Significantly, Stallone sees



Production number from *This is the Army*, 1943 (US).

himself as transcending current political discourse. "I'm not right wing, I'm not left wing. I love my country," he told the *New York Times*. "I stand for ordinary Americans, losers a lot of them. They don't understand big, international politics. Their country tells them to fight in Vietnam? They fight." The statement articulates a potent mixture of obedience and rage. Stallone has admitted that should he elect to make a *Rocky V*, the fighter "would have to go into politics, which seems to be the natural extension."

If Stallone is the noble savage of the new patriotism, director John Milius is the mode's leading theorist. Indeed, Milius, who has called himself a "zen fascist," shows signs of having read Sontag's essay. Not only does *Red Dawn* open in the clouds like *Triumph of the Will*, the film's radical subservience of love to patriot-

ism, marked lack of religion, naked hatred of politicians, and subliminal backdrop of Alpine purity set it apart from traditional Hollywood agitprop and relate it to the mythology of right-wing German nationalism.

What gives *Red Dawn* an additional exotic twist is Milius's transposition of a Third World liberation struggle to deepest Colorado. Milius is in love with the idea of guerrilla warfare (in theory anyway; asthma kept him out of the army) right down to its fashion accessories—by the end of the movie, his high school quarterback turned freedom fighter is wearing a home-made burnoose. Huge chunks of *Red Dawn* are reversals of scenes from *Apocalypse Now*, which was originally written by Milius, with Americans enacting the role of Vietcong partisans and Russians playing the part of the American invaders.

“Every single thing in *Red Dawn* is taken from the stories of Russian and Yugoslav partisans during World War II or from the Viet Cong,” Milius told an interviewer, emphasizing an identification which is all but pathological: Almost a decade earlier he had used a similar equation to describe his relationship with the New York film critics: “I’m a Castro fighting in the hills against those fraudulent, narrow-minded, bigoted and destructive people.” Along with the desire for revenge and vindication, the post-Vietnam exorcisms are striking for their solipsistic identification with the erstwhile victor. By Milius’s logic the richest, most powerful nation on earth becomes something like an underdeveloped victim. America has been invaded, America is under occupation; Americans must engage in guerrilla struggle.

That neither Milius nor Stallone served in Vietnam in no way mitigates the militarism of their films. On the contrary, playing at war becomes a substitute for the real thing. Describing Milius’s attitude on the set of *Conan*, Arnold Schwarzenegger recalled that the director “promised us this shooting was going to deal with dirt and pain. That’s exactly what we got.” Milius, Schwarzenegger continued, “runs a set like an army. So that’s the feeling everyone had—that this wasn’t a movie, it was a battle.”

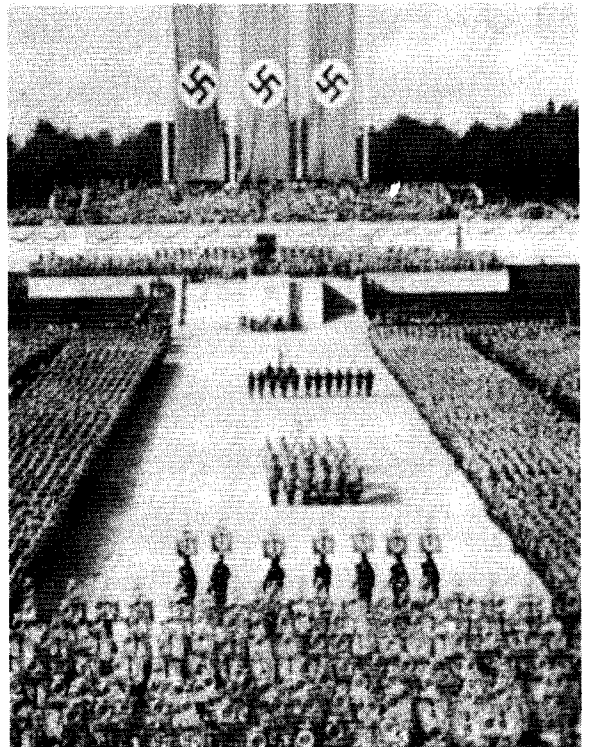
If *Red Dawn*—which, according to Milius, was approved by presidential hopeful Alexander Haig—is predicated upon the denial of nuclear war, *The Terminator*, which despite the absence of overt rightwing politics belongs with *Rambo et al*, is even more sinister. At once a metaphor for nuclear war and an acceptance of its inevitability, the film has the underlying nihilism of the Phalangist battlecry: “Viva la muerte, Long live Death!”

Walter Benjamin, who saw in fascism the introduction of spectacle into politics, noted that “all efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war.” In his essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin quotes the futurist-turned-fascist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in what could be an ecstatic review of *Rambo* or *Terminator*: “War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt-of metalization of the human body. War is beautiful because it en-

riches a flowering meadow with fiery orchids of machine guns. War is beautiful because it combines the gunfire, the cannonades, the cease-fire, the scents, and the stench of putrefaction into a symphony.”

Perhaps the most fascistic aspect of the Stallone—Milius axis is their faith in the regenerative, if not hygienic, powers of war. The very title of *Red Dawn* implies a rebirth, while *Rocky IV*’s Las Vegas sequences are meant to parody American decadence. *Invasion U.S.A.*, too, makes much of America’s supposed moral weakness. “Look at them—soft, decadent. They don’t understand the nature of their own freedom,” laugh two Soviet agents on the beach near Miami. What shuts them up is the gunfire of Chuck Norris’s symphony.

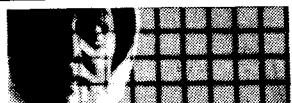
Rambo, *Red Dawn*, et al play to the vengeful, authoritarian, nihilist component of the audience. Yet, the only mass movement they address is that of movie goers, and in this sense they can’t really be termed fascist. But what would we call it if the Japanese or Germans were to suddenly engage in a flurry of World



Scene from Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will*, 1933 (Germany).

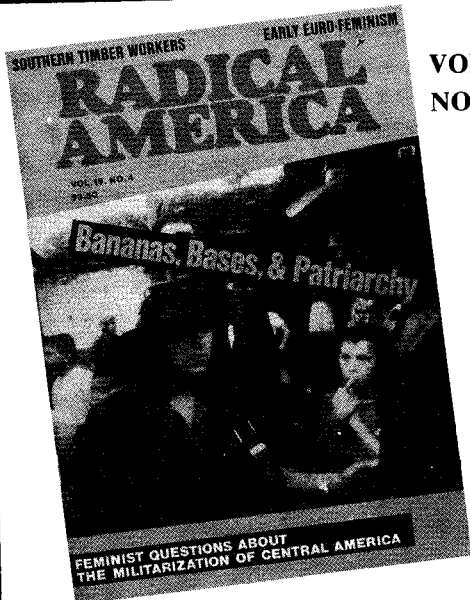
War II victory films or the Soviets to release melodramas in which the steroid *Urbemensch* of *Rocky IV* repelled an American invasion of their sacred motherland?

J. Hoberman is a film critic for the *Village Voice* (New York) and a contributing editor for *American Film*. This is a slightly revised version of the article appearing in the March 1986 issue of *American Film*.



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REQUIEM FOR THE SIXTIES?

David Horowitz and
The Politics of Forgetting

Anthony Ashbolt

Nothing surprises any more. As the ringing of revolution fades into a distant tinkle, old comrades and fellow travellers from the sixties march off in the direction of a postmodern era which signals the beginning of post-consciousness. Heroes of the past return in curious guise. Regis Debray, friend of Castro and author of the classic *Revolution in the Revolution?*, resurfaces in the 1980s as a special emissary acting on behalf of French colonial domination and nuclear terror. Has he forgotten the anti-imperialist movement, turned his back on the past? Perhaps there is no longer a past against which one can turn. Survivalism and the desire for material security breed an inexorable state of amnesia.¹ Adaptation, rather than struggle, reigns supreme. As Russell Jacoby has observed, the "long march through the institutions has turned out to be a long search for a job."² Yet we need not be cynical about such a transformation in the politics of everyday life. Signs of hope abound. The problem is that they are just signs. Billboards for the future resonate with a distaste for the past. Stanley Karnow's "Vietnam: a television history," which does try to reconstruct the sorry tale of American involvement in Vietnam, ends up shot through with what Chomsky has called the "pathology of intellectual life," a pathology in which "memories fade, and only official history remains."³ And inasmuch as "every reification is a forgetting,"⁴ we can tentatively

suggest that Vietnam, even for many once on the Left, has become a thing to be buried, to be shunted off through the back door of history. In this climate lies, distortions, and outright betrayal triumph. The point is not to resuscitate nostalgia for the lost days of struggle and resistance in the sixties. The point, however, is to ensure that memory does not become obliterated by a "goodbye to all that" syndrome which is merely a fashionable form of reification.

In the early 1960s David Horowitz, a young scholar at the Berkeley campus of the University of California, wrote a book about the burgeoning Berkeley student movement.⁵ He paid homage to the student activists who, more than any other student grouping in the United States, had been responsible for generating a "new politics." His conclusion, written two years before the Free Speech Movement erupted, was prophetic:

The fight that the students are putting up is just the preliminary struggle. They are young and they are growing up in a world which for them is also young. For this new world, they have new ideas and new methods for putting them into practice. They have, in short, a new politics. The fight now is the fight for the freedom to work it out.⁶

David Horowitz was to go on and become a prominent New Left intellectual. His study of US foreign policy, "From Yalta to Vietnam," first published in 1965 under the American title "The Free World Colossus," remains a landmark piece of scholarship and established his reputation as one of the most important contributors to a growing body of revisionist history. From 1964 to 1967, having left America to go to Britain, he was Director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation where, among other things he began editing two impressive volumes on the Cold War, "Containment and Revolution" and "Corporations and the Cold War." By 1968 he had returned to the Bay Area to become an editor of the renowned radical magazine *Ramparts*. Beginning as a Catholic literary and philosophical magazine, *Ramparts* became perhaps the best and certainly the most popular organ of the new radicalism. Its passing away, in late 1975, was a sad moment and none of the leftist magazines which followed



Ramparts cover (May, 1970) with burning Bank of America Santa Barbara office.

(for example, *Seven Days* and *Mother Jones*) ever matched its tough-minded journalistic acuity. During his time at *Ramparts*, Horowitz wrote and edited a number of studies, including "Imperialism and Revolution," which for me and a few of my student colleagues in the early 1970s, was one of those books which was ostentatiously carried around campus, possibly in the hope that a stamp of intellectual depth would be laid upon our political militance. The epigraph for "Imperialism and Revolution" came from Rosa Luxemburg:

The triumph of imperialism leads to the decay of culture—temporary decay during any modern war, or complete decay, if the era of world wars that has begun were to last and go on to its final conclusion. Now therefore . . . we stand . . . before this choice: either the triumph of imperialism and the devastation of all culture, as in ancient Rome—devastation, depopulation, degeneration, a huge cemetery; or the victory of socialism . . .

Thanks for the memories

That great historic choice still confronts us. But the decay of culture seems to be winning out. And with it comes the decay of some erstwhile mentors. In the *Washington Post Magazine* in 1985, David Horowitz and Peter Collier (also an editor of *Ramparts* in its heyday) published an article explaining why they voted for

Reagan in the 1984 Presidential election.⁹ This remarkable transformation can hardly be traced with ease. While at *Ramparts*, Horowitz gave no indication that a dramatic turning-point had arrived, although he was becoming increasingly cranky (and to a great extent justifiably so) about the excesses, in both polemic and style, of the New Left. Todd Gitlin remembers Horowitz being “royally disdainful” about radical movements by “the mid-seventies,¹⁰ so it could be that he slid gradually from a healthy cynicism to a jaundiced irascibility. After the death of *Ramparts*, Horowitz and Collier published a study of the Rockefeller family and, more recently, a study of the Kennedys.¹¹ Nothing much is revealed in these scrupulously researched best-sellers, except that they are almost entirely lacking the sort of marxist theoretical framework which characterized Horowitz’s work in the late 1960s and early 70s. The Kennedy volume in particular, tends to be devoid of analytical rigor. Whatever the personal and political shifts which Horowitz and Collier underwent in the years following the demise of *Ramparts*, their recent article in the *Washington Post Magazine* deserves some examination, if only because it bears eloquent testimony to the pitfalls of a politics permeated with forgetfulness.

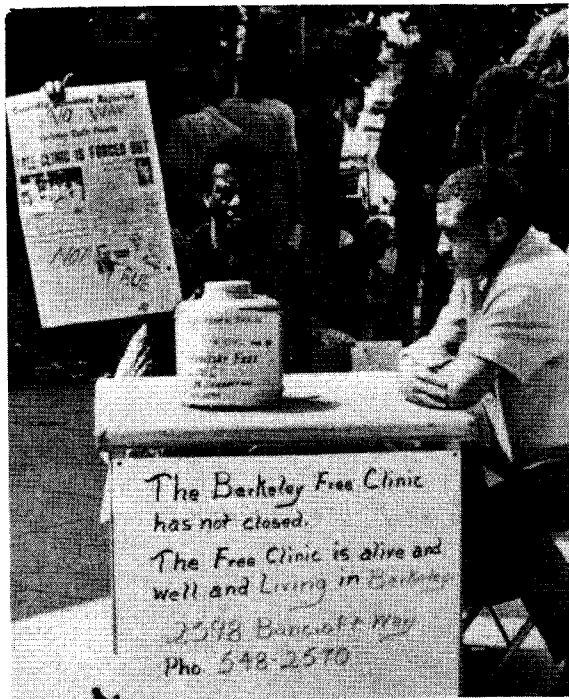
Horowitz and Collier acknowledge that voting for Reagan was their way of turning their back on the sixties, of saying “goodbye to all that—to the self-aggrandizing romance with corrupt Third Worldism; to the casual indulgence of Soviet totalitarianism; to the hypocritical and self-dramatizing anti-Americanism which is the New Left’s bequest to mainstream politics.” The “goodbye to all that” syndrome has a venerable tradition within the American Left. Old Left graveyards are littered with vitriolic confessions and the New Left, being not so new in any case, has not escaped the recurring orgy of acrimonious rejections of the past. Aileen Kraditor, once a promising sixties radical historian, has confessed her mistakes, rewritten the history of radical history, and is now at the forefront of the Conservative Historians Forum.¹² While Robin Morgan’s famous farewell to the New Left constituted an affirmation of radical feminism rather than a complete rejection of the past, it

was filled with bitterness levelled at a movement which, for all its faults, had provided the basis from which a new feminist culture could spring.¹³ There are, moreover, the unwritten valedictions by those who have handed in their sixties medals and merged into the flat landscape of Reagan’s small town America. As the editors of the journal *Social Text* have observed “what you think the 60s was is one of the forms in which you affirm or repudiate a whole part of your own life.”¹⁴

Amnesia fuels the “goodbye to all that” syndrome. The characters in the film *The Big Chill*, for instance, cannot really recapture their past in any coherent way. Indeed, one of the most disappointing (yet also interesting) aspects of the film is that the previous commitment to the Movement is never explained or explored satisfactorily. In a sense, these characters are portrayed as being just along for the ride, making their way from one form of self-indulgence to another. This, to be sure, is part of the story of the sixties. But it cannot account for all those who remain committed to New Left ideals and aspirations and, to an even greater extent, cannot begin to elucidate the apparently massive turnaround of David Horowitz. So what is it that Horowitz and his colleague Collier now claim to be saying goodbye to?



October 1967 march on the Pentagon.



Street scene, Berkeley 1968. Stephen Shames Photon/West.

Hooked on a feeling

“The left,” according to Horowitz and Collier, “was hooked on Vietnam. It was an addictive drug whose rush was a potent mix of melodrama, self-importance and moral rectitude.” These last words aptly capture their own current posturing. But what a strange metaphor they have chosen to describe a horrifying war which many in the United States fought against with great courage and, sometimes, heroism. That they have to explain their past in terms of addiction tells us more about them than the New Left. Moreover, their assertion is not entirely accurate historically. They were both in Berkeley in 1969 and there is a very real sense in which Vietnam was not the central issue there at



Berkeley street scene, 1968, DAK.

that time. A provincialist radicalism had come to predominate, epitomized in the “Berkeley Liberation Program.”²⁸ Some leading Berkeley radicals were later to criticize the insularity of the Berkeley Left and in particular, the way in which the movement there pushed Vietnam to one side while it sought to build its own revolutionary culture.²⁹ All this seems to have passed Horowitz and Collier by. Indeed, Horowitz had no organizational base in the New Left outside *Ramparts* and this could partly explain his later misreading of events. To a certain extent he “never really lived the New Left,” if only because he was not in America during the movement’s crucial period of transformation in the mid-sixties.³⁰ Furthermore, the addiction metaphor carries an insidious meaning. It suggests that the Left should never have concerned itself with Vietnam in the first place. For to do so immediately invited the perils of habit-forming ideological blindness from which it was difficult to withdraw. One of the blind spots was supposedly the conviction that Vietnam afforded the opportunity for domestic revolution. The Left, however, had not foreseen the possibility of the war ending:

Never had we thought that the United States, the arch-imperial power, would of its own volition withdraw from Indochina. This development violated a primary article of our hand-me-down Marxism: that political action through normal channels could not alter the course of the war.

The claim that the United States withdrew from Vietnam “of its own volition” is an extraordinary misrepresentation of history. With the Saigon regime crumbling, American troops in disarray, massive fire-power unable to smash the will of the Vietnamese people, international pressure on the American government and widespread dissatisfaction with the war at home, it is hardly as if “volition” came into it at all. Equally important, however, is their reference to “our hand-me-down-Marxism.” For in 1969, Horowitz wrote an article for *Ramparts* which attacked the “hand-me-down-Marxism” of elements of the New Left. While recognizing that the turn towards Marxism was an important moment in the development of the New Left, he was careful to draw a distinc-

tion between two kinds of Marxism:

A Marxism which is . . . flexible, open and unafraid to rethink its revolutionary perspectives according to specific conditions; and which fashions its language as a means of communication analysis and mobilization, rather than employing it merely as ritualistic invocation, can be just the powerful instrument that a revolutionary movement requires.

But there is also Marxism of the hand-me-down variety, where an ideological perspective and vocabulary developed in a different epoch or a different political-cultural environment is transposed whole and adopted as an all-embracing wisdom.³¹

So despite his earlier critique of so-called "hand-me-down-Marxism" Horowitz is now suggesting that he embraced this shop-worn ideology. But perhaps his memory is playing tricks. While escaping from the family of the Left, he could not leave behind all his own peculiar phraseology. So now he is turning it against himself in a ceremonial display of self-congratulation masquerading as self-criticism.

Much of Horowitz and Collier's article is an attack upon the Soviet Union, particularly its role in Afghanistan. They acknowledge that Afghanistan is not the Soviet Union's Vietnam, but this, they allege, is because there is no systematic reporting (especially on television) of "the My Lais that are daily occurrences" there; no coverage which could inspire resistance within the Soviet Union itself. Given the dearth of accurate news and independent reporting from Afghanistan, one wonders how Horowitz and Collier know that there are massacres of women and children every day. Indeed, their very style of writing is designed not so much to make us sympathetic to the

Afghanis, as to allow us to shrug off the memory of My Lai. And the political direction of their invective is captured superbly by the following reconstruction of history:

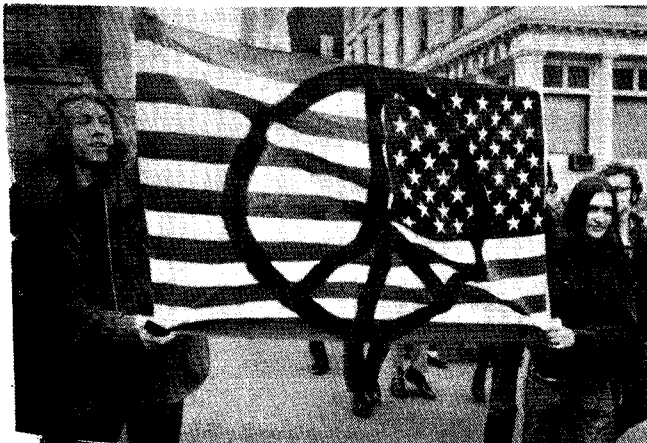
The proper analogy for Afghanistan is not Vietnam at all but rather Spain—not in the nature of the war, but in the symbolic value it has for our time—or should—in terms of democracy's will to resist aggression. Aid to the Mujaheddin should not be a dirty little secret of the CIA, but a matter of public policy and national honor as well.

It is not merely laughable that Horowitz and Collier are capable of confusing democratic ideals with the social values and practices of the Mujaheddin. Such muddlement bespeaks a contempt for history, which ultimately vitiates memories of the Spanish freedom fighters and the International Brigade which fought alongside them. But at least Horowitz and Collier are clear about one thing: national honor should simply be an ideological extension of CIA covert activity.

Stocks and Bondage

The Left, according to Horowitz and Collier, has forgotten its past errors of judgment and is once more repeating them. Current support for the Sandinista regime can be compared to the enthusiastic campaigns on behalf of Cuba twenty-five years ago. And witness what a disappointment Cuba has become. Castro is merely "an aging pimp who sells his young men to the Russians for use in their military adventures in return for \$10 billion a year." The language here reveals a self-loathing characteristic of those who leap from hero-worship to disillusionment in a single bound. But in this instance, as before, a thin veneer of masochistic regret shields a back-patting narcissism, a know-it-all rejection of the past. It is thus not surprising that Horowitz and Collier feel the need to hurl the accusation of amnesia at the Left. Look closely, however, at the way in which they do this:

The left's memory can be as selective as its morality. When it comes to past commitments that have failed, the leftist morality is utterly unable to produce a coherent balance sheet, let alone a profit-and-loss statement.



1968, Michael Abramson photo.

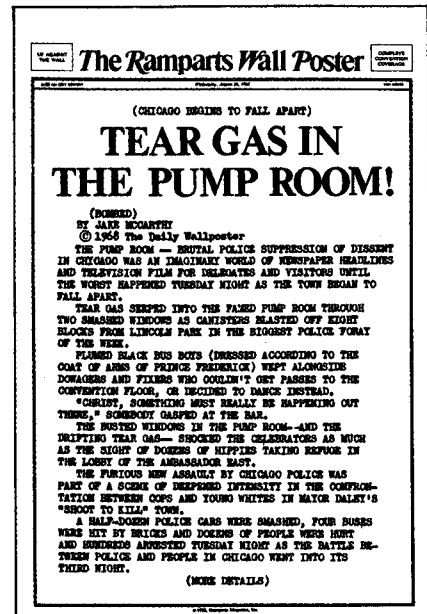
The Big Skill

Firstly, there is the "self-aggrandizing romance with corrupt Third Worldism." Part of the New Left did identify, in an uncritical and romantic way, with various Third World movements and regimes. There was certainly an intimate link between what Horowitz once called the "revolutionary karma" of the Weathermen,¹⁵ and that organization's labelling of "the workers and oppressed peoples of the colonies of Asia, Africa and Latin America" as the vanguard of the revolution.¹⁶ Subjectivism and objectivism lived side by side in elements of the New Left, producing at times a simultaneous contemplation of the navel and a deification of Third World liberation movements.¹⁷ But this is not true of the whole New Left experience and it is, in particular, not true of Horowitz. In 1972 Horowitz wrote that the Left historically has tended

to glamorize the post-revolutionary status quo in those [Third World] countries, and simplify its own attitude of solidarity and support. As a result, it has confused the sense of solidarity with the posture of adulation, the defense of the rights of these revolutions to self-determination and survival, with blanket apologies for the policies and rationales of particular revolutionary governments.¹⁸

So what precisely is he now saying goodbye to? Can you say goodbye to something which you were never really a part of, to something which you mostly kept a critical distance from? Moreover, which "corrupt Third Worldism" can Horowitz and Collier be referring to? Were there sections of the New Left that supported the corrupt regimes of Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines? Is there perhaps something inherently corrupt in Third World liberation movements? Inasmuch as this is so, surely they have been corrupted by years of domination, exploitation and brutality. Again, it is not very clear what they are saying goodbye to, suggesting possibly that "goodbye to all that" serves as a camouflage for the much more chilling "hello to American Imperialism."

Horowitz and Collier are also saying goodbye to "the casual indulgence of Soviet totalitarianism." Yet Horowitz's analysis in *Imperialism and Revolution* was profoundly in-



Ramparts wallposter, Chicago 1968.

fluenced by Trotskyist thought (some of its weaknesses flow from that) and there is little evidence overall that he ever casually indulged Soviet "totalitarianism" (note the use of the rather imprecise and loaded Cold War term). While not uncritical of the Soviet Union, he did recognize the crucial role it played in supporting the Vietnamese revolution.¹⁹ Indeed he once expressed dismay at "the cruel reconciliation between Moscow/Peking and the enemy in Washington" which was supposedly undermining the Vietnamese struggle.²⁰ His coming to grips with Solzhenitsyn in the early 1970s did not automatically produce a blind anti-Sovietism but rather an impassioned plea for the introduction of democratic rights in order "to fulfill the promise of October." Support for dissidents was seen not as an act "of despair about the Soviet past, but of hope for the Soviet future."²¹ Apart from the fact that Horowitz was never uncritically pro-Soviet it is stretching the imagination too far to suggest that the New Left as a whole "casually indulged" the Soviet Union. That it directed its primary antagonism at US imperialism surely points to the fact that the most significant global expansion in the post-war era was undertaken by the United States. And, as Horowitz

once observed, imperial adventures abroad highlighted the domestic structure of power:

... in a profound sense, foreign policy is but an extension of domestic policy: the inequality of privilege and power in American society mirrors (and serves) an even more insidious global inequality . . . neither the Cold War, nor the U.S. role in it, can be understood without a previous understanding of the class character of American society and the nature of the corporate system which underpins and structures it.²²

Finally, Horowitz and Collier seek to say goodbye to “the hypocritical and self-dramatizing anti-Americanism which is the New Left’s bequest to mainstream politics.” To suggest that anti-Americanism is the New Left’s “bequest to mainstream politics” is bizarre. For a start, in what sense has mainstream politics embraced or been influenced by anti-Americanism? Even if we read “anti-Americanism” as “anti-imperialism” the quote does not make much sense, particularly as it is not clear what they mean by the phrase “self-dramatizing.” The New Left opposed a range of American policies abroad and at home and, in general, lamented the trajectory of US politics and society in the twentieth century. This did not always (although it could) translate into an anti-American phobia. Moreover, such opposition could only be seen as “hypocritical” if you were to extend the bounds of logical consistency so far as to preclude anyone who

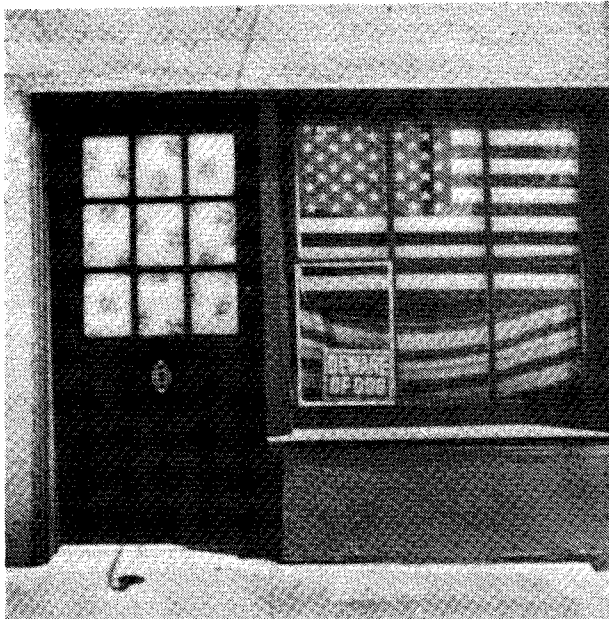
benefits from a society in particular ways from condemning that society. Yet it is not surprising that Horowitz should choose “anti-Americanism” as a *bete noir*, for he constantly upheld “authentic” American ideals and aspirations against those that were being pushed by US policy makers. Here perhaps is a clue to his ultimate dramatic transformation: Horowitz never abandoned his faith in the virtues of American democracy, he just saw those virtues being trampled upon. This in itself might not appear significant but it does point to an ultimate belief in the American way, a belief which could be slotted into various frames according to the exigencies of history. Horowitz concluded “From Yalta to Vietnam” with these words:

... when America set out on her post-war path to contain revolution throughout the world, and threw her immense power and influence into the balance against the rising movement for social justice among the poverty-stricken two thirds of the world’s population, the first victims of her deeds were the very ideals for a better world—liberty, equality and self-determination—which she herself, in her infancy, had done so much to foster.²³

Elsewhere he stressed the “increasingly violent contradiction” between American imperialism and the American revolutionary ideals.²⁴ And he even described counter-insurgency programs (not entirely tongue-in-cheek) as “un-American.”²⁵ In a response to the Weathermen celebration of Third World liberation movements, he observed that “It is certainly true that the liberation of the Third World will hasten the liberation of the US. But it is no less true that the American revolution is the key to the liberation of mankind.”²⁶ There is nothing sinister here, no blatant genuflection at the altar of what Daniel Boorstin used to call “the genius of American politics.”²⁷ Still, there is a profound Americanism at work, a faith in the ultimate salvation of mankind through the realization of goals and beliefs which inspired the foundation of American nationhood but were to be corrupted by oligarchic power structures. Paradoxically, it may have been this faith which helped nurture disenchantment, not with the power structures, but with their opponents.



Wall outside the now-demolished Boston Playboy Club.
by Berndt/Red Star.



Reflections IV: Half Moon Bay, California. Margaret Randall photo.

Reagan's strange new bedfellows are using a logic fashioned by the dictates of the stock market, a logic which can be found within both bourgeois and orthodox Marxist thought.³² The ledgers are drawn up according to commercial standards of success. Rather than preserving memory, however, account-book thinking pulverizes it. The cash nexus emerges triumphant and, when all is said and done, the only good insurance policy these days is the one offered by the American Marines.

Towards the end of their article, Horowitz and Collier suggest that their voting for Reagan was a symbolic act, "a way of evaluating what one's country has been as well as what it might become." They acknowledge disagreements with some of Reagan's policies (especially in the domestic arena) but are unwilling to spell these out. It is Reagan's vision which captures their sentiment, a "vision of the world as a place increasingly inhospitable to democracy and increasingly dangerous for America." That is not, as the young Horowitz would have recognized, a vision. Rather, it is a wild hallucination sustained by the desire for omnipotence. It is this desire, more than anything else, which truncates the possibilities for democracy and makes the world an increasingly dangerous place. US imperialism may be running scared but it is still running. Horowitz and Collier are now happy to jog along with it. They have trad-

ed in their uniforms of the radical sixties for those worn by the Intellectual National Guard. "One of the saving graces of age," they assert, "is a deeper perspective on the passions of youth." But it just might be that a deeper perspective is actually afforded by some of the passions of youth. Age is not any absolute guarantee against the temptations of shallow thinking. These two ex-editors of *Ramparts* could have done worse than take serious note of what David Horowitz once wrote for that magazine:

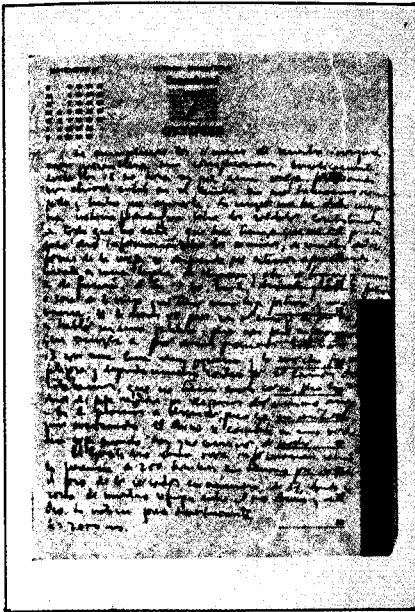
In the spring of 1966, the role of the CIA at Michigan State was revealed by a courageous intellectual. . . . What may have seemed like an isolated scandal in 1966 can now be recognized as a universal condition of organized intellect in America. The saddest part is that the academics have become such eager victims. They have internalized the limits placed upon them. They fiercely uphold a strict academic professionalism. But it is no more than expert servitude to oppressive power, to a system whose wages are poverty and blood. They do not see what they have really embraced is the perverted professionalism of the mercenary and the hired gun.³³

The exaggerations in this passage are characteristic of much sixties' sloganeering. But that should not worry us unduly. Horowitz was making a significant and challenging point about the corruption of intellectual endeavor in America. After all, the mercenary and the hired gun (understood, of course, as metaphors) may one day even be writing for the *Washington Post Magazine*. Nothing surprises any more.



Vietnam, 1970.

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Page from Ramparts "scoop" publication of Che Guevara's diary.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a trenchant critique of the survivalist mentality, see Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self* (Suffolk: Pan Books, 1985).
2. Russell Jacoby, "The Politics of Objectivity: Notes on the U.S. Left," *Telos* 34 (Winter 1977-8) p. 88.
3. Noam Chomsky, "The Vietnam War in the Age of Orwell," *Race and Class*, XXV, 4, Spring 1984, p. 59; also see Peter Biskind, "What Price Balance? On 'Vietnam: a television history,'" in the same issue.
4. Teodor Adorno, cited in Martin Jay, "Anamnestic Totalization: reflections on Marcuse's theory of remembrance," *Theory and Society*, 11, 1, January 1982, p. 5.
5. David Horowitz, *Student*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1962).
6. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
7. Horowitz, ed., *Containment and Revolution* (London: Anthony Bland, 1967), and *Corporations and the Cold War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969).
8. Horowitz, *Imperialism and Revolution*, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969).
9. Peter Collier and David Horowitz, "Lefties for Reagan: we have seen the enemy and he is not us," *Washington Post Magazine*, March 17, 1985.
10. Todd Gitlin, letter to author, August 1, 1985.

11. Collier and Horowitz, *The Rockefellers: An American Dynasty* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976), *The Kennedys* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1984).

12. See Robert Westbrook, "Good-bye to All That: Aileen Kraditor and Radical History," *Radical History Review* 28-30, 1984.

13. Robin Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," first published in 1970, reprinted in her *Going Too Far: the personal documents of a feminist* (New York: Random House, 1977); also see Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: the roots of women's liberation in the civil rights movement and the new left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), particularly chapter 9.

14. *Social Text* editors, "Introduction" in S. Sayres, *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 8.

15. Horowitz, "Revolutionary Karma vs. Revolutionary Politics," *Ramparts*, March 1971.

16. "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows," in H. Jacobs ed., *Weatherman* (Ramparts Press, 1971), pp. 60-61.

17. See Jacoby, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

18. Horowitz, "The China Question and the American Left," *Ramparts*, July 1972, p. 13.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Horowitz, "The Cruel Reconciliation," *Ramparts*, November 1972, p. 66.

21. Horowitz, "Solzhenitsyn and the Radical Curse," *Ramparts*, June 1974, p. 48.

22. Horowitz, "Introduction" in Horowitz ed., *Corporations and the Cola War*, p. 22.

23. Horowitz, *From Yalta to Vietnam* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1971), p. 426.

24. Horowitz, "Introduction" in Horowitz ed., *Corporations and the Cold War*, p. 22.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

26. Horowitz, "Hand-me-down Marxism and the New Left," *Ramparts*, September 1969, p. 19.

27. Daniel Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953).

28. *Berkeley Barb*, May 30-June 5, 1969.

29. Frank Bardacke and Tom Hayden, "Free Berkeley," *Berkeley Tribe*, August 22-29, 1969; personal interview with Frank Bardacke, August 8, 1979.

30. Todd Gitlin, letter to author, August 1, 1985.

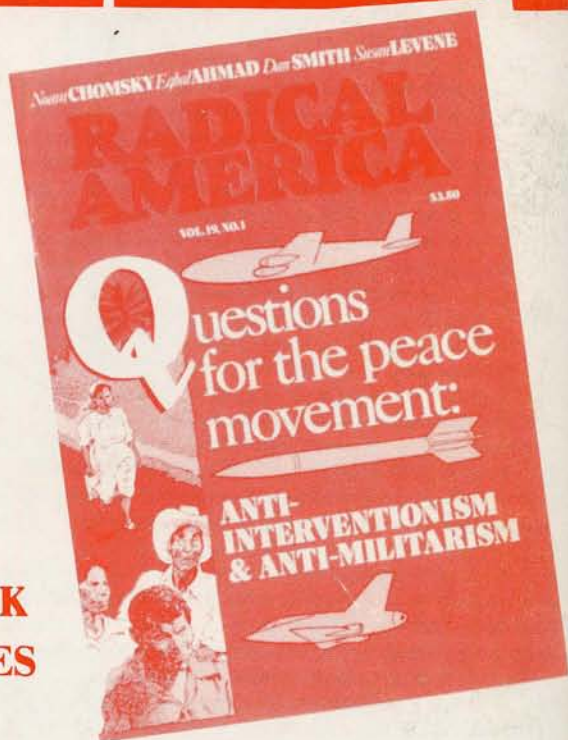
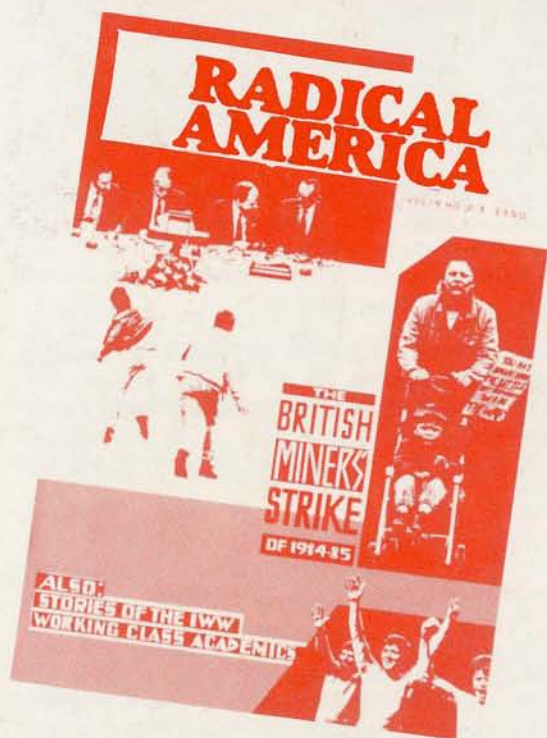
31. Horowitz, "Hand-Me-Down Marxism . . .," *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

32. See Jacoby, *Dialectic of Defeat: contours of western marxism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 2-3.

33. Horowitz, "Sinews of Empire," *Ramparts*, October 1969, p. 42.

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