

**PRO-CHOICE
PRO-CHILD**

Chain of Life

• P.O. Box 8081 • Berkeley, CA 94707 •

A Feminist Adoption Reform and Child Welfare Newsletter
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BOOK REVIEW

What's Wrong with Surrogacy?

"Birth Power: The Case for Surrogacy,"
Carmel Shalev, Yale University Press, 1989, 201 pages

Reviewed by Nancy Ehrenreich

Choice is the dominant trope through which liberal legal thought conceptualizes individual action and the relation of the state to society. Liberal theorists limit the role of government to the facilitation of private interactions between freely consenting individuals. Within this framework, governmental intervention into the "private" sphere of such personal transactions is justified only when necessary to protect one person's will from being wrongly subordinated to another's. Thus, sex without consent is rape, contracts produced by misrepresentation or duress are invalid agreements, "unwelcome" flirtation with an employee is sexual harassment -- and government can interfere with "private" relations only when such coercive acts justify regulation.

The modern women's movement, of course, has sought to throw into doubt the liberal assumption that there really exists a separate private sphere of personal freedom. The slogan "the personal is political" captures much of the feminist challenge to liberal orthodoxy. Feminists contend that focusing on the private lives of individuals obscures the cultural dimensions of social problems, encouraging women to believe that their dissatisfactions are due to personal, psychological frailties. That focus, in turn, prevents women from seeing their grievances as arising from attitudinal and systemic barriers to their survival and fulfillment, such as their relegation to devalued and undercompensated work roles. A similar insight has informed radical critiques of law, which draw upon a similar slogan, "law is politics," to convey the idea that legal rules, like culture, are deeply implicated in the constitution of the private sphere of individual freedom that law is thought merely to regulate.

Despite the affinities between these two critiques of the ideology of private choice, feminist legal theory does not always connect up with the "law is politics" critique. Indeed, many feminist analyses of gender and the law implicitly accept the traditional liberal notions of individual

choice and the public/private dichotomy. In doing so, they serve to reinforce and legitimate law's role in the subordination of women, rather than to challenge it.

In her book, *Birth Power: The Case for Surrogacy*, Carmel Shalev addresses the issue of choice in the context of contract parenthood, concluding that a refusal to enforce agreements to conceive and gestate children "denies the notion of female reproductive agency and reinforces the traditional perception of women as imprisoned in the subjectivity of their wombs." Although Shalev's analysis stands as a thorough and original treatment of the issue from a liberal perspective, it also reveals the limitations of that perspective as a vehicle for accomplishing fundamental social change.

▲ *The slogan "the personal is political" captures much of the feminist challenge to liberal orthodoxy.*

In the basic structure of its argument, the book evokes the familiar debate in feminist legal theory -- sometimes called the equal treatment/special treatment debate -- about what kind of rules are the best route to equality. Most of the major issues that have split feminist ranks over the last decade have devolved into debates over questions of choice versus coercion, equality of opportunity versus equality of results, sex-blind versus sex-specific treatment. Shalev's argument is consistent with the "equal treatment" prong of liberal feminist analysis, which asserts that equality for women can best be attained by attacking the negative stereotypes used to justify limiting their participation in political and economic life. Under this view, sex-blind legal rules are essential, not only because they directly increase women's autonomy, but also because they undercut the notion that women are different from men.

The "special treatment" position focuses instead on the extent to which existing inequalities constrain women's exercise of choice. Rather than seeking merely to remove formal barriers to equal opportunity, its proponents advocate affirmative governmental intervention into the private sphere -- if only temporarily -- to assure equality of results for women. The "special treatment" view underlies the position on surrogacy that Shalev explicitly rejects --- that women's decisions to sign surrogacy agreements are sufficiently different from most other contractual promises to justify not enforcing such agreements.

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What makes Shalev's book particularly interesting -- despite the fact that it revisits some familiar terrain -- is the way in which she constructs her argument that treating parenthood contracts as chosen rather than coerced will eradicate harmful stereotypes of women. Shalev sees contract parenthood as the last step in a progressive change in the definition of parenthood, from a "biological" one based on blood connection to a "social" or "legal" one based on individual intent. She argues that this change to a social definition of kinship will free women of the "double standard of sexual-reproductive conduct" that the biological definition produced. By rejecting the genetic element of fatherhood, she says, we can eliminate the male need to control female sexuality in order to assure the paternity of offspring. And by rejecting the genetic and gestational elements of motherhood, we can undermine the biology-is-destiny view that has justified relegating women to a child-rearing role for which they were thought to be instinctively suited.

▲ *the impulse to use surrogacy rather than adoption will usually reflect simply a more straightforward interest in biological connection*

While Shalev's analysis is provocative and original, it ultimately fails to account for the many ways in which contract parenthood arrangements reinforce, rather than undermine, traditional patriarchal categories of thought. For example, the "problem" supposedly addressed by surrogacy -- infertility -- is only a problem in a culture that values biological reproduction (and that devalues minority, disabled, and other "imperfect" babies). The primary reason that William Stern, the biological father in the Baby M case, preferred contract parenthood over adoption was to perpetuate his genetic heritage. Of course, the fact that Stern's parents were the only members of his family to survive the Holocaust -- leaving him the sole person capable of continuing his line -- makes such a desire particularly understandable. However, such special cases aside, it seems quite likely that the impulse to use surrogacy rather than adoption will usually reflect simply a more straightforward interest in biological connection. In surrogacy, the biological definition of motherhood is rejected, but the biological definition of fatherhood is left very much intact.

Moreover, as Barbara Katz Rothman has pointed out, what Shalev calls the "social" definition of parenthood results in a legal scheme in which it is the woman's relationship to the father of the child that determines whether she is the mother. Thus, if the ovum donor is a stranger to the father and the gestator is his wife -- in whom the embryo has been implanted -- then the gestator is the mother. But if the ovum donor is the wife and the gestator a stranger, as in a recent California case involving a white couple and a black "surrogate," then the ovum donor is the mother. To the extent, then, that the intent-based or "social" view does undermine the biological definition of motherhood, it replaces that definition with an alternative that reduces women to their marital status: whether a woman is a mother becomes a function of whom she is married to.

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Focusing on intent also does not necessarily undercut the vision of a maternal instinct that Shalev seeks to eradicate. Rather, an insistence that contract parenthood arrangements be allowed, especially if accompanied by a sympathetic concern for the frustrated intent of the infertile couple, suggests not only that biological fatherhood is every man's right, but also that motherhood, biological or otherwise, is so important to women that some will go to any lengths to accomplish it, including getting someone else to provide the baby.

Besides, as Shalev perceptively points out, not all women are seen as instinctive mothers to begin with. She describes how, for example, the unmarried birth mother is not seen as having any maternal instinct at all, but instead is criticized as "selfish" if she decides to keep her child, rather than put it up for adoption. The unmarried woman who wants to obtain artificial insemination is likewise seen as selfish, rather than as acting out her instinctive drives. Thus, it should not be surprising that in the context of surrogacy there is also a "good girl" and a "bad girl": the "selfish" surrogate (even the term "surrogate" implies the illegitimacy of her claims) and the sympathetic wife of the biological father -- the "true" mother whose dreams of a child have been shattered. Nor should it be surprising that here, too, the implicit scheme of female virtue should break down along class lines, with the poor or lower-middle-class woman given the bad girl role, and the upper-middle- or upper-class one the good.

Yet Shalev fails to recognize the repetition of these patterns in the contract-parenthood context. Instead, she erroneously concludes that enforcing parenthood contracts will undermine the biological definition of kinship upon which the notion of a maternal instinct is based, and thus will dismantle, rather than perpetuate, the dichotomy between "good" instinctive mothers and "bad" selfish mothers. Attributing women's oppressed status solely to their biologically defined role, she fails to appreciate the complex interrelation between class and gender. It will take more than redefining motherhood to dislodge patriarchy.

Shalev's complex (if ultimately unconvincing) argument that invalidating parenthood contracts will reinforce negative images of women does more justice to the "sex-blind" side of the liberal debate than does her less persuasive claim that invalidation also undermines women's autonomy. She begins this latter argument by distinguishing contract parenthood situations from adoptions, where a waiting period is usually required before the birth mother's promise will be enforced. Surrogacy is different, she asserts, "in view of the deliberate nature of [contractual] conception." Starting from the premise that "[i]n modern society. . . a person may generally acquire social, economic, or political position as an independent agent by means of free agreement or contract with others," Shalev views any suggestion that women could be coerced by their circumstances as decidedly paternalistic. But in her efforts to avoid paternalism, she cleaves to a rigidly individualistic vision of the actual social

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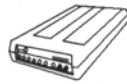
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setting of surrogacy arrangements, a vision that fails to capture the complex motivations -- conscious or otherwise -- that surely affect a woman's decision to bear a child for money.

As a consequence, Shalev's analysis ignores both the ideological and the material context in which such decisions get made. Rightly concerned with eliminating the ideological equation of womanhood with motherhood, she nevertheless overlooks the fact that many women themselves have internalized that conception of their role, and thus are particularly susceptible to sales pitches like the sort given to Mary Beth Whitehead, who became convinced that she wanted to "give the gift of life" to the Sterns. Shalev's vision of surrogacy relies on a model of the rational weighing of personal preferences that seems sorely inadequate, for example, when it comes to explaining why Whitehead would have signed a contract that paid her the equivalent of \$1.57 per hour for nine months of life- and health-endangering, emotionally difficult work.

Nor does Shalev adequately address the material inequalities that constrain women's choices. Sex-based wage differentials, for example, make it inevitable that a married woman will be the one to stay home with the children, and thus be limited to piecemeal, fudge-making, or pregnancy-for-pay as about the only ways to add to the family's income. Worse still, the single mother struggling to support her children and faced with the opportunity to, in a sense, hold two jobs at the same time, might find that an offer to enter a parenthood contract is one that she virtually cannot refuse. Yet Shalev's response to such concerns about the potential for exploitation is disturbingly dismissive:

[T]here is concern that a free market scheme would relegate underprivileged women to a new oppressed and undignified occupation, like prostitutes and wet nurses. But it should be obvious that the idea of a free market in reproduction does not attempt as such to rectify existing social inequities.

Yet, even though this rejection of the "coercion" position seems out of touch (if not uncoerced) with the lived reality of many women in our society, it also has some appeal. Shalev correctly emphasizes, for example, that it is paternalistic to suggest that women who sign these contracts really have no idea of what is good for

them, but merely sign because they overidentify with the traditional image of selfless motherhood. To view them this way surely also reinforces the notion that all women are indecisive, irresponsible, and need protection in the competitive, "male" world of the marketplace. Moreover, the concern with economic coercion is equally paternalistic: Even if these women are faced with a choice between two evils (exploitative contracts versus material deprivation), why shouldn't they themselves be allowed to make it?

In addition, it is difficult to distinguish the economic pressures that might affect a decision to enter a contract- parenthood arrangement from those that affect a plethora of decisions that Americans make every day -- such as the decision to work in a hazardous workplace, remain in a demeaning job, or join the military. In short, the argument that the coercion in these contracts stems from unequal bargaining power is either a utopian attack on the entire capitalist system or a troubling elevation of reproductive labor over other sorts. Moreover, the economic coercion argument is easily perceived as an illegitimate demand for more than one's fair share of social benefits. Why should women be allowed to escape contracts that their circumstances forced them to sign, when men cannot?

By now, the cat-chasing-its-tail quality of the debate between the two liberal positions should be apparent. While the equal treatment approach validates women's decision-making ability, it also perpetuates systemic inequalities and fails to address women's immediate needs. And while the special treatment approach addresses existing social and material inequities, it also essentializes women, denies their agency, and risks creating resentment against them among other groups. Indeed, the conflict between the two can seem to be quite intractable, a product of the complex, contradictory situation of women in American society.

▲ *Why should women be allowed to escape contracts their circumstances forced them to sign, when men cannot?*

Shalev frames the issue nicely, as the problem of how to "transcend socially defined sex-based constraints and to acknowledge the individual woman's right to self-definition, without denying the social parameters of women's oppression as a class." Unfortunately, however, she doesn't provide a satisfactory answer, and merely retreats into the terms of the liberal debate by concluding that "we women, as human beings, are capable of exercising reason with respect to reproduction and of sharing our birth power with those less fortunate than we." For Shalev, as for most liberal feminists, to demand that society change a woman's situation, we must be willing to characterize her as lacking either the capacity or the power to have created it herself, something Shalev is unwilling to do.

One could discuss, of course, whether she thereby strikes the right balance between the sets of pros and cons posed by the choice/coercion tension. But my point here is, rather, to suggest that the liberal formu-

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lation that she applies is itself the problem and will never provide a satisfactory way out of the dilemma. In addition, it is an ultimately apologetic position, legitimating the system that it seeks to reform. By assuming that the only way to justify not enforcing these contracts is to label them involuntary and/or irrational, both liberal positions accept the notion that there is a sphere of private decision-making unaffected by governmental power. Correspondingly, agreements that do not fall into the deviant category must be seen as the products of freely exercised individual autonomy. The liberal frame for the issue thus implicitly legitimates the choice/coercion dichotomy itself, and reaffirms the idea that it is an accurate description of reality to say that some choices are "free" and others are "coerced."

And what is wrong with that? one might ask. Certainly some decisions are the product of individual will, and others are not. But my point here is that although all of us surely perceive the world in such categories, the terms themselves have no inherent meaning. Rather, individuals -- and perhaps groups -- infuse the concept of choice with their own content, content that will be intimately tied to their own perceptions of the particular social contexts in which the term is raised. To some, silently pushing away a sexual overture suggests consent; to others it constitutes refusal. To some, remaining with a battering spouse is a freely made decision; to others it is not.

Thus, choice is not a determinant of results so much as a vehicle for justifying them. Moreover, contract doctrine, in drawing the line between "free" and regulable market transactions, will inevitably institutionalize a particular vision of what constitutes choice. In deciding when the protection of individual freedom requires enforcing a contract and when it requires instead refusing to do so, courts are defining, rather than merely facilitating, individual choice.

My point here is not that courts can avoid defining choice, or that refraining from doing so would purge contract law of its problems, returning it to a neutral facilitative role. Rather, my point is simply that government is inevitably implicated in contractual arrangements. A certain agreement is enforced not because it reflects the will of the parties but rather because it comports with the law's current vision of just and fair interpersonal or commercial relations and thus is *seen* as reflecting contractual choices. This means that when people agree to enter contracts as a result of emotional manipulation, or despite being inadequately paid, or without complete knowledge of flaws in the product being sold, we need not accept as a given that such agreements were the product of free and autonomous choice. Just as, under existing doctrine, courts will imply a promise of good-faith dealing into a contract, so they could also imply a promise of a fair wage, or full disclosure of information, or meaningful participation in the governing of the workplace. Since we already use contract law to structure interpersonal relations, nothing should prevent us from doing so in a progressive and humane way.

Finally, to the extent that liberal legal theorists treat choice as something that exists outside of and prior to law -- as something that courts merely enforce after it

occurs -- they ignore the constitutive role that law plays in the production of choice. Shalev's book itself provides much data to support this point. For example, she convincingly documents how legal regulation of both adoption and artificial insemination has traditionally enforced a rigid role definition for women, for it emphasizes the importance of childbearing (and rearing) for married women while simultaneously refusing to recognize or protect any maternal interests or rights of unmarried women. While applauding the trend toward open adoption on the grounds that it undermines this image, she neglects to consider the impact that the traditional adoption and artificial insemination rules must have had on how women themselves conceptualize their roles and thus, on the current choices they make.

▲ *Reproductive capacity, like children and bodily organs, may just be something we don't think people should be allowed to sell.*

But if there is no separate and distinct private realm of social relations unaffected by governmental power -- if law both defines and constructs choice -- then the role of contract rules is not to facilitate the making of private agreements but rather to establish a particular regulatory regime controlling such agreements. Because law decides what will be called freely chosen contract relations, and affects the choices people make to begin with, no realm of private contracting exists separate and apart from governmental influence. Thus, if there is no private sphere of interpersonal relations -- if law is politics -- then we should not be talking about preserving private freedom at all, but rather about how to structure humane and fulfilling contractual and reproductive relations in our society.

As far as contract parenthood agreements go, that question can be answered in a number of different ways. For example, in Great Britain, formal, compensated surrogacy arrangements are forbidden, as is the use of brokers or advertisements to procure them. In a similar vein, law professor Margaret Radin has suggested that the closeness of contract parenthood to baby selling and the harmful effect of commodifying women's reproductive capacity justify allowing only unpaid surrogacy arrangements. Reproductive capacity, like children and bodily organs, may just be something we don't think people should be allowed to sell. Moreover, by focusing on the nature of the thing being sold instead of the contractual capacity of the participants in the exchange, removing surrogacy from the market might actually elevate women's status, treating reproduction as an important social activity.

In contrast, merely regulating parenthood contracts might reinforce the negative stereotypes about women's decision-making capacities that worry Shalev. Even very stringent regulation -- including, for example, generous minimum payment to "surrogates," visitation rights, independent review of the contracts, etc. -- risks having this

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effect. A regulatory approach also replaces the woman's decision about her own interest with the state's. Better, it seems to me, to recognize the limitations on choice inherent in market exchanges in current society than to attempt to use existing patriarchal institutions to police such exchanges.

Anyone who wonders why the issue of surrogacy has "suddenly" arisen cannot help but be skeptical about the prospects for change. The problem of surrogacy is not, as Shalev sometimes suggests, a product of society's inability to keep up with technology: turkey basters have been around nearly as long as turkeys. Nor, as I have argued, does it stem from a wholesale rejection of the biological definition of kinship. Rather, it is the product of an increased willingness to see women's reproductive capacity in instrumental terms, as a means to the ends that individual men, and society as a whole, define for it. Unfortunately, however, this instrumental view of women is merely obscured and legitimated, not undermined, by a legal analysis that fails to challenge the dichotomies between choice and coercion, private and public, good girls and bad.

This article was originally published as "Wombs for Hire" in the May/June 1991 issue of Tikkun, A Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture, and Society, and is used here by permission. ▲

SUPPORT CHAIN OF LIFE

Choices, the collection of cartoons about abortion rights published by Trina Robbins, is a fundraiser for the National Organization for Women. It is still available by mail: Send \$5.50 to **Angry Isis Press**, 1982 - 15th St., San Francisco, CA 94114. This cartoon by Bülbül is from **Choices** and is used here by permission.



AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN SEATTLE, OCTOBER 18-20

The American Adoption Congress, an organization that works for openness and honesty in adoption, will be having a Western regional conference in Seattle, October 18-20, 1991. This meeting combines the Northwest and Southwest regions of AAC.

Keynote speaker will be Kate Burke, president of the AAC, who will detail structure and policies of the international organization. John Goldberg, AAC's Legislative Chair, will present a workshop on theories and practice of adoption activism.

Conference rates are \$85. for members before September 13, and \$105. after that date. Add \$40. for non-members. The Edgewater Hotel on Puget Sound charges \$95. plus tax per room (more for a water view). The conference committee has allowed for unscheduled time for informal meetings or to tour the area. Make checks for the conference payable to American Adoption Congress and send them to: AAC Conference Registrar Julie Spurgeon, 5503 - 17th Ave. NW #P210, Seattle, WA 98107. The Edgewater can be reached at 1-800-624-0670. ▲

• POLICY STATEMENT •

Human beings have a basic right to knowledge and information of their genetic heredity. This applies to children by adoption, children living away from family of origin, and children living in blended families. This concept also applies to children born as a result of alternative forms of reproduction: donor insemination, oocyte donation, embryo donation, or surrogacy. Please contact us regarding your comments concerning this statement:

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May 31, 1991

Dear Janine,

I had news of your workshop at the A.A. Congress in California by Judith Kizell Brans who was there to represent Parent Finders Canada.

I was supposed to go. . . but on March 1st, our regional director and his executive board resigned. I was alone and I had to (re)build a new regional executive board for the region of Québec. I am now Director. I really did not need this overload of work. . . As someone told me (I mean our President), the region needed new blood. I have a very good team to work with me.

The reason why I could not go to California this Spring is this: I was on the production team of six people who had to prepare, build, and conceive a five-hour-long TV program which has been broadcast live throughout Québec Province on May the 19th in the evening. What a contract! This TV program has been a complete success. I put hundreds and hundreds of hours of work in it, and it was not for nothing. During the broadcast, we made a public inquiry. The question was: "Are you for or against the right to origins?" People from everywhere in Québec could answer this question by calling up a toll free phone number (zenith 1-800).

There were so many people who tried to call up this toll free number at the same time that the telephone lines jammed and the telephonic console (switchboard, which was computerized) blew out. Bell Canada, our canadian telecommunication firm (equivalent of AT&T in USA) had to replace the console during the evening. Bell Canada engineers, who told us a day before the event that it was impossible for a zenith phone line to give out, could not believe what they saw this evening. Circuits were red.

The reason why the system broke is that more than 10,000 people tried to phone at the same time from the same region. However, if we do not take into account this little unexpected event, the result of the inquiry is the following: 2,672 for the right to origins, and 52 against. Not that bad for a first experience!

I enclose a French copy of the summary of our requests and recommendations for the Civil Code Revision. This summary is on very very general points. It's a "Preamble" to the next document where I will explain, article by article, our recommendations to the Minister of Justice of Québec. Those will touch mainly the adoption chapters, family rights chapter, and successions chapter.

I also opened a new door for . . . the participation of the Roman Catholic Church in the Adoption Record Disclosure Issue and the Open Adoption Act project we suggested to Government. Our requests are presently debated by the Québec Roman Catholic Bishops Assembly. . . .

Cécile Comeau

Mouvement Retrouvailles (Reunion Movement)
Québec Region ▲

Dear Janine,

Enclosed is my subscription.

Thanks for the sample issue of *Chain of Life*, as well as your kind note -- I am impressed by *Chain of Life*, its focus on how adoption relates to so many other issues (feminism and sexism, racism, homophobia/ heterosexism, abuse/incest, human rights, sexuality, spirituality, U.S. interventionism, etc.)....

I was a bit troubled to see Dr. Michael Bailey's too rigid characterization of male sexuality as "either strictly heterosexual or gay in orientation." Ours is a culture of dichotomies, of Us and Other, of either/or, and of silences about the realities that do not fit. As a bisexual man, I do not see myself in Dr. Bailey's construct of men, I feel rendered invisible. And as co-founder of a five-and-a-half year old support group for bisexual men and women, and an attendee at two national conferences of bisexual men and women, I know that sexual orientation, identity, and behavior are far more complex and unpredictable than Dr. Bailey's statement would indicate.

Not so incidentally, at the North American Multicultural Bisexual Network's founding conference in San Francisco in June 1990, I met a woman who is, like me, an adoptee and a bisexual. We are both interested in trying to pull together a workshop on bisexuality and adoption issues for a future conference. It seems to me there are connections, much like the analogy between bisexuality and interracial or multiracial identity that writer June Jordan explores in the column titled "A New Politics of Sexuality" in the July 1991 issue of *The Progressive*:

"To be fully and freely all that I am" means "to insist upon the equal validity of all of the components of social/sexual complexity. . . consecrated to every struggle for justice, every struggle for equality, every struggle for freedom."

Hopefully we can all move toward embracing that complexity rather than falling back into either/or analysis. As people with biological families, adoptive families, step-families (for many of us), our own families (traditional and non-traditional), and scads of other kinds of relationships and networks, adoptees can, like bisexuals, multiracial people, androgynes, and political progressives, forge the kinds of understandings that can connect us all.

Thanks for your newsletter, Janine; I look forward to future issues.

Brian Cronwall
St. Paul, Minnesota ▲

Response from Dr. Bailey:

Thanks for allowing me a chance to clarify my position:

I am sorry that my remarks on sexual orientation troubled Brian Cronwall. However, I am also sorry that he did not quote the full relevant passage of my letter, in which I noted that in my research "among men, at least, it appeared that most are either strictly heterosexual or gay in orientation [emphasis added]." This is clearly different from a characterization of male sexuality as "either strictly heterosexual or gay in orientation" since I noted that there are exceptions. My research (and others' research)

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SUBSCRIBE! (FORM ON BACK)

Editorial

I chose the book review about

surrogacy for this issue because it untangles some of the theoretical complexities between adoption reform and feminism. Feminism has never been a monolithic movement. There are radical, liberal, and Republican feminists. And as the review suggests, there are both feminists who think women should have a right to premeditatedly relinquish a child conceived for that purpose ("surrogacy"), and those who question the wisdom of sanctioning such behavior.

I have been interested in the uneasy alliance between feminism and adoption reform issues for a number of years. When I became involved in the adoption movement in 1983, I already strongly identified with feminism. Among adoption activists, I met some women, usually birth mothers, who complained that "feminists" were not supportive of their perspectives. My initial response was surprise. I was a feminist! And I thought adoption issues were clearly related to women's oppression. As so many birth mothers have reported, their choice to relinquish was rarely a free one, taking place in a society that simultaneously encourages women to be sexually appealing to men and then punishes them for succeeding if they become pregnant.

As if to prove that feminists did support birth mother and adoptee concerns, I sent the feminist newspaper *off our backs* of Washington, D.C. an article I had written about adoption from a feminist perspective, which they published in December 1984. There! I had proved that at least some feminists supported adoption reform.

But I now realize that the conflicts between the two movements are more complicated, and Ehrenreich, who does an excellent job of pointing out the flaws of a pro-surrogacy perspective, shows that there are (at least) two feminist ways to look at reproductive freedom. It's a long article, but worth the time. As always, your thoughts and feelings about it are welcome.

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At this writing, adoptee and writer Mi Ok Bruining has returned from a trip to Hawaii where she was interviewed for a documentary about the international baby trade. I look forward to hearing more from her about what she learned to share with you in the next issue.

▲
CHAIN OF LIFE BECOMES A MAIL ORDER BUSINESS! On a more hopeful note, books are available to help us all build healthy families and healthy lives, and you can now buy some of these books directly from Chain of Life. Books about feminist views of mothering, lesbian/gay parenting, and child welfare are now available. I hope to add more titles soon, to be an-

nounced in the November/December issue. If you have not received a flyer about the books that are available, I would be glad to send you one.

A subscription form is on the back for those who received complimentary copies of issue 15 and want to subscribe, or to order a gift subscription for a friend or relative. Your subscriptions, donations, book orders, and ads keep Chain of Life going. Thanks to everyone who has renewed, and to Bay Times for their recent donation.

Chain of Life is now available at Old Wives Tales, the women's bookstore in San Francisco.

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suggests that true bisexual men (men who are sexually attracted to both men and women) are somewhat rare. Most men are attracted either to men or to women. But the word "most" in the sentence at issue clearly implies that not all men are either heterosexual or gay. I should have made it clearer, perhaps, that just because bisexual men are unusual, this does not mean there is anything wrong with bisexual men. Geniuses and saints are also rare.

Sincerely,
Michael Bailey ▲

Thank you for your newsletter and for including ISRR as another resource for searchers.

Although it is not widely known, ISRR is a mutual consent reunion registry for any adult person who is in search of their next of kin-by-birth, regardless of the causes of the separation. Admittedly adoption and divorce are leading reasons.

ISRR since its inception has not called anyone collect to match and probably won't unless we reach a financial inability.

What we rather people would do is to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope (business size). The SASE really speeds the return of the registration form to the requestor and helps to defray much of our postal costs.

I am pleased that "Chain of Life" can provide its readers a diversity of current and valid articles to better inform us on social issues.

My best wishes,
Anthony S. Vilardi, Registrar
International Soundex Reunion Registry
P.O. Box 2312, Carson City, Nevada 89702
(702) 882-7755 ▲

Resources and Events

▲ The 1991 Reader's Guide to Adoption-Related Literature listing fiction and non-fiction books and articles, both in and out of print, has been compiled by adoptee William Gage. He will make a copy available to you (as long as the supply lasts) at no cost if you send a self-addressed, stamped, business-sized envelope to him with your request. Write to: **William Gage, 2300 Ocean Avenue #1C, Brooklyn, NY 11229.**

▲ **CUB Camp -- November 1-3, 1991:** A camp/conference/retreat will be held at MarLu Ridge near Jefferson, Maryland, sponsored by Concerned United Birthparents. Registration before October 1st is \$175, which includes 3 nights accommodation and meals. For more information and names of speakers, write to Concerned United Birthparents, 2000 Walker St., Des Moines, IA 50317.

▲ **"Adoption Reform Meets Lesbian-Feminism."** This paper was adapted from the presentation given by Janine Baer at the American Adoption Congress conference in April 1991. It discusses the adoption/abortion debate, adoption by gay people, stories of children of lesbians who have met their donor/fathers, and other topics. A bibliography is included. Send \$4.50 to **Chain of Life, Box 8081, Berkeley, CA 94707.**

▲ **Do you want to network** with other Chain of Life readers? Starting with the next issue, **Chain of Life (un)classified ads** will be available for \$8. (minimum) for up to 40 words. Ads can be personal requests to network with others, offers of your services, or announcements. Send your ad and a check before September 30, 1991 to **Chain of Life, Box 8081, Berkeley, CA 94707.** (Chain of Life reserves the right not to include any ad that may seem to conflict with the spirit of adoption reform, feminism, or the preservation of families.)

Soleares for a Birth Mother

Written and choreographed by Joyce Bahr; dedicated to her son Terry Michael Bahr.

*My sorrow is great.
the facts of life kept from me
like an unrevealed family secret.
It's not my mantilla I lost!*

*I have spent many years reaching out
for you -- in my own way
a way only I know about
thoughts of you bottled up inside
me are going back and forth,
with frenzy.*

*Repression has kept my spirit down.
You could somehow forgive me and
I could somehow forgive them.
Will my searching bring us back
together again, or keep me moving
to roads beyond Granada?*

This poem was written to accompany a Flamenco dance.

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I am an adoptee, a birth parent, an adoptive parent,

an adoption professional _____, someone else _____