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The politics of reproduction.

Author: O'Brien M

Source: Boston, Massachusetts, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. 240 p.

Abstract: This book analyzes the dialectical, historical, and material aspects of the reproductive process. It offers the thesis that the reproductive process is not only the material base of the historical forms of the social relations of reproduction, but that it is also a dialectical process which changes historically. Chapter 1 analyzes the reproductive process and expounds on the human significance of the dialectics of that biological process. A selection of the conceptual concerns of feminist theory is discussed, and the works of Hegel, Marx, and Freud are incorporated where relevant. Chapter 2 is a critical examination of the theoretical framework of feminist studies and includes the works of De Beauvoir, Millet, Firestone, and Reed. The reliance of these women on existing theories, however selective the approach, is viewed as a weakness which perpetuates the elements of male-stream thought and which works against women, particularly in the denial of the creativity, historicity, and intellectual significance to human reproduction. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the relation of creation to procreation as a determinant of the social forms of the separation of the public realm and politics from the private realm and family. This division is argued to be responsible for man's historically demonstrable need for a second nature, as seen from the works of Arendt, Machiavelli, and Plato. Chapter 5 examines Marxist interpretation of the polis life, whose real and imagined virtues frame the idealist political vision. George Thomson demonstrates the limitations of economism in either describing or understanding the historical move from family to polity. Marx preempts reproductive dynamic and awards it arbitrarily to the reproductive process. This is the materialist ideology of male supremacy. Some of the dimensions of the theoretical task which history now presents to women are discussed in the conclusion, as are some of the problems of unifying feminist theory with feminist practice.

Language: [English](#)

Year: [1981](#)

Keywords: [Reproduction](#) | [Political Factors](#) | [Women's Status](#) | [Women](#) | [Men](#) | [Psychosocial Factors](#) | [Social Psychology](#) | [Political Systems](#) | [Sex Factors](#) | [Marxism](#) | [Theoretical Models](#) | [Sociocultural Factors](#) | [Socioeconomic Factors](#) | [Economic Factors](#) | [Demographic Factors](#) | [Population](#) | [Behavior](#) | [Psychology](#) | [Social Sciences](#) | [Science](#) | [Population Characteristics](#) | [Socialism](#) | [Research Methodology](#)

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