

Readings

- Gill, Gurjeet K. 1998. "Female Feticide as a Contemporary Cultural Practice in the Punjab." *Dialectical Anthropology*. 23(2):203-213.
- Petchesky, Rosalind Pollack. "The Body as Property: A Feminist Re-vision." *Conceiving the New World Order*. 387-406.
- Pearce, Tola Olu. "Women's Reproductive Practices and Biomedicine: Cultural Conflicts and Transformations in Nigeria." *Conceiving the New World Order*. 195-208.

Class Business

Short Paper rewrite due on Wednesday
Final paper possible topics

Student Presentation

Gill, Gurjeet K. 1998. "Female Feticide as a Contemporary Cultural Practice in the Punjab." *Dialectical Anthropology*. 23(2):203-213.

- Female less valued than males; feticide v infanticide
- The "miracle" of amniocentesis
- 1000 females to 1700 males
- A struggle between giving and receiving a dowry
- Female birth was mentioned to father after the infanticide
- Males desired to keep the name of the family going
- "A preference for sons is the outcome of economic considerations and a patriarchal ideology that grants higher status through producing sons." (211)
- Cultural relativism: is this okay? Does this make sense? Can you impose your reason onto the culture?
- Is this a matter of older v younger generations? How can one move into a more modern setting.
 - Matter of educated v uneducated

Blackboard Interjection

- *How do notions of property, notions of autonomous object influence the application of reproductive technologies?*
- *Ideas of kinship and marriage, issues of exchange in marriage practices. Wife-givers and wife-takers*
- $A \leftrightarrow B$
- Women are viewed as more expensive to raise; there is also the cost of the dowry to make the woman more attractive to husband's family

- *The Gift*. Marcel Mauss. 1954 [English]. 1950 [French]. Looked at different groups, including northwest coast of America, exchange practices of more simple societies.
 - Potlatch: annual festivals of where one group must give to another. Gifts would be destroyed. The social status of who is giving and who is receiving: a simple exchange of expressing your alliance with that individual and little politicking.
 - Two groups of different status: wife givers of lower status to the prospective husband's family
 - Interesting dowry practices: making up the gap of social status between bride and groom; a social leveler
- Claude Lévi-Strauss. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*.
 - Smaller social groups made political alliances. Theory of alliances, kinship—political between small family groups.
 - Pearce: What is the primary unit of power in which the person is embedded. A man or woman's body and power and reproductivity and the social institution in which s/he is embedded.
 - Talking about lineages, kinship—issue of wealth
 - Wealth and spiritual power transfer from generation to generation and who inherits that power
- *Key terms: descent, patriline/patrilineal*
- How are the differences between these societies, how gender affects status in community, and the interest of the mother-in-law in the daughter-in-law producing sons. The question of the viability of the family unit over time. How power and resources are maintained in males

Back to student

- Sikh and Hindu religious relationships; to equate men and women—yet cultural standards take precedence over cultural standards over women?
- Historically, both have practiced infanticide that cuts across caste, class.
- Changes in societies shift from rural to urban—this may be changing? (comment)
- Older women perpetuate cultural preference for males
- How does position of a person holds within a lineage group or gender system—how might they be invested in maintaining those inequalities?
- A conspiracy of silence? Did the husbands really not know about the infanticide?
- A modern problem that media is addressing of problem of too few girls
- 20 million boys in China will not have spouses.
- Japan: once a housewife, a person can't work; women are delaying marriage
- Women's pay, for example, is not equal.
- *The idea of the person—and where does gender fit in? Is this a presentation of an autonomous individual?*

Pearce, Tola Olu. “Women’s Reproductive Practices and Biomedicine: Cultural Conflicts and Transformations in Nigeria.” *Conceiving the New World Order*. 195-208.

- Norplant in Nigeria
- Clinic for married women only
- Contraceptives not always promoted—state was concerned how much it could promote its own security; population rates were relatively high and outstripping state economic growth and contraceptives seen as the tool to control population growth.
- Pointed out that state hadn’t been involved in family planning; the purview of family lineages and kinships
- Birth control: abortion—other methods developed.
- Kinship structure, ideas of fertility and self
- *What is the idea of kinship? What is the idea of the person and how do people think about fertility, childbearing within the family structure?*
- A matter of spiritual and economic lineage—the lineage is at state with infertile woman—woman can be afflicted by ancestors
- No one wants to mess up the kinship lines.
- The autonomous individual does not apply to this conception of woman
- You could argue that the concept of physiological autonomy starts at birth for men; but for women it is subject to other external circumstances. Should concept of person/physiological autonomy start with birth? Varying over time, over birth position, over cultures/societies
- Keep complexity in the issues
- *Why does it seem like the status of women is always lower than that of men? Why does women’s body seem closer to nature, men’s body closer to culture? And how can this change? How do you change the so-called division in terms of inequalities and sexes and what would one do to create level playing field. Why is the women site of state intervention?*
- Not discrete autonomous individual but person connected to ancestors, persons who boundaries are permeated by spirits, weather, ancestors
- Issues of property
- Balance between physiological and psychological self—mind/body problem
 - Relates to religion
- Stem cell research—check online articles
- *Is it clear to understand the social unit in which people are embedded; the relationship of that individual and the future of the social unit? Different from western conception.* How these things relate to property, property transfer.

Petchesky, Rosalind Pollack. “The Body as Property: A Feminist Re-vision.” *Conceiving the New World Order*. 387-406.

- The culture of life, the language surrounding life in terms of social relationship
- Petchesky: question of the commons; a group of women trying to protest—Levellers. Property—who could or could not intrude into a certain space, protecting the viability of the person

- Shifted over time to John Locke—idea of property, the land or property own belonged to those who had the most power. The individual on some level was the male property owner, not women, not commoners. Is there something that we should redeem when we talk about the language of property?
- Slave women forced to bear children
- One way to rectify the historical injustices of certain groups of women and by extension, men and women that have been oppressed by colonizers. Authors are saying that we need to make this language available to everyone before we eliminate this language—there is a correlation between how society views idea of property, body, and who should have control over it.
- Marilyn Strathern talks about idea of the gift, how the idea of women as mothers and cultivators, ideas of ownership, people
- Pearce and Gill—clearly not an autonomous individual
- The idea of property—Nigerian culture group, the concept of the lineage; you can correlate ideas of ownership with ideas of personhood.
- But in cases of slave women, then they are being seen as property—but how they viewed themselves. Slave women taking back rights... through white boyfriends?
- *How women of color appropriated their own bodies—not to be a mere object, property. They are being the ones who should have control of that body; Petchesky says that slave women—the idea of person is more relational—through her children, mother and child, as well as more corporate, the community. African-American mothers to Papua New Guineans—network of mothers and daughters, production of crops, pigs, the sense of the self is more relational. The Levellers in Britain protesting the State, had a sense of relational community member, rather than sole autonomous actor. Property and market—ideas of self, boundaries of person.*
- *Corporate interests of the family extend into the capacity of the individual's reproductive capacities.*
- *White feminist critique of using ideas of property, the commodification of the women's body, what can develop is the notion of property, one's own person, then it can promote the idea that women and men can appropriate their bodies for the market, e.g. prostitution, wombs, surrogate motherhood, for trade and exchange.*
- Donation of body parts: if they are your own, should you be able to sell them to others? By turning bodies into commodities, something essential is lost and the sale of bodies, donation of parts. To equate woman with reproductive capacity, reifying that difference, the power inequality, something that can be objectified and commodified. The language of property—does that reinforce the status of the women. The social unit that a person is embedded, to the larger society, to the state, and to the market?
- Is maleness or masculinity/virility lost through sperm donation? Focused on the women, the symbolic valence. Defining a woman by her capacities of her body parts.
- Body or society as site of struggle