

At the Intersections of Infertility and Gender-Based Violence: A study on Select Infertility Narratives

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The Female Reproductive Body is considered lacking for its absence of the penis, the male reproductive organ, and also due to the presence of the womb and the various female reproductive functions from menstruation, pregnancy, and breastfeeding to menopause. While the position of mother and motherhood is celebrated, on the other hand, the fluidity of the female body and the inability of the female body to reproduce has always been sidelined, afflicted with shame and stigma, and inflicted with violence. The early Marxist feminist Shulamith Firestone has proclaimed that ensuring the elimination of sexual classes requires the revolt of women, the seizure of control of reproduction, and the maximization of artificial reproduction (Firestone, 11). But the question here is, does taking away the ability to reproduce from the female reproductive body really eliminate the gender differences, or does the lack of lack (the ability to conceive) have doubled in value? The answer to this can be gathered from the way infertile bodies are treated across generations and cultures.

This study analyses select infertility narratives and the infertile bodies and the violence inflicted upon these bodies on three levels: the physical violence inflicted upon the infertile body, the violence attributed to the infertile bodies through medical intervention, and the psychological trauma that the bodies go through. Prenatal discourses and the hegemonic patriarchal discourses have tried to discipline the infertile body by inflicting violence of various sorts. The study will closely examine select narratives from the theoretical framework of Foucauldian disciplinary power.

Keywords: Infertile body, GBV, Disciplining the body, ART, Medicalisation of infertile body