

R 4/19 Reproductive Rights in Theory

- Rosalind Petchesky “The Body as Property: A Feminist Re-Vision” (Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction, p. 387-406)
 1. On what grounds has the language of women’s bodily rights as property been contested by feminists?
 2. What questions are raised by this language of (bodily) property and its contemporary cases?
 3. What is the narrow version of “property in one’s person”? What alternative to it is presented by the author?
 4. What are the bases of the Levellers’ early-modern European claims to “self-proprietorship” and selfhood? How do their claims contrast to those of Hobbes and Locke?
 5. What is Petchesky’s critique of Pateman’s *The Sexual Contract*?
 6. What kind of “ethic of women’s bodily integrity” (398) does black feminist theory point to? Why?
 7. What does Williams insist we do with “rights discourse” (400)?
 8. In what ways are women’s bodies occupied?
 9. What “common property” is necessary to women having “property in our bodies”?

- Wendy Brown, “Reproductive Freedom and the Right to Privacy: A Paradox for Feminists” (*Families, Politics, and Public Policy: A Feminist Dialogue on Women and the State*, p.322-338)
 1. Why does Brown call abortion “an unhappy necessity”? Why does she say abortion is a political problem?
 2. How, under the Ancient Greeks, do the private realm and reproduction come together? What impact has that had on the present?
 3. Explain: “Freedom *from* reproduction represents a purely negative version of freedom” (326).
 4. Compare *Roe v. Wade* and *Harris v. McRae*.
 5. What does Brown argue regarding the “meaningful life” standard?
 6. Explain: “One problem with rights is that they isolate individuals in theory when they are not independent of one another in reality” (331).
 7. What prescriptions does Brown recommend to address the problems raised by the issue of abortion?