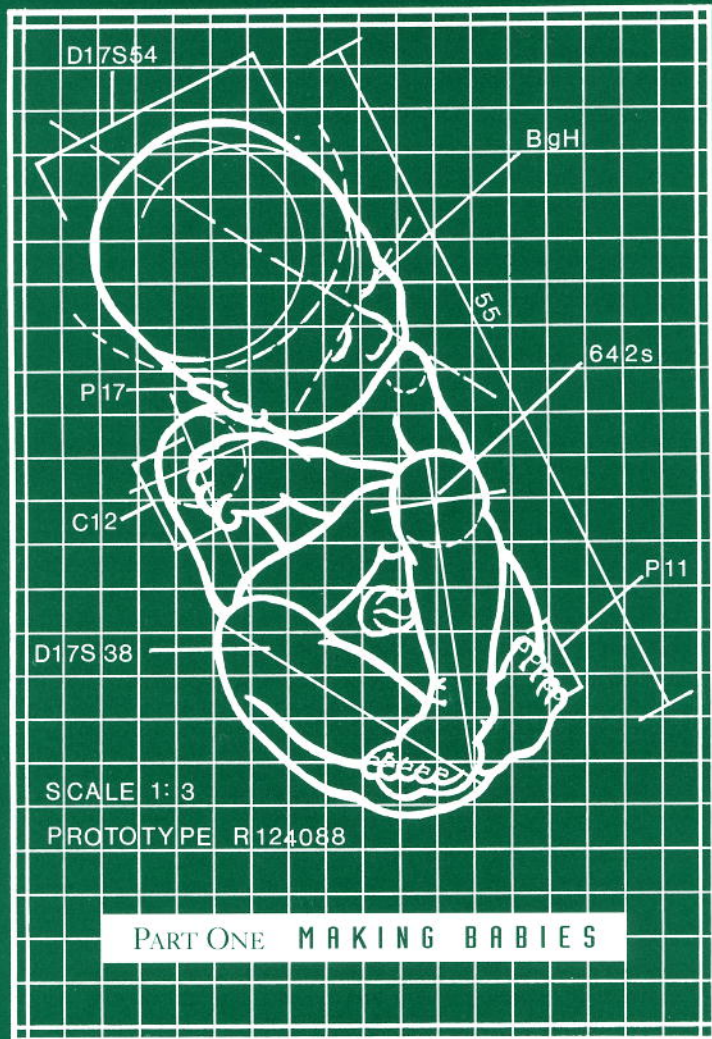


ON THE EIGHTH DAY

PERFECTING MOTHER NATURE

MAKING BABIES



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MAKING BABIES

From Dr. Faustus to Dr. Frankenstein, cautionary tales about scientists who dare to play with the forces of life have gripped the popular imagination for centuries. The possibility of human procreation without sex, without relationship to another, has been a persistent human fantasy. With the development of reproductive technology, that and other fantasies have moved from the realm of fiction to reality.

A human embryo can now be produced outside a woman's body through the use of a controversial procedure called in vitro fertilization (IVF). Hailed as a wonder cure for infertility, this technology may provide scientists with the means to control human reproduction and evolution. Proliferating at an alarming rate, reproductive technologies are in the process of changing the most basic bonds of human society.

Making Babies documents the development and use of reproductive technology and explores how science and industry have combined to transform the act of procreation into the business of making babies. The film examines how a technology that began in the barnyard to make money for livestock breeders has been exported into the human realm. It suggests that the same commercial values that drive its use in animal breeding also drive its application in human society.

Described by the World Health Organization as an experimental medical technology with an 85-90% failure rate, in vitro fertilization is now being used in clinics around the world. Despite the fact that women have died from this technology, despite alarmingly high rates of prematurity and death in the babies born as a result of IVF, the technique continues to be used not only on infertile women but also on surrogates hired to carry babies for other couples. The World Health Organization has called for a moratorium on the expansion of IVF centres and services until more research can be done. World governments have yet to respond.

But even if the medical profession were to perfect the technology, even if the risks were diminished or overcome, the film argues that there are still pressing ethical and moral questions society must ask about in vitro fertilization and its technological offspring. Thousands of "surplus" human embryos are now stored in freezers around the world. Who owns these embryos? Are they simply raw material for experimentation and research? What does it mean when we hire a woman to carry a child to which she has no genetic relationship or legal claim? What happens to family relationships when, through the use of a medical technology, your mother could bear your brother's child?

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of the National Film Board
of Canada and the
Canadian Broadcasting
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financial participation of
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C 9192 045 (video)

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Making Babies is a compelling film with a disturbing message. It asks us to question why society continues to tolerate experimentation on women's bodies. It asks us to examine who reproductive technology is developed for and why. Most importantly, it asks viewers to look within themselves and ask the most fundamental of all questions — what does it mean to be human?

■ SUGGESTED AUDIENCE

Of particular interest to women's groups and organizations, this film would augment courses at the post-secondary level in Medicine, Nursing, Science, Philosophy, Medical Ethics and Women's Studies. It can also be used by community groups and medical professionals as an educational and organizational tool.

■ THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

Is infertility the reason for the development of IVF or an excuse for scientific experimentation?

Some experts describe the development of reproductive technology as one failed technique building on the next. Is this an accurate description?

Why are we spending so much money on reproductive technology when we could be investing more on medical and social programs designed to prevent infertility, reduce premature birth and infant mortality rates and provide safe and legal abortions?

What social mechanisms or forums do we have for controlling the development of technology? Should doctors, scientists and drug companies be the ones making decisions about what new medical technologies are developed?

The Geneva Convention set strict limitations on the use of human beings in medical experimentation. Can you find examples of medical experimentation on women in the last 20 years that may have crossed those legal and ethical guidelines? Are there comparable examples of medical experimentation on men?

Doctors are now talking about the possibility of producing human foetuses for use in the treatment of disease. What ethical issues does this possibility raise?

Why does society place such a strong emphasis on couples having their own biological children? What options are there for infertile women and couples?

Efficiency, productivity, profitability — these are the values emphasized in the development of technology. How does this affect human procreation and reproductive technology?

■ RELATED NFB FILMS AND VIDEOS

Making Perfect Babies Part Two in the series, *On the Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature*, focuses on developments in the new genetic technologies and their application in human reproduction. C 9192 046

Discussions in Bioethics A compilation of eight short dramas designed to promote discussion of issues related to medical bioethics. C 0185 131

Pregnancy and Birth A film about human reproduction and birth. C 0169 033

People and Science: Waiting for the Flies to Die A short drama about ethical issues related to research in biotechnology. C 0187 114

Fragile Harvest A film that looks at the changing pattern of seed development and the impact of genetic selection and engineering on the world's seed pool. C 0186 552

No Longer Silent A film focussing on the struggle against injustice towards women in India, including the traditional preference for male children. C 0186 510

Children of Desired Sex A documentary which examines why couples in India do not wish to bring a daughter into this world. C 0189 163

■ SUGGESTED READING

Corea, Gena. *The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies from Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs*. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.

Rehner, Jan. *Infertility: Old Myths, New Meanings*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 1989.

Issues in Reproductive and Genetic Engineering: A Journal of International Feminist Analysis. New York: Pergamon Press.

■ HUMAN RESOURCES

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Toronto, Canada.

The Council for Responsible Genetics, Boston, USA.

FINRRAGE - Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering. Cathy High, 138 Baltic Street, #4C, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 USA.

■ FACTS

- According to IVF Canada figures for 1990, one IVF/GIFT (in vitro fertilization/gamete intrafallopian transfer) cycle costs between \$4,000 and \$4,500 Canadian, not including drug and freezing costs.
- According to a 1990 report done for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Canadian government spent \$3.5 million on research in reproductive technology in 1987 and \$400,000 on public health research into the causes of infertility.
- According to the Institut de Médecine de la Reproduction de Montréal Inc., the cost of fertility drugs, per woman, per IVF treatment cycle, is between \$1,500 and \$2,000.
- Scientific studies conducted in France and Belgium suggest that there is an increase in chromosomal damage in embryos produced through IVF. The damage appears to be linked to the use of fertility drugs.
- There are no long-term studies available on the impact of fertility drug use on women or on babies born as a result of IVF.
- Ares-Serono drug company, one of the world's largest producers of fertility drugs, helps fund the activities of infertility support groups in Canada and the United States through its non-profit educational arm, Serono Symposia.
- According to Marsden Wagner, M.D., of the World Health Organization, the medical definition of infertility has dropped from two years to less than one year of unprotected sex without conception.
- According to the New York Times, the number of women between the ages of 15 and 44 who reported that they or their partner had impaired fertility increased by only 0.4% between 1982 and 1988 in the United States.
- According to the New York Times, the number of fertility clinics in the United States increased from less than 50 to 235 between 1987 and 1992.
- Through the use of Preimplantation Diagnosis, human embryos can now be genetically screened before they are implanted in a woman's womb.

MAKING BABIES

What happens when the most fundamental human act — the act of procreation — becomes a laboratory procedure? What does it mean when science and industry become partners in the production of human life?

From a high tech marketplace in Paris, to the work being done at a fertility clinic in London, Ontario and a surrogacy centre in Los Angeles, *Making Babies* takes a critical look at reproductive technology and provides a chilling account of its development and use. Through interviews with doctors, drug salesmen, infertile women, surrogates, and feminist critics like Gena Corea, the film explores the origins and application of the technology and the dangers it may pose to women and to society as a whole.

**A FILM ABOUT
THE NEW
REPRODUCTIVE
AND GENETIC
TECHNOLOGIES.**

A compelling and insightful film, *Making Babies* raises important questions about who reproductive technology is being developed for and why. It suggests that by changing how we reproduce, we may be changing what it means to be human.

Part One in the series *On the Eighth Day: Perfecting Mother Nature*

A Cinéfort Inc. production in co-production with Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Director: **Gwynne Basen**
Producer for Cinéfort: **Mary Armstrong**
Producer for Studio D: **Nicole Hubert**

50 minutes 45 seconds
Order number: C 9192 045



Closed captioned for the deaf and the hard of hearing. A decoder is required.

STUDIO
D



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