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ARE CYBORGS QUEER?

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biological determinism and feminist theory in the age of new reproductive technologies and rerogenetics.

1. Introduction.

Sustained by the authority of science, biological determinist discourses have throughout the modern period defined an array of bodily markers - sex, reproductive capacities, the bodily phases of ageing, skin colour, physical and mental outfit, mother tongue etc. - that should perform as stable and "natural" referents for the formation of identities, subjectivities and desires. Biological determinist arguments have, moreover, been used as powerful political tools to legitimate social inequalities and power differentials along the lines of gender, race, sexual preference, age, class, nation, culture etc.

The enormous intellectual and political efforts that feminists, socialists, queer theorists, anti-racists, social constructionists etc. have had to muster in order to counter these conservative discourses is an indirect testimony of their power. Much feminist energy has been spent on exactly this. If we look at feminist theory from Beauvoir to Butler, a diverse landscape appears. But a common denominator is the fight against biological determinism and its naturalization and normalization of essential links between biological sex,

sexuality, reproductive capacities, gendered subjectivity and hierarchical gender systems.

The history of feminist theorizing is in many ways shaped by the project of de-naturalizing the conceptual frameworks of biological determinism. An obvious example is the articulations of the sex/gender-dichotomy, which for years served the purpose of liberating the gendered subject from constraining, monocausal ties to "static" biology. But also feminist theories, less faithful to a Cartesian mind/body split or to "the great modern divide" between nature and culture (Latour 1993; Lykke and Braidotti 1996), are "geared" towards the fight against biological determinist fixations of gendered subjectivities in essentialist and reductive notions of the sexed body. The feminist wrestlings with psychoanalysis along the lines of both sexual difference and gender theories testify to this. Queer theory in Judith Butler's version and Donna Haraway's feminist appropriation of the cyborg figuration, which will serve as framework for my discussion in this paper, have also been mobilized as part of the continued struggle with biological determinism.

The monocausal and deterministic linking of biological sex and gendered subjectivity has been the target of feminist critique at least since Simone de Beauvoir. But biological determinism in the traditional sense came under attack also from quite a different angle during the last decades of the 20th century: as an effect of scientific reproduction and the separation of reproduction from sex, engendered by the new reproductive technologies and reproductives. It is true that new kinds of biological determinism - i.a. in the shape of genetic essentialism - emerge forcefully as part of this development. But the desexualization and "scientification" of reproduction is, nevertheless, a phenomenon that destabilizes and weakens the frameworks in which biological determinist arguments about "natural" foundations of gendered identities, desires and subjectivities are anchored. It seems, as if the new reproductive technologies and some of the popular science discourses they engender in their own peculiar way sustain feminist efforts to deconstruct biological determinism.

In this paper, I will explore this thesis further. I will ask, if the new kind of material-semiotic deconstruction of the foundations of traditional biological determinism will demand readjustments of critical feminist agendas. Illustrated via popular science narratives and examples from the public debate on assisted reproduction, I will discuss how the cultural imaginary (see definition in the following section) processes biological determinist thought-figures in the wake of new reproductive technologies and reproductives.

As a starting point, I will, first of all, focus on the cyborg and the queer as examples selected from the wealth of feminist theories that deconstruct biological determinism. The two figurations will serve as a frame of reference for my discussion of readjustment anti-biologist, feminist agendas. Secondly, I will look at the desexualization and "scientification" of reproduction and ask, how it is processed by the cultural imaginary. I shall highlight two powerful trends. One is a tendency to conjure up blindly techno-optimistic and super-liberalistic "utopias", where any kind of "queer" desires for a child can be fulfilled in case you can pay the doctors' bill. An opposing tendency will also be scrutinized. It is a tendency to repatriarchalization and remobilizing of "Nature" as an argument against the "excesses" to which reproductives in the minds of many people today might lead us. I shall discuss, how the very different kinds of discourses, narratives and images, which the two trends stir up in the cultural imaginary, have a common denominator, in so far as both seem to establish a contiguity between "the cyborg" and "the queer". In conclusion, I will return to the discussion of feminist agendas and suggest that the queer cyborg may have something to say in response to the two equally problematic trends.

In order to position myself in the feminist discussion of new reproductive technologies, I shall emphasize that I am by Donna Haraway's feminist appropriation of the cyborg-figure (Haraway 1991) and its erosion of the foundations of biological determinism. But this does not mean that I ignore other aspects of the same development. I agree with Franklin (1993), Haraway (1997) and others, who stress that the current destabilization of biological determinism in the wake of new reproductive technologies should not be just

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naively celebrated. Even though a certain kind of biologist determinism loses its foundation, it is, nevertheless, far from totally dead. Currently, it is articulated in a very up-to-date version, genetic essentialism. In addition, it is also mobilized in a very paradoxical variant, which implies a recursion to a "Nature" which does not exist; a "Nature" that appears as a "a nature of no nature" (Haraway 1997); a "Nature" which is being reinvented so rapidly that it becomes very visible that it cannot act as a stable referent. Due to the limited space of this paper, I will leave out genetic essentialism here. Instead I shall concentrate on the paradoxical opposition between erosion and remobilization of biological determinist arguments which strictly speaking have been outdated by rerogenetics and its sophisticated reinvention of nature.

2. A note on terminology:

The cultural imaginary

The term "cultural imaginary" that will serve as a theoretical framework for my discussion is rooted in the Lacanian notion of "the imaginary" that refers to the self-images of the child in its mirror stage. But I use the term in a broader cultural studies sense. Here it refers to the intersections of fantasy images and discursive forms in which cultural communities mirror and articulate themselves, and which act as points of reference for their collective identity formations. With cultural studies theorist and masculinity researcher Graham Dawson I define the cultural imaginary as "those vast networks of interlinking discursive themes, images, motifs and narrative forms that are publicly available within a culture at any one time, and articulate its psychic and social dimensions." (Dawson 1994: 48). The intersection of the social and the psychic is an important aspect of the concept. According to Dawson, "cultural imaginaries furnish public forms which both organize knowledge of the social world and give shape to fantasies within the apparently "internal" domain of psychic life" (Dawson 1994: 48).

I use the term "cultural imaginary" as a framework of reference for my discussion of biological determinism, new reproductive technologies and feminism, because I want to stress the intersections of the social and the psychic, and crossbreedings of the work of ratio, emotion and fantasy.

3. Two feminist figurations: the cyborg and the queer.

As a framework for the discussion of feminist agendas, I chose to focus on two figurations, the "cyborg" and the "queer" for a number of reasons. Both have played a prominent role in feminist theorizing in the 1990s - with Donna Haraway (1991) and Judith Butler (1990 and 1993) as key spokeswomen. The cyborg has, moreover, been used productively to think through the consequences of the new reproductive technologies and rerogenetics. Haraway's own work together with the work of several others testifies to this (e.g. Gray et al 1995; Haraway 1997; Davis-Floyd and Dumit 1998). The cyborg is, therefore, an obvious choice in the context of this paper. A reason for mobilizing the queer as well is the contiguity between "cyborg" and "queer" that cultural imaginary processings of new reproductive technologies tend to construct. In this way "the queer" imposes herself on the agenda of cyborg-feminism. I shall return to this. But in order to define my points of references, I will first briefly summarize the key arguments against biological determinism, implied in the figuration of the queer and the cyborg, respectively.

The queer: I shall start with the queer and briefly outline of Judith Butler's

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anti-biologicistic way of arguing. While gender theory of the 1970s and 1980s fought against the determinist argument that sex causes gender by detaching sex from gender and by putting focus on the gendered subject as a socially and culturally changeable category, Butler takes a different route. Roughly summarized, she deconstructs the dichotomy between sex and gender, biology and culture, by emphasizing that sex is socioculturally constructed as well. But in addition she turns the biological determinist argument upside-down defending the position that gender constructs sex.

Butler's arguments about sex as discursively constructed by the cultural power regimes of gender are inspired by Foucault's approach to sexuality and his rejection of the idea of sex as a universal and natural phenomenon. According to both Foucault and Butler, sex and sexuality are sociocultural and historical constructions. As Foucault describes the historical emergence of sex (Foucault 1978), it is an effect of modernity's biopolitical agendas and the management of life regime that since the 18th century discursively have been mobilized in order to regulate bodies so that they reproduce themselves according to (bio)politically "adequate" demographic standards. The discursive construction and regulation of sexuality in "normal" (i.e. reproductive) heterosexuality and "deviant" (i.e. non-reproductive) forms (such as hysteria, homosexuality and other perversions) are to be understood as a consequence of reproduction's dependency of sexuality. Sexuality is the pivot that for years has made the demographic and biopolitical machinery run and therefore very important for modernity's regime of biopower. Biological determinist arguments about causal relations between sexed bodies, sexual desires, object-orientations, gender identities and gender performances in relation to among other things reproduction and family building should be seen on this background.

It is therefore consequent, when Butler - in order to delegitimize, denaturalize and denormalize the chain of causal connections - puts focus on the queer in the shape of i.a. the drag queen. S/he is a figure who disturbs the smooth running machinery, exposing dissonances and making it visible that there is no essentially "natural", universally "normal" and a priori given link between the sex of the body, desires, gender identity and gender performance.

The cyborg: Contrary to the queer, who first of all seems to be bent on diversity in the sexual performances of bodies, and who fight biological determinism because it limits sexual interactions along the lines of gender norms derived from reproductive capacities, the feminist cyborg on her part is not primarily interested in the bodily performances of existing bodies. On the contrary, her passion is the production of new bodies via fusions of organism and machine. In this sense, she puts focus on reproduction or rather regeneration of bodies as Haraway prefers to put it (1992) in order to emphasize the innovative and not just repetitive dimensions of the process.

The figuration of the cyborg refers to the diversity of fusions between bodies and machines that are taking place today as a consequence of the development of both information technologies and biotechnologies. The cyborg can be defined as a cybernetic organism, a machine-human or machine-animal, an organism, whose bodily functions are modified/transformed/simulated by technology.

As part of her critical feminist appropriation of the concept, Haraway (1991) stresses that the cyborg, on the one hand, is a dangerous player in the development of militaristic and capitalistic command-control-paradigms. But, on the other hand, the figuration has potentials as challenger of an array of dichotomies in which the (bio)power of Universal Man and modern technoscience are founded. According to Haraway, the cyborg can act as an ally in the feminist fight against biological determinism, in so far as the figuration challenges the stable boundaries between nature and culture, makes visible that "Nature" is not universally given, but a changing ethno-specific construction; in so far as the figuration, moreover, stresses the reinventedness of nature and gives emphasis to an understanding of nature as co-construction of human and non-human actors (Haraway 1992) and as a process in constant change. Biotechnology and new reproductive technologies are areas which makes these rebellious acts of the cyborg very clear (Haraway 2000).

4. The emergence of the queer in the cyborg-world of clinical conception.

The new reproductive technologies change reproduction radically. Conception can take place in a petri dish in a laboratory. Sperm, eggs and embryos can be frozen, thawed and in principle used whenever you like. Maybe years after they lost touch with the body that produced them. They can also be donated or bought and sold as consumer goods. Together all the changes mean that the links between genetic, gestational and social mother- and fatherhood as well as between sexuality and reproduction are loosened in a radical way. Indeed, neither children with an "unknown father" nor insemination in a simple sense (i.e. undertaken with a spoon, a finger or other simple instruments, while the sperm still has the warmth from the male body that produced it) are modern inventions. Nevertheless, in earlier times, a minimum of bodily and physical connection in space and time between the genetic mother and father, between the one who contributed the egg and the one who contributed the sperm, was a necessary precondition for conception. With the new reproductive technologies this does not apply anymore. It is no longer a prerequisite for conception that the genetic parents ever touch or even meet in space or time. They may live in totally different corners of the world without ever getting to know about each other, and one of them can in principle be long dead, before the other is born.

An effect of all this is that gendered, sexual and reproductive identities, which biological determinism formerly with a certain success could claim were one and the same thing, in the ongoing processes of scientific reproduction are being split up. This entails an array of open questions for which it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain that there are any "a priori" or "naturally" given answers. Are surrogate mothers or the women and men, who donate egg or sperm to be considered mothers and fathers? What is the difference between genetic motherhood, gestational motherhood and social motherhood? And between genetic and social fatherhood? Who are the "real" and "true" mothers and fathers? And what about sexual identities, desires and orientations? Don't they lose any meaning as regards reproduction, when the latter can take place in a petri dish in a laboratory, or be performed in the womb, but with anonymous, frozen-thawed cyborg-sperm bought in a sperm bank and injected without the involvement of sex? How can reasonable distinctions be maintained between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples wanting medically monitored assisted reproduction in so far as they cannot conceive via sexual intercourse? On what grounds can medically monitored assisted reproduction be highly recommended in the latter case and condemned or forbidden in the former? How can single mothers, lesbian mothers and surrogate mothers be distinguished reasonably from "real" mothers, i.e. mothers living in a heterosexual relationship?

The public debate and legislation in many countries show that answers, of course, can be given to these questions. Distinctions are constructed and negotiated intensely for the time being. But the very fact that passionate and often contradictory negotiations are taking place in many settings, makes it at the same time increasingly visible that what is going on is nothing but a process of social, cultural and legal construction; a construction which obviously cannot be reasonably legitimated by recurrence to an unchallenged consensus about its "natural" foundation. The flood of open questions about "natural" mothers, "natural" fathers, "natural" origins, "natural" sex, "natural" kinship, which begins to take hold of the cultural imaginary, affects biologist determinist key notions of "unalterable" links between reproductive capacities, sexual desires and subjectivity. They come to appear dubious.

An example that shows how popular science discourses may nourish the cultural imaginary in this respect can be found in the highly controversial and provocative popular science book *Remaking Eden* (Silver 1998) by Princeton biologist Lee Silver. Silver intends to make it crystal clear that conception is no longer dependent on sexual encounters between a female and a male body. Lesbian and gay couples who want children genetically related to both partners, and single women who want to clone children without male interference form happy families in future scenarios conjured up on the pages of Silver's book. In his new Eden, almost every thinkable kind of "queer" desires for a child are

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normalized. Biological determinist links between sex and gender are implicitly declared unsustainable and hopelessly outdated.

Only one small "snake" appears in Silver's Eden. This is money. A majority of the world's people will not be able to pay for clinical conception. Therefore, society will be more and more divided, Silver warns. On the one hand, a ruling elite of genetically engineered and enhanced cyborgs will develop, in whose world the "queer" desexualized way of conceiving becomes the norm. On the other hand, we will witness the emergence of a lower class of people who, for economic reasons, will be forced to conceive in the old-fashioned way. They will, therefore, remain excluded from "the benefits" of genetic enhancement as well as from making other than very modest and old-fashioned "queer" desires for a child come true. In due time this class division will, Silver says, be so outspoken that the human species simply will be split up in two different parts, who have become so genetically incompatible that they no longer will be able to conceive together.

If we compare Silver and other popular science narratives of the Eden, into which rerogenetics are about to bring us, it is obvious that their super-liberalist discourses construct a proximity between the cyborg and the queer. This makes it interesting to involve queer theory in a dialogue about the future perspectives.

First of all, it seems to be significant that a radical denaturalization of the links from sex to gender - such as queer theory - emerges at a moment in time, when material deconstructions of these causal relationships seem to be well under way as a consequence of the technological development. Moreover, Silver's predictions can to some extent appear promising, seen from a queer perspective, in so far as they declare the "natural" relationship between sexuality, sexual desire and reproduction for totally dead and outdated.

This might, however, also lead to a provocative question about feminist agendas. Is it still necessary to spend intellectual energy on the delegitimation of the causal links that traditional biological determinism constructed between "natural and normal" sex, "natural and normal" reproduction, "natural and normal" gender identities, "natural and normal" gender performances etc.? Or does the cyborg-world of desexualized, scientific reproduction not overtake the anti-biologist arguments? When the technoscientific development, without any help from critical feminists and promoters of radical sexual politics, desexualizes reproduction, causes denaturalisation and lies emphasis on social constructions such as social mother-, father- or parenthood (separated from gestational motherhood and genetic mother-, father- and parenthood), is it then still necessary to spend time deconstructing the linkage of sexuality, reproduction and gender identities? Or would the feminist energy perhaps be spent more productively on a strong critique of the class divisions included in Silver's utopia and by claiming a new kind of reproductive rights, which includes democratic access for all to clinical conception?

If we listen exclusively to Silver and other popular science narratives about new reproductive technologies and rerogenetics, it seems as if the traditional biological determinist linking of sex and reproduction is about to be outdated. So feminists do not need to struggle with the deconstruction anymore. It is happening automatically as an effect of the development, these discourses maintain. Progress, lo and behold! we are on the brink of an era where the new technologies are about to transform reproduction to something that - totally separated from sexuality - takes place as a clinical process in a laboratory. The type of conception, where a child was a product of sexual intercourse, is outdated as non-scientific. So we are told.

These kind of popular science discourses are, of course, naively techno-optimist, and, moreover, partly futuristic and science fiction-like. But partly they also express the reality of a growing number of infertile people who ask fertility clinics or hospitals to help them with their "problem". Moreover, it should be noted that modernity has been characterized by the "scientification" of more and more areas of everyday life. The current development of rerogenetics indicate that the turn now perhaps have come to conception and reproduction, which as an effect of the process of "scientification" are about to be desexualized.

The question, I will raise, is what this means for the anti-biologist feminist agendas. Are we perhaps better off with the cyborg than with the queer as a framework for critical analysis? I will return to this question in the conclusion. But first I will take a look at a cultural imaginary trend which opposes the technooptimist utopism I have discussed so far. I shall also mention the remark that the confrontation with this trend will shift the way in which I will raise the question of readjustment of feminist agendas.

5. The "natural" order of things on the slippery slope.

Silver and the broad strand of popular science that reproduces the same kind of naively technooptimist utopism predict that the edenic future world will belong to an elite of cyborgs indulging in "queer" desires for babies. The opposing trend, to which I shall turn now, constructs the same contiguity between cyborg and queer, but with purpose of scapegoating and demonizing them. With the Danish parliamentary debate on assisted reproduction as illustration, I will point out how the current erosion of biological determinist thought-figures such as "natural" mothers, "natural" fathers, "natural" families etc. not only calls forward dreams of a new Eden, created in the image of the queer cyborg. I will demonstrate how the other side of the coin seems to be strong fears, against which the cultural imaginary tries to defend itself by reinforcing dichotomies between very stereotyped and asymmetrical gender constructions, on the one hand, and monstrous scare images of the queer cyborg and her "perverted" and "unnatural" desires on the other.

The debate on assisted reproduction and reprogenetics in the Danish parliament took place in 1996-98 (with an afterplay in the spring 2000). The Danish law on assisted reproduction was passed through parliament in 1997. An amendment concerning the access of lesbians and single women to medically monitored assisted reproduction was debated from 1997-98, but led to no change of the 1997-law's denial of access for lesbians and single women to medically monitored assisted reproduction.

To some extent the Danish debate is typical of the continental European situation, where the discourses on assisted reproduction emerge on a political background characterized by often more restrictive attitudes to the whole issue than those found in for example the US. However, the Danish debate is also special, because it, compared to other countries, e.g. Sweden and UK, it took place relatively late, i.e. at the end of the 90s. It was prepared via debates throughout the 1980s and the early 1990, but the grand finale was the prolonged debate about the law from 1997.

At that time a lot of potential "monstrosities" had been made visible by the world press. The story about the Italian woman of 62 who were impregnated by IVF had made headlines and so had the Human Genome Project and Dolly. The attitudes of the majority of Danish politicians were obviously very influenced by this. They appeared scared and perplexed, overwhelmed by a feeling that they were facing a development, which they did not feel they had the power to stop, and which they found difficult to understand and foresee. This made the debate very emotional. The rhetoric used in the debate is very different from the usual so-called "neutral", i.e. technocratic language, which normally characterizes the debates in the Danish parliament. The emotionality is further given weight by the fact that the debate and the ensuing votings were not conducted along party lines. All parties had set their members free to vote along lines defined not by the party, but by individual ethical standards. The highly emotional and in some cases even very vulgar language which characterized the Danish debate on the bill on assisted reproduction gives a privileged glimpse into some of the cultural imaginary images tied to new reproductive technologies and reprogenetics.

What I find interesting when looking at the debate and the ensuing law is, first

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of all, that a fear, which apparently is evoked by an uncanny feeling of vanishing "natural" foundations and loss of thoroughly anchored biological determinist thought-figures, surfaces forcefully. Images of the world gone awry and a development determined by "mad scientists" seem to lurk in the back of the minds of many Danish parliamentarians, when they with a shudder talk about the erosion of "the natural" order of things and the uncontrolled proliferation of monsters that reprognetics evokes.

From a Foucauldian point of view, it is revealing to look at how detailed the "monstrosities" of biotechnology are uplisted, and how eloquently they so to speak are mapped in the debate. The law is a prohibition act, and as such it must list and map the monstrosities it will not allow. They are cloning of humans, construction of humans on the basis of positive selection of genetic characteristics (i.e. genetic enhancement or "designer-babies"), sex selection, construction of human-animal-hybrids, gestation of humans in animal or artificial uteruses. But to these monstrosities which were already prohibited by earlier legislation, and which go unchanged into the law of 1997 are added a whole range of other evils that emerge out of the debate in parliament. Age, including post-menopausal pregnancies, are a big issue in the debate. Another much debated issue is egg- and sperm-donation and the question: who is allowed to donate eggs and sperm to whom? Between the lines lurks what one MP from a socialist party in disgust evokes as "US-conditions", where daughters have donated eggs to their mothers and sisters to the wives of their brothers thus in a way transgressing the barriers of incest (homosexual as well heterosexual) and transgressing also the "natural" alteration of generations. A third monster is micro-insemination, whereby sperm of men with a low sperm-count is injected into the egg. According to one worried MP from the Social Democratic party, this procedure might lead to degeneration. The ghost of eugenics is also invoked by the discussion of preimplantation-diagnostics and the possibility of sorting out embryos with a predisposition for serious hereditary diseases.

I see the eloquent listing of monstrosities, in which the politician indulge, as an indicator of their fear and feeling of powerlessness vis-à-vis a scary erosion of the foundations of any kind of recursion to biological determinist thought-figures. The debate asks to be read in a Foucauldian vein. The unusually emotional rhetoric of the politicians asks to be interpreted as an elaborate construction and confirmation of the things they most abhor.

But the politicians' fear of the techno-monsters and their feeling of powerlessness vis-à-vis the development of technoscience become even more obvious, when we - to the listings of monstrosities - add the explicitly defeatistic ways in which some parliamentarians speak about their endeavours to set limits and create restrictions. They talk, for example, about a not very effective act of "fire extinguishing" (female MP from the left wing), about "the uncanny" that cannot be stopped (male MP from the right wing), and about "going down a slippery slope" (many MPs from both left and right wing parties).

As an especially telling example, which clearly demonstrates the perplexity, and the way, in which the politicians seem to feel that the foundations of all value-judgments have been turned upside-down, I will quote an MP from the Conservative Party (moderate right wing). She bluntly admits that she has no rational arguments left:

"To those who ask me about rational answers to this question (the question about how long it shall be allowed to preserve embryos in a freezer, NL), I cannot think of a reply. It is the thought about the artificiality that scares me: that you, 2 or 3 years after the fertilized egg has been frozen, take it out of the freezer and put it into the womb. There is something unnatural about it, and it transgresses my ethical limits..." (L 200, 1996).

Apart from the obvious fear and perplexity, which apparently have caught many of the MPs, the debate, moreover, shows, how these feelings of powerlessness and fear seem to give extra force to an overzealous attack on the reproductive rights of single women and lesbians. The law from 1997 excludes them from access to medically monitored assisted reproduction, and in the debate they are addressed in misogynist, stereotyped and even vulgar ways. When you close-read the debate, you get the impression that the force, with which many MPs stigmatize the "social monsters", lesbians and single women, is proportionate

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with the intensity of the feelings of fear and powerlessness vis-à-vis the cyborgs. It is, as if unmanageable techno-monsters are displaced in favour of social monsters, lesbians and single women, over which the politicians can exert power. Especially in the second phase of the debate from 1997, the "fatherless family" headed by such "unnatural" creatures as single women and lesbian couples, come to represent the ultimate step towards the horrible abyss, where the onward march of the cyborgs can no longer be stopped.

The majority of parliamentarians could thus easily agree on the presumption that the "natural" had to be based on a male-gendered father. A member of the conservative fraction, for instance, aired his conviction that "the being together with, you may say - a y-chromosome - a really masculine part" often had great significance for the identity of a boy. (However, in his view, this y-chromosome should not originate from sperm bought in the Far East!). A member from the socialist party, a woman - who aside from being a MP is also a priest - insists on behalf of herself and many of her comrades in her fraction that the name of the (biological) father should be officially proclaimed as a precondition for women's pregnancy: "Do single women have the right to get children without there somewhere at the other end of the sperm blot is a name?", she rhetorically asks.

The connection between quality-parenting and male gender is also easy to spot if we go through the different female and male images, which the Parliament's many propagators of the "natural family" put forward with a patronizing, almost missionary zeal. Whereas the imaging of women is predominantly negative, the opposite holds true of (real) men.

The following examples may illustrate the gallery of predominantly negative, "abnormal" or "queer" female types presented by the many both right wing and left wing promoters of the "natural family".

Firstly, we have the women who in one way or other are natural monsters, and who either "cannot" or "won't". One of these is the woman who is so "incomprehensible ugly" that she cannot "score/get hold of a man". Should she - or for that matter the lesbian who does not want to "score a man" - really be admitted to a "sperm blot" without a name? Another monstrous figure, conjured up in the debate, is the Career woman. The one who out of pure selfishness puts off having a child until it is nearly too late. Obviously, she is a bad and selfish person without the right maternal instincts. To her, whose life style is probably focussed on consumption, a child is just consumer goods.

Moreover, we have the lesbians of whom there are two kinds: the responsible, who do their best to arrange something that at least may resemble the natural dad-mum-baby-family. That is OK, but only as long as they do not expect to get medical assistance for insemination, in-vitro fertilisation etc. If their fallopian tubes are closed, then they must either resign or become normal. The other kind of lesbian is a really bad person. It is the irresponsible lesbian: the one who lives in the delusion that she may herself take care of a child's "welfare" without the physical or symbolic presence of the y-chromosome and the father name.

Whilst these constructions of femininity feed on the misogyny inherent in our culture and the construction of the dichotomy between "normal" women living in a heterosexual relationship and "queer" women (lesbians and single women, who are too ugly or too focused on their career!), the image of maleness, most often conjured up in the discourse of the majority of parliamentarians, benefits from traditional, positive views on masculinity. To the fore comes the icon of the "good" father. He is the one whose masculine charisma is so strong that he does not even have to be at home. In the romanticized refrain of the MP from the socialist fraction, whom I quoted earlier, he emerges as a dream prince: "A child has the right to a father, and that should not only be the rule when the parents split up but also when the child is conceived. We know very well that the father can be conspicuous by his absence, and we cannot pass bills to solve that, but we can at least make sure that there is one who is conspicuous. There must be someone to dream about and long for, otherwise it will be so awfully sad." (L.200 1996)

The traditional counter-image to this dream prince is, of course, the

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"defective"/castrated man, and, believe me or not, he pops up in the debate as well, although not as often as the dream prince. The castrated man is the guy whose spermatozoa are so "wonky", that they are not even able to walk on their own legs but have to be "driven in a wheelchair and pushed in". (The technique of microinsemination (injection of sperm into the egg) is actually referred to in such vulgar language by some parliamentarians.) In contrast to the overdetermined dream prince, this "queer" guy does not vouch for quality.

Denmark was the first country in the world to allow registered partnership for homosexual couples. Therefore, it was, of course, especially disappointing that lesbian couples together with single women some years later, as part of the debate on assisted reproduction, were stigmatized as unfit of parenting without the participation of a "real" masculine element. However, my thesis is, as mentioned, that at least one of the explanations for the heavy attack on the reproductive rights of lesbians and single women was the image of the mad scientist lurking in the cultural imaginary behind the techno-monsters. The fear of the cyborg-monsters was projected upon "queer" women, lesbians and single women, who broke with the so-called "natural family", i.e. the family based on a male-gendered father. The figure of the "queer" and the figure of the "cyborg" were collapsed with the result that the different demonic powers and the hate, which were projected upon each, were merged into the horror image of the "queer cyborg".

6. Conclusion.

Two feminist figurations, the "cyborg" and the "queer", have been players in my text. In the first part of the paper I asked provocatively, if a certain modernization and readjustment of anti-biologist feminist agendas were needed in the light of the desexualization of reproduction, brought about by the development of new reproductive technologies. The question set the stage for the preliminary conclusion that feminist critics of new reproductive technologies and reprogenetics perhaps would be better off taking "the cyborg" as her ally rather than "the queer". On the background of the super-liberalist techno-optimist utopism, stressed in the first part of my narrative of the fate of biological determinism in the age of new reproductive technologies, the "queer" seemed too fixated on the deconstruction of links between sexuality, reproduction and subjectivities. Why bother, when the bio-technological development seemd to be about to outdate these links anyway?

Having thus tentatively set the stage for selecting the "cyborg" rather and the "queer" as critical tool for the feminist analysis of cultural imaginary processings of new reproductive technologies, the "queer" so to speak re-imposed herself on the agenda in the next main section. It showed how a demonized version of the cyborg and the queer were collapsed into each other and used as evil counter-image to the good and "natural" heterosexual couple who would only use new reproductive technologies for decent purposes, i.e. in order to give "Nature" a helping hand. Bearing this in mind, I shall now in conclusion rearticulate the question of new agendas for feminist theorizing and suggest an alliance between "the queer" and "the cyborg" instead of a replacement of the former with the latter.

The cultural imaginary construction of contiguities between the "queer" and the "cyborg" suggests a feminist strategy that undertakes a kind of re-appropriation, adopting the "queer cyborg" as a point of identification and as site for critique and resistance. Although the term queer has its own problems, in so far as it to some extent ignores sexual difference and gender asymmetries in favour of the fight against heteronormativity and power differentials defined along the lines of sexual preference (Braidotti and Butler 1994), the "queer cyborg" may, nevertheless, turn out to be a critically useful figure. The figuration may prove to be able to take into account the necessary political transformations of the current sex/gender system in a more committing way than the figure of the "post-gender cyborg" whom Haraway introduced in the

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cyborg-manifesto (1991: 150), but who after that has lived a life of its own without the approval of its "mother". In a recent interview (Lykke, Markussen and Olesen 2000), Haraway stated that she is not very happy with the term "post-gender". She sees it as too often used in a superficial utopian sense that misses the point about necessary political transformations of the here and now. Such transformations are, as I see it, implied in the figure of the queer.

The "queer cyborg" may draw upon the critical strength and transformative potentials of both the involved feminist figurations. While the cyborg deconstructs dichotomies and hierarchies between organism/machine, nature/culture, sex/gender etc., the queer breaks down dichotomies between different kinds of sexual orientation as well as the link between reproduction and sexual desires and identities. But when the two act in conjunction both kinds of tasks may be given equal weight and priority. We saw in the analysis of the Danish parliamentary debate that the powers of demonization were increased by the coupling of "cyborg" and "queer". But this kind of synergy effect may also manifest itself as far as the critical potentials are concerned, which feminists have attached to the two figurations.

As critical feminist figuration the "queer cyborg" may, therefore, make a useful contribution to the solving of at least two important theoretical and political tasks. She will emphasize that the feminist fight against biological determinism must be able to combine the critical deconstruction of the monocausal links from sex to gender with an exploration of the potentials as well as the problems implied in the effects of the "opposite" kind of detachment: the desexualization of reproduction.

Secondly, she will stress, how the separation of reproduction from sexuality erodes, deconstructs and delegitimizes the argumentative power that biological determinism has ascribed to "the natural" and "the normal". But she will at the same time also give much attention to the fact that this loss of power perhaps, in return, may produce so much fear that "old-fashioned" kinds of biological determinism are forcefully mobilized with herself as a convenient target and scapegoat.

The queer cyborg will hopefully not be driven to despair by this! Conversely, I will assume that she, in a kind of Foucauldian reversal, may use this scapegoated and demonized position as a platform for critique and as a site of resistance, which may help to strengthen, renew and readjust the feminist agendas as regards the critique of reproductive technologies and reprogenetics. One thing is certain: For the queer cyborg feminist the nostalgic and technophobic recurrence to a world without cyborg-reproduction and cyborg-babies would be definitely "out", in so far as this would make her side with the conservative voices who will exclude her from access to new reproductive technologies.

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