PRONATALISM:

AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

OF AN OLD CONCEPT AS A NEW DISCRIMINATION

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FORWARD

This thesis is about the radical subject of not having babies and the pressures that make everyone think they should. I learned, like everyone else growing up in America in the 50's and 60's that it is just expected that everyone has children, no questions asked.

I learned in high school that the world is overpopulated, but I still wanted my babies someday. Someday is here, I am finishing an undergraduate degree, and I've been married over two years. Now I find I am so happy the way my life is going and that there are so many other things to do, I'll just postpone the babies, perhaps indefinitely.

I began researching pronatalism because little was written about it. It did not take me long until I began questioning the Myth of Motherhood as it affects me. I want to say that I am not a radical, but a normal, 21-year-old, almost-college graduate, but I question if I want children in my life ever. I am not cutting down people who do choose to have children (only those who have too many)--the point is that this option must exist. I am also not saying I will never have children, just that I don't know it I will.

I do not want to offend anyone with this paper. I just hope that everyone will be sensitive to pronatalistic pressures, and even if they choose parenthood, that they make sure the option exists to choose a childfree lifestyle.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Pronatalism: an old concept as a new discrimination</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Legislated pronatalism</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The social guardians</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Conclusion</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. INTRODUCTION

It is getting more difficult all the time for people of the world to ignore the crisis of too many human beings needing and wanting too many of Spaceship Earth's limited resources. Only the naive and the selfish can deny the fact that more people are hungry than well fed; indeed that malnutrition is the biggest single contributor to infant and young child mortality in developing countries where 25 to 30 percent die before the age of four (UNICEF newsletter). Everyone can try to cope and adjust, but the traffic on the highways, overcrowded schools and public facilities, pollution, and overburdened recreation areas are problems that will only get worse.

Many Americans are under the mistaken impression that the United States has a zero population growth rate. Others fear ZPG would hurt the nation. Much to the contrary, the U.S. population is growing by a considerable number every year to reach 262 million by year 2000, an increase of nearly 50 million from today (World Population News Service, 9/1975), and many leading economists and other experts see ZPG as our only hope for survival. The birth rate the U.S. did attain in 1974 was called the replacement fertility level. While not being a zero rate of growth, replacement fertility means that couples are only having enough children to replace themselves. Too many people, themselves products of the post war baby boom, are at the childbearing age for a zero growth rate.

Research released over the summer 1975 concludes that even the replacement fertility trend of 1974 is now being reversed by a "mini" baby boom. The two researchers, Dr. June Sklar of the University of California, and Beth Berkov, of the California State Department of Health, found that the birth rate for women of childbearing age rose 2.3 percent from 1973 to 1974.
in California. Sklar and Berkov say there is a high potential for increased fertility because of the large proportion of married women under the age of 30 who have not yet borne any children (Sklar and Berkov, 1975, 693-700).

The evidence available clearly points toward more people and more problems. It would seem reasonable, however, for the logical women and men of this nation and the world to stop having so many children. Why will all those married women under 30 to whom Sklar and Berkov refer who have put off having children all this time suddenly decide to reproduce? Just why does anyone have children? Does everyone really love children so much that we overpopulate the world, or do we just think we have children out of sheer love for them? These questions are only beginning to be asked; the answers are catching up. This newly recognized field of questions now has a name and a discipline of study. Ellen Peck, columnist, writer, and founder of the National Organization of Non-Parents (NON) introduces it:

there is a strong and heretofore unquestioned social force which has produced both the universal parenthood ideal and its attendant discriminations. This social force is called pronatalism (Peck, 1974, 9).

II. PRONATALISM: AN OLD CONCEPT AS A NEW DISCRIMINATION

The hidden persuaders promoting universal parenthood compose that social force we now term pronatalism. Pronatalism, being a young field of study, is subject to a range of variations in definition. Some choose to define it narrowly, while others use a broad definition. Peck (1974, 1) defines pronatalism as "any attitude or policy that is 'pro-birth', that encourages reproduction, that exalts the role of parenthood." Pronatalism may even be merely a pro-birth social climate. In this case a policy of attitude
need not directly encourage people to have children, such as paying them to do so, but it could furthermore be any policy or attitude that discriminates against those who choose not to be parents. The narrow description limits the concept to attitudes or policies that promote births to the extent that women have children rather than take advantage of alternative opportunities. This paper will focus on the broad, more liberal view of pronatalism.

Pronatalism has been in the demographer's vocabulary for years. They used the word in reference to national policies that affect population trends. Today the word is being used in a new context, one that reaches down among the people for an impact on individual lives. Pronatalism is another form of discrimination, a result of prejudice just like sexism or racism. No one claims it is a comfortable word; it suggests inequality, bias, and a rigid system of social values like the other -isms. Peck (1974, 1) notes that "full comprehension of its pervasiveness in our thoughts, actions, and institutions will not be painless" just as our understanding of racism and sexism rocked a few boats.

If pronatalism is any attitude or policy that promotes birth, is there anything associated with children that is not pronatalistic? The women's movement has urged maternity leaves from employment, for example, to preserve seniority and for child care centers as two steps towards equality for women. British women receive a grant of about $60 upon the birth of a baby and about $20 a week during maternity leave from employment. While these two examples help women with babies, most experts agree that they are not pronatalistic.

Maternity leaves, child care, and birth allowances do not encourage parenthood. Rather, they are solely for the benefit of children and society, and in the long run, reduce births. Indeed Piepmeier and Adkins (1973, 518)
concluded these programs are instrumental in reducing birth rates.

Turning to developed countries the idea that in the interests of population control, day care facilities for children of working women should not be provided has been put forth by some researchers and decision makers. This policy does not seem sound: the policy should be to keep women in the working force.... We should not believe that if child care facilities exist, women will produce more children merely to fill them. Rather, the provision of facilities to make it easier for mothers to work will convey societal approval of female employment and thus make the domestic role less important as a means of attaining recognition.

If a woman lost her job to have one baby, there would be no incentive not to have three or four to make that job loss worthwhile and to be fully occupied again.

Public education, vaccinations, and the Aid to Dependent Children program, as well as the British birth allowance, benefit children and society. They must be considered non-natalist because non-parents benefit as much as anyone. A higher priority of insuring the welfare of future generations is here served.

III. LEGISLATED PRONATALISM

Legislated pronatalism, laws and government policies that encourage childbearing, include tax laws, laws prohibiting non-reproductive sex, restrictive abortion, laws limiting the availability of contraceptives, and the vagueness of laws governing voluntary sterilization. As implied earlier, public assistance programs seem pronatalist, while often they are not.

The charge that present income tax deductions for children are pronatalistic is perhaps the best known. The U.S. Commission on Population and the American Future (1972, 158) and others contend that the $750 deduction "is so small in contrast to the cost of childrearing, that it is difficult
to imagine that anyone would have additional children in order to secure additional exemption." The Commission's opinion, therefore, reflects the narrow definition of pronatalism.

Representing the broad interpretation, Peck (1974, 3-4) claims that tax laws are pronatalistic in that while it may be no real incentive for parenthood, "the symbolic message is important enough and may be interpreted as 'approval for parenthood', there being no comparable benefits for those without children." She further says that persons without children must, in effect, "pay a premium every year for the privilege of not reproducing."

The non-natalist remedies vary. Many legislators agree that a halfway solution may be to limit tax deductions to two children for future families. A more extreme incentive would involve tax rebates for existing families of two or less children. Such an incentive is thought to be positive and not to jeopardize the human rights of third and fourth children (Cook, 1974, 56).

Whether or not public assistance, especially ADC, is pronatalistic is another debate. On the surface it may seem so--payments increase with family size. At a closer look, however, we find that twenty states have a maximum rate regardless of family size (Commission, 1972, 158) and that increasing payments with increasing size "typically do not seem sufficient to affect motivation (Berelson, 1974, 737)". The Commission (1972, 158) found in New York City that while payments and program utilization increased in the years 1959-1970, the percentage of welfare mothers bearing children each year dropped from 18.9 percent in 1959 to 11.3 percent in 1970. As discussed earlier, helping children already born is only insuring the welfare of the future generation.

Non-natalists and population activists have, of course, made suggestions to lessen legislated pronatalism. One clear move to make taxes less pronatalistic is to fully exempt expenses for birth control, abortion, and steri-
lization right along with other medical expenses. Some advocate bonus payments to those who voluntarily consent to sterilization (Cook, 1974, 56), however, this may be a case of reverse discrimination. The Commission (1972, 159-160) opposes direct financial rewards for limiting childbearing. Such legislation could possibly be found unconstitutional as violating "equal protection under the law" since it would be a greater inducement for directing the reproductive behavior of the poor.

This whole area of taxes and government programs is not as clear cut as many people believe. The Commission (1972, 158) admits that this indicates how little is known of the demographic effects of tax and expenditure programs. The Commission recommends research to determine at what point in these programs reproductive behavior is directed.

Another area of legislated pronatalism involves that group of laws created on moral grounds. These laws broadly based against obscenity and to protect physical health include prohibition of non-reproductive sex—sodomy, homosexuality, and prostitution; restrictive abortion; and unclear laws governing sterilization. Today many of these laws are being modified on the basis of protecting fundamental rights, especially the right to privacy, but a good number are still in force, usually at the state level. Their presence today is another message of approval to parents.

Sodomy refers to any "unnatural" form of sexual activity. This can mean relations with members of the same sex, intercourse with an animal or corpse, oral sex, or even any position for sexual intercourse other than the missionary position. None of these are intended for mere reproduction, but usually for mere sexual gratification or more pleasure. As late as 1968, the United States Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a sodomy conviction in Indiana citing the 1965 case Griswold v. Connecticut. While the
Griswold decision establishes that private, consensual, marital relations are protected from governmental regulation, many states still have enforceable laws prohibiting sodomy.

Homosexuality, another form of non-reproductive sexual activity, is considered a crime in most American states and is punishable by prison terms ranging from six months to life (McCary, 1973, 467). Persons of the same sex may not marry except in California and Colorado. Gay activists and their supporters are working hard to bring homosexuality out of the closet and have it recognized as a preference and not a perversion. One claim is that it is ridiculous to prohibit homosexuality in a time when the world has enough of the offspring of heterosexual activity.

Prostitution, illegal in the United States except in Nevada, is also a non-reproductive sexual activity. Here again, sex for pleasure is prohibited; its only purpose is baby making.

Regulation of sodomy, homosexuality, and prostitution was not instituted to promote births; rather these laws are a product of a period in which the growth ethos prevailed. Non-reproductive sex was not normal for the period, because the goal was to settle the vast frontier. Regulation was also tied to morality. How sad it is that most Americans to this day think of morality as sexual self control first. Morality is also loyalty, compassion, unselfishness, and leaving a decent world for the next generation. Prohibition of recreational sex in the past has been pronatalist. The individual was left with no choice but to be a frustrated celibate, a criminal, or a parent. Modification of all such laws would serve a non-natalist purpose as well as bringing the statutes up to the twentieth century. People seem to lose respect for laws that make criminals out of otherwise law abiding citizens.

Pronatalism has also been legislated through birth control regulation
3. Few pharmacists know any more about condoms than anyone else. Most have not had any family planning training.
4. Drug stores have a bad atmosphere for condom shopping. In England, for example, barber shops are a major outlet for condoms. (Redford, 1974, 113)

Since 1970 when California repealed its laws restricting advertising and display, condom sales have risen 40 percent. The repeal was, of course, accompanied by an advertising campaign to boost sales (Redford, 1974, 109).

So how is all this directly pronatalist? First, if laws prohibit birth control being widely available, the government is expressing disapproval of contraceptives. Secondly, if people don't know about contraceptives, or can't get them, they will most likely have babies. Humans are not noted for abstaining from sexual activity for fear of pregnancy. So here again, the government is expressing approval for parents and making non-parenthood difficult.

Laws prohibiting abortion are also pronatalistic. Often the issue is clouded with emotion, but the fact that prohibitive laws force women to have children they do not want is always very clear. This paper will not discuss the emotional aspect of the abortion question, but is investigating policies and attitudes, of which abortion is one, that promote birth.

The demographic significance of permissive abortion is uncertain because of the extent of birth control use, the extent to which legal abortions will substitute for illegal ones, and an unknown willingness to resort to abortion that will accompany its legalization. One estimate is that the universal availability of legal abortion (meaning you don't have to travel hundreds of miles to a large city clinic) would reduce the annual birth rate by 1.5 per thousand people in the first year (Berelson, 1974, 740), a considerable proportion of the total U.S. birth rate of about 15.0 per thousand. Note that this figure applies to the year when all women, not just those in
progressive urban areas, have access to legal abortion. That such availability of legal abortion would reduce the birth rate so much indicates just how pronatalist the prohibitive laws are.

The laws of this nation also permit hospitals to impose various pronatalist policies, especially where abortion and sterilization are concerned. Hospitals may opt not to perform either operation. Often the statutes are so vague that hospitals require persons to be of a certain age and have a specified number of children already or permit only therapeutic, as opposed to contraceptive, sterilization to protect their own legal liability (Commission, 1972, 171).

It is therefore apparent that the laws of the United States and the laws of the individual states remain pronatalist in a time when an expanding population threatens our basic security and when the freedoms of individuals are protected from the other -isms in this society. The course of action should be to free individuals from pronatalism by eliminating and altering discriminatory statutes that promote birth.

In summary, these are the recommendations to relieve legislated pronatalism. While more research is necessary to determine the extent of birth promotion in welfare and tax laws, a first step is to limit income tax exemptions to two children not including families already in existence and the designation of contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion costs as exemptable. Other steps include weeding out the old sex laws thereby making sodomy, and homosexuality legal and regulating prostitution along health guidelines. Contraceptives should by all means be legal everywhere for everyone and should be advertised. Lastly, abortion and sterilization should be universally available.
IV. THE SOCIAL GUARDIANS

While the forms of pronatalism legislated into statutes promote births in our society, the heaviest pressure emanates from non-legal, non-governmental origins. Insurance and business, school curricula and sex discrimination, and advertising and the media all very often encourage people to have children. Supporting the whole structure of pronatalism is the Myth of Motherhood. It is these areas that deserve the most study and alteration to relieve the pressure of pronatalism.

It is also in these areas that pronatalism interacts with sexism to gather more force. Pronatalism is in many cases a result of the unequal status of women. It is best to explain this link before developing the theme any further.

The traditional role of women is that of mother. All other roles are subordinate. Indeed, many jobs women take on outside the role of mother, teaching and nursing, for example, simulate nurturing. Continuation of this limited role for women is pronatalistic because as long as women are not allowed to find fulfillment in jobs outside the home, they will have babies.

Working women usually have fewer children than non-working women, and are also more likely to remain childfree. Also, the more educated a woman is, the less likely she will have many children.

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<thead>
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<th>COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION</th>
<th>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN</th>
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<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade school</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
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(Silverman, 1971, 160)

Several studies (Mitchell, 1972; Weller, 1968; and Rosen and Simmons, 1971) have even found that greater influence of the wife in family decision-making is associated with lower fertility. Since many couples have more than one or two children simply to have a son, the favored sex, sexual equality would
cut down the birth rate simply because couples would stop producing and be happy with either sex.

When it comes down to reality, no one can expect women to stop having babies if motherhood is the only role which they are permitted. Only the presence of other roles for women can provide alternatives to fulltime motherhood. The solution to provide alternative roles, however, falls into a vicious circle—"the greater the independence of women..., the more likely they are to control their fertility, but the availability of fertility control is itself a fundamental part of the process of gaining autonomy" (Piepermeier and Adkins, 1973, 507). When motherhood ceases being culturally compulsory, women can begin to think and do more about their self-development. "Far from being selfish, such development is probably our only hope" (Rollin, 1970, 17). The population growth rate of the future depends upon whether women are permitted rewarding non-maternal roles or only motherhood.

The only conclusion then is that not only is sexism detrimental to our society because it hurts 51 percent of it, but it is also bad because it causes pronatalism which hurts everyone with unwanted children, a waste of womanpower, and a population bomb.

Sexism links with pronatalism years before a person is actually in the childbearing stage. It begins from the moment a child see mommy and daddy fulfilling such different roles. It begins when a girl is bombarded with the message that she is to be like mommy and a boy like daddy. Children's literature and school curricula reinforce the pronatalism of which children are already aware.

Czapinski (1972,1) reports that young people become intensely absorbed looking at picture books and hearing adults read the limited text over and over again. In her study of award winning picture books, she found that "sexism does exist within children's picture books" through rigid sex
role stereotypes and a "degrading portrayal of women and girls" (Czaplinski, 1972, 94). Females in the picture books were passive, males carried prestige, and most pronatalistic of all, motherhood was glorified (Czaplinski, 1972, 88-89).

Grade school texts are also a target for change. A 1972 content analysis of themes of 134 elementary school readers from 14 different publishers (Women, 1972, 4) found boy-centered stories outnumbered girl-centered stories five to two, adult male main characters to adult female characters three to one, and male biographies to female biographies six to one (Women, 1972, 6). Furthermore, women were shown in only 26 occupations while men participated in 147 different jobs (Women, 1972, 6). Even jobs which in reality are open to both sexes were 100 percent male in the readers (Women, 1972, 25). There were no biographies on politically ambitious women like Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Victoria, or Susan B. Anthony to show that women too can change history (Women, 1972, 29).

Here again sexism is pronatalist. Women are given limited alternatives in exchange for a glorification of non-glory—motherhood. The authors of the textbook study contend that school readers "convey official approval," and that presented within the context of authority in the classroom, children hear society saying, "This is what we would like you to be." (Women, 1972, 33) To make elementary school readers and thereby the curricula less sexist and less pronatalist, childfree couples, single-parent families, and women participating in varied occupations should be shown unpatronizingly (Women, 1972, 38).

Sexism and pronatalism naturally extend throughout the junior high and high school curricula. Sexism is being removed from the texts, but pronatalism lingers on. What is most objectionable is the persistent assumption about the inherent nature of all people to be parents, that all women
become wives and mothers, and that all other decisions come after the one to have babies.

Cox (Peck, 1974, 99) offers the following criteria to identify pronatalism in textbooks:

1. Inevitability of parenthood assumed
2. Childfree lifestyles and/or marriages not acknowledged
3. Childfree marriages treated as problematic or undesirable
4. Adherence to theories of maternal instinct or maternity as central to a woman's life
5. Bias against abortion, adoption, or the only child
6. Failures, when appropriate, to discuss contraception

Cox concedes that students today are given the choice to take home economics or industrial education, but even those who elect home ec should not be "misled by a glorified picture of motherhood" (Peck, 1974, 100).

Once young people leave the academic world, they are molded by even more pronatalist pressures. The entire field of business transactions in this society has been criticized for being racist and sexist in the past. Business is now under fire as pronatalist. As mentioned before, often what is sexist is pronatalist, therefore, a first examination of pronatalism in business need only again be a look at sexism.

In the late sixties half of all the women that were working in the United States were employed in only 21 occupations while half of all male workers were found in 65 different occupations (Department of Labor, 1969, 96). It is doubtful if the distribution has improved drastically in the seventies. It is this fact that demonstrates just how stereotyped women's occupations really are.

Furthermore, only five percent of women were salaried managers or officials in 1971 in contrast to 15 percent of males. Women also equal only 15 percent of total managerial employment, seven percent of all physicians, and 21 percent of all professionals outside the fields of education
and health (Ginzberg, 1973, 3). It isn't because working outside the home is too strenuous—only ten percent of today's occupations require muscle power greater than typing and pencil pushing while the other 90 percent can be done equally as well by either sex (Silverman, 1971, 155).

So these are the pure sexist facts. How do they become pronatalist? Since women do not advance in the business world, they often decide child-rearing is a more creative option. Peck sums up the sexist-pronatalist situation:

> An employer may ask a wife when she plans to start her family—or use her assumed parental disposition as an excuse not to advance her beyond the typing pool. "We can't train you for management; soon you'll want to quit and have children, and we can't waste the training" is a sexist rationale which is apt to have a pronatalist result. Kept from a challenging job because of her sex, a young woman is apt to deem childbearing and rearing more creative than typing—and have a child (Peck, 1974, 3).

(Ginzberg's (1973, 47) rebuttal to the job turnover is that the record for keeping bright young men trained for management isn't very good either.) The Silverman's agree that "women do find a greater sense of personal worth in their activities as mothers than in the menial and financially thankless jobs that the de facto employment discrimination against women forces them into." They call motherhood the "lesser of two evils" (Silverman, 1971, 182).

Another sexist-pronatalist myth that keeps women out of careers is the one that says children will be maladjusted and deprived if mom is not always home. Again in this case, if women have to be home for just one child, they feel they may as well make it worthwhile and have three or four children. The myth, however long it continues in force, is not scientifically supported. Powell (1961, 352) reports there is a lack of evidence which would support the conception of the neglected maladjusted child of middle
class employed mothers." In a study of 709 seventh grade boys and girls whose mothers had worked for specified periods of time, maternal employment was found to have "no apparent relationship with the personality or social developmental characteristics of the children" (Burchinal, 1961, 339). No negative effects of maternal employment were observed in the Burchinal study. Powell (1961, 352) did find that children of employed mothers do tend to have higher achievement motives than those of full-time homemakers. Maladjustment is not caused by merely having a working mother, but more likely by poor interaction when mother and child are together.

In the past the concerns of sexism and pronatalism have broken ties in one aspect. The earlier feminists sought only to liberate women enough so they could have a career along with their family. It seems no one thought women could possibly have a career without children at all. Peck (1974, 8) says "Feminism's concerns must of necessity be directed to the realities that exist today, and today it is the norm for virtually all women to have or to expect to have children." Blake (Peck, 1974, 47) questions "the notion of why persons of either sex who have such a marginal commitment to child-rearing should be pressed into having children." The more militant feminists of the mid-seventies proclaim that women will not be truly liberated until they are completely freed of childbearing even physically. A mere option to reproduce or not, however, would serve the non-natalist purpose quite sufficiently.

Even institutions as quantified as insurance let everyone know "it's better to reproduce than not." Some insurance companies regard childfree people as unstable characters and offer them not a standard rating, but a higher premium. The cheaper-by-the-dozen theory even carries over into insurance making package bargains for large families.

Peck (1974, 3) has found that group insurance plans also carry a "pro-
natalist presumption". She says, "Maternity benefits are a required component of medical policies even though this benefit presumably covers a choice not exercised by all who share in the payments." Undeniably, maternity costs would be too high for many people without such insurance, but here again the fact stands that those who choose not to reproduce must again pay a price for the privilege.

Economic discrimination persists against non-parents who would have insurance to help terminate pregnancy. While hardly any insurance plan is without policies to pay for a pregnancy and delivery, few help pay to end one (Peck, 1974, 3). Costs for abortion and surgical sterilization are not covered like appendicitis or a broken arm. So while people are merely being insured, pronatalism is a pressure manipulating their actions.

Pronatalism continues on into one of its strongest areas--the media. Popular rock entertainer Frank Zappa has an arrangement about "the slime oozing out from your TV sets" which is molding American minds. The air waves are in the unique position of being able to come right into the living room to influence what people buy, do, and think. Very often the electronic media has been criticized for not living up to the responsibilities that accompany their privilege. They seem to live only by the rule of making everyone happy so consumers will buy the sponsors' products.

Pronatalism, of course, has become a part of the media. Television, in trying to appeal to everyone, has in the past reinforced the four kids, split level home, station wagon ideal of American life. At the same time, television has not shown both sides of the image. Life Savers just do not make all little boys quit fidgeting at weddings. The Fantastik commercials in which the woman says she is married to a man, not a house, so don't call her a housewife are few and far between.

A survey of commercials (Peck, 1974, 86-97) in February 1972 monitored
all network advertising for one week. Each commercial was evaluated according to specified criteria. Objectional pronatalist commercials showed large families as product sales tools (washing machines); idealized family situations; idealized father-son, mother-daughter relationships; the problems of parenthood solved by the product (Life Savers); a sentimentalized image of children as a sales tool (Kodak cameras); pregnancy used as a product sales tool (a Vlasic pickle, anyone?); the theme "generation after generation," and Supermom.

Among the 1000 daytime commercials sampled, a total of 326 (33 percent) were found objectionable based on the above criteria. Food and beverage advertisements were the worst offenders. Of the 1000 prime time commercials sampled, the number found objectionable dropped to 14 percent. Commercials were only classified objectionable if they were pronatalist although many others were objectionable on a sexist scale.

Less than one percent of the commercials surveyed were commendably non-natalist. These few did not exploit maternity or glorify family life, parenthood, or children, but showed non-domestic, non-maternal modern images of women. Peck (1974, 91) demonstrated how even a product for babies could be non-natalist.

A pregnant woman tells viewers that she used Playtex Nurser for her last baby, thus projecting a "baby machine" image. (Could a woman instead possibly say, "Having a baby is serious business these days. You're not sure what the future will be like, or what kind of parent you'll be. But one thing I am sure of is Playtex Nurser...?")

One wonders which commercial would sell more Playtex Nursers.

The electronic media as well as the press is only beginning to deal with advertising contraceptives. To avoid government regulation, the industry has carried on self-regulation which until 1972 for TV and 1966 for radio didn't accept feminine hygiene ads as suitable for public viewing. At one
time even toilet paper ads were rejected (what was the world like without Mr. Whipple squeezing the Charmin?). Ads for contraceptive foam and condoms are still unacceptable under Code standards. Since May 1972 such ads were allowed on Canadian airwaves, but as of 1974 only radio ads were approved for airing (Redford, 1974, 147-148). Only recently have magazines such as *Playboy* carried condom advertisements while the women's magazines have the spermicidal foam market.

Not only are the commercials on television very often pronatalist, but so is the programming between them. In another investigation, Peck examined pronatalism in daytime TV dramas. She reports, "The birth rate on daytime TV seems to rival that of Latin America!" (Peck, 1974, 79). Pregnancy has been exploited in the plots of the soap operas as well as in the prime time shows. What new season doesn't begin with a character getting pregnant to create a whole year of plots. Even Gloria Stevik of "All in the Family" who in 1974 wanted to first find herself as a woman finds herself a mother in the 1975 season.

On the daytime TV dramas in particular, "pregnancy is shown as woman's way to become the center of attention, retreat from unresolved conflicts, or compete for men" (Peck, 1974, 79). Peck found that eleven of the fourteen soap operas currently aired carried "strong reproductive themes"(Peck, 1974, 81). and that if all the pronatalistic comments were totaled and presented to the FCC Fairness Doctrine Committee, "daytime TV would owe Zero Population Growth, the National Organization for Non-Parents, and similar organizations approximately 18,200 minutes of 'equal time' for the past year's shows alone" (Peck, 1974, 80). To this influence millions of viewers are exposed every day.

No one is really sure just to what degree television influences our lives, but we do know it does change and condition us. Every institution
in this society that has that potential must also be responsible.

Television...has a clear responsibility to create new, non-natalist programming approaches (to)...better serve a society in which children have too often been the victims of our casual attitude towards reproduction—and a society which is just beginning to learn that it exists within the context of a finite world (Peck, 1974, 86).

Television must change to be responsible to the world today.

We have investigated what the law says to be pronatalist and how the other major institutions in our society, business and education, enforce their own pronatalist rulings. Now we will examine the real heart of pronatalism—the justifying myth.

Discrimination in all forms must have a myth behind it to preserve cognitive balance. This means, people create a myth to make discrimination and prejudice logical and consistent with other ideas. For example, racism's justifying myth is that whites are superior to blacks. Discrimination against blacks is illogical to a person who believes all Americans have equal rights under the law, but since the myth says blacks aren't as good as whites anyway, discrimination is logical.

The justifying myth of pronatalism is The Myth of Maternal Instinct or simply Motherhood that briefly says a woman must have children or forfeit true fulfillment. The Myth has led us to believe that women innately want to have children because

A. Childbearing is the reason for their sex drive; the purpose of their sexuality is to reproduce.
B. Women are biologically designed to bear children and their minds are instinctively programmed to comply with their physiology.
C. Women have a natural need to nurture and love children as a way of achieving personal fulfillment. (Silverman, 1971, 7)

The presence and firm belief in this myth explains how pronatalism can exist in America today.
The Myth of Motherhood has not existed forever. Professor Ethel Alpenfels of the New York University Department of Educational Anthropology has noted that many early human fossils once thought to be male because of the relatively large bone structure were discovered to be women. She says, "This could indicate that women worked hard, hunted with men, and travelled and suffered just as men did (Silverman, 1971, 1). Newborns still have an instinctive grasp (one of the few instincts humans do have), today thought to reflect the past when babies had to cling to mothers on the run or get left behind. The size differentiation between the sexes we know today appeared about 35,000 years ago simultaneously with the first elements of civilization (Silverman, 1971, 3). It was also at this time that sex roles were created and that motherhood began to be regarded as woman's chief purpose.

The emergence of the Myth was very much a result of faulty logic. Since women had a sex drive which usually resulted in pregnancy, women having no efficent birth control until this century, people came to think that procreation was the reason for female sexual desires. Women wanted sex to become mothers. Since no man became pregnant as a result of his sexual drives, the male sex drive was passed off lightly as for pleasure only.

The Myth of Motherhood flourished for those 35,000 years mainly because "vested interests" profited from making women believe they had no alternatives but to become mothers. As early as 1906, however, Sumner (1906, 310) expressed this opinion: "It may well be believed that, if procreation had not been put under the dominion of a great passion [sex], it would have been caused to cease by the burdens it entails."

Indeed, motherhood is a very risky business. Why, when today procreation is no longer necessarily under the dominion of sex, does everyone think they must be parents. "It doesn't make sense any more to pretend that women need babies, when what they really need is themselves"
Leta Hollingworth, an early feminist and clinical psychologist found that "social guardians" promote childbearing. Hollingworth (1916, 19-29) noted that the bearing and rearing of children is necessary for the existence of a species, that this is painful and dangerous to life, and involves long years of self-sacrifice, and that no scientific data supports a theory of maternal instinct strong enough to impel women to involuntarily seek such pain, danger, and hard labor. "We should expect, therefore, that those in control of society would invent and employ devices for impelling women to maintain a birth rate sufficient to insure enough increase in the population..." (Hollingworth, 1916, 21). The social guardians manipulate women into motherhood through role prescription, public opinion (media), beliefs (religion), education, art, and illusion (never mentioning the bad side of children or the danger). Even in 1916, Hollingworth knew that a day would come when women would see through these cheap controls and demand greater rewards or quit reproducing. This realization is only awakening 60 years later.

Hollingworth was one of the first to take a scientific approach to motherhood. She pointed out that if maternal instinct could be measured quantitatively, "we should find this trait distributed among women just as we have found all other traits distributed which have yielded to quantitative measurement" (Hollingworth, 1916, 20). More recently Silverman (1971, 9) says, "If procreation were an instinct, women would die from extended use of contraception." Distinguished sociologist-author Dr. Jessie Bernard adds, "Motherhood instinctive? Biological destiny? Forget biology! If it were biology, people would die from not doing it." (Rollin, 1970, 15). From another angle, William Goode, president-elect of the American Sociological Association says, "There are no instincts. There are reflexes, like eye-blinking, and drives, like sex. There is no innate drive for children. Otherwise the enormous cultural pres-
sures [pronatalism] that there are to reproduce wouldn't exist. There are no cultural pressures to sell you on getting your hand out of the fire" (Rollin, 1970, 15). "Society, not nature, programs women to desire motherhood" (Silverman, 1971, 14).

But whether or not the desire for children is instinctive, since nearly all women are physically equipped to reproduce, shouldn't they do so? Physically capable is not psychologically, mentally, or emotionally qualified. "To assume that such an exacting, consuming and important task is something almost all women are equipped to do is far more dangerous and ridiculous than assuming that everyone with vocal chords should seek a career in the opera" (Rollin, 1970, 16).

An awareness of pronatalism dispells the Myth of Motherhood as we discover that childbearing is NOT the reason for female sexuality and sex drive, that women do NOT have an instinctive need to mother, and that while most women are physically capable of reproducing, many are not psychologically and emotionally fit for the job. There is no basis, therefore, for society obligating every woman to bear and rear children.

On the other side of the issue are the parents' motives for having children. Many, of course, are a response to the social pressures, but others can come from within the individual to satisfy their various own needs. Too often children are born with an obligation to do something for their parents before they can win the complete acceptance to which every baby is entitled.

This is no less of an issue to pronatalism. While the outside social pressures to have children are clearly pronatalistic, those pressures from within the individual are, too. These are the individuals that make up the whole society. At this point, we will investigate the personal motives for having children, then deal with motives for remaining childfree.

Very often couples have children to please their own parents. People
who devoted their younger years to rearing children want grandchildren to fill their lives again and make them feel young and needed like when they had their own young children. Grown children not having children of their own may be a slap in the face to their parents as if they were denouncing their parents' lifestyle. Love for one's parents, however, is much more than giving them the titles grandma and grandpa.

Another high ranking childbearing motive is a claim to immortality. Many people feel that if you have children, you never really die; a part of you lives forever. Some people want children, particularly sons, to carry on the family name. This is using a child as a monument to yourself. Babies are not substitutes for hard work, and people are only remembered in history for their accomplishments—not their children.

Children are thought to help save marriages. It is true that the birth experience can bring close couples closer, but people having marital difficulty will probably find that a child only brings more trouble. What usually happens is that a child will only prolong a divorce and may even later be rejected as the cause of the trouble. We will examine the impact of children on a marriage later in this paper.

Along with the marriage-saver motive, women may feel that a baby will keep the husband more attached to her and their home. In reality, a fussy demanding baby can drive him right out the door. With no discredit to men as being irresponsible, if the home situation is not pleasant, and if the wife must stay at home with children, husbands will go away alone.

Many people just don't want to be different. At social gatherings, especially weddings, talk is about children. It is quite acceptable to ask childfree people when they intend to have children, but any parents would be shocked if someone asked why indeed did they have a child? One study found a correlation between a woman's fertility and that of her three closest friends (Rollin, 1970, 17).
Since most people do have children, those without them are shut out from the majority. Imagine three mothers together with their childfree high school girlfriend who is now a lawyer. Conversation would more likely be babies than court cases. Society expects people to have babies, everyone else has babies, so you have a baby, too is the philosophy. To fit in socially the childfree can either search out childfree friends or have a baby.

Other people have babies to prove something to themselves or to the world. Some men and women need to prove their masculinity or femininity. Often people believe that being parents proves they are adults. Some people have children to overcome their fears of sexual inadequacy. Having a child confirms their sexual maturity. Some men have children to show the world they are successful and can afford a family. Executives may have to prove their image; childfree men are sometimes not considered stable enough for high level executive positions. Some couples compete to prove they can be better parents than their own parents were.

It is not unknown or even undesirable for parents to hope their children will be somebody, but this may be harmful to a child. There are parents who use their children as status symbols. It is usually adults who never reached their own goals who try to reach them through their children. Children are a second chance at one's own ambitions.

Some women believe motherhood will give them something to do. The young homemakers soon find houses can only be cleaned so much. They see that having children will take up their time and fill an empty house. What is often forgotten is that the job does not go one forever. Children grow quickly and need independence—they are not a substitute for a woman's own interests or career. Having a child is a dramatic change and time consuming, but one will not fill a person's inner emptiness.

Children are also considered an accomplishment. Rollin (1970, 17) points
out that "with motherhood, the feeling of accomplishment is immediate. It is really much faster and easier to make a baby than paint a painting or write a book or get to the point of accomplishment in a job." This is not to say only these accomplishments are worthwhile. It is just that too many women have a baby to show for their time rather than seek our a meaningful job or volunteer work.

Many people, if not nearly all, look to their children as old age security. This in fact, is a major stumbling block in trying to convince people of developing nations to slow their population growth. Americans may frown on Indians having children to financially support them when they are old, but Americans themselves rely on children for emotional support in their own old age. In the past, a large family has kept the elderly from being socially isolated, given them financial security, and renewed their youth with grandchildren. In these changing times, however, people no longer live in extended but in nuclear families and often times thousands of miles apart. In the future people will rely more and more on friends for emotional support and with smaller and child-free families, they will have more time to devote to friends.

Pregnancy is a special time for a couple, especially for a woman. There is all the special attention from the expectant father and grandparents, special food, always something exciting and new to talk about, and the many doctor appointments. The problem is that some women get pregnant just for the special attention they receive in that condition. Pregnancy, however, only lasts nine months, and too often after the baby's birth when s-he is the center of attention, the mother resents the baby. Greatly disputed Freudian penis-envy theory suggests women feel complete with that "something more down there".

The power motive for parenthood is a serious one. Women and men alike seek power and having children is an easy way to attain it. For men power is proof of masculinity. In the past, the head of a large family or tribe yielded much power and commanded great respect, a concept that lingers on today. Some men,
hopefully few in number, believe a baby will keep a woman in her place, bare-foot and pregnant as the expression goes. A woman busy with kids can not compete with men for power outside or inside the home. Husbands may also use children to keep wives from having extra-marital affairs. In another sense today, men derive power from their children. Men take a lot of ordering and pressure from the boss at work, but at home, they can be king and order everyone else around. Silverman (1971, 90) puts it in words very descriptively:

"...once men get it in their heads that they do not have to boss their wives and families around to assert their masculinity, then fewer children will be born to fill King Kong's needs for subjects."

The power motive for women having children differs slightly from men's. Women who have been lowest in rank in this society have to create their own subordinates over whom to have power. Women also can gain prestige and get to be somebody in their own circles by what their children do.

Having children has for centuries been guided by religion. There are those devout people who have children because they firmly believe this is what God wants them to do. To have or not children is a difficult choice for people whose religion proclaims it is a sin to use contraception. Such religious motives for childbearing can hardly be considered wrong or selfish motives. The idea that pregnancy is "getting what you deserve" for the "sin" of sex lingers on today, too.

The Bible verse does say "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth," but in the past we have limited our interpretation of those words. Being fruitful and multiplying need not only be producing an abundant crop of children, but may also be fruitful with love and charity for fellow humans. Replenish should not be limited to a fresh supply of people, but could also be understood in the sense of giving back to the earth what we take away from it. In the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus taught that the one law to live by is
to love one another. Surely having more people on the earth than it can comfortably sustain is not loving each other as we should. Future competition for resources may make us even less loving. Rollin (1970, 17) says, "If God were still speaking to us in a voice we could hear, even He (She) would probably say 'Be fruitful. Don't multiply.'"

Some people today fear that it will be the educated who stop having children. The uneducated, they say, will keep right on reproducing until the world is overrun by them. It should be made clear to such individuals that wealth and education do not necessarily qualify one for parenthood. If children could choose their own parents, they would probably seek out loving, patient, and gentle individuals—traits which cut across socio-economic lines. Often the very quality that makes successful people successful also makes them failures as parents. As we realize that parenting is a skilled occupation for which only some are qualified, we will understand that it too requires the time and financial rewards of other occupations. The successful, educated individuals have mostly likely spent so much time attaining success that they really do not have the time to fulfill a child's needs.

So these are the motives for having children. Most of them are selfish or intend to do something for the parents. This is not to say that everyone should stop having children, but that women and men should thoroughly analyze their motives for having a child. Silverman (1971, 38) suggests these considerations in a decision to have a child:

A. Does the desire to have a child reflect your own wishes or a sense of expectation or compulsion arising from socio-cultural pressures?
B. If already being parents, is the birth of another child truly necessary or advisable in terms of the best interests of the existing family and society in general?
C. Are the motives for seeking parenthood altruistic or selfish?

The answers to these questions do not come easily because human beings have a
tendency to rationalize any answers they want to believe. The only really right motive for having a child is, being qualified physically as well as psychologically and emotionally, you believe you can create and rear a well-adjusted loving individual that will contribute to, not take away from, the world.

We all have difficulty facing up to the requirements and honestly answering the questions because we are ill-prepared for parenthood. Already discussed are the idealized family situations the media and education present. Too often family living and home economics classes show the cute and fun side--rarely is parenthood equated with sacrifice, responsibility, and dedication. English literature and earth science are presented objectively in school; so should family living.

The unveiling of the pressures and discrimination of pronatalism does not seek to make childrearing an obsolete occupation, but only to make parenthood optional, not compulsory. Rollin (1970, 17) says, "Only the Myth must go out, and now it seems to be dimming." Recognition of the Myth is not necessarily rejection of parenthood, but a better understanding of it. Rollin also notes that to love children, we do not have to own one. There are already plenty to be loved.

The recognition of pronatalism and thousands of individual decisions to not have children has brought around a new word to describe the related lifestyle—childfree. The traditional word, childless, was not suitable to describe this deliberate state of being without children. Childless suggests a lack or incompleteness which does not adequately fit. The new breed of non-parents do not lack children, they are simply free from them. They reject the term childless very similarly to the manner in which "descendents of former slaves choose black and Afro-American, rejecting colored or Negro.... Self concepts of persons or groups can be affected by words affixed to them" (Peck, 1974, 250).
Non-parents do not view themselves as lacking anything, nor do they want to be thought of by society as lacking anything. Childfree expresses self-respect and a new pride rather than a deficiency or pity.

It is at this time then that this paper should investigate the motivations for challenging pronatalism and remaining childfree. The motivations here are not as varied as those for having a baby. They are usually centered around the marriage relationship as it exists without children, a woman's career, economic pressure, health, or a simple dislike of children.

More and more scientific surveys and research are supporting the theory that children may hurt, not help, a marriage. At an increasing rate, couples are discovering before it is too late that children would interfere with their way of life. They even admit they are self-centered, but point out that it is far less selfish to be self-centered and not have a baby than to become parents hoping that children will do something for them or give the marriage a purpose.

In the past the belief was that childlessness was associated with instability of marriage. In recent years, however, numerous studies (Chester, 1972, 443; Feldman and Meyrowitz, 1964, 153; LeMasters, 1957, 352-353; Bethel and Luckey, 1966, 217; and Monahan, 1955, 456) conclude exactly the opposite.

Feldman (1964, 153) found that "those couples with children had a significantly lower level of marital satisfaction than did those without children." In a similar study (LeMasters, 1957, 362-363) 83 percent of 46 middle class couples reported that the birth of a baby created a crisis situation in the household—crisis meaning a great change occurred in the husband-wife relationship because their former behavior patterns were either inadequate or inappropriate to cope with the new role. This was true in the good as well as poor marriages.

In another random sample of 2164 adults, Campbell (1974, 38) concluded that the happiest people are newly married with no children. He reports that "almost as soon as a couple has kids, their happiness bubble bursts. For both
men and women, reports of happiness and satisfaction drop to average, not to rise again significantly until their children are grown and about to leave..." (Campbell, 1974, 39). Mothers age 25-34 especially "are the most likely of any group of wives or husbands to describe themselves as feeling tied down, to express doubts about their marriages and to wish occasionally to be free of the responsibilities of parenthood" (Campbell, 1974, 39). Couples whose children are grown are also happy. They report feelings of companionship and mutual understanding even higher than they felt as newlyweds. "Raising a family seems to be one of those tasks like losing weight or waxing the car that is less fun to be doing than to have done" (Campbell, 1974, 39).

Childfree husbands over 30 in the Campbell study (1974, 39) reported the highest satisfaction with life, and they feel less pressure than most men. Childfree wives over 30 also describe their lives in generally positive terms. They are not LESS satisfied than women their age who do have children. Perhaps they are not more satisfied because social pressures keep insisting they can not be happy without children.

Monahan (1955, 456) has found that desertions occur more frequently in marriages where there are children. A father would be inclined to leave if he felt guilty about not supporting the family well enough or so the family could receive public assistance. Mothers and fathers both may desert each other because they are jealous of the baby or because they are frightened by the responsibilities of parenthood.

Campbell (1974, 39) attributes less happy parents to economic and psychological strain, less time for each other, and the loss of adult companionship. Furthermore, Rollin (1970, 17) notes that motherhood often destroys a woman's sexuality. "When the stork flies in, sexuality flies out. Both in the emotional minds of some women and in the minds of their husbands, when a woman becomes a mother, she stops being a woman." She attributes loss of sexuality
and hence marital happiness to the madonna concept surrounding motherhood that puts a mother "above sex."

So the old belief that children make happier marriages is, therefore, without scientific support. The idea may have only ever found support in the fact that most divorces are without children. The conclusion that the childlessness was related to the divorces, however, ignores another fact that "the peak of divorce now comes during the second year of marriage, with the first and third almost as high" (Baber, 1953, 504). Most people today postpone having children until after a few years of marriage, and so when they decide to part, they just have not even had the chance to have children yet. "What the earlier studies (of marital happiness and childbearing) failed to take into account is that simply because two things co-exist—in this case divorce and childlessness—it does not necessarily mean that a cause and effect relationship also exists" (Silverman, 1971, 138).

The second motivation for a childfree marriage compliments the first. Very often a wife will remain childfree to pursue a career of her own. Popenoe (1936, 134) discovered that employed wives shared a closer personal relationship with their husbands than wives who stayed at home, because they have more in common. So a couple may choose not to have children so the wife can work and find a closer relationship at the same time.

Some women, of course, must work and, even if they want them, can not have children under economic pressure. While this may not be exactly opting to remain childfree, it too must be considered a motivation. There are occasions when the husband cannot work. Health motivations, too, while often not a choice, keep some couples childfree. Genetic or chromosome irregularity at times plays a part.

The final motivation for a childfree lifestyle may be shocking, but realistic. Some people simply dislike children or dislike childbearing. As stressed
before, those individuals who do not like children should not be forced by social pressures into becoming parents. Parenthood is a demanding, skilled occupation. Few would enter the field of medicine if sick people repulsed them, but many who do not like children become parents.

V. CONCLUSION

The Myth of Motherhood has been exposed. Now that we recognize that something out there is pressuring us into having children we may not want, we can challenge it. Where in the past no one questioned laws that encourage birth, the media's idealized family situations, role stereotyping in children's literature, and "maternal instinct" to name a few, now we can challenge pronatalism as discriminatory. We know that childfree individuals can be as happy as parents and even happier. The option to have children or to be childfree can exist.

Making the option available will not be easy or quick. We will all have to rearrange our thinking, our plans, and our attitudes. We will have to question our own prejudices against non-parents just as white America questioned their prejudices against blacks in the 60's. Emphasis must transfer from doing what is best for the family to what is best for society, and the world knows society needs that kind of concern. No longer can people retreat into their homes, shutting out the problems that face the world, being content to take care of their own. We must look out past our own doorsteps to encompass the world's family, the world's children.
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