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## Afterword

### *In-Fertilities in the New Reproductive Order*

ADITYA BHARADWAJ

The notion of “in-fertilities” reverberates with potential, teeming with conceivability that is lively in its seeming stillness. In-fertilities alter imaginaries, practices, and experiences of the human in-capacity to reproduce selves and others. The notion of in-fertilities—explicitly plural—also instantiates an interplay of presences and absences awaiting reproduction, thus exposing the fuzzy boundary between an imagination of a fertile presence and an infertile absence. In-fertilities are profoundly phenomenological. The experience of each—absence (infertility/fertility) and presence (fertility/infertility)—typifies the other. It is in the presence of one that we confront the absence of the other, thus rendering the absent present, locatable, tangible, and impactful. In-fertilities as a conceptual arc shape the extensive research featured in this epic volume. This majestic book heralds the dawn of a new era in which human reproduction and its experience transcend crass biopolitical enumeration, ideological prescription, and banal measurement. The new reproductive order straddles both a willful expression and an ethical assertion—for instance, a simultaneous celebration of child-free living and proactive “quest for conception”; devastating critiques of egregious medicalization as well as a determined embrace of a dazzling array of technological mediations; political resistance and critique and socio-political mobilization.

The idea of in-fertilities structuring the new reproductive order must also be read as an invitation to examine the kinds of structures, ideas, and norms we consider reproducing. For instance, how might we conceive and embrace “new” kinds of motherhoods? That is, how might the recreated sense of maternal connection appear in the absence of the notion of motherhood, a concept seemingly (irreversibly) tainted by structural patriarchy? Under what conditions could configurations

of queer kinship, for instance as exemplified by gay fatherhood, assert their independence from ideologically prescriptive terminology, such as “dad” and “father”? As Michel Foucault may have averred, What new can emerge in its place, take its place? This quest may stimulate other provocations: instead of creating something new, can we approach the idea of reproduction in a different manner and resist the allure of novelty altogether? That is, can we envision the new reproductive order as a quintessential supplement, one that replaces and also adds? But, how do we make sense of this absent newness in the face of a time-tested anthropological truism—that reproduced difference births newness?

This question gains salience as we pause to consider in-fertilities in contexts and formations, variously conceived as Third World, developing world, resource-poor settings, or “other cultures.” Here, too, as in the Euro-American formations, fertility is valorized and sacralized in equal measure. In these settings, the biopolitical overreach often stigmatizes certain kinds of fertilities as a premodern pathology and family planning as a modernist panacea. The imagined traditions become ever more deeply embedded in local communities, only to ostracize infertility as a fertile failure. Once we begin outlining the cultural contours of marginalized lives infected with infertile stigma, coproduced by health policy neglect and socially entrenched prejudice, we begin to better appreciate the complex ways in which reproductive precarity becomes stratified in-fertility. Perhaps it is worth asking, What kind of new reproductive futures will become further stratified and despised in the new reproductive order? In the meantime, the in-fertilities of the dispossessed and the marginal, especially those enduring violent cycles of climatic change, wars, displacement, and extreme levels of socio-economic peril, will routinely appear and disappear, announcing their presence with deafening clarity.

The new reproductive order demands a new ethicality, one that unremittingly interrogates the conditions under which persons, communities, and international orders enact, reject, and/or embrace in-fertilities. In this, we must remain attentive to the new conditions that are fomented into existence. Most importantly, this new ethicality also means enacting and embracing a different (new) kind of politics and asking, How can we then liberate ourselves from ideological demands imposed on us by the very notion of reproduction, without

giving up on reproducing? How might we clasp onto in-fertilities as the only potent act of resistance in the face of a crass pro- and antinatalist bio-politicization?

This book is a giant leap in this new direction. It remains fully attentive to the irony implicit in heralding the “new” and acknowledging the new demands it imposes on us. It is a spectacular distillation of decades spent at the forefront of reproductive scholarship, as well as the front line of reproductive politics. The editors of this landmark volume have transformed the field of anthropology of reproductive in-fertilities. Thanks to this unwavering commitment—and the conceptual bravura and ethnographic splendor inscribed in the chapters of this opus—we now see much more clearly how to begin the process of extricating infertility and fertility—“in-fertilities”—from an unproductive binary entrapment sunk in an oppositional quicksand. This shift also behooves us to explore how we might better decipher and reconceive the absent presences and present absences that undergird the structural foundations of human reproduction. The book convincingly shows how the late liberal separation between infertility and fertility has now truly departed. This movement will likely herald monumental shifts as the world slips into a new reproductive order, one in which the interplay of biology and ecology birth unprecedented scientific and social challenges for the discipline of biomedicalized “gyn-ecology.” The scientific texture and structure of reproductive knowledge must now converse with environmental and food sciences just as the structures underlying the discipline of demography must confront its cooptation as a scribe to the biopolitical logics of neoliberal governance.

More fundamentally, the notion of the new reproductive order brilliantly captures the emerging resistance toward, and appraisal of, a well-established neoliberal perichoresis: state, capital, science. Similarly, a critical alignment among desire, choice, and consumption typifies the new reproductive order. While this configuration is producing unprecedented opportunities for action and expression, the triumvirate of state, capital, and science is also proffering staggering opportunities to profit from child desire and instrumentalize (and monetize) choice as a culturally mediated imperative.

The dazzling array of scholars in this volume who together announce the new reproductive order through their committed scholarship have

truly ignited this heartfelt endeavor. This masterful, erudite tome, bunting together a spectacular range of offerings, pushes us to also receive what the editors eruditely unpack and explain as “reproductive cause and effect,” or the alterations in perceptions, pursuits, and experiences of reproductivity, both individually and collectively.

In this respect this book is so much more than a harbinger of a new reproductive order. It firmly establishes in-fertilities as forever emerging from global disorders; cooked in a cauldron of unprecedented sociopolitical heat; altered, perhaps irreversibly, in a climate of rapid change; swept up in a wave of emerging queer configurations and relationalities; and ensconced in new bio-political configurations as yet unknowable. In other words, new in-fertilities in a new world order.