

**Extended Quotes Used During Lectures on Inequality and The State**  
**Anth 2240**  
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1) “Simply put, one group of scholars, following Marx and Engels, associated the ‘world historical defeat of the female sex’ with the evolutionary rise of the state – centralizing and institutionalizing of power in the context of extreme economic and social stratification.

Opposing groups claimed that women’s oppression was universal and linked to structural conditions that cross-cut state and non-state societies.”

(Irene Silverblatt, in Michaela di Leonardo, 1991:141)

2) “To be free from producing their own subsistence, ruling groups ... had to gain access to the labour ... of what were autonomous kin groups. This process, Gailey argued, fragmented both the local division of labour as well as the cohesion of kin-group identity. The public ... sphere, which was wrenched from the kin-group, was able to sever dimensions of gender and age from the community’s cohesive social persona.”

(Irene Silverblatt, in Michaela di Leonardo, 1991:148-49)

3) “Shifting needs in our society enable women to work in a man’s world, sometimes for equal pay, but no matter how early in life a woman begins her career, nor how successful she is, she will still be living and working un the constraints of her conceptual denial by the technocratic model of reality. Based as it is on a fundamental assumption of her physiological inferiority to men, that model guarantees her continued psychological disempowerment by the everyday constructs of the culture-at-large and her alienation both from political power and from the physiological attributes of womanhood.”

(Davis-Floyd, 1993:311)

4) It came as a shock to me ... to discover that fully seventy percent of women in my study expressed varying degrees of contentment with their technocratic births. As I explored the reasons behind this finding, I came to realize that the technocratic rituals of hospital birth, in spite of the philosophy that underlies them, do of course provide the same sense of order, security, and power to birthing women as they do to physicians and nurses.

Moreover, that philosophy itself is not so alien to today’s women as I had imagined. Although [forty-two percent] of women did enter the hospital with the expressed intention of ‘doing natural childbirth,’ this philosophical goal faded in importance as labor progressed – or “failed to.

As these women gradually became convinced of the defectiveness of their birthing machines or of the birth process, they came to interpret the interventions they experienced as appropriate ... Another twenty-eight percent entered the hospital already convinced that the way of technology was better than the way of nature.

(Davis-Floyd, 1993:311-312)

References

Davis-Floyd, Robbie E. 1993. The Technocratic Model of Birth. In *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*. Susan T. Hollis, Linda Pershing, and M. J. Young, eds. Pp. 297-315. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Silverblatt in di Leonardo, Micaela. 1991. *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press.