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In “Wages Against Housework”, Sylvia Federici makes two important intellectual contributions: that capitalism actively appropriates and solidifies a gendered social structure to maintain itself, and that the very act of demanding wages for housework performs the crucial work of interrupting the continuity of this structure. Through the epistemological phenomena of naturalization and essentialization, housework has been mapped as unquestionably innate to the female body and character. The female body and reproductive work are set in intellectual gravitational motion around each other, reciprocally intertwined until their association is codified as an axiom of the capitalist knowledge-state. As a consequence of this association, there is significantly decreased or absent need to give wages in return for reproductive labor. To demand wages for housework, Federici asserts, is to introduce into the dominant gendered capitalist epistemology the radical existence of a woman resisting the naturalization of housework. It is the very interruption of this epistemology that lays the necessary groundwork for disentangling the female body from reproductive work.

In the final scenes of Octavia Butler’s “Bloodchild”, Gan struggles with whether to allow T’Gatoi to impregnate him with her children after witnessing the gruesome process of extracting matured T’lic young from the body of a Terran host, Lomas. Gan is so disturbed that he prepares to commit suicide, but relents and decides to host T’Gatoi’s young after considering that T’Gatoi would impregnate his sister Xuan Hoa, if not himself. Soon afterwards, T’Gatoi penetrates Gan with her eggs in a viscerally physical and sexual scene. “You will live now,” (14) T’Gatoi tells Gan at the conclusion of “Bloodchild”. Gan responds with resigned acceptance – “Yes” (14).

We can read Gan’s hesitance and potential suicide as an interruption to the dominant T’lic epistemology, the introduction of a Terran resisting the naturalization of reproduction upon

his body – motivationally similar to Federici’s intellectual justification for demanding wages for housework. T’Gatoi does not understand that a Terran would destroy their own body, the site of T’lic reproduction, because reproduction has been naturalized and essentialized as innate to the Terran body. When T’Gatoi sees Gan holding the rifle, she asks if Gan will use it to shoot her. After Gan doggedly questions narratives of T’lic-Terran reproductive collaboration, T’Gatoi quietly asks, “Would you really rather die than bear my young, Gan?” (12). It is at this point in which it is demonstrated that Gan’s refusal to conform to the dominant epistemology has shaken the axioms of innate Terran suitability to reproduction that comprise it, and thus the epistemology itself.

However, after knowing that T’Gatoi will impregnate Xuan Hoa instead, Gan lowers the gun – thus dissolving the resistance to the dominant epistemology – and T’Gatoi moves quickly to deposit her eggs into Gan. After the impregnation, T’Gatoi promises to keep future egg extractions out of Gan’s perception because “I don’t want you thinking any more about shooting me” (14). This is revealing: T’Gatoi understands the rifle and Gan’s intentions in relation to feelings of fear, self-defense, and disgust to her own body and worm-like children – just as demonstrated when T’Gatoi first sees Gan holding the rifle. For a moment – when Gan held the rifle to his own neck – it enters T’Gatoi’s belief space that the rifle might be a tool to destroy a unit of *reproduction*, rather than just a unit of *production* (the product being a T’lic body). Immediately after Gan lowers the rifle, however, T’Gatoi once again understands Gan’s rifle-wielding as a threat to the *product*, attempting to wrench the rifle away from Gan not as a threat to Gan himself but as a threat to T’Gatoi’s children. Gan narrates T’Gatoi’s uneasiness: “Now her young and this gun would be together in the same house” (13). In this way, the act of lowering the rifle is a succumbing to the dominant epistemology; T’Gatoi still holds as an axiom

of her knowledge-system that Gan, and Terrans broadly, are natural sites of reproduction – as she did before, and as does T’lic society broadly. If a Terran is to pose a threat, it is because they are antagonistic towards the products of their labor, rather than their reproductive labor itself – this antagonism is reconcilable through restriction of information and the perpetuation of narratives of cross-species collaboration.

In this way, we can read Gan’s final decision in “Bloodchild” as that of a failure to meaningfully interrupt the dominant epistemology, to fully question the naturalized mechanisms of reproduction underlying the structure of society. It is an ending in which one may perceive the illusion of reconciliation but with which the reconciliation is utterly false.