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**Feminist Philosopher Publishes Scholarly Book on Socio-Cultural**

**Conceptualizations of Women and Childbirth**

Book Title: *Feminism and the Mastery of Women and Childbirth:*

*The Cultural Maiming and Reclaiming of Maternal Agency During Childbirth*

(**ISBN/Price: Cloth: 978-1-936320-78-3; $84.95)**

Dr. Jeffrey Nall has published a book-length analysis of the understanding and representation of women and childbirth. Nall’s work, *Feminism and the Mastery of Women and Childbirth*, examines popular assumptions about women, gender, nature, and the childbirth process.

Though itprincipally targets a scholarly audience, Dr. Nall contends that his work is likely to be of interest to those interested in childbirth. “The book discusses a number of aspects of childbirth, from how philosophers and theologians have understood women, birth, and pain, to how childbirth is represented in Hollywood films and mainstream television,” said Nall. “I also examine media reports and academic research suggesting that the growth of homebirthing women is dangerous. My contention is that these claims are problematic for a variety of reasons, and that they are best understood in the context of historical, patriarchal theories of women, femininity and childbirth.”

According to Dr. Nall’s work, common social attitudes toward women’s childbirth, as indicated in popular culture, medical practice and research, promote dehumanizing, dishonoring definitions of femininity. The dominant vision of childbirth serves, he contends, to perpetuate the distrust of both the female body and the sphere of “nature.” Nall also argues that the homebirth movement provides an alternative understanding and practice that is often, but not always, more consonant with feminist and ecofeminist philosophy’s values, including support for gender equality, and the disavowal of dominator relations.

The book is presently available via a number of outlets including Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, Books a Million. It is also being carried by libraries across the world, from Duke University, Columbia University, Harvard, to universities in Australia, Canada, and Germany. For information about availability see Worldcat.org: <http://www.worldcat.org/title/feminism-and-the-mastery-of-women-and-childbirth-an-ecofeminist-examination-of-the-cultural-maiming-and-reclaiming-of-maternal-agency-during-childbirth/oclc/868259651>

**BIO**:

Dr. Jeffrey Nall is an author, speaker, interdisciplinary scholar, professor of philosophy (IRSC) and women and gender studies (FAU), husband and father to four children. Nall's rich, interdisciplinary education bridges multiple disciplines including humanities, philosophy, women and gender studies, and various aspects of social studies. Nall has a Ph.D. in Comparative Studies from Florida Atlantic University, a Graduate Certificate in [Women’s Studies](http://www.fau.edu/WomensStudies/) from FAU, and a Master of Liberal Studies from Rollins College. His work has appeared in numerous academic journals including The International Journal of Communication and Health: “Mother Beware: Perilous Scholarly and News Media Discourse around Homebirth.: [**http://communicationandhealth.ro/upload/number2/JEFFREY-ALLEN-NALL.pdf**](http://communicationandhealth.ro/upload/number2/JEFFREY-ALLEN-NALL.pdf)

**BOOK DESCRIPTION:**

Dr Nall's monograph explores the dominant Western discourse around gender and childbirth. The research examines the connections between the understanding of women and nature and the construction of pervasive conceptualizations and practices of childbirth. It also examines the relationship between conceptualizations of men and masculinity, culture and nature, and childbirth.

Feminism and the Mastery of Women and Childbirth identifies prominent characteristics and themes related to childbirth in both popular culture, such as Hollywood films (Knocked Up, The Backup Plan), documentaries (The Business of Being Born), birth guides, magazines, news articles, websites, and scholarly, medical and alternative healthcare discourse. It considers how various conceptualizations of childbirth are used to legitimate, or, alternately, to undermine, patriarchal gender norms such as emphasized femininity and patriarchal (hegemonic) masculinity. More generally, the work contemplates the influence of “master consciousness” (Val Plumwood 1993), a way of understanding the world that is reliant on an unjustifiably dualistic thinking and that is responsible for fostering social practices of domination, in structuring American beliefs about childbirth and gender. Perhaps most importantly, this work sets out to consider the implications of alternative conceptualizations of childbirth emerging in the context of the natural birth movement, and to determine whether or not understandings of childbirth counteract patriarchal gender categories and the culture/nature dualism.

The significance of this work is that it addresses a lacuna in philosophical and feminist theory literature on the subject of nature, gender and childbirth. There are simply no research works that implement ecofeminist philosophy to examine cultural representations of gender and childbirth. It provides a unique ecofeminist examination of conceptualizations and practices of childbirth. This work is also timely as it critically analyzes the relationship between ideas about culture and nature pertaining to birth practices at a time when technological birth interventions have become increasingly common and, in some cases, dangerous.

Chapters include:

1. How We Know: Radical Feminist and Ecofeminist Approaches to Knowledge
2. The Conceptual Tenets of Medicalized Childbirth
3. Virtual Reality Childbirth: Examining High-fidelity Birth Simulators in American Culture
4. What about Maternal Magnificence? Patriarchal Policing of Gender Norms in TV and Filmic Representations of Childbirth
5. Birth Resistance: Revolutionary Representations of Childbirth
6. Mother Beware! Perilous Scholarly and News Media Discourse around Homebirth