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# Campus Women

By Ella Holt

Susan Cole, feminist writer, freelance journalist, appeared on campus Oct. 11, 1990 sponsored by UPEI Student Union and P.E.I. ad hoc committee on NRT and presented a lecture "Exploring the complexities of new reproductive technologies."

She presented a well organized lecture designed to inform women and demystify an issue which directly affects women. A Royal Commission has been set up by the Canadian Government to "inquire into and report on current and potential medical and scientific developments related to new reproductive technologies considering in particular their social, ethical, health, research, legal, and economic implications and the public interest, recommending what policies and safe guards should be applied." Ms. Coles expressed a very specific perspective that many new reproductive technologies are in fact a form of violence against women. She stated "It's hard to agree with NRT that apparently allow women to blissfully experience child birth. But one must ask: What are the experiences of the women involved and do NRT's even work? Statistics from the World Health Organization indicate that in one specific area invitro fertilization (The fertilization of a human egg outside of the womb. The eggs are removed from a woman's ovaries fertilized with sperm in a laboratory and then placed in a woman's uterus. The fertilized eggs may either be placed in the uterus of a woman who produced the eggs or in the uterus of another woman). The success rate is 8.8%, although Dr. Bev. Brodie challenged this statistic indicating a more correct statistic of pregnancy was probably 15 - 20%. However, her definition of pregnancy was a heart beat on an ultrasound. I think it's fair to say most women are interested in the live birth. The heartbeat is nice but it doesn't console you when you leave the hospital without a baby. Ms. Coles admitted being rather cynical about the topic and suggested that perhaps medical researchers were endeavoring to control the birth experience that has historically

belonged to women. The entire industry of NRT is being turned into Harnessed Technology "The Boys with their toys" making something new and exciting, pretending to be God. Another disturbing part of the presentation was these technologies are expensive and not covered by health insurance. While one invitro fertilization only costs between three and six thousand dollars, The World Health Organization indicates the cost for each live birth is approximately \$35,000 taking into consideration all the women who do not achieve a successful pregnancy. Not many women have the money to access this technology. The idea that it's available and accessible is an illusion. Ms. Coles stated she was not in favor of abolishing NRT but that Women have the right to be informed, have equal access and realistic counselling concerning NRT's. Women should not be used as guinea pigs in a society that link women's identity to having children at any cost.

The Brown Bag lunch for discussions on Gender issues met Friday, October 12, 1990. The topic of discussion was violence against women and the first 20 minute segment of the Janet MacLeod story was heard. Following the presentation it was almost difficult for the discussion to begin. The trauma this woman endured affected all the members of the group. It's very unsettling to have a social problem like violence taken out of the books and thrust directly in your face. However, violence affects large numbers of people in our society and the majority of the victims are women. At least the members of the group are not sweeping it under the rug. They are examining the topic even if it would be easier to pretend it did not exist. The next meeting for the group will take place in the Sociology lounge October 26, 1990, 12:30 - 1:30. All interested persons are invited to attend. Topic Part II of the Janet MacLeod story...Violence against Women.