



# Gynocide: Hysterectomy, Capitalist Patriarchy and the Medical Abuse of Women

By Editor Mariarosa Dalla Costa

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How much of contemporary medical practice still derives from a practice rooted in the witch-hunts that plagued Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, and burned at the stake, after horrible torture, hundreds of thousands of midwives and healers along with other poor women - the greatest sexocide in recorded history? Women's bodies and their medical knowledge were burned on those stakes to be replaced by a male "science" and a male gynecological profession controlled by the state and church. Has history run its course? Or, among the many reasons given today for hysterectomies, does its abuse still conceal, more or less covertly, a yearning for male domination over women's bodies that reaches this most lethal form of conquest because it expropriates and destroys what makes a body a woman's body? The essays (and accompanying glossaries and testimonials) collected in Gynocide examine the historical, legal, ethical, psychological and medical aspects of deeply sexist practices in defining and treating issues of contemporary women's health. Contributors draw on the important theoretical perspectives developed in recent years by radical Italian feminism, revealing the complicity of widespread assumptions about the structures and roles of gender, the nuclear family, educational practices, and the state. Translated from the Italian.

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