

ART in the «art»

Infertility in history, rituals, cinema, paintings and literature

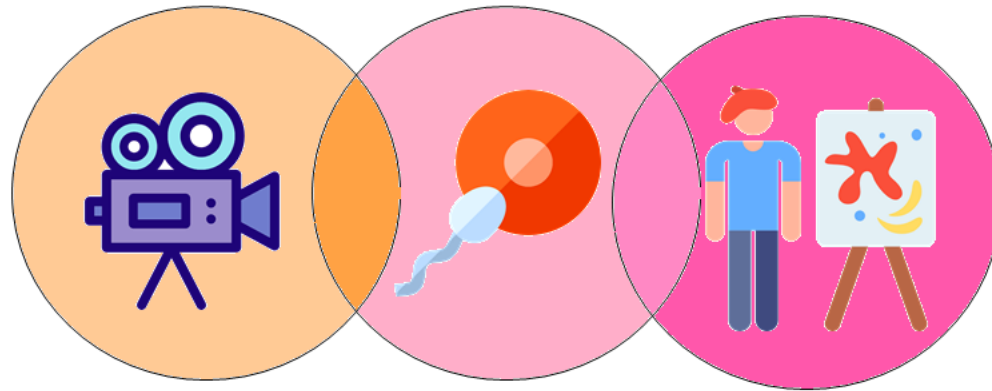


TABLE OF CONTENT



Introduction



In the past...



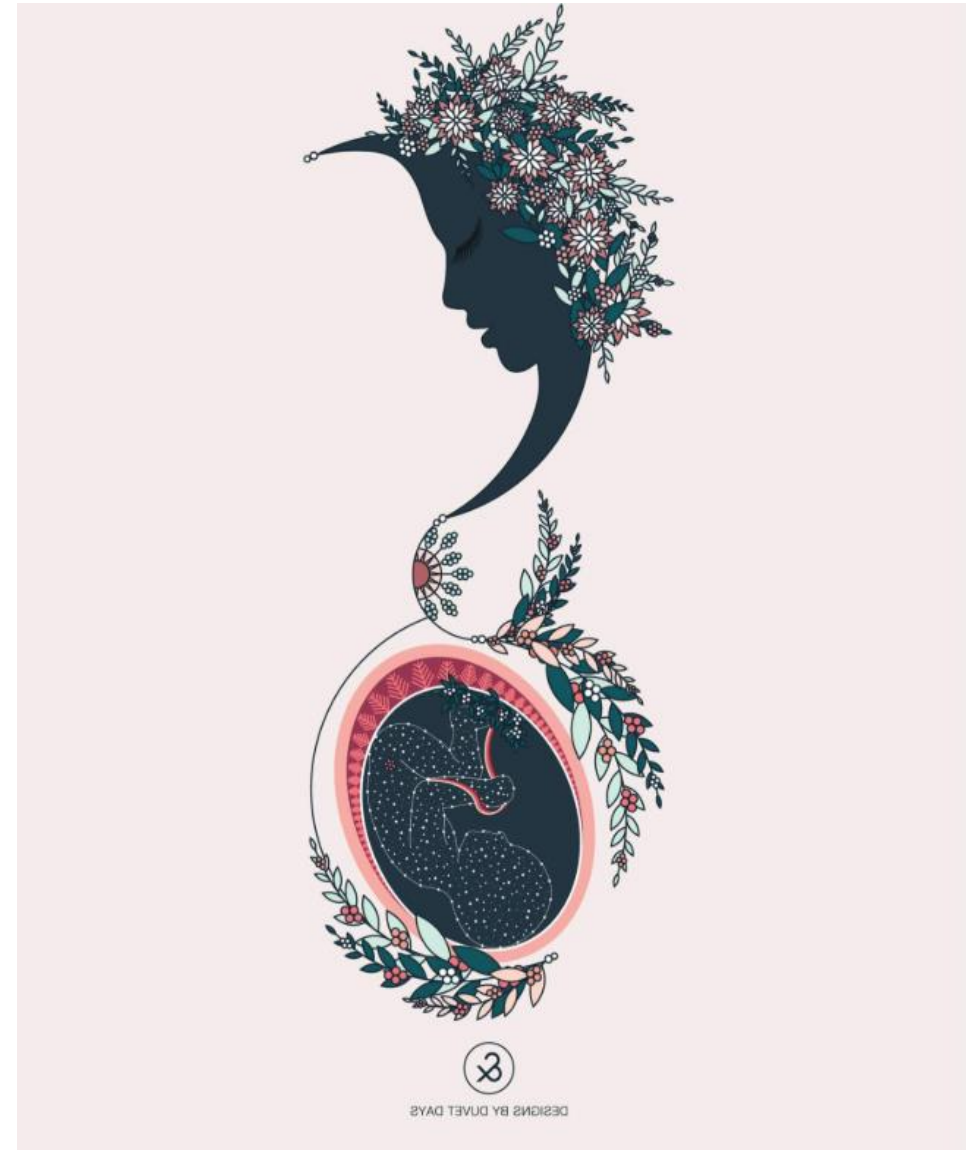
Infertility in figurative art



Infertility in books



Infertility in cinema



INTRODUCTION

Infertility and Reproductive techniques have now become a **theme which is much more frequent to find** in what surrounds us, going from television, to books and also in cinema.

The reason is the **higher frequency of the use of the technique by common everyday people**, and the enhancement of the techniques that permits a higher success profile.

Infertility theme has also obtained its spotlight, and becoming no more a banned argument, with an **increase in the social awareness** about it, gaining a central role as a discussion theme.



In this presentation we will see a general overview of how these themes are depicted nowadays, with also a little focus on how in dystopic novels and movies these techniques are seen.

IN THE PAST: Ancient Greece

Speaking about infertility, there are those who would deny that it has much of a past at all. Some reconstruct the main start of the infertility and reproduction with the advent of reproductive techniques with **birth of baby Louise Brown in 1978**

We have traces of infertility treatment in ancient greek world, in particular in the Hippocratic Corpus.

Among the various topics covered by these writings, in a range of styles, are human generation and the diseases of women.



There are ten treatises, of disparate size and approach, dedicated to these subjects.

IN THE PAST: Ancient Greece

The earliest extant Greek medical writings include **extensive and elaborate discussion of reproductive failure and its treatment.**



“The cause of a man and woman’s failure to generate, when having intercourse with each other, resides sometimes in both, sometimes in just one or the other.”

These are very numerous, but the almost endless variegations of detail can be grouped under four main headings:

- the anatomical configuration;
- the alignment and flexibility of the mouth of the womb;
- the shape, size, composition, and internal environment of the uterus itself;
- the woman’s overall health and somatic balance

IN THE PAST: Ancient Greece

It is the recurrent theme in *Diseases of Women* and *2* that for in these illnesses, are dangerous, possibly fatal and that Or is the miscarriage, and at what stage? **“will become infertile”** Does the woman menstruate abundantly, and literally “non-bearing” the concept, not bringing forth (and birthing) may be even perished by (aid) or sufficient severity to lead to serious uterine ulceration and the re



IN THE PAST: Fertility rituals

To earliest man the propagation of the species and its survival was a source of real anxiety; **a woman who failed to conceive and carry a pregnancy to term was a source of concern and she regarded her**



Fertility rituals are still relied upon all over the world when couples are having problems conceiving

believed to increase a couple's chance of conceiving.

Statues, special herbs, prayer services, to name just a few, **were commonly considered helpful.**

THE MIRACLE CHAIR

The Catholic Saint **Maria Francesca of the Five Wounds** of Jesus reportedly died in this chair located in Naples, Italy. The saint was canonized by Pius IX who named her the patroness of women with difficulty conceiving.



LEGENDARY FERTILITY STATUES



Located a bit closer to home, Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not in Orlando keeps **two fertility statues from the Ivory Coast**.

The Ripley's legend is that a half-dozen employees became pregnant after touching the sculptures. The oddities museum allows visitors to lay hands on the two seated figures, carved from ebony using primitive tools.

BEDROOM DRAGONS



According to Feng Shui tradition, **dragons are a fine source of male virility**. Experts in the mystic Chinese art of spiritual interior decoration suggest that placing a dragon statue on your bedside table might help get things moving.

It's just one of a handful of home manipulations that Feng Shui practitioners say could increase your fertility. They including not blocking front and back doors and placing a single piece of hollow bamboo in the corner of your bedroom.

Infertility in figurative art



- **Miscarriage**
- **Slowness**
- **Injuries**
- **Infertility**

Frida Kahlo



Henry Ford Hospital (1932)

INFERTILITY IN FIGURATIVE ART

Art at ESHRE: Fertility Fest



This festival has been founded in 2016 by **Jessica Hepburn** and **Gabby Vautier**, professional arts producers and former IVF patients.

Fertility Fest aims to bring together artists with fertility experts to achieve three important aims:

- To advance fertility education;
- To raise public conversation about all aspects of infertility and reproductive science;
- To improve emotional care and support for people struggling to conceive.

Fertility Fest at Barcelona 2018

Tina Reid Peršin: Photos I'll never take

INFERTILITY IN FIGURATIVE ART



Fake daughter to represent family photos

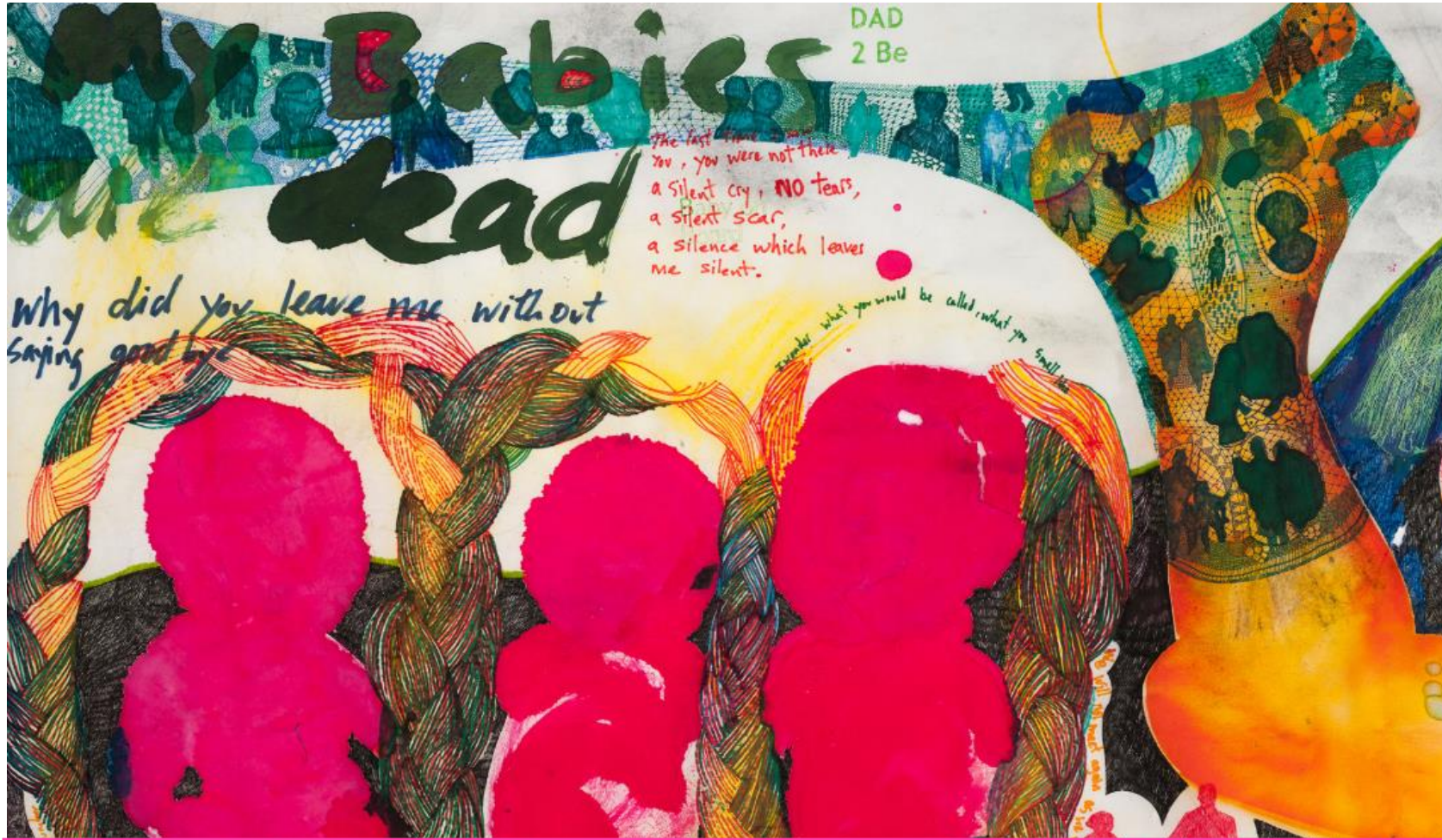
Fertility Fest at Barcelona 2018

Thomas Webb: The Easy Bit



Fertility Fest at Barcelona 2018

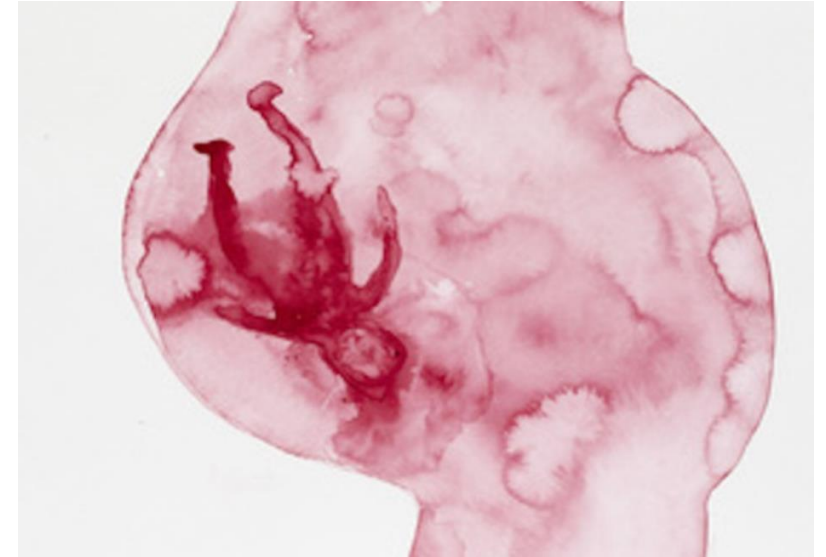
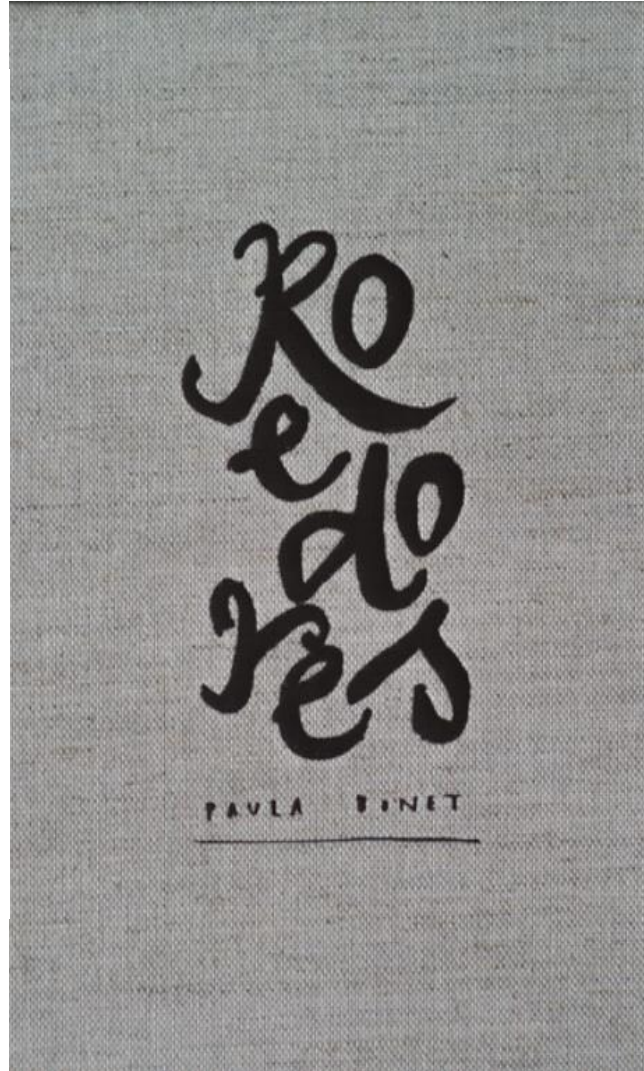
Foz Foster: Labour of Love



Miscarriages

Fertility Fest at Barcelona 2018

Paula Bonet: Roedores



**Letter to a never born
daughter**

Fertility Fest at Wien 2019

Heidi Barkun: Unnamed



IVF failure

Faye Glen

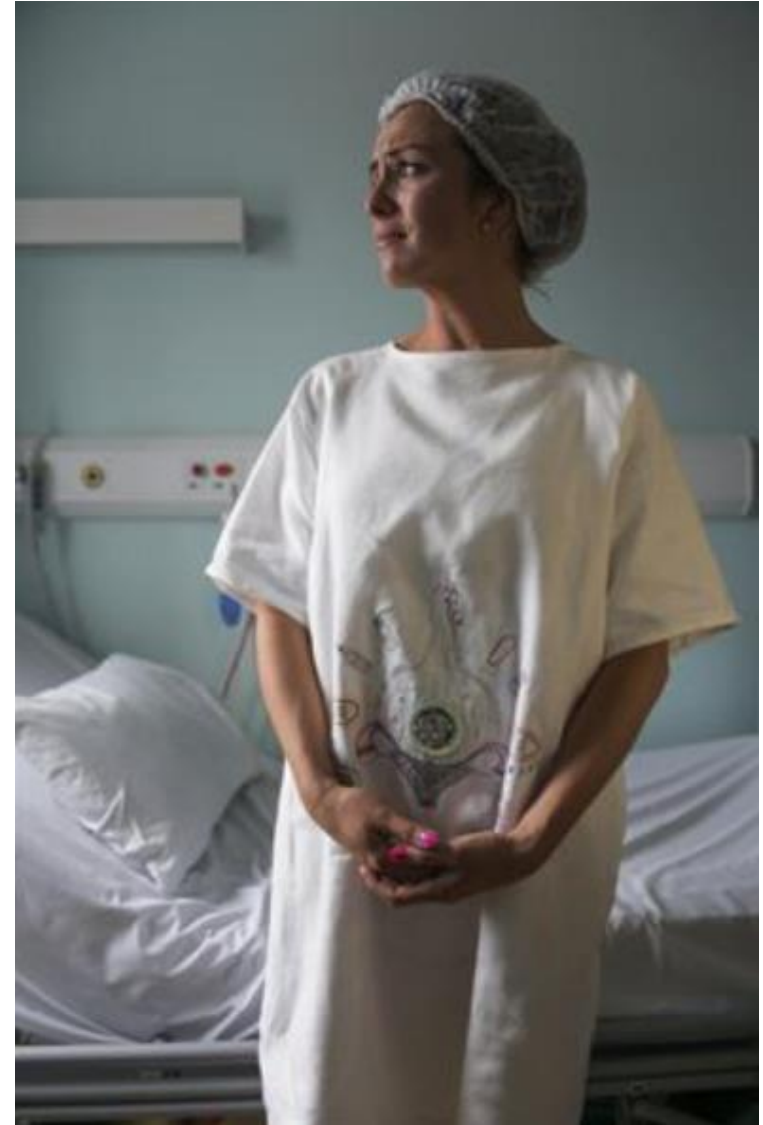


Unsuccessful treatments

Tabitha Moses: Investment



IVF experience



Stuart Semple: Something Amazing



**Sensibilization on egg
donation**



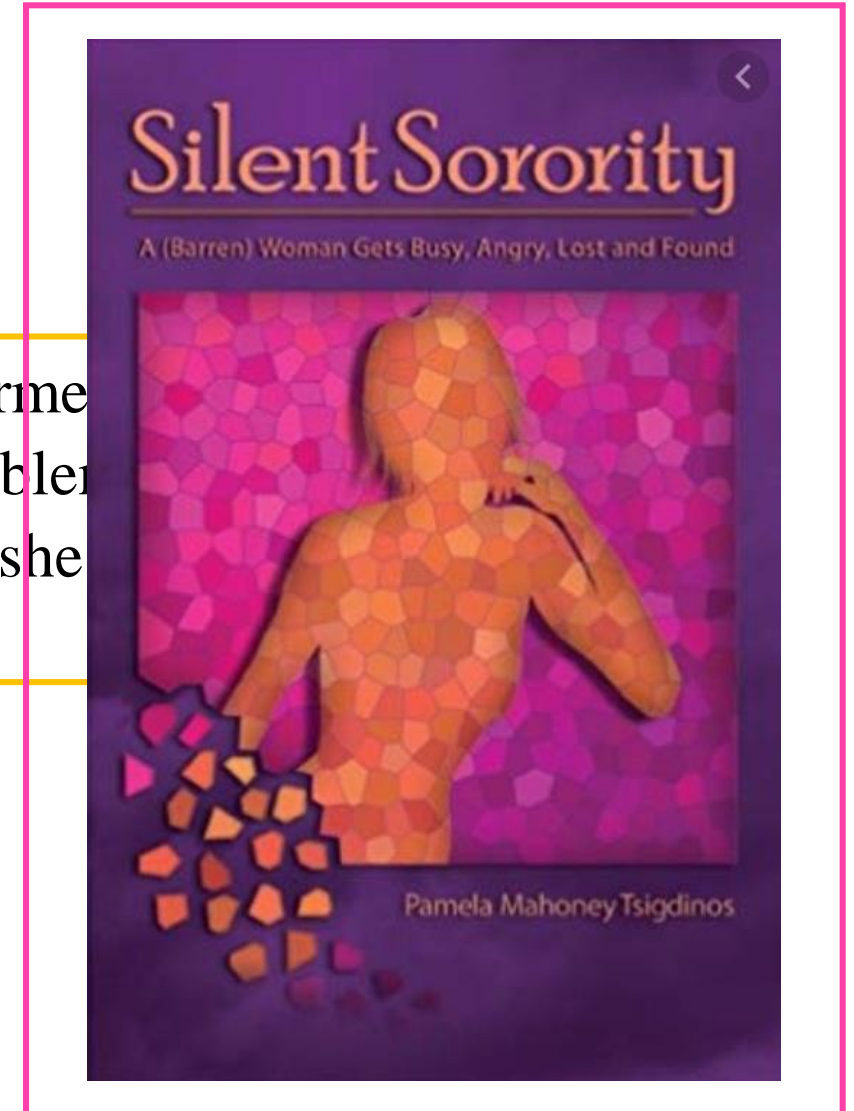
Infertility in books

INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: from the patients

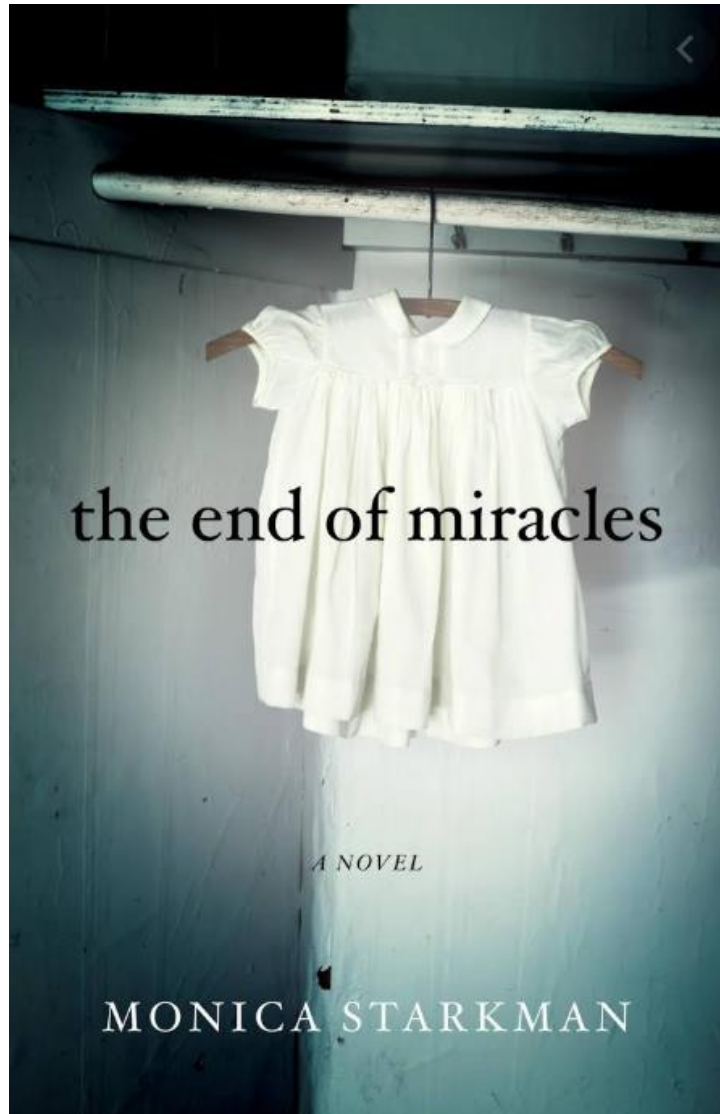


Pamela Mahoney Tsingdinos book has overcome its success because of its different kind of telling a story about infertility, that doesn't end in a pregnancy; all this is seen in an era in which the magazines, television and social media do help to overcome this situation. In her memoir, the former she had hidden the infertility problem, miscarriages help that she two daughters.

This book so became the first memoir confronting about infertility not written by a mother



INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: from the patients



Margo Kerber has endured difficult years battling infertility while trying to sustain her good marriage and satisfying career.

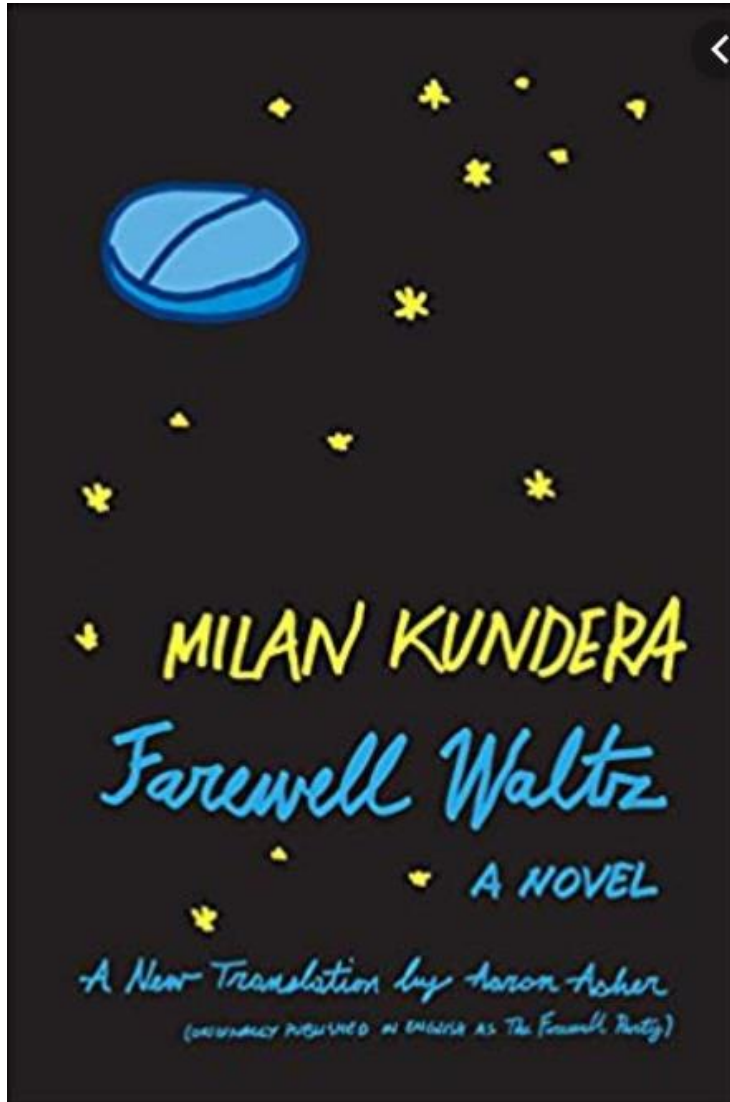
Her path to motherhood has been troubled from the start. Consultations with a fertility specialist leave Margo and her husband feeling **like lab animals, and like their sexual relations are now “controlled by doctor, date, and a woman’s monthly rhythm.”**

Yet when the treatments continue to fail, Margo is advised to accept the fact that she may never naturally bear a child and to consider other options.

When a joyful pregnancy ends in a late miscarriage, she is devastated. For a time, the false belief that she is once again pregnant rescues her from grief. When this comforting fantasy inevitably clashes with reality, she falls into a **deep depression**. She is admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Worried it is making her worse, she seizes an opportunity to flee.

Alone on the city streets, a new fantasy propels her to kidnap a baby from its carriage.

INFERTILITY IN BOOKS



Plot

A musician is arranging the abortion of his mistress (and trying to convince her to do that) with a doctor who heads a fertility clinic in an unorthodox manner: **he fecundates the patients artificially with its own semen.**

This plot crosses with the story of a previous war prisoner, that wants to kill himself taking a suicide pill, that he then without thinking puts in a container of pills that belongs to the musician's mistress, killing her instead of killing himself, without saving her even when he was having regrets about his gesture.

“Having a child is to show an absolute accord with mankind. If I have a child, it's as though I'm saying: I was born and have tasted life and declare it so good that it merits being duplicated.”

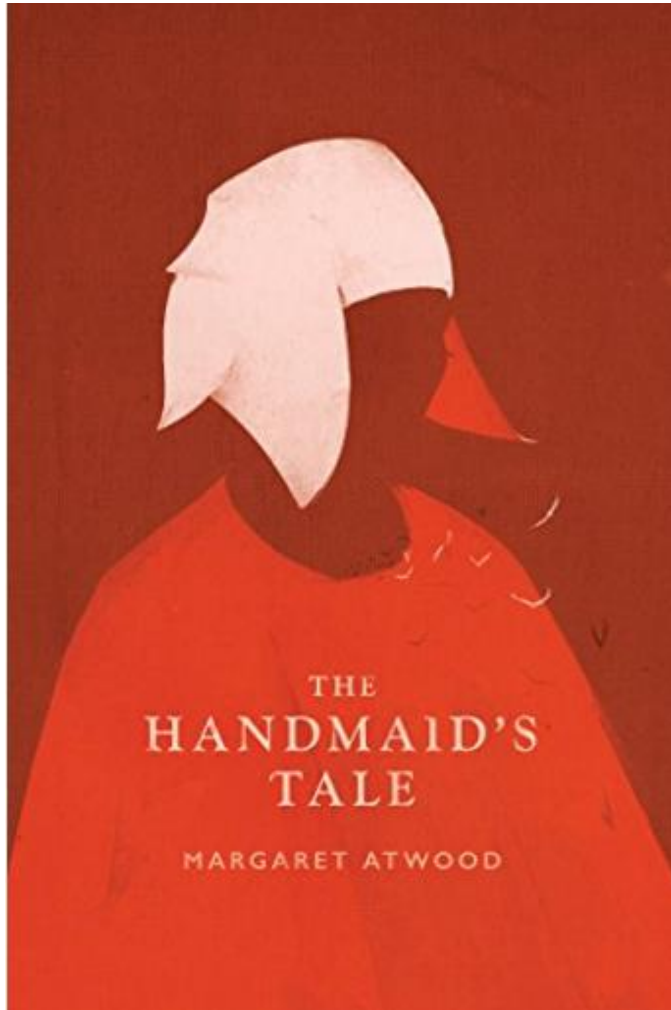
INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: dystopic novels

The Handmaid's tale

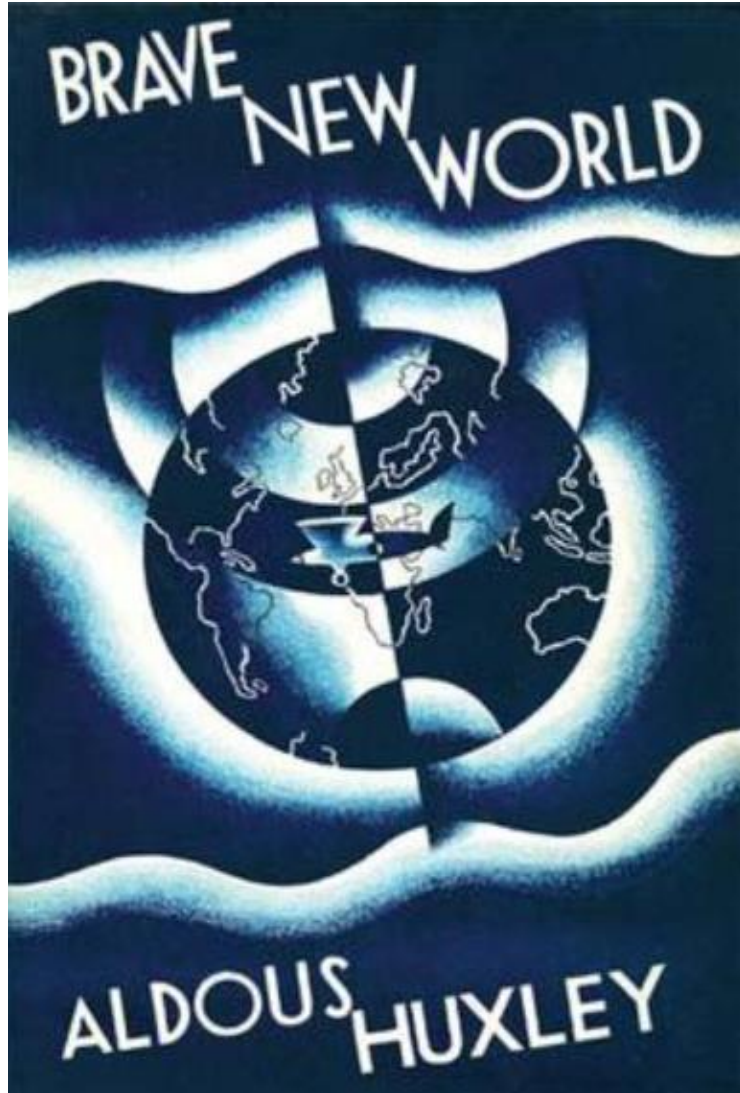
In this book is in a dystopic future in which a radical political group instaurated a new theocratic republic, the **Republic of Gilead**.

In this dystopic regime society rules are applied reinterpreting some parts of old testament, and a new social model of religious fanaticism among its newly created classes.

In this era of declining birth rates due to increasing infertility caused by environmental pollution and radiation, she is one of the few fertile women. Hence she is forcibly assigned to produce children for the ruling class of men "Commanders", and is known as a "Handmaid" based on the **biblical story of Rachel**.



INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: dystopic novels



Brave New World

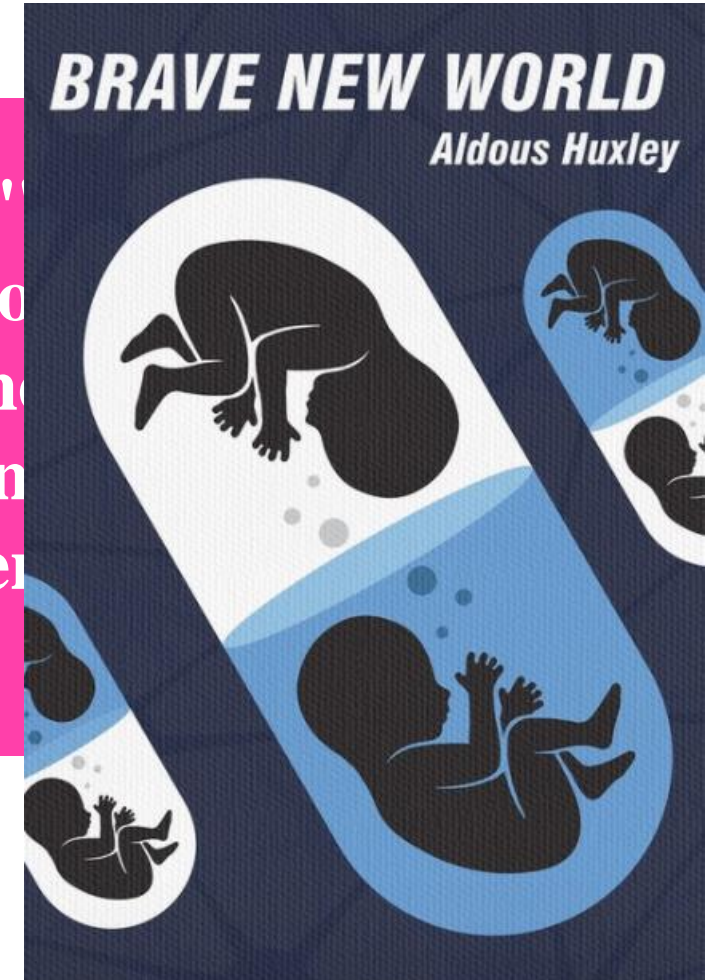
- Brave New World is a dystopic novel by Aldous Huxley (1932).
- It is set in a futuristic World State, in which the inhabitants are genetically modified citizens, with an intelligence-based social hierarchy

This novel anticipates huge scientific improvements and advancements in themes like sleep-learning, psychological manipulation and also **reproductive technology**.

INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: dystopic novels

Ectogenesis

"These," he waved his hand, "are the incubators." Behind the insulated door he showed them racks upon racks of incubator tubes. "The week's supply of ova. Kept," he explained, "at thirty-seven degrees, whereas the male gametes," and here he opened another door, "have to be kept at thirty-five instead of thirty-seven degrees. The machine sterilizes."



INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: Quotes

“How it was let out drop by drop onto the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa—at a minimum concentration of **one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre**, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined;”

INFERTILITY IN BOOKS

Bokanovsky's Process

Bokanovsky's Process, combined with **Podsnap's Technique** for speeding up the maturation of unfertilized eggs from an ovary, is used to

“One egg, one embryo, one adult - normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before.”

The Alpha and Beta embryos never undergo this dividing process, which can weaken the embryos

INFERTILITY IN BOOKS: EXTRA



Yerma is a play by the Spanish dramatist Federico García Lorca.

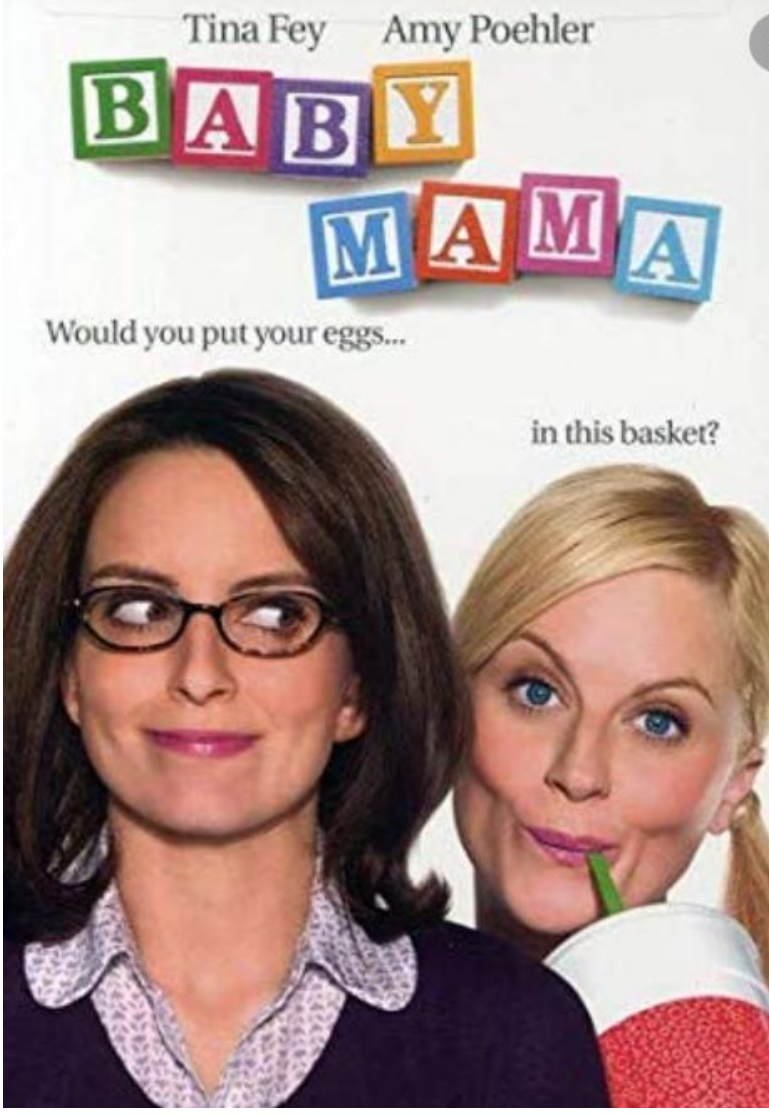
This play tells the story of a **childless woman** that lives in a rural village in Spain, that desperately desires to become a mother, and this becomes a obsession for her.

She is unable to have children because her husband doesn't want them, he focuses on what exists, and **he says to his wife to do like him, not to concern about something that doesn't exist.**

Symbolism of the elements

Infertility in cinema

INFERTILITY IN CINEMA



INFERTILITY IN CINEMA

Private Life



Richard and Rachel are a middle-aged couple that is desperately trying to have a child. After multiple failed attempts of insemination they try in vitro fertilisation.

They later discover that Richard has a **blockage not letting him to produce sperm, and for this reason he undergoes a surgery**. At the same time they also try to adopt a child after being previously matched with a pregnant teenager from Arkansas, but then she stops contacting them.

INFERTILITY IN CINEMA

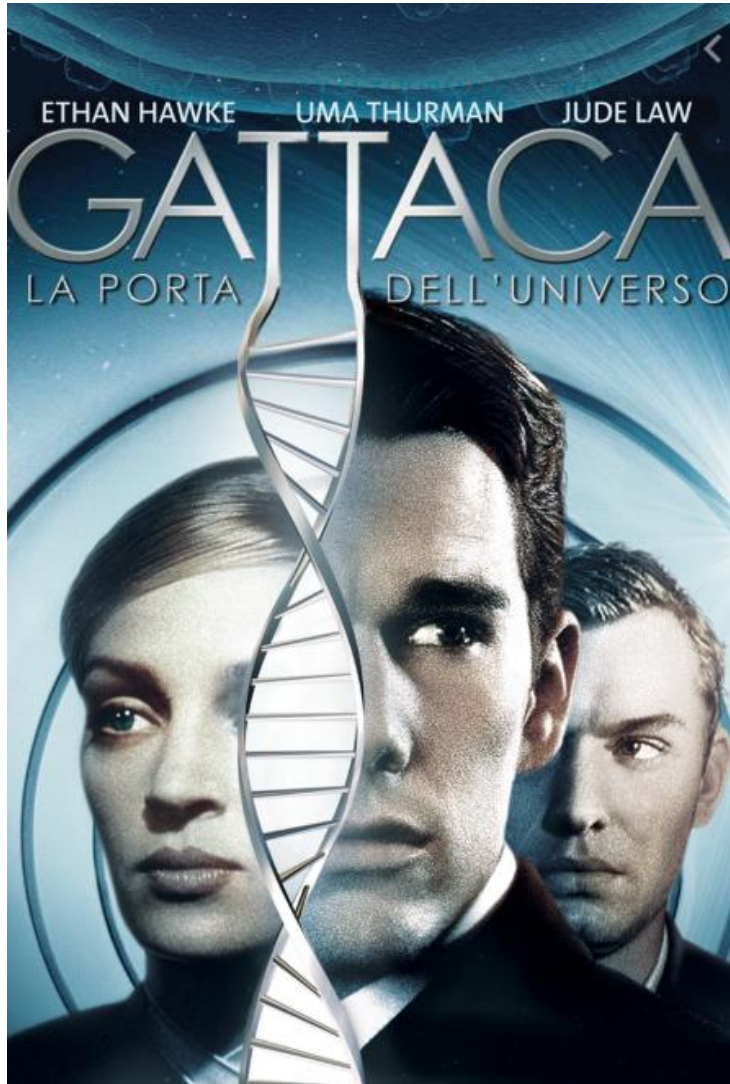
After the IVF fails, their doctor floats the idea of using a **donor egg to inseminate Rachel** which would raise their chances of success from 4 to 65 percent. At the same time Sadie, daughter of a couple of friends of them, stays for a period with them after interrupting her frequency to university.

Rachel, who struggled with the idea of an unknown egg donor, decides that she wants to ask Sadie for her eggs. To their surprise Sadie quickly agrees, both because she loves Richard and Rachel and **because she thinks the egg donation will bring meaning to her life.**





INFERTILITY IN CINEMA



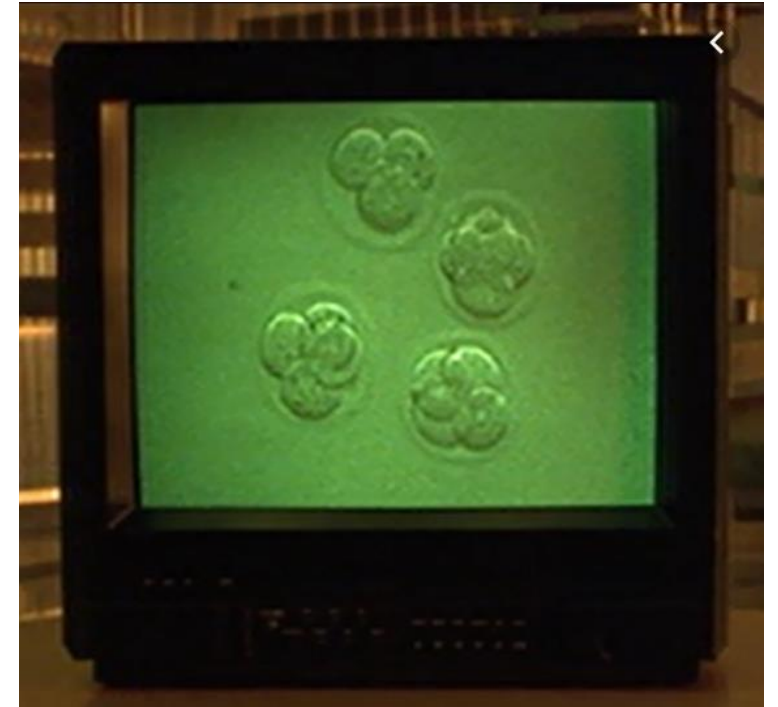
Reproduction in dystopic cinema: GATTACA

The film presents the vision of a future society driven by **eugenetics**, where potential children are conceived through **genetic selection to ensure they possess the best hereditary traits of their parents.**

The film draws on concerns over **reproductive technologies that facilitate eugenetics**, and the possible consequences of such technological developments for society.

INFERTILITY IN CINEMA

A genetic registry database uses biometrics to classify those so created as "valids" while those conceived by traditional means and more susceptible to genetic disorders are known as "in-valids". **Genetic discrimination is illegal, but in practice genotype profiling is used to identify valids to qualify for professional employment while in-valids are relegated to menial jobs.**



Designer babies in the future?



To conclude...

Do you think that representation of infertility in our nowadays surrounding is adequate? How could we improve that?

Which art form do you think is the most effective on people?

In which kind of events would you invest to raise awareness on infertility and ART?

Dystopic ways of depicting infertility and reproduction appear to you far as they are showed or nearer that we can imagine?

Thank you for the attention!