“Families are always stereotyped into the cosy mums having coffee while the kids are playing in the garden”

**Images Of Non Mothers**

- What are the media images of women who do not want to or cannot have children?
- They seem to fall into distinct categories: the sad spinster and the neurotic career bitch, Glenn Close in Fatal Attraction (1987) example
- The film hinted at the fact that the character played by Close, a successful career woman is unable to have children, so strings on her husband, lies about being pregnant and then in a fit of jealousy he chooses to stay with his wife and family. The wife and mother is seen as nurturing etc whilst the latter is neurotic and mad
- In ideolozing motherhood, a tremendous amount of denial has to take place and this denial is projected on to the figure of the childfree woman.

“Childless women are given terribly negative images: the spinister in the lonely apartment”

“Childless women are portrayed as hard-bitten, career girls and men haters”

**Psychoanalysis**

- The neurotic childfree woman stereotype probably owes a lot to psychoanalysis. Freud has been a formidable source of Pro-Birth thought
- Psychoanalysis views parenthood as the natural culmination of normal development to adulthood: the true definition of making it into psychological normality is to be a heterosexual woman who is a mother etc
- Freud asserted that women compensated for their penis envy by having a child, and that a woman who did not seek fulfilment in child rearing might become neurotic.
- Accordingly, a woman’s ultimate source of satisfaction lay in motherhood, particularly in a relationship with a son.
- Much has been written about Freud’s misogyny and lack of empirical research, yet this psychology has been absorbed into Western popular culture and became a dominant form of psychiatry after the Second World War

“When I turn up for Christmas, unmarried and without children, my mother says ‘Where did I go wrong? There’s something very peculiar about you’”

“Years ago my father in law was quite adamant that I’d have children and id love them. Now his son has had a vasectomy and he acts as if I cast an evil spell over him”

**Casual Remarks**

- Women who are married are under much more pressure than those who are single or cohabitating

“Just wait till you have children..” is a familiar litany that reinforces the ineviabilty of parenthood