racism. We get solid suggestions from Alison van Nie about teen explorations of spirituality, and an indispensable reminder from Carol Ricker-Wilson that high-schoolers still need parental advocacy.

At times, however, the volume fails to comment on its own contradictions and focuses on the anecdotal, at the expense of larger trends. With the notable exception of Bridget Lynch's moving memoir of a daughter with developmental delays, the collection's autobiography seems limited to scant historical or statistical information. And I was surprised by the strange juxtaposition of Martha Fleming's article on economic class and Tara Cullis's chapter on activist teens two essays later. Cullis, president of the philanthropic David Suzuki Foundation, is married to its founder and discusses her daughter's journey toward activism and documentary television stardom via hard work by mother and daughter, to be sure, but also through familial connection to Suzuki, a scientist and television broadcaster whom Cullis never mentions specifically. Having been thoroughly engaged, a few pages earlier, by Fleming's account of her struggle with her husband to provide opportunities for their children on a working-class income, it is difficult to care about the exploits of a nine-year-old so fortunately connected that a wealthy donor would offer $1000 for her environmental activism trip to Rio during a visit to the Suzuki family foundation (246).

Despite this criticism, *Mothering Teens* fulfills its editor's mission to explain why our children behave as they do, and to help us mother more intelligently. Kaufman "envision[s] this book being passed across back fences, being discussed in line at the bank or being argued about at church potlucks" (10). My volume has already traveled over one back fence into the hands of a colleague with a 13-year-old daughter, and she will pass the book on to a mutual friend. Let the conversations begin.

Weaving Work and Motherhood

Anita Ilta Garey, 1999,
Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999

Reviewed by Leigh M. O'Brien

As its title indicates, this book details the interconnectedness of "working" mothers' professional and personal lives. Garey uses the international metaphor of weaving, as it is both a process and product. She notes that many women have followed a life pattern that is not linear and often have made life changes dictated by others' circumstances (e.g., a husband's job transfer; a child's graduation from school); but she contends nonetheless that women

make conscious, deliberate choices within the framework of their lives. The women she interviewed "are weaving patterns in which employment and mothering are not two independent lines but are overlapping, interwoven, and entangled."

What is **not** clear is that the women Garey refers to in her title are all hospital workers. I feel she ought to have provided a subtitle indicating this focus. Although some general themes are applicable to all mothers working in female-dominated occupation, they are illustrated exclusively with examples from women in one profession. Hence, the examples given may not be readily applicable to other mothers who work outside the home.

Garey interviewed 37 "racially and ethnically diverse" women living in California. The way she presents the stories told and the themes they develop mirrors the weaving metaphor mentioned above. She skillfully weaves the hospital workers' often compelling stories into the framework of each chapter. The book begins with an overview of the history of so-called "working mothers," a descriptor that Garey critiques. She then addresses what she calls "strategies of being" that women use to construct their identities. She devotes four chapters to the various job configurations within which the hospital workers function (e.g., involuntary part-time work), and concludes by analyzing patterns over their life times and drawing implications from her findings.

The points I find to be key follow. First, the mothers interviewed mention, time and again, that they want to "be there" for their children and they do so in a number of ways (for example, by working the night shift). Garey calls this "maternal visibility," which she contends is vitally important for many women. Another important point she makes is that for these women "the issue...is not a dichotomous one of being employed versus not being employed, nor is it an issue of being a worker *or* a mother – the issue is one of how to structure work and family life so these two endeavors can be combined in ways that do not take such a heavy toll." She notes that mothers who are employed full time are virtually "doing it all" usually by giving up sleep. Further, the ability to balance conflicting demands is linked to the degree of support women receive. In Garey's stories, many of the women are trying to "do it all," with very limited support.

This lack of support is addressed in her conclusion, where Garey argues that many work situations could be organized, as is nursing, to allow for more flexibility in career paths/life courses. Many of the women with whom she spoke regret having had to give up time with their children; "these regrets were connected to expectations about what mothers should be doing for young children, such as 'being there'." Garey calls for us to move beyond an individualistic orientation, and suggests that we have to turn individual problems and solutions into societal ones. Again she argues that the metaphor of weaving better represents the actions and intentions of women than the current (U.S.) model. She notes that the way we conceptualize the relationship of employment and motherhood is important because how we think about an issue shapes

what we do about it. At present, without a broad vision and a social program, we are rooted in the status quo.

Other countries have chosen different directions, and those countries provide far more support to parents and children. What we need, Garey charges, are "the kinds of changes that socialize responsibility for the care of children and that build employees' family responsibilities and relationships into the organization of the workplace. As a society, we should expect work and family life to be compatible." However, those of us who are parents living and working in the U.S., know all too well that we are still a long way from this ideal. Garey's book helps clarify the dilemmas of the working mother and outlines possible reforms.

In Defense of Single-Parent Families

Nancy E. Dowd
New York: New York University Press, 1997

Reviewed by Robin Edward Gearing

Slowly, painfully, many of the stigmas of yesterday are exposed and deposed. Nancy Dowd's *In Defense of Single-Parent Families* systematically examines the layers of overt and covert stigmatization faced by single parents. I was anxious to read this book as it openly and candidly analyzes the single parent role, both that of mother and father, in relation to economic status, race, age, law, tradition, and modern convention. Finally, this work opens each barrier to single parenting and boldly offers alternatives to the "normative"family form.

Nancy Dowd, a legal professor and lawyer, introduces her book with simple and powerful words: "I am a single parent." Through her compelling analytical style supported with legal research and personalized with experience, Dowd outlines the realities and perceptions that affect single parents in our society. The "normative" two-parent family structure and the less conventional single-parent family are introduced and analyzed. After all, as Dowd states, "Dysfunctional families come in all shapes and sizes; so do healthy families".

The text is well organized into three main segments: Myths and Realities; Law and Single Parents; and Law Reform. Section one examines the stigmas and quietly entrenched beliefs that negatively impact on the single-parent family. Methodically and with legal precision, the author describes and lists a wide range of stereotypes: that the single family is a problem family, that single mothers are to blame for their questionable mores, that children of single-parents are to be ostracized. Dowd uses research, knowledge, and literature to question the commonly held assumptions that single parents are immoral and cause poverty.