

members who "may play a central and permanent role in the partners' lives."

"The Generativity Stage" is marked by the partners' awareness of their mortality. Because lesbians must face so many social pressures and prejudices, they may experience emotional maturity early. This hard-won wisdom will help couples during the fourth stage which may also, Slater notes, be marked by a "special richness and contemplation."

Because women, on the average, live seven years longer than men, a female couple has a good chance of sharing a long life together into their later years. In her discussion of stage five, "Lesbian Couples over Sixty-five," Slater describes the accumulation of stresses commonly connected with being "female, lesbian, and elderly." In this section, the author discusses differences among and between various races regarding attitudes toward the aged. She notes that many cultures such as Asian Americans and Hispanics enjoy a strong appreciation and respect for the elderly while African Americans often express a great deal of gratitude and love especially toward elderly women.

Suzanne Slater's study, *The Lesbian Family Life Cycle*, is a well-researched, academically sound yet accessible book. Women's studies and sociology professors would do well to include this volume as required reading for their courses. It can also serve as an essential resource for family therapists. General readers would surely learn a great deal from this book.

Women of Color: Mother-Daughter Relationships in Twentieth-Century Literature

Elizabeth Brown-Guillory, Ed.
Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995

Reviewed by Michelle L. Taylor

The publication of such novels as Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* (1989), and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), sparked an important movement among critics to interrogate the role of ethnicity in mother-daughter relationships. Foundational texts and articles such as *Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters* and "Born of a Stranger: Mother-Daughter Relationships and Storytelling in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*," are only a few of the texts that examine this relationship. *Women of Color: Mother-Daughter Relationships in 20th Century Literature* follows in this tradition, but makes an important departure by placing African-American mother-daughter relationships in conversation with other multi-racial mother-daughter relationships, including Native-

American, Mexican-American, Asian-American, African, Indian, and Australian Aboriginal. The result is an insightful and easy to read collection of essays that challenges readers to contemplate the complexities of being a mother and/or a daughter in a society marred by gender and racial discrimination. Importantly, the essays also focus on the novel as a vehicle for social change and as an expression of feminist cross-racial alliances.

The 12 essays in *Women of Color* share many important commonalities, including the emphasis on twentieth-century literature, the emotional and psychological condition of the mother, and the predominance of gender and racial discrimination. One of the most important themes in the collection is the struggle to overcome the societal silences imposed on women. Brown-Guillory notes: "The mothers and daughters always seem to be struggling to get beyond the silences. Sometimes the texts point to consequences of continued silence and sometimes to the joy of breaking silence and movement toward reconciliation and growth between mothers and daughters" (4).

As a whole, the collection will find an audience in readers interested in a range of cross-cultural novels and issues. The collection includes essays on Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* and *Storyteller*, all of which suggest the link between feminism, literature, and history. The wide variety of subjects is more than matched by the quality of the essays. Among the most interesting examinations of the complexities of diasporic motherhood is Radhika Mohanram's, "The Problems of Reading: Mother-Daughter Relationships and Indian Post-Coloniality" which addresses the devaluation of women in Indian culture by examining two Indian short stories by Mrinal Pande and Anjana Appachana. Julia De Foor Jay's "(Re)claiming the Race of the Mother: Cherríe Moraga's *Shadow of a Man*, *Giving Up the Ghost*, and *Heroes and Saints*" echoes Mohanram's emphasis on cultural oppression and female silence by gauging the complex relationship between a Chicana heritage, feminism, and lesbianism in selected works by Cherríe Moraga. Likewise, Lucille Fultz's "To Make Herself: Mother-Daughter Relationships in Toni Morrison's *Sula* and *Tar Baby*," considers the balance between the historical pressures placed on African American women and familial expectations.

Another important factor in the essays, and one of particular interest to ARM members, is the relationship between the novel and social activism. Among the most interesting are Kimberly Pollacks's "A Continuum of Pain: A Woman's Legacy in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*" and Joyce Zonana's "I was cryin', all the people were cryin', my mother was cryin': Aboriginality and Maternity in Sally Morgan's *My Place*."

To her credit, Brown-Guillory has assembled a group of essays that will increase our understanding of the impact of race on the mother-daughter dyad. This text is an important contribution to the expanding field of the feminisms of women of color and will be a standard bearer for future texts that explore cross-racial and cross-cultural feminist alliances.