

Part three treats the subject of politics. Essays in this section consider how pro-choice language restricts the pro-choice movement and limits services, supports, and access for women in pregnancy and childbirth. The political nature of the natural childbirth movement is also discussed in the context of privilege, identity, and as potentially disempowering for women.

Finally, part four probes the ambivalent imagery of pregnancy in popular culture. Here, Rebecca Tuvel deploys Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection to critique cultural attitudes toward breastfeeding. The volume closes with an analysis of feminist phenomenology and pregnancy.

This useful book is directed at scholars and advanced students across a range of disciplines; it is also accessible to readers outside of academe who are interested in pregnancy, childbirth, and mothering. Its greatest achievement lies in challenging the prevailing assumption that pregnancy, childbirth, and mothering unfold on a connected continuum.

Adoption and Mothering

Frances J. Latchford, ed.
Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press, 2012.

REVIEWED BY MAYA E. BHAVE

Adoption and Mothering is an insightful compilation of thirteen interdisciplinary essays that explore adoption solely from the perspective of mothers. Editor Frances J. Latchford's academic background in women's studies, family studies, queer identity, and gender rights informs this group of essays that moves far beyond conventional adoption primers. Readers will not find the typical exegesis of the adoption triad or an overview of North American adoption history; instead, contributors examine what Latchford calls the "debate, discourse and politics" of adoption. Although the volume is not structured thematically, the first five essays focus explicitly on birth mothers while the next eight consider the experiences of adoptive mothers.

The first section focuses on how adoption is linked to the development of self and the explicit marginalization of birth mothers' experiences. March's work explores how birth mothers' deliveries are labeled "non-events," and thus their motherhood is negated and shrouded in "secrecy, lies, and shame." Sieger's and Pietsch's essays study the binary constructions of "good" and "bad" mothers based on racialized ideals, with birth mothers often viewed as "non-mothers." Sieger uses border identity theory to explain this racialized

binary, while Pietsch focuses on the racial and class dimensions of adoption discourse between 1945 and 1965. Latchford's own essay notes that birth mothers' identities have been framed by coercion and biological motherhood, as opposed to being explored as sites of resistance with birth mothers as free agents engaging in the care work of labour, birth, and physical reproduction. Livingston's analysis rounds out the first section by showing how birth mothers "trouble" the normative narratives of family and thereby move the discussion of adoption beyond the binary constructions of "essentialism" versus "constructivism." Taken together, the essays in the first section emphasize birth mothers' identities as critical, fluid, and dynamic.

The latter eight essays focus on adoptive mothers and their marginalization within adoption discourse—despite their crucial role in children's lives. Wall opens the section by considering the bias of biological reproduction, racial identity, and difference. She analyzes the choices she herself has made regarding biology and difference, assimilation and the construction of family while raising her son, who was adopted from Romania. Traver explores the experience of other adoptive mothers, particularly white American women raising Chinese children. She finds that these mothers develop an ethnic identification through cultural objects, heritage, and ethnic performance in order to solidify their positions as "mothers." Central to this collection is such analysis of how the label "mother" is conferred on a woman. Marr's work, for example, addresses the dilemma of motherhood and naming. She deploys conflict theory in assessing racial and structural inequality in the adoption process to reveal that adoption is heavily influenced by race and class.

Home and Sharkey consider adoptive mothers who frequently are absent from adoption discourse: those of children with disabilities and lesbian mothers. Home's work shows that adoptive mothers of disabled children have less support, feel shame, and face specific challenges, while Sharkey demonstrates that lesbian mothers problematize hetero-normative constructs of family and thus desperately need to push against the bias of biological connectedness between mother and child.

Fittingly, the three final essays centre on the adoptee. Heijun Wills examines multiculturalism in Asian adoption fiction, while Martin and Trimberger study Jaiya John's autobiography, *Black Baby, White Hands: A View from the Crib*. Uhrlaub and McCaslin close the collection by linking a discussion of nomenclature and recognition with an analysis of adoption law.

As a sociologist, I appreciate the evidence, critical analysis, and unique perspectives that distinguish *Adoption and Mothering*. As an adoptee, however, I look forward to a subsequent volume which might address the agency of adoptees, as well as the complex and multi-layered relationships that adoptees often have with their adoptive mothers and/or birth mothers.