

Making Modern Mothers is a creative work that opens the way for further elaboration of the crucial link between enduring systems of power and the making of selves in everyday life. One provocative and potentially generative finding, for example, is the “absence of stories about more difficult and embodied experiences” (270). Re/storying cultural silences around disability, illness, pregnancy, and birth may bring out other aspects of configurations along with ways that matrices of normalcy play out and are resisted in mothers’ lives. Within an ever-expanding marketization and responsabilization of motherhood, including troubling and renewed figures of the good/bad mother, *Making Modern Mothers* brings to the fore and makes its own contribution to the importance of a politics of motherhood that can hold onto differences between mothers while at the same time offer alternative representations, possibilities, and identities. It is a highly thoughtful work that is a must read for those seeking theoretically innovative approaches to questions of identity and gender under late modernity.

Black Motherhood(s): Contours, Contexts, and Considerations

Craddick, Karen T.
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This book is an exceptional and thought provoking collection that not only problematizes the images, stereotypes, myths, and dominant understandings of Black Motherhood across many different contexts but also renews the call for much needed rethinking, re-theorizing, and redefining of the same. To do so, the editor pulls together significant contributions that offer a range of standpoints (black feminism, African feminism, and critical theory), diverse methods (narrative writings, autobiography, document analysis, poetry, and fiction), which together, disrupt historical, socio-political, ideological, and stratified underpinnings of Black motherhood.

In so doing, several issues emerge throughout the chapters. First is the powerful yet distinct ways in which notions of womanhood intertwine with those of motherhood to frame the varied meanings of motherhood, socialization practices, subjective formations, and maternal experiences as well as the conferment of power and authority. Second is the silence on the contextual complexities that underlie Black motherhood. These include, but are not limited to, the stratifying and intersecting effects of race, gender, nationality, eth-

nicity, diasporic status, gender, and religion on definition and presentation of self, social relations, socialization of children, and inherent decision making processes. Third, is the way in which acts of resistance serve as useful coping and negotiating strategies that secure, albeit in vary degrees, the survival and empowerment of Black mothers and their children.

These issues are articulated and developed over the five sections of the book. In the first section of the book, the authors use fictional writings on Black motherhood to challenge representations of and deliberation on maternal identities. By giving voice to the experiences of Black mothers, the authors present powerful standpoints that move away from denigrating constructions of their own maternal thinking and practice. A paradigm shift, however, is not without complications. Using the lived experiences of African mothers who use migration as a way of transforming their own subjectivities outside the boundaries maternal norms, the second part of the book highlights the continuous ways in which African mothers both home and abroad struggle with issues related to the welfare of their children, work and family integration, and the impact on their relationships with loved ones overtime. In the third part of the book, the authors use progressive feminist epistemologies and protagonist representations in poetry and literature to critique and expand historical representations and interpretations of Black motherhood. The use of historical facts to highlight the politicized story of Sally Hemings and her relationship with Thomas Jefferson represents a powerful case in point. What remains clear in the fourth section of the book is that such efforts must also cross institutional boundaries. Thus, Tyrallynn Frazier calls into question the disconnect between the contextualized nature of the reproductive health, the technocratic paradigm that dominates health care, and the ability of mothers to make decisions to secure their sexual and reproductive freedoms. Emilie Grant also draws on the ways in which missionaries use their intervention privileges to connect African women to Christian values and maternal practices.

In the last section of the book, the authors examine the ways in which Black mothers teach their daughters to negotiate the racialized, sexualized, gendered, and classed spaces within which women Black women exist. Thus, Tracy Nichols and Regina McCoy provide stories of Black mothers who share their insights into the racial and gendered realities of Black women with their children as a way of empowering their daughters to deal with such marginalized realities. Another is what Marva Lewis describes as the use of hair combing opportunities by mothers to create counter narratives that troubles the traumatic legacies of slavery and its negative effects of the self-esteem, body image, and relationships of young girls and by extension their own daughters.