

Crowley describes why mother become members of mother's organizations as primarily for emotional support, friendship and parenting resources. Political advocacy, whilst an interest, was not the primary reason for joining with the exception of MomsRising. Crowley expresses puzzlement by this and explores whether a reluctance to be seen to be engaging with the 'mommy wars' could be a factor. She finds that the majority of members are not concerned with the judgment of others or themselves and argues that the perceived 'mommy wars' need not be a deterrent for these groups advocating for workplace reform. Nonetheless the 'mommy wars' remains a factor as members actively avoid conversations that might enter this territory. As a result Crowley recommends that organizations need to carefully understand their membership before advocating for change—to tread carefully.

The take-home message from Crowley's book is that women in mother's organizations desire workplace flexibility and that this may be a unifying theme for a mother's movement involving a significant number of members. While mothers agreed on flexibility, there was much less consensus on the role of government in bringing about change with strong support for government to educate business but not for mandating provisions. Crowley concludes with her five-step call to arms for the leaders of mother's organization to mobilize their membership and advocate for change.

## **Moms Gone Mad: Motherhood and Madness, Oppression and Resistance**

Gina Wong, ed.

Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2012.

REVIEWED BY MARYN BELLING

*Moms Gone Mad*, edited by Gina Wong, is at once an embrace to all mothers, a beacon shining from many areas of scholarship, and a call-to-action for all women. The social, medical, and psychiatric constructs that seek to help mothers are also those which pigeon-hole them. Each piece in the text massages the scar-tissue of modern motherhood to expose an incomplete healing—for true healing would make the world a better place for current and future moms.

*Moms Gone Mad* is arranged into three main sections: Motherhood: Madness and Oppression, Motherhood: Resistance and Empowerment, Narrative Voices: Mad Moms. Madness and Oppression introduces us to the ethnographies of institutions that frame madness in motherhood, visiting with contemporary mothers and examining the corpus of historical parenting guides,

and analyzing the prevalence of mother-blame in society and its institutions.

Resistance and Empowerment introduces us to the theory of Matroreform indicating that mothers' perception of always being watched or judged (e.g., Foucault's panopticon) undermines their self-evaluation, self-worth, and belief. This theory is further explored by assessing the cultural instances of a woman's worth being linked to her progeny - specifically sons. Minaker's recollection, "mothers are too often placed into the category of 'mother' instead of viewing mothering as another aspect of our identities rather than the singular aspect from which other parts of our lives 'fit' in" (Minaker t128), illustrates the culturally embedded definitions of motherhood.

Narrative Voices provides the opportunity to meet mothers whose children have committed suicide, mothers who came of age in environments of mental illness, the impact on capacity for nurturance in post-partum depression affected mothers, and the non-physical woman-on-woman animosity and angst that occur in society as an extension of it occurring between mothers and daughters.

By identifying the areas in which society, the medical community, mental-health delivery systems, and moms themselves exacerbate the "good to unfit mother continuum," the contributors to Wong's inaugural collection on motherhood and madness bring about a clean slate for anyone whose experience as a new mother left them feeling bereft, unsupported, disenfranchised, and detached from society.

The contributors expand upon an academic understanding of hegemonic misogyny and social disenchantment in regard to maternal constructs of power and scapegoatism. Borrowing from "Freud's Mother Speaks" (Caplan's 1996 play "Call Me Crazy") and the accurate equivocation between mother-blame and hate speak. Caplan's editorial piece "Mocking Mom: Joke or Hate Speech" ([http://www.paulajcaplan.net/files/Mocking\\_mom\\_-\\_jo.doc](http://www.paulajcaplan.net/files/Mocking_mom_-_jo.doc)) is drawn upon to illustrate that imputing blame on mother and fracturing the mother-daughter relationship. The author's work illustrates disrepair of social structures and the erosive nature of the cultural constructs of motherhood, Caplan's assertion that mother-blame is hate speech is especially resonant.

*Moms Gone Mad* also includes a discourse analysis of a family member's psychiatric record spanning 30 years in mental institutions, the contemporary treatment of mothers in the legal system (both in the U.S. and Canada), the importance of the deletion of some mother-related diagnoses in the newest edition of DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*), and the hegemony of the medicalization of mental-health matters. In all, this collection covers an array of the issues maddening today's mothers.

Wong's promise of future texts is a welcome one. I've recommended *Moms Gone Mad* to fellow moms, mental-health professionals, and students in the

field of maternal mental health. Identifying the areas in which we, as mothers and scholars, need to work to bring about change for our daughters, our sisters, our friends, and our future grandchildren is daunting. Knowing that The Motherhood Initiative and Demeter Press support a transcendental future for positive maternal experiences is empowering. You're not a bad mom. You're a modern mother living in an outdated patriarchal society; you work hard and your voice and those of your sisters in academia and motherhood need to be heard. Come: read the work that's been done and know you're not alone.

## **How to Expect What You're Not Expecting: Stories of Pregnancy, Parenthood and Loss**

Jessica Hiemstra and Lisa Martin-Demoor, eds.  
Victoria, BC: Touchwood Editions, 2013.

REVIEWED BY SOPHIA BROCK

*How To Expect What You're Not Expecting: Stories of Pregnancy, Parenthood and Loss*, is a collection of nineteen narrative essays that tell stories about hope, sorrow, grief, acceptance and resilience. The collection is arranged into four sections which cohere around the central themes of the book: 'what you have is what happened'; 'the wounded past cannot deny the beautiful future'; 'the desire to understand'; and 'the possibility to love'.

Poignantly referencing the title of the well-known *What To Expect When You're Expecting*,<sup>1</sup> this volume offers readers a series of evocative, engaging and often moving perspectives on the simultaneously personal yet universal experiences of intense parental grief and loss. Unifying the stories is the experience of grieving for the loss of what 'could have been': grieving for the child that can be so vividly imagined but cannot be conceived; mourning the child that is conceived but is never born into life; and giving birth to a child only to have to say goodbye. The narrators of these stories speak of the loss of dreams—of the thwarted potential for closeness in the relationship between parent and child; the foreclosure of the dream of a 'normal' family when their newborn has a disability. Equally intense is the lasting bereavement at being unable to know and raise a child who has been adopted; the loss of virginity and innocence at the hands of an abuser, or the experiences a teenager misses out on when they have a baby. Many of the contributors wrestle with the loss of who they potentially could have become had their circumstances been different.

This collection, however, is not just about loss. It is about resilience, hope, courage and determination. While it may seem easier to cling to and draw on