

circumstances makes a key point that such programs embrace the well-being of both mother and their children. There is no doubt that Bedford Hills is a maximum-security institution that penalizes inmates for breaking the law. But the existence of the Children's Center posits that mother and child programs are key to a woman's rehabilitation by acknowledging her as a mother making efforts to maintain relationships with her children, enhancing the children's chances of staying out of state systems of child services and foster-age. This film is highly recommended for teaching and learning, especially in training programs for Social Workers, Correctional Officers, and Families Services personnel.

References

Brennan, Sarah. "Canada's Mother-Child Program: Examining its Emergence, Usage and Current State." *Canadian Graduate Journal of Sociology and Criminology* 3.1 (2014): 11-33. On-Line. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Essential Breakthroughs: Conversations About Men, Mothers, and Mothering

Fiona Joy Green and Gary Lee Pelletier, eds.
Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2015

REVIEWED BY NAOMI R. MERCER

In the gendered, racialized, and classed rhetoric that surrounds care work, particularly of children, Fiona Joy Green and Gary Lee Pelletier contend that childcare itself and conversations about that care is "essential" (1). In weaving together essays that engage mothering from multiple perspectives, especially non-traditional mother figures such as men, Green and Pelletier attempt to make the "breakthroughs" alluded to in the volume's title that broaden the discourse around mothering to challenge the gendered and biologically essentialist nature of childcare and concomitant devaluing of that care. The anthology's premise uses Sara Ruddick's concept of maternal thinking as a feminist springboard to decouple gender and heteronormativity from acts of childcare without effacing the biological realities of pregnancy, labor and delivery, and lactation.

One of the most effective "breakthroughs" in the collection is "Mommie Dearest: Undoing a Gay Identity through Pregnancy" by Jack Hixson-Vulpe, which "queer[s] motherhood" (2) in order to expand the discourse surround-

ing it. Identifying himself as a transgender man, Hixson-Vulpe mixes theoretical analysis and a personal narrative of his experience of pregnancy and subsequent abortion. The fact of pregnancy itself, as a result of Hixson-Vulpe's queer relationship with another man, contradicts one of the known tenets of same-sex liaisons: the inability to reproduce without external assistance. The raw power of Hixson-Vulpe's narrative is no less tempered by its placement well into the volume followed by "The Ties that Bind Are Broken: Trans* Breastfeeding Practices, Ungendering Body Parts, and Unsexing Parenting Roles" by A.J. Lowik who demonstrates the potential for transgender parents to defy breastfeeding norms and social constructions of parenting.

First, however, the editors juxtapose Joanna S. Frye's "Parental Thinking: What Does Gender Have to Do with It?" with Pelletier's analysis of the rise of the childcaring "manny" in "Does the Manny Mother?" Frye advocates a "parental thinking" (15) practice free of gender constraints, arising out of maternal thinking and its flexibility but redefined. She acknowledges that gendered constructions may shape how we parent, but that individuals should be able to parent in ways that are best for them and for children, regardless of labels or traditional gender roles. Pelletier's essay, in contrast, finds that the discourse surrounding mannies is particularly "damaging" to women who nanny because it downplays the carework that most women do, paid or unpaid, and venerates men as caregivers if they offer care on par with women. The prevalence of this veneration highlights how our society expects women to routinely perform carework for free or for low wages with no such expectations for men.

The anthology includes four essays that address mother-son relationships from sons who have learned to mother in their parents' absence in "Changing the Gender Script: Ecuadorian Sons' Increased Domesticity and Emotive Responses to Transnational Mothering" by Ruth Trinidad Galván to Justin Butler's personal narrative "Why Isn't Everyone Celebrating Me? My Mom, Bankruptcy, and My Ego" that critically analyzes how his mother's single-parenting affected, or not, his development from child to adult. Nick J. Mulé's piece, "Is He the Son of No One? A Son's Relational Narrative on his Mother" examines how the author's mother positioned herself as a feminist while inhabiting a traditional heterosexual role as a housewife, a mother, and a woman. "Lesbian Families, Sons, and Mothering: Parenting Outside the Boundaries" by Alys Einion probes the navigation of societal expectations for providing male role models and the potential assimilation of lesbian families into heteronormative notions of the nuclear family for lesbian mothers of sons.

The next grouping of essays thematically concerns the ways in which popular culture and the nuclear family model that entrenches men as heads of