tive Mothering in a Transnational Context" and "'Sister Mothers': Turkish American Muslim Mothers' and Grandmothers' Networks in Diaspora," analyze how women create and foster transnational kinship bonds between members of the religious community who are not related by biological ties.

The third section of the collection offers readers a glimpse into the challenges that Muslim mothers must confront in the diaspora, such as the complexities of nurturing a positive Muslim identity in their children as members of a minority within Islamophobic contexts. In these three pieces, the authors investigate how Muslim mothers are faring within such diverse locales as Canada (Ontario), Germany and the United States.

The studies in section four, "Reproduction and Maternity in Muslim Societies," center upon social and religious constructions of motherhood in Indonesia and their impacts upon expectations of ideal family size, the confinement practices of young Malay Muslim mothers and the impact of beliefs about maternity on the reproductive health of individuals in Muslim societies.

The volume closes with a reflection on why there is a need for a theoretical approach to the study of the intersections of Islam and motherhood. Through such scholarly research, Irene Oh believes that important insights may be gained concerning the current crises confronting the world and that more may be learned about the intersections of women, gender, and religious beliefs and practices. A timely and much-needed anthology, *Muslim Mothering* offers readers an excellent variety of perspectives on all of those intersections.

## Mothering in Marginalized Contexts: Narratives of Women Who Mother in and through Domestic Violence

Caroline McDonald-Harker, Ph.D.
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Research on domestic violence and on motherhood-mothering as independent topics has grown considerably in recent decades. However, despite the fact that being a mother dramatically increases the likelihood that a woman will be abused (Mirlees-Black, 1999), few studies have addressed the confluence of these two experiences, and even fewer have done so from the perspectives of abused women themselves. *Mothering in Marginalized Contexts:*

*Narratives of Women Who Mother in and through Domestic Violence* by Caroline McDonald-Harker, Ph.D., is a welcome, important exception. Between May 2009 and June 2011, McDonald-Harker conducted face-to-face interviews with twenty-nine abused women who were living in nine different shelters in and around Calgary and Alberta, Canada; half of these women are Aboriginal. She examines the subjective narratives of these "experiential experts" (54) in terms of three main areas of inquiry: how they understand and perceive the expectations that mothers are held to and evaluated by, as articulated in Andrea O'Reilly's categories of "intensive mothering" (2006); how they employ, negotiate, and resist various "good" and "bad" mothering discourses as they construct their mothering identities; and—in a direct response to the call for intersectional research on motherhood and on domestic violence by feminist scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (1994) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991)—how they think that gender, race, and social class impact how they are seen as mothers. What is most impressive and noteworthy about McDonald-Harker's book is the way that it not only incorporates but foregrounds the voices of abused mothers, reminding us of the human cost of domestic violence but also demonstrating the resilience of victim/survivors, thereby taking a step toward better understanding the individual, diverse circumstances and, ultimately, the agency of these women.

Taking a feminist, sociological perspective, McDonald-Harker's book carefully contextualizes the complex issues it investigates and explores their implications. An early chapter summarizes the major insights of the limited research on mothering in domestic violence as well as its gaps, particularly in terms of its strong reliance on quantitative methods such as standardized questionnaires and its failure to directly examine the impact of ideologies of mothering as well as sociocultural factors on women's own perspectives. The core of the book is the presentation of abused mothers' narratives in their own words about these little-examined issues, and it is here that McDonald-Harker's study makes its greatest contribution. Speaking of the tendency to view abused women as "bad mothers," one of the subjects, Coreen, an Aboriginal single mother of five children, comments, "In a way, I think they think that abused mothers are really weak and can't stand up for themselves, you know, can't say what they need. But they can and they do! But nobody listens! . . . they were giving me help in a way I didn't need help [laughs], you know like what meals to feed my kids. Like hello, I need clothes here! I don't need you to tell me how to cook for my kids" (147). A twenty-seven-year-old Native woman of seven children, Makayla, relays how her experience of racism in a women's shelter affected her sense of self and her actions: "So my point of view is that Native women are looked down upon. Like right away if we're abused, boom, well got to get the kids out of there. But if it's a white person

they're trying to work with them, you know what I mean? So I got scared and afraid to go to shelters" (227).

As these testimonies suggest, McDonald-Harker's study yields significant and, in some cases, unexpected findings. She concludes that the majority of the abused mothers in the study expressed, challenged, and resisted the constraining and oppressive ideology of intensive mothering. She further observes that these women constructed empowering identities for themselves as mothers that point to and question the cultural construction of normative notions of motherhood. Most surprisingly in terms of biases about single parenthood, race, and social class, abused mothers who were single, poor, and non-white were more likely to resist this ideology in constructing their own, positive mothering identities. Coreen comments, "Being abused has affected me a lot. Like really not negative! I think I feel strong as a mother cuz I've made it through you know, and my kids are okay, and they're all safe now…." (239). Despite its relatively small number of subjects, McDonald-Harker's insightful study provides a pointed corrective to a culture of mother- and victim-blaming and to the silencing of the individual voices of abused mothers, voices which challenge our assumptions, condescension, and complacency.

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