

et al., Zimmerman, et al., and Edwards, et al. discuss the results of their studies on accommodation, marital equality, and the impact of relocation on the resilience of children. Parker, et al. addresses the limitations of research in this area—which focuses largely on white, dual career, heterosexual couples—and argue for the need to expand the narrow definition of family. The volume concludes with an overview by Viers, et al. of the research in the field and its implications for therapists, as well as suggestions for future research. I appreciated Bacigalupe’s insightful call for families, practitioners, and researchers to reject either-or choices and to search for logic in balancing family and work.

All the contributors are sensitive to the limitations of their research. As Zimmerman points out, “couples were recruited for this study on the basis of their ability to successfully balance family and work.” At the end of the volume, it is encouraging to find Viers’s recommendation to integrate research into therapy, an affirming view of the bridging potential of theory and praxis.

Dehumanizing Discourse, Anti-Drug Law, and Policy in America: A “Crack Mother’s” Nightmare

Assata Zerai and Rae Banks
Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002

Reviewed by Jennifer Musial

Dehumanizing Discourse, Anti-Drug Law, and Policy in America is an excellent interdisciplinary study of the rhetoric constructing the “crack mother.” Zerai and Banks combine discourse analysis with quantitative research to argue for a change in public policy, one that moves away from criminalizing maternal drug use and toward rehabilitation. Following the vein of Dorothy Roberts’s *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, this text examines the social construction of the poor, pregnant woman of colour. Zerai and Banks use intersectionality, as put forth by Patricia Hill Collins, to analyze how race, class, and gender affect legislation, punishment, and public opinion.

The book is arranged in two parts: part one is qualitative and part two is quantitative in nature. Part one highlights the “hostile environment” that addicted women face. The authors look at the history of “crack moms” in media coverage that demonizes poor, African American pregnant women. Next, medical studies of “crack babies” are deconstructed to point out that cocaine is not the sole factor in determining the sickness of a child. The authors convincingly argue that “inadequate prenatal care is the strongest determinants of low birth weight while drug use is not significant” (92). Here,

the authors return to their framework: it is predominantly women of colour in lower socio-economic classes who experience obstacles to prenatal care.

In part two, Zerai and Banks use quantitative research to humanize pregnant addicts, affording them agency. Despite the “hostile environment,” drug users are cast as “courageous” women who persevere in their attempts to access medical care and rehabilitation. Finally, the authors turn to grandparent advocacy. A common strategy for addicts entering treatment is to solicit the help of grandparents to care for children. Unfortunately, as the authors point out, the legal system does not value this arrangement, often making it difficult to apply for, and maintain, child custody.

Unfortunately, part two, which relies heavily on empiricism and not enough on actual women’s voices, is not as strong as part one. Cocaine users’ agency is described through data rather than interviews, although grandparenting is explained primarily through dialogue rather than statistics. This last piece, however, is brief and would benefit from further development.

The strongest aspect of this book is its focus on the inequality created by race, class, and gender oppression. One example of this is Zerai and Banks’s explanation of why white women are seen as cocaine addicts who merit treatment while black women are perceived as crack addicts who deserve jail time. The authors examine legal rulings in cases where women have been charged with neglect and child abuse based on cocaine use during pregnancy. Deconstruction of the “dehumanizing discourse” present in the legal system and culture at large is the most intriguing section of the book.

Zerai and Banks are activists who charge, “The nightmare of ‘crack mothers’ can only end when the prevailing ideology that demonizes Black women is dismantled” (142). Their commitment to praxis is valuable academic and advocacy work. *Dehumanizing Discourse, Anti-Drug Law, and Policy in America* masterfully unites empiricism and rhetorical analysis; it will be a useful text in a variety of courses.

Birth: A Literary Companion

Kristin Kovacic and Lynne Barrett, eds.
Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002

Reviewed by Miriam Jones

Anyone who has felt exasperated by the prescriptive tone of *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* will delight in this collection of stories of being born, as the editors call it, as parents. From the thoughtful introduction to the final powerful poem, these pieces will resonate with readers starved for represen-