

divorce and focuses on the multiple challenges of pregnancy. The transition to parenthood and the transformation of women and men as they either accept or reject parenthood is experienced inwardly and outwardly. Hoge shows that a crisis can occur when a couple cannot adapt as a family of three, and the result is divorce at childbirth.

Part two explores the effects of divorce at childbirth. Hoge's insight and analysis of research on the emotional consequences of divorce are informative. The research on attachment theory and trauma versus grief is particularly insightful in relationship to divorce. The adverse economic realities for divorced mothers and their children are stark and distressing. Two chapters in this section are devoted to the effects of divorce on older children and the effects of divorce on infants. Part three concludes by reporting the results of research undertaken in support of Hoge's study. *Women's Stories of Divorce at Childbirth* will be an invaluable resource for professionals and people who have experienced divorce.

Unbecoming Mothers: The Social Production of Maternal Absence

Diana Gustafson, ed.
New York: Haworth Press, 2005

Reviewed by Amy Mullin

Unbecoming Mothers: The Social Production of Maternal Absence is an important contribution to feminist scholarship on mothering. This collection of essays, edited by Diana Gustafson, examines non-residential mothering, specifically the mothering experiences and/or practices of women who do not live with their children, and who therefore violate powerful assumptions about the place of mothers in their children's lives. The title of the book refers simultaneously to the process of becoming other than the resident and fully absorbed mothers of western ideology, and to the "unbecoming" nature of this very role.

This interdisciplinary collection includes contributions written by academics from a diverse array of fields (nursing, social work, history, anthropology, and the performing arts). The volume includes essays written by mothers who are living apart from their children, interviews, narratives, and, to a lesser degree, the voices of children who have grown up apart from their mothers. One poem is also included.

The eleven essays share assumptions about the need to analyze the function of gender (among other variables) in parenting; the role of social, political, and economic forces in shaping the diverse experiences of mothers and children;

and the impact of unrealistic western ideals about “good mothers” on mothers and children alike. Taken together, the essays investigate a number of reasons why women live apart from their biological children, including health problems, the intervention of social agencies, missionary zeal, women’s competing needs, and difficult life circumstances. Most of the mothers studied are contemporary women, but two fascinating essays (one on seventeenth-century Quaker mothers and another on early twentieth-century Canadian mothers), consider two very different contexts in which women live apart from their children.

The essays point to the burden placed on both women and their children by the expectation that mothers and fathers will have different kinds of relationships with their children, and that a child’s closest relationship will always be with his or her mother. As a result, children who are raised by other adults, but who have ongoing contact with their nonresidential mothers, feel stigmatized. Even when their mothers have made careful arrangements for their care and continue to be in contact with them, a gap exists between their experiences and ideals for relationships between mothers and children. At the same time, mothers often face harsh social sanctions and disapproval from acquaintances, as well as from those closest to them.

Many of the essays contest the sharp distinction between “good” and “bad” mothers, which typically operates in the societies studied in this book (Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States). They gesture toward a balanced rethinking of what it means to be a “good mother.” Further theorizing about non-residential mothering is necessary, and any such work would do well to start with the rich theoretical and experiential material presented in Gustafson’s collection.

In Search of Shelter: Subjectivity and Spaces of Loss in the Fiction of Paule Constant

Margot Miller
Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003

Reviewed by Marla H. Kohlman

Margot Miller’s avowed purpose in writing *In Search of Shelter* is to “bring critical attention in the English-speaking world to the work of Paule Constant, an award winning and decidedly disturbing author” (9). Constant’s collected works, Miller argues, are particularly important to scholars of postcolonial studies because they give voice to the complicity and struggle located in interpersonal relationships, and in the historical effects of having been either