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***Motherhood and Modernity.* Christine Everingham & *Mothering.*
Evelyn N. Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (Eds.).
Reviewed by Michelle Livermore, Louisiana State University**

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Part IV summarizes within the framework of ideology and social control. The ideologies of individualism and competition are presented as subtle forms of social control which prevent challenges from subordinate groups and maintain the status quo for the dominant groups. The author further argues that processes such as this are "neither planned or conscious" (p. 365). The theme of the book is therefore well represented by the title 'The Velvet Glove'. Intergroup relations based on gender, class and race are seen as complex and as using subtle strategies to maintain the position of the dominant groups, whilst 'flagrant hostility is a minor actor' (p. 377). However, one wonders what the effect would be in carrying out the same study in the wake of Reaganite policies, the Los Angeles Riots and the Bobbitt trial as examples of inter-group conflict along the lines of race, class and gender. In summary, the argument is well crafted and provokes questions throughout. This volume is a useful contribution to the literature on inter group relations, and will no doubt provoke further debate and research.

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Evelyn N. Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (Eds.). *Mothering*, New York, NY: Routledge, 1994, \$49.95 hard cover, \$16.95 paper cover.

Christine Everington. *Motherhood and Modernity*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press, 1994. \$75.00 hard cover, \$25.00 paper cover.

The role of motherhood in contemporary western thought can easily be viewed as the focal point of many disputes regarding the roles and rights of women in society. The meaning and purpose of motherhood has changed over time and in culturally specific ways that deem it either glorifying or oppressive to the female gender. Each of the books reviewed here asks critically important questions: Should feminism celebrate the differences that separate women from men to develop a solidarity, or should the differences between the sexes be down played for the purpose of claiming equality on the basis of "sameness"?

Is mothering/caring behavior a function of nature or nurture? Should and does it originate and operationalize on the personal or political level? Are mother-child relationships based on the unilateral perceptiveness of the mother or reciprocal exchanges between the two parties involved.

Glenn, Chang and Forcey have compiled a collection of articles that address these issues. Glenn's introductory article, titled the "Social construction of motherhood: A thematic overview", outlines the basis of the argument that motherhood is a function of socialization. The book's approach is "to emphasize the social base of mothering [and to look at] the variation rather than search for the universality . . ." (p. 5). The book is divided into four sections that emphasize the diversity in mothering in historical theory, popular American ideology, and practical reality.

The first section defines the roles of mothers, as individuals, in the context of a larger framework. First, the role of the mother is depicted as only one small part of a larger context of family roles. Then, the western concept of motherhood, with its expectations of the 'stay at home mother', is placed in perspective as a product of white, middle-class values that ignore the disparity in reality dependent on race and class. Finally, mothering behavior displayed by non-mothers is discussed in order to expand the concept of mothering.

The second section of the collection addresses cultural images of mothers and children depicted in literature and film. It explores the personification and glorification of the fetus that leads to the view of mothers as objects with the purpose of caring for children and denies their value as individuals. And, defines oppressive components of motherhood as constructs of patriarchal society.

Lastly, *Mothering* defines the interpretations of motherhood in various cultures. Here the history of work expectations for women of different race and class backgrounds is discussed and motherhood is put in political and social perspective. Differing expectations and perception of the ability to mother, the appropriate method of mothering, and the social outcome of variations can be seen vividly in non-mainstream cultures.

In her book, *Motherhood and Modernity*, Everington also focuses on the "social" component of mothering. However, she does so in the context of an ethnographic study of mothering

styles and agency in the context of play groups. Her book begins with an extensive review of literature on a variety of perspectives on motherhood, including social psychology, object relations theory, cross cultural perspectives, and the feminist focus. The literature review of morality and motherhood explores issues such as nature/nurture debate regarding mothering, communal forms of mothering, and the 'moral attitude' involved in the practicality of motherhood. The review of literature on the 'self' set the scene for the research questions of the study by exploring the concept of mothering as an intersubjective experience, as opposed to the traditional view of mother as object, controlled by the objective 'needs' of the child.

Everington's study included the researcher observing three play groups consisting of culturally, economically, and philosophically diverse care-givers and children. The study's aim was to define *how* mothers *determine* the needs of their children, to see how they coordinate these with their own personal needs, and to discern what *effects* this has on the child's value system and autonomy. The study found that mothers do assert themselves as subjects in opposition to the demands of the child, mother-child relations result from mutual 'understanding', and that the assertion of maternal subjectivity is determined by social context (i.e., value of personal autonomy, role of women in society, maternal ideals).

Like Glenn, Chang, and Forcey, Everington also addresses the difficulty that lies in the separation of the public and private spheres which places mothering in the private, and less valued of the two. She stresses the necessity of eliminating this constructed dichotomy and representing it instead as two equal levels of action context (individual and non-individual). Here, the boundaries between the 'concrete' and the 'generalizable'; feminist writers and grass roots organizers; nature and nurture; motherhood as glory and oppression; differences and similarities; and autonomy and collective action, can be transcended,

These two books are not designed for beginners. However, they provide powerful insights into the institution of motherhood in modern society and deserve to be widely read.

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