

these, is put on the future research agenda. We are looking forward to these kinds of analyses, perhaps in the form of a second book by Daly herself.

## References

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Yasmine Ergas, Jane Jenson and Sonya Michel (eds) (2019), *Reassembling Motherhood: Procreation and Care in a Globalized World*, New York: Columbia University Press, £22.00, pp. 336, pbk.

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*Reassembling Motherhood* provides a thorough and insightful analysis of emerging and ongoing forms of injustice related to mothering.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines to *reassemble* as “to bring or put together the parts of (something) again”. Hence, the title of this volume implies two underlying theses about motherhood. First, that motherhood was a systematic whole. Second, that motherhood as a systematic whole has been broken up, and, somehow, we need to put it back together.

However, after reading this enlightening and engaging book, I believe *disassembling motherhood* could be a more apt title. In fact, this volume *disassembles* motherhood in that it successfully identifies the component parts involved in mothering, both, in relation to procreation and care. In addition, the book shows how each component part, as well as motherhood as a whole, are the outcome of social, legal, scientific, ideological and political forces at stake in a given time and place (as the illuminating opening chapter of Nara Milanich shows, giving a particularly insightful frame for the following chapters).

As such, recent changes transforming motherhood are just the last link in the socio-historical chain producing motherhood and, more precisely, mothering. Yet the ongoing challenge of each time, and in which this volume excels, is to unpack how these forces produce and reproduce new and old forms of oppression, injustice and discrimination associated with mothering. The focus in the book is changes brought about by assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), family law, and care policies; taking place in a context of predominant neoliberalism and globalization.

The book comprises thirteen substantive chapters plus introduction and afterword. These chapters can be clustered in three broad subjects. The biggest cluster of chapters (Bos; Kahn and Chavkin; Lutz; Michel and Oliveira; Palumbo; Roberts; Sanger) analyze inequalities related mostly to ‘race’, class and migration, but also to ARTs, which result in punishing certain mothers or in curtailing their maternal rights. These chapters effectively show how classical social variables, such as race, class and marital status continue to shape the status of motherhood. Therefore, mothers who are non-white, single and from low-income groups continue to be punished in their condition as mothers. Yet, the volume also shows how today migrating, surrogate and lesbian mothers face significant forms of coercion.

For example, Roberts’ chapter shows the ongoing punishment of black mothers in the US, now exacerbated by the “intersection of the foster care and prison systems”, which results

in black children and women being overrepresented in both systems. Likewise, Bos' chapter depicts how single, low-income Tamil women in India are forced by their families of origin and adoption agencies to give their children for adoption. Bos describes the harrowing experience of these women, showing how they succumb in their desire to keep their offspring. While Kahn and Chavkin show how in the procreation chain of ARTs surrogate mothers are the ones who put themselves at greater health risk, yet they receive "the last reward". Surrogate mothers' low bargain power is related to issues of class and race, which becomes even more obvious in international commercial surrogacy. Similarly, Palumbo's chapter illustrates how many countries only give access to ARTs to heterosexual couples, excluding single and lesbian women. Thus, even in apparent modern and egalitarian forms of motherhood – such as ARTs – we find old forms of discrimination at work, discarding some mothers as "unfit".

A second cluster of chapters (Achmad; Ergas; Higonnet) delve into how mothers' bodies are being erased. Historically motherhood has been strongly linked to biology. Since Roman law, a mother is understood as a woman who bears a child. Hence, based on this biological fact, legislators have stated that motherhood is always certain (in contrast to fatherhood). Women's bodies are at the core of maternity. However recent scientific and legal developments related to ARTs, commercial surrogacy, and diagnostic imaging techniques are cutting out mothers' bodies.

For example, Higonnet's chapter shows how ultrasound pictures "eliminate the body on which the life of the fetus depends", thus there is "no more mother". Likewise, in commercial surrogacy, the surrogate mother, who is the birth mother, bears no right over the child she delivers. In contrast the commissioning mother or parents, who could have no genetic or bodily connection with the child are considered to be the real parents. The point here is that disembodied motherhood implies a substantive threat to women's bodily integrity and to their maternal rights. As Erga's chapter states, women's right to abortion is precisely rooted in that the fetus is an integral part of the maternal body.

A third group of chapters (Fineman; Jenson; Kessler-Harris) shed light on the paradoxical outcomes of recent changes in family law and social policies, changes that have been framed by discourses of gender equality and investing in early childhood. For example, Fineman analyzes how modifications to family law follow an egalitarian or shared parenting model. Although family law states "on paper" that parenting is shared, in practice women continue to perform most caretaking, whether parents are together or if they have split-up. Therefore, formal equality assumed by family law obscures the "very unequal nature of the costs associated with raising and caring for children" (p.204).

Something similar, as Kessler-Harris points out, happens with the "adult worker model", which puts low-income mothers in an impossible situation, as in addition to bearing most of childcare they lack the resources needed to enter paid employment (i.e. accessible day care, public transport, and safe housing, among others). Hence, for low income mothers entering paid employment entails high costs. Finally, Jenson's chapter shows how the social investment approach has focused on promoting early acquisition of human capital in children and young people. In doing so, social policies regard mothers as a mean to achieve that goal, instrumentalizing them and neglecting gender equality. For sure, *Reassembling Motherhood* makes significant inroads unveiling how mothering carries on being at the core of modern societies.

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