

site), paid maternity and paternity leaves, job sharing, and family-friendly work environments, we're never going to have enough time. So our advice to you is to grab the moments you can for personal pleasure. And seize every possible opportunity to agitate for social change" (249-250).

Other chapters explore topics such as building self-esteem, becoming a mother, sexuality as a parent, and raising sexually healthy children. The list of parenting resources at the back of the book are invaluable – I wish I'd had them at my fingertips earlier. In fact, the lists contain many addresses, websites, and telephone numbers I will pass on to my students. The list of research organizations will provide the basis for essays and reports, and the list of hotline numbers listed will be useful for students, as well. In fact, this book will help raise the consciousness of all readers.

At the Breast: Ideologies of Breastfeeding and Motherhood in the Contemporary United States

Linda M. Blum
Boston: Beacon Press, 1999

Reviewed by Lara Foley

Linda Blum's book, as its subtitle suggests, provides a complex and nuanced portrait of ideologies of breastfeeding and motherhood in the United States. She analyzes nineteenth and twentieth century medical discourses, popular advice literature on motherhood and breastfeeding, as well as data from participant observation and interviews with 28 members and leaders of La Leche League. Further, in an effort to hear the stories of women who might be less influenced by dominant discourses, particularly working-class white and African-American mothers, Blum examines interview data from 34 women, recruited from an urban family practice clinic serving primarily low-income clients, as well as 19 women working as low-status hospital workers.

Blum situates motherhood and breastfeeding as both personal experience and public issue, developed in the context of power relations. She suggests that scholarship on motherhood historically has either privileged lived-experience or has constructed mothers as subjects of institutional and cultural discourses. Blum argues that a scholarly discussion of motherhood should encompass "women's stories, but framed knowledgeably, sympathetically in larger contexts; it is a view of women as active subjects but subject to particular constraints and conventions" (10). Her work does exactly that.

Blum gives an excellent overview of feminist theories on motherhood and

points out that this writing often ignores the physicality of mothering. She seeks to bring this perspective into view. As a related issue, Blum also examines the role of men in breastfeeding. In the introduction, she promises an extended discussion of men's claims to female bodies and sexuality in relation to breastfeeding. In the substantive, empirical chapters, however, the focus seems to be on men's presence or absence and their level of financial, emotional, and practical support, with far less discussion of their claims to women's bodies and sexuality.

A central theme of this work is that the notion of intensive, exclusive mothering has been embedded in medical discourse, "expert advice," and that it has always been a "white status—and class—enhancing project" (9). In chapter two, Blum argues that nineteenth century maternalist reform efforts, expert advice on motherhood, and policy issues related to motherhood set the stage for contemporary social movements and the formation of La Leche League in 1965. Chapter three examines the ideology and practices of La Leche League and the middle-class, white mothers who are members of this organization. Chapters four and five address the meanings attached to breastfeeding by white, working-class and African American, working-class mothers, respectively, as well as the breastfeeding decisions and practices of these women.

I assigned this text in a women's studies course entitled "Theories and Politics of Motherhood." The students responded positively, offering only one criticism: "What about middle-class, African American women?" I echo this critique. The author's explanation for this absence is that La Leche League, where the middle-class respondents were found, is a white, middle-class organization. This explanation does little to satisfy the reader. I enjoyed this book and have recommended it to sociology and women's studies scholars and students, as well as to women's health care professionals interested in breastfeeding. I would recommend this text for courses on motherhood and for courses on qualitative methods: it is a stellar example of interdisciplinary research methods.

Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood

Cherrie Moraga
Ithaca: Firebrand, 1997

Reviewed by Colette Morrow

Cherrie Moraga's *Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood* is an