

administrators. In one useful study, for example, Neumann, Terosky and Schell turn their attention to mid-career faculty and find that "career demands do not lessen with tenure" but actually "increase" (91). In another, Jeni Hart studies the creative, far ranging policies initiated at the University of California that give the reader a sense of what is possible when university administrators take the needs of an increasing diverse faculty seriously. As with several other contributors to this volume, Hart argues that no one policy can achieve a sane work-life balance for persons at all career stages and in all personal contexts.

Despite the care contributors took in attending to the variety in academic institutions (research universities, comprehensive universities, and community colleges, where faculty workloads are highest and least flexible), the studies deal exclusively with American institutions. Here in Canada, the legal context for maternity and parental leaves is determined federally, and all employers including academic institutions have the same legal obligations to their employees (up to 12 months leave with a guarantee of returning to the same status of job). Junior faculty, however, still may be reluctant to take full advantage of those entitlements for fear of appearing insufficiently dedicated, as Wolf-Wendel and Ward's contribution to the volume suggests - albeit in the American context. Canadian female faculty, like their American counterparts, are not immune to delaying childbearing/rearing or "choosing" to have fewer children than we might otherwise, as documented here by Mason, Goulden, and Wolfinger.

Despite its many strengths, *The Balancing Act* pays scant attention to the lives of adjunct or part-time faculty and the policies that inform their work-life "balance." Although the editors and several contributors make passing reference to the changing institutional conditions that include the ever-increasing "casualization" of academic labour and the hiring of more and more non-tenure-stream faculty, none of the essays takes that body of academic workers as its focus.

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Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering. Andrea O'Reilly. Toronto, Ontario: Demeter Press, 2006; vii + 206 pages; ISBN 1-55014-449-9; \$24.95 (paper).

In this book, Andrea O'Reilly has compiled ten of her own essays on motherhood and mothering, spanning 15 years of work, in an effort to address the lack of writing on mothering within feminist literature. The main questions she grapples with in this volume are: How do we challenge patriarchal motherhood? How do we create feminist mothering? And how are these two aims interconnected? Section one, entitled "Motherhood," sets out to discuss the ways that motherhood, as an oppressive and hegemonic ideology, is harmful to women. Motherhood is defined by O'Reilly as a patriarchal institution that differs from a woman's lived experience of mothering. This distinction, like many of O'Reilly's arguments, develops from the writings of Adrienne Rich. Section two builds on this experiential concept of mothering by exploring ways that women can resist motherhood and embrace a feminist mothering model. O'Reilly challenges earlier feminist critiques of mothering by arguing that these blame the mother (rather than the institution of motherhood) and encourage a disconnection between mother and child. As an alternative, O'Reilly advises a return to engaged and connected parenting, specifically, a feminist mothering model which consists of both anti-sexist child rearing and empowered mothering; the latter being more important because it models the former.

As a young mother working my way along the academic career path, I enjoyed *Rocking the Cradle* and could relate to much of what the author has to say. She effectively describes the disjuncture between being a feminist and a mother, as well as the difficulties of juggling academia and child rearing. O'Reilly points out that parenting

norms differ along class, as well as racial/cultural lines. Her examples are restricted to Anglo and African American ideologies and styles of motherhood, and while it would have been interesting to see her interrogate a broader spectrum of norms and practices, her foci speak to her extensive research in these cultural communities. Her critique of traditional feminist theories on mothering requires expansion, as she does not address the lack of space within feminism for stay-at-home mothers. This parenting model is often scorned as "non-feminist," which may alienate mothers who subscribe to feminist ideals and yet feel judged or rejected by feminism.

I recognize that in order for O'Reilly to create a space for discussions of feminist mothering, there is a need to define what that is. At the same time, by creating a definition of feminist mothering she runs the risk of recreating a new meta-narrative on the right way to mother, and thus, this task needs to be done with the greatest of care. That said, *Rocking the Cradle* is an insightful and well-written examination of motherhood in North America, and offers valid critiques of both mainstream and feminist narratives on motherhood, as well as useful strategies for challenging them. It is well suited for use in multiple social science and humanities disciplines, both at the upper undergraduate and graduate levels, that focus on motherhood in western society.

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Negotiating Social Contexts: Identities of Biracial College Women. Andra M. Basu. Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing, 2007; xi + 79 pages; ISBN 13: 978-1-59311-596-8; \$39.99US (paper).

Challenged by Coeducation: Women's Colleges since the 1960s. Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, Eds. Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006, xii + 418 pages; ISBN 0-8265-1542-8; \$26.95US (paper).

The study of women's lives in college continues to be characterized by examinations of identity, context, and history. In differing ways *Negotiating Social Contexts*, a study of individual transformation, and *Challenged by Coeducation*, a survey of institutional evolution, succeed in elucidating a deeper understanding of the complexities women in higher education continue to face, despite the progress that been made in the last forty years.

In *Negotiating Social Contexts*, Basu offers a revealing picture of the lives of biracial college women. Through a mixed-methods qualitative study of 14 biracial women attending an urban college in the Northeast United States, Basu utilized individual interviews, focus groups, and written narrative data to reconstruct the nuanced experiences of her participants. She pays special attention to family, peer group, and educational social contexts to understand the ways biracial women make meaning of their racial identities, both for themselves and in relation to the ways these identities are constructed and reflected back to them by others. At times persuasively confident, and at others cautiously tentative, the voices of the women in her study help the reader to understand the complexities of claiming one identity as primary, both identities as a meaningful amalgam, or a third construct, "biracial," as their foundational sense of identity. Barriers to a full sense of belonging in either of their familial cultures are also examined, and the implications of all this for educational practice are also briefly explored.

By contrast, Miller-Bernal and Poulson's artfully edited volume turns the spotlight on institutional culture and its impact on American and British women collegians in the late twentieth century. Prior to the social tumult of the 1960s, high-achieving American women with a sense of intellectual purpose, as well as less motivated daughters of the moneyed classes hoping merely to enter into a meaningful marital arrangement with a young man of the Ivy league, attended women's colleges, which then numbered in the hundreds. Today, fewer than 70 remain,