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This type of gender essentialism, the new momism, “insists that... In the cultural contradictions of motherhood, Sharon Hays eloquently showed how the attributes of “intensive mothering” evolved over ...

Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood

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Akkerman, Tjitske Hajer, Maarten and Grin, John 2004. The Interactive State: Democratisation from Above?. Political Studies, Vol. 52, Issue. 1, p. 82. Sandström, Johan 2004. Greening the Swedish ...

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Working mothers today confront not only conflicting demands on their time and energy but also conflicting ideas about how they are to behave: they must be nurturing and unselfish while engaged in child rearing but competitive and ambitious at work. As more and more women enter the workplace, it would seem reasonable for society to make mothering a simpler and more efficient task. Instead, Sharon Hays points out in this original and provocative book, an ideology of "intensive mothering" has developed that only exacerbates the tensions working mothers face. Drawing on ideas about mothering since the Middle Ages, on contemporary childrearing manuals, and on in-depth interviews with mothers from a range of social classes, Hays traces the evolution of the ideology of intensive mothering--an ideology that holds the individual mother primarily responsible for child rearing and dictates that the process is to be child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive. Hays argues that these ideas about appropriate mothering stem from a fundamental ambivalence about a system based solely on the competitive pursuit of individual interests. In attempting to deal with our deep uneasiness about self-interest, we have imposed unrealistic and unremunerated obligations and commitments on mothering, making it into an opposing force, a primary field on which this cultural ambivalence is played out.

To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Sharon Hays' landmark book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, this collection will revisit Hays' concept of "intensive mothering"

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as a continuing, yet controversial representation of modern motherhood. In Hays' original work, she spoke of "intensive mothering" as primarily being conducted by mothers, centered on children's needs with methods informed by experts, which are labourintensive and costly simply because children are entitled to this maternal investment. While respecting the important need for connection between mother and baby that is prevalent in the teachings of Attachment Theory, this collection raises into question whether an over-investment of mothers in their children's lives is as effective a mode of parenting, as being conveyed by representations of modern motherhood. In a world where independence is encouraged, why are we still engaging in "intensive motherhood?"

This text explores the impact of recent welfare reform on motherhood, marriage, and work in women's lives. It also focuses on what welfare reform reveals about work and family life, and its impact on us all.

Neoliberal policies and austerity measures have unequivocally altered the landscape of women's lives globally. The most detrimental effect has been on mothers as they are faced with increasing responsibility and decreasing resources. Despite mothers being the primary producers, consumers, and repro- ducers of the neoliberal world, their centrality has been largely silenced within economic discourse. Thus, *Mothering in the Age of Neoliberalism* calls for a new economic framework to counter the individualized neoliberal model, one in which the needs of mothers and children are prioritized. This volume provides a crucial starting point. By identifying the sources of neoliberal failure toward mothers, we can begin to collectively

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formulate an alternative paradigm in which mothers' voices are no longer rendered invisible, but rather predominate in the global landscape.

Shadow Mothers shines new light on an aspect of contemporary motherhood often hidden from view: the need for paid childcare by women returning to the workforce, and the complex bonds mothers forge with the "shadow mothers" they hire. Cameron Lynne Macdonald illuminates both sides of an unequal and complicated relationship. Based on in-depth interviews with professional women and childcare providers—immigrant and American-born nannies as well as European au pairs—Shadow Mothers locates the roots of individual skirmishes between mothers and their childcare providers in broader cultural and social tensions. Macdonald argues that these conflicts arise from unrealistic ideals about mothering and inflexible career paths and work schedules, as well as from the devaluation of paid care work.

In *Mothering through Precarity* Julie A. Wilson and Emily Chivers Yochim explore how working- and middle-class mothers negotiate the difficulties of twenty-first-century mothering through their everyday engagement with digital media. From Facebook and Pinterest to couponing, health, and parenting websites, the women Wilson and Yochim study rely upon online resources and communities for material and emotional support. Feeling responsible for their family's economic security, these women often become "mamapreneurs," running side

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businesses out of their homes. They also feel the need to provide for their family's happiness, making successful mothering dependent upon economic and emotional labor. Questioning these standards of motherhood, Wilson and Yochim demonstrate that mothers' work is inseparable from digital media as it provides them the means for sustaining their families through such difficulties as health scares, underfunded schools, a weakening social safety net, and job losses.

This study traces the emergence of changing attitudes about the child, at once economically "useless" and emotionally "priceless", from the late 1800s to the 1930s. It describes how turn-of-the-century America discovered new, sentimental ways to determine a child's monetary worth.

Offers parents strategies for coping with the increasing presence of digital and mobile media and for managing new technology for their children, and examines how approaches differ among families according to income.

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