



Laboring Positions: Black Women, Mothering and the Academy

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Laboring Positions aims to disrupt the dominant discourse on academic women's mothering experiences. Black women's maternity is assumed, and yet is also silenced within the disembodied, patriarchal, racist, antifamily, and increasingly neoliberal work environment of academia. This volume acknowledges the salience of the institutional challenges facing contemporary caregiving academics; yet it is centrally concerned with expanding the academic mothering conversation by speaking against the private/public spheres approach. Laboring Positions does so by privileging the hybridity between Black women's mothering experiences and their working lives within and beyond the academy. The collection also intentionally blurs essentialist boundaries of mother and "other", which dictates and generates alternate border zones of knowledge production concerning Black academic women's working lives. In doing so, the diverse perspectives captured herein offer us cogent starting points from which to interrogate the interlocking cultural, political, and economic hierarchies of the academy.

The editorial goal of Laboring Positions is to offer a polyvocal collection embodying themes that privilege and arouse Black mothering as central in the narratives, research, and models of existence and resistance for Black women's survival within the academy. The contributors utilize a wide variety of methods and perspectives including Black feminist theory, intersectional feminism, Womanist research ethics, hip-hop feminism, African-centered epistemologies, literary analysis, autoethnography, policy analysis, memoir, qualitative research, survival strategies and frameworks, and situated testimony that are all collectively bound by Black women's intellectual lives, activist impulses, and experiences of mothering or being mothered. The critical embodied perspectives herein serve as evidence that Black women exist beyond the institutional and ideological boundaries that have attempted to define their journeys. Laboring Positions' chapters speak to each other and some conversations are louder than others; yet together they offer us a complexly nuanced portrait of the emergent literature on race, gender, mothering, and work.

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