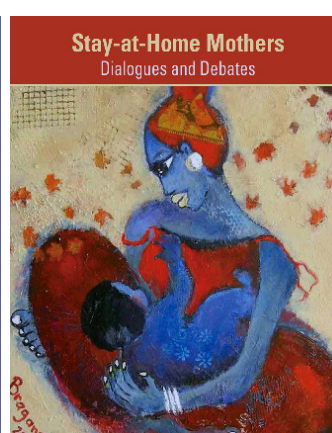


DEMETER PRESS

author interview with

ELIZABETH REID BOYD



WE SPOKE WITH DEMETER AUTHOR ELIZABETH REID BOYD ABOUT COMPILING HER NEW CO-EDITED COLLECTION WITH GAYLE LETHERBY, *STAY-AT-HOME MOTHERS: DIALOGUES AND DEBATES*, THE MOMMY WARS AND WHICH 18TH-CENTURY FEMINIST YOU SHOULD KNOW.

To order Stay-at-Home Mothers: Dialogues and Debates visit www.demeterpress.org where all books are available for a limited time at 50% off and with free mailing for orders over \$60. #motherhoodisNOTaliability

DP: WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO PRODUCE A BOOK ON STAY-AT-HOME MOTHERS? WHY NOW?

ERB: Stay-at-home mothers and the ‘mommy wars’ are a continuing phenomenon worldwide. Battle lines continue to be drawn. This book is an international edited collection that explores debates and issues surrounding mothers returning to/staying at home from a variety of countries and perspectives. Over the last decades, there have been many books exploring questions, issues and policies surrounding working mothers. This book is a world first – an international exploration of mothers staying at home. This perspective enables a new discussion: Why are mothers still staying at home? Which mothers? In which countries? Under what conditions? What debates do they provoke? This is an international conversation we need to have. Only by listening to both sides will we be able to move forward. The mommy wars must end!

DP: RECENTLY, SOME CELEBRITIES HAVE COMMENTED ON THE “MOMMY WARS.” WHAT EFFECT MAY THIS CELEBRITY “INTERVENTION” HAVE ON VIEWS OF STAY-AT-HOME MOMS?

ERB: The flames of the mommy wars continue to be fanned in the media, and many women get scorched. Most moms are more supportive of each other than media portrayals pretend – whether we are movie stars or not, we all know how hard it is to be the parent we want to be. Unfortunately, it’s usually made out to be a cat fight – and cats become tiger-moms when defending their kittens!

DP: WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE FEMINIST MOTHERHOOD BOOK, OR BOOKS THAT YOU RECOMMEND?

ERB: Every woman should read *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, written in 1792 by the 18th-century British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. It is one of the earliest works of feminist philosophy (and her daughter Mary wrote Frankenstein!)

DP: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD ABOUT STAY-AT-HOME MOTHERS?

ERB: Mothers are not alone in their childcare choices. All over the world, mothers are making decisions, sometimes easily, sometimes in hardship, to provide care for their children. To isolate them as lone decision makers, to be applauded or blamed, is to obscure outstretched arms that might hold and embrace them. Backed into a corner, many a mother is forced to defend her choice (here a snarling tiger-mother, there a tight-lipped martyr) causing further separation, distress and conflict. When women are trapped in their personal conflicts, divided within themselves, they are also separated from other women and mothers, as well as from men and fathers. Thus childcare remains a woman’s issue (still holding that baby). It also separates mothers from society and the community at large. All too easily, skirmishes break out as to how to share the common coin between individual women in divided camps. It’s necessary to recognize and appreciate differences between women, as well as differences between men. But as this volume reveals, it is perhaps more important to recognize what we share. New childcare choices will emerge when the caring needs of women, men and children are envisaged, beyond male and female, beyond public and private, beyond working and stay-at-home mothers. Twenty-first century childcare choices will emerge from a new conversation. This global conversation has now begun.