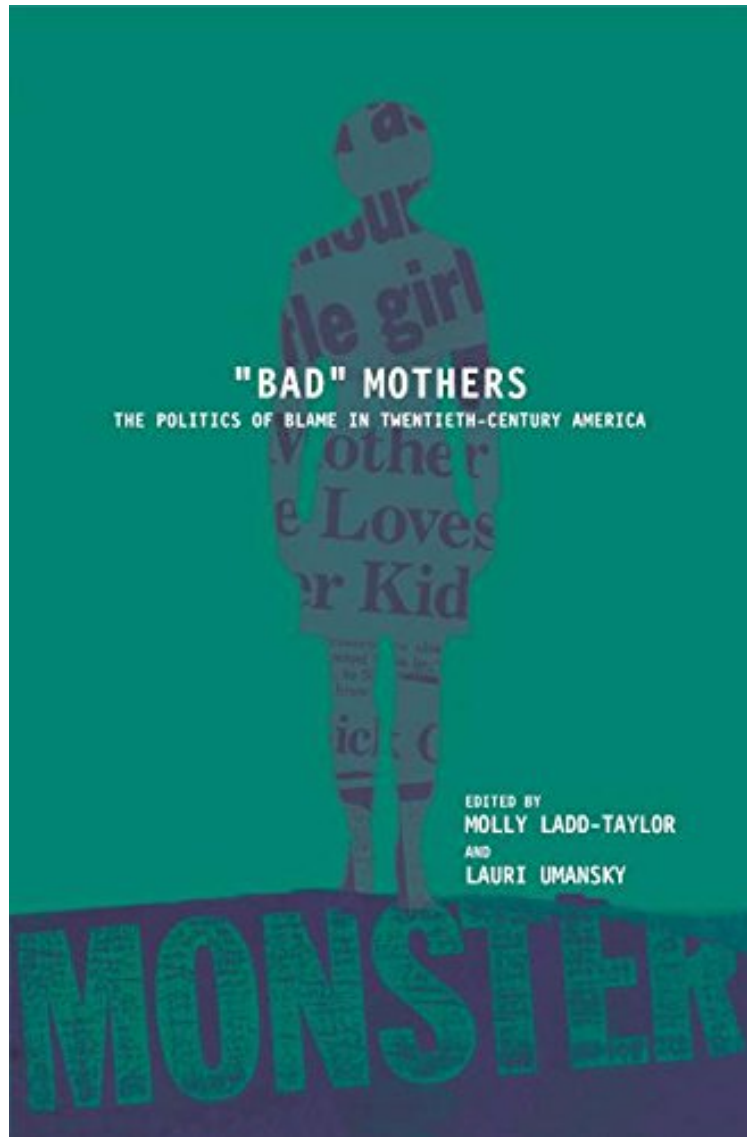


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## BAD MOTHERS: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America

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0 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Do you like apple pie? Or is that passe? Or back in style? Or part of the camp culture?By (((Marco Buendia)))Introduction / Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky -- 1. Mending Rosa's

"Working Ways": A Case Study of an African American Mother and Breadwinner / Karen W. Tice -- 2. The Sterilization of Willie Mallory / Steven Noll -- 3. Hospitalizing Maria Germani / Emily K. Abel -- 4. Taking on a Mother's Job: Day Care in the 1920s and 1930s / Elizabeth Rose -- 5. "Mother Made Me Do It": Mother-Blaming and the Women of Child Guidance / Kathleen W. Jones -- 6. Mother-Blaming / Paula J. Caplan -- 7. Antiracism and Maternal Failure in the 1940s and 1950s / Ruth Feldstein -- 8. "Momism" and the Making of Treasonous Homosexuals / Jennifer Terry -- 9. Bad/Good, Good/Bad: Birth Mothers and Adoptive Mothers / Betty Jean Lifton -- 10. Nonmothers as Bad Mothers: Infertility and the "Maternal Instinct" / Elaine Tyler May -- 11. On Being the "Bad" Mother of an Autistic Child / Jane Taylor McDonnell -- 12. "Immoral Conduct": White Women, Racial Transgressions, and Custody Disputes / Renee Romano -- 13. The Making of a "Bad" Mother: A Lesbian Mother and Her Daughters / Christine J. Allison -- 14. Mothering to Death / Su Epstein -- 15. On a Hickory Limb / Burton Rascoe -- 16. The Overprotective Mother / Herman N. Bundesen -- 17. How to Be a Jewish Mother: A Very Lovely Training Manual / Dan Greenburg -- 18. Murder in Alabama: American Wives Think Viola Liuzzo Should Have Stayed Home / Lyn Tornabene -- 19. Mothers Who Don't Know How / George Will -- 20. "Fetal Rights": A New Assault on Feminism / Katha Pollitt -- 21. Breastfeeding in the 1990s: The Karen Carter Case and the Politics of Maternal Sexuality / Lauri Umansky -- 22. Rejecting Zoe Baird: Class Resentment and the Working Mother / Diane Sampson -- 23. Moms Don't Rock: The Popular Demonization of Courtney Love / Norma Coates -- 24. Murdering Mothers / Annalee Newitz -- 25. On Fixing "Bad" Mothers and Saving Their Children / Annette R. Appell -- 26. Poisonous Choice / Rickie Solinger

"With a distinct minority of American families living the two-parent, one-worker lifestyle touted as the norm," the authors examine the question: "Do most mothers now qualify as 'bad' mothers in one way or another?"--Cover.

The upshot of the selection here seems to be that people who hold mothers responsible for their actions (or lack of action) frequently have an agenda that has little to do with childraising. Also, that some of those people deserve to have bad names hurled at them. As the book was authored by various authors, there's something here for everyone.

In the past quarter century, "bad" mothers have moved noticeably toward center stage in American culture. While Susan Smith will eventually fade from the tabloids, the monster mother that she represents has a storied and long history. Mothers have been blamed for a host of problems, from autism in children (due to chilly "refrigerator" mothers), to homosexuality (attributed to "smothering" moms), to welfare dependency and crime (caused by black "matriarchs" and single mothers). Some mothers are not good mothers. No one can deny that. There are women who neglect their children, abuse them, and fail to provide them with proper psychological nurturance. While such mothers have always stimulated the American imagination, the definition of what constitutes a bad mother has expanded significantly in recent years. Indeed, with a distinct minority of American families living the two-parent, one-worker lifestyle once considered the norm, we all face the discomfiting question, Do most mothers now qualify as "bad" mothers in one way or another? Drawing together the work of prominent scholars and journalists, "Bad" Mothers considers such diverse topics as the mother-blaming theories of psychological and medical "experts," bad mothers in the popular media, the scapegoating of mothers in politics, and the punitive approach to "bad" mothers by social service and legal authorities. The volume also includes the stories of individual "bad" mothers, from sterilization survivor Willie Mallory to rock star Courtney Love. Ably edited by two leading scholars, "Bad" Mothers marks an important contribution to the literature on motherhood.

" . . . a powerful volume of finely written essays.-Journal of Social History

About the Author Molly Ladd-Taylor is Associate Professor of History at York University in Ontario and author of *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare and the State, 1890-1930*.