

March 30, 2004

## STUDY QUESTIONS

Read: Collins: Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing About Motherhood  
Cowan and Cowan: Becoming a Parent  
Mannis: Single Mothers by Choice  
Mason, Fine, Carnochan: Family Law in the New Millennium: For Whose Families?

1. Collins, quoting a mother writing in 1904, suggests that children of white mothers have “every opportunity and protection,” and the “colored” daughters and sons of racial ethnic mothers have few opportunities and no protection. Defend her position. Critique it.
2. Collins characterizes the white middle class normative family household. In what ways, does she suggest, do working-class and families of racial and ethnic minorities not fit this characterization? In what ways, do you think, do U.S. middle-class white families in 2002 not fit it either?
3. Collins describes two problematic assumptions of feminist theorizing on the family. What are they? Discuss.
4. What are “the five domains of family life,” according to Cowan and Cowan?
5. “For couples who thought that having a baby was going to bring them closer together, this is especially confusing and disappointing.” What causes couples to become more distant after the birth of a child?
6. Cowan and Cowan speak of contemporary parents finding themselves in “double jeopardy.” What does this mean?
7. “In academia, the bias that single-mother families are a misfortune rather than a choice remains.” (Mannis: p. 232). Discuss.
8. List all of the ways Mannis’s sample of single mothers does not fit the stereotype of
9. Mannis speaks of “agency.” What does she mean?
10. Mannis’s sample was only 10 women. What characteristics did they share? How did they differ?
11. What are some of the new social realities family law tries to keep up with, according to Mason et al.?
12. List some of the changes during the past century in the legal institution of marriage.

13. What was the “divorce revolution”?
14. How does covenant marriage (Louisiana, Arizona) protect—and not protect—the institution of marriage?

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