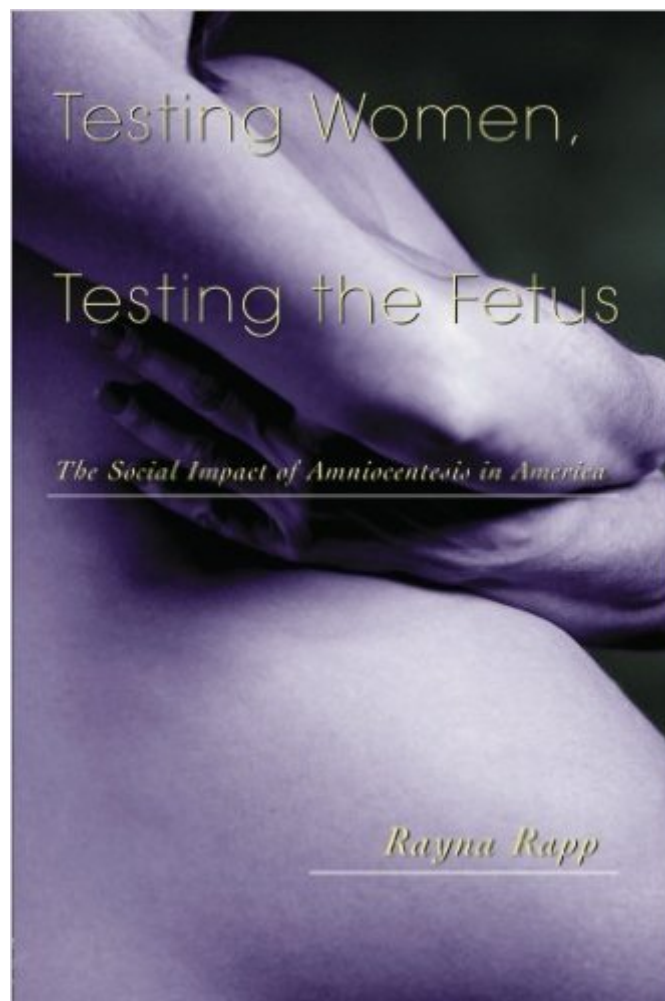


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# Testing Women, Testing The Fetus: The Social Impact Of Amniocentesis In America (The Anthropology Of Everyday Life)



## Synopsis

Rich with the voices and stories of participants, these touching, firsthand accounts examine how women of diverse racial, ethnic, class and religious backgrounds perceive prenatal testing, the most prevalent and routinized of the new reproducing technologies. Based on the author's decade of research and her own personal experiences with amniocentesis, *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus* explores the "geneticization" of family life in all its complexity and diversity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

How does one, as an anthropologist, write about amniocentesis? Rapp's work redefines the scope of anthropological inquiry helping us look at U.S. culture as an acceptable site of investigation. Focusing on both the "medical establishment" and the "clients" it serves, the book leads us into alternate worlds of creating/inventing medical technology, and delivering medical technology. It is not as simple as putting women through a standardized process; there are questions of individual need, race, spirituality, class, profession, family support, and many other factors that affect the process of amniocentesis and the value of the procedure to the women who receive or refuse the technology. Beautifully written, Rapp follows many threads, both narrative and scientific, to reveal a picture that is not quite so neat.

I read Rapp's *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus* for an anthropology/gender studies class, and as an examination of the way different ethnic groups in NYC approach amniocentesis and prenatal testing as a whole, it might be very interesting. However, that is not what the book is about. The book is supposed to be about the impact that amniocentesis has on women's lives as they are faced with the decision not only to have the test, but what to do with the information they receive. But Rapp was so intent on characterizing each of her interview subjects by race, occupation (hence class) and gender, that she ultimately separated and categorized her subjects in ways that left the reader hanging. She did not make any definite conclusions about amniocentesis, only that women make decisions about amnio based on values they had before they even got pregnant, possibly due to ethnicity. If I were pregnant this book wouldn't help me at all in making a decision. But the chapters on how the tests are analyzed are quite interesting, and the chapters on disability and the way we as a society deals with disabled children in an age when it's easy for them never to be born changed the way I think about disability, and for that reason alone I think it should be read.

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