

Lesbian Parenting: Living with Pride and Prejudice

Katherine Arnup, ed.
Charlottetown: Gynergy books, 1997

Reviewed by L. Suzanne LeBlanc

Kathrine Arnup's edited volume *Lesbian Parenting: Living With Pride and Prejudice* is the first to consider lesbian motherhood in the Canadian context. The paucity of Canadian material on lesbian parenting is made clear by this book. Most resources either are located or based primarily in the United States with branches in Canada.

This book contributes to the literature by providing a much needed discussion of lesbian parenting from many perspectives. It includes five sections: (1) choosing parenthood; (2) defining "family"; (3) raising children; (4) parents and children: reflections on identity; and (5) lesbian parents and the law. Women write about their experiences of lesbian parenting, from making the decision whether or not to parent and how to go about becoming a parent. Much of the focus is on the difficult choice of whether to turn to artificial reproduction or adoption to become a parent. The trials, tribulations, and costs of artificial insemination are experienced by all women—including lesbians—who put their bodies through such medical procedures in order to conceive. But, as Bernstein and Stephenson note in their piece entitled "Dykes, Donors & Dry Ice: Alternative Insemination," not all women have equal access to fertility clinics. Access to fertility clinics for lesbian couples is often limited and many face additional hurdles in their attempts to become parents.

The nine articles in the second section address the challenge lesbian parents face in defining their roles as parents for themselves, their children, family, and society. The authors address the complicated issue of how to define their roles in families since conventional labels (mother, father, child, parent) were constructed and are used to describe and define the typical heterosexual family.

This collection of articles serves to illuminate the reality and experiences of lesbian families. It highlights the pervasive, monolithic image "family" as a two parent, heterosexual union with biological offspring- a stumbling block to lesbian parents. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject of lesbian parenting and parenting and families in Canadian society.