

We need to become familiar with the daily ways lesbian mothers are living their lives, and with the ways that class, race, age, ability, and personal and political history intersect with and influence the experience of lesbian mothers, if we want to more consciously create integrated, holistic, alternative visions of motherhood.

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¹A term first used, as far as I know, by Adrienne Rich in her 1977 book, *Of Woman Born* (New York: Bantam).

²I use the terms "lesbian mother" and "lesbian parent" interchangeably. Language is a powerful force in naming, defining, and resisting cultural norms. Existing conventions in the dominant culture do not adequately reflect lesbian and gay relationships, and underlying different choices regarding language are assumptions about how we define our families. Issues of naming are particularly significant for the nonbiological parent, as she is the parent who defies traditional categories and is more vulnerable to being delegitimized by language. Some nonbiological parents are absolutely clear that their identity is as a mother; others consider themselves parents but not mothers. Some biological mothers prefer to think of themselves as parents and not mothers. For the purposes of this article I used whatever rolled off the computer at the time I was writing, and my intention was not to make any particular link between language and biology.

³A term also first used by Rich.

⁴Although lesbian nonbiological parents have for the most part been denied legal status by the courts in both Canada and the United States, there are attempts being made by individuals to achieve some sort of legal recognition. If a biological mother does not contest a custody suit by the nonbiological parent, it is possible for the couple to be granted joint custody. Second parent adoptions have also been granted to sev-

eral lesbian nonbiological parents in Ontario. For a more detailed discussion of North American legal issues and precedents see the section on "Lesbian Parents and the Law" in Arnup, 1995.

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RACHEL ZOLF

trompe l'o(r)eil(le)

how we swell with speech, your ululant tongue
burrowing furious through skinbag to raw,
my spiral mouth wound round leakages;
the ripeness is all.

how the black ink bits slip and slide;
how the ululant turns pustule;
how the w(ou)nd gapes, weeping

Rachel Zolf's poetry appears earlier in this volume.