furthering feminist politics or being a transformative instrument. Menon's exploration of law is largely focused on rights, not other realms such as criminal law and therefore reduces law to a singular domain. This reduction of law is problematic for her argument. To argue against law only in terms of rights fails to consider the multiple sites of law and legal processes. In regards to her critique of universal moral visions provided by law, the failure to move effectively beyond the national to the international, through examination of international criminal law or international notions of human rights, other than David Kennedy's critique of rights, leads to an incomplete picture of arguments that feminists have found useful concerning universal notions of the person. So, for example, feminist work focusing on international law is not engaged within any detail. As international criminal law has demonstrated in its significant revisions of gendered harms, a full exploration of the jurisdiction and how it characterizes gendered violations through criminal wrongs of accused, not rights, would further enhance and perhaps revise Menon's theoretical claims that feminist engagement with law is largely exhausted.

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Mommy Queerest. Contemporary rhetorics of lesbian maternal identity

Julie M. Thompson; University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst & Boston, 2002,
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There have been significant studies and anecdotal anthologies which explore the everyday experiences of lesbian parent family life and identities; Julie Thompson aims to add a theoretical engagement with the topic through critical rhetoric. *Mommy Queerest* argues that the category of lesbian mother is discursively constituted as an antithetical identity. She draws on critical and rhetorical principles to explore social and legal representations of lesbian maternity and examines how 'lesbian mother as oxymoron' is negotiated in various forums.

In Chapter One, Thompson introduces lesbian maternity and ideas of lesbian community through a historical exploration of lesbian identity, tracing its emergence through sexological accounts of sexuality into contemporary public (US) debate over the meanings of lesbian motherhood in journalistic, judicial and academic discourses. The following three chapters elaborate on these three areas. Thompson illustrates how journalistic discourses uphold hegemonic

understandings of what constitutes 'normal'; how the US legal system regulates lesbian maternal identity in child custody disputes; and how academic rhetoric, in the form of psychological studies of lesbian parent families, reinforces a heteronormative model which 'others' lesbian maternal experience and portrays lesbian motherhood as something inferior to heterosexual maternity. In conclusion, Thompson advances a theoretical reconceptualization of lesbian motherhood. She develops a lesbian-affirmative discourse which proposes a strategic framework of how pro-lesbian advocates may expropriate and reinscribe the oxymoronic rendering of lesbian motherhood and legitimize lesbian maternal identity. She advocates four central components of a lesbian-affirmative conception of motherhood.

Lesbian parent families constituted through assisted insemination through donor (AID) should highlight the role of individual agency in the process of family conception/formation. The functional aspects of motherhood (the 'doing' of maternity) should be recognized over purely biological-kinship ties. Marriage and heterosexuality should not be taken as the norm and should be replaced with a parent-child dyadic framework in legal discourses. We should start from the position of assumed equality rather than presumptive subordination. These measures reflect a strategic reinscription of lesbian motherhood which proposes lesbian/mother-as-agent, lesbian/mother-as-function. Thompson suggests that the adoption of this model moves beyond claiming equal rights towards an emancipatory goal which deconstructs the binary systems of gender, sex and sexuality: aiming for revolution not reform.

Thompson's account is engaging and her theorization of lesbian motherhood is a welcome critical intervention in the field of sexuality and family studies. Previous academic studies tend to develop theoretical positions and ideas from empirical data; Thompson examines lesbian motherhood through 'textual' and/or discursive representations, but, paradoxically, it is here that the book leaves me wanting more. For example, the author's omission of first-hand experience means that her interrogation of identity raises many interesting questions but it does not extend to the parents' *identification* and how lesbian mothers negotiate the complexity of their identity. It is not that I want to see all theory grounded in data, but without lived experience Thompson's account seems to reduce the messiness of everyday lives to an overly compartmentalized, textual analysis. The omission of empirical data and lived experience is particularly peculiar given that one section of the book is devoted to analysis of academic discourses and yet sociological and anthropological accounts, which detail the patterns of everyday life, are not acknowledged as part of the academic picture even though they comprise a significant proportion of this field of studies. I am also uneasy at the author's tendency to set up polemical/oppositional positions and categories, for example, the 'straight press' characterization of lesbian maternity as a threat to traditional families, versus the 'gay press' account which either valorizes lesbian

mothers as revolutionary feminists or as traitors to the feminist cause. This is a simplification of debate and erases the more complex coverage – albeit occasional – that appears in both forums. More importantly, I find Thompson's underlying tenet of 'lesbian mother as oxymoron' troubling because it sets up lesbian and mother as mutually exclusive categories, which contradicts the lived experiences of many lesbian mothers and the differences among lesbian parent families. While Thompson states that she wants to redeploy lesbian mother as oxymoron, the rigidity of her focus tends to foreclose a thoroughness of exposition on the subject. Furthermore, the irony is that by structuring her hypothesis around this polemical presupposition she may actually valorize the antithetical status of lesbian mother and give credence to anti-lesbian rhetoric. Notwithstanding these reservations, Thompson's book does provide some interesting points of analysis and will be useful to scholars and activists who work and/or study in the area of lesbian parent families.

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The intimate economies of Bangkok: tomboys, tycoons and Avon ladies in the global city

Ara Wilson; University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004, xvi + 272pp., maps, illustrations, references, index, ISBN 05-2023-783-8, £32.50 (hbk); ISBN 05-2023-968-7, £8.50 (pbk)

Much has been written lately on the phenomenon of globalization and how best to study and theorize the multiple ways in which places, cultures and people interact with global economic and cultural practices and ideologies. Sadly, the debate has tended to descend into moralizing arguments that emphasize a distinctive break between local, traditional, authentic (real) cultures and the global abstract flow of Western-originating, capitalist and hegemonic modernity, forever foreign to anywhere but the 'West', and where the latter will sooner or later destroy the former.

Ara Wilson's *The Intimate Economies of Bangkok* is an overall excellently argued and ambitious exercise in how globalization can and must be studied: through detailed, long-term ethnographic research in local places, and keen participant observation of everyday practices in socio-cultural context. Wilson explores the dynamic and highly complex interaction between global market economy and Bangkok's 'intimate economies' – meaning everyday practices and beliefs related to people's sense of their social identities and relationships, especially in terms of gender, sexuality and kinship. The aim is to 'capture the deeply felt