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Lesbians Raising Sons–Got a Problem with That?

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That story was told by Peggy F. Drexler, a research psychologist and advisory board member of the San Francisco Day School. It was published in the June 16, 2004 edition of The San Francisco Chronicle, and served notice that America is adopting “new family values.”

In her article, Drexler announced that she had “set out to study a new breed of mothers: lesbian couples raising sons.” As a researcher, Drexler decided to focus on this population asking a series of critical questions. “Could boys prosper through the power of mothers alone? How would these boys develop a moral compass, a positive sense of themselves as male and confident independence without the presence of a father who knows best?”

Drexler was to publish her analysis in the journal Gender and Psychoanalysis, and she argued that “the sons of lesbian couples are thriving.” According to Drexler, “Boys raised in two-mother families are vibrant, courageous individuals, effectively constructing their sense of self amid ordinary family love and extraordinary social change. These boys are articulate and thoughtful and deeply aware of their own emotional lives—including the pain that comes from discrimination against their families. They exhibit all the usual traits of manliness, including athletic interests and skills. Significantly, they also demonstrate the openness and ease with feelings usually attributed to women.”

Drexler’s rosy scenario, packaged as both academic research and a popular newspaper article, is evidence of efforts on the part of homosexual advocacy groups to push for the absolute normalization of homosexuality, homosexual marriage, and homosexual-led families. Most Americans have only a minimal or abstract understanding of what this represents.

A decidedly nonabstract perspective comes in the form of Lesbians Raising Sons, edited by Jess Wells and published by Alyson Books of Los Angeles. The book is not new, but it has found its way into many of the nation’s leading bookstore chains and local stores. Anyone still in doubt about the scale of the social revolution we are now facing should take a quick look at this book and all will be explained.

In her introduction, Jess Wells explains that the whole issue of lesbians raising sons is due to a biological circumstance. “A socially and biologically driven phenomenon is producing a disproportionate number of male children within the current lesbian baby boom. Lesbians who choose to undergo donor insemination now have at least a 65 percent chance of bearing a son.” Wells went on to explain why this is so. She argues that male sperm weigh less than female sperm and therefore swim faster and are more likely to reach the egg ahead of sperm without a Y chromosome. The disproportionate number of boys born to lesbian mothers is thus, at least in part, an ironic slap in the face from an unforgiving biological fact.

Biology is one thing, parenting styles is another. “We are parents unlike any others,” Wells argues, “and this is most evident in the mothering of our sons. Lesbian households are raising a new generation of men who will be significantly different from their counterparts from patriarchal families. Lesbian parenting by and large incorporates strong feminist concepts. Patriarchal families teach girls what they cannot do and teach boys what they cannot feel. They traditionally teach boys to sublimate their emotions into only two areas: anger and aggression.” Lesbian mothers of sons, Wells asserts, will open up “more avenues for expression for our sons instead of limiting them to sports and sex.” According to her utopian vision, lesbians will teach boys “to dance, sing, decorate, play music, sew, and do theater and imaginative dress-up as well as play football and baseball, surf, ski, and shoot hoops.”

In the short span of this introductory essay, Wells presents lesbians mothering sons as revolutionaries ready to overthrow a patriarchal social order. “The right wing reacts to lesbian mothers with a vengeance for several reasons,” Wells laments. “We procreate without intercourse; we raise sons without men in the house; and we teach boys not to oppress women, to feel, and to live free of gender restrictions and homophobia. We are not raising the next generation of patriarchs, and the right wing is coming at us with the full force of its power.”

Lesbians Raising Sons includes 36 additional chapters, all dealing with different dimensions of lesbian motherhood and sons. In her article, Peggy Drexler had argued that “boys have an innate ability to become men, a capacity that good parenting by males or females can nurture.” Based on her “research,” she asserted that boys “do not need a single male role model in-house to teach them how to hit a ball or become men.”

Perhaps she should have read Lesbians Raising Sons. If so, she would have encountered a very different line of argument and evidence.

In the book’s first chapter, Sara Asch wrote of her son, “who is apparently a girl and who, if he were old enough to read this, would be furious at me for using this male pronoun.” She goes on to explain that the boy wears eleven braids decorated with eighty-eight beads. “Flowing tresses is the effect he seeks, for he has studied well the white girls with their long, straight hair. He has watched the college girls who student-teach, the video mermaids, the female heroines of the silver screen. He knows how to toss his head just so, to tuck a lock behind his ear, to suck on a strand that reaches the mouth. And he covets the opportunity. His braids, done by his butchish mommy with loving care, some fear, and a deep commitment to his growing spirit, are his way into that tress experience.”

So much for “all the usual traits of manliness.” Robin Morgan, writing of her own experience mothering a son, recalled the boy’s “earliest bedtime stories were about strong female characters and gentle male characters.” According to Morgan, she and her partner “made them up ourselves because there were almost no antisexist children’s books then available.” She also related that her son was very rarely disciplined or punished in any way. “Instead, we’d talk about it, not with rhetoric but with concrete examples of how speech and actions had consequences, how they hurt or heal people’s feelings, bodies, lives.” She does relate that her son, now grown, now says, “I almost longed to be simply forbidden something or punished for something, like other kids.”

Morgan and her partner also worked to create a feminist environment in which their son would be raised. “We tried to offer alternatives to the patriarchal ‘norms.’ We celebrated Wiccan holidays with much pomp, while giving a superficial nod to Christmas and Hanukkah. He was offered—and played with—dolls and tea sets as well as with fire trucks and tractors.”

An even more extreme vision of lesbian motherhood and sons was related by Ruthann Robson as she explained the response of lesbian separatists to the birth of her son. Having been separatists themselves, they were puzzled by how they would deal with this baby boy. “What were two dykes going to do with this miniature emissary from the patriarchy who invaded our lives? One of us would be the one to give him a bath every night. The other one would be telling bedtime stories.”

Robson defines lesbian separatism as “an ethical forward/moral/political/social/theoretical lifestyle in which lesbians devote their considerable energies, insofar as it is possible, exclusively to other lesbians or, in some cases, exclusively to other women.” Clearly, the birth of a boy ruins this women-only picture.

When Colby, Robson’s son was born, she even feared that her lesbian partner would leave her. “I kept thinking of all the concerts from which we’d be excluded, all the radical conferences at which we wouldn’t be welcome, all the

women's land on which we could never live.”

What happened? Robson tells that their friends largely left them. “Inez said she could no longer come to meetings at our house because our rooms exuded maleness.” Raquel, another friend, “told us she couldn't believe we simply didn't give up the ‘male child’ for adoption when ‘the bourgeois’ were starving for healthy white baby boys and it would be so easy for us to start over.” Another lesbian friend showed up to give speeches “about lesbian strength being dissipated, about lesbian separatist ethics, about lesbian obligations to the future, about the inviolability of gender.”

Finally, another lesbian, whose sexual advances Robson had rejected, “stood up at the Coconut Grove Lesbian Dance, Meeting, and Pot Luck and proposed a rule that would bar all ‘lesbians in any way participating in male-energized households’ from the group.”

In her own chapter, Jess Wells insisted that she had done everything within her power to avoid giving birth to a son. “How had this happened? I had paid to have the sperm sex-selected. The sperm had been made to swim for hours, and the fastest swimmers—the ‘male’ sperm—had been poured down the sink.”

“I had been planning on a girl,” Wells remembered. “It was essential that I have a girl.” When she was told that her womb contained a boy, she was “profoundly disappointed.” As an ardent opponent of “male privilege, patriarchy, and male culture,” Wells didn't want anything to do with raising a boy.

Eventually, she was reconciled to the fact that her child was a boy and decided this could be a positive experience. “My son cannot take me away from the struggle for women's rights, nor can he force me to take an interest in anything that I don't deem interesting. He cannot be my oppressor because he is my child, and he cannot be a second chance to relive my life because he has his own life. He and I will explore each other's cultures, sharing what we can and respecting what we can't . . . Both of us, respecting each other's sovereignty, can rejoice in our foreignness and celebrate our diversity.”

The prophets of political correctness now tell us that diversity is the order of the day, and that “diverse forms of family” are to be greeted with enthusiasm. Those who insist that marriage is the union of a man and a woman and that parenthood should flow from that union are now dismissed as intolerant, closed-minded extremists. Even in the face of such intimidation, a quick look at *Lesbians Raising Sons* should be sufficient to help the vast majority of Americans know who the real extremists are.

