

the contributors discuss the violence of mothering in neoliberalism including the diminishing narrative of scarcity (Autumn Brown), the difficult choices that are made (Norma Angelica Marrun, Rachel Broadwater), and the pain that this system can inflict (Vivian Chin, Layne Russell). But underlying these narratives are themes of strength, relationship, and hope (Christy Na-Mee Eriksen, Noemi Martinez). As China Martens writes in the introduction to “The Bottom Line,” “Children are Hope. Hope is the current, changing, moment, living, rising, being born, and resisting” (84).

The fourth section, “Out (of) Lines,” is introduced by Gumbs, who reminds us that motherhood is systematically denied to Black mothers, immigrant mothers, and LGBTQ mothers. However, the practice of mothering is a different matter: “Mothering is a queer practice of transforming the world through our desire for each other and another way to be” (116). In addition to other powerful pieces, “Out (of) Lines” reflects on LGBTQ mothering. This includes Katie Kaput’s reflections as a trans mama, and Ariel Gore’s resistance to the American nuclear family. As Gore writes, “I find it amusing that to be a threat to the nuclear family, all one has to do is live happily (or in honest depression) outside of it” (143).

“Out (of) Line” is followed by “Two Pink Lines,” which includes several pieces that explore transformation via mothering. For instance, Lisa Factora-Borchers reflects on childbirth facilitating a new feminist praxis. Likewise, H. Bindy K. Kang writes as a “radical mama” (177), transformed by the birth of a daughter in a complex dynamic of patriarchy in aspects of Kang’s culture, alongside cultural racism and patriarchy embedded in the state. The collection ends with further pieces that explore themes of transformation, as well as resilient, hopeful futures rooted in love (“Between the Lines”). Ultimately, *Revolutionary Mothering* is a powerful collection of stories that affirm mothering as the bridge to radical futures.

## **Mothers and Sons: Centering Mother Knowledge**

Besi Brilliant Muhonja and Wanda Thomas Bernard, Editors  
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Mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, daddy’s girl, mama’s boy, all familiar phrases. Same-sex dyads are exhaustively studied, and opposite-sex parent-child relationships equally examined. Affection for the opposite-sex parent is a gendered territory; “daddy’s girl” is an acceptable appellation, yet

mommy's boy is pejorative. Muhonja's introductory chapter states the need to "de-gender the framing and study of parental legacy." In **Mothers and Sons: Centering Mother Knowledge**, twenty chapters delve into a subject seldom contemplated, the first-hand knowledge of mothers and sons. A collection of ethnographic mother-son narratives centers the mother, and mother knowledge, "not knowledge about mothers."

What is mother knowledge? Mostly experiential knowledge, resulting from "interaction with and understanding of the connections between specific individual(s) and the mother cosmos." Complete mother knowledge resides in "familial, cultural, societal, political, and economic realities and structures" (1). Mother knowledge, framed in phenomenology, guided the selection of each chapter.

Love, pride, confusion, dread, and perplexity of mother knowledge are examined. Queer women wonder why their son's affinity for Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* is mentioned by his first-grade teacher. The women also wonder why the teacher's discomfort causes their own discomfort. Chapter topics offer personal recollections, from the poetry of *My Mother Tells Me Her Dream* (Nils Peterson), to *Letter to My Son* in which Renata Ferdinand notes several studies of black mothers and daughters. Ferdinand asks, "What about black sons?" Feminist mothering is explored by Dara J. Silberstein in, "But I am a Feminist! Masculinity, Privilege, and Mothering" as she recalls her confusion at the prospect of raising a white, economically privileged male.

Pamela Courtney describes mothering with illness and disability in a culture that "others" the disabled. She details years of pain, exhaustion, and muscle atrophy. Friends asked her how she had "brought such illness upon herself." Eventually her undiagnosed meningitis and thyroid cancer were discovered. Later Courtney learned to mother in a new fashion when her twenty-year-old son became disabled from encephalitis.

The mother of two sons myself, I reflected on my past experiences, and imagined the lives detailed in *Mothers and Sons*. Muhonja and Bernard collected accounts of relationships and the questions mothers ask of ourselves and our sons. What do we know, what are our dreams, what are our realities? Bi-racial sons, black sons, white sons, transgender sons, disabled sons; how do we raise our sons? As the best ethnographies do, *Mothers and Sons* draws the reader into the lived experience of the authors. In *Mothers and Sons*, editors Muhonia and Bernard succeed in bringing to light stories that expose the complexity of relationships. The writings would be useful studies of gender, race, development, and education. A worthwhile read for both scholars and a popular audience, I admire and respect the authors of these chapters. The book presents a new light on mothering and the implicit knowledge and unique insight of mothers.