



Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage: Valuing All Families under the Law...By Nancy D. Polikoff

(Marriage/Family)

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Part of the Queer Ideas series, edited by Michael Bronski QUEER IDEAS-a new series of LGBT hardcovers that address important intellectual questions facing the movement. The debate over marriage equality for same-sex couples rages across the country. Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage boldly moves the discussion forward by focusing on the larger, more fundamental issue of marriage and the law. The root problem, asserts law professor and LGBT rights activist Nancy Polikoff, is that marriage is a bright dividing line between those relationships that legally matter and those that don't. A woman married to a man for nine months is entitled to Social Security survivor's benefits when he dies; a woman living for nineteen years with a man or woman to whom she is not married receives nothing. Polikoff reframes the debate by arguing that all family relationships and households need the economic stability and emotional peace of mind that now extend only to married couples. Unmarried couples of any sexual orientation, single-parent households, extended family units, and myriad other familial configurations need recognition and protection to meet the concerns they all share: building and sustaining economic and emotional interdependence, and nurturing the next generation.

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