Canadian Journal of Family and Youth, 13(2), 2021, pp. 195-199
ISSN 1718-9748© University of Alberta
http://ejournals,library,ualberta.ca/index/php/cjfy

Lockman, Darcy. (2019). All the Rage: Mothers, Fathers, and the Myth of Equal Partnership. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Reviewed by: Natalie Schneider, MacEwan University

Darcy Lockman's book, "All the Rage: Mothers, Fathers, and the Myth of Equal Partnership," challenges the notion of equality in modern heterosexual relationships. Darcy Lockman's rage is palpable, giving the impression that what follows is largely based on personal experience. However, a diverse range of males and females are interviewed and Lockman provides objective social statistics to back up her passionately presented arguments. Darcy argues that while men are generally happy to help out with domestic and familial duties when prompted, the weight of those responsibilities including planning, organizing, and disciplining, lands disproportionately on the shoulders of women. Several factors that play into this dynamic, including gender differences in biology, socialization, identity, self-focus versus other-focus, and passivity are explored. The book utilizes conversational style interviews with parent participants and other academics in related fields such as gender studies and social psychology. Personal anecdotes are used to add both gravity and levity to the topic. This review will highlight Lockman's points on whether gender stereotypes are more biologically or culturally driven, and then the failure of both sexes to fully integrate gender equality into everyday living despite having an intellectual understanding of it.

Lockman initially details how unpaid labour encompasses the ongoing tasks that go largely

unseen in the day-to-day operations of running a household and increase dramatically with the addition of children. Traditionally women's work, household duties and child rearing responsibilities have been reorganized on an ongoing basis since the introduction of women to the labour force, especially in the last seventy years. Where it was previously the sole responsibility of women, understandably men are now expected to help out more as more women are increasingly making economic contributions to the household: seemingly a trade as the latter had traditionally been the role of the male. With this change in gender norms where men are no longer assumed to be the breadwinner, the question of biology comes into play. Gender essentialism is the belief held "that women share some innate essential property that differentiates them from men" (p. 59). Built on this notion, Lockman addresses whether women are biologically programmed to be the stronger, more capable party to excel in unpaid duties. She validates the physiological changes associated with pregnancy including the production of oxytocin and prolactin that facilitate female bonding with their infants but argues that this relates to birthing children specifically and does not extend further than that. She argues that there are as many differences "within gender as between gender" and that gender stereotypes are upheld due to cultural factors primarily, not biological ones (p. 61). Furthermore, the gender essentialism belief is the very thing that prevents men and women from making "any effort to change" (p. 64). While instinct is common to the survival of mammals and their offspring, Lockman makes the distinction between humans and other primates in regard to our superior neocortex and ability to become conscious beings, suggesting this capacity for higher level thought negates the idea that biology and instincts propel women's over-functioning in the household, but rather intentional cultural norms that do.

While she concedes that “mothering is biologically and socially determined” her point that our social environment is almost entirely to blame for gender stereotypes captures the reader by unexpectedly favouring taking the side of nurture and environment in the long-standing nature versus nurture debate despite her background as a psychologist (p. 76.) To provide contrast, she compares other species such as fish, birds, amphibians and insects and their degree of “devoted fathers” role to human paternal behaviour (p. 77). While at first the comparison seems to lend a certain degree of compassion to human fathers, it also feels like merely another rage-filled jab toward the parental under-functioning of human men. She sharply highlights that the nurturing capacities in men can, in fact, be honed and utilized to relieve women of their false belief that they are the superior sex for all things child-rearing related given that “six-to-twenty-one-month-olds were just as likely to be calmed by the presence of their fathers as their mothers” (p. 85).

Lockman then discusses how the responsibility that seems to fall onto mothers and not fathers is a complicated issue with many factors, beyond biological ones. Specifically, while men and women can be momentarily conscious of gender inequality and inequity, these dynamics continue to play out individually and within partnerships on a regular basis. Where “Fathers use their time for fun rather than basic care tasks… Mothers feel a greater sense of responsibility” (p. 135). This responsibility can be seen not only in the external patterns but the internal ones as well, where women are constantly forward thinking and men are not putting “any thought or energy into…the division of labor” (p. 208). And while “…some fathers [are] angry that moms signed kids up for so much…. they’d also get mad if the mom goofed up and the kid missed a deadline for soccer or baseball. Everyone proclaimed it to be the Mom’s fault” (p. 209). She exposes how

automatic it is for responsibilities to land mothers regardless of whether it is doing too much or too little while fathers take the back seat passively resisting “without doing a thing” (p. 209). To augment this argument, Lockman interviewed several men that were able to speak honestly about their role and lack of responsibility while they let their female partners take on the heavier load and makes the point that male apathy relates to mixed-sex relationships specifically and not same-sex ones: “It was only in the mixed-sex groups that men deferred responsibility” (p. 213). As an extension to this point, Lockman then notes how a speed dating experiment showed that “men didn’t mind ambitious women, but only insofar as her score was not higher than his” (p. 221). Based on these two points, a connection of male passive resistance with the issue of male insecurity, Lockman uncovers a deeper issue about the psychological dimensions that exist between men and women that may manifest in household expectations, without exploring it in detail. To further the proposed association between gender expectation and insecurity however, she highlights a study that found “male and female students of similar ability levels” participating in a math test “perform similarly” until they are told that the test was “designed to determine why some people are better at math than others” (p. 224). When this happens, it is the scores of females that drop dramatically. Lockman proposes that this performance difference is a function of the engrained social expectations between genders that extend beyond biology.

In summary, Lockman makes a compelling argument that while men can be aware of these issues and even care about them, they simply are not motivated by the same factors as women to take action in part due to the ramifications of willingly giving up the entitlement that comes with male privilege. It is “the men who say they want to be equal parents [that] have other, less con-

scious motivations. They fail to seize what Lowell called ‘the thing that makes you motivationally step up and do something when you’re not being asked’” (p. 229). What Lockman does not expand on though is this concept of male entitlement and perhaps how this pertains to the entitlement of being a child, leaving the reader wanting more. Nor does she explore what it means to be a mother in comparison to what it means to be a wife, which could add an essential piece to the gender inequality issues that continue to live on in our homes. Hopefully, she has plans to add upon this meaningful and well-presented book by addressing these other issues in a sequel. In terms of the academic audience, those involved with sociology, social work, and psychology would find this book of interest.