



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

Reviewed by: Shannon Walters, MacEwan University

Darcy Lockman's book "All the Rage" is a well-organized compilation of semi-structured interviews and scientific research, which supports and highlights the disparities between the roles of mothers and fathers. Lockman examines parenting through the use of the conflict perspective. She explores gender inequalities in parenting through a range of seemingly differing perspectives of the parents themselves, that ultimately points back to an imbalance in the household. The findings from interviews conducted by Lockman herself, as well as supporting research from various scientific disciplines, provides important examples of how these inequalities thrive. The facts are harmoniously arranged throughout the chapters as Lockman identifies the problems contributing to the inequalities and proposes ways in which the balance must shift in order to attain equal parenting. A large portion of the book is engaged in the psychological debate of nature vs. nurture, in favour more so of the nurture aspect, exploring how biological (nature) and environmental (nurture) factors contribute to the inequalities found in parenting. As well, today's gender roles in society lead women to support the existing ideologies and men to resist them, each contributing to inequalities. All evidence and themes presented throughout the book ultimately support its most fundamental theme; we as a collective, continue to support inequalities in parenting.

Human biology, as Lockman states, “is such a comfortable place to land” (p. 57). Over the course of many interviews and examples of varying experiences, including her own, the author makes it evident that many people’s default is set to make allowances for the shortcomings of fathers in the name of biological differences. Throughout these personal accounts, there exists a trend of inequality in the effort and work put into the household and care of children, usually with men doing less. In many situations, the women interviewed used gender differences as a scapegoat for these discrepancies. Lockman indicates that this is nothing short of exacerbating masculine ideologies considering there is little proof to back it up. A good example that Lockman uses to prove biological tendency as a fallacy in parenting is her debunking of the maternal instinct. She specifies through various studies that biology alone does not make a female a mother. Research shows that there is not a sufficient difference between the sexes to support the notion of such large inequalities in the roles males and females play. Lockman states, “fathering, like mothering, is biologically and socially determined” (p. 93).

That being so, the book turns to nurture and focuses on the environmental factors at play, most of which are created by society. Lockman dedicates much time to the ways in which society adds to parenting inequality through the promotion of gender roles. From the gender existentialist perspective, gender is “a social construct radically impacting the way we think, act, and see ourselves, linked to sex not by biology, but by culture” (p. 96). The elite, dominant role of the man as opposed to the nurturing, subordinate role of the woman in Western society, form the basis of masculine and feminine ideologies. Among the many examples Lockman gives of gender roles in parenting, she recurrently states how men tend to act with a bigger sense of entitlement and

aloofness in the household by relaxing more, and helping with chores and the children less, whereas women act with more responsibility and care for the household and family members. Lockman declares, “combining work and family is conceptualized as a female problem rather than a human one” (p. 127), indicating there is much room – and need – for gender roles to shift, so that it is not up to women alone to balance work and parenthood.

Lockman points out that these gender norms are encouraged by how we are raised, and can therefore lead to the roles each gender plays as a parent. An example used by Lockman includes how, from a young age, girls and boys are encouraged to play with certain toys and engage in certain behaviours that match the expectation of their designated gender (pp. 97-99).

This leads to the idea of a self-perpetuating cycle in parenting. Being steeped in societal gender norms and expectations while being raised, leads people to mature into the very roles that were encouraged, and to likewise instill them in their own children as well. So, the cycle goes, according to Lockman, as she states, “we work to maintain our rightful relative positions and feel discomfited when we don’t” (p. 107). Moreover, Lockman points out the resistance to change, where the inequalities present in a household, are in fact encouraged through the environments of the household itself. An example of another repetitive cycle exists here where there are two seemingly opposing sides between males and females. Lockman describes it to be a situation that can be interpreted as men resisting the change of patriarchal ways in the household and because of this, women taking on a larger load themselves to do what needs to be done, thus further encouraging the lesser role that men accept. As the author writes, “to resist the gendered assignments to provide or withhold care is a task that neither mothers nor fathers are currently

pulling off as well as they might” (p. 110).

Lockman does, however, include a few examples of couples where the men are the primary caregivers, as well as families of same-sex couples. In these instances, men still feel the strains and pressures of existing gender expectations. Different than the difficulties women face, when a man is the one who takes more – or even equal – time for his family life, or breaks the norms, it comes with judgment from other men as well as consequences in the workplace (pp. 230-231). In addition, Lockman points out that lesbian couples are proven to be the most equal, and find the most success, since they start from a relatively blank slate without the pressures or influences of gender norms in the family (p. 246). These examples act as significant proof of the influence of gender ideologies on mothers and fathers.

It is clear that Lockman had unequivocal intentions for her book. With the effective use of parental experience, studies in various fields of research, and copious examples of inequalities existing among mothers and fathers, Lockman seeks to explain and answer questions surrounding the stereotypes that exist for parents. For one, she addresses why it is that women do so much. That is, in the current day and age many mothers work outside the home, yet they still do most of the housework too, specifically, “women who work outside of the home shoulder sixty-five percent of child care responsibilities, and their male partners thirty-five percent” (p. 16). Lockman also explores whether or not it is possible for equality to be achieved. She examines different perspectives, including that of those who believe they have found solutions by exposing problems and finding answers, such as breaking gender roles. Lockman deems it possible if both parties come together to derive the appropriate solution.

The author's inclusive approach in seeking answers and achieving her main goals through the exploration of her various themes can be seen as a strength. She uses a combination of macro and micro perspectives. A micro lens is used to view specific experiences among a wide variety of categories such as various ages, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and genders. This micro view, then supports the research and creates a bigger-picture view of the topics of interest through a macro lens. By shining a light on the inequalities between genders, from a conflict theory perspective, Lockman stands a chance at achieving change in the positions mothers and fathers currently hold.

Lockman successfully forms an inclusive compilation of arguments; however, a possible bias could be found in her reliance on experiences without proof. Additionally, the female's side of things were often favoured to make a point. Though this was necessary in a lot of Lockman's arguments, while in search of equality, one must be careful not to denounce the current dominating class in order to get ahead.

The inclusivity of Lockman's book makes her audience a varied one, including, but not limited to, social psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and gender studies scholars. These disciplines can all find usefulness and benefit from this book. When it comes to social change and achieving equality, "responsibility for the process must be shared" (p. 276). The themes involved in this book are also useful for post-secondary students interested in gender studies, or any of the aforementioned fields of study.

Lockman's intention, upon writing the book, was to shine a light on the inequity that exists

between genders in parenting roles. Whether the reader agrees or disagrees, I feel it is well written, flows well, and accomplishes this goal. I found it to be insightful, engaging, and thought-provoking and would recommend it to anyone interested in the subject of parenting and or gender roles and norms.