

standard part of the literature on women and health. Indeed, the critique of medicine as an "objective" science, the bias of medical textbooks, and the misogynist practitioners have become symbolic of the victimization of women generally in a patriarchal society. The impact of this on the women's movement and its mobilization is significant; the impact of it on the medical system is more problematic.

Nada Logan Stotland is a physician and professor of clinical psychiatry, a woman accustomed to hospitals and medical discourse. Her book is intended to help health care workers in obstetrics and gynecology understand the psychology of reproduction and some of the changes in society that have made the experience of female sexuality and reproduction more ambiguous, if not ambivalent. Dr. Stotland is aware of feminist commentary and frequently refers to it in her discussion, but she is not convinced. Furthermore, in a friendly way, she sometimes points out that feminist thinking may be part of the problem.

To begin with, we insist that our female reproductive experience has been ignored by male-centered medicine, but also complain that we are seen too often as nothing but reproductive systems. According to Dr. Stotland, we not only devalue and envy motherhood, but we also do not help a woman who has just had the trauma of a caesarean section, let alone start worrying about whether the surgical intervention was really necessary. Pregnancy, she says, has its own imperatives which may conflict with a full-time career, and the resulting stress may itself compound the problems.

Have we gone too far in demedicalizing pregnancy? We certainly have, according to Dr. Stotland, in normalizing parturition. Turfing women out of hospitals a day after delivery may serve hospital economics and our romantic images of peasant women delivering in the field, but it contributes to the anxiety of women who are cut off from immediate access to advice and reassurance, and sends physically and emotionally exhausted women home often to households with other children.

Dr. Stotland's discussion of postpartum depression is a good place to re-examine our feminist thinking about reproduction and our analyses of the relationship between patient and professional. Bear in mind that some form of depression is characteristic of sixty to seventy percent of women after childbirth, and that the highest rate of admission of women to mental hospitals is within the first six months following the birth of a child. Is it a hormonal phenomenon? There are good biochemical reasons for

mood swings in this period, yet it is not found in all cultures. Is it organizational, an iatrogenic side-effect of the hospital system? The abrupt discharge is an example. Is it a reaction to stress that triggers latent psychiatric problems? Or is it specific to the birthing experience? For example, is it a grieving process for the separation from the fetus and a regression to infantile fantasies? Is it a form of role conflict? (My god, after all this struggle to be different, am I going to become just like my mother?) Or is it a manifestation of a more general gender oppression? Dr. Stotland discusses all these ideas except the last and cites case histories where, thanks to the intervention of specialists, the problems were successfully resolved.

Social Change and Women's Reproductive Health Care will be read by nurses, physicians, students, social workers and others connected with obstetrics and gynecological services, and who have become aware of the confusions and misunderstandings that women have in a modern society where there are fads (How much weight should a woman gain?), religious beliefs (concerning contraception and abortion), and political theories (doctors depicted as the self-interested agents of capitalism) competing with the imperfect and incomplete scientific knowledge. I found the book gave me a useful perspective on feminist thinking and our blindspots. It should help to correct some of our dogmatism about childbearing and childbirth that is often far removed from the clinical experience of women. It does not help to tell a woman vomiting her way through the first three months of pregnancy that the personal is political. However, having said that, the limitations of this book are serious and I look forward to something similar that would bridge the feminist critique with the insights of the professionals who, like Dr. Stotland, are in the system and who are, in their own way, humanizing it while still having to feminize it.

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In the Business of Child Care: Employer Initiatives and Working Women. Judith D. Auerbach, *New York: Praeger Press, 1988, Pp. 171 hardcover.*

"Given the salience of child care in the contemporary period — especially in the lives of working women — it is surprising that it has received relatively little attention in the sociological literature, including feminist literature" (p. 3). The aim of this book is to examine the phenomenon of child care and to begin to fit it into larger sociological questions about the links between gender, family and

work. Specifically, the author, herself a sociologist, sets out to identify some of the links between the allocation of child care responsibility (child care as a role) and the social context in which it is determined (child care as an institutional arrangement).

After an introduction justifying the importance of child care as a topic of sociological study, the first two chapters offer a clear and succinct account of the growing need for child care and the factors that have led to this, and a history of child care policies and practices in the U.S.A. from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Neither the historical material, nor the arguments presented, are likely to be new to anyone who is familiar with the child care literature, or who has followed recent government task forces and public policy debates on child care in Canada. It is certainly surprising to a non-sociologist to read that the topic has not been central to modern sociological investigation and thought.

The central premise of the argument which is presented and analysed is as follows. In spite of changes in women's lives which have, for varied reasons of choice and necessity, resulted in a situation in which the majority of mothers of young children are employed, there has been little or no corresponding change in the "institutionalization of child care" as individual women's responsibility. The government's (i.e., society's) involvement in the provision of child care has changed very little over the past century. Governments have sponsored child care only for those families at the very low end of the income scale (or who are deemed in some way to be deficient in their ability to care for their children themselves), or as an expedient in an emergency situation when national interest requires women to be involved, albeit temporarily, in the workforce, as for example in wartime.

Government involvement has thus focused on income maintenance for the very poor or on control of female employment in the national interest. In essence, child care has been regarded as a pathological and not a natural need, in spite of overwhelming evidence that it is a need of the majority of families. Even though there has been some shift in attitudes towards acceptance of working women and for child care for all who need or want it, the association of publicly funded child care with welfare and, therefore, deficient families has led to support of it somehow being considered "non-American" and "anti-family." As a result, in the gap between an obvious need for, and equally obvious lack of, provision of child care, there has been growing emphasis on private sector provision. One manifestation of this trend has been for employers to

become involved in some way in sponsoring or supporting child care for their employees. Auerbach argues that this is a significant development in the status of child care, in that it inadvertently poses a direct challenge to the institutional acceptance of mothers working outside the home and extra familial care for young children.

The author examines the roots of prevailing attitudes to child care, and their resistance to change, in the ideology and politics of American culture; in the deeply embedded ideas about mothering and the privacy of family life, and the fear of the "communal," which have characterized the American psyche. Although the book deals only with the American position, anyone reading it from a Canadian perspective will find familiar the issues and the picture that is presented of the historical developments and government policies. The issues which child care presents for families and society as a whole, the response of governments to the need for child care, the general trend for child care to be funded only as a welfare service and for the vast majority of children to be cared for in unlicensed and unregulated child care, are very similar in both countries, even though the exact legislation, funding mechanisms and types of provision are somewhat different (Pence, 1985, 1987; Chenier and LaBarge, 1984). If we take Pence's striking metaphor of child care as a geological phenomenon (1985, p. 236), where surface displays (i.e., actual provision, legislation, tax relief provisions, pressure groups, etc.) are seen as the result of "immense subterranean sociological and economic plates" grinding together, the underlying issues are similar in most Western countries, even though some of the overt surface manifestations are different.

The second part of the book is a description of employer-supported child care based on the author's comprehensive survey of the scope and types of employer-supported child care in the U.S.A., and of the reasons why employers do or do not get involved in its provision. This is a carefully researched and detailed investigation of current provision in the area and is a valuable addition to the body of knowledge of child care provision. The picture of employer-supported care is again similar to that in Canada, in that the types of provision and the issues surrounding it are similar, although different tax and parental leave provisions apply, and different "government as employer" initiatives have been taken in the two countries.

In the conclusion, the author argues that, when the rise in employer-supported child care is considered from the perspective of the issues discussed in the first two chapters of the book, "it can be considered as posing (albeit inad-

vertantly) a direct challenge to the prevailing ideology of motherhood and thus contributing to the greater potential for opportunities for women" (p. 142). The rationale for this conclusion is that its very existence is a mark of sanction for mothers working outside the home and for extrafamilial child care, and, as such, represents some kind of institutional acceptance of child care. While Auerbach does not assert that employer-supported care is the solution to the child care dilemma, it is presented as a positive step or one part of the solution.

The conclusion begs a number of questions about power and dependence relationships involved in gender and employment, child care as role and institution, and the role of government in family policy which are not dealt with here. Not everyone sees employer-supported child care as a positive development. Canadian evidence indicates that women prefer neighbourhood-based care (Status of Women, 1985). The fact that the majority of employer-supported facilities are found in traditional places of women's employment, for example, health care facilities and insurance and banking services, can be seen as a potential additional factor keeping women in traditional low-paying jobs. Those who support social policies for comprehensive and accessible child care comparable to education and (in Canada at least) health care see it, at best, as a Band-Aid solution which does very little to address the overall need for child care, and consider it a diversion from the main issue. Only about three percent of all child care falls into this category at present in either country. It can be seen as a sign of "surface activity" rather than a sign of a realignment of the "subterranean sociological plates." These issues certainly would appear to fall within a sociological analysis of the topic.

From a different perspective, the book does not deal with the issue from the perspective of the children involved. Auerbach quite legitimately claims that the issue of child care "as relationship" and the effects of child care on children is outside the realm of the book. However, as she asserts, child care is a societal issue, not just a parental or employers' issue, and children, as persons, must come into the argument somewhere. The evidence reported in the survey indicates that employers become involved in child care primarily for reasons of self-interest (e.g., to attract staff in short supply, to decrease staff turnover and absenteeism, and to promote staff morale). Can employer-supported child care be seen as relegating child care and, therefore, children to the realm of "employee benefits" similar to sports facilities or subsidized meals? What are the sociological implications of this analysis? This is an interesting and valuable book which examines

a number of pertinent and salient questions and causes us to think about others. These same questions are equally, if not more strongly, implicated in the second book on the topic reviewed below.

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The Employer's Guide to Child Care: Developing Programs for Working Parents. Barbara Adolf, *New York: Praeger Press, 1988, Pp. 208 hardcover.*

This is a "why you should" and "how to" handbook for employers. It is not an academic book. It is a book written to persuade employers that it is in their best interest to support child care, and to lay out for them the ways in which they can do this. It first sets the scene with a brief description of the child care problems of working women (although there are six lines under the topic "Not Just a Women's Issue"!). Next, evidence mainly from government statistics, newspapers and journal articles together with vignettes of the experiences of individual organizations is presented to support the central argument that employer-supported child care can increase recruitment and productivity, decrease turnover, absenteeism and health costs and enhance employee morale and corporate image.

In chapters three and four, a number of options for employer child care support are examined with sections on flexible hours and leaves, financial assistance to employees, support for existing community programs, referral services, family day care and direct work place child care facilities. This provides a comprehensive picture of the different ways employees can and have become involved in child care and their motives for doing so. It is also a useful reminder, not just to employers, that the