

countries, it is not hard for the audience to fill them in. She lists very plainly (p. 305) offences against women, and in their opposites, the values she stands for:

It is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food, or drowned ... because they were born girls ... when women and girls are sold into the slavery of prostitution ... when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ... is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes by their own relatives. ... If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that women's rights are human rights.

For those sociologically minded readers who are wondering, Hillary meets Anthony Giddens on page 426 and on page 428.

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REVISITING THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL IN LATE MODERNITY

Personal and political: feminisms, sociology and family lives. Miriam David, 2003. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books; ISBN: 1 85856 305 4 paper, 190pp., £17.99 paper.

Miriam David, in the introduction to her 'intellectual biography as a feminist sociologist in the academy', states that this is her 'personal perspective on the origins and development of a feminist sociology of family lives in late modernity' (p. 1).

Growing up in the postwar generation in Yorkshire, in a middle-class, second-generation immigrant Jewish family, she describes her mother and grandmothers as having a great influence on her life. Her mother was somewhat unusual in that she had attended university in the late 1920s, subsequently becoming a teacher. Although she gave up her own career upon marriage, her mother's expectation nevertheless was that her daughters would go on to higher education. Of interest to note was that both parents' wish was for their daughters not to become teachers but to develop 'broader interests' – yet all have become teachers, '... in one way or another ... fascinated by the relations between education and families' (p. 18).

David's paternal grandmother had come from a wealthy background. By contrast her maternal grandmother, who had been widowed as a young immigrant, had worked to support her family and put her three children through university. Thus despite originating from a modest social and educational background, she had elevated her children's status to 'new' middle class.

It was as a young, middle-class woman that David herself went to university in the 1960s to study sociology, at a time when increasing numbers of women were entering higher education. Whilst at university she became involved, as did many students of the 1960s, with student and university politics. Anti-war movements, left and liberationist politics, and moves for social change were high on their agenda, with feminism or women's liberation initially less prominent. It was through political activism: campaigning for equal employment opportunities in the workplace (including the academic world) that an interest in women's liberation developed. As David states, '... feminist activities have not always been in the foreground of either my political or academic work'. Also '... beginning to write about feminism as part of my academic activities was a long and slow process although teaching as a feminist was an earlier and easier one' (p. 31).

As David's interest in sociology and socialist politics developed so did her interest in the politics of the family. As a postgraduate her first post in London involved researching mental illness, and the conflicting theories and approaches to such illness. This led to further awareness of gender and family differences. She freely admits that at this stage in life her aim was to be in a cosmopolitan environment, including a Jewish community, whilst continuing research as a social scientist. Ideas of a career were not clearly formulated, though marriage certainly was on the agenda – much in keeping with the 1960s concept of taking a career break to raise family.

Throughout the book David traces the evolution of feminism against a background of political change through the 1960s to the present day. She links this to her own developing theories of feminism as a social and political activist, through studies of 'the family' during employment in the academy, and her experiences of feminism in the academy within the USA and Europe (also including visits to Israel). As her own family circumstances change it is interesting to note the influences on her research and studies. Initially issues such as those related to employment and married women's positions within the academy were seen against a background of '... lingering restrictions about marriage within universities' and '... that married women should not work in the same department, faculty or institution as

their husbands' (p. 86). Concerns regarding women's access to higher education became, in addition, focused on the accessibility of child-care, as David's career continued whilst her own children were still young (somewhat unusual even in the increasingly liberal early 1970s). Later concerns, and the subject of several areas of study, were centred on informed choices in education provision for children, and maternal influence on such choices – reflecting events in her own life.

David cites the influences of women academics on the theory and methodology of sociological studies and the social sciences within the academy. As qualitative, subjective analyses gained acceptance in the academy, women's writings in the form of auto/ biographies became more prolific and were increasingly accepted as valid contributions to the growing body of research into the lives of women, children and families. 'Our biographies and our experiences began to capture imaginations as an approach to our understandings of family and social life' (p. 124). The majority of sociological writings had originated largely from men, and involved explanations of family, family life and change in the context of adult relationships, with little reference to issues such as children or childcare and education, or indeed gender issues. The family were considered peripheral to the 'real issues' of politics, business, industry and social science. However, in the 1960s, against a political background of democracy or liberalism, family life was beginning to be seen as central to the development of theoretical concepts in the development of sociology.

The use of personal life stories was being mirrored in political life – the change in emphasis from the political to the personal. The family was beginning to be seen less as the private and personal institution of the 1950s and early 1960s, supported by social welfare and family policies, but increasingly as a public institution with personal and social responsibilities. As part of the first generation of feminist sociologists graduating from university with feminist perspectives on family lives, David and her colleagues were determined to ensure that issues such as sex, gender and the nature of family or family life would become part of the sociology/social studies curriculum in higher education. Linking the themes of politics, personal and family life to her own career in sociology and social science studies within the academy, David refers to many of the influential feminist writers of her time – some of whom would become colleagues, coworkers and activists for change, some coauthors of articles, papers and books (e.g., Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, Jane Gaskell, Alison Griffith, Lee Corner, Sheila Rowbotham, Juliet Mitchell, Ann Oakley, Hilary Land and Germaine Greer). There is a sense of collaboration and support amongst these campaigners, which is conveyed

in David's book, and David herself comes across as an energetic and prolific writer and activist for the cause of improving education opportunities for women in the academy, policy making on the nature of family and women's studies, research projects and many other related causes.

In common with many other women students of the 1960s, David was young, white and middle class. She has subsequently been instrumental, in her position as a feminist manager in higher education, in increasing opportunities for mature students, students from ethnic minorities, and those in women's study and research areas. Her research has included aspects of poverty and social disadvantage, in addition to the advantages of a mother's higher education for her child. She notes that some male sociologists are increasingly giving credit to feminist writers for their significant contributions to family studies, referring to Allan (1999) whose family sociology reader contains chapters by several authors on women's issues around the family – women's self-identity and search for lifestyle choices, marital violence, money, power, inequality, division of labour and cohabitation. Allan and Crow (2001) also look at the influence of the women's movement in their study of the changing structure of the family and society.

David's book sets out to explore policies and practice in education from her own academic life as a feminist in higher education institutions. She identifies three phases of liberalism in the political changes that have taken place both in the UK and the USA over the past 35 years. She relates these to changes in family and social life, the effects on social and education policies and the way in which these have in turn influenced attitudes and approaches within the academy. The three political phases are identified as follows. (1) Social democracy/liberalism in the postwar period (1960s), which resulted in political and social movements for liberation and change such as social/sexual freedom and also feminism and changes in the structure of relationships and family life. (2) Re-emergence of the new right (1979–89): neoconservatism and economic liberalization, privatization of public services influenced by the increased globalization and changes in demands of the work force, plus the acceptance of feminist studies in the academy as part of the curriculum. (3) Post-socialist or neo-liberalism (1989–2003) with increasing cultural, economic and social diversity and the concept of family values and increasing personal responsibility. David successfully demonstrates how these changes have influenced sociological studies of family and gender in the academy. Feminist methodologies and theories are now accepted practice in the social sciences, as are ethnographic and

qualitative methods of study and research through life stories, narratives and other forms of personal account.

In the conclusions to her book, David voices the opinion that ‘... transformations in personal and political and women’s lives have been complex and contradictory’. She notes that while there have been changes in the way women are ‘... presented and viewed ... as sexual and social beings’, and despite the acceptance of feminist theories and methodology in higher education, ‘patriarchal and masculine agendas have prevailed and remain dominant’ (p. 195). Gender is ‘complexly linked with social class, race and ethnicity’. There is still a need to educate young women from other social classes to resist ‘... masculine agendas and traditional conceptions of women’s lives caring for others and taking “personal responsibility”’. Finally she concludes that ‘global sexual justice remains to be achieved although sociologists together with feminists have theorized the personal’.

As a young student attending a girls’ grammar school, and subsequently a ‘women only’ teacher training college in the 1960s, I have to admit that I knew little about the feminist movement at that time. Miriam David’s text contains a wealth of information on feminist writers, includes explanations of concepts such as women’s liberation and ‘first and second wave feminism’, and the development of sociological study methods of the family from a feminist perspective. As a reference book it has much to recommend it. I was left with the feeling, however, that there are issues around the study of functionality of the family unit that will be interesting to explore in relation to feminism and the role(s) of carer. Cheal (2002) has written about the increasing vulnerability of children to the accelerated rate of change in the postmodern family; uncertainty that is related to a sense of lack of control. Family dysfunction is an increasing problem to us as educationalists of the younger generation. Education needs to be accessible to *both* sexes on the implications of their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to one another, their freedom of choice, negotiations and compromises in relation to responsibility for the family.

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