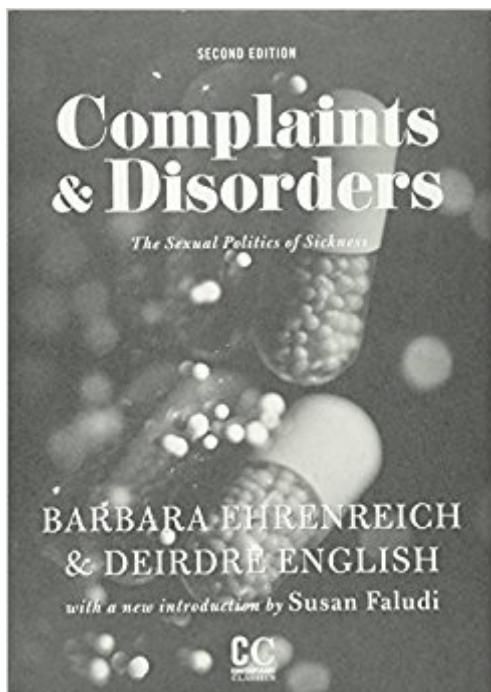


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# Complaints & Disorders [Complaints And Disorders]: The Sexual Politics Of Sickness (Contemporary Classics)



## Synopsis

From prescribing the "rest cure" to diagnosing hysteria, the medical profession has consistently treated women as weak and pathological. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English's concise history of the sexual politics of medical practices shows how this biomedical rationale was used to justify sex discrimination throughout the culture, and how its vestiges are evident in abortion policy and other reproductive rights struggles today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In this follow-up to *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English look at the evolution of the medical view of the female sex and how it has been used to reinforce the social view of women. Beginning in the late 19th century, the fact of women's inferiority was "proven" through medical science. Today, the medical establishment still serves to give "scientific" justifications for the sexist values of our society. The point here is that medicine is not an objective, unbiased science; rather, it reflects and supports the prevailing social attitudes. In their quest for better healthcare, women need to address not only access to care, but also the prejudices which affect that care." from The WomanSource Catalog & Review: Tools for Connecting the Community for Women; review by FGP

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Barbara Ehrenreich is author of the 2002 New York Times bestseller *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. She has written nearly twenty books, and has been a columnist for Time magazine and the New York Times. She has contributed to The Progressive, Harpers, The Atlantic Monthly, Ms., The New Republic, Z Magazine, In These Times, and Salon.com. Deirdre English is the former editor of Mother Jones magazine. She has written for the Nation, New York Times Book Review, San Francisco Magazine, S.F. Chronicle Sunday Magazine, Vogue, and public radio and television. Currently, English is a professor at University of California, Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism.

I'm fairly stunned at the two two-star reviews here. This book was co-authored by Barbara Ehrenreich who went on to write several other WONDERFUL books, such as "Nickel and Dimed" and "For Her Own Good." "Complaints and Disorders; The Sexual Politics of Sickness" is a short book (95 pages) but that's part of what made it such a good read. Once you start reading it, you won't want to stop until you're to the last page. And there's a lot of info packed into those pages. On page 37, the authors write, "The entire mystique of female sickness - the house calls, the tonics and medicines, the health spas - served, above all, to keep a great many women busy at the task of doing nothing." That's what was done to women in the Victorian era. In modern times, we use beauty and weight as the lure to "keep women busy as the task of doing nothing." There's also some background info on how women healers (or witches, as the men liked to call them) were removed from power so male doctors could enjoy their ascension to power and wealth. It's one of a handful of books I've pressed into the hands of my daughter and said, "you have GOT to read this book." And \*that's\* the highest recommendation.

Excellent book on the subject of women and health. The history is laid out well and the point of view the book takes makes for a great read.

Nothing much has changed in the world of medicine in the past hundred or so years. Those who

can afford it are over-treated for imaginary illnesses while most everyone else suffers from the maladies brought on by neglect and poverty. Enlightening and enraging.

This is a book that will open your eyes to the systematic control of women by the medical community. The overall effect of power and control over all aspects of our lives.

I read "Complaints and Disorders" for my womeun's health class, and it completely opened my eyes to the oppression of the medical system. Again, every woman should read this book.

I am currently doing a book review on the book and it has opened my eyes to prejudice against women.

This is short, but it's worth every penny if you're interested in American women's history. It also gives some background to help understand why health issues are an important one for women to be active on, and how they can draw us together. It also addresses one of the major myths of America, and that is that America is/has been a classless society. I wish it would have been longer, but it was intended to be a short work that could impact women's actions, rather than a historical tome to be studied and placed on a shelf. Also, they provide a nicely organized bibliography for people who want to look up and read further on their own.

Whoever sent my book also put a strawberry twizzler in the package and it was a really pleasant surprise after a bad day.- Rachel

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