soap heir, were impelled by a belief that the quality of the population would decline if those least able to support children continued to have most of them.

Diversity occasionally bred personal antagonisms within the movement. Flamboyant and headstrong, Sanger at times had stormy relations with others in the American Birth Control League. Gamble's insistence on controlling every aspect of his philanthropic ventures frequently alienated him from Sanger and others. Yet Reed argues convincingly that the movement's leaders achieved as much as reasonably could have been expected, given the inhospitable climate in which they had to work. Indeed, the movement's diversity was an advantage because it stimulated experimentation both in technology and political tactics. Reed notes, for example, that during the 1930's most leaders of the American Birth Control League thought that no new legal initiatives were necessary. Sanger disagreed, and she prompted Morris Ernst to launch proceedings that resulted in the *One Package* decision (1936), which legalized use of the mails for contraceptive materials intended for physicians.

Reed has an admirable ability to enliven organizational infighting and institutional growth. The result is, rara avis, a long book that is also interesting, a model of mature and engaging social history.

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Issues of Family Life

Fathers, Mothers and Society. Towards New Alliances. RHONA RAPOPORT, ROBERT N. RAPOPORT, and ZIONA STRELITZ. With Stephen Kew. Basic Books, New York, 1977. x, 422 pp. $15.

During the 1960's, when activist youth were urging a radical social transformation and an end to war, racism, and economic exploitation, conservative critics blamed the disrespect of ungrateful youth on overly indulgent child-rearing practices inspired by Spock and psychoanalysis. Such child-centeredness was taken as indicative of decline of parental authority and erosion of family life, which supposedly served as the basis of social stability. It is ironic that in the present decade progressive and radical scholars, surveying the seeming disarray of family life, have taken up a similarly mournful cry. Christopher Lasch, for instance, sees in the decay of the family the encroachment of an increasingly rationalized society and consequently the collapse of the last bastion of resistance to the soft-core totalitarianism of late capitalist society (*Haven in a Heartless World*, Basic Books, 1977). Lasch leaves one in despair both about the future of the family and about the possibility of achieving a social order that will facilitate equality and individual actualization.

In *Fathers, Mothers and Society*, Rhona and Robert Rapoport and Ziona Strelitz present an optimistic interpretation of the current changes in family life and hold out the promise of a new alliance among parents, children, and society. From their perspective, much of the difficulty within families is the result of failure to understand the needs of parents. We suffer, they contend, from an inappropriate "child-centered, mother-focused paradigm of parenting" that systematically ignores the fact that parents have needs just as do children. Prescriptions for parenting have failed to take these needs into account, rather treating parents as dehumanized producers of children, in somewhat the same way the organization of work and manufacturing processes has disregarded the familial commitments and personal needs of workers.

The authors place the primary responsibility for the development of this injustice on professional child-care experts in a variety of disciplines. Filling in the gaps created by the obsolescence of traditional child-care orientations within a rapidly changing society, professional experts created a conception of parenting that is inappropriate to the actual living conditions of most families. Through a careful examination of the professional child-care literature the authors delineate the major features of the model that has dominated contemporary thought about parenting. It is a model based on the assumption that child care is and should be built around a biologically founded complementarity of naturally nurturing mothers and weak and vulnerable children. This "natural" relationship flourishes best in a privatized nuclear family in which the husband functions as the sole material provider, minimally involved in the direct care of his children but allied with his nonworking wife in a life dedicated to material and psychological sacrifice for the children and structured to protect the family from the intrusions of others. Within this model, it often has seemed as if there was only one way to be a good parent and that experts were the ones who best knew that way.

After documenting their argument about the impact of experts, the authors go on to a thorough discussion of the diversity of modern parental situations, arguing persuasively that there is a significant discrepancy between actualities of most people's everyday family life and the model that informs most professional opinion.

The remainder of the book is taken up with an attempt to delineate the major parenting issues through four stages of the life cycle: the period prior to the birth of children, the years from preschool to puberty, adolescence, and parenting with adult children and grandparenting. Especially welcome is the authors' discussion of the early and middle years of active parenting, in which they examine parents' experience of children in relation to issues of concern to the parents as adults—intimacy, work, and leisure. Although their review of the relevant literature is necessarily selective this is more than compensated for by the fact that throughout these chapters the authors are fair-minded in their consideration of diverse points of view, honest and explicit about their own preferences and biases, and intelligent and sensitive in the exploration of complex themes such as parental ambivalence, topics often ignored or one-dimensionalized in the professional literature. By the end the reader is well convinced of the need for a new perspective on parenting, one that does not so thoroughly homogenize the multiplicity of parenting situations and that "clarifies the nature of the fit between parents' and children's lives" (p. 14).

But when the authors attempt a discussion of the policy and research implications of their review, the major weakness in their approach is revealed. In their effort to be empirically eclectic and theoretically fair, they have failed to develop a coherent, historically grounded theoretical framework from which to interpret the changes in family life in relation to social and economic forces. Although they recognize that "work has been organized as though families and their requirements did not exist," they explain this as having come about "not so much because industrialists did not care about families, but because the paradigms of social organization allowed them to be taken for granted" (p. 14). For the authors, economic and social imperatives dissolve away and social problems are the result only of misunderstanding.

Without such a framework the authors are also unable to develop any critical self-consciousness of the potential social functions of their own perspective, even while they recognize that it is changed

social circumstances that permit the emergence of changed perspectives. Thus the conventional model of permissive child-rearing is also presented as a sort of mistaken idea, arising out of the desires of well-intentioned professionals to correct the abuses of an earlier generation of excessively repressive experts. But people familiar with the history of the professions know full well that experts, especially child-care experts, have always cloaked their pronouncements in the mantle of an overriding concern for those they are supposed to serve. In the case of the United States, throughout the end of the 19th and the first part of the 20th century, psychologists, social workers, and the like were instrumental in the assault on family patterns and child-rearing practices of immigrant families, which had to be transformed to fit the requisites of the American economic and social structure. Throughout the middle third of this century the assault has continued, with the target shifting to nonwhite families. At the same time shifts in professional opinion regarding "normal" families have usually been associated with changes in social conditions, and typically those shifts have proven to be, as William Kessen has noted, "in large measure, instrumentalities of other powers in American life" ("Insights on the Child Development Movement in the United States," *Monogr. Soc. Res. Child Dev.* 40, Nos. 3-4, 1975, p. 101).

The authors speak of desiring "a responsible and caring society, requiring a high degree of human involvement" and tolerant of a "multiplicity of models for living" (p. 365), but they have ignored the possibility that it is the structure and dynamic of this particular society that make sustained human involvements marked by tolerance, mutual responsibility, and caring difficult to obtain. In such conditions it makes no sense to speak of "society" as an abstract and undifferentiated whole, nor is it reasonable to speak of forging "new alliances . . . between the family and society" (p. 365). I fear that in the long run analyses such as these, however well intentioned, may work against the people they are designed to aid. It is a dilemma that must be faced by all social scientists who attempt to address social problems.

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Factors Associated with Criminality

Biosocial Bases of Criminal Behavior. SARNOFF A. MEDNICK and KARL O. CHRISTIANSEN, Eds. Gardner Press, New York, 1977 (distributor, Wiley, New York). xx, 298 pp. $22.95.

The term "criminal" quite possibly conceals more heterogeneity than any other description of human behavior. Criminals are 20-year-old four-time losers and 70-year-old first offenders; lower-class Jean Valjeans and upper-class thrill kidnappers; chronic schizophrenics and persons only morally "insane"; child-molesters and other criminals who despise child-molesters. Some criminals turn themselves in and others never get caught (or convicted); some act on principle or out of desperation, others on impulse or whim; and, though we would prefer not to think so, there are even some who commit crimes because they like it.

A major stumbling block in the scientific study of criminality has been our inability to process this heterogeneity and delineate subtypes that could possibly be associated with specific causes. There are signs, however, that we are beginning to make progress. Epidemiologists are just beginning to generate the prevalence estimates that are essential for testing certain genetic or environmental hypotheses. Studies of the distribution of crime among the population are also revealing. Gösta Carlsson's chapter in this volume is a good brief introduction to behavioral epidemiology. Carlsson points out that the viability of certain theories of criminal behavior depends substantially on whether or not most crime is produced by a few people. A high concentration of criminal activity among a few people would support "kinds of people" or "growing commitment to crime" hypotheses and would argue against explanations emphasizing temporary situations that affect substantial numbers of people. Carlsson finds crime in Sweden to be quite concentrated and goes on to the identification of one type of person that is definitely at a higher risk for crime: psychopaths.

Other investigators also find crime to be highly concentrated. In the first chapter of this book Mednick reports that 1 percent of males accounted for more than half the offenses committed by a Copenhagen birth cohort of over 30,000 men. He cites Wolfgang as reporting a similar result for a Philadelphia sample. Mednick's hypothesis is that this small group of active recidivists are fundamentally different from the rest of us, and from many other criminals as well, in that they have a physiological defect that prevents them from learning to inhibit aggressive responses. Rather than focus on the learning of deviant behavior Mednick constructs a model for the learning of law-abiding behavior, which consists of the following sequence: The child anticipates making an aggressive response but because of previous punishment develops a classically conditioned fear response; this fear motivates him or her to inhibit the aggressive response; and the inhibition is reinforced by reduction of fear. According to Mednick, the autonomic nervous systems of the high-risk recidivists are deficient in their ability to dissipate fear, which results in a very slow or small reinforcement for inhibiting aggressive responses. Mednick uses slow recovery of electrodermal responses as an index of the hypothesized autonomic liability and predicts that a combination of hyporesponsiveness and slow electrodermal recovery yields the maximum autonomic predisposition to criminal behavior.

Six of the 19 chapters in this book are devoted to research and reviews of research on psychophysiological factors in asocial behavior. Mednick and his colleagues report their findings on electrodermal responsiveness and recovery of responses among (i) criminal or noncriminal sons reared by criminal or noncriminal fathers, (ii) groups of antisocial adolescents, and (iii) children who later become delinquent or are diagnosed as psychopaths. The work of other investigators is integrated with these results, and Mednick concludes that numerous empirical tests have not disconfirmed his hypothesis.

David Siddle reviews the work on electrodermal activity in psychopaths and agrees with Mednick that the data on electrodermal responsivity are relatively consistent. He argues, however, that differences in skin conductance responses between psychopaths and normals could indicate the presence of attentional rather than autonomic deficits in psychopaths. Whether the deficit is attentional or autonomic, the thrust of all this work is that psychopaths are physiologically different from the rest of us. Although