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The Socialization of Reproduction and the Collapse of Authority

The "Socialization of Workingmen" The survival of any form of human society depends on the production of the necessities of life and the reproduction of the labor force itself. Until recently, the work of reproduction, which includes not merely the propagation of the species but the care and nurture of the young, took place largely in the family. The factory system, established in the nineteenth century, socialized production but left other functions of the family intact. The socialization of production, however, proved to be the prelude to the socialization of reproduction itself—the assumption of childrearing functions by surrogate parents responsible not to the family but to the state, to private industry, or to their own codes of professional ethics. In the course of bringing culture to the masses, the advertising industry, the mass media, the health and welfare services, and other agencies of mass tuition took over many of the socializing functions of the home and brought the ones that remained under the direction of modern science and technology.

It is in this light that we should see the school's appropriation of many of the training functions formerly carried out by the family, including manual training, household arts, instruction in manners and morals, and sex education. "Social, political, and industrial changes," announced a pair of leading educators in 1918, "have forced upon the school responsibilities formerly laid upon the home. Once the school had mainly to teach the elements of knowledge, now it is charged with the physical, mental, and social training of the child as well." These words reflected a consensus among the "helping professions" that the family could no

longer provide for its own needs. Doctors, psychiatrists, child development experts, spokesmen for the juvenile courts, marriage counselors, leaders of the public hygiene movement all said the same thing—usually reserving to their own professions, however, the leading role in the care of the young. Ellen Richards, founder of the modern profession of social work, argued: "In the social republic, the child as a future citizen is an asset of the state, not the property of its parents. Hence its welfare is a direct concern of the state." Experts in mental health, seeking to expand their own jurisdiction, deplored "the harm, often well-nigh irreparable, which the best intentioned parents may do their children." Many reformers despaired of instilling in parents the principles of mental health and maintained that "the only practical and effective way to increase the mental health of a nation is through its school system. Homes are too inaccessible."

Opponents of child labor argued along the same lines. Convinced that poor immigrant parents exploited their children's labor at every opportunity, they demanded not only state prohibition of child labor but the placement of the child under the custody of the school. Similarly, those who dealt with juvenile delinquency saw "broken" or otherwise flawed homes as the breeding ground of crime and tried to bring the juvenile offender under the protective custody of the courts. Parents' rights in their children, according to the new ideology of social reform, depended on the extent of their willingness to cooperate with officials of the juvenile courts. "To the competent parent all aid should be given," wrote Sophonisba P. Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, but "to the degraded parent no concessions should be made." By the same logic, as another spokesman for the helping professions explained, refusal to cooperate with the courts and other welfare agencies proved that a parent "has a warped view of authority and is thereby unable to make use of social resources," thus forfeiting his right to his children or at least raising strong doubts about his competence as a parent.

Reformers conceived of the "socialization of workingmen" as the alternative to class conflict. "If men of any country are taught from childhood to consider themselves as members of a 'class,'" wrote Edwin L. Earp, characteristically addressing himself to the

terms of probation. The probation system, according to one reformer, created "a new kind of reformatory, without walls and without much coercion"; but in fact the establishment of this reformatory without walls extended the coercive powers of the state, now disguised as a wish "to befriend and help," into every corner of society. The state could now segregate deviants for no other reason than that they or their parents had refused to cooperate with the courts, especially when refusal to cooperate appeared as *prima facie* evidence of a bad home environment. Judges who considered themselves "specialists in the art of human relations" sought to "get the whole truth about a child," in the words of Miriam Van Waters, in the same way that a "physician searches for every detail that bears on the condition of a patient." One judge prided himself on "the personal touch" with which he approached delinquent boys: "I have often observed that if I sat on a high platform behind a high desk, such as we had in our city court, with the boy on the prisoner's bench some distance away, that my words had little effect on him; but if I could get close enough to him to put my hand on his head and shoulder, or my arm around him, in nearly every case I could get his confidence." In effect, the court now certified the "patient" into what Talcott Parsons has called the sick role. Once the boy admitted his need of help—the real meaning, in this essentially therapeutic setting, of giving the judge his "confidence"—he exchanged his legal rights for the protective custody of the state, which in practice often proved to be as harsh and unrelenting as the punishment from which the new system of judicial therapy had delivered him in the first place.

Occasionally a judge with old-fashioned ideas insisted that "the true function of a court is to determine judicially the facts at issue before it"—and that "investigations of the lives, environments, or heredity of delinquents, the infliction of punishment, and the supervision of probation institutionalize the courts and are repugnant to every tenet of the science of law." Such reasoning, however, ran against the current of sociological jurisprudence, which appeared to justify a vastly enlarged role for the courts. By the mid-1920s, Van Waters argued that the state had an obligation to "protect" children not merely against broken

homes, which bred crime, but "against parents whose treatment results in a crippled or warped personality." Her book, *Parents on Probation*, listed in one chapter "nineteen ways of being a bad parent," which included "perpetual chaperonage," a "warped view of authority," and failure to become "oriented in the modern world." Van Waters admitted that most children of "bad parents," given a choice between the custody of the juvenile court and the custody of their parents, preferred to return even to homes in shambles. This "incurable loyalty of children to unworthy adults," although it was "the despair of the social worker," nevertheless suggested that a child's "own home gave him something that the mere kindness and plenty of the foster home could not furnish, and that all the social workers in the world would fail to supply." But these considerations did not prevent Van Waters from arguing that not only broken homes but "normal" homes often produced broken children and that the social worker's duty to interfere in other people's domestic arrangements logically knew no limits. "As our case descriptions in clinics and conferences pile up, the wealth of evidence that the 'normal' home, as well as the broken home, fosters malnutrition, physical and spiritual, that sordid habit-settings and moral maladjustments occur in the 'best' families, the conclusion grows, not that parents need education, but that a specialized agency had better take over the whole matter of child rearing."

Parent Education Those who resisted such a sweeping formulation of the state's powers *in loco parentis* clung to the hope that "parent education" would improve the quality of child care and make more drastic attacks on the family unnecessary. Reformers like Washington Gladden, well known as an exponent of the social gospel, accepted most of the principles associated with the new humanitarianism—with school reform and the new sociological jurisprudence in particular—yet questioned their more extreme applications. Gladden endorsed the view that "punishment must be ancillary to reformation" but wondered whether the "reaction against the retributive severities of the old penol-

ogy" had not eroded "fundamental ethical principles" and "weakened, perceptibly, the sense of moral responsibility." Many "sentimental prison reformers," he noted, talked about prisoners "as if they were wholly innocent and amiable people." Although Gladden accepted the prevailing view that "the actual work of education is now largely done outside the family" and that this arrangement, moreover, represented an efficient division of labor, he accepted it only with misgivings. He agreed with Dewey that "the school must find a way to cultivate the social temper, the habit of cooperation, the spirit of service, the consciousness of fraternity"; yet while assenting to this unprecedented expansion of the school's responsibility for socialization, he nevertheless wanted education to remain "fundamentally, a parental function."

From the beginning, the movement to improve the home—the only alternative, it appeared, to bypassing or replacing it—floundered in such contradictions. Teachers of "domestic science," academic experts in "marriage and the family," marriage counselors, family therapists, and many social workers tried to strengthen the family against the forces that tended to undermine it. One social worker, Frank Dekker Watson, objected to the "deceptive philosophy that turns the back upon parents as hopeless and proposes to save the children. We cannot save the children separately," he insisted. "We must reach and save the family as a whole." Yet all these experts, in their very eagerness to "save" the family, accepted the overriding premise that the family could no longer provide for its needs without outside assistance. In particular they distrusted the immigrant family and saw the parent-education movement as part of a wider effort to civilize the masses—that is, to Americanize the immigrants and impose industrial discipline on the working class. The urban masses, wrote Gladden, "must be civilized, educated, inspired with new ideas." Florence Kelley, a noted socialist, complained that a typical Italian girl, even when exposed to years of schooling, forgot everything she learned as soon as she married and proceeded to bring up "in the most unreasonable manner the large family which continues to the second generation in the Italian colonies. She will feed her infants bananas, bologna, beer and coffee; and

many of these potential native citizens will perish during their first year, poisoned by the hopeless ignorance of their school-bred mother." Such reformers, despairing of the school, hoped to make the family itself one of the chief agencies of enlightenment—but only by overhauling it according to the latest principles of marital interaction and child care.

These principles, of course, underwent continual elaboration and revision, as professional fashion dictated. If we consider the literature on childrearing alone—leaving aside the equally voluminous literature on the problems of marriage, which consisted mostly of conflicting speculations about the attraction of opposites or the importance of similar backgrounds and tastes—we find that expert opinion evolved through four stages, each claiming to represent a notable advance over the last. In the twenties and thirties, behaviorism held sway. Such authorities as John B. Watson and Arnold Gesell stressed the need for strict feeding schedules and carefully regulated child-parent contacts. In their initial revulsion against home remedies, rule-of-thumb methods, and "maternal instinct," baby doctors and psychiatrists condemned "maternal overprotection" and urged parents to respect the child's "emotional independence." Many mothers, according to Ernest and Gladys Groves, thought it "the most astonishing thing that mother love has been found by science inherently dangerous, and some of them grow panicky as they let the significance of the new teaching sink into their thoughts." In the long run, however, the new teaching would enable parents to confer on their offspring the inestimable blessing of "freedom from emotional bondage to their parents."*

* Groves and Groves were not alone in noting, even at this early date, certain disturbing effects of professional teaching on parents. Miriam Van Waters wrote: "So much alarming popular literature has been written about defective children that a diagnosis of defect, or serious handicap, like epilepsy or neurotic constitution, freezes the parents into despair." Such observations, however, seldom prompted those who made them to question the wisdom of professional teaching, which by its very nature—even when it seeks to reassure—holds up a norm of child development, deviations from which necessarily give rise to parental alarm, to further demands for professional intervention, and often to measures that intensify suffering instead of alleviating it.

Those who noted that the attack on maternal instinct undermined maternal

Permissiveness Reconsidered In the late thirties and forties, the popularization of progressive education and of debased versions of Freudian theory brought about a reaction in favor of "permissiveness." Feeding schedules gave way to feeding on demand; everything now had to be geared to the child's "needs." Love came to be regarded not as a danger but as a positive duty. Improved methods of birth control, according to the progressive creed, had freed parents from the burden of raising unwanted children, but this freedom in practice seemed to boil down to the obligation to make children feel wanted at every moment of their lives. "The common error of psychological advice," wrote Hilde Bruch in 1952, "is teaching parents techniques of conveying to the child a sense of being loved instead of relying on their innate true feelings of love."*

confidence felt no reservations about this development, because in their view the confidence destroyed by medicine rested in the first place on ignorance and complacency. According to Lorine Pruette, "The severe criticism of the average mother's way with her children coming from social workers, psychiatrists, and educators has helped to destroy a great complacency which was formerly the young mother's protection. . . . The dictum that mother knows best and the dogma of the natural instincts of motherhood have so fallen in disfavor as to be available refuges only for the ignorant or the stubborn." A writer in *Good Housekeeping* observed in 1914: "Souls full of love bring also heads full of ignorance. . . . 'Instinct tells a mother what to do.' Oh, it's an old chant, and it is as scientific as the classic statement that an upstanding fork means a caller, or that the moon is made of green cheese. Instinct forsooth!"

* In Lisa Alther's *Kinflicks*, the heroine's mother, a product of the permissive period, complains: "If anything had been drummed into her in her years of motherhood, it was that you mustn't squelch the young. It might stunt their precious development. Never mind about your own development."

The importance of "wanted" children attained the status of dogma as early as 1912, when Mary Roberts Coolidge argued that organized education for motherhood, together with improvements in contraception, would soon make motherhood "something more than a blind obedience to nature and mankind." Motherhood would soon become "a high vocation worthy of the best preparation and the profoundest devotion," according to Coolidge. Freed of the burden of raising unwanted children, women would confront childrearing not as a burdensome biological duty but as a challenging career requiring careful study and the application of rational technique. "We are rapidly passing from a purely instinctual to conscious and voluntary motherhood."

Permissiveness soon produced its own reaction, an insistence that parents should consult their own needs as well as the child's. Maternal instinct, much derided by earlier experts, made a comeback in Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, first published in 1946. "Trust yourself," Spock announced at the outset. "What good mothers and fathers instinctively feel like doing for their babies is usually best." Often blamed for the excesses of permissive child-rearing, Spock should be seen instead as one of its critics, seeking to restore the rights of the parent in the face of an exaggerated concern for the rights of the child. He and other experts of the forties and fifties had become somewhat belatedly aware of the way their own advice undermined parental confidence. They began to suggest, tentatively at first, that parents should not be held responsible for all their children's faults. "The deepest roots," wrote one pediatrician, "lie not in the mistakes of the parents but in cultural attitudes of which the parents are merely the purveyors." Another expert found that faulty approaches to parent education aroused irrational "hostility toward family experts and counsellors." Exposed to counselors who stressed "problems instead of theories," many parents "felt somehow that they had failed to do for their children what their parents had done for them, and yet, they did not know why, or wherein they had failed, or what they could do about it." Such considerations did not lead experts to withdraw, however, from the business of parent education. On the contrary, they now widened the scope of their claims, setting themselves up as doctors to all of society.

Even the more penetrating critics of permissive dogmas countered them not with a more modest statement of what medicine and psychiatry could hope to accomplish but simply with new dogmas of their own. The limits of psychiatric self-criticism emerged most clearly in Hilde Bruch's *Don't Be Afraid of Your Child*, the work of a humane and sensible psychiatrist who nevertheless left matters no better than she found them. At times, Dr. Bruch departed from her attack on permissiveness and attacked psychiatric imperialism itself, which had inhibited "spontaneity" and brought about in many parents a "state of superimposed anxiety." Afraid of repeating the mistakes of their own parents, modern parents repudiated the serviceable practices of the past and

embraced the "routinized half-truths of the experts as the laws of living." Better than almost any other commentator on American psychiatry, Dr. Bruch understood its massive assault against the past and the devastation left by this demolition of older forms of authority.

It has become fashionable in the whole world of psychiatry and psychology, not only in its immediate relation to child-rearing practices, to speak in sweeping, dramatic terms of the crushing effect of authority and tradition. The failure to recognize the essentially valid and sustaining aspects of traditional ways and of differentiating them from outmoded harmful and overrestrictive measures has resulted in a demoralized confusion of modern parents and thus had a disastrous effect on children.

Dr. Bruch went even further. She grasped the social and cultural transformation that has made science the handmaiden of industry—in this case, psychiatry the handmaiden of advertising, which enlists psychiatry in the attempt to exploit "parents' desires to do right by their children." By keeping parents in a state of chronic anxiety, psychiatry thus frustrates desires that advertising can then claim to satisfy. It lays the emotional foundation for the insistence of the advertising industry that the health and safety of the young, the satisfaction of their daily nutritional requirements, their emotional and intellectual development, and their ability to compete with their peers for popularity and success all depend on consumption of vitamins, band-aids, cavity-preventing toothpaste, cereals, mouthwashes, and laxatives.

Having confronted or at least glimpsed all this, Dr. Bruch betrayed her own perceptions by attributing the troubles she identified not to the inherently expansionist ambitions of modern psychiatry but rather to the misuse of psychiatry by a few irresponsible practitioners. Too often, she wrote, parents consulted "self-appointed, unlicensed experts" when they should have gone to a "medical psychiatric expert" working in close conjunction with a physician. For all the barbs she launched against her own profession, she subscribed to most of its clichés: "parent education is here to stay"; "there is no going back"; "what was 'common sense' in a past century is apt to be useless and hopelessly out of step in our time." Her attack on permissive childrearing boiled down to a criticism of psychiatric malpractice. Al-

though she urged parents "to recognize their own inner resources and capacity for judgment," her book, like Dr. Spock's, abounded in dire warnings of the damage ignorant parents could inflict on their offspring. Spock undermined his own plea for confidence by reminding parents that failure to give children love and security could lead to "irreparable harm." Similarly Bruch condemned permissiveness on the grounds that it could produce "deep emotional disturbance" in the child. Such pronouncements had the effect of weakening parental confidence in the very act of trying to restore it.*

* The same thing holds true of the critique of permissiveness that runs through a group of psychiatric essays collected in 1959 by Samuel Liebman, *Emotional Forces in the Family*. These essays contain the same mixture of sense and pseudo-sense. In "The Development of the Family in the Technical Age," Joost A. M. Meerloo analyzes, with great discernment, the "invasion" of the family by mass culture and by half-assimilated psychiatric ideas, which then become tools of sexual and generational combat. An "imposed intellectualization of the emotions," according to Meerloo, has become "a substitute for mature action." The "delusion of explanation replaces the appropriate act. Words, words, and mere words are produced rather than good will and good action. Sex itself is expressed in words instead of affection."

In the remaining essays, however, analysis of "psychologizing" and "the delusion of explanation" gives way to criticism of a single form of psychologizing, the dogma of permissiveness. Bertram Schaffner writes, in the same vein as Hilde Bruch and Dr. Spock, that "the so-called 'human relations' school of thought," both in childrearing and in industrial management, has gone too far in the direction of permissiveness and has too readily assumed that the "child could do no wrong." "In the recent confused picture of parent-child relations, some parents have taken the concept [of providing security for the child] to mean that the child should have every wish and need met, should not have the experience of being refused." Schaffner's attack on the "abdication of authority in the family and at work" recalls Bruch's plea for "a father or mother who can say 'No' without going through an elaborate song and dance."

The contributors to the Liebman volume, like other critics of permissiveness, write as if parental authority could be restored by professional exhortation, at the same time that they repeat the conventional injunction against leaving childrearing to instinct. "It is our responsibility," concludes Lawrence S. Kubie, "to re-examine critically everything which used to be left to mother's or father's uninformed impulses, under such euphemistic clichés as 'instinct' and 'love,' lest mother-love mask self-love and father-love mask unconscious impulses to destroy." Psychiatrists have the last word after all.

Gilbert J. Rose has criticized "global permissiveness in child development" along the same lines, but with more sensitivity to the evil of psychologizing as

The Cult of Authenticity Since the critique of permissiveness seldom challenged psychiatric orthodoxy, it soon hardened into a new dogma of its own—the dogma of authenticity. Earlier experts had advised the parent to follow one or another set of prescriptions; now the experts told him to trust his own feelings. Whatever he did was right as long as he did it spontaneously. “Children are not easily fooled about true feelings,” warned Dr. Bruch. “Parent effectiveness training,” the latest vogue in child-rearing, has popularized the cult of authenticity that began to emerge in the fifties. Like other forms of psychic self-help, parent effectiveness training teaches the need to “get in touch with your feelings” and to base everyday intercourse on the communication of these feelings to others. If parents can understand their own needs and wishes and convey them to their children, encouraging children to reciprocate in the same fashion, they can eliminate many sources of friction and conflict. Objective statements should be excluded from discourse with the child, according to this reasoning, in the first place because no one can argue rationally about beliefs and in the second place because statements about reality convey ethical judgments and therefore arouse strong emotions. “When a child says, ‘I never have good luck,’ no argument or explanation will change this belief.” “When a child tells of an event, it is sometimes helpful to respond, not to the event itself, but to the feelings around it.” Since “all feelings are legitimate,” their expression should be greeted neither with praise nor with blame. If a child does something to annoy the parent, the parent should express his annoyance instead of condemning the child or the action. If the child expresses emotions that seem

such. The “analytic tendency to look with suspicion upon action as possible acting out, . . . inappropriately transferred from analytic practice,” encourages passivity in everyday life, according to Rose. “Some parents, for example, are incapable of such things as putting their child to bed in the face of protest or of curbing the children’s aggression. . . . The avoidance of being judgmental in analysis is sometimes generalized into a moral detachment in everyday life. This suspension of the moral sense, often combined with a hypertrophy of the therapeutic attitude, leads to calling something ‘sick’ where there is no clinical evidence and not calling it ‘bad’ though such is obvious. The naive idea that sickness accounts for badness and that badness necessarily results from being misunderstood is the prejudice of a therapeutic morality.”

incommensurate with the occasion, the parent, instead of pointing out this discrepancy—instead of making an objective statement about reality and the emotions appropriate to it—should indicate to the child that he understands the child’s feelings and acknowledges his right to express them. “It is more important for a child to know what he feels than why he feels it.” The child needs to learn “that his own anger is not catastrophic, that it can be discharged without destroying anyone.”*

The cult of authenticity reflects the collapse of parental guidance and provides it with a moral justification. It confirms, and clothes in the jargon of emotional liberation, the parent’s helplessness to instruct the child in the ways of the world or to transmit ethical precepts. By glorifying this impotence as a higher form of awareness, it legitimizes the proletarianization of parenthood—the appropriation of childrearing techniques by the “helping professions.” As John R. Seeley noted in 1959, the transfer of parental knowledge to other agencies parallels the expropriation of the worker’s technical knowledge by modern management—“the taking over from the worker of the sad necessity of providing himself with the means of production.” By “helpfully” relieving the worker from “such onerous responsibilities” as the provision of his own and his children’s needs, society has freed him, as Seeley wrote, “to become a soldier in the army of production and a cipher in the process of decision.”†

* The contention that parent effectiveness training and other enlightened techniques of childrearing originated in the fifties will surprise those commentators who can remember nothing more ancient than the latest issue of the *New York Times News of the Week in Review*, and who regard the fifties, accordingly, as the Dark Age of “traditional” parenthood—a period, for example, in which “sex education usually didn’t amount to much more than a brief embarrassed conversation.” Nancy McGrath, a free-lance journalist, belatedly discovered the cult of spontaneity in 1976 and jumped to the conclusion that it represented a complete reversal of the “permissiveness” encouraged by Dr. Spock. In fact, Spock anticipated recent writers in his insistence that parents had rights as important as the child’s—one of the principal dogmas of parent effectiveness training. He and Hilde Bruch condemned permissive styles of childrearing on precisely the same grounds that Nancy McGrath now condemns Fitzhugh Dodson’s *How to Parent* and Lee Salk’s *How to Raise a Human Being*—that such teaching mistakenly instructs parents to “adapt to a baby’s needs, not expect the baby to adapt to theirs.”

† As a result of the invasion of parenthood by the health industry, Seeley concluded, “One finds parents convinced of their impotence, clinging to doctrine in

The revolt against behavioral and progressive dogmas, which exaggerated the parent's power to deform the child, has encouraged society to hold the parent "only marginally accountable," as Mark Gerzon has recently observed, "for his child's growth. . . . Obstetricians take charge at birth, pediatricians are responsible for a child's ailments and cures; the teacher for his intelligence; . . . the supermarket and food industry for his food; television for his myths." Ironically, the devaluation of parenthood coincides with a belated movement to return to the family functions it has surrendered to the apparatus of organized therapy and tuition. Rising rates of crime, juvenile delinquency, suicide, and mental breakdown have finally convinced many experts, even many welfare workers, that welfare agencies furnish a poor substitute for the family. Dissatisfaction with the results of socialized welfare and the growing expense of maintaining it now prompt efforts to shift health and welfare functions back to the home.*

the face of confronting fact-at-hand, robbed of spontaneity (or, equivalently, forcing themselves as a routine to 'be spontaneous'), guilt-ridden, dubious about their own discriminatory capacity, in double tutelage—to the child himself and to his agent, the 'expert'—penetrable, defenseless, credulous, and sure only that, while it doth not yet appear, the day of salvation is at hand." In another essay in the same collection, Seeley noted that modern society presents "a social division of labor in which the burden of rationality is . . . externalized, thrust upon a body of professionals, and hence set beyond one's own capacity to mismanage. In effect, one is to become rational, not by some internal and personal struggle, but by setting in motion a public process that, once started, one cannot resist—a process in which one selects an elite to procure for oneself and others that environment that is most conducive to rational behavior."

* In 1976, the Center for Policy Research (New York) organized a conference on dependency, based on the premise that "traditional public responses have lost much, if not all, legitimacy" and that institutionalization and professional care have become widely "suspect." Both in its attack on asylums and in its suspicious attitude toward the "motive of benevolence," this conference accurately reflects the current revulsion against socialized welfare and the revisionist scholarship which supports that revulsion by disparaging the motives of reformers and depicting asylums as "total institutions." The work of Erving Goffman, Thomas Szasz, Eliot Freidson, David Rothman, and others has helped to shape a new orthodoxy, which criticizes institutionalization and "professional dominance" but fails to see the connection between these developments and the rise of modern management or the degradation of work. In practice, the critique of professionalism seldom

Psychological Repercussions of the "Transfer of Functions"

It is too late, however, to call for a revival of the patriarchal family or even of the "companionate" family that replaced it. The "transfer of functions," as it is known in the antiseptic jargon of the social sciences—in reality, the deterioration of child care—has been at work for a long time, and many of its consequences appear to be irreversible. The first step in the process, already taken in some societies in the late eighteenth century, was the segregation of children from the adult world, partly as a deliberate policy, partly as the unavoidable result of the withdrawal of many work processes from the home. As the industrial system monopolized production, work became less and less visible to the child. Fathers could no longer bring their work home or teach children the skills that went into it. At a later stage in this alienation of labor, management's monopolization of technical skills, followed at an even later stage by the socialization of childrearing techniques, left parents with little but love to transmit to their offspring; and love without discipline is not enough to assure the generational continuity on which every culture depends. Instead of guiding the child, the older generation now struggles to "keep up with the kids," to master their incomprehensible jargon, and even to imitate their dress and manners in the hope of preserving a youthful appearance and outlook.

These changes, which are inseparable from the whole development of modern industry, have made it more and more difficult for children to form strong psychological identifications with their parents. The invasion of the family by industry, the mass media, and the agencies of socialized parenthood has subtly

rises above the level of a consumers' movement, while in theory, it has already hardened into a cliché. For historians, "social control" serves the same purpose in the seventies that "status anxiety" served in the fifties. It offers a comprehensive, all-purpose explanation that fits every case and contingency and can now be manipulated with little thought. Even the best of the social-control studies tend, in the words of Richard Fox, "to exaggerate the novelty of nineteenth-century perceptions of disorder, to reify the 'controllers' to the point where they become either a homogeneous elite or, as in Rothman's case, indistinguishable from society as a whole, and to assume that institutions are imposed by that elite or that society upon passive, malleable subjects."

altered the quality of the parent-child connection. It has created an ideal of perfect parenthood while destroying parents' confidence in their ability to perform the most elementary functions of childrearing. The American mother, according to Geoffrey Gorer, depends so heavily on experts that she "can never have the easy, almost unconscious, self-assurance of the mother of more patterned societies, who is following ways she knows unquestioningly to be right." According to another observer, the "immature, narcissistic" American mother "is so barren of spontaneous manifestation of maternal feelings" that she redoubles her dependence on outside advice. "She studies vigilantly all the new methods of upbringing and reads treatises about physical and mental hygiene." She acts not on her own feelings or judgment but on the "picture of what a good mother should be."

The woman who came to a psychiatrist after reading books on child development from which she "felt that she had not been able to learn anything" dramatizes, in heightened form, the plight of the modern parent. She pursued such information, her psychiatrist reported, "as if she were interested in passing some kind of examination or in producing a child that would win some contest. . . . She had to become a perfect mother." Yet her relations with her child suffered from "a striking lack of affect." Tormented by "a feeling of inexperience and clumsiness in handling tasks with which she had no previous acquaintance," she compared herself to someone who had never seen or ridden in a car and was trying to learn to drive it from a mechanic's manual. Another mother "felt she knew nothing about mothering, literally. . . . She could go mechanically through the motions of looking after her child's needs, but she never really understood what her daughter required and she felt she was responding completely without empathy as one would automatically follow instructions from a manual."

Narcissism, Schizophrenia, and the Family Clinical evidence documents the frequently devastating effects of this kind of mothering on the child. The "shallowness and unpredictability of

his mother's responses," according to Heinz Kohut, produced in one of his patients the pattern of narcissistic dependence so often found in borderline conditions, in which the subject attempts to re-create in his unconscious fantasies the omniscience of early infancy and seeks to shore up his self-esteem by attaching himself to "strong, admired figures." The mother-child connection, in the view of Kohut and many others, ideally rests on "optimal frustrations." As the child begins to perceive his mother's limitations and fallibility, he relinquishes the image of maternal perfection and begins to take over many of her functions—to provide for his own care and comfort. An idealized image of the mother lives on in the child's unconscious thoughts. Diminished, however, by the daily experience of maternal fallibility, it comes to be associated not with fantasies of infantile omnipotence but with the ego's modest, growing mastery of its environment. Disappointment with the mother, brought about not only by her unavoidable lapses of attention but by the child's perception that he does not occupy the exclusive place in her affections, makes it possible for the child to relinquish her undivided love while internalizing the image of maternal love (through a psychic process analogous to mourning) and incorporating her life-giving functions.

The narcissistic mother's incessant yet curiously perfunctory attentions to her child interfere at every point with the mechanism of optimal frustration. Because she so often sees the child as an extension of herself, she lavishes attentions on the child that are "awkwardly out of touch" with his needs, providing him with an excess of seemingly solicitous care but with little real warmth. By treating the child as an "exclusive possession," she encourages an exaggerated sense of his own importance; at the same time she makes it difficult for him to acknowledge his disappointment in her shortcomings. In schizophrenia, the disjunction between the child's perceptions of his mother's shallow, perfunctory care and her apparently undivided devotion becomes so painful that the child refuses to acknowledge it. Regressive defenses, "loss of the boundaries of the self," delusions of omniscience, and magical thinking appear, in milder form, in narcissistic disorders. Although schizophrenia can by no means be considered simply as an exaggerated form of narcissism, it shares with narcissistic dis-

turbances a breakdown in the boundaries between the self and the world of objects. "The contemporary psychoanalytic position," according to one psychiatrist, is that "schizophrenia is above all a narcissistic disorder." It is not surprising, therefore, that studies of the family background of schizophrenic patients point to a number of features also associated with narcissistic families. In both cases, a narcissistic mother lavishes suffocating yet emotionally distant attentions on her offspring. The narcissist, like the schizophrenic, often occupies a special position in the family, either because of his real endowments or because one of the parents treats him as a substitute for an absent father, mother, or spouse. Such a parent sometimes draws the whole family into the web of his own neurosis, which the family members tacitly conspire to indulge so as to maintain the family's emotional equilibrium. In "the family caught in this way of life," according to a student of narcissism, each member tries to validate the others' expectations and projected wishes. "This family tautology, together with the work needed to maintain it, is an identifying feature of the family held together by the narcissistic way of life." According to Kohut, such families suffer more from one member's character disorder than from an overt psychosis, since the psychotic parent is confined to an asylum or at least gets less support from his immediate social environment.

Narcissism and the "Absent Father" Families of this type arise in America not just in response to a particular member's pathology but as a normal response to prevailing social conditions. As the world of business, jobs, and politics becomes more and more menacing, the family tries to create for itself an island of security in the surrounding disorder. It deals with internal tensions by denying their existence, desperately clinging to an illusion of normality. Yet the picture of harmonious domestic life, on which the family attempts to model itself, derives not from spontaneous feeling but from external sources, and the effort to conform to it therefore implicates the family in a charade of togetherness or "pseudo-mutuality," as one student of schizophrenia calls it. The

mother in particular, on whom the work of childrearing devolves by default, attempts to become an ideal parent, compensating for her lack of spontaneous feeling for the child by smothering him with solicitude. Abstractly convinced that her child deserves the best of everything, she arranges each detail of his life with a punctilious zeal that undermines his initiative and destroys the capacity for self-help. She leaves the child with the feeling, according to Kohut, that he has "no mind of his own." His idealistically inflated impressions of the mother persist unmodified by later experience, mingling in his unconscious thoughts with fantasies of infantile omnipotence.

A case reported by Annie Reich shows in exaggerated form what the absence of the father does to the relations between mother and child. The patient, a bright young woman who had embarked on a successful career as a teacher, "wavered between her feelings of grandiosity and an awareness that she was not as grandiose as she wanted to be." Secretly she believed she was a genius, who in her own words would "suddenly reveal herself and stand out as an obelisk." The girl's father had died a few months after she was born. Her mother's brother had also died young. The mother refused to remarry and showered the child with attentions, treating her as someone rare and special. She made it clear that the child was to substitute for the dead father and uncle. The daughter, putting her own construction on this communication, "imagined that the mother had devoured the father in the sexual act, which was equated with having castrated him through biting off the penis. She (the patient) was the father's penis—or the dead father or uncle come back." Like many narcissistic women, she directed her interest "to an enormous degree upon her own body," which she unconsciously equated with a phallus in the fantasy of "standing out like a tremendous obelisk," admired by everyone around her. Yet her awareness of her femininity, which contradicted this phallic fantasy, combined with "a relentless superego" (derived in part from the "megalomaniac id") to produce feelings of unworthiness and violent "oscillations of self-esteem."

The most striking features of this material, as with so many cases concerning narcissistic patients, are the persistence of ar-

chaic fantasies, the regressive character of defenses against loss, and the inability to sublimate—for example, by finding pleasure in the work for which the patient had already shown considerable aptitude. We have seen how an exaggerated dependence on the mother, encouraged by the mother herself, makes it difficult for the child to reconcile himself, after a period of mourning, to her loss. In the present case, the father's death, combined with the mother's use of the child as a substitute for the father, allowed the girl's fantasy of a grandiose, phallic father to flourish without the correcting influence of everyday contact. "The normal impact of reality on this fantasy subject, which would have helped to achieve some degree of desexualization [as the child came to understand that her father had other qualities besides sexual ones] and also to reduce to normal size the figure of the father that was seen in such supernatural dimensions, was absent in this case—hence the unsublimated phallic character of the ego ideal and its megalomaniac scope."

Women with "otherwise well-integrated personalities," according to Dr. Reich, unconsciously seek to please a narcissistic mother by replacing the missing father, either by elaborating grandiose fantasies of success or by attaching themselves to successful men. One patient said that "during intercourse she felt as though she were the man with the phallus-like body making love to herself, the girl." Another achieved minor success as an actress and described the euphoria of being admired by the audience as "an intense excitement experienced over the entire body surface and a sensation of standing out, erect, with her whole body. Obviously she felt like a phallus with her whole body." In such patients, the superego or ego ideal consists of archaic representations of the father unmitigated by reality. The identification of themselves with a sexual organ, their grandiose ambitions, and the feelings of worthlessness that alternate with delusions of grandeur all testify to the primitive origin of the superego and to the aggressiveness with which it punishes failure to live up to the exaggerated ideal of an all-powerful father. Behind this image of the phallic father stands an even earlier attachment to the primitive mother, equally untempered by experiences that might reduce early fantasies to human scale. Narcissistic women seek to replace

the absent father, whom the mother has castrated, and thus to reunite themselves with the mother of earliest infancy.

On the assumption that pathology represents a heightened version of normality, we can now see why the absence of the American father has become such a crucial feature of the American family: not so much because it deprives the child of a role model as because it allows early fantasies of the father to dominate subsequent development of the superego. The father's absence, moreover, deforms the relations between mother and child. According to a misguided popular theory, the mother takes the father's place and confuses the child by assuming a masculine role ("Momism"). In the child's fantasies, however, it is not the mother who replaces the father but the child himself. When a narcissistic mother, already disposed to see her offspring as extensions of herself, attempts to compensate the child for the father's desertion (and also to conform to the socially defined standards of ideal motherhood), her constant but perfunctory attentions, her attempts to make the child feel wanted and special, and her wish to make it "stand out" communicate themselves to the child in a charged and highly disturbing form. The child imagines that the mother has swallowed or castrated the father and harbors the grandiose fantasy of replacing him, by achieving fame or attaching himself to someone who represents a phallic kind of success, thereby bringing about an ecstatic reunion with the mother.

The intensity of the child's dependence on the mother prevents him from acknowledging her limitations, which in any case are concealed beneath an appearance of continual solicitude. The father's emotional absence from the family makes the mother the dominant parent; yet her dominance makes itself felt chiefly in the child's fantasies (where the father too plays an active part), not in everyday life. In this sense, the American mother is an absent parent also. Outside experts have taken over many of her practical functions, and she often discharges those that remain in a mechanical manner that conforms not to the child's needs but to a preconceived ideal of motherhood. In view of the suffocating yet emotionally distant care they receive from narcissistic mothers, it is not surprising that so many young people—for example, the alienated students interviewed by Kenneth Keniston and Herbert

Hendin—describe their mothers as both seductive and aloof, devouring and indifferent. Nor is it surprising that so many narcissistic patients experience maternal seductiveness as a form of sexual assault. Their unconscious impressions of the mother are so overblown and so heavily influenced by aggressive impulses, and the quality of her care so little attuned to the child's needs, that she appears in the child's fantasies as a devouring bird, a vagina full of teeth.

The Abdication of Authority and the Transformation of the Superego The psychological patterns associated with pathological narcissism, which in less exaggerated form manifest themselves in so many patterns of American culture—in the fascination with fame and celebrity, the fear of competition, the inability to suspend disbelief, the shallowness and transitory quality of personal relations, the horror of death—originate in the peculiar structure of the American family, which in turn originates in changing modes of production. Industrial production takes the father out of the home and diminishes the role he plays in the conscious life of the child. The mother attempts to make up to the child for the loss of its father, but she often lacks practical experience of childrearing, feels herself at a loss to understand what the child needs, and relies so heavily on outside experts that her attentions fail to provide the child with a sense of security. Both parents seek to make the family into a refuge from outside pressures, yet the very standards by which they measure their success, and the techniques through which they attempt to bring it about, derive in large part from industrial sociology, personnel management, child psychology—in short, from the organized apparatus of social control. The family's struggle to conform to an externally imposed ideal of family solidarity and parenthood creates an appearance of solidarity at the expense of spontaneous feeling, a ritualized "relatedness" empty of real substance.

Because these family patterns are so deeply rooted in the social conditions created by modern industry, they cannot be changed by prophylactic or "educational" reforms designed to

improve the quality of communication, diminish tensions, and promote interpersonal skills. Such reforms, by extending the sway of the health and welfare professions, usually do more harm than good. The injunction to feel spontaneous emotion does not make it easier to feel. In any case, the psychological patterns promoted by the family are reinforced by conditions outside the family. Because those patterns seem to find their clearest expression in the pathology of narcissism, and ultimately in schizophrenia, we should not jump to the conclusion that the family produces misfits, people who cannot function efficiently in modern industrial society.* In many ways it does a good job of preparing the child for the conditions he will encounter when he leaves home. Other institutions—for example, the school and the adolescent peer group—merely strengthen earlier patterns by satisfying expectations created by the family. As Jules Henry writes, "There is a constant interplay between each family and the culture at large, one reinforcing the other; each unique family upbringing gives rise to needs in the child that are satisfied by one or another aspect of the adolescent-and-school-culture."

According to Henry and other observers of American culture, the collapse of parental authority reflects the collapse of "ancient impulse controls" and the shift "from a society in which Super Ego values (the values of self-restraint) were ascendant, to one in which more and more recognition was being given to the values of the id (the values of self-indulgence)." The reversal of the normal

* Kenneth Keniston, Philip Slater, and other Parsonian critics of American culture have argued that the nuclear family, in Keniston's words, "produces deep discontinuities between childhood and adulthood." The critique of "privatism," which has emerged as one of the dominant themes in recent cultural radicalism, finds an obvious target in the nuclear family, which ostensibly encourages a predatory and anachronistic individualism and thus cripples children for the demands of cooperative living in a complex, "interdependent" society. Often associated with the radical psychiatry of R. D. Laing and Wilhelm Reich and with urgent calls for a cultural revolution, this criticism of the nuclear family merely updates and clothes in the latest liberationist jargon an indictment of the family first articulated by social workers, educators, penal reformers, and other social pathologists, and used by these experts to justify their appropriation of familial functions. By associating itself with psychiatric criticism of the family, the "cultural revolution" thus reaffirms one of the strongest tendencies in the society it claims to criticize.

relations between the generations, the decline of parental discipline, the "socialization" of many parental functions, and the "self-centered, impulse-dominated, detached, confused" actions of American parents give rise to characteristics that "can have seriously pathological outcomes, when present in extreme form," but which in milder form equip the young to live in a permissive society organized around the pleasures of consumption. Arnold Rogow argues, along similar lines, that American parents, alternately "permissive and evasive" in dealing with the young, "find it easier to achieve conformity by the use of bribery than by facing the emotional turmoil of suppressing the child's demands." In this way they undermine the child's initiative and make it impossible for him to develop self-restraint or self-discipline; but since American society no longer values these qualities anyway, the abdication of parental authority itself instills in the young the character traits demanded by a corrupt, permissive, hedonistic culture. The decline of parental authority reflects the "decline of the superego" in American society as a whole.

These interpretations, which lucidly capture the prevailing styles of parental discipline, their impact on the young, and the connections between the family and society, need to be modified in one important detail. The changing conditions of family life lead not so much to a "decline of the superego" as to an alteration of its contents. The parents' failure to serve as models of disciplined self-restraint or to restrain the child does not mean that the child grows up without a superego. On the contrary, it encourages the development of a harsh and punitive superego based largely on archaic images of the parents, fused with grandiose self-images. Under these conditions, the superego consists of parental introjects instead of identifications. It holds up to the ego an exalted standard of fame and success and condemns it with savage ferocity when it falls short of that standard. Hence the oscillations of self-esteem so often associated with pathological narcissism.

The fury with which the superego punishes the ego's failures suggests that it derives most of its energy from aggressive drives in the id, unmixed with libido. The conventional oversimplification which equates superego and id with "self-restraint" and "self-

indulgence," treating them as if they were radically opposed, ignores the irrational features of the superego and the alliance between aggression and a punishing conscience. The decline of parental authority and of external sanctions in general, while in many ways it weakens the superego, paradoxically reinforces the aggressive, dictatorial elements in the superego and thus makes it more difficult than ever for instinctual desires to find acceptable outlets. The "decline of the superego" in a permissive society is better understood as the creation of a new kind of superego in which archaic elements predominate. The social changes that have made it difficult for children to internalize parental authority have not abolished the superego but have merely strengthened the alliance of superego and Thanatos—that "pure culture of the death instinct," as Freud called it, which directs against the ego a torrent of fierce, unrelenting criticism.

The new permissiveness extends largely to expression of libidinal instincts, not to aggression. A bureaucratic society that stresses cooperation, interpersonal give and take, cannot allow many legitimate outlets for anger. Even in the family, which is supposed to allow expression to feelings denied expression elsewhere, anger threatens the precarious equilibrium that members of the family try so hard to preserve. At the same time, the mechanical quality of parental care, so notably lacking in affect, gives rise in the child to ravenous oral cravings and to a boundless rage against those who fail to gratify them. Much of this anger, fiercely repressed by the ego, finds its way into the superego, with the results described by Henry and Yela Lowenfeld.

The inhibiting, controlling, and guiding function of the superego, which largely merges with the ego, is weakened through the weakness of the parents, through indulgent education which fails to train the ego, and through the general social climate of permissiveness. . . . But the severe superego of early childhood still lives in the individual. The controlling function of the superego which draws its strength from the identification with strong parental figures, and which can protect the individual from conscious and unconscious guilt feelings, functions poorly; its punishing and self-destructive power still seems to affect many. The result is restlessness, discontent, depressive moods, craving for substitute satisfactions.

In Heller's *Something Happened*, which describes with such a multitude of depressing details the psychodynamics of family life today, the father believes, with good reason, that his rebellious adolescent daughter wants him to punish her; and like so many American parents, he refuses to give her this satisfaction or even to recognize its legitimacy. Refusing to be maneuvered into administering punishment, he wins psychological victories over his daughter, on the contrary, by giving in to her wishes and thereby avoiding the quarrels she seeks to provoke. Yet both his children, notwithstanding his desire, in his son's case at least, to adopt the part of the "best friend," unconsciously regard him as a tyrant. He muses in bewilderment: "I don't know why [my son] feels so often that I am going to hit him when I never do; I never have; I don't know why both he and my daughter believe I used to beat them a great deal when they were smaller, when I don't believe I ever struck either one of them at all." The parent's abdication of authority intensifies rather than softens the child's fear of punishment, while identifying thoughts of punishment more firmly than ever with the exercise of arbitrary, overwhelming violence.*

The Family's Relation to Other Agencies of Social Control Society reinforces these patterns not only through "indulgent education" and general permissiveness but through advertising, demand creation, and the mass culture of hedonism. At first glance, a society based on mass consumption appears to encourage self-indulgence in its most blatant forms. Strictly considered, however, modern advertising seeks to promote not so much self-indulgence as self-doubt. It seeks to create needs, not to fulfill them; to generate new anxieties instead of allaying old ones. By

* In the school studied by Jules Henry, an eleven-year-old boy wrote gratefully that his father "teaches me [baseball and] other sports [and] gives me as much as he can," but complained that "he never gives me a spanking when I've done wrong." Henry observes: "What this child seems to be saying is that the father . . . cannot give what the child feels he needs in order to make him a person: just punishment for his wrongdoing. It is startling for people in a permissive culture to learn that *not* to be given pain can be felt as a deprivation. Yet it is more painful for some children to bear guilt unpunished than to get a spanking."

surrounding the consumer with images of the good life, and by associating them with the glamour of celebrity and success, mass culture encourages the ordinary man to cultivate extraordinary tastes, to identify himself with the privileged minority against the rest, and to join them, in his fantasies, in a life of exquisite comfort and sensual refinement. Yet the propaganda of commodities simultaneously makes him acutely unhappy with his lot. By fostering grandiose aspirations, it also fosters self-denigration and self-contempt. The culture of consumption in its central tendency thus recapitulates the socialization earlier provided by the family.

Experiences with authority—in school, at work, in the political realm—complete the citizen's training in uneasy acquiescence to the prevailing forms of control. Here again, social control promotes neither self-indulgence nor the guilty self-criticism formerly inflicted by a moralistic superego but anxiety, uncertainty, restless dissatisfaction. In the school, the business corporation, and the courts of law, authorities conceal their power behind a façade of benevolence. Posing as friendly helpers, they discipline their subordinates as seldom as possible, seeking instead to create a friendly atmosphere in which everyone freely speaks his mind. Jules Henry found that high school teachers actually feared quiet and restraint in their classrooms, justifying their failure to enforce order on the grounds that imposition of silence interferes with spontaneous expression and creates unnecessary fears. "A quiet classroom may be an awfully fearful situation for someone," said one teacher, whose classroom grew so noisy that the students themselves clamored for quiet. According to Henry, the classroom teaches children "their first lessons in how to live in the 'friendly,' 'relaxed' climates of the contemporary bureaucracies of business and government."*

* When Ann Landers advised a high school student to complain to the principal about other students who carried on sexual activities in the cafeteria, she was told that the "principal is probably a gutless wonder" and that "the teachers know what goes on and who the offensive kids are, but they don't want to stir up any trouble so they keep quiet." The same column carried a letter from a sixteen-year-old girl who insisted that adolescents complaining of "being under [their] parents' thumb" should consider themselves lucky not to have "parents who take the easy way out and don't stand up to their kids because they hate the hassle."

The appearance of permissiveness conceals a stringent system of controls, all the more effective because it avoids direct confrontations between authorities and the people on whom they seek to impose their will. Because confrontations provoke arguments about principle, the authorities whenever possible delegate discipline to someone else so that they themselves can pose as advisers, "resource persons," and friends. Thus parents rely on doctors, psychiatrists, and the child's own peers to impose rules on the child and to see that he conforms to them. If the child refuses to eat what his parents think he ought to eat, the parents appeal to medical authority. If he is unruly, they call in a psychiatrist to help the child with his "problem."* In this way, parents make their own problem—insubordination—the child's. Similarly at school, the child finds himself surrounded by authorities who wish only to help. If one of the students gets "out of line," they send him to a counselor for "guidance." The students themselves, according to Edgar Friedenberg's study of the American high school, reject both authoritarian and libertarian measures and regard social control as "a technical problem, to be referred to the right expert for solution." Thus if a teacher finds an unruly student smoking in the washroom, he should neither "beat him calmly and coolly and with emotional restraint" or publicly humiliate him, on the one hand, nor ignore the offense, on the other hand, as a minor infraction that should not contribute to the student's reputation as a troublemaker. The teacher should refer him instead to the school psychiatrist. Beating him would make him more unmanageable than ever, in the students' view, whereas the psychiatric solution, in effect, enlists his own cooperation in the school's attempt to control him.

Human Relations on the Job: The Factory as a Family Experts in personnel management have introduced similar tech-

* "The community has expressed its concern for childhood by creating institutions," wrote Van Waters. "It is increasingly common for births to take place in hospitals, infant feeding has become an esoteric rite few parents would attempt

niques into the modern corporation, ostensibly as a means of "humanizing" the workplace. The ideology of modern management draws on the same body of therapeutic theory and practice that informs progressive education and progressive childrearing. Recent efforts to "democratize" industrial relations bring to a full circle the development that began when experts in scientific management began to study group dynamics in the office and factory in order to remove friction and raise output. Social scientists then applied the ideas first worked out in the study of small groups to study and treatment of the family, arguing that most domestic conflicts originated in the attempt to impose outmoded authoritarian controls on an institution that was evolving from an authoritarian to a democratic form. By the 1950s, almost all psychiatrists, social workers, and social scientists condemned the values associated with the traditional or authoritarian family. "Our textbooks," wrote one team of experts, "discuss the 'democratic' family system and the sharing of authority."

In the late fifties and sixties, industrial relations experts began to extend these ideas to the problems of management. In *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960), Douglas McGregor urged corporate executives to accept the "limits of authority." Defining authority, too crudely, as command sanctioned by force, McGregor argued that authority represented an outmoded form of social control in an age of "interdependence." Command remained effective, he reasoned, only so long as workers occupied a debased, dependent position in the industrial hierarchy and found it difficult to satisfy even their material needs. The psychiatrist Abraham Maslow had demonstrated that as soon as human beings satisfy the basic need for bread, shelter, and security, they devote their attention to satisfying the need for "self-actualization." Yet industrial managers, McGregor complained, still took a "carrot and stick" approach to the worker, unscientifically assuming that people hate work and have to be coerced into performing it or enticed with material rewards.

without expert assistance; when children are ill, they are cared for by specialists far better equipped than parents. . . . At every stage in the child's life some modern organized agency will say to the parent: 'We can do this better than you can.' "

McGregor made it clear that he did not wish to see an abdication of managerial responsibility. Like Dr. Spock and Dr. Bruch, he rejected the "permissive" approaches of his predecessors, which had allegedly contaminated early experiments in "human relations." Experience had overturned the assumption that "employee satisfaction" led to greater productivity or that "industrial health [flowed] automatically from the elimination of . . . conflict." The worker still needed direction, but he had to be approached as a partner in the enterprise, not as a child. The enlightened executive encouraged his subordinates to participate in group discussions, to "communicate" their needs and suggestions to management, and even to make "constructive" criticisms. Just as marriage counselors had learned to accept conflict as a normal part of domestic life, so McGregor tried to impress a similar point of view on corporate managers. He told them that they made a mistake in regarding the interests of the individual as opposed to those of the group. "If we look to the family, we might recognize the possibilities inherent in the opposite point of view."

Research into small groups, according to McGregor, showed that groups function best when everyone speaks his mind; when people listen as well as speak; when disagreements surface without causing "obvious tensions"; when the "chairman of the board" does not try to dominate his subordinates; and when decisions rest on consensus.* These precepts, which by this time had be-

* McGregor's influential book, so characteristic an expression of the culture of the fifties, not only complemented the psychiatric attack on the authoritarian family, which came to fruition in that decade, it restated many of the themes of the Parsonian sociology of the family. In 1961, Parsons criticized David Riesman's analysis of the abdication of parental authority (in *The Lonely Crowd*) on the grounds that modern parents best equip the young for life in a complex industrial society when they encourage them to become self-reliant, instead of attempting to supervise every detail of the child's upbringing. Like Parsons, McGregor argues that what looked like an abdication of authority—in this case, managerial authority—represented instead a transition to a more effective, scientific, therapeutic form of control. Just as reactionary alarmists (sometimes in common with well-meaning but misguided social theorists) prematurely deplored the collapse of parental authority, so reactionary businessmen predictably denounced the new softness imported into business by industrial relations experts, demanding a crackdown on unions, a reversal of the New Deal, and a return to the good old days of industrial

come the common coin of the social sciences, summarize the therapeutic view of authority. The growing acceptance of that view, at all levels of American society, makes it possible to preserve hierarchical forms of organization in the guise of "participation." It provides a society dominated by corporate elites with an antielitist ideology. The popularization of therapeutic modes of thought discredits authority, especially in the home and the classroom, while leaving domination uncriticized. Therapeutic forms of social control, by softening or eliminating the adversary relation between subordinates and superiors, make it more and more difficult for citizens to defend themselves against the state or for workers to resist the demands of the corporation. As the ideas of guilt and innocence lose their moral and even legal meaning, those in power no longer enforce their rules by means of the authoritative edicts of judges, magistrates, teachers, and preachers. Society no longer expects authorities to articulate a clearly reasoned, elaborately justified code of law and morality; nor does it expect the young to internalize the moral standards of the community. It demands only conformity to the conventions of everyday intercourse, sanctioned by psychiatric definitions of normal behavior.

In the hierarchies of work and power, as in the family, the decline of authority does not lead to the collapse of social constraints. It merely deprives those constraints of a rational basis. Just as the parent's failure to administer just punishment to the child undermines the child's self-esteem rather than strengthening it, so the corruptibility of public authorities—their acquiescence in minor forms of wrongdoing—reminds the subordinate of his subordination by making him dependent on the indulgence of those above him. The new-style bureaucrat, whose "ideology and character support hierarchy even though he is neither paternalistic nor authoritarian," as Michael Maccoby puts it in his study of

autocracy. McGregor had no patience with this outmoded outlook. It rested, in his view, on a misunderstanding of authority and a simplification of the alternative modes of exercising power. "Abdication is not an appropriate antithesis to authoritarianism. . . . Only if we can free ourselves from the notion that we are limited to a single dimension—that of more or less authority—will we escape from our present dilemma."

the corporate "gamesman," no longer orders his inferiors around; but he has discovered subtler means of keeping them in their place. Even though his underlings often realize that they have been "conned, pushed around, and manipulated," they find it hard to resist such easygoing oppression. The diffusion of responsibility in large organizations, moreover, enables the modern manager to delegate discipline to others, to blame unpopular decisions on the company in general, and thus to preserve his standing as a friendly adviser to those beneath him. Yet his entire demeanor conveys to them that he remains a winner in a game most of them are destined to lose.

Since everyone allegedly plays this game by the same rules, no one can begrudge him his success; but neither can the losers escape the heavy sense of their own failure. In a society without authority, the lower orders no longer experience oppression as guilt. Instead, they internalize a grandiose idea of the opportunities open to all, together with an inflated opinion of their own capacities. If the lowly man resents those more highly placed, it is only because he suspects them of grandly violating the regulations of the game, as he would like to do himself if he dared. It never occurs to him to insist on a new set of rules.

VIII

The Flight from Feeling: Sociopsychology of the Sex War

Suddenly she wished she was with some other man and not with Edward. . . . Pia looked at Edward. She looked at his red beard, his immense spectacles. I don't like him, she thought. That red beard, those immense spectacles. . . .

Pia said to Edward that he was the only person she had ever loved for this long. "How long is it?" Edward asked. It was seven months.

DONALD BARTHELME

I think more and more . . . that there is no such thing as rationality in relationships. I think you just have to say okay that's what you feel right now and what are we going to do about it. . . . I believe everybody should really be able to basically do what they want to do as long as it's not hurting anybody else.

LIBERATED BRIDEGROOM

The Trivialization of Personal Relations Bertrand Russell once predicted that the socialization of reproduction—the supersession of the family by the state—would "make sex love itself more trivial," encourage "a certain triviality in all personal relations," and "make it far more difficult to take an interest in anything after one's own death." At first glance, recent developments appear to have refuted the first part of this prediction. Americans today invest personal relations, particularly the relations between men and women, with undiminished emotional importance. The