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## Book Reviews . . .

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The editors accuse Kelly of being overtaken by the 'sociological imagination'; Kelly would be justified in making the counter-accusation of 'abstracted empiricism'. Some chapters drown the reader in tables. Balmer's article on housing takes the prize with eleven tables, the second place is taken by Krupinski. With the exceptions of Mol (on religion), Colliver (on socio-economic aspects) and Harper (on poverty), the figures are not interpreted and the reader is left pondering the relative merits of indices and survey findings. Krupinski tends to draw sweeping conclusions. For instance, he concludes that most families are happy and the fact that his data indicate a very substantial minority is not, does not merit elaboration. Some chapters, on the other hand, are disappointing in that little or no evidence is presented, e.g., those on the rural family (Balmer), sexual behaviour (Wood *et al.*), and immigrants (Banchevska).

The book has two aims: to be educational and practical. However, few people working or teaching in the field will find their understanding greatly increased and it is not appropriate as a text because the articles are of uneven quality. The general public will not find the book readable, even though the editors give the impression that it is written to help Australians in general understand family problems and help those families with problems to deal with them. I am amazed at the number of reprints (3) of the first edition and can only conclude that the book has sold so well because there is no other book with a similar title. The practicality of the book consists in proposing types of help for those families that 'make excessive demands on health and

welfare services' (p.4). These proposals are mainly concerned with improving the husband's employment situation through work training. Some contributors are aware that it is tricky to draw policy implications from data pertaining to individual families without also doing a structural analysis of, for instance the housing market, the economy and the labour force. Even so, most end up on an individualistic note, e.g., Banchevska proposes that immigrants be selected for 'strength and greater maturity' (p.194) and Finlay states that 'the problems affecting families today are mostly not legal ones' (p.124), without discussing how the law deals with child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, abortion, occupational equality, etc. The book contains many statements about how things 'should' be, but few directions about how to get there. Nonetheless it ends on a positive note — poverty will diminish, leisure will increase, working-class families will get more opportunities, the male-female relationship will not disappear, and Australia will avoid the calamities of over-population, pollution and technologies because of its relative isolation and willingness to learn from others' mistakes.

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### **The Changing Family — making way for tomorrow.**

Eds. Jerald Savells and Lawrence Cross.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston.  
1978. 474pp. No price.

Reviewed by: Dr Warwick Hartin,  
Executive Director, Marriage  
Guidance Council of Victoria.

As the title indicates, this book is future oriented and attempts to grapple with current issues and trends and their possible implications for the future. Future oriented books have now become common as we begin to realise some of the implications of the technology we have created. This book is more substantial than most of its type inasmuch as forty one contributors have been brought together and the views expressed are divergent and sometimes conflicting. The variety of views and the number of subjects covered make the task of the reviewer extremely difficult. We shall begin by handing out the awards.

"The Changing Family" has a number of virtues. In the first place, it brings together in one volume articles previously published in sources some of which are not readily available in this country. Some of these articles have appeared in scholarly journals and some in more popular magazines.

In the second place, more than two thirds of the articles appeared in the last three years and this gives the book a very contemporary flavour.

A further advantage for the reader is that the book is divided into thirteen sections which encompass most of the topics in debate at the present time; for example alternative life styles, the

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redefinition of male and female roles, marital stress and divorce, and sex in and out of marriage. Each section is introduced with editorial comments and there is an editorial introduction to each chapter.

## Current Thinking

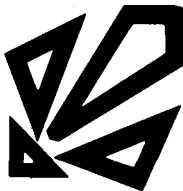
This book is rather like a display stand of current thinking — it shows what is available but you are not expected to like it all. Although there is a good spread of subjects one fifth of the book is devoted to discussing life styles that are considered alternatives to conventional marriage. This is unfortunate because the number of people involved in such life styles are in the minority and most of the authors seem to believe that they will continue to be in the minority in the future. The preoccupation with alternative life styles gives the book an out of balance appearance. It has attempted to be comprehensive — one article on each of middle age and old age is included — but it has not been comprehensive enough. In a book which purports to be about the changing family there surely ought to be more material devoted to children but, apart from three chapters on the demystification of parenthood, and especially motherhood, there is no mention of children. There is nothing at all about fatherhood, nor is there anything about adolescence apart from one chapter on the pre-marital assessment of teenage couples. There is only one chapter on work and nothing on leisure.

## Overall Impression

The over-all impression given by the book is that it is largely preoc-

cupied with male-female relationships which, no doubt, is one of the major preoccupations of our time. But a book about the changing family would have served us much better if it had paid attention to the parent — child relationship, to the life cycle, and to the interaction of family and society.

Apart from these deficiencies the quality of the great bulk of the articles is not in doubt. And it is refreshing to see in this book a few articles which offer a re-evaluation of some of the criticisms of the family that we have become used to hearing. All in all, an interesting book and a provocative one and for the person who wishes to keep in touch with current thinking, a necessity.



**TITLE:** TEARS OFTEN SHED — Child Health and Welfare in Australia from 1788.

**AUTHOR:** BRYAN GANDEVIA.

**PAGES:** 151.

**PUBLISHER:** PERGAMON PRESS.

**PLACE AND DATE:** SYDNEY, 1978.

**PRICE:** \$12.00.

This book discusses aspects of child health and welfare in Australia from 1788 to about 1920. Professor Gandevia in his preface, states that “Children, their health and welfare, their morbidity and mortality, necessarily offer a more sensitive reflection of the social and physical environment in which they find themselves . . . I have tried to illustrate, if not to demonstrate, the interrelationships implicit in . . . the . . . proposition, to examine the medical aspects against the social and environmental change on disease and health and to consider the impact of medical developments on society and its attitudes . . .”

He carefully traces the health status of children from the convict ships to the early colonial days. Later influences, such as the gold rushes, also played their part. He clearly demonstrates the inevitable relationship between child health and social change. Even further, he shows, without actually stating it, how history repeats itself. The current issues in social paediatrics today, such as breast feeding and difficulties with hospitalization, were issues from the very early days of Australian life. Repeatedly the book cites the value of breast feeding in terms of infant survival. The problem of gastroenteritis is not nearly as important as then, but breast feeding recently has had an increased vogue because of the positive benefits of “maternal-child” bonding. For those interested in hospitalization of children, comments about “rooming in” after birth and schools in hospital are pertinent. The early development of child care services which includes child protection, fostering and adoption, have their roots in the 1870’s and is one of particular interest to the social worker.