and he saw the benefits of technology. His criticism of the "machine" had less to do with any particular technology than with a way of thinking. Even before the machine, Mumford argued, Western society had embraced a set of values—material progress, disregard for limits, commitment to endless growth—whose corollary was specialization, mechanization, and strict rationality.

Could technology be used to repair its own damages? In *Technics and Civilization* (1934), Mumford envisioned ways in which the automobile and electricity would allow the creation of "garden cities"—loose, decentralized "green belts" around urban centers—to replace the crowded dehumanizing concentrations built by steel and the railroads. Mumford's vision made him a "father of the suburbs," although suburbs today are hardly the green communities he intended.

In 1926 Mumford and his wife tested their principles by abandoning Greenwich Village to settle in a model housing project in Sunnyside, Queens. Ten years later, they moved to the rural upstate town of Leedsville. From there Mumford issued his manifestos with what Miller calls an irritating "priestly certainty." Yet what is most striking in retrospect is how prescient Mumford was. His warning about the dangers of unlimited growth in the 1920s, his criticism of the cold functionalism of Le Corbusier and the International Style in the 1930s, and his early jeremiads against atomic power—all out of step at the time—are today commonplace. Mumford's fate is that of the thinker whose ideas become so accepted that people forget who first sounded them.

Contemporary Affairs

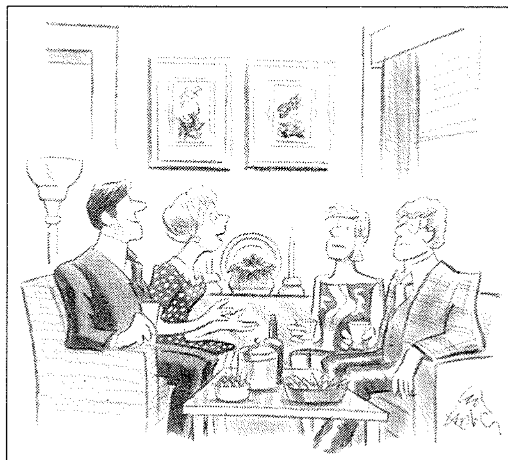
BRAVE NEW FAMILIES: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth Century America. *By Judith Stacey. Basic Books. 328 pp. $22.95*

Here's an annual Thanksgiving celebration that Norman Rockwell never painted. Around the turkey dinner are Pam, her husband, her ex-husband and his children, her ex-lover and his live-in companion and their daughter, and several friends, among them a gay and a lesbian.

Anthropologist Stacey finds that such "extended kinship networks" have supplanted the traditional family. The New York Supreme Court recently validated a gay man's right to retain his deceased lover's apartment, and San Francisco passed a law that accords live-in partners the legal rights of spouses. Contrary to popular opinion, Stacey asserts, the family is not declining, but its definition is changing. Reaganites championed the working-class family as the bulwark of traditional values, yet it was during the Reagan years, as blue-collar jobs disappeared and more wives were forced to work, that the "traditional" family became an endangered species.

To write *Brave New Families*, Stacey spent time with two families working in the electronics industry of Silicon Valley in California. Both families are run by strong, independent women who in the 1970s left stifling, 1950s-style marriages to fulfill the feminist ideals of self-reliance. Silicon Valley is itself an important "character" in the book. A 1950s Promised Land for the working class, it held out the lure of good jobs and cheap houses, but by the 1980s the thousands who had flocked there saw its golden promise disappear. Stacey has a wonderful feel for the area, the inhuman production lines set in beautiful "industrial parks" and the flimsy tract houses that now cost 15 times the average worker's annual wages.

As the political analyst Andrew Hacker observed, "it is hardly news that families are not what they used to be." Stacey, however, sup-



"We used to be old-fashioned. Now we're postmodern."

plies a useful reminder that the "traditional family," with its single male wage earner and wife-run household, was the product of a particular historical development. As such, it was always likely to be superseded. Many "alternative family practices" are customarily treated as primarily white, middle-class developments. Stacey points out that working mothers and two-earner households "appeared earlier and more extensively among poor and working-class people." Middle-class spokespeople only later endowed such people with the values of feminists and yuppies.

Although she is a left-wing feminist herself, Stacey is honest enough to emphasize that feminism has failed to be a liberating force for the women she studies. The two principal women, after a brief euphoric period of surviving on their own, soon realized they would never attain the standard of living they had enjoyed as housewives. Meanwhile, their daughters have no understanding of the feminist ideals that motivated their mothers. For the daughters, earning their own living or making their way as single parents is merely what is normal, part of living in a world where little can be expected from their jobs or from their men.

How typical are Stacey's two intriguing examples? Looking for nontraditional relationships in California is about as difficult as looking for sand in the Mohave Desert. Two families are more than enough material for a novel, which is what this anthropological tour de force reads like. "The American family" in its full diversity, however, remains beyond Stacey's scope.

OUT OF BEDLAM: The Truth About Deinstitutionalization. *By Ann Braden Johnson. Basic. 306 pp. $22.95*

In 1955 there were more than half a million public-hospital beds for mental patients in this country; today there are 100,000. Where most of these patients went after "deinstitutionalization" (as the phenomenon was named, largely after the fact) is the story of *Out of Bedlam.*

During the 1960s and early '70s, the medical profession was confident that new psychiatric drugs would soon make the state mental hospitals, or "snake pits," obsolete. The hospitals themselves, or the state governments financing them, were only too glad to pass their burden off to community health centers. Finally, lawyers and legislators, influenced by anti-psychiatric works such as R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self* (1960) and Thomas Szasz's *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1967), enacted regulations to change hospital inmates from mental patients into victims of oppression.

Johnson, who heads the mental health services for women in New York's Rikers Island jail, originally supported deinstitutionalization. Now she sees it as "a self-serving, politically motivated, fiscally oriented move on the part of government to rid itself of an unrewarding and expensive public burden." Yet, curiously, this cynical move has been justified by a "high-minded, idealistic, happy faith in our society's willingness to tolerate the presence of the bizarre and the deviant."

What exactly went wrong? During the early 1960s, the state mental hospitals began sending their patients to inadequate nursing homes and ill-funded community residences which at the time received no federal support. And when Medicaid (starting in 1965) and federal disability insurance (starting in 1974) began providing support, neither required recipients to receive treatment. Nor did the federal programs fund essential services such as day hospitalization, casework, advocacy, and vocational counseling. During the 1980s, as social programs were cut under President Reagan, the problems reached crisis proportions. Residents of state mental hospitals with no families to return to found their ways into decreasing numbers of nursing homes and care facilities or—more commonly—into jails, shelters, and the streets.

Johnson does not pin the blame on deinstitutionalization as much as on "the fact that we implemented it in a very hypocritical way." In those few cases where adequate programs exist, deinstitutionalization works. At the Fairweather Lodge in New York City, for instance, former patients live and work together, while the Program for Assertive Community Treatment actively monitors outpatients' medication and trains them in everyday skills. But with the mental health system split between those who know the patient population and those who exercise bureaucratic control, Johnson doubts whether such programs can be implemented