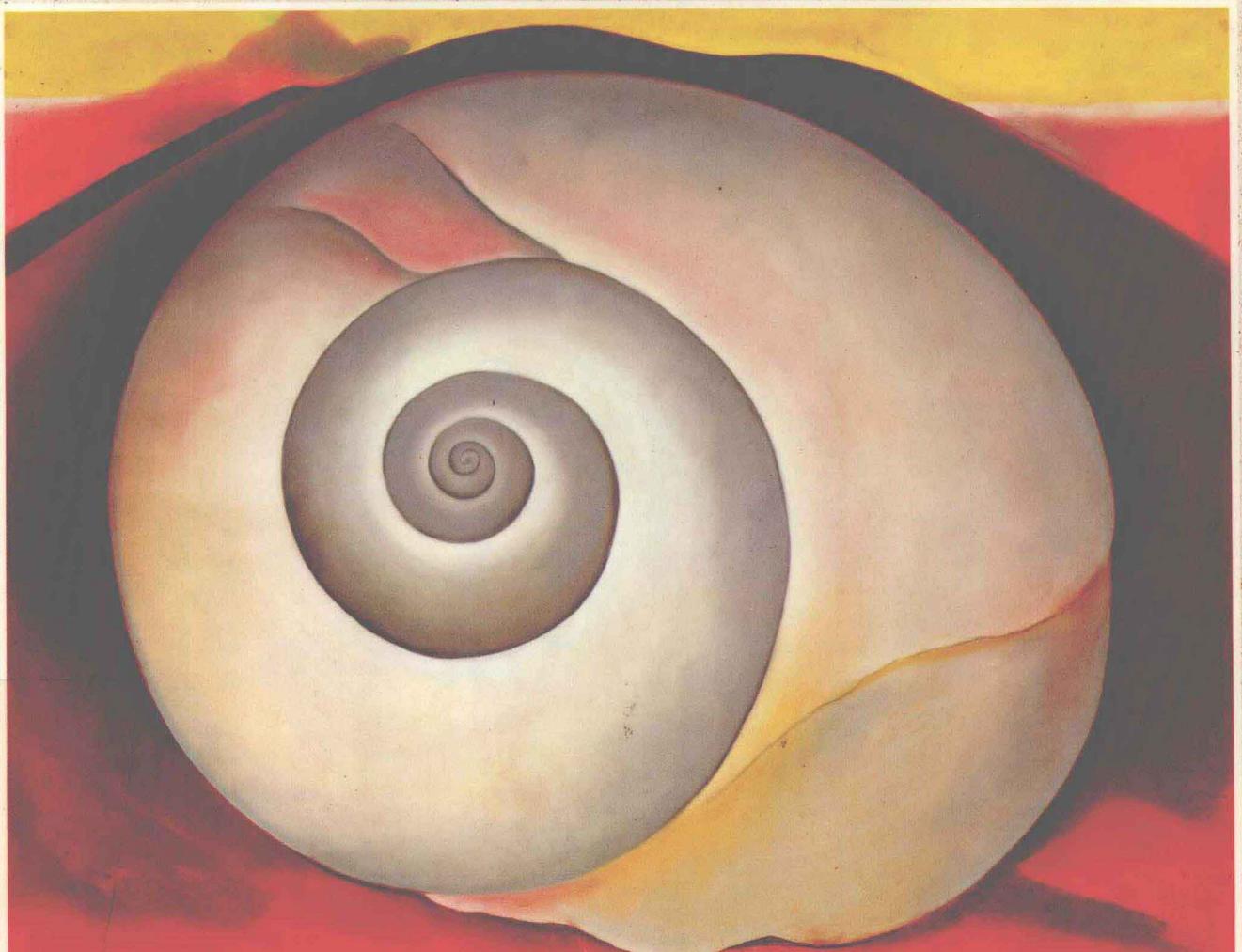


Marriages and Families

MAKING CHOICES AND FACING CHANGE

FOURTH EDITION

MARY ANN LAMANNA • AGNES RIEDMANN



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*To our families, especially
Bill, Beth, and Chris;
Larry, Valerie, Sam, Janice, and Simon*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Agnes Riedmann attended Clarke College, Dubuque, and received her bachelor's degree from Creighton University, her master's degree in sociology from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and her doctorate from the University of Nebraska. Her professional areas of interest are theory and family. She is the author of *The Story of Adamsville* (Wadsworth), a science fiction novella written to supplement introductory sociology textbooks. She received a one-year Fulbright award for demographic research at Australian National University, Canberra. She has two children, Beth, 25, and Bill, 24.

Preface

As we complete our work on the fourth edition of *Marriages and Families*, we look back over three earlier editions. Together, these represent thirteen years spent observing the contemporary American family. Not only has the family changed during this time but so has sociology's interpretation of it. While our observation of change is not always encouraging, it is gratifying to find ourselves a part of the enterprise of learning about the family and to share that knowledge with students.

Our own perspective on the family has developed and changed during this period as well. We have studied demography and history and in this edition have paid more attention to social structure in our analysis. We continue to affirm the power of families to direct the course of their lives. But the social milieu seems less promising today than it did when we began this book amid the utopianism still lingering from "the sixties." Consequently, we give more attention in this edition to policies needed to provide support for today's families: working parents, poor and minority families, single parents, remarried families, gay couples, and other nontraditional families—in short, virtually all families, as the once-standard nuclear family becomes less and less prevalent (though it remains a cultural ideal and common family experience).

Marriage and family values continue to be important in contemporary American life. Our students come to a marriage and family course because family life is important to them. Our aim now, as in the first edition, is to help students question assumptions and to reconcile conflicting ideas and values throughout their lives. We enjoy and benefit from the contact we've had with faculty and students who have used this book. Their enthusiasm and criticism have stimulated many changes in the book's content. To know that a supportive audience is interested in our approach to the study of the family has enabled us to continue our work over a long period of time.

The Book's Themes

Several themes are interwoven throughout this text: People are influenced by the society around them as they make choices; social conditions change in ways that may impede or support family life; there is an interplay between individual families and the larger society; and individuals make family-related choices throughout adulthood.

Making Choices Throughout Life The process of creating and maintaining marriages and families requires many personal choices, and people continue to make decisions, even "big" ones, throughout their lives.

Personal Choice and Social Life Tension frequently exists between the individual and the social environment. Many personal troubles result from societal influences, values, or assumptions, inadequate societal support for family goals, or conflict between family values and individual values. By understanding some of these possible sources of tension and conflict, individuals can perceive their personal troubles more clearly and can work constructively toward solutions. They may choose to form or join groups to achieve family or individual goals. The accumulated decisions of individuals and families may also shape the social environment.

A Changing Society In the past, people tended to emphasize the dutiful performance of social roles in marriage and in the family structure. Today people are more apt to view marriages as committed relationships in which they expect to find companionship and intimacy. This book examines the implications of this shift in perspective.

Individualism, economic pressure, social diversity, and decreasing marital permanence are features of the social context in which personal decision making takes place today. As fewer social

guidelines seem fixed, personal decision making becomes even more challenging.

The Themes Throughout the Life Course

The book's themes are introduced in the Prologue, and they reappear throughout the text. We developed these themes by looking at the interplay between findings in the social sciences and experiences of the people around us. Ideas for topics arose from the needs and concerns we perceived. We observed many changes in the roles people play and in the ways they relate to each other. Neither the "old" nor the "new" roles and relationships seemed to us as stereotyped or as free of ambivalence and conflicts as is often indicated in books and articles. The attitudes, behavior, and relationships of real people have a complexity that we have tried to portray in this book.

Interwoven with these themes is the concept of the life course—the idea that adults may change through reevaluation and restructuring throughout their lives. This emphasis on the life course creates a comprehensive picture of marriages and families and enables this book to cover many topics that are new to marriage and family texts. The book makes these points:

- Many people reexamine the decisions they have made about marriage and family not once or twice but throughout their lives.
- People's personal problems and their interaction with the social environment change as they and their marriages and families grow older.
- People reevaluate their relationship and their expectations for relationships as they and their marriages and families mature.
- Because marriage and family forms are more flexible today, people may change the style of their marriage and family throughout their lives.

Marriages and Families: Making Choices

Making decisions about one's marriage and family, either knowledgeably or by default, begins in early adulthood and lasts into old age. People choose

whether they will adhere to traditional beliefs, values, and attitudes about gender roles or will adopt more androgynous roles and relationships. They may clarify their values about sex and become more knowledgeable and comfortable with their sexual choices.

Women and men may choose to remain single or to marry, and they have the option today of staying single longer before marrying. Single people make choices about their lives, ranging from decisions to engage in sex for recreation to decisions to abstain from sex altogether. In the courtship process people choose between the more formal custom of dating and the less formal "getting together."

Once individuals choose their partners, they have to decide how they are going to structure their marriages and families. Will the partners be legally married? Will theirs be a dual-career marriage? Will they plan periods in which just the husband or just the wife works interspersed with times in which both work? Will they have children? Will they use the new reproductive technology or "surrogate mothers" to become parents? Will other family members live with them—parents, for example? They will make these decisions not once but over and over during their lifetimes.

Within the marital relationship, couples choose how they will deal with conflicts. Will they try to ignore conflicts and risk devitalized relationships? Will they vent their anger in hostile, alienating, or physically violent ways? Or will they practice bonding ways of communicating and fighting—ways that emphasize sharing and can deepen intimacy?

How will the partners distribute power in the marriage? Will they work toward a no-power relationship in which the individual is more concerned with helping and supporting the other than with gaining a power advantage? How will the partners allocate work responsibilities in the home? What value will they place on their sexual lives together? Throughout their experience family members continually face decisions about how to balance each one's need for individuality with the need for togetherness.

Parents also have choices. In raising their children, they can assume the role of martyr or police officer, for example, or they can simply present themselves as human beings who have more expe-

rience than their youngsters and who are concerned about developing supportive, mutually cooperative relationships.

Many spouses face decisions about whether to divorce. They weigh the pros and cons, asking themselves which is the better alternative: living together as they are or separating? Even when a couple decides to divorce, there are choices to make: Will they try to cooperate as much as possible or insist on blame and revenge?

The majority of divorced individuals eventually face decisions about remarriage. And in the absence of cultural models, they choose how they will define step-relationships.

When families meet crises—and every family will face *some* crises—members have to make additional decisions. Will they view each crisis as a challenge to be met without blame or as an unfair and devastating blow?

An emphasis on knowledgeable decision making does not mean that individuals can completely control their lives. People can influence but never directly determine how those around them behave or feel about them. Partners cannot control each other's changes over time, nor can they avoid all accidents, illnesses, unemployment, deaths, or even divorces.

Families *can* control how they respond to such crises, however. Their responses will meet their own needs better when they refuse to react automatically and choose instead to act as a consequence of knowledgeable decision making.

New in This Edition

We have again reduced the number of chapters and rearranged them. As we directed more attention to the social structural factors shaping gender roles (Chapter 2) and the relationship of work to family (Chapter 12), we needed to consolidate other sections: hence former Chapters 7 (on the family) and 8 (on marriage) were merged; the resulting chapter is “Marriage: A Unique Relationship” (Chapter 7). Following the suggestions of readers and reviewers, we moved child rearing (Chapter 11) to follow the chapter on decisions about parenthood (now Chapter 10).

The changes in content are too numerous to report comprehensively. In Chapter 1 (“Choices

Throughout Life”) we have elaborated the varied social influences on family patterns and brought life course research up to date. The chapters on gender (Chapter 2) and work and family (Chapter 12) have been framed by Joan Huber and Glenna Spitze's theory of gender stratification. Cancian's important work on gender and love penetrates Chapters 2 and 3 (“Changing Gender Roles” and “Loving Ourselves and Others.”)

Chapter 4 (“Our Sexual Selves”) updates the sexual scene by looking at recently published data on sexual attitudes and behavior. It also delineates the continuing impact of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases on sexual life.

Chapter 10 (“To Parent or Not to Parent”) brings information on reproductive technology up to date. In that chapter and in Appendixes B and C we look at the “politics of reproduction,” or who makes decisions about reproduction and birth? Chapter 11 considers class and ethnic variations in pressures on parents and parental values.

The discussions of work and family (Chapter 12), divorce (Chapter 15), and remarriage (Chapter 16), take into account important new work in these areas. Chapter 12 now includes such topics as the politics of housework in dual-earner couples, working women's decisions about career and family goals, the “mommy track,” men and their families, housewives today, and policy support for families. (Chapter 14 also devotes attention to economic policies in support of families.)

Chapters 15 and 16 consider children's adjustment to divorce—what today's research shows; parents after divorce, including disadvantaged mothers and vanishing fathers; kinship after divorce; and new research on remarriage and stepfamilies.

We have thoroughly updated our research base throughout, using the most current literature, research findings, and demographic data available.

Special Features of Marriages and Families

- **A broad, up-to-date research base.** The content is based on extensive research. More than 1900 sources are cited, including many recent studies.
- **Interview case studies.** Agnes Riedmann talked with individuals of all ages about their experiences in marriages and families. These inter-

views appear as boxed excerpts, balancing and expanding topics presented in the chapters. We hope that the presentation of individuals' stories in their own words will help students to see their own lives more clearly and will encourage them to discuss and reevaluate their attitudes and values.

- **Enrichment material.** Boxed material drawn from classic research, new studies, popular social science, and newspaper and journal articles supports and expands the chapter content.
- **Pedagogical aids.** An outline of topics to be covered introduces each chapter. A large number of charts and diagrams present current data in easily understood form. End-of-chapter study aids include a summary, a list of key terms, study questions, and annotated suggested readings. A comprehensive glossary defines and illustrates important terms.

Acknowledgments

This book is a result of a joint effort on our part; neither of us could have conceptualized or written it alone. We want to thank some of the many people who helped us.

The people at Wadsworth Publishing Company have been professionally competent and a pleasure to work with. We are especially grateful to Serina Beuparlant, sociology editor, who worked with us to shepherd this edition to publication. Thanks to Steve Rutter, vice president, for his original vision of the project and his faith in us, and to Sheryl Fullerton, executive editor, who saw us through earlier editions as both friend and editor. Maggie Murray, development editor, did a superb job in riding herd on the manuscript chapter by chapter, and editorial assistant Marla Nowick responded to requests for practical help and kept us in touch with the fourth edition's progress through Wadsworth's offices.

We value the skill of Sandra Craig, senior production editor, as, for the second time, she put the book together with incredible competence and patience. Thanks also to Donna Davis, designer, for a crisp design and a multicultural photo program, and to Marty Kongsle for coordinating the art.

Agnes Riedmann especially acknowledges her mother, Ann Langley Czerwinski, Ph.D., who helped her significantly with this revision.

Sam Walker has contributed to each edition of this book through his enthusiasm and encouragement for Mary Ann's work on the project. Continuation into the fourth edition is largely owing to his support and companionship. Larry and Valerie Lamanna have enlarged their mother's perspective on the family by bringing her into personal contact with other family worlds—those beyond the everyday experience of family life among the social scientists!

Reviewers gave us many helpful suggestions for revising the book, and although we have not incorporated all of their suggestions, we considered them all carefully and used many. The review process made a substantial contribution to the revision. Peter Stein's work as a thorough, informed, and supportive reviewer throughout four editions has been an especially important contribution. Fourth edition reviewers include: Joan Aldous, University of Notre Dame; Julie Anson, University of Wisconsin—Stout; Terry Arendell, Hunter College; Barbara Carson, Ball State University; Marilyn Coleman, University of Missouri, Columbia; Sharon S. Cramer, University of Nebraska at Omaha; John F. Crosby, University of Kentucky; John R. Crowley, Manchester Community College; Mary Dellmann-Jenkins, Kent State University; Edmund G. Doherty, Wayne State University; Margaret M. Gittis, Youngstown State University; Norval Glenn, University of Texas at Austin; Ann Goetting, Western Kentucky University; Richard L. Halpin, Jefferson Community College; Gary Hansen, University of Kentucky; Shirley J. Harkness, University of Kansas; Janet L. Koenigsamen, College of Saint Benedict; Pat Langley, Sangamon State University; Marilyn McCubbin, University of Wisconsin—Madison; Kathleen McKinney, Illinois State University; Lois T. Mickle, Oklahoma State University; Joseph E. Ribal, El Camino College; Jack Sattel, Normandale Community College; Jerry W. Shepard, Austin Community College; Denise A. Skinner, University of Wisconsin—Stout; Peter Stein, William Patterson College; and Les Whitbeck, Iowa State University.

Students and faculty members who tell us of their interest in the book are a special inspiration.

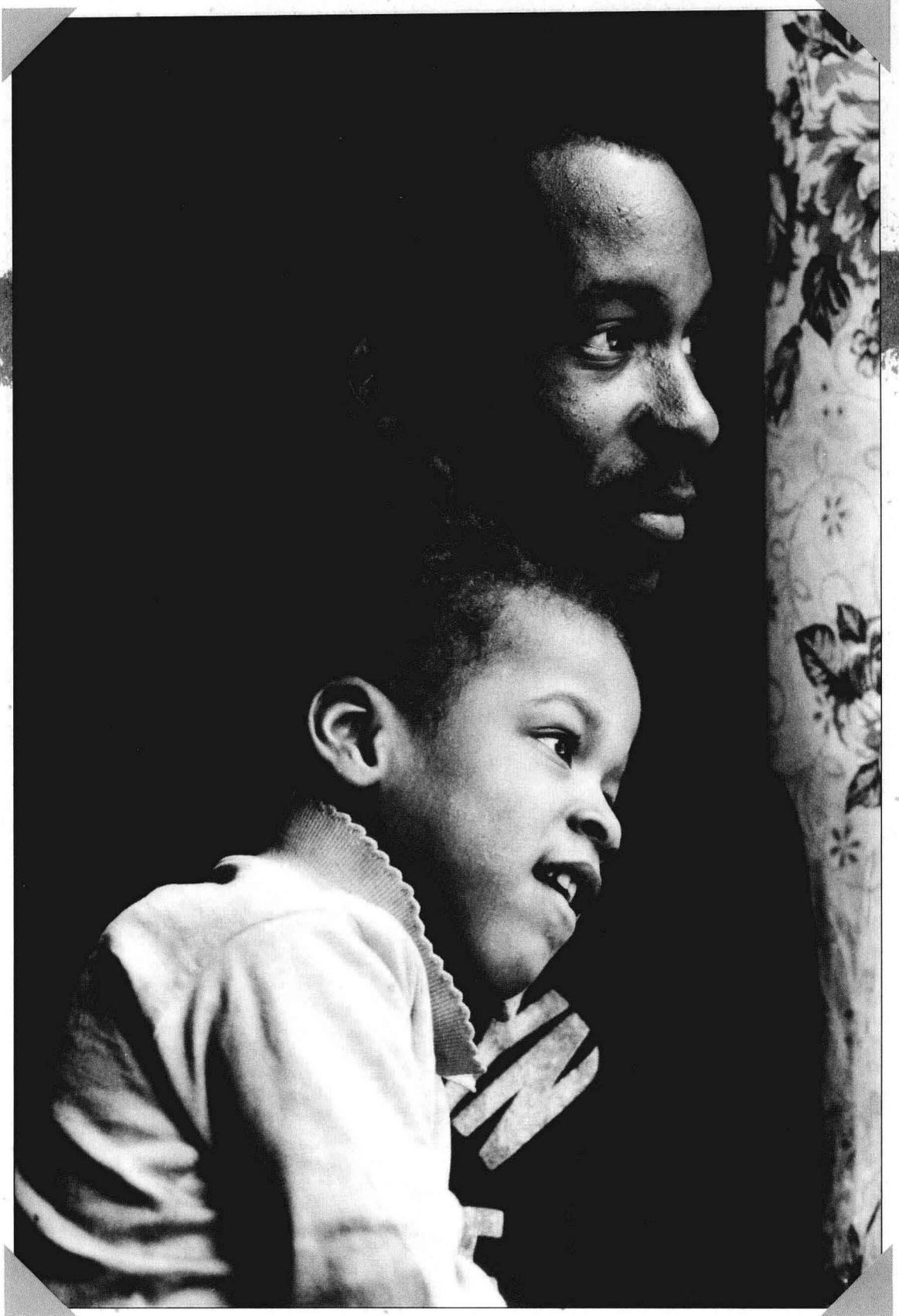
To all of the people who gave their time and gave of themselves—interviewees, students, our families and friends—many thanks.

Mary Ann Lamanna
Agnes Riedmann

Marriages and Families

MAKING CHOICES
AND FACING CHANGE





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