

In the evolving new mating ritual, in Whitehead's view, "men and women can pursue their reproductive destinies with only minimal involvement with each other." At first, both sides seem to benefit: "men get sex without the ball and chain of commitment and marriage; women get a baby without the fuss and muss of a man around the house." Women's economic independence and the pill have encouraged women to accept this new deal. Today, 53 percent of teenage girls think it is "a worthwhile life-style" to have a baby without getting married. Among teenage boys, when asked their views on dealing with an unwed girl's pregnancy, 59 percent said that rather than marriage, adoption, or abortion, the best option was for her to have the baby and the father to help with support.

Such loose arrangements give men the

freedom to walk away at any time, leaving women to raise the children. Even women who opt for single motherhood, according to survey responses, often rethink their choice by the time their children reach the age of six, particularly those with sons. It is far easier for men to find the situation that suits them, and many opt for a pattern of serial monogamy, sometimes involving marriage or remarriage, but more often not. Except for a lucky few in the upper-middle class, women are more often left embittered and alone, struggling to work and raise children on their own. In the end, the new mating pattern, says Whitehead, "which began with the promise of enlarged happiness for all, generates a superabundance of discontent, pain, and misery, something that should be a matter of concern to a society as solicitous of adult psychological well-being as ours."

The Road to Grandmother's House

"The Making of the Domestic Occasion: The History of Thanksgiving in the United States" by Elizabeth Pleck, in *The Journal of Social History* (Summer 1999) Carnegie Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213.

On Thanksgiving Day 1880, dozens of drunken youths careened through the streets of Philadelphia, wearing makeshift masks and women's clothing, just as Thanksgiving "Fantastics" had been doing for generations. They were followed by eager groups of younger boys who donned rags and knocked at the doors of the well-to-do, demanding treats. Beginning with this drunken working-class carnival, Pleck, a professor of history at the University of Illinois, traces Thanksgiving's progression toward the sedate domestic occasion it is today.

Thanksgiving didn't become a peaceful familial feast by accident, Pleck argues. While it had bona fide historical origins—starting, of course, with the Pilgrims' 1621 meal with their Wampanoag neighbors, and later, the issuance of ad hoc proclamations of a national day of thanksgiving by Presidents Washington, Adams, and Madison—Pleck contends that the holiday was "invented and reinvented" over a period of almost two centuries by a series of politicians, social reformers, and ordinary citizens. Among them was Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of *Godey's Lady's Magazine*. Beginning in the 1840s, she con-

ducted a campaign to spread Thanksgiving, hoping that a unifying holiday would help avert a civil war. Partly in response to her efforts, President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a legal holiday in 1863. Even so, it continued to be little celebrated outside New England.

That changed during the Industrial Revolution, when Thanksgiving was readily adopted by those who wished to restore the morality and simplicity of a previous age. It became a holiday of homecoming for the newly mobile younger generation, a time of reunion and renewal. Despite this gradual familialization, however, Thanksgiving would only become an exclusively domesticated occasion in the 1910s, says Pleck. Amid the labor strikes and general unrest of the period, unruliness of any sort came to seem threatening to the middle and upper classes. Public tolerance of the Fantastics' rowdy parades declined and the ritual disappeared.

As immigrants streamed into the United States, the holiday took another turn. Progressive social workers and teachers, anxious about the immigrant tide, portrayed

Thanksgiving “as a day when all Americans could feel they belonged to the nation.” Schoolteachers filled their classrooms with pictures of Pilgrims and turkeys, painting a rosy picture of the Pilgrims as the very first immigrants—historical figures with whom any recent arrival could identify.

Only one element was missing from Thanksgiving as it is today—football. Though collegians had played the game on

turkey day since the 1880s (as the upper-class counterpart to Fantastic parades), football did not become a central part of the holiday until the advent of radio broadcasting in the 1920s. This, for Pleck, was the last feather on the old Pilgrim turkey, for it carved out a masculine niche in what had become a feminine domestic festival, cementing Thanksgiving’s place in American life and lore.

Justice for Juveniles

“The Honest Politician’s Guide to Juvenile Justice in the Twenty-First Century” by Barry C. Feld, in *The Annals* (July 1999) of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 3937 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

In its landmark 1967 ruling, *In re Gault*, the Supreme Court extended to youthful offenders some of the procedural safeguards given adult criminal defendants. In the decades since, contends Feld, a University of Minnesota law professor, the juvenile court has been turned into “a scaled down, second-class criminal court” that provides “neither therapy nor justice.”

The Progressive era “child savers” who brought the juvenile courts into being around the turn of the century aimed to reform rather than punish youthful offenders. Unwittingly, says Feld, the Supreme Court opened the door for judicial, legislative, and administrative changes that have effectively ended that mission.

Juvenile courts now turn over many youthful offenders to other institutions. Many white, female, and middle-class school truants and troublemakers, whose missteps would not have been offenses if committed by adults, have been shifted to private mental health and drug treatment facilities. At the other end of the spectrum, serious youthful offenders, disproportionately black and male, increasingly have been transferred to criminal courts for prosecution as adults. There, Feld observes, violent offenders are given “dramatically more severe sentences” than they would have received as juveniles. Ironically, most of the nonviolent serious offenders “actually get shorter sentences.”

The ordinary delinquents left in the juvenile system, meanwhile, are punished more severely than they would have been in the past, Feld says. The states are moving away

from the traditional therapeutic emphasis in juvenile justice, emphasizing instead responsibility and accountability. Yet at the same time, “most states continue to deny juveniles access to jury trials or other rights guaranteed to adults,” he says. (In any event, Feld avers, juvenile correctional facilities provide virtually no “meaningful rehabilitative programs.”)

Feld welcomes some of the changes. “The juvenile court . . . characterized delinquents as victims rather than perpetrators, and subjected them to an indeterminate quasi-civil commitment process.” Its “treatment ideology” underemphasized “offenders’ duty to exercise self-control.”

But the juvenile court’s underlying concept of combining “social welfare and criminal social control in one agency” remains “fundamentally flawed,” Feld maintains. Why wait for youngsters to commit crimes before giving them better education and health services? Why offer social services to those young criminals who won’t benefit?

Feld’s solution: abolish juvenile courts, putting youths accused of crimes in the regular justice system with special procedural safeguards and formal recognition of youthfulness as a mitigating factor with categorically shorter sentences. Then, once sentences have been imposed and personal responsibility affirmed, place the convicted youths in designated correctional facilities “with resources for self-improvement.” By virtue of their age, he notes, youthful offenders eventually return to society. They ought to be prepared.