presentation is largely in a Weberian (or even a Paretian) mode, he hints, toward the end, that the best hope for a "clarification" of the country's position on nuclear power comes from just such ideological conflict. This is despite the fact that he acknowledges the deep polarization such conflicts inevitably bring about. He does not mention other possibilities: that continued dissent could lead to an ultimate paralysis of decision-making, or that authoritarian rule could squelch dissent. To some, these seem much more likely than that a general clarification of goals will come about in a diverse society.

This lack of a full analysis is part of a pervading sketchiness that mars the book. Throughout, a great deal of important material is merely mentioned, almost in asides. For example, in discussing the passage of the early nuclear regulatory laws, the author presents us with little more explanation than the superficial statements of legislators. We are left to guess at the political processes which produced such bills. Again, in several places, the author glosses over the content of confrontations. When different people present differing evidence, and then attack one another's positions, it is useful for us to know who "won," or at least what the specific arguments were in some detail, so that we can make reasoned judgments about the direction of such encounters. We are given little such information. Again, when congressional committee hearings are filled with personal attacks, we need enough information to judge which statements are *ad hominem* and which are not. The author does not give us this information, in several places, despite the fact that some of the attacks might not be against the person so much as against a style of presentation or against previous *ad hominem* attacks.

Such annoying glosses do not threaten the legitimacy of the author's general argument, but they do give the book some of that newsmagazine flavor known as "Timespeak." In addition, this lack of documentation on important points leaves no choice but reliance on the author's judgment. Equally annoying is Del Sesto's very obvious anti-nuclear bias, evident in his word choice rather than his general arguments. Anyone not predisposed to dislike nuclear power will be annoyed by the author's tendency to "go easy" on opponents and to "go hard" on proponents. This is not to say that he should not be critical of nuclear power, but such obvious bias detracts from what should be a more clearly analytic presentation.

**Informed Consent in Medical Therapy and Research.**

**Reviewer: MARGARET DIMOND, University of Utah**

This latest book by Bernard Barber will have considerable appeal and usefulness for investigators in health and related disciplines. Barber provides a thoroughly documented, well-written, and detailed account of the social, ethical and practical factors in informed consent in medical therapy and research. This work is a careful and thoughtful analysis of the values, legal principles, and factors of communication and authority that bears on the protection of human rights in clinical practice and research.

There are several major contributions. The first is simply the scope of the information presented. Barber begins with a discussion of the value placed on
individual equality in American society, a topic he treats with particular lucidity. In describing the legal parameters of informed consent, Barber notes that the professions in general and physicians in particular are committed to the value of equality, but are likely to be hostile to legal forces that seem to be too restrictive. This condition may create considerable conflict in situations requiring informed consent. Barber notes also the authority and power vested in the medical profession, the prevailing model of dominance (Freidson) as opposed to collegiality (Parsons), and the implications of a context where a profession is most often neither subject to others' control nor effectively self-regulating. In the practical application of the law, informed consent is in fact a communication process. Barber's discussion of communication and informed consent is particularly well documented and thoughtful. He points out such factors as the competence of the client to understand, the consequences of explanation (maybe the client won't consent), the unavailability of the physician to answer questions, and the generally low importance placed on informed consent procedures by physicians and medical researchers.

A second major contribution is the exceptionally fine way that Barber grounds his arguments in empirical research. He states early his intent to "explore the significance of the best available systematic data and research evidence on the several dimensions of the medical research systems." His success is clear throughout the book.

Finally, Barber uses selected special populations to highlight the problems of informed consent. He applies his analytic concepts (values, norms, laws, authority patterns, communication structures, and social control mechanisms) to problems of securing informed consent from prisoners, children, and the mentally ill. These discussions are extremely useful and enlightening, but one wonders why Barber omitted the elderly as a special population. They are neither mentally ill nor children (though they are sometimes treated as both), but there is probably no group in our society whose "personhood" is more questioned and less valued. As Butler notes, a sense of powerlessness may be amplified in the elderly by irrational, self-generated dependency and learned compliance.

There is, therefore, a need to designate the elderly as a special class, and to provide some special advocacy system to protect them as research subjects. Such a system could ensure appropriate and sensitive procedures for informed consent when elderly subjects are involved.

The Welfare Industry: Functionaries and Recipients in Public Aid.

Reviewer: GUIDA WEST, Rutgers University

In a period when there seems to be little interest in the problem of poverty, this book on The Welfare Industry is a welcome addition to the sociological literature. The authors provide a cogent analysis of the paradoxes within the welfare system and their consequences for those who derive a living from it (the functionaries) as well as for those who are dependent on it for survival (the recipients). In many ways the