

taken over, swampingly. Nevertheless, this as it stands is still a short book, if certainly well packed and non-extraneous. And I cannot help wishing he *could* have used his same sensitive, comprehensive sweep of religio-historical understanding for a chapter or two on contending ideals and ideas of university among Anglicans and Methodists, or on moral mind-building for the young as part of Ontario's transcendent path from material betterment to godly transformation. Yes, it has been done—somewhat. But Westfall's book provokes me to think that he could offer a good deal more from his own special knowledge.

It is an easy game, however, for the reviewer to suggest additions freely for the study he never undertook to write. And if in these ways this book is not unqualified perfection, then what is? Obviously, I myself have not written perfect history: well, very little, anyway. The commanding fact remains that this is a work that throws essential light on the ambience of educational development in the Ontario community across the mid-nineteenth century, the crucial period for establishing a mass educational system. So even if this work—quite reasonably and rightly—is not primarily addressed to educational historians, it should be required reading for him and her, if they look to get beyond computer number-crunching to evanescent but impelling ideas, to human hopes, moral values, interests, visions, and so much else that really drove the operations of Canadian social technology. This is, in fact, an

important book, and I need say no more.

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Elaine Tyler May. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era.* New York: Basic Books, 1988. Pp. 284.

John Modell. *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. Pp. 414. \$32.50 U.S.

As the twentieth century draws to a close, historians can be expected increasingly to ruminate on the events and trends that made this epoch distinct. Those interested in both the history of American family life, and the way contemporary historians study this topic, will learn a great deal from the most recent books by Elaine Tyler May and John Modell.

In their choice of subjects and methodologies, these books reflect modern—though not quite post-modern—currents. Both have been influenced by feminist scholarship. May's exploration of family living focuses on the experiences of married women from the Depression through the Cold War. For a slightly wider time span—the 1920s to the mid-1970s—Modell attempts to reconstruct and distinguish the lives of male and female youth.

Both use the contemporary tools of the social historian. May's

evidence includes Hollywood movies, mass circulation magazines, and longitudinal survey research. Modell adopts the "life-course" perspective, and documents the transition from youth to adulthood with abundant demographic data, primarily on marriage patterns and birth rates.

And both, it should be noted, place middle-class, white families at the centre of their analyses. Rural, working-class, black, and gay Americans are not entirely overlooked in these books. But they constitute, at best, comparative or merely descriptive sidelights. Modell's tables and charts frequently differentiate between the dating, marriage, and reproductive patterns of blacks and whites. But he makes no significant attempt throughout the text or in the conclusion to explain these differences. May acknowledges the class-based limitations of her study, but justifies her generalizations with the claim that "the values of the white middle class...shaped the dominant political and economic institutions that affected all Americans" (p. 13).

All Americans may have been "affected" by middle-class values but this does not mean that the conduct of family life within every class and race was the same. Having completed a book on university youth in Canada during the 1930s, I hardly mean to suggest that the middle class should not matter to social historians. But historical judgements derived from studies of skewed populations should not be applied universally. If these two books are indicative of broader historiographical trends, we can infer that while women are now effectively

incorporated into surveys of American social history, other traditionally marginalized groups still are not.

This caveat aside, these studies are immensely informative and interesting, though *Homeward Bound* is a more absorbing and easier read. May offers pithy summaries of Hollywood movies, examples of outrageous government propaganda, and moving testimony from agonized housewives struggling to be heard. The author argues that instead of achieving full emancipation, which had been envisioned during the 1920s and 1930s, American women in the postwar era were enveloped by an ideology of "containment" that bound them to the (suburban) household for the rest of their adult lives. Virtually everyone—from politicians, to psychiatrists, to pap novelists—cast the nuclear family as American's anchor in a dangerous nuclear age. The stable, successful home, peopled with smiling children, responsible fathers, and devoted mothers, was hailed as the main source of safety, emotional security, and social status for all of its members. It is no accident that anti-communist crusader Joseph McCarthy scored with the public when he accused political "subversives" of undermining family values.

What really undermined the traditional family, according to May, was the extraordinary pressure felt by married women to be perfect. Most would never admit to interviewers that they regretted marrying, but upon deeper reflection, they confessed that the physical isolation, the burdens of housework and child rearing, the sexual obligations, and the continual

pandering to male authority or male egos were frequent sources of tension and depression. By finally (and openly) confronting the myth of the postwar family in the mid 1960s, the mothers of the baby boom contributed as much to social change in America as did the civil rights and anti-war movements.

While the author effectively sustains her main argument, there are some rough edges. On the one hand, she makes the surprising claim that "Hollywood [movies of the 1930s], encouraged the independence of women and the equality of the sexes," (p. 41), while on the other hand, much of the cinematic evidence she presents proves precisely the opposite. Similarly, her intriguing contention that middle-aged mothers in the 1960s encouraged their daughters to rebel against authority is based on extremely limited testimony. On other occasions, the author cites one similar case after another to prove her point, an approach which makes the account longer without making it more substantive. Nevertheless, how (middle-class) American women achieved a greater measure of autonomy in their lives is surely a major chapter in twentieth-century social history, and by linking family life to American political culture, this book tells a part of that story in an innovative way.

The enhancement of youth's autonomy in this century is similarly at the centre of Modell's study. He shows that the process of growing up is infinitely more complex than suggested by either the generational conflict or social control models of

youth-adult relations. Over the decades young people have not really rejected what adults have wanted them to become; they have instead assumed a greater role in determining how to get there. For example, in the 1950s, couples who married very young often did so against their parents' wishes. Thus, these youth simultaneously expressed their independence while perpetuating social convention. Youth invented unchaperoned dating in the 1920s, a practice that had become institutionalized with parental approval by the 1950s, and was then all but discarded by young people in the 1970s in favour of more informal group outings. Over the century, sexual restraints among youth have loosened, and common-law living arrangements have grown in popularity, but marriage remains the dominant family form. Alas, the youth movement of the 1960s turned out to be less of a cultural revolution than many believed. Indeed, if the Reagan-Bush years are any indication, the children of baby boomers might turn out to be one of the most conservative generations in this century. But they too will find an authentic way of "coming into their own."

Many of Modell's observations are perceptive, though the prose and presentation make this book something less than a joy to read. The author bombards the reader with numbers, tables, and mysterious cross tabulations which, literally, take the life out of growing up. The quantification of dating, marriage, and birth-rate patterns may all be necessary components of the

life-course model, but I suspect one could learn as much or more about the history of youth's experience by examining schooling, movies, and music through the ages. The author has left this task to others.

The lives of middle-class youth and women have both stimulated and been shaped by social change in twentieth-century America. And as both books demonstrate, the engagement of these groups with the forces around them has been complex, fascinating, and unpredictable. The lives of other American families, yet to be surveyed, will undoubtedly prove equally interesting.

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Peter Gordon and Richard Szepter, eds. *History of Education: The Making of a Discipline*. London: The Woburn Press, 1989. Pp. 240. £22.50.

In a collection of fifteen previously published papers, Peter Gordon and Richard Szepter present the development of history of education as a discipline from the early 1900s to the 1980s.

Their purpose, with particular though not exclusive attention to the British context, is to examine how and why the historical study of education has been transformed in the last twenty or so years.

In a refreshingly candid "Introduction," Gordon and Szepter defend a chronological arrangement of

papers that is shown to reflect the historiography of the time. Briefly commenting on the changes that have occurred, and with an emphasis on "the creative period" following the 1950s, the editors recognize the impact of European and especially North American traditions on developments in the field.

The chapter concludes with an overview of topics for further study and a valuable list of notes and references extending beyond the confines of British historiography.

The leading paper following the introduction is "The Study of the History of Education" (originally published in 1914), by Foster Watson. As a period piece it provides an examination of the value of history of education essential to teacher training, stressing the discipline's significance not only as a complement to technical concerns in the preparation of teachers but also as a means of comparing approaches to education in other periods. Watson claims that the history of education contributes to both a knowledge of the past for historians and a general understanding of education for parents and administrators.

B. Simon, in "The History of Education" (1966), argues for the social significance of educational history with an emphasis on the interdependence of institutions and ideas. A knowledge of the past for Simon is a "liberating influence" that will lead perhaps to a new future. "To study the history of education attentively, to discover just how and why the division of primary and secondary education became fixed at