

liberal arts. This new curriculum apparently includes good doses of the humanities, the social sciences, sciences (including mathematics) and languages (several participants considered bilingualism essential for the Canadian student of the future). The “new classicist” curriculum will combine the proper degree of content and skills and will possibly be imparted in new ways through new structures, the creation of which is so fraught with difficulty that it inspired the participants with despair. (But then, the acquisition of knowledge was never a rose-petal-strewn path!)

The book also lacks a good overview of what is actually happening in Canada. Skolnik mentions in his conclusion the innovative programs at UBC, Concordia and McMaster. The conference features Dalhousie, UBC, the University of Toronto, and the Université du Québec. But what about the University of King’s College and all the little institutions like Glendon, Mount Allison, Acadia, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, Sainte-Anne, etc? There are, without doubt, many other interesting and innovative curricular developments occurring in the country.

The Ottawa conference was perhaps too internalized and too introspective. The speakers included only one business person and no representatives of other professions or government. There was only one woman among the eleven speakers, only 1 1/2 papers in French, one speaker from the Maritimes and one from the West. Nonetheless, the proceedings are worth reading. The book is thoughtful and provocative. It is most definitely a call for the leadership and the vision necessary to take our universities and our society into the twenty-first century. This book was intended to stimulate universities to seek and implement change. I hope we will all join together to take up the challenge and that our efforts will be given the necessary financial support by the business community and by government.

Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, eds., *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989, Pp. xxx, 381. \$34.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper. Reviewed by J. Donald Wilson, University of British Columbia, Faculty of Education.

Critics are often harsh in their reviews of collected essays, echoing Woodrow Wilson’s warning while he was still an historian at Princeton: “No amount of uniform type and sound binding can metamorphose a series of individual essays into a book.” But having been a book editor myself, I am more inclined to the appraisal Robert Fulford made of Duke Ellington in *Best Seat in the House*, when it comes to the task of a conscientious and efficient book editor: “He was an artist who both practised his own art and created spaces where others could practise theirs.” In their work at putting together *Youth, University and Canadian Society*, editors Paul Axelrod and John Reid amply attest to my contention.

For years the history of higher education in Canada operated in the shadows of the mainstream of Canadian educational history. Inspired by the “new” social history of the 1960s, the history of Canadian education attained new levels of

accomplishment in the 1970s. Ever since, historians in this field have shown themselves increasingly sensitive to the class, gender and ethnic/racial dimensions of educational history; prone to utilize oral history and quantitative methods to interpret source material; influenced by the social sciences, especially sociology and anthropology; and wont to resort to interpretive rather than narrative forms of exposition. In contrast, the output of books and articles relating to the history of higher education in Canada remained thin through the 1960s and 1970s when compared to the enormous outpouring of Canadian social, intellectual and educational history.

With a few notable exceptions, the recent historiography of the history of higher education in Canada is not an enviable one. As William Bruneau, in an article in Vol. 15, no 1 (Spring 1984) of the *Canadian Review of American Studies* insists, these histories of universities are in effect "celebrations of the present", and "presentist in outlook, Whig in outcome." "They are chronologies," he continues, "relieved now and then by extended "stories": a founder's triumph, or a building constructed through miraculous fund-drives ..."<sup>1</sup> In this context the Axelrod and Reid collection of original essays marks a significant breakthrough in its deliberate rupture with past historiography and its strong emphasis on the social history of higher education.

Two-thirds of the authors are fairly well-established scholars; the rest are recent post-graduates or junior scholars. In subject matter, all regions except Western Canada and Quebec are well represented. Only one article deals specifically with a Western Canadian institution (Regina College), and Quebec is served by a fascinating discussion of the significant influence of Father Georges-Henri Levesque on the introduction of social sciences at Laval University from 1938 to 1955. The special experience of the provincial universities of Western Canada is completely missing from this volume. As to time period, the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries are the focus of attention, perhaps with a view to suggesting contemporary relevance. Only one article deals with the last forty years and none with the period before 1880.

Among the book's strengths is the space it devotes to the education of women at Canadian universities. Several articles treat this subject directly or on an equal basis with a discussion of male students. Another persistent theme which serves to direct attention away from the traditional emphasis on institutional history is found in the discussion of "youth" as a social category. University students are seen most often as part of this category of analysis, rather than as members of a particular university. Thus, when Keith Walden examines initiation rites at the University of Toronto around the turn of the century, he spends the last third of his article generalizing the experience of the Toronto students onto the larger Canadian and North American youth scene of the early twentieth century. Similarly, in her examination of student unrest on university campuses in the 1960s, Patricia Jasen concludes her remarks with a discussion about this being "a unique era in the history of Canadian youth" (p. 264). Brian McKillop on Ontario undergraduate culture before World War I and Diana Pedersen on the YWCA in the same time

period give graphic portrayals of young manhood and womanhood in a period of growing secularization in Canadian society. The underlying assumption here and elsewhere in the book is that youth as a social category is historically constructed, in part at least, by the perception and policies of adult society. In the process, several commonly-held notions are debunked. For example, both James Pitsula (for Regina College) and Keith Walden demonstrate that the notion of “flaming youth” in the 1920s was largely a myth in the Canadian universities under study. Despite the temptations of alcohol, automobiles, petting, and jazz, students learned the importance of hierarchy, conformity, and deference. They were hardly forging new standards of behavior as Paula Fass has suggested for American youth of this decade. It seems quite likely this state of affairs persisted into the 1960s when *in loco parentis* was finally challenged and overthrown by Canadian university students.

On the matter of access to universities before World War II, several authors make it clear that students in this time period were not only from elite backgrounds. Detailed studies of late nineteenth century Queen’s by Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks and Susan Laskin demonstrate that farmers’ children made up the largest proportion of intramural students at that university. Similarly, Judith Fingard shows that many female students at Dalhousie at the turn-of-the-century were not from well-to-do families. Twenty per cent of students at Queen’s were female. Although a goodly proportion of students at Dalhousie were female, many never completed their studies for degrees. For example, between 1881 and 1901, 75 per cent of all women students did not graduate. The impact of the war years is closely studied in the chapters by Barry Moody (Acadia), Yves Gingras (the development of scientific research in Canada) and Nancy Kiefer and Ruth Roach Pierson (the war effort and women students). Axelrod concludes in his fascinating article on the student movement in the 1930s that “youth become more conservative when social conditions become more severe” (p. xxi). The student radicals of the thirties, although “ahead of their time in the fight for civil liberties, minority rights, student assistance, and youth employment policies” (p. 234) did not move far from the mainstream behaviour patterns expected of them by their parents and professors. For the most part, unlike their counterparts in the 1960s, they remained “deferential, respectable, and patriotic” (p. 233).

Many chapters in Parts 3, 4 and 5 document the important shift, as we move into the twentieth century, in the university’s mission from stressing denominationalism to its role in promoting social utility and service to the nation. Here the accounts complement the research and conclusions of Doug Owsram in *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900–1945* (1986) and Marlene Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada* (1987). The ever declining influence of religion in higher education is juxtaposed with the perceived usefulness of universities in the solution of social and particularly economic problems. This facet caught the attention of both public and politicians in the decades after World War II. In the fifties the Massey Commission, for example,

placed great stress on the role universities might play in preserving national culture and identity in the face of a renewed threat of Americanization. The Canada Studies Movement was the counterpart to this thrust in the 1970s. Meanwhile, in the intervening decade, the human capital theory heavily touted by the Economic Council of Canada in its first two reports came into play. The Council promised that "increased investment in human resources," as they phrased it, would insure an augmented Gross National Product for the nation as well as an increased standard of living for individual Canadians. Politicians found this formula irresistible, and so millions of government dollars were poured into constructing new universities, converting colleges into degree-granting institutions and expanding existing institutions. Everyone seemed convinced that higher education was the panacea for the last third of the twentieth century that universal schooling had been seen to be a century before; that is, all except many of the students themselves. Ironically, the most severe critics of the "new" university of the 1960s were the students, as ably explained in Patricia Jasen's article on "The Student Critique of the Arts Curriculum in the 1960's." Some of this critique, Jasen concedes, was "ephemeral and some of its demands were naive." But "it gave expression to fears about the quality of arts education that had been building up for decades, and it forced both scholars and administrators to open their minds to fresh ideas" (pp. 262–63). Jasen is the only author in the book who attempts to discuss the university curriculum – just what it was that the students studied.

All told, these essays serve to give us a much clearer picture than we had of Canadian universities and students in the past century. Questions of accessibility and the nature of the student body – class, gender, age, place of origin, and religion – are particularly well addressed. Even what students did with their lives after attaining their degrees, a thorny problem for researchers, is documented in several articles. Likewise, the changing student profile as professional courses were added and the intimate links between higher education and the emergence of professionalism in Canada – in law, medicine, education, nursing – are topics that are introduced in this collection but merit further attention. The impact of depression and war are thoroughly canvassed. The conclusion overall seems to be that higher education contributed to social mobility in Canada rather than social control. This is a thoroughly engaging book, opening up new questions and avenues of research.

At a time when Canadian educational historians are discussing the need for a new synthesis of the field to replace *Canadian Education: A History* (1970), Axelrod and Reid have produced yet another specialized study. Will we ever find an all-encompassing vision of the experience of education in Canada – something resembling Lawrence Cremin's monumental three-volume account of American education? Do we need more secondary material like this book before we can consider composing a synthesis? If we do, as seems evident, then *Youth, University and Canadian Society* will certainly help us along the way by reminding us, as others have, that educational history must not be confined to the education of only children and adolescents, to only elementary and secondary education, but must consider as well the education of adults.