

social joy that does not require play as its expression. Perhaps the JOY system has been co-opted multiple times to build the capacity to play in the various lineages that engage in play. The book seems to overemphasize the link between social joy and PLAY. Even so, it provides a great starting point for further empirical studies on these issues.

If scholars working on the mechanisms related to the other core systems—SEEKING (expectancy), FEAR (anxiety), RAGE (anger), LUST (sexual excitement), CARE (nurturance) and PANIC/GRIEF (sadness)—read this book with an open mind, they will, no doubt, discover the strengths of the framework and identify the weaknesses needing further research. Thus, the book should finally put to rest whether there are basic emotions (there are); settling this issue directs us to more fruitful arguments about the details of the brain mechanisms involved.

At first I felt the book at five hundred pages was too long, but once I began reading, it was engrossing. I find the fact that the citations in the foreword are not listed in the bibliography to be irritating, but in a large book, perhaps such errors are unavoidable. I hope the authors correct the problem in a later edition. Most importantly, because of the way this book effectively links the brain research on nonhuman animals and on humans—and because of its practical implications, especially for learning and psychotherapy—this is a must-read book for a wide audience. It certainly belongs on the reading list for all my graduate students.

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### **Reinventing Childhood after World War II**

*Paula S. Fass and Michael Grossberg, eds.*  
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Contents, notes, index.  
182 pp. \$42.50 paper.  
ISBN: 9780812243673

How many historians does it take to write an insightful, provocative, scholarly, and readable little book that will help students and historians alike understand the contexts in which the history and historiographies of children and youth have developed over the last half century? In this case, seven—the number who contributed to this model of purposeful collaboration that stakes a claim for the potential of history as a tool to explore and even influence public attitudes about and government policies toward children.

If not quite seamless, the book is nevertheless tightly organized. Paula Fass focuses on the creation of a generation of anxious parents and children as more mothers went to work, divorce rates grew, schools worsened, and drugs became available to control child behaviors. Michael Grossberg explains how children's "rights" at first widened (the 1954 school desegregation decision, for instance) and then narrowed (due to censorship and worries about sexual predators). Steven Mintz explores the commercialization of children's culture and the growing belief that children's pastimes required less imagination than in the past (he also partly debunks that notion). Stephen Lasseonde argues that, while the first postwar generation grew up with clear coming-of-age markers, the commercialization of childhood, the increasing awareness of

psychological and eating disorders, and the exposure to sex and violence all combined to “compress” childhood, even as other cultural trends have caused adults to extend their own childhoods. Mary Ann Mason examines the difficulty of fitting the notion of the “best interests of the child” into the constantly shifting definitions of family with the emergence of surrogate motherhood, gay adoption, and other new or newly accepted technologies and concepts. Kriste Lindenmeyer suggests that the American Dream became different things for postwar children and their parents and led the federal government to build programs intended to level the playing field for all children. And Bengt Sandin offers a Swedish perspective in which children’s rights became a dominant priority of the central government and children’s lives became a state responsibility in ways that Americans could hardly imagine.

One of the most important threads running through the essays is anxiety: Parents worried about giving their children too much or too little freedom; Government officials worried about creating a class of permanently dependent citizens; Cultural critics worried about child consumerism and about forcing (or allowing) children to grow up too fast; Traditionalists worried about expanding constructions of families; And, for more than half the period covered by the book, everyone worried about the Soviet threat and its ramifications. Other themes that unify the essays include the increasing awareness among Americans and Swedes of the growing number of outside forces acting on families and children, the ways in which shrinking families changed conceptions of childhood and child rearing (and

helped fuel the above-mentioned anxiety), the influence of changing technology, and the inevitable growth of central governments in the postwar world, which had both intended and unintended (and positive and negative) consequences. But the strongest tone emerging from the collection is profound ambivalence: Parents were (and are) ambivalent about the children they adore and resent; Policy makers were (and are) ambivalent about the unique solutions demanded by children’s unique problems; And historians find in the histories of children and youth fundamental ambivalences about the cultural, economic, political, and moral contexts in which youngsters are raised.

Although all the authors provide contextual material from before the war, Lindenmeyer especially spends at least as much time on the prewar status of government involvement with children and youth as on postwar programs. This emphasis on the government’s role before the war suggests that perhaps her essay should have been placed closer to the front of the book. It really does provide context that might be useful to the readers of the other essays. Another tiny quibble concerns the choice of Sweden to compare to the United States, which seems somewhat arbitrary. A more useful comparison might have been to a non-Western country, perhaps even the Soviet Union, since the Cold War instigated so much of the anxiety that shaped American childhood and youth after 1945.

These are minor points, and most readers will hope the University of Pennsylvania Press hurries *Reinventing Childhood* into production as a paperback, where it will, no doubt, enjoy a long life as stimulating and meaningful read-

ing in childhood-studies courses. In the meantime, historians will find it a bracing introduction to a period—the 1970s and 1980s—rarely addressed in the literature. Its overt engagement with current policy and culture—Fass urges Americans “to reconnect with their own historical experiences and their cultural legacy and begin once again to trust their children and allow them to grow into their own futures” (p. 18)—helps it stand out in the flourishing historiographies of children and youth.

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**Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Re-examined, Rediscovered, Renewed**

*Nancy File, Jennifer J. Mueller, and Debora Basler Wisneski, eds.*

New York: Routledge, 2011. Contents, references, index. 232 pp. \$39.95 paper. ISBN: 9780415881111

In their book, *Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Re-examined, Rediscovered, Renewed*, coeditors Nancy File, Jennifer Mueller, and Debora Wisneski offer an engaging array of essays that examine philosophical, historical, cultural, and political influences on early-childhood curriculum. Their volume invites readers to consider alternate views of early-childhood curriculum and to reflect more deeply on some of the major issues in the field. This book will appeal to educators, graduate students, classroom teachers, researchers, and school

leaders who wish to pursue an inclusive process of curriculum development and retain a responsive, child-centered focus in their work.

The editors open the book with two essays—one focusing on the underappreciated role of teachers in curriculum development and the other on the role of research in informing curriculum practices. Debora Wisneski draws attention to the missing voices of teachers in the literature on curriculum development and innovation. Nancy File, in turn, questions how curriculum research can most effectively inform classroom practice. She argues that more attention needs to be paid to qualitative curriculum research because it can be more inclusive of children from diverse cultural backgrounds and low-income families.

Part 2 examines some of the major theoretical influences on the development of early childhood curriculum and offers examples of how various theories have been applied. In chapters 3 and 4, Nancy File and J. Amos Hatch discuss developmental theory and why its applications in ECE curriculum have been problematic. File concludes that we need to acknowledge the limits of our knowledge about child development, to engage in dialogue about how child-development knowledge translates to practice, and to involve families and communities in questions of what should be included in the curriculum. Hatch argues that child-development theory has more to say about instruction than about curriculum, that is, more about how to teach than about what to teach. Although both of these curriculum perspectives expand our thinking, readers might wonder if or how the authors