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"The History of Us": Social Science, History, and the Relations of Family in Canada

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Article abstract

This essay provides a selective overview of the Canadian historiography on family. The roots of family history not only extend backwards much further than the "new social history" bom of the tumultuous 1960s, they are buried deep in several other disciplines, most notably sociology, anthropology, and demography, whose practitioners were concerned as much with the historical process of family change as with the state of families contemporary to their times. I consider how pioneering social scientists, by grappling with the family's relationship to structural change, historicized early 20th century family studies and offered up many of the questions, concepts, theories, and methods that continue to inform historical scholarship on families. Turning to the body of historical publications that followed in the wake of, and were often inspired by, the "new social history," I highlight the monograph studies that served as signposts in the field's development, especially for what they have revealed about the critical nexus of family, work, and class. The historiography mirrors the family's history: "family" consists of so many intricately plaited strands that separating them out is frustrating and often futile. I have attempted to classify this material both topically and chronologically within broad categories, but the boundaries blur so that most of these works could fit as comfortably in several others. Many of them, in fact, will be recognized as important contributions to fields such as labour, ethnic, women's, or gender history rather than as works of family history per se.

"The History of Us": Social Science, History, and the Relations of Family in Canada

Cynthia Comacchio

JUST AS THE 20TH CENTURY gasped its last, Canada's purported national newspaper pledged an "unprecedented editorial commitment" to "get inside the institution that matters the most to Canadians: the bricks themselves, our children, our families." Judging by the stories emanating weekly from "real families" in Toronto, Calgary and Montréal, commitment to "the bricks" remains strong despite unremitting bleak prophecies about the family's decline. There is much concern, however, that their mortar is disintegrating. At the dawn of a new millennium, Canadians worry about such abiding issues as the decision to have children, their number and timing; finding decent, affordable shelter; whether both parents will work for wages and how child care will be managed [and paid for] if they do; how domestic labour will be apportioned; what single parents must do to get by; and -- most pressing of all — how to master the wizardry that might reconcile the often-conflicting pressures of getting a living with those of family.[1]

These "family matters" strike certain transhistorical chords. If we have more options than did our forebears of a hundred or even fifty years ago, most of us still have to take into account the available material support before we can make the

[1]"Family Matters: A Year in the Life of the Canadian Family," *The Globe and Mail*, 11 September 1999. The criteria used to decide the representativeness of the families is not discussed; the title suggests there was no editorial compunction about the existence of "the Canadian family." The seer of the "end of history" also contends that "unstable families" contributed greatly to the discordances marking the 20th century; see F. Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption* (New York 1999). My title is owed to a quip by the inimitable E.P.Thompson; see "Happy Families: Review of Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*," *New Society*, 8 September 1977, 499-501.

Cynthia Comacchio, "'The History of Us': Canadian Families and Socioeconomic Change," *Labour/Le Travail*, 46 (Fall 2000), 167-220.

major life decisions signified in family formation. Unromantic though these deliberations may be, they are fundamental.

For the vast majority throughout history, family relations have been intermeshed with the structures of work. The family has historically constituted the principal site of production. Even in the "advanced" western world, until as recently as a century ago, few could subsist outside some form of family setting. The welfare of most families, in its every sense, was the measure of its members' mutual assistance as constituted in labour, thus individual and collective contributions to the family economy. The labour of families is connected even more directly to capitalist development when we consider that the production of family farms allowed for the local surplus accumulation that, along with the importation of foreign capital, supported the transition to industry. Industrialization did not destroy this historic relationship of work and family, but gradually reconfigured it to accord with the new relations of production.

Nearly twenty years ago, in a path-breaking effort to unlock marxist theory to gender issues, sociologist Dorothy Smith conceptualized home and family as "integral parts of, and moments in, a mode of production." Family relations do not stand apart from, but are organized by and within capitalist economic and political relations, the most significant of which are class relations. By recognizing these relations to be mutually necessary and supportive, we:

> can begin to see the social organization of class in a new way. We discover the family or forms of family work and living, as integral to the active process of constructing and reconstructing class relations, particularly as the dominant class responds to changes in the forms of property relations and changes in the organization of the capitalist enterprise and capitalist social relations.[2]

The working class, I would add, finds its own means and methods of adaptation through a domestic reorganization characterized by selectivity; that is to say, it accepts some bourgeois practices and standards of family life, rejects others, and creates still others that reflect the cultural heritage, community, and individual needs of individual families.

Smith, among others who have engaged in this integration of family into models of capitalist relations, effectively proposed a refinement of the 19th century views of Marx and Engels. Both were convinced of "the dissolution of family ties" that industry bred, while equally convinced that the survival of the working-class family meant the very survival of the working class. Marx never developed a comprehensive theory of the reproduction of labour power, all the while conceding its importance for any theory of capitalist production: "the maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and must ever be, a necessary condition to the

[2]D. Smith, "Women, Class and Family," in V. Burstyn, D. Smith, eds., *Women, Class, Family and the State* (Toronto 1985), 6-7.

reproduction of capital."[3] The connection between work and family is critical to capitalist production, but equally important is the relationship between identity and family. Social identities are learned and internalized in the family setting, a process of interpellation crucial to the formation of self-identities: our families are where we are first introduced to, and absorb the meaning of, the differential status conferred by class, gender, race, and age. Families replicate, reproduce and perpetuate the interwoven relations of patriarchy and capitalism. Moreover, the family's often-contradictory internal relations are mirrored in the contradictions between the "earthly family" in its material basis and the "holy family" as it is configured in ideal terms, to borrow Marx's evocative imagery.[4]

If work has defined family for many, it has not defined it in the same way for all families, nor for all family members. For the bourgeoisie, production was gradually distanced from domestic life — though not as quickly and definitely as was initially postulated in theories about the "sundering" of work and home. Bourgeois family strategies became less a matter of subsistence, more a matter of the maintenance of certain living standards, "respectability," and children's prospects rather than their day-to-day contributions to the family economy. For the working class, the change was essentially a difference in source of subsistence rather than a departure from traditional interdependence, as the family economy became a family wage economy. In both instances, the roles of women and children were altered not so much in substance as in conceptualization. Much work, both productive and reproductive, and in varying degrees depending upon the family's material circumstances, remained in the home which was women's domain; children also continued to work in different ways, not necessarily "waged" in the customary sense. Through the course of the 20th century, however, work and family became increasingly disassociated in the public imagination as in state policy. Work was redefined as the wage labour of men functioning as primary breadwinners. This remaking of the history of the family — more a recasting, looking too selectively backwards — has had repercussions that continue to affect us as historians and as 21st-century citizens. If we obscure and confuse the historic relations of work and family, we not only limit our understanding of much of our socioeconomic development since colonial times, we all too often allow the recurrent "family values" debates of our own times to hinge on the ahistoric concept of "the family" and the scapegoat figure of the "working mother."

Families, then, pose as much a "problem" for historians as for social commentators. It is evident that "the family" is not only integral to a larger process, but is itself continually in process, undergoing palingenesis in a series of successive rebirths and regenerations. While conceding that "the family" is imaginary, and that actual families are eminently mutable, family historians have identified the

[3]F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845; Stanford, Ca. 1968), 145, 160-1, 225; K. Marx, *Capital* (Moscow 1971), 1, 460.
[4]Marx, in Marx, Engels, *Collected Works* (New York 1975), 5, 4.

major influences at work on domestic relations over the past two centuries: economic changes, particularly the shift from domestic to factory production; demographic changes sparked by the decline in family size; changes in the socio-economic status of women; and the changing relations between the private sphere, represented by "the family," and the public interest increasingly represented by the state.[5] Structural and familial change are so entwined, however, that it is difficult to trace causation, to establish which initiates and which responds in any given moment.

What follows is a selective overview of the Canadian historiography on family. The roots of family history not only extend backwards much further than the "new social history" born of the tumultuous 1960s; they are buried deep in several other disciplines, most notably sociology, anthropology, and demography, whose practitioners were concerned as much with the historical process of family change as with the state of families contemporary to their times. I begin in pre-history, so to speak, to consider how pioneering social scientists, by grappling with the family's relationship to structural change, historicized early 20th century family studies and offered up many of the questions, concepts, theories, and methods that continue to inform scholarship on families in the past. Turning to the body of historical publications that followed in the wake of, and were often inspired by, the "new social history," I highlight the monograph studies that, in my judgement, served as signposts in the field's development, especially for what they have revealed about the critical nexus of family, work and class. The historiography mirrors the family's history: "family" consists of so many intricately plaited strands that separating them out is frustrating and often futile. I have attempted to classify this material both topically and chronologically within broad categories, but the boundaries blur so that most of these works could fit as comfortably in several others. Many of them, in fact, will be recognized as important contributions to fields such as labour, ethnic, women's, or gender history rather than as works of family history *per se*. Like much of family life, family history is a messy prospect; family reaches into virtually every corner of human existence.

I. *Foundations: The Social Sciences and the Archaeology of Families*

To locate public interest in families in the just-past century belies a certain inadequacy of historical memory. From the beginnings of European attention to the "New World," families were crucial to plans for cultural and economic supremacy formulated in imperial centres of power. The *Jesuit Relations* (1632 - 1673) of New France transcribed the earliest-known commentaries on family life. While the great

[5]In a recent attempt to make sense of changes/continuities in Canadian family history, I adopted an interpretive framework based on the idea of punctuated equilibrium, a biological concept employed figuratively to suggest how families persist through sharp points of disruption that are eventually met by adaptation and restabilization: C.R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto 1999), 3-11; 149-56.

fur-trading enterprises that dominated the 18th century comprised "companies of [male] adventurers," their registers expose the domestic arrangements underpinning vast networks of commerce. By the second half of the 19th century, a consciously "scientific" approach to families was already making its way to British North America under the auspices of a developing European social science, influenced particularly by the ideas of Frédéric LePlay (1806-82).[6]

For LePlay, the family was not only the foundation but the determining element of all social organization. While conducting the first empirical investigations of European working-class and peasant families, he developed a typology in which a series of family forms each corresponded to a particular stage of social development: the patriarchal family, the stem family, and what came to be known as the "nuclear" family, described in his terms as "individualist" or "particularist." In the LePlayian hierarchy, the stem family (*famille-souche*) was correlated to the highest degree of social stability. A modification of the extended patriarchal family, it was characterized by its inheritance pattern, in which one offspring, usually the youngest son, continued to live with the family until he inherited the estate.

With the blessing of LePlay's Société d'Economie Sociale de Paris, the Baron Charles Gauldrée-Boilleau, French consul at Québec, inaugurated the study of Canadian families in 1861. At the farm of Isidore Gauthier in the parish of Saint-Irenée on the Lower St. Lawrence, the Baron applied LePlay's methods of observation and classification to conclude that the hard-working nine-member Gauthier household exemplified the stem family. The Consul's experiment was followed by a more methodical undertaking by Léon Gérin (1863-1951) in 1898. The first Canadian-born social scientist, Gérin's brief sojourn at LePlay's Ecole de Science Sociale in Paris shaped his life's direction as well as that of early Canadian sociology. In the parish of Saint-Justin, he confirmed Gauldrée-Boilleau's findings about the economic basis of family relations and the signal importance of the stem family within that matrix. He had to concede, nonetheless, that "l'analogie est loin d'être parfaite:" geography and history had made Quebec's rural families more nuclear in structure, less territorially-stable, less communal, than the French peasant families against which they were measured.[7]

[6]E.M. Nett, *Canadian Families: Past and Present* (Toronto 1993), 5-10; see S.R. Mealing, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: A Selection* (Ottawa 1990); and the seminal works by S. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg 1980), and J. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver 1980). On LePlay's ideas, see R. L. Howard, *A Social History of American Family Sociology, 1865-1940* (Westport, Conn. 1981), 75-7.

[7]Léon Gérin, "L'habitant de Saint-Justin," in Gérin, *Le Type économique et social des canadiens: milieux agricoles de tradition française* (Montréal 1937), 17-18, 20-22, 86, 174. This study was originally published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* (1899). The Baron's conclusions can be found in C. Gauldrée-Boilleau, "Paysans de Saint-Irenée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862," in P. Savard, ed., *Paysans et ouvriers québécois d'autrefois* (Québec 1968). Gérin spent six months in Paris, late 1885 to spring 1886, and

When Gérin actually retraced the Baron's path to the Gauthier doorstep in 1920, some sixty years after the original visit, he was dismayed to find the family gone, the land sold, the house taken down.[8] Intrigued by the wider sociohistoric implications of this family's story, he followed its tracks to the Saguenay valley, where, a mere five or six years after the Baron's visit, "le fameux centre traditionnel" of the Gauthier family of Saint-Irenée had transplanted itself — in the manner of so many others — to pursue better economic prospects. In the new setting as before, traditional class-based habits of solidarity, manifested in shared labour, economic self-sufficiency, and mutual dependence, remained fundamental to the Gauthier family's security.

Committed to his view that the stem family constituted "l'axe directeur, le pivot central, le centre de gravité" of Québec's socioeconomic life, Gérin was perturbed by the "complications sociales" he saw unfolding around him. Studying rural families on the south bank of the St. Lawrence as they coped with an industrializing environment, he found mixed results: some had benefited from the economic changes, adapting to the new conditions "dans l'ordre materiel et dans l'ordre moral," thus able to sustain themselves as families. Others were losing their self-sufficiency, and, unable to withstand "l'attraction puissante du grand atelier," were in danger of "degénerating." He surmised — regretfully — that the new order appeared to favour families of the "particularist" or nuclear form, in which individual initiative was valued more than the collective, familial good. Those that failed to make this transition were shaken, uprooted, and sliding into instability.[9]

Gérin's observations were echoed in contemporary studies of urban neighbourhoods, where industry was taking a visible toll on working-class families. In these communities, family study imitated some social science techniques — observation, interview, the gathering of quantitative data — following upon the famous Booth and Rowntree surveys of London's slums. But Canadian investigators were also inspired by the muckraking journalism of American Progressives. Montréal businessman, reformer and politician Herbert Brown Ames published his famous survey of the impoverished working-class families of west-end Montréal first in the *Montreal Star*, and then in a book, *The City Below the Hill* (1897), whose title signified the world of the urban underclass both literally and figuratively. Similar explorations by various reform-minded citizens' groups drew attention to urban

attended lectures by the LePlayian social scientists, the Abbé Henri de Tourville and Edmond Demolins. The latter's interest in rural families, and his active encouragement that Gérin undertake a Canadian study, motivated Gérin's work. See J.C. Falardeau, "Notes Biographiques," in Falardeau, P. Garigue, eds., *Léon Gérin et l'habitant de Saint-Justin* (Montréal 1968).

[8]*Gérin*, "L' habitant," 17.

[9]Gérin, "L'émigrant déraciné, en bordure à la zone vallonneuse du sud", in Gérin, *Le type économique et social*, 155, 183; originally published as "Deux familles rurales de la rive sud du Saint-Laurent: les débuts de la complication sociale dans un milieu canadien-français," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* (1908).

pathologies as a clarion call for state intervention.[10] By the interwar years, the confluence of a rising academic social science and public preoccupation with a modernity both enticing and terrifying, saw social scientists adopt a taxonomy of "social problems" in which families served as barometers to gauge the nature of structural change, its impact on the collectivity, and what was in store for the future. The state also became increasingly involved in family-watching, establishing the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare (later the National Welfare Council) in 1920 to act as a clearing-house for family study and related policy initiatives. The latter were primarily directed at parents, especially maternal, education in the interests of healthier, happier families for a more productive, "efficient" modern Canada.[11]

It was at this moment that Canadian sociology took on a more definite professional form, though much of the leadership would come from the United States. At the University of Chicago, Robert Parks and Ernest Burgess were concentrating on the interaction and adjustment of various institutions in the context of modernization. Influenced by LePlay's ideas, they devised a dynamic, historicized notion of family as process, positing a dialectic between family and society that allowed for a range of stable family types, each relating in different ways to the larger society. The local culture constituted a specific "ecology" which encouraged the success of certain family types while making others obsolete. Accordingly, as had Gérin, they found the isolated nuclear family best-suited to industrial urban settings that demanded continual adaptation.[12]

The interactionist approach, as Marlene Shore has indicated, was imported to Canada by the Chicago-trained Carl Addington Dawson, who was instrumental in establishing sociology at McGill University. With Warner Gettys, Dawson pro-

[10]Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada* (Montréal 1887; reprinted, Toronto 1972); see T. Copp's classic *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto 1974) on the Ames survey, especially 15-29. C. Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto 1995), 106-10, discusses the role of the city's Social Survey Commission and its 1915 report. See also S. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto 1997) on the role of the settlement houses in social surveys.

[11]I discuss the Council's role in Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children* (Montréal/Kingston 1993); also *The Infinite Bonds*, 90, 96-7, 120, 139.

[12]Parks and Burgess's *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* was first published in 1921. The American Sociological Society, which included Canadian social scientists, established a section on family sociology in 1924; see Howard, *A Social History of American Family Sociology*, xi, 65-8. On early Canadian sociology, see R. J. Brym, with B. Fox, *From Culture to Power: The Sociology of English Canada* (Toronto 1989), 15-18; and M. Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada* (Toronto 1987).

duced a widely-used textbook, *An Introduction to Sociology* (1929), which classified the family as a "crescive institution." As such, its form and function correspond to historic conditions, so that "any fundamental changes going on in the latter are reflected in the family units." Also like their Chicago mentors, Dawson and Gettys inventoried modernization's harmful effects, yet concluded optimistically that the family was exhibiting "remarkable tenacity," holding its own by means of "modifications and readjustments to a changing social order."[13]

Established during the Depression to examine the relations of industry and community, McGill's Social Science Research Project could not overlook the place of family within this complex of interactions. As Gérin's studies had intimated, its participants' immediate community was the perfect laboratory for testing the modernization hypothesis. Produced by the Chicago-trained Everett C. Hughes, the first English language analysis of the Québec situation stressed how the "rural folk society" of the town he named "Cantonville" was disrupted by industrial capitalism. In his ominously-titled *French Canada in Transition,* Hughes reiterated the Baron's findings of nearly a century before — that rural society was established on the relationship of family and land — but he regarded this relationship as a "core vulnerability" rather than the foundation of community stability.[14] Meanwhile, in an ethnographic study of the agricultural community of Saint Denis de Kamouraska, Hughes' student surpassed him in highlighting Quebec's "folk society" and its "rural lifeways". Searching out "the factors responsible for culture change in the direction of urbanization and anglicization," Horace Miner concluded that families behaved "as units in all matters," their internal synchrony essential to their own material survival and to a local economy based on "the family system ... which was brought over from France in the 17th century and has remained unchanged."[15] Mentor and student alike overplayed the precipitous nature of modernization, neglecting to consider that the Quebec countryside had been drawn into industry's orbit, gradually but inexorably, over the course of a half-century — that, in fact, Gérin's preliminary visit to Saint-Justin in 1898 had given him some cause to worry about the changes already materializing. When they paid their respective visits,

[13]Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption*, xvi, 118; C.A. Dawson, W. Gettys, *An Introduction to Sociology* (New York 1929), 61, 77-9. Gettys was Professor of Sociology at the University of Texas. Honours programs in sociology were established at McGill in 1926 and at the University of Toronto in 1932.

[14]Hughes began the study, with the assistance of his Canadian-born, Chicago-trained wife Helen MacGill, before leaving McGill for Chicago in 1938; see E.C. Hughes, *French Canada in Transition* (Chicago 1943), 8-9. Shore, *Science*, 270, notes that LePlay's theories about family "found expression" in Hughes' work because of their influence on his mentor Park. Hughes himself acknowledges his debt to Gérin in Ch. 2, "The Rural Society," *French Canada in Transition*. Shore, 227-30, discusses some of the studies undertaken by McGill students under the aegis of the Social Science Research Project.

[15]H. Miner, *St. Denis, A French Canadian Parish* (Chicago 1939), ix, 63-70. Miner was in St. Denis from July 1936 to June 1937.

their subject communities had already moved well away from being isolated, family-based, self-sufficient peasant enclaves.

By World War II, the francophone social sciences were finding new energy, much of it directed to the study of Québec families and their place in the modern socioeconomic order. It was on the very basis of their "mistaken historical judgement" that Université de Montréal sociologist Philippe Garigue disputed the findings of Hughes and Miner, among others, both anglophone and francophone, who supported "folk society" theories about "traditional" Quebec families. Garigue maintained that such theories derived from a "conscious or unconscious" exaggeration of the French origin of Québec institutions. Few French institutions were exported directly to New France; even those so transferred were greatly modified by their new environment. The "uniquely French-Canadian" family, he asserted, actually resembled that of New England more than that of France: "il est donc possible de dire que la famille canadienne-française est nord-américaine." Folk society proponents ignored the "cultural homogeneity" that extenuated urban-rural differences in families. More important, they assumed that change resulted directly from "Anglo-Saxon" importations, thereby dismissing the "inherent dynamism" of French-Canadian culture.[16] Garigue's own landmark analysis, begun in 1953 and published nearly a decade later, stressed the historic identification of religious values of duty and sacrifice with familial values that sustained family-oriented, rather than sentimental and individualist, ideas about love and marriage. This relatively stable value system had endured despite structural changes and the family's functional adaptations, facilitating cultural transmission across generations and ensuring the survival of French Canada.[17]

With our privileged hindsight, we can see the irony in Garigue's conclusions. Even as his findings were coming to light in publication, many of those traditional values were being challenged as Québec entered its Quiet Revolution amidst a larger sociocultural revolution that would once again shake the equilibrium of

[16]P. Garigue, *La vie familiale des canadiens français* (Montréal 1962), 19-26; see also Garigue, "The French Canadian Family," in M. Wade, ed., *Canadian Dualism* (Toronto 1960), 181-200. Garique argued that francophone social scientists were skewing their findings on urban families by looking too hard for "une difference majeure" between these and rural families, as in the work of M. Lamontagne, J.C. Falardeau," The Life Cycle of French Canadian Urban Families," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science,* 13, 2 (May 1947), 233-470. During the 1940s, Father Georges-Henri Lévesque was a leading force in establishing a secularized sociology at Laval University; see D. Whyte, "Sociology and the Nationalist Challenge in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 19, 4 (1984-85),115-28. Shore, *Science*, 270, indicates that E.C. Hughes was a tremendous influence on Lévesque.

[17]Garigue, *La vie familiale* , 12, 24, 91-2; see also J.C. Falardeau, "The Changing Social Structures," in Falardeau, ed., *Essais sur le Québec contemporain* (Québec 1953), 104, 120.

modern families throughout the western world.[18] As in other moments of social turbulence, fears about "family crisis" inspired the need, or at least a public perception of the need, for concerted research on family life. The result was the first federal-government sponsored Canadian Conference on the Family, leading to the 1965 creation of the Vanier Institute of the Family, the nation's central agency for family research. By the 1960s as well, the functionalist paradigm steadily advanced by Chicago's Talcott Parsons since the 1940s was firmly in place as the cornerstone of modern family sociology, affirming the LePlayian heritage that made the family the primary element of social order, and reinforcing structural explanations for its historic changes. Not surprisingly, Frederick Elkin's *The Family in Canada*, the first "state of the art" survey of Canadian family sociology, followed the prevalent structural-functionalist line. Elkin reassured Canadians that "the family does not disappear, rather it changes and adapts and develops new patterns," all the while maintaining crucial socializing functions for its members. He also observed that the country's distinctive geography and history, class, religious, ethnic, occupational "and other groupings" made it "much too heterogeneous" to have "one or ten or twenty distinctive family types."[19] For all Elkin's seeming sensitivity to diversity, functionalist sociology encouraged understandings of families, past and present, as socioeconomic entities acting in common, united in uncontested — and uncontestable — familial objectives. The model paid scant attention to the differential effects of gender, age, class, geography, and so on, and even less to any family form other than the one decreed to represent the modern ideal: the self-enclosed male-breadwinner nuclear family. Only recently challenged for its assumptions of universality and its normative premises, it left a lasting imprint on public discourses about family, on social work practices and government policies, some remnants of which persist even as the 21st century commences.

[18]Other sociological inquiries of the time reveal foreboding about the acclaimed 1950s nuclear family despite its iconographic status; for example, J. Seeley, A. Sim, E. Loosley, *Crestwood Heights* (Toronto 1956), sparked a flurry of media and public attention. Examining a well-to-do Forest Hills neighbourhood in Toronto, its authors argued that affluence was making upward mobility a new pressure for families, and that materialism appeared to be overriding all "traditional" values. Although their sample was hardly representative, the study cast a dark light on postwar urban/suburban families and their inward-looking detachment from the wider community, both supporting the modernization thesis and challenging the theory of familial malleability. On the study, see V. Strong-Boag, "Their Side of the Story: Women's Voices from Ontario Suburbs," in J. Parr, ed., *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-80* (Toronto 1996), 42-3.

[19]F. Elkin, *The Family in Canada* (Ottawa 1964), 8, 31-2. Elkin, a University of Montréal sociologist, dismissed many of the studies on French-Canadian families as "moralistic ... commentaries on history," but his own views that "a pervasive familism" sustained the links between "survival, the family and the rural world" differed little from those of Hughes and Miner. On Parsons' influence, see D.H.J. Morgan, *Social Theory and the Family* (London 1975).

Although it preceded the initial stirrings of "the new social history" in Canada by some thirty years, it is tempting to identify an interdisciplinary bridge of sorts between Canadian sociology and social history in Samuel D. Clark's 1942 monograph, *The Social Development of Canada*. Infused with Innisian staples theory, Clark's synthesis of historical writing on Canadian society focused on the interplay of frontier development and social formation. He found that the age and gender composition of frontier communities, which favoured single young men, greatly affected social stability. Because of their dependence on the family unit, groups historically responsible for regulation and welfare either failed to become established or could not sustain themselves in its absence. As a result, many of the "normal controls of society" were also missing or ineffectual, as were the family mores and the religious and communal institutions traditionally upheld by the efforts of women — along with "most of the niceties and refinements of social relationships depending upon companionship within the family group."[20] Familial stability was itself contingent upon the specific frontier environment and the nature of production. Since timber production was closely tied to agriculture, timber communities saw the most stable family/social organization. Male-dominant mining communities, located within access of urban centres and all their purchaseable depravities, contained the least stable families. More emphatically than that of the family sociologists with their universalized modernization schema, Clark's work drew out the links between family, class, and the nature of production in specific historic and geographic settings. He also implicitly connected women with families, and both with stabilizing or "civilizing" trends.

Clark's provocative notions were not taken up with any unseemly haste by his colleagues in history. While Canadian historians of the time ascribed much importance to familial networks as key sources of colonial governance, trade and economic development, and were tremendously interested in settlement and nation-building, families did not signify in their work. Their scholarly objectives could not help but reflect prevailing notions about the subject hierarchy that historians should rightfully pursue. But it does seem curious that so little was made of the familial when so much pointed to it. In the classic works of Innis, Creighton, and Lower, there are no families knitting together the crucial Native-European trading networks; no families clearing land, homesteading, populating and reproducing imperial values in frontier territory; no families using family capital to invest in and extend the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence. It is as though "families are

[20]S.D. Clark, *The Social Development of Canada* (Toronto 1942), 1-5, 8-10. Clark completed his Master's degree at McGill in 1935, but found the ecological approach unappealing; see Shore, *Science*, 180; on Clark, see C. Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English Canadian Historical Writing, 1900-1970* (Toronto 1976), 163; H.H. Hiller, *S.D. Clark and the Development of Canadian Sociology* (Toronto 1982).

everywhere but families are nowhere," an "absent presence" that is a powerful motive force despite its seeming invisibility.[21]

In 1958, a harbinger of sorts appeared in the form of Arthur Lower's *Canadians in the Making: A Social History of Canada*, proclaimed by its publishers to be "the first book of its kind in Canada" and "a landmark in Canada's national growth." The author himself declared the book "experimental, and, as far as I know, a pioneering effort."[22] Lower's political framework and "great man" narrative must have comforted those apprehensive about any radical reconfiguration of the field that this "experiment" might augur. Yet it *is* "pioneering," in that he attempted to chronicle, insofar as the extant literature allowed, some of the sociocultural activity that went on within, around, at times even beneath history's exalted echelons. He even touched lightly on gender and family relations, arriving at interpretations necessarily coloured by the ideas and values of his own time. Conceding that "white blood must have begun to pass into the wigwams from the first," he contended that "this does not argue a return current; interbreeding was confined to the Indian mother's side," except for those (apparently) few white men who were "anchored by an Indian wife." (11) He proffers the usual stereotypes about "sturdy yeomen" with large families, French-Canadian habitants with even larger families, poor-but-ambitious "immigrant stocks" with the largest families of all, and a few "local family compacts" boasting remarkable patriarchs and their equally-remarkable scions. Women take the form of "eternal Eves" or their mirror opposites, the "tractable daughters and obedient wives" who qualified to be "the flower of Canadian womanhood." The historian's personal longing is palpable in his depiction of a Victorian tableau of "dignity and gravity," an imagined 19th century ritual in which "every respectable citizen walked to church on Sunday morning in plug hat and cut-away coat, followed by his numerous family, and decorously returned to eat his Sunday dinner of roast beef." (321) Here was the high point of a social harmony embodied in the mythic family, well-mannered, well-dressed and well-fed, captained by the middle-class, white, probably Protestant, likely urban *pater-familias*. Lower did not question the universality of this family experience, nor did

[21]For example, H.A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (New Haven 1930, 2nd edition Toronto 1956), 66-7, cites a memorandum, November 1681, M. Du Chesneau, "Irregular Trade in Canada," which opens with "The King, having been informed that all the families in Canada were engaged with the coureurs de bois ...," but there is nothing about this relationship in his classic study; in his conclusion, 392, he notes without comment that "the existence of small and isolated sections of French half-breeds throughout Canada is another interesting survival of this contact." Even the innovative work of H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860* (Toronto 1981) says nothing about the role of families in capital accumulation and industrial production. On families as an "absent presence," see L. Davidoff, M. Doolittle, J. Fink, K. Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (London 1999), 52-3.

[22]A. Lower, *Canadians in the Making: A Social History of Canada* (Toronto 1958), xv. The publishers' comments were on the original cover jacket.

he probe the roots of its patriarch's authority in the historic relations of class, gender, race and family. We can only assume that he believed it to represent the rightful order of things, the family to live by, if not with.

II. *Transitions: From Family Sociology to the History of Families*

i. *Demography and Family Reconstitution: Accounting for Families*

Not long after Lower's experiment, a fresh wave of scholarly interest in ordinary lives brought about a self-consciously "new social history" that made class both central subject and means of analysis. In recovering the experiences of common people, those dedicated to emerging sub-fields of working-class, women's, ethnic, and Black history invariably hit upon the bedrock of family, so imbricated are all other social relations in those of domesticity. Initially, the surest way across the threshold of private homes appeared to be quantitative. The first generation of family historians took advantage of the methodological groundwork already put in place by social scientists, assisted by the timely technology embodied in the first generation of computers, to develop "cliometrics."[23]

The big questions of early family history thus tended to be those that lent themselves to numerical answers, and were posed with a view to understanding the impact of structural change — specifically industrialization — on families. Historians examined such quantifiable matters as residence, household size, organizational structure, developmental cycles, inheritance systems, and migration. Necessarily community-based, these studies were detailed collective biographies of a manageable number of families inhabiting a shared, designated geographic space. Where data were available for more than one such "snapshot", it was possible to conduct longitudinal studies to trace the motion — or lack of motion — of a number of families over a certain period. The data's own limitations meant that time and space were fairly circumscribed, as were any generalizations that could be made about "the family."[24]

[23]Most demographic studies of the time were not focused specifically on the family, but on the population *en masse*. Prominent among Canadian demographers were Nathan Keyfitz, who studied population trends and birth rates, and Jacques Henripin, who produced important historical studies on the patterns of population growth and fertility in Québec and demographic variations in English and French Canada; see J. Henripin, "From Acceptance of Nature to Control: the Demography of the French Canadians Since the Seventeenth Century," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 23 (February 1957), 10-19; Henripin, *La population canadienne au début du xviiie siècle; Nuptialité-fecondité-mortalité infantile* (Paris 1954), and *Trends and Factors of Fertility in Canada* (Ottawa 1972). See also N. Keyfitz, "Some Demographic Aspects of French-English Relations in Canada", in M. Wade, ed., *Canadian Dualism*, 66-95.

[24]In England, the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, established in 1964 under the direction of Peter Laslett, used these tools to demonstrate that "the great family of Western nostalgia" — the three-generation household — had never

In Canada, this new wave of historical demography was exemplified by Louise Dechêne's *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle* (1974). Although Dechêne's specific purpose was to examine the trade relations girding the colonial economy, her careful reading of notarial records revealed that these economic ties were often ties of family. The two institutions "closest to the people" were those of family and parish, twin pillars of the colony's social structure. The nuclear family structure predominated, and the availability of land made partible inheritance common practice. As Gérin had observed in the late 19th century, it was not so much land that bound family members as a reciprocity characterized by a generationally defined sense of duty. Also significant was public acknowledgement of the family's importance as the colony's "only effective and truly compelling instrument of social control."[25] Dechêne's masterful study, and subsequent Québec-based population analyses, corrected earlier LePlayian views respecting transplanted French peasant families by establishing what was distinctly North American about their domestic arrangements, all the while confirming the centrality of the family as a unit of production.

Beginning where Dechêne's story closed, and in many ways a complementary study, Allan Greer's reconstitution of the socioeconomic history of three parishes [Sorel, St Ours, St Denis] in the Lower Richelieu Valley from the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries (1985) also focused on the lives of the settler-peasants or habitants. Close examination of similar notarial and parish records supports Greer's contention that Quebec rural society was comprised of feudal social relations upheld, and in turn upholding, pre-capitalist values. In the first two chapters, which treat the peasant household and family reproduction, he draws out clues from estate inventories to compensate for the absence of personal papers, diaries and letters.

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constituted more than a tiny minority in Western Europe since the 16th century, and that the nuclear or conjugal unit had actually preceded industrialization. The early 1970s marked the publication of the immensely influential *Household and Family in Past Times*, edited by Laslett and R. Wall (Cambridge, England 1972), and T.K. Rabb, R.I. Rotberg, eds., *The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays.* (New York 1973). The flagship *Journal of Family History* began publication in 1976.

[25]L. Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle* (Paris 1974); translated by L. Vardi as *Habitants and Merchants in 17th Century Montreal* (Montréal/Kingston 1992). Dechêne notes, 237, that Gérin had "discovered in the Quebec countryside the stem family so dear to his teachers in France." As discussed, Gérin may have been convinced that this was the ideal, but he was not convinced about its predominance, having found three family types in the Maskinonge district that he studied; see Gérin, "L'habitant de Saint Justin," 215; also Garigue, *La vie familiale*, 24. The abundance of parish records has seen quantitative history flourish in Québec: see also H. Charbonneau, A. Guillemette, J. Legare, B. Desjardins, Y. Landry, F. Nault, *Naissance d'une population: les français établis au Canada au xviie siècle* (Montréal 1987). See I. Caccia, L.Y. Dillon, "A Current Bibliography on the History of Canadian Population and Historical Demography in Canada, 1994-98," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 32 (Fall 1999), 73-85.

He is thus able to piece together a remarkably detailed account of household composition, material culture, production and consumption, marriage practices, sexual behaviour, and the community's larger demographic patterns. Greer concludes that their shared feudal subordination made the situation of individual peasants and their families much like that of their European counterparts; as did Dechêne's, however, his micro-historical approach also uncovers what is North American in both the smaller lives of, and the larger demographic patterns, affecting these families.

Although very influential in Europe, the proto-industrialization model of family change has had limited influence on Canadian research. Canadian historians acknowledge the continuation of domestic production through the early stages of industrial development, and note the ways in which farm families typically did not rely on agricultural production alone, most engaging also in some form of seasonal wage labour. But the primary focus has tended to be the rural family or the industrial family. David Gagan's study of Peel County (1981) used census reports, assessment rolls, wills, and mortgages to get at the adjustments that farm families had to make during a time when population growth was exceeding land availability. His analysis revealed how such correlates as land ownership, family size, inheritance prospects, and economic status determined the family's ability to sustain and reproduce itself. One of the preferred responses was out-migration, placing entire families in the position of "hopeful travellers" on the move to improve their situations while maintaining their integrity as family units.[26] Adding a cultural dimension, Chad Gaffield's work (1987) on Eastern Ontario's predominantly francophone Prescott County also uncovered evolving family strategies that combined traditional ideals of land ownership and cultivation with newer notions about later marriage, family limitation, and investment in children's education. Integral to the group's family strategies was the preservation of its Franco-Ontarian identity.[27] Bruce Elliott's examination of 775 Irish-Protestant families who left North Tipperary for the Ottawa and London areas between 1818 and 1855 also demonstrated how land and cultural identity underpinned family solidarity among the largest non-francophone ethnic minority group in 19th century Canada.[28] Gerard Bouchard's comprehensive

[26]D. Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West* (Toronto 1981).

[27]C. Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French Language Controversy in Ontario* (Montréal/Kingston 1987). For a comparative view, see C. Gaffield and G. Bouchard, "Literacy, Schooling and Family Reproduction in Rural Ontario and Quebec," *Historical Studies in Education*, 1, 2 (Fall 1989), 201-18.

[28]B. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (Montréal/Kingston 1988). See also J.I. Little, *Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848-81* (Montréal/Kingston 1991); F. Noel, *The Christie Seigneuries: Estate Management and Settlement in the Upper Richelieu Valley, 1760-1854* (Montréal/Kingston 1992); C.A. Wilson, *A New Lease on Life: Landlords, Tenants, and Immigrants in Ireland and Canada* (Montréal/Kingston 1994); M. Conrad, ed., *Intimate*

Quelques arpents d'Amérique (1996), the outcome of some twenty years of research, reconstituted virtually the entire population of the Saguenay region. Bouchard made the rural family the key determinant of economic development, positioning it at the centre of structural change rather than as a mere receptor, often an unwilling and unwitting one at that. Most important, Bouchard's findings call into question much conventional wisdom concerning the "inherent" conservatism of rural families, especially francophone Catholic families. The Saguenay's demographic patterns were not merely local, culturally specific variants, but intrinsic to a larger North American process wherein rural families were meeting structural changes creatively, often with a view to avoiding the "all or nothing" choice that industry seemed to present.[29]

Taken from the other (urban-industrial) side, Michael Katz's seminal analysis of industrializing Hamilton, Canada West (1974) was the first Canadian project to make extensive use of the (then) new computerized data-processing systems. Katz's micro-study of the 1851 and 1861 censuses emphasized the structural inequality that characterized the city of 12,000: 60 per cent of resources were controlled by an élite of the richest 10 per cent, while the poorest sector (two-fifths of the population) held 6 per cent. The "intensive transiency" of a population in flux ensured the continuation of such inequality. On the level of families, Katz confirmed their nuclear structure, but found households to be malleable, in that many contained the boarders whose presence signified both the importance of surrogate families to those (largely single men) on their own, and the contributions of extra-familial members to fragile working-class family economies. Using similar statistical testing, subsequent studies of property ownership mapped these patterns of inequality in other settings; in Toronto, in 1871, for example, half of all adult men owned a house, but a substantial segment of the male labouring population was nonetheless impoverished.[30]

Relations: Family and Community in Planter Nova Scotia, 1759-1800 (Fredericton, N.B. 1995).

[29]G. Bouchard, *Quelques arpents d'Amérique: Population, économie, famille au Saguenay, 1838-1971* (Montréal 1996). Bouchard's research, published regularly in scholarly journals, was conducted over 25 years through the Institut universitaire de recherches sur les populations, at Université de Québec (Chicoutimi). On the larger question of rural families and change, see the review essay by R.W. Sandwell, "Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History," *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 27, 53 (May 1994), 1-32.

[30] M. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge 1975). See G. Darroch and L. Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto 1994); they used a sample of 5,699 individuals, composed of adult male and female heads of households [313 were women], and males over 20. See also D.G. Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montréal/Kingston 1994).

Peter Gossage's recent work (1999) demonstrates the methodological and analytical gains made in the two decades since the watershed Katz study. Gossage comes so much closer to revealing how family relations are articulated to the new relations of production, in fluctuating rhythms of give-and-take, initiate-and-respond, as he explores these in the context of industrializing Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec, in the late 19th century. Reconstituting the family histories of several hundred couples through parish records, his main concern is to understand how marriage, household composition, and fertility were affected by the transition, especially the class basis of evolving demographic patterns. The latter revealed that the middle class was increasingly delaying marriage and restricting family size. Changes in these areas reflected a domestic reorganization related to the town's particular economic reorganization. The new patterns suggest the widening gap between the bourgeoisie and the struggling working class. Like Bouchard, Gossage contends that the demographic response of urban, francophone Catholic families fit the overall North American trend. While culturally prescribed, subjective, individualized motivations underlie such personal decisions as those involving marriage and family formation, equally important are the "boundaries set by constantly changing sets of material constraints, opportunities and circumstances."[31]

The interdisciplinary, University of Victoria-based Canadian Family History Project, a long-term collaborative effort focusing on the 1901 census, promises to further our understanding of the material basis and work relations of early 20th century families. Its first monograph, *Unwilling Idlers* (1998), coauthored by Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, compares 1891 and 1901 census data for six cities. Reading the census as a text that encodes a three-way relationship between the government, the enumerators, and the enumerated, the authors found that recurrent joblessness affected more than 1 in 3 families. More telling, however, is the fact that low average wages were a constant drag on household income and standards of living for most of the working class. Ultimately, the market could not sustain many of these urban families, the state would assist them only minimally and in keeping with perceived economic truths, and the family itself was the last shelter against destitution — a historic function that was becoming increasingly difficult to fulfil, but one whose importance for vulnerable working-class families was arguably greater than ever.[32]

[31]P. Gossage, *Families in Transition: Industry and Population in Nineteenth-Century Saint-Hyacinthe* (Montréal/Kingston 1999), 180.

[32]P. Baskerville, E. Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto 1998). The cities are Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Montreal and Halifax. On the project, see E. Sager, "Research Note: the Canadian Families Project," *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly*, 3, 1 (1998), 117-23. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, it is supported by its host institution and four other participating universities, and consists of 11 scholars from the disciplines of history, sociology, geography and historical demography.

Even a cursory glance at thirty years' worth of demographic studies indicates that this approach to families in history has retained its validity, becoming methodologically more sophisticated, consequently more adept, in uncovering the symbiosis of family and work relations, familial and structural change. Demography has been particularly useful in showing how, somewhere "between the level of classes and that of isolated individuals," families occupy a critical position in the socioeconomic order.[33] Historians working within these quantitative frameworks encouraged awareness of the ambiguities, complexities, and ongoing mutations that typify domesticity, past and present. Most significant among their findings was the fact that both the fertility decline and the nuclear family structure preceded industrialization, rather than being its chief demographic results. But the demographers' spotlight on the family unit ultimately imparts very little about the internal power dynamics of families and the interactions of their individual members, with each other and outside the family. How did families decide on their collective approach to needs that arose and conditions that were changing, or promising to change? How were priorities chosen and paths charted for individual members? How did individual family members — people of different ages, different sexes, unequal prospects, probably harbouring unique hopes — live within their defining parameters, staking their claims as family members and as autonomous individuals? Answers to such questions clearly cannot be inferred from numerical data, prompting family historians to turn their attention to specific life stages, both on their own and within the broader context of the life course. Even the shifts in method and approach, however, did not move attention far from the perennial question of how families adapted to modernizing forces.

ii. *Life Stages: Childhood, Youth, Marriage, Parenting, Sex (and Foucault)*

Although Philippe Ariès' work has been criticized for inferring broad historical trends from a narrow upper-class source base, his *Centuries of Childhood* (1962), which located an overall shift in societal perceptions of children in 17th century Europe, inspired an international scholarly interest in the most enigmatic of all historical subjects.[34] Once it was recognized that children have a history — that childhood is specific to time and place — age joined the identifying categories of class, gender and race, taking its place in the "trinity of oppressions" that historians

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On the role of statistical information in state formation, on reading statistics, see G. Emery, *Facts of Life: The Social Construction of Vital Statistics, Ontario, 1869-1952* (Montréal/Kingston 1993).

[33]Davidoff, *et. al.*, *The Family Story*, 7; T. Harevan, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review*, 96, 1 (February 1991), 1-3; K.A. Lynch, "Old and New Research in Historical Patterns of Social Mobility," *Historical Methods*, 31, 3 (Summer 1998), 95.

[34]P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York 1962); originally published in 1960. For a critique of the Ariès thesis, see D. Archard, *Children: Rights and Childhood* (London 1993).

could no longer overlook in their forays into past societies. The distinguishing feature of the "modern" childhood, that dependent, insulated life-stage before the assumption of adult responsibilities, is the absence of labour. Although we still lack a history of child labour, most of those that consider children support the view that, until very recently, children in the majority of households were expected to work in some capacity, as befitting their age, ability, gender, and the family's needs. The childhood that we recognize as such, along with the prolonged dependency that has come to characterize modern adolescence, were not so much biologically as economically determined, first enjoyed in families that could afford them in the material sense.

Historians of education must be credited with opening the field of Canadian childhood history. Influenced by American historiographical trends of the 1960s and 1970s, especially the revisionist work of Michael Katz during his tenure at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, they broke through the "institutional" walls of traditional education history to cast a critical eye on the relationships of socioeconomic and educational change, public schooling and state formation. Their work exposed the double edge of 19th century school reform, as it democratized access to education through public funding and compulsory attendance laws, expanding state control over working-class families just as parents' control over their children's participation in the family economy declined. The new education history also underscored the connections between school reform and the period's fundamentally class-based social anxieties.[35] "Nation-building," with its often fiercely-racist and eugenic motivations, was as much behind the "new education" as were pedagogical developments, emerging ideas about childhood, and the Protestant middle-class reformist notions encapsulated in the Social Gospel.

These themes were taken up by Neil Sutherland in his inaugural *Children in English Canadian Society, 1880-1920* (1976). In detailing how childhood was reconceptualized and institutionalized through reform campaigns and related state initiatives, demonstrating the growth of public support for a "modernized" child-

[35] M. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (New York 1968), inspired much of the Canadian revisionism. See A. Prentice and S. Houston, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto 1988); also A. Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada* (Toronto 1977). More recently, Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (London, Ontario 1988), 14-15, argues that "educational practice was centrally concerned with political self-making, subjectification and subordination." On the evolution of Canadian education history, see H. Graff, "Towards 2000: Poverty and Progress in the History of Education," *Historical Studies in Education*, 3, 2 (Fall 1991), 203-5; J. D. Wilson, "From Social Control to Family Strategies: Some Observations on Recent Trends in Canadian Educational History," *History of Education Review*, 13, 1 (1984), 1-13; C. Gaffield, "Back to School: Towards a New Agenda for the History of Education," *Acadiensis*, 15 (1986); N. Sutherland, "Does Lawrence Cremin Belong in the Canon?," *Historical Studies in Education*, 10, 1-2 (Spring/Fall 1998), 205-11.

hood as the nation's best way forward, Sutherland crafted an influential interpretive framework.[36] He pieced together the overlapping concerns of contemporary social reformers to reveal children through the anxious eyes of their middle-class parents and would-be protectors. But we also saw how fearful these adult observers were about the contaminant effects of their neighbours' children, many of whom could not aspire to a family life that conformed to the ideal family reflected back to them in their parlour mirrors. The childhood experience was contingent; the family's socioeconomic position was key to its nature; and it was, in fact, fear of the repercussions of an impoverished childhood for the future citizenry that galvanized the child welfare movement.

Much of the post-Sutherland historiography also approached children through the "child-saving" or family-centred reform campaigns of the late 19th -early 20th centuries. P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell (1987) discussed the conjoining of childhood and citizenship through legal and political structures, as the "right to childhood" rallied reformers. Within a framework of "rescue and restraint," with public schooling at the forefront, various new institutions created "total environments" in which to implement the middle-class design of modern childhood; the post-World War II welfare state was the "final element in the creation of childhood as an ideology in modern industrial societies." Theresa Richardson (1989) was probably the first childhood historian to use Foucauldian concepts in her comparative analysis of Canadian and American "mental hygiene" campaigns. Richardson considered how medicine, social science, and the pseudo-science of eugenics operated as "the childhood gaze," recasting childhood as a medical "psychobiological" phenomenon. Child welfare policies devised in accordance were largely responsible for the creation of the "social phenomenon of the maladjusted and mentally disordered child," who was also most likely to belong to a working-class, immigrant or "non-white" family.

My own work (1993) explored early 20th century attempts to improve infant and maternal welfare by means of "scientific motherhood," which constituted a medical regulation of maternity increasingly underwritten by the state. I used elements of social reproduction theory to situate their joint campaign within a

[36]N. Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society, 1880-1920: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto 1976); reissued by Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000. See also N. Sutherland, "Children and Families Enter History's Mainstream," and the articles in the Special Issue on Childhood and Family in the Twentieth Century, *Canadian Historical Review*, 78, 3 (September 1997). Among the early essay collections are J. Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canada* (Toronto 1982); R. Smandych, G. Dodds, A. Esau, eds., *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays in the History of Childhood and Youth in Canada* (Winnipeg 1991); B. Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History* (Toronto 1993). The most recent collection is E.A. Montigny, L. Chambers, eds., *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History* (Toronto 1998). For a comparative study of English/French Canadian approaches, see A. Turmel, "Historiography of Childhood in Canada," *Paedagogica Historica*, 33, 2 (1997), 509-20.

perceived crisis in the family that entwined these health issues with middle-class anxieties about rapid socioeconomic change, related urban pathologies, "racial" degeneration, and declining industrial productivity. Medical/state intervention in working-class families was critical to the success of "national efficiency" projects. As Katherine Arnup (1994) discovered in pursuing similar themes, traditional gender ideals, racist assumptions, and class suspicion — all bolstered by contemporary science — imbued medical and psychological theories that singled out "maternal ignorance" to explain why mothers and babies were dying, and why the state should uphold a very limited, primarily "educational" intervention.[37] Despite their interest in modern scientific methods, women were constrained in their childrearing choices by their material circumstances — the conditions of family life that their educators refused to consider as they persistently denied the class basis of these "social problems." Although neither of us dealt with the question of a widening gap between middle-and working-class families in terms of quality of life, our shared conclusions suggest that this was the case in early 20th century Canada.

A broad notion of "education" — with a profoundly regulatory purpose — became the panacea for a vast litany of "problems" stemming from economic conditions that were leaving a substantial number of Canadian families struggling to get by. It also justified increasing state intervention in the traditionally sacrosanct private domain. But it was not only the fragmenting, physically and morally-undermined urban working-class family that was seen to require such "education," as Jeffery Taylor reveals in *Fashioning Farmers* (1994). Taylor uses an Althusserian variant of post-structuralist theory to explain attempts by the state, through its educational institutions (specifically by means of public schooling, sociology, scientific management and home economics) to shape the family's role in reproducing the values of modern industrial capitalism. In early 20th century Manitoba, capitalist production and exchange values permeated rural life right through to the farm household. Traditional patterns of shared labour were to be up-dated by attempts to organize the farm family economy along factory lines, to make it "not so much a cooperative family unit but a miniature corporation, with the wife as

[37]P.T. Rooke, R.L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada, 1800-1950* (Llanham, Maryland 1983); T.R. Richardson, *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany, New York 1989); C.R. Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies*; K. Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in 20th Century Canada* (Toronto 1994). See the essays in K. Arnup, R. Pierson, A. Lévesque, eds., *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London 1990). On working-class motherhood, the classic study is Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1919* (London 1993); on race and families, see J. Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York 1985). See also J. Modell, D. Ross, eds., *Children in Time and Place: Developmental and Historical Insights* (Cambridge 1993).

purchasing agent." Also integral to the cause were a more pronounced gendered division of labour, "practical" education for farm children, and such reinforcing extracurricular activities as Boys and Girls Clubs.[38]

Nor was the profound faith in education diminished by war and depression. The mid-20th century witnessed a resurgence of the cult of domesticity in their aftermath, its gender and family prescripts drawing new impetus from an economic affluence that was placing more Canadians in a position to achieve the long-standing male-breadwinner-family ideal. Mona Gleason's recent study (1999) concentrates on how psychologists constructed, perhaps consecrated, the "norm" that upheld 1950s domesticity amidst a public clamouring for "normalcy" that manifested in nostalgia for the "traditional" family. Drawing on Michel Foucault's theories about the "technologies of the self," Gleason's conceptual framework is structured around the "technologies of normalcy" — comparing, differentiating, hierarchizing, homogenizing, and excluding — as promoted through school and public health systems, child guidance clinics, advice manuals, and popular media. By deconstructing the period's own "myth of the modern family," she shows how efforts to "normalize" the ideal aimed to entrench and reproduce the gender and family values of the dominant class, thereby "limiting what was truly acceptable to the confines of psychology's discursive construction of normalcy," and also, needless to say, limiting what was realistically attainable by many Canadian families.

Much of what we know about family life in the past, as these studies suggest, is conveyed through the eyes of middle-class observers, many of them professionals self-classified as "family experts," who alternated between exaltation and condemnation of what they saw or believed to exist in Canadian homes. While confining us to the fairly recent past, oral testimony offers some hope of getting through these obscuring filters, permitting a gateway to the day-to-day business of family that might not otherwise materialize, especially in regard to the working-class and immigrant families who left few written records in their own voices.[39] In her

[38] J. Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925* (Regina 1994).

[39] In these millennial times, historians are becoming more accepting of the role and value of memory as a viable approach to private lives; see J.A. Robinson, "Autobiographical Memory: A Historical Prologue," in D.C. Rubin, ed., *Autobiographical Memory* (Cambridge 1986), 19-23. The classic on imagination and historical representation is H. White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore 1973). See also J. Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review*, 3, 1 (1994), 5-28; J. Jeffrey and G. Edwall, eds., *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience* (Lanham, Maryland 1994). Among family stories recounted through memory, see D. Chong, *The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided* (Toronto 1996);C.M. Blackstock, *All the Journey Through* (Toronto 1997); J. Kulyk Keefer, *Honey and Ashes: A Story of Family* (Toronto 1998); W. Choy, *Paper Shadows: A Chinatown Childhood* (Toronto 1999); W. Johnston, *Baltimore's Mansion* (Toronto 1999).

examination of domestic life during the Great Depression, Denyse Baillargeon features the personal recollections of thirty francophone, Catholic, Montréal women. Their memories of everyday routines and rituals underscore how the structures of class, gender and custom brace domesticity, as the Depression context throws traditional family strategies — so often the coping strategies of women — into bold relief. Commitment to their familial roles, and all the ingenuity and resourcefulness expected of housewives of their class and time, gave these women the skills to "make do" and "get by." Even during long stretches of joblessness, men rarely took on "women's duties" in the home, the corollary being that mothers rarely worked outside the home, otherwise doing everything possible to keep families fed, clothed and sheltered. These families were accustomed to periodic unemployment, as Sager and Baskerville have shown; along with their historic, class-based experience of "stretching," even in good times, such expectations served as directions for domestic management and family relations.[40] But, as Joan Sangster reveals in her case study of wage-earning women in Peterborough, Ontario, while conventional role ascriptions offered women networks of support in their dual worlds of work and family, they also perpetuated their subordination and dependency in both settings. Taking a critical stance on memory that acknowledges how it is neither entirely "unmediated" nor entirely discursively-constructed, Sangster allows her oral histories (91 women, 10 men) to show how gendered understandings of "respectability" infused working-class self-identity, class identification, family life, and workplace culture. The women's stories emphasize the distinctly "feminine" consciousness that made them define themselves in specific reference to family, despite their roles as wage labourers.[41]

Personal memories corroborate historic trends, placing human beings and real lives into the statisticians' reports. They are also important because they disclose inlaid images, archetypes, and narrative threads that reveal much about past lives through collective storying. Neil Sutherland employs memory as just such an activating instrument in his second major childhood study, *Growing Up* (1997). Sutherland collected the childhood memories of people born between 1910 and 1950 in two Vancouver neighbourhoods, and in the rural, north-central British Columbia community of Evelyn, along with the oral testimonies, autobiographies, and personal records of others across English Canada. Multifaceted and free-ranging, these memories constitute "the central scripts of childhood," displaying common patterns and enough common structure to permit the weaving together of

[40]D. Baillargeon, *Ménagères au temps de la Crise* (Montréal 1991); translated by Y. Klein, *Making Do: Women, Family and Home in Montreal During the Great Depression* (Waterloo 1999).

[41]J. Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto 1995).

individual life stories across social class and geographic region.[42] At the same time that he emphasizes the material, class-delineated boundaries of childhood, Sutherland reasserts what is eternal about it: growing up has always been a complex process defying easy generalization, and even the best-laid attempts to reconfigure childhood — to make it a uniform "middle-class" experience — have not had even, predictable, "progressive" results. These collected memories also confirm the persistence of traditional family economies, consequently historic patterns of family/work relations. However much compulsory schooling, mass culture, consumerism, and family-centred leisure may have eroded distinctive elements of working-class culture, the continued importance of mutual assistance among kin, children's contributions of wages or services, and the domestic production entailed in sewing, canning, vegetable and fruit growing and small animal husbandry, is notable even past the mid-point of the 20th century. Despite increasing income and leisure, the historic relations of work and family were often preserved, whether by choice or necessity.

Much of the literature on courtship, marriage, and sexuality in the past, in Canada as elsewhere, is concerned more with public expectations or social constructions than actual practices. This is largely attributable to the specific challenges involved in locating sources — especially behavioural evidence — about the most intimate of all intimate relations. Of the early work in this area, Peter Ward's *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (1990) and Serge Gagnon's *Mariage et famille au temps de Papineau* (1993) are the closest Canadian examples of the so-called "sentiments" or "emotions" approach to family history. Incorporating some quantitative data with the highly individualized material of journals and personal correspondence, Ward points to the intersections of the private (romantic, emotional or sentimental) with the public, or 'civic' aspects, of marriage (duty and responsibility). He insists on the "ordinariness" of the views emanating from his sources, and contends that "the courtship and marriage rites of English Canadians cut across social boundaries." The sources' decidedly anglophone, Protestant, middle-class provenance suggests otherwise, but they do effectively demonstrate how a period's romantic images, gender ideals, and class-based social conventions are encoded in private, reflective discourses. Focusing on francophone Catholic families, Gagnon's study addresses the value system encompassing marriage and family in Québec during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Like Ward's anglo-Québec couples, the francophone couples most likely to accept the stringent requirements placed before them by Church and state were of the middle class, those of better or worse means either less compliant in the face of

[42]N. Sutherland, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto 1997). Sutherland explains this "schematic" model and its application to his own work, 7-12.

these prescriptions, or perhaps more willing to contest them.[43] From opposite sides of the cultural divide, these histories are remarkable in that they are not particularly divergent. What we need are further explorations of how class and what can broadly be called "culture" — ethnicity, region, language, religion — fashion courtship and marriage practices, and what this entails for gender, sexual, and family relations.[44]

In addition to the problematic source base, emerging analytical trends have pointed the historical study of sexuality in the direction of discourse rather than practice or behaviour. It is in addressing such evasive historical subjects as sex that post-structuralist concepts and tools of analysis, notably Derridian deconstructive reading, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Foucault's emphasis on the material body and the discourses of power, have proven most valuable. Foucault's influence — already noted in several instances — dominated the 1990's historiography. By placing power at the centre of private relations, he turned attention to the formidable "heterosexual matrix" of class, race, gender and sexuality that upholds what is normative through its compulsory, disciplinary and exclusionary elements. Foucauldian discourse analysis has encouraged interrogation of "timeless" concepts too long presumed to be universal, definitive, unproblematic. Moreover, as an explanatory concept, "regulation" is more fluid and relational than earlier "social control" approaches that tended to assign an omniscient power to the regulators.[45]

[43]P. Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montréal/Kingston 1990); S. Gagnon, *Mariage et famille au temps de Papineau* (Sainte-Foy, Québec 1993). See also A. Gagnon, "The Courtship of Franco-Albertan Women, 1890-1940," in E.A. Montigny, L. Chambers, eds., *Family Matters.*

[44] Family biographies have filled in some of the details for some individuals, but they tend to be concerned with "special" middle-class families for whom both public and private records exist; see K.M.J. McKenna, *A Life of Propriety: Anne Murray Powell and Her Family, 1755-1849* (Montreal/Kingston 1994), and J.I. Little, *The Child Letters: Public and Private Life in a Canadian Merchant -Politician's Family, 1841-1845* (Montréal/Kingston 1995).These gender prescriptions and their outcome for public roles and private relations are the subject of Cecilia Morgan's *Public Men and Virtuous Women: the Gendered Languages of Religion and Politics in Upper Canada, 1791-1850* (Toronto 1996), which delves into the ideals conveyed through the language of politics and religion in the public discourses of Upper Canada. The cult of domesticity and its "separate spheres" ideology were grafted uneasily onto a frontier society, but nonetheless took root in the public imagination, at least insofar as the latter can be "read" through public discourses. Yet there was clearly a tension between the negative implications of family among reformers who challenged the patronage and nepotism that characterized colonial politics, and the profound social importance ascribed to domesticity, a theme that needs further exploration.

[45]M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, 1, An Introduction* (New York 1984); *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London 1989); Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in R. Young, ed., *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (London 1987), 48-78. See J. Weeks, "Foucault for Historians," *History Workshop Journal*, 14 (August 1982), 165-78; C. Waters, "Legacies of Foucault: New Writing on the History of Sexuality," *Gender and History*, 2, 2 (1990), 218-22; J.D. Wrathall, "Provenance as Text: Reading the

I won't enter into the debate, often circular, concerning post-structuralist threats to class analysis, whereby the very concept of class as a meaningful category of personal experience/historical understanding is deconstructed into absurdity. It is sufficient to note that, insofar as Canadian historians have embraced elements of post-structuralist method, none to date has lost sight of the material world containing discourses; all acknowledge the real class, gender, and racial dimensions of power relations and avoid arguing that reality is accessible only through representation, or the "from-things-to-words move" as Michele Barrett succinctly defined it.[46]

In an early synthesis of the disparate bits of historical analysis on sexuality in Canada, sociologist Gary Kinsman introduced many history students to social construction as a means of understanding that identifying categories are actively "made" by dominant social groups employing moral regulation to sustain hegemony. Thus sexuality comprises a set of historically and culturally specific social relations, whose shifting [and plural] definitions correspond to parallel shifts in other social relations. Approaches such as Kinsman's also decentred Victorian sexual repression by revealing that the Victorians discussed and regulated sexuality in very public ways. Contemporary medical, psychological, and social-scientific theories, often premised on Darwinian or pseudo-Darwinian ideas, made classification a promising new tool of social analysis and suggested the necessary forms of regulation, as demonstrated in Mariana Valverde's influential study of the discourses of social/moral reform, principally those of the social purity movement.[47]

Within this context of moral/social regulation, Serge Gagnon's *Plaisir d'amour et crainte de Dieu* (1990) examines the regulation of sexuality in rural,

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Silences Around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections," *Journal of American History*, 79, 1 (1992); J. Kucich, "Heterosexuality Obscured," *Victorian Studies* 40, 3 (Spring 1997). See also J. Weeks, *Against Nature: Essays on History, Sexuality and Identity* (Concord, Mass.: 1991), and R. Porter, L. Hall, *The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950* (New Haven, Conn. 1995).

[46]The classic deconstruction of deconstruction is, of course, B.D. Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Philadelphia, Penn. 1990). See also M. Barrett, "Words and Things: Materialism and Method in Contemporary Feminist Analysis," in M. Barrett and A. Phillips, eds., *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates* (Stanford, California 1992), 203-4. Theorists and practitioners discuss its applications in K. Jenkins, ed. *The Postmodern History Reader* (London 1997).

[47]G. Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montréal 1987; 2nd edition, Montréal 1996); M. Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto 1991). Although not Foucauldian, Jay Cassels, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto 1987) discusses these public discourses, increasingly dominated by a medical profession keen to extend its social authority with the assistance of the state.

colonial, French-Catholic Lower Canada as documented in the correspondence between parish priests and their bishops. What is astonishing, in light of the Church's strict prohibitions, is the relative rarity of sexual infractions. Though this may well be a matter of "getting away with it," rates of illegitimacy were exceedingly low by comparison to those of contemporary Europe and North America. It is here that the significance of religion, culture, and community comes into play, and the primacy of family over that of self-individuation is made visible in a time and place where collective familial welfare may have preempted even the most fundamental of human urges. A sense of a "sexual geography," with a slightly higher number of indiscretions in more recently settled areas than in the old parishes, and in parishes closer to anglophone, Protestant communities, also points to the entwining of class, community, and cultural heritage where sexual mores and sexual behaviour are concerned.[48]

Engaging this concept of sexual geography with respect to youth, gender and class are two complementary studies, Karen Dubinsky's *Improper Advances* (1993) and Carolyn Strange's *Toronto's Girl Problem* (1993). Both are essentially discourse analyses informed by Foucault's theories of power, discipline, and regulation. Both make the fundamental point that sex is a gendered experience, but also one that is class-bound. They explore the coalescence of social constructions about gender and sex with laws regulating the sexual conduct of women and men, though largely the former, who were paradoxically made out to be victims and predators at once. Also evident in Dubinsky's rural and northern communities and Strange's big-city Toronto are inchoate middle-class fears about gender inversion, with all its implied familial and social dangers, that fostered a veritable "moral panic" about youthful lower-class female sexuality, and a range of regulatory, at times punitive, measures to contain it.[49] In their respective settings, Dubinsky and Strange chart the spatial dimensions of sexuality, pointing out that public outcry about the "dangers" of public spaces, whether backroads or city amusements, diverted attention from the violence against women that was so often perpetrated in the "safety of home." The connections drawn between economic independence and

[48]S. Gagnon, *Plaisir d'amour et crainte de Dieu: Sexualité et Confession au Bas-Canada* (Québec 1990). On these themes, see the essays in J. Weeks and J. Holland, eds., *Sexual Cultures: Communities, Values and Intimacy* (London/New York 1996).

[49]K. Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago 1993); Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem*. See also A. McLaren, "Policing Pregnancies: Sexuality and the Family, 1900-1940," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3 (1992), 17-23; J. Sangster, "'Incarcerating "Bad Girls': The Regulation of Sexuality Through the Female Refuges Act in Ontario, 1920-1945," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7, 2 (1996), 239-75; T. Myers, "Qui t'a débauchée?: Family Adolescent Sexuality and the Juvenile Delinquents Court in Early-Twentieth-Century Montreal," in Montigny, Chambers, eds., *Family Matters*. See the synthesis offered by T. Loo and C. Strange, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939* (Toronto 1997).

sexual behaviour are important. If most young women could not afford to leave the parental home, however, we might wonder whether the new sexual expressiveness so feared by middle-class observers was truly limited to public spaces, therefore limited on all counts. Dubinsky's *The Second Greatest Disappointment* (1999) further explores these evasive relations of gender, class, race, sexuality and "space" through the Foucault-inspired concept of "the tourist gaze." She considers the mutability of sexuality, specifically heterosexuality, in relation to changing gender and marital ideals, wryly packaged within a deconstruction of the "cultural code" imprinted in the popular association of Niagara Falls ("the greatest theme park of heterosexuality") with honeymoons. Dubinsky also links early 20th-century changes in "the public culture of heterosexuality" with the identification of honeymoons as rituals signifying an "adult citizenship" premised on the twin achievements of sexual maturity/marriage. Consequently, the 19th century's upper-class "bridal tour" became a heterosexual "coming out" for the middle-class young marrieds of the 1920s, making its way into working-class practices after World War II.[50]

If the 20th century saw the emergence of a distinctive life-stage between childhood and adulthood, we need to know how this development variously reflected new ideas about childhood and youth, a changing economy that restricted work opportunities for young people while calling for more schooling, and the related changes in family models that increasingly emphasized affective relations over the historic concept of the family as a unit of mutual, often material, assistance and shared labour. While we still lack a history of adolescence, the post World War II era, currently hot in historical circles, has inspired several recent publications that consider that liminal stage against the backdrop of the Baby Boom and the youth-centred "revolutions" of the 1960s. Doug Owram's *Born at the Right Time* (1996) is our first generational history, chronicling the up-bringing and coming-of-age of the century's epoch-making birth cohort, the notorious Boomers. Owram outlines post-war economic and demographic trends and their far-reaching sociocultural repercussions, as well as the role of the media and popular culture in disseminating certain "family values." His examination of the converging student, sexual, and women's liberation movements confirms how age is not only a component of self-identity, but is salient to collective identity and the dialectics of power.[51] The middle-classness of his subjects does not lend itself to examination of this point, but it is evident that the newly-protracted life-stage between childhood and adult independence, while more and more common across class, race, and

[50]K. Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto 1999). Dubinsky uses Foucault, both directly and through British sociologist John Urry's Foucauldian concept of "the tourist gaze," which denotes the invention and organization of the tourist experience.

[51]D. Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto 1996).

regional boundaries, was still dependent on the family's economic standing. A broader affluence made teenagers' wages less important to the working-class family economy, while, as Sangster shows, a new postwar trend was replacing teenagers with mothers as secondary breadwinners, as a growing proportion of women reentered the workforce after having children. Teen labour increasingly took the form of part-time work, and the primary occupation of youth became high school. Once again, however, class differentials remained. Attendance increased for all classes and ethnic groups across the nation, but high-school graduation was still predominantly confined to the "Canadian" middle class.

Mary Louise Adams (1997) relies on Foucault, primarily his notion of surveillance, to explain how the dominant discourses captured in the popular media, educational literature, film, and government reports of the 1950s were explicitly meant to affirm traditional understandings of masculinity, femininity and "normal" heterosexuality. As did Dubinsky's second study, Adams' examination of the construction of the normative reveals much about how its opposite — homosexuality — was demonized in Cold War Canada. In *L'amour en patience* (1997) Gaston Desjardins tackles the same topic, same period, for Québec. His approach is also Foucault-inspired, his method, discourse analysis; his sources cover a range of popular, religious, medical, and psychological literature, and the government publications and educational films at the basis of sex education in the schools. Even in supposedly repressive Catholic Québec, the emphasis on the negative aspects of sexuality — sex as sin — and Church authority in all sexual matters, gave way to recognition of the importance of physical intimacy (within heterosexual marriage, of course) and the expertise of doctors and psychiatrists. With Owram, Adams and Desjardins stress the turning-point nature of the 1950s, during which adolescence became both a recognized life-stage, and, in Adams' words, "one of the distinctive markers of the postwar world." Yet there are signs that a distinctive "youth culture" was making its presence felt by the 1920s, in the wake of structural, cultural, and technological changes intensified by World War I. Like Owram as well, they note the middle-class basis of their subject group without examining the class elements to any degree. Was youth culture a largely "constructed" menace to middle-class respectability and domesticity? Was it a "homogenizing" instrument where working-class and immigrant families were concerned? The problem, as usual, is situated between words, images, and their assimilation, on the one hand, and the material limits of participation, on the other.[52]

[52]M.L. Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto 1997); G. Desjardins, *L'amour en patience: La sexualité adolescente au Québec, 1940-1960* (Québec 1997). On 1920s youth culture, see P. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920's* (New York 1977). The classics on adolescence include J. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York 1977); J. Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975* (Berkeley, Calif. 1989);G. Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York 1997).

My sketch of some of the historical writing on life stages and their keynote experiences underscores the basic point that multifarious sociocultural elements are at work in their definition, timing, and how they are lived out within different social groups. Class and culture, as well as biology and often to greater effect, establish particular points of entry and passage. Moreover, just as life stages are fluid and contingent, individuals are not frozen in them, do not necessarily move consecutively through them, may experience several simultaneously, and may, of course, skip some in large part or even altogether. Childhood, adolescence, sexual relations, marriage, and parenthood are no more universal than they are historically unchanging. Much depends on the when, where, and how of family life.

iii. *Family Dynamics: Life Course, Gender Roles, Family Strategies and Family Economies*

The life-course framework is often used in association with life-stage analysis, with the intention of stressing the fluidity and mutability of life stages and family life. Life-course historians attend to the ways in which family members follow their own paths, but these individual life-histories are examined as they converge with larger histories: those of the family itself, as well as those of generations, communities, regions, nations. By getting a sense of how the phases of the life course have changed over time, historians can identify such developments as the increasing systematization of the life course itself over the 20th century. The challenge lies in avoiding a mechanistic model that, while ordering life-stages logically, might not leave room for divergences, making life decisions appear inevitable and masking the personal, idiosyncratic, or perhaps just-plain-foolish choices that must have been as common in the past as they are in our own family circles.[53]

Life-course analysis has been applied most productively in studies on women and gender. Without conflating the history of women and the history of families, historians working in these areas share many questions, as they look to understand how these ties came about, why they persist, and how they have changed, in order to appreciate how family operates as the principal site for the manufacture of gender identity, and why this is also a class issue. There is simply no denying the elemental

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There is no Canadian history of adolescence yet see my take on it, C.R. Comacchio, "Dancing to Perdition: Adolescence and Leisure in Interwar English Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 32, 3 (1997), 5-35; also C. Sethna, "Wait Till Your Father Gets Home: Absent Fathers, Working Mothers and Delinquent Daughters in Ontario during World War II," in E.A. Montigny, L. Chambers, eds., *Family Matters*; also D.O. Carrigan, *Juvenile Delinquency in Canada: A History* (Toronto 1998).

[53]T. Hareven, "Family Time and Industrial Time," in Hareven, ed., *Family and Kin in Urban Communities* (New York 1977), 35. American historical sociologist Glen Elder developed the life-cycle approach, precursor to life-course studies, in the early 1970s; see the essays in Hareven, *ed., Transitions: The Family and the Life Course in Historical Perspective* (New York 1978); also A. Rossi, "Life-Span Theories and Women's Lives," *Signs*, 6, 1 (Autumn 1980), 4-32.

bonds that have tied women to families in a manner that has never applied equally to men. They also recognize that, if families have constrained women on numerous counts, the familial role has also served women as a source — sometimes the unique source — of both private and public power. Despite their subordinate position, women have historically been the primary agents of family adaptation to the forces of change.[54]

In their path-breaking life-course studies, Veronica Strong-Boag and Andrée Lévesque traced the chronology of women's lives individually, in families, and against the wider backdrop of a newly "modern" Canada and Québec during the interwar years. With respect to ideas/ideals about womanhood and family, two cultures with divergent social and religious customs were more similar than not. The "new woman" enjoyed more options for education, employment, and political involvement than her predecessors, but, as they demonstrate, the traditional, biologically-defined roles and relationships premised on family remained her defining experience. Strong-Boag considers how the mass media, especially the "family magazines" that proliferated during these years, subsumed the interests of women within those of family, targeting the "home-maker" whose exhausting round of everyday labour literally made the happy home of middle-class ideal, and establishing her as the icon of a new consumer society. Lévesque's analysis shows how the maternalist ideals conveyed through intermeshing religious and nationalistic discourses promoted a womanhood rendered near-divine by virtue of the familial role, all the while vehemently defending the rule of the father/provider. The Catholic Church may have dominated these discourses in Québec, but a flurry of secular experts across the land, especially (male) physicians, jockeyed for position as modern advisers to these ostensibly modern women. As Denise Lemieux and Lucie Mercier confirmed in their comprehensive life-course study of Québec women, even the structural changes and technological advances that marked the first half of the 20th century did not alter the fundamental ordering of women's lives, the day-to-day, morning, noon and night aspects of a domestic labour that upheld the family.[55]

[54]C. Hall, "Feminism and Feminist History," in Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (London 1992), 15. On maternal feminism in Canada, see L. Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto 1979); and Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto 1998). See also R. Rapp, E. Ross, R. Bridenthal, "Examining Family History," in J. Newton, M. Ryan, J. Walkowitz, eds., *Sex and Class in Women's History* (London 1983).

[55]V. Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Toronto 1988); A. Lévesque, *La Norme et les déviantes: des femmes au Québec pendant l'entre-deux-guerres* (Montreal 1989), translated by Yvonne Klein, *Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939* (Toronto 1994); D. Lemieux, L. Mercier, *Les Femmes au tournant du siècle, 1880-1940: Âges de la vie, maternité et quotidien*

By the mid-1970s, Canadian feminist sociologists were integral participants in the "domestic labour debates," which attempted to refine classical marxism in order to integrate the complexities of gender oppression with those of class oppression, to theorize the productive aspects of reproductive labour, and to incorporate into the evolving body of marxist thought an understanding of social reproduction as a necessary corollary to capitalist production. The outcome was a fresh appreciation of the centrality of domestic labour — historically the work of women — to capitalism, as the sociology of the family was "fundamentally transformed" by this understanding of the significance of gender in terms of the larger systems embodied in family, patriarchy and capitalism.[56] Social scientists who considered these interrelations in historical context, such as Meg Luxton (1980) and Marjorie Cohen (1985), turned attention to the false dichotomies represented in "separate spheres" notions of the gendered division of labour. Luxton discussed the class-bound, generationally transmitted values associated with women's domestic labour, which, in working-class homes, often made the difference between destitution and a measure of economic and familial security. Cohen revised the standard view of the family farm in relation to agricultural development and capitalist accumulation in 19th century Ontario, while revealing the importance of women's labour to this process, both in its reproductive sense – maintaining and sustaining the labouring population for farm work and occasional wage labour – and in active production in such areas as dairying.[57]

By reconceptualizing "women's work," these undertakings have had lasting effects on family and women's history. To untangle the threads binding women and family, feminist historians have reevaluated "separate spheres" and modified earlier views about the impact of factory production on women's roles and on the family economy. A newly-rigid division of labour within the home was replicated

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(Québec 1992). See also A. Lévesque, "Réflexions sur l'histoire des femmes dans l'histoire du Québec," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amerique française*, 51, 2 (1997), 271-84; J. Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," in Parr and M. Rosenfeld, eds. , *Gender and History in Canada* (Toronto 1996).

[56]B. Fox, "The Feminist Challenge: A Reconsideration of Social Inequality and Economic Development," in Fox, Brym, *From Culture*, 120-23. The Canadian contributions to the domestic labour debates are extensive; some of the highlights are W. Seccombe, "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism," *New Left Review*, 83 (1974), 3-24; Smith, "Women, Class and Family," in Burstyn, Smith, *Women, Class, Family and the State*, 3-24; the essays in B. Fox, ed., *Hidden in the Household: Women's Domestic Labour Under Capitalism* (Toronto 1980); and the essays in R. Hamilton and M. Barrett, eds.,*The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism and Nationalism* (London 1986). For updates, see also S.J. Wilson, *Women, Families and Work*, 3rd ed (Toronto 1991), 47-62; P Armstrong and H. Armstrong, *Theorizing Women's Work* (Toronto 1990), 67-98.

[57]M. Luxton, *More Than A Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (Toronto 1980); M. Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development in 19th Century Ontario* (Toronto 1988).

outside it, where women's work was also gender-defined, inferior to, and consequently not valued, in every sense, as much as that of men. Yet, if we simply accept that the separate spheres ideal was practised as much as preached, and that work and home were indeed "sundered" by industrialization, we falsify the domestic arrangements of many Canadian families. New research recognizes the permeability of boundaries between work and home, the overlap of domestic and productive labour, and the continued importance of a family economy of mutuality and reciprocity, often involving the exchange of services necessary to transform commodities into things that family members can use: hot lunches, clean clothes, mended shoes.

Whatever the prevailing views about where they belonged, then, women and children lived in networks of domestic and public, home and work, family and neighbourhood, just as did men, if not in precisely the same ways. Elizabeth Jane Errington has shown that the women who barely merit mention in the "official" pre-Confederation sources at the basis of much historical research were frequently the mainstays of their family's material well-being, as well as acting as principal caregivers. Sean Cadigan's discussion of the household economy of the 17th-century Newfoundland fishery reveals its near-total dependence on family labour, and the importance of women's labour in an ostensibly male-dominated enterprise. Marilyn Porter has traced the continuation of this family dynamic to the present day, indicating how women's work in the fishing family household, fiercely demanding and unrelenting, is vital to family and community reproduction. The persistently marginal economic position of Newfoundland fishing families ensured that individual self-interest had to be subsumed in the interests of the family. Gail Cuthbert Brandt and Naomi Black have compared the experiences of rural women in Québec and France to demonstrate the myriad interactions of gender, family, and work.[58]

What is striking is the continued importance of women's labour in both pre-industrial and industrial times, in rural and urban settings. In *The Gender of Breadwinners* (1990), the first Canadian study of gender, work and family to take advantage of the (then) new analytical tools offered by post-structuralist theory, Joy Parr sought to avoid the "binary opposites" grounding assumptions about what constitutes public/private, men's work/women's work, and to examine, instead, where they overlap and conjoin, and how they contradict. Parr's comparative case studies of the wage labour and private lives of female textile workers in Paris and male furniture workers in Hanover (Ontario), reveals how gendered understandings

[58]E.J. Errington, *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada, 1790-1840* (Montréal 1995); S. Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855* (Toronto 1995); M. Porter, *Place and Persistence in the Lives of Newfoundland Women* (Brookfield, Vermont 1993); N. Black, G.Cuthbert Brandt, *Feminist Politics on the Farm: Rural Catholic Women in Southern Quebec and Southwestern France* (Montréal/Kingston 1999).

of work and family simultaneously supported and contradicted the roles of individual breadwinners, the existential gap being particularly wide for female breadwinners. Although many Paris families depended on the latter in the absence of steady local employment for men, women's strong position in the economies of both town and family did not translate into gender equality and familial authority. In Hanover, where both the local economy and family life were organized along traditional, male-dominant lines, providing for a family was inseparable from masculine identity; women, for the most part, did "women's work" in the home. Noteworthy about Parr's analysis, therefore, is the revelation that even the unusual work/family environment in Paris did not mitigate the socially sanctioned power relations defined by gender and class and reinforced in family. We see how, in countless ways, gender and family relations are influenced more by class and the dominant culture than by the family's own circumstances — how the quotidian can confute, and potentially conflict with, those values. What we need to figure out is *why*; what makes human beings committed to role ascriptions that differ from their actual roles? Even as historians challenge the binary opposites at the base of so much discussion about gender, the oppositional nature of the public self and the private self continues to perplex.[59]

Interpreting women's domestic labour solely as reproductive labour and management of consumption, and industrialization as a break in the historic relations of family and work, obscures the complexities of "getting by" and the different roles of family members in the process; it also oversimplifies the larger process of modernization. In more instances than we can know, supposedly dependent women and children were shoring up the family economy, often operating within a "hidden" or "informal" economy, outside the masculine marketplace, that was largely their own domain.[60] Recent work on the family economy, frequently conducted within a life-course framework and with a specific view to uncovering "family strategies," also emphasizes the blurred lines of productive/reproductive labour. Historians who focus on family strategies examine family decisions and actions as responses to external social, economic, and political pressures in light of the changing ages and roles of members. Their goal is to discern to what degree behaviour might correspond to external conditions, and to what degree it responds to the family's internal, traditional rhythms. Critics of this approach have questioned the viability of the concept of "strategies," with its implicit notions of choice and deliberation, when constraints both internal and

[59]J. Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto 1990).

[60]J. Dickinson and B. Russell, "The Structure of Reproduction in Capitalist Society," in Dickinson, Russell, eds., *Family, Economy and State: The Social Reproduction Process under Capitalism* (New York 1986), 1-4; see also the discussion of social reproduction in S. Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900* (London 1988).

external may well have limited — even removed — the element of choice. Non-material and non-quantifiable factors out of the reach of known historical methods might hold the most explanatory force where household decisions are concerned, leaving historians to see as "strategies" only those whose outcomes are readily traced.[61]

The first Canadian study to look at family strategies within a life-course framework was Bettina Bradbury's examination of Montréal families between 1861 and 1891, a critical moment during which "the nature of the interaction between family and work [were] in the process of changing." As Herbert Ames detailed in his survey of the "city below the hill," these working-class families could not subsist on one wage. Their survival and reproduction, therefore, must be understood within the context of a family economy rooted in the labour of all family members. Age and gender determined the type and extent of individual contributions, which, in turn, defined the individual's familial status. No matter to what degree women and children facilitated the family's subsistence, as Bradbury shows, final authority rested with the male head of the household. Thus the family operated simultaneously as a unit of survival, solidarity, and support, and also as the setting, and source, of interpersonal tensions, gender inequality, and generational conflict. While she acknowledges the power struggles that took place between men and women, parents and children, Bradbury's emphasis on "strategies" perhaps exaggerates familial consensus, at times even in the face of contradictory evidence, such as that concerning alcohol abuse and domestic violence.[62]

The dynamics of class, age and gender still defined the roles and contributions of working-class family members a half-century later, in 1920s Halifax, as Suzanne Morton reveals in *Ideal Surroundings* (1995). Morton applies life-course analysis to a case study of Richmond Heights, a working-class Halifax neighbourhood reconstructed after the 1917 harbour explosion according to British "Garden City" standards. Attentive to class-based ideas about "respectable" domesticity, Morton echoes Bradbury's findings in revealing the continuities on the levels of ideas and material reality where working-class family life is concerned. Despite their modern

[61]Hareven, "Family Time and Industrial Time," 188-9. On family strategies, see the critical commentaries in "Family Strategy: A Dialogue," *Historical Methods*, 20, 3 (1987), 113-25.
[62]B. Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto 1993); S. Morton, *Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s* (Toronto 1995). Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-95* (Montréal/Kingston 1994), describes how "the parish and the hearth" were mutually supportive; Lévesque's study reveals that this ecclesiastical campaign continued to hold force in Québec during the interwar years. Similarly, Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto 1996), discusses how choices about religion and leisure were affected by gender and class, and vice versa, indicating how Protestant worship became increasingly feminized, while its most sustained challenge came from young single men of both classes.

"ideal surroundings" — as the housing project was billed — working-class women were still obliged to find "extra-market" ways to contribute to the family economy without detracting from the familial/social status of male breadwinners, just as the contributions of children remained important to the family's material welfare. The male-breadwinner-family ideal that was already well on its way to cross-class acceptance by the late 19th century was no closer to realization for the majority of the working class even during the so-called Roaring Twenties. Under-and unemployment were perennial threats to the security of Atlantic labourers and their families. Nor did the plight of single mothers improve; like Bradbury, Morton found that widowed, deserted and divorced women were fortunate if they could rely in some measure on the assistance of family and kin. Public provision for marginalized families remained ill-considered and largely ineffectual, as can be seen in the history of families set apart from the ideal due to "race" and cultural differences.

iv. *"Other" Families: "Race," Ethnicity, and Immigration*

The history of white settlement and immigration is in and of itself a family story. In order to facilitate this process in the name of nation-building, the existing population of the great Northwest — the vast clans of Aboriginal peoples for whom family and kinship were the central organizing principle of all life — had to be transferred to reserves under the wardship of the paternal state. We do not, as yet, have a study specifically about the culture and experience of family among the Native communities so painfully caught in this conjuncture of social and familial change. Twenty years ago, Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown produced pioneering studies that effectively spanned several sub-fields of the "new social history," elucidating the largely-overlooked relations of race, gender, and family embedded in the structures of trade and governance of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies. Van Kirk and Brown showed how disapproving missionaries, traders, government agents, and white settlers interfered with and disrupted the traditional family economies of Aboriginal societies, their understandings of gender roles and relations, and their kin-based economic, social and political networks. The emissaries of a "superior" civilization became increasingly hostile to "mixed" marriages, and more forceful in imposing their European notions about the patriarchal family.

By the 19th century's end, as J.R. Miller describes, Native childrearing culture had also met with misapprobation by Euro-Canadians, whose harsher brand of discipline was inimical to Aboriginal customs. Believing that their own ways were crucial to the development of morally-upright, productive modern "Christians," the government's Indian agents enforced a residential school system that broke up families, destroyed the generational process of cultural transmission, obliterated knowledge of language, customs and history, and exposed Native children to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse for the better part of a century. Sarah Carter's studies consider both the patriarchal and racist implications of Indian policy,

indicating that strict regulations rendered Native women helpless to continue their time-honoured contributions to their family economies, making them scapegoats for the poor living and health conditions on reserves. Carter's *Capturing Women* (1998) explores the sexualized imagery that demonized Native women, the former helpmates of white traders and settlers. They were deliberately configured as brutish, predatory, morally degenerate, and slothful, in stark contrast to the pure, brave, selfless White Woman whose hard work and good housekeeping and mothering skills would transform the unruly West into the "cradle of the nation."[63]

The immigration vital to the national project was, from the original decision to leave the country of origin, a process motivated by family imperatives and sustained by family networks that functioned as cushions against alienation and destitution. In many cases, part of the family stayed behind, often sending out its youth, predominantly male, to improve the family's fortunes by means of temporary labour, or to prepare for its resettlement. One of the first Canadian histories of childhood, and still the only one that deals with child labour specifically, details the unique case of juvenile immigrants from the British Isles. Joy Parr's *Labouring Children* (1980) discusses a long-running campaign by British charitable organizations, eager to resolve their own problems with a growing urban under-class, to sponsor the immigration to Canada of disadvantaged British children. 80,000 children, mostly under the age of fourteen, were sent out under these circumstances. They were not necessarily orphaned; their fate was usually decided by family members, often their parents, who saw immigration as a way of bettering the young emigrants' prospects as well as those of the family left behind, if only by removing a mouth to feed. To their Canadian hosts, they were depicted as a replenishing wellspring for declining "Anglo-Saxon stocks." But even more important than these racial considerations was their function as a much-needed source of cheap labour, especially on farms. Cut off from kin, indifferently "supervised" by the Barnardo and other organizations involved, these children were often exploited and abused by the Canadian families who "adopted" them, not as true family members but as indentured servants. Their experiences show that, notwithstanding new ideas

[63]S. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870*; J.S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country*; J.R. Miller, *Shingwauck's Vision: A History of Residential Schools in Canada* (Toronto 1996); S. Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal 1990); Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montréal/Kingston 1997); see also the essays in J.S.H. Brown and E. Vibert, eds. *Reading Beyond Words : Contexts for Native History* (Peterborough, Ont. 1996); A. McGrath and W. Stevenson, "Gender, Race and Policy: Aboriginal Women and the State in Canada and Australia," *Labour/Le Travail*, 38 (1996), 37-53; J. Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies* (1997-98), 237-66.

about a protected childhood and its corollary legislation, labour remained the central fact of some children's experience well into the "Century of the Child."[64]

In the various historical instances of group and chain migration to and within Canada, the role of family in the community's reconstitution has been paramount, as has been the importance of the family's economic role. Bruno Ramirez (1991) compared the experiences of migrants in two agrarian societies, Québec's Berthier County, and Italy's Southern Appenines, to show how their pragmatic choices were essentially family ventures. In contrast to the Italian migration, largely a back-and-forth movement of men, the French-Canadian exodus to New England's factory towns was a collective undertaking. Economic betterment depended on the presence of an adequate number of children who could work for wages. Because fathers were less readily and consistently employed than their children, their roles as providers tended to become "if not subordinate at least complementary," though this interpretation may overdraw the distinctions between the farm family economy and the new family wage economy. There is no question, however, that family objectives were the motive force of immigration, as is also evident in the three generations of Mennonites studied by Royden Loewen in *Family, Church and Market* (1993). His comparison of two communities settled in Manitoba and Nebraska makes clear that the roots of a transplanted culture — what the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites envisaged as "the essence of life"— were carefully tended through the preservation of family, religious, and community values. While modifying certain customs because of the new environment, they were remarkably successful in protecting the familial practices, immured in the economically self-sufficient nuclear family, that comprised their cultural heritage.[65]

The Ukrainians studied by Frances Swyripa (1993) share a similar story: they also arrived as family units, transplanting their communities in prairie bloc settlements that were grounded in mutually reinforcing cultural and family values,

[64]J. Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (Toronto 1980; second edition, Toronto 1994). While child labour is recognized as playing a significant role in all industrializing societies, including Canada's, we have little historical analysis of its nature and magnitude, with the exception of various articles by the late John Bullen; see, for example, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario," in Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History*; J. Synge, "The Transition from School to Work: Growing Up Working Class in Early 20th Century Hamilton," in K. Ishwaren, ed., *Childhood and Adolescence in Canada* (Toronto 1979). J. Zucchi, *The Little Slaves of the Harp: Italian Child Street Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Paris, London and New York* (Montréal/Kingston 1992) suggests the possibilities for studies of immigrant children.

[65]B. Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1816-1914* (Toronto 1991); R.K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto 1993). Also on out-migration, see G. Burrill, *Away: Maritimers in Massachusetts, Ontario and Alberta* (Montréal/Kingston 1992).

especially in regard to gender roles. While men mediated between their own and the host community, women were mostly confined to the family farm, where their labour as the mainstays of the family economy was much as it had been in Europe. The community's male leaders, dominated by clergy, made mothers the public representatives of its status and cultural identity. Such expectations, however, meant that women were often targeted for blame. Swyripa is very attentive to the culture clash that manifested itself in generational terms, as young people increasingly tried to be more "Canadian" than their families and community could sanction. This tension between old world and new, tradition and modernity, between parental authority and youthful autonomy, also had definite gender boundaries, in that boys were allowed more freedom than their sisters and received more rewards for their contributions to the family economy.[66] In immigrant families, individual adaptation to the adopted country could be impeded as well as facilitated by family and kin, with age and gender the crucial variables in the process.

Franca Iacovetta (1992) likewise highlights the traditions of mutuality and shared labour that infused the culture and family lives of her community of southern Italians in post-World War II Toronto.[67] Unlike the earlier wave of Italian immigration with its large cohort of lone male sojourners, the post-war immigration was primarily a process of family relocation. Iacovetta's examination of the family economy points to the continued interdependence of family members: even during the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s, male breadwinners could not consistently support families on their own. Although married women's wage work outside the home was no longer proscribed — Iacovetta finds that immigrant women were more likely to be employed after marriage and motherhood than those of the native-born working class — many women preferred to take in work, or to supplement income in time-honoured "feminine" ways without leaving the home. Like so many others of their class and circumstances, they carried an onerous double-load. Despite the limitations imposed by class, gender and ethnic customs, families were malleable enough, and the networks of kin and *paesani* secure enough, to allow adaptations that eased their transition from peasants to urban industrial labourers. Yet, as Swyripa found, the necessary sacrifices for the family's sake did not preclude resentment and possible conflict with the ultimate authority,

[66]F. Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (Toronto 1993); not quite so family focused, but also useful, is L. Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers: The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940* (Toronto 1995).
[67]F. Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montréal/Kingston 1992); 55-65. On the first wave, see John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Montréal/Kingston 1988) and the essays in R. Perin, F. Sturino, eds. *Arrangiarsi : Italian Immigration Experience in Canada* (Montréal 1989). Recent work includes the essays in F. Iacovetta, P. Draper, R. Ventresca, eds., *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (Toronto 1998).

as vested in fathers. It is highly likely that, finding themselves in a society bent on self-individuation, younger family members would have felt their subordination keenly. This aspect of immigrant family life, where the personal stakes, in some respects, were higher than for the Canadian-born, awaits further development. Also barely begun is the study of family life among people of colour in our nation's past. The preliminary work in this area strongly suggests that, for these families whose every move was "racialized" by the host society, and in regard to whom public policy was heavily weighted toward surveillance and regulation, we stand to learn a great deal about the familial structures supporting the formation of self and group identity.[68]

vi. *"Bringing the State Back In:" Family Policy and Politics*

As the history of immigration indicates, family formation is intrinsic to nation-building and state formation, not only in the crucial material sense of necessary bodies, but also because families forge the links between personal identity and public roles, effectively reproducing both the citizenry and the constellation of values concerning citizenship. In the past decade or so, historians' renewed commitment to "bringing the state back" might appear a concession to social history's critics that the field constitutes merely "history with the politics left out." The formidable politics of family are extremely difficult to ignore, however, much as generations of political historians have attempted to do. What "state studies" entail, within family history's parameters, is a recognition of the modern state's increasingly intimate ties to family. As more and more family-watchers theorized about modernization's negative repercussions, the state was compelled to step in with reinforcements for the beleaguered patriarchal family. Social policy developments such as mothers' allowances, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, and family allowances, comprised a political mediation of often-contradictory capitalist and reproductive imperatives, and a public commitment to a male-breadwinner familial ideal.[69]

[68]On African-Canadian families and those of other "visible minorities;" there is little apart from the collection by P. Bristow, D. Brand, L. Carty, A.P. Cooper, S. Hamilton and A. Shadd, *"We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up": Essays in African Canadian Women's History* (Toronto 1994); see also S. Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World; African-Nova Scotian Women in Late 19th-Century Halifax County," *Acadiensis,* 22, 2 (Spring 1992), 61-83; S. Yee, "Gender Ideology and Black Women as Community Builders in Ontario, 1850-20," *Canadian Historical Review,* 75, 1 (March 1994), 53-73. We need something along the lines of the essays in S. Coontz, M. Parson, G. Raley, eds., *American Families: A Multicultural Reader* (New York 1999).

[69]S. Coontz, *The Origins of Private Life,*10-12; for a survey of state measures on the provincial level, see J. Struthers, *The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970* (Toronto 1994). Many of the works that I have discussed under other headings, especially those about child welfare, fit easily into this category of family/state relations.

Families were first identified as the sites of social problems potentially remediable by state regulation during the last quarter of the 19th century, formative years for organized reform and incipient welfare legislation in Western Europe and North America, as the historical literature on "child-saving" suggests. Compulsory schooling, temperance, protective legislation for working women and children, and the instigation of family courts were the most noteworthy of an array of regulatory policies exemplifying the new state intervention in this arena. The state was hardly monolithic, however, and its measures coexisted, and were often supported by, the voluntary and philanthropic efforts of community-based, frequently women-led, organizations. The process inspired many interconnected reform campaigns and much political rhetoric, shaping social policy as well as the contours of the modern bureaucratic state and federal-provincial relations. Less discernible is how such "external" forces were actualized in the family circle; how such developments as the expansion of education, health and welfare systems, for example, actually affected domestic arrangements and family strategies on the quotidian level that most fascinates and yet eludes us.

The first survey of state regulation of reproduction, as seen through the politics of contraception and abortion, was Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren's aptly titled *The Bedroom and the State* (1986). The ideological constancy behind the restrictive legislation is not surprising, given how discussions on reproduction were dominated by (male) politicians, lawyers, doctors, and clergy. The laws necessarily reflected their hegemonic class-based patriarchal and racist views. The ongoing decline in fertility, traceable to the mid-19th century, was thus "inextricably entangled in a web of social, sexual and cultural relationships" that made discussions "more concerned by the broader issues of sexual, social and political power than by the issue of family size." McLaren and McLaren uncovered working-class ambivalence about family limitation, construed as both a right and a transparent attempt at bourgeois social control, but we need to know more about the textures of sexual politics in their class setting. A close reading of the working-class debates on fertility control would sharpen some of the amorphous ideas about class, sex, and family currently circulating. What is ultimately disappointing about this study probably cannot be helped. Despite the authors' stated interest "primarily in private and public power struggles over the control of fertility," there is little sense of the private struggles, of those that worked themselves out, or failed to do so, in the family setting.[70]

In *Private Lives, Public Policy* (1993), sociologist Jane Ursel carefully synthesized the key aspects of the social reproduction debates to examine state intervention in the family in a manner both theorized and historicized. Her comparative case study of Manitoba and Ontario situates legislative initiatives within

[70] A. McLaren and A. Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1997* (Toronto 1986; 2nd edition, Toronto 1997).

the dynamics of industrial capitalism. Ursel employs a dual-systems model to explain the shift from "familial patriarchy" to "social patriarchy" during the 20th century: since patriarchy and capitalism are mutually supportive systems, state intervention in reproduction — the work of women — is required to sustain production, the work of men. From a similar perspective, sociologist Dorothy Chunn's examination of family courts in Ontario discussed how social patriarchy was enforced through special institutions that formalized state intervention on behalf of families. Chief among these were the new provincial family courts of the early 20th century, created to deal with the social menace of "disorganized families." Despite the obvious class angle, what is clear is that the material basis of many family problems was *not* made to be the key issue. As both authors show, reformers and state agencies chose to emphasize the perceived decline in parental — especially paternal — responsibility that, in their view, appeared the most serious outcome of historic shifts in social organization and the worst menace to society.[71]

This anxiety about family crisis and social anomie saw the community's interest in its young couples' choices made manifest in a developing body of legislation to regulate private relationships and personal behaviour for the national good. James Snell's *In the Shadow of the Law* (1993) traces 20th century changes in divorce legislation, revealing just as much about popular ideals concerning marriage and family as about legal objectives. Since divorce represented the irrefutable failure of these ideals, regulation of courtship and marriage was thought to be the key to its prevention. In this climate of middle-class consensus about the sanctity of family, the divorce law itself remained stringent, though the persistence of desertion — "the working-man's divorce" — and common-law unions indicates that "ordinary" Canadians were capable of subverting the moral/legal standards devised by the dominant class. In Lori Chambers' *Married Women and Property Law in Victorian Ontario* (1997), the life-stories that emerge from legal records and court files testify to the often-tragic outcome for women and children when legally sanctioned male/paternal authority is abused. Even expanded property rights and the courts' generally sympathetic response to women plaintiffs did not begin to address the conditions of subjection that kept women and children trapped in difficult, sometimes dangerous, domestic situations. In addition to explaining how legal structures scaffolded the social and familial subordination of women and children, both books underscore the need for a detailed study of domestic violence in Canada.[72]

[71] J. Ursel, *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family* (Toronto 1992); D. Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good: Family Courts and Socialized Justice in Ontario, 1880-1940* (Toronto 1993).

[72] J. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939* (Toronto 1993); L. Chambers, *Married Women and Property Law in Victorian Ontario* (Toronto 1997). On domestic violence, see K. Harvey, "To Love, Honour and Obey: Wife Battering in Working-Class Montreal," *Urban History Review*, 19, 2 (October 1990), 130-40; J. Fingard, "The

The relationship of the paternal state to the most problematic of all problem families, those that visibly deviated from the male-breadwinner-model, is the subject of Margaret Little's long-anticipated *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit* (1998). Little lays bare the now-familiar racism and class bias of the maternal feminists leading the mothers' allowance campaign, also noting that organized labour supported this type of state provision because of its commitment to the male breadwinner family. She argues that the moral and the material were entwined in the requirements placed on recipients: eligibility rules were strict, funds supplied were minimal, and continued surveillance and judgement became part of the everyday lives of the families who finally qualified for assistance. If all single-mother families were suspect, none were more so than those also marked by "race," who faced the most rigorous eligibility criteria and the most intensive scrutiny. Once again, it is clear that public outcry against the employment of mothers and children somehow skirted these "problem families," whose members were expected to contribute substantially to their own upkeep. Little makes evocative, though frequently uncritical, use of mothers' voices as filtered through the Commission's records, allowing contemporary recipients to speak for themselves in interviews that expose the sad historic continuities in the lives of female-headed families. As well as the material deprivation and social stigma that have been their lot, it seems that privacy, too, is a class privilege not permitted to the poor.[73]

As historical trends have affected the life-course from one end to the other, the state has also played a major role in the lives of the elderly, whose story, so far, has been told within this specific framework. With expanding industry, the aged, like children, became superfluous to production. Re-ushered into the realm of age-defined dependency before many had attained that state mentally and bodily, their maintenance became another of the family duties that was gradually, but not smoothly, being relocated to the public sphere. Much of the debate about their situation revolved around the issue of responsibility for those who could not earn their keep: did their years of productive labour entitle men to state support, or should this be left to the families they had once worked to support? What should be done for women, whose labour was usually unwaged and whose socially subscribed dependence was much greater at all life-stages? Edgar-André Montigny examined the dilemma confronting families of the dependent elderly in late 19th century Ontario, as structural changes exacerbated the timeless challenges of their care. Governments used the rhetoric of family duty to justify their grudging measures, while family economies strained against the expenses and labour involved in elder

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Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia, 1880-1900," *Acadiensis*, 22, 2 (Spring 1993), 84-101; A. Golz, "Uncovering and Reconstructing Family Violence: Ontario Criminal Case Files," in F. Iacovetta and W. Mitchinson, eds., *On the Case: Explorations in Social History* (Toronto 1998).

[73]M. Little, *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-97* (Toronto 1998).

care. Deftly combining demographic data and institutional records, Montigny points to the contradictions between family realities and "the family" of ideal at the base of the state's efforts. Ultimately, the traditional supports of family, kin and community, though allegedly diminished in the wake of modernization, remained critical to the survival of the elderly. Taking up the story where Montigny concludes, James Snell confirms that, although fewer than 20 per cent of Canadians lived in an "extended family" arrangement during the first half of the 20th century, traditions of intergenerational reciprocity meant that the majority of the elderly, particularly in working-class and farm families, relied on children and grandchildren. This relationship did not decline with the passage of the federal Old Age Pensions Act in 1927. If it tended to lean more heavily on the younger generation, and especially on women, it was not one-sided. Some of the elderly had the resources, such as homes or perhaps savings, to help their children; at the least, many could offer useful services through domestic labour, household maintenance, and child care. While elderly women were unquestionably more financially needy than men, thanks to the sexual division of labour both within and outside the family, they were more likely to "fit" into extended-family households because of their predominantly maternal life-roles.[74]

Dominique Marshall's *Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence* (1997) investigates the modern accord negotiated between families and governments as it was arrived at in Québec during the foundational years of the post World War II welfare state. Marshall's painstaking case study of the development of social policy as shaped by a unique cultural heritage and political history is a necessary corrective to the anglo-Central-Canadian slant of much of the literature in this area.[75] As in every preceding instance of intervention, the state had to create a regulatory relationship with families — particularly those of the ever-benighted lower classes — so that parents could be educated about the "proper" form and function of domestic life. Institutionalizing prewar trends toward "expert" intervention, the emphasis on children's rights justified this surveillance, affixing parental cooperation to the receipt of family allowances. Yet the undermining of parental authority and domestic privacy was generally tolerable because the material benefits made the allowances, modest as they were, important to the welfare of many needy families. The outcome of these state initiatives was a cultural shift embodied in the new relationship between families and the state. The adoption of a language of citizens' rights, despite the province's profoundly anti-statist history, signified the adeptness of Québec parents at invoking state response to their families' needs,

[74]E.-A. Montigny, *Foisted Upon the Government? State Responsibilities, Family Obligations, and the Care of the Dependent Aged in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montréal/Kingston 1997); J. Snell, *The Citizen's Wage: The State and the Elderly in Canada, 1900-1951* (Toronto 1996).

[75]D. Marshall, *Aux origines sociales de l'État-providence: Familles québécoises, obligation scolaire et allocations familiales 1940-1955* (Montréal 1998).

foreshadowing the vast reforms of the Quiet Revolution. In the end, as Marshall remarks, her culturally distinct Québec families appear to have reacted to family allowances much as did their anglo-Canadian counterparts. More regional and comparative studies will show how this assessment holds up in the face of other cultural variances.

vi. *The Material Culture of Family: Homes and Things*

Moving from the state back to the home, if the material basis of family has been a connective theme in the majority of works relating to Canadian family history, the family's material culture — the things that live with families in their homes, and are used by them for work, housekeeping, sustenance, and recreation, as well as the physical structure called "home" — is really only beginning to receive attention. Two just-released works, by Joy Parr and Peter Ward, suggest the richness of this vein of sociocultural history in relation to family history. Joy Parr's *Domestic Goods* (1999) is an innovative, complex, sometimes complicated, interpretation of the post World War II economy that interweaves political and economic history with a gendered analysis of the history of domestic technology and design. Her discussion suggests how often, and in how many ways, the state agents responsible for the postwar transition to peacetime production barely managed to control what little they could, notwithstanding any commitment to practical applications of Keynesian theory. The design and marketing of consumer goods for the "family home," and the issue of domestic (female) needs within this literally man-made frame of reference, speaks to the tenacity of the sexual division of labour in both marketplace and home. Parr contends that needs and luxuries were morally more than materially delimited: historic class-based notions about debt, thrift, "making do," the family economy, and the gendered nature of production and consumption, clashed with emergent views about buying, borrowing, and what constituted "the good life" in a time of prosperity new to many families after decades of restraint and want. There is much information about the material culture of everyday life in these years, with details drawn from the international scene regarding developments in modern design and their impact on Canadian consumer products, as well as the process involved in the actual "domestication" of such objects. The objects' history is fascinating, but at times overshadows that of their human owners. Nonetheless, this is a seminal study in what it demonstrates about the connections between a renewed domesticity and a burgeoning consumer economy, and how both hinged on updated, "modern," but still basically traditional, class-based ideas about gender, work, and domesticity.[76]

Another historiographical "first," Peter Ward's three-century survey, *A History of Domestic Space* (1999), attempts to transfer the architectural historians' focus on the aesthetic to one that regards houses as "the theatre[s] of our domestic

[76]J. Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto 1999).

experience, both spatially confining action and permitting a wide range of possibilities." Ward follows the changing size and spatial configuration of Canadian homes admirably, and in a manner nicely illustrated with photographs, blueprints, floor plans and diagrams. He also considers how family and social relations have shaped, and have been shaped by, these changing spaces, a rather more abstruse undertaking that doesn't quite succeed. Although he considers how the small homes that typified urban working-class shelter became "problems" to early 20th century reformers intent on pathologizing much of their social inferiors' private lives, he does not take on the "intrinsic merit" of home ownership and the reasons why "the detached family house is deeply embedded in our archetypes of the home." In a nation where, historically, the majority of all classes have lived in detached housing that usually sheltered only the nuclear family, it would be interesting to know how this "family home" became a cross-class ideal. What about the growing power of advertising and real estate marketing and the kind of fetishizing of domestic goods that Parr details? Moreover, Ward's important assertion that "gender categories don't shed much light on the relations between privacy and domesticity," because "in Canada, men and women have always shared all parts of the house," is not remotely convincing. Perhaps a clearer view would result from asking who worked where. What explains the fact that women became so associated with "hearth and home," specifically with the kitchen, that it was configured as their own domain, even spoken of colloquially as "her indoors"?[77]

Getting On With It: The Dialectics of Family, Self and Society

My purpose was to survey the monograph literature that, even if not classified as "family history," has nonetheless touched upon the connections between family, class, work, and social change. I attempted to trace the field's development from the questions that attracted our early social scientists as they observed the familial impact of economic change in late 19th and early 20th century Canada. The structural-functionalist paradigm that dominated by mid-century accounts for the overarching narrative of family history that devolved, in which families were seen to recover from modernizing blows by means of a "transfer of functions" that entailed certain necessary losses. Within this interpretive framework, the family endured, but the costs in terms of "traditional" domestic relations were high: the loss of productive functions entailed in the separation of home and work, thus the

[77]P. Ward, *A History of Domestic Space: Privacy and the Canadian Home* (Vancouver 1999). On the gendered use of space, see Davidoff, *et. al.*, *The Family Story*, 83-7. The model for studies of gendered space is A. Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870-1900* (Montréal/Kingston 1996). For an overview, see H. Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, 2 vols. (Don Mills, Ontario 1995). On material culture, see G. Pocius, *A Place to Belong: Community, Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland* (Athens, Georgia 1991), and Pocius, ed., *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture* (St. John's, Nfld. 1998).

family's key historic function, led directly to the decline of parental, especially paternal, authority, and the loosening of bonds between family, kin and community. For historians, their work — more prescriptive than analytical by far — is valuable for what it reveals about contemporary family ideals, but also for what shines through as the vitality of familial networks of labour and other forms of mutual assistance. When historians became interested in the question of modernization in relation to family, their research softened the story's sharper angles by disclosing the unevenness of modernizing processes and acknowledging the complexities of causality. In the socioeconomic order as in families, it was discovered, the demonstrably new or "modern" could coexist with the "traditional," which may have been recast but was only rarely obliterated.[78] Over the course of three decades since the inaugural publications in a field recognized as family history, successive phases of study in its interrelated subjects have succeeded in animating the passive, even hapless, historical family. No longer primarily recipients of change, families are depicted as active, shrewd participants, protecting their own interests, pursuing their goals both collectively and on behalf of individual members, though not necessarily consensually or to equal benefit. What is clear is that families make history at least as much as the inverse is true.[79]

Whatever the historic changes in families, their material basis, their form, functions and relations, "the family" serves as a kind of holy grail for unholy times. There is something of the search for the holy grail in the historical pursuit of families as well. Even if a treasure trove of sources were excavated, how much can historians generalize about social relations from family stories? Since family is just as culturally-delimited, value laden and subjectively understood now as ever, what about the ways in which our own "family values" and contemporary politics affect our approaches to families in the past? At the risk of resembling Stephen Leacock's infamous horseman, heading off in all directions at once, I offer a few rough ideas that presented themselves as I channelled through this archaeology of family history. No one should be surprised that they reflect my own interests and prejudices as much as the existing gaps in the literature.

First, whatever the focal point — gender, race, sexuality, life-stage, to name a few of the most important as these pertain to family — we can't get far without due consideration as to how class is embedded in family relations, in day-to-day family life, consequently in the formation of self-identity. In short, class matters where family matters are concerned. Without adopting a deterministic stance, it is possible to see just how critical class has been, and continues to be, in the gamut of social relations that can be linked to family: from courtship through sexuality, marriage

[78]Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," 113-14; see also D. Scott Smith, "The Curious History of Theorizing About the History of the Western Nuclear Family," *Social Science History*, 17, 3 (Fall 1993), 325-53.

[79]Davidoff, *et. al.*, *The Family Story*, 21,157; I. Davey, "Rethinking the Origins of British Colonial School Systems," *Historical Studies in Education*, 1, 1 (Spring 1989), 149-60.

through parenting, gender roles through age relations, ethnic culture through "race" identification, any variety of work and any type of play, and all the choices, "constructions," and practices implicated in these.

The internal dynamics of family, consequently, beg more research, despite the advances in knowledge that have come about as a result of life-course and family economy studies. For example, we usually discuss marriage, parenting, and childhood separately, even though the first two were practically synonymous until very recently, and the interaction between parent and child is obviously key to their respective life-stages. We have little knowledge about how class and culture affect the familial transmission of gender roles and how this process operated. How, for example, might sons and daughters of employed mothers imbibe gender ideals differently —or not? What about the children of single-parent, especially single-mother, families, who worried so many experts due to the absence of a "father-figure?" All the gender studies mentioned here have made earnest attempts to give women and men equal time, but we still know far more about women's roles in families than we do about those of men. Although the article literature dealing with the historical/cultural specificity of manliness has expanded in size, scope, and sophistication, it is mostly concerned with the construction of masculine roles, or the enactment of those roles, outside of family and especially on the job. In a sense, the historiography itself has been built on a "separate spheres" foundation, perpetuating, even while gamely trying to avoid, the women/home, men/work dichotomies. We know about the conflict between middle-class separate spheres ideology and the exigencies of working-class life from women's perspective. What about that of the lauded male breadwinners who play such shadowy roles in the homes of the past, where their domestic labour, parenting, and recreation are as hidden as the productive labour of women has long been? We know little about real fathers and how they went about fathering as families become increasingly mother-centred, at least on the level of rhetoric. Even Parr's anti-binary study reveals more about men in the workplace than in the home.[80]

[80] J. Parr, "Gender and the Practice of History," 20-1, discusses the importance of considering "hegemonic masculinities." More than a decade ago, Steven Maynard also pointed to this void in the historiography; see "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History," *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (1989), 159-69; also Maynard, "Queer Musings on Masculinity and History," *Labour/Le Travail*, 42 (Fall 1998), 183-97. The only monograph with masculinity as its specific subject is Thomas Dunk's historical-sociological case study of working-class culture in Thunder Bay, Ontario, *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture in Northern Ontario* (Montreal/Kingston 1991). See also the oft-reprinted M. Rosenfeld, "It Was a Hard Life: Class and Gender in the Work and Family Rhythms of a Railway Town," in Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History*. See the special issue on Masculinities and Working-Class History, *Labour/Le Travail*, 42 (Fall 1998); and the contributions to K. McPherson, C. Morgan, N.M. Forestell, eds., *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada* (Toronto 1999). On fatherhood, see L. Chambers, "'You Have No Rights, Only Obligations:' Putative

It follows that we also need to know more about remarriage, about reconstituted, "blended" and step-families, a fairly common experience for many Canadians in times of high mortality, and, more recently, rising divorce rates. Then there are the roles and relations that strain against convention: singleness and celibacy, the experiences of widows, widowers, orphans, and unwed mothers, common law, and same-sex partnerships all deserve in-depth study.[81] Thanks to the Canadian reading public's fascination with biography and autobiography, we know a lot about some famous sibling relationships, next to nothing about ordinary sibling interaction.[82] As to the wider meanings of family, kinship is acknowledged for its continued importance, especially among working-class, rural, immigrant, and non-white families, but there is not much analysis as to how these networks operated and who maintained them. As well as being profoundly shaped by class and race, kinship is a gendered experience: men are socialized to focus on wives and children, while women's familial obligations include the sustenance of wider kin relations, even, perhaps especially, in regard to the husband's extended family — a duty that tends to persist beyond his death, beyond marital breakdown.[83] There

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Fathers and the Children of Unmarried Parents Act"; C. Comacchio, "Bringing Up Father: Defining a Modern Canadian Fatherhood, 1900-40"; R. Rutherdale, "Fatherhood and Masculine Domesticity During the Baby Boom: Consumption and Leisure in Advertising and Life Stories"; all in E. Montigny, L. Chambers, eds., *Family Matters*. See Ralph LaRossa's American study, *The Modernization of Fatherhoodhood: A Social and Political History* (Chicago 1997).

[81]This is not to say that nothing at all is available: on bachelorhood, see C. Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930* (Toronto 1995); M. Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto 1987); Bradbury, Lévesque, and Morton discuss widows and single mothers in their respective studies. See also S. Maynard, "Horrible Temptations: Sex, Men and Working-Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890-1935," *Canadian Historical Review*, 78, 2 (June 1997), 191-235; P. Rusk, "Same-Sex Spousal Benefits and the Evolving Conception of Family," in Montigny, Chambers, eds., *Family Matters*; E. Setliff, "Sex Fiends or Swish Kids?: Gay Men in *Hush Free Press*, 1946-56," in McPherson, *et. al.*, eds., *Gendered Pasts*. On the historiography, see S. Maynard, "'In Search of Sodom North':The Writing of Lesbian and Gay History in English Canada," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 21 (March-June 1994); also C. Hood, "New Studies in Gay and Lesbian History," *Journal of Urban History*, 24, 6 (1998), 282-92; C. Jackson, "Against the Grain: Writing the History of Sexual Variance in America," *Borderlines: Studies in American Culture*, 3, 3 (1996), 278-86.

[82]On famous siblings, see C. Gray, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Lives of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill* (Toronto 1999). The importance of sibling relationships doesn't appear to have diminished over time; see the collection of letters to writer Edna Staebler from her sister (1950s) in E. Staebler, ed., *Haven't Any News: Ruby's Letters from the Fifties* (Waterloo 1995).

[83]M. di Leonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship," *Signs*, 11 (1987), 440-53; see also A. Douglas, *The Feminization of*

is scarce written about extended family relations, including those involving grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws, despite the evident material, personal and cultural value ascribed to them in memoirs, diaries, and correspondence, in legal documents, in literature, and art.[84]

In order to get at the meaning of family for different people in different times, we need to step back from the collectivity that is family — the "unit" — to look more intently at how our culture assigns meanings to the self. Despite the individualism pervading Western European-North American-capitalist societies, self-identity is formulated in the family setting, and always in relation to family. Many of the studies reviewed here consider how men and women have profoundly different involvements in family, as do young and old. Taken from another angle, how do family obligations, so often upheld by class-defined conventions, religious and cultural strictures, law and other forms of regulation and moral suasion, mould self-identity? Some have described how ethnic, racial, and religious identities are learned through generational transmission and kinship, but this area remains underdeveloped, especially in regard to Native Canadians and those of non-white, non-European origins. We know how those looking in at "other" families racialized their domestic arrangements; how does race affect the sense of self and the meaning of family? The interplay of family and religious ideals has been given some thought in reference to Protestantism; Catholicism outside Québec is barely touched upon as a formative element in self-identity, yet it has been fiercely imprinted through family, separate schools, and an array of sociocultural institutions. Given the tenacious nature of regional identities in Canada, it would be especially interesting to know what distinctive meanings of self and family might be ascribed to, and nurtured in regional cultures, or what comprises the social geography of family and identity.[85]

The greatest hindrance where the history of sexuality is concerned is trying to glean the degree of "fit" between what is represented and what was actually

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American Culture (New York 1971); G. Neville, *Kinship and Pilgrimage: Rituals of Reunion in American Protestant Culture* (New York 1987).

[84]Nor do we have to look to Jane Austen; the very popular early 20th century Canadian series about Jalna is set at a family compound containing any number of shifting configurations of family related by blood and contract; see M. de la Roche, *Jalna* (Toronto 1927).

[85]Davidoff, *et. al.*, *The Family Story*, 53-5; 91. None of the following are specifically about these issues, but Carter's two studies, cited previously, get at the racial aspects; on Protestantism, we have Marks; Morgan; W. Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montréal/Kingston 1989); S.A. Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: The Women's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montréal/Kingston 1995); N. Christie, M. Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada* (Toronto 1997). On Catholicism, see the essays in G. Stortz, T. Murphy, eds., *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930* (Montréal 1993).

happening, or even how dominant the dominant discourses were. How different were class standards of sexual morality and commitment to monogamy and heterosexuality? Is there any substance to assumptions that premarital sex was a working-class proclivity, while extra-marital sex belonged to the social betters? This is an area where, as Gagnon's findings suggest, religion, culture, and ethnic background may matter as much as class. Respecting gender and sexuality, the emphasis again remains on women. Male heterosexuality seems to be much as it was described or prescribed. But the prescriptions themselves often exhibited internal contradictions, perhaps a sub-textual acknowledgement of a spectrum of male sexuality. Historians are careful to recognize oppression while avoiding wholesale delegation of victim status, but we lean toward assigning agency to those who may have had so little power on their own account as to render the concept of "choice" meaningless. Or we skirt the historical differences between present-day attitudes and experiences and those of our subjects, and call that difference "agency." Finally, within the context of sexuality, power and diversity, where are the historical forms of the erotic?[86]

The history of private lives has been greatly enhanced by cross-disciplinary borrowing, most recently in the field of cultural anthropology, especially where memory is a crucial source. It is likely that this particular method of data-gathering, though not uncomplicated, holds the key to many of the otherwise "dark corners" of family life. Critical theories borrowed from literature and psychoanalysis are also showing us how to reread memoirs, autobiographies, diaries — all forms of life-writing that have ever constituted important historical sources — to identify the narrative conventions, myths, silences, and tensions that are built into these accounts, to listen to *how* people recount their family stories as well as what they tell in them. Currently promising exciting research possibilities is a reconceptualization of "family time." John Gillis offers the provocative notion of family time as "time out of time," or ritualized time, and how it shapes what Gillis calls our "symbolic families:" those that exist in our family stories, myths, credos, customs, rituals, icons, and so on.[87] Many religious and secular holidays, ceremonies and

[86]See A. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (London 1992). Some of the interesting work on sexuality/culture outside Canada includes K. White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (New York 1993); S. Ullman, *Sex Seen: The Emergence of Modern Sexuality in America* (Berkeley 1997), and J.A. Boone, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago 1998).

[87]J. Gillis, "Making Time for Family: The Invention of Family Time(s) and the Reinvention of Family History," *Journal of Family History*, 21, 1 (January 1996), 4-21; further developed in Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual and the Quest for Family Values* (Boston, Mass. 1996). See anthropologist E. Hall's study, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimensions of Time* (New York 1983). Gillis's fascinating study establishes that many of the "eternal" family rituals are fairly recent. Most originated in Victorian times; some are literally "products" of the early 20th century, invented for middle-class consumers and sold

socially-recognized "passages," "special occasions" such as birthdays and anniversaries, even everyday "family dinner," are implicitly familial, intimate, and exclusive, but their creation and conduct are usually taken-for-granted as timeless and universal. What ideas and practices constitute "family traditions," and who decides these? How do they vary according to class, culture, region, race? Who participates? What roles are played by individual family members that are age and gender-defined — who is honoured, who is seated at the table, who is at the head of the table, who does the planning, who does the work? On a related note, we need to know more about how consumer culture, advertising, and technology have influenced family relations — radio, television, cars — all initially, and still, sold through family imagery, though simultaneously criticized as "things" that interfere in "real" family togetherness.

When it comes to self, symbol, and meaning, approaches derived from psychoanalytic and linguistic theory have compelled us to think about the often contradictory, near-chaotic but co-existing elements denoting the historical relationship between ideas and "things." Regarding discourse analysis, specifically social constructionism and Foucault-inspired textual readings, the benefits to the study of family history are apparent. "The family" is a multidimensional symbol system as well as a material, embodied set of social relations. Deconstruction has helped us to "unpack" terms and categories that we once failed to notice were "loaded." But constructions, plentiful and elemental though they be, are like the top of the table that makes us take its underside on faith, to borrow from the philosophers' store. Even while recognizing the fragmentary nature of historical reality, and accepting that we can only reconceive it imperfectly, indefinitely, and subjectively, it still seems worth trying to see what's underneath rather than contenting ourselves with what is publicly seen, acknowledged, constructed about family life in particular historical moments. There is a certain hint of determinism in over-focusing on what is constructed, perhaps taking away from the creativity of the subjects and that all-important agency to which social historians are so committed. A large part of actual roles and lives must necessarily be self-determined — self-constructed even — no matter who is saying what. We would do well to keep using these valuable tools of historical analysis — only not as one big Foucauldian hammer, applied as though everything were intrinsically meant to be hammered.

Let's turn to the concept of age, at the last. Age is an especially slippery category, all the while that it is a key signifier of personal identity, familial position, and social status. As long as we live, we are too young for some things, too old for others, or somehow "the right age" — and "age requirements" are determined by

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through modern advertising, family magazines, cinema, and popular music. Whole new industries burgeoned as a result; think, for example, of the boon to greeting card and camera and film manufacturers, who have even lent their product names to these Hallmark occasions and Kodak moments as part of the popular lexicon.

fluctuating criteria as well. Age denotes transitory life stages, some more fleeting or more demarcated than others, but it is also about power, most of which belongs to those in the vast "middling" section who are "of age" but not yet "aged." The most subordinate of all humans in all social categories are the "under-aged." The same structural factors decide access to power and influence for children and young people as for other groups, but the former are also marginalized because authority, in all possible settings, belongs to adults.

We now have a good sense of how childhood was modernized, and, thanks to oral history and memory reconstitution, the hushed voices of children themselves are becoming more audible. We need to know more about those broadly classified as "youth," beginning with a time-specific notion of what this life-stage entailed, and for whom. Some youth were barely more than children, but compulsory schooling and factory laws designated their passage from childhood at age 12 or 14; unmarried men were often considered youth until well into their thirties, while unmarried women aged much faster in the public eye. Adolescence only came to be a distinct category in the early 20th century, part of the larger pattern of age systematization and rationalization that also distinguished and prolonged childhood.[88] It is here, in this liminal stage of not-children/not-adults, that we stand to learn much about how power is negotiated in the absence of political rights — in the case of young people, through increasing recourse to cultural forms of resistance. Looking to the other end of the life course, we need to think about why political rights are not sufficient to ensure the power of those who are seen to lack cultural value. In both instances, economic power makes a significant difference: teenagers with money to spend are valued more than poor elderly people, while affluent seniors have more power than most teenagers dependent on parents and part-time income. This confirms economic advantage which is not necessarily correlated to class advantage; but it does not explain why the cultural value of youth has increased exponentially over the 20th century, while public respect for elders has declined. In sum, we have to work our way towards employing the concept of "age" analytically as we have done with the class-gender-race trinity, rather than just noting its presence in other kinds of power relations.

Although our purpose as historians is to look for common cultural, social and economic patterns in family life, we will always confront the simple truth that no two family stories are ever the same. However lyrical, Tolstoy's oft-cited theory about how "all happy families resemble each other, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" does not hold up in the face of the historical evidence. We might

[88]Among the recent non-Canadian studies, see Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History*; J. Austin and M. Nevin Willard, eds., *Generations of Youth: Youth Cultures and History in Twentieth-Century America* (New York 1998). On aging, see D. Kertzer and P. Laslett, *Aging in the Past: Demography, Society, and Old Age* (Berkeley, Calif. 1995).

do better to use G.K. Chesterton's metaphor: he declared families to exist as little kingdoms, "generally in a state of something resembling anarchy."[89]

[89]G.K. Chesteron, "The Institution of the Family" (1905), quoted in C. Hardyment, *The Future of the Family* (London 1998). The Tolstoy quote is the opening line of *Anna Karenina* (1886).