

construction of science itself has rarely been questioned; the problem is always women, not science. But is it really? The authors based their analysis on interviews with forty adult British women. As the number indicates, the interviews were not intended to be quantitative nor generalizable. The strength of their research is in their careful reading of the collected words and attentively made bridges between them and other empirical studies and theories. Maintaining easy accessibility, the book successfully invokes questions on such broad issues as adult education, women and science education, and feminist epistemology.

Both books examine the relationship between women and science by revealing the problems of science (and not women). In the attempts to be inclusive to women, ironically I felt excluded. I could not locate myself in either of the arguments as a woman who enjoys science and appreciates womanhood. Although both books ask good questions about women's relationship to science, a better question to begin might be whether there is a relationship between women and science. Too much emphasis on women's collective experience could paradoxically exclude some women. Relationships between women and science may be more diverse, dynamic, and intertwined than these books indicate.

Yukiko Asada
University of Wisconsin

The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality. Mary Louise Adams. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997; viii + 224 pages; ISBN 080208057X; \$19.95.

No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-97. M. Little, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998; xxv + 293 pages; ill.; index; ISBN 0195411501; \$24.95.

While their subject matter and approaches are different, both Adams and Little contribute much to our understanding of the

histories of gender, age, and sexual relations. They demonstrate the interwoven nature of these relations, and show how they are mediated by, and through, public expectations frequently manifested in regulatory state programmes premised on a "norm" that is more ideal than real. The state, as both authors reveal, has interpreted its expanding mandate for intervention largely in terms of educating its citizens toward a certain standard/type of behaviour - applied to both Adams' young Canadians and Little's single mothers - times resorting to surveillance and punishment to ensure that the message is not taken lightly. In both instances as well, the norm delivered to the target audience is unequivocally derived from white, middle-class, heterosexual, Anglo-Celtic, Protestant Canadian values.

Among the first of a new wave of histories that are making the society, culture and politics of post-World War II Canada their focus, Mary Louise Adams' *The Trouble with Normal* is ground-breaking. Her analysis sheds much light on an under-explored period about which several nostalgic views persist: that the renewed "cult of domesticity" based on the male-breadwinner family was the universal experience, for example. Adams observes that during the two decades following the war "dominant claims of heterosexual behavior and identity were rarely challenged." But the fact that influential Canadians in government, social work, educational, psychological and medical fields worried aloud that they might be crucial to her story. There were evident anxieties about the extent to which the private practices of Canadians actually reflected "the norm."

Adams makes her most important contribution to the scant historiography on the subjects of gender and sexual relations, youth, courtship and marriage by pointing out that "the trouble with normal is its taken-for-grantedness and its power as a regulatory sexual category." She relies on Foucault's notion of surveillance to explain how public discourses, captured in educational literature and film and government reports, transmitted the idea of heterosexuality - premised on "traditional" understandings of masculinity, femininity and "normal" sexuality - through parenting, schooling, and social institutions. Understanding this process allows us

to understand how the aberrant or deviant is constructed, so that her discourse analysis reveals much about the demonization of homosexuals in this Cold War/Baby Boom historical setting.

Adams stresses the turning-point nature of the 1950s, a time when adolescence became both a recognized life-stage, and, in Adams' words, "one of the distinctive markers of the postwar world" (51). This is essentially true, but I suspect that historians of postwar youth have made too stark a divide between the "new" youth culture of the 1950s and 1960s and its precursors of the interwar years. She also notes the middle-classness of her subject group without examining the class elements to any degree. Finally, while she effectively discusses the ways and means through which some Canadians attempted to make their views of "normal" a powerful "regulatory category," just as they worried that public support did not necessarily translate into the requisite private behaviour, we need to know more about that elusive aspect before we can really judge the meaning of "dominant" and "powerful" discourses.

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*. Little effectively lays bare the now-familiar racism and class bias of the maternal feminists leading the mothers' allowance campaign in the early twentieth century, noting, as well, that organized labour supported state provision because of its commitment to the male breadwinner family. She argues convincingly that the moral and the material were entwined in the requirements placed on recipients: eligibility rules were strict, funds were minimal, and continued surveillance and judgement became part of the everyday lives of the families who finally qualified for grudging, and tenuous, assistance. Single mothers were constantly called upon to prove their "fitness" as mothers and as recipients according to middle-class standards of child care, household cleanliness and manners, and were regularly "visited," inspected, spied upon and reported for all manner of "infringements." Next to dirt and ill-mannered children, any hint of their sexuality was enough to remove them from the

rolls. Moreover, 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. It is also evident that, while the employment of mothers and children was publicly decried, different rules applied to these "problem families": single mothers and their children were expected to contribute substantially to their own upkeep, and children were pressured to leave school to do so. Little makes evocative use of mothers' voices as filtered through the Commission's records, and allows contemporary recipients to speak for themselves through interviews that expose the sad historic continuities in the lives of female-headed families. In addition to the on-going material deprivation and social stigma that have been their historic lot, it is evident that privacy, too, is a class privilege not permitted to the poor.

This book covers much ground in its sweep over some seventy years of discussion and policy-making, with the - probably unavoidable - result that the coverage is uneven. More recent years, especially in the wake of renewed attacks on the welfare state and its icon, the "welfare mother," since the resurgence of monetarist fiscal policies in the 1970s, are discussed in much more depth and detail than the earlier period, particularly the formative years between the world wars.

Adams and Little are both intent on uncovering the historic power relations that underlie the making of state policy. Whether in terms of public schooling or public provision for the marginalized, they effectively demonstrate that conventions regarding gender, class, race and sexuality, especially as these coalesced around the iconic "family" at the centre of anxious public discourses, were forceful (and continue to be forceful) in ways that are difficult to measure, but undeniably tenacious.

Cynthia Comacchio
Wilfrid Laurier University
