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Paula S. Fass. *Children of a New World: Society, Culture, and Globalization.* New York: New York University Press, 2007. x + 269 pp. $70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8147-2756-0; $22.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8147-2757-7.

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The Revolutionary History of Childhood

Children of a New World is an impressive book consisting of essays that the author has previously published on children in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. Two underlying themes connect these essays. The first suggests that childhood has become a significant working area in social history. Though these essays are profoundly informed by social history and carry a deep concern about large-scale shifts in the experiences of children, Paula S. Fass also provides sharp pieces of cultural analysis. She relates her evidence to political history, and to other disciplines, such as literature, education, and psychology. From the interpretation of children and childhood using a broadly conceived historical approach, Fass reveals her second main theme: the influence of "a new world" or "globalization" (an increase in international trade, developments in migration, and expansion of media technologies) on children and the meanings of childhood. Within the scope of these two general themes, Fass has gathered her essays skillfully to demonstrate historical change of childhood in social, cultural, and global dimensions.

In the first part of the book, Fass emphasizes historical change regarding children and the meanings of childhood in terms of schooling and migration in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America. Schooling was critical in a pluralistic society accommodating a great number of immigrants. Integrating different cultures into the same values and thus the idea of establishing "a mutual national identity" became one of the most important aims in these years. In spite of the existence of such a political objective, to protect and maintain their own cultures, immigrants preferred alternative or religious schools for their children. Nevertheless, changing economical conditions and the rise of specialized clerks increased the significance of public schooling. In this context, intelligence tests were invented to predict what an individual could accomplish with education or training. Testing served as a tool for solving social and cultural problems by sorting children and (purportedly) allowing the educational and child welfare systems to meet the psychological needs of individuals. According to Fass, it caused a kind of segregation in education to the disadvantage of immigrant youths because the tests were culturally biased. Complementing the intelligence testing movement in the interwar period, American educators attempted to develop a comprehensive and uniform curriculum. The new curriculum included "extracurricular activities," through which students found opportunities to prove their self-direction in social, citizenship, athletic, and academic subjects. This was aimed to improve the citizenship and advance assimilation of diverse cultural groups. But the results were not always so straightforward. Based on her analysis of high school yearbooks in New York, Fass argues that extracurricular activities concretized cultural differences between students. Immigrant teenagers continued making their identities based on their ethnic origin, although they were different from their families of origin.

In the second part of the book, Fass closely examines the changing meanings of childhood and parenting during the twentieth century. She explores the development of mass media as a critical factor of cultural change. The 1924 murder trial of two teenagers, named Leopold and Loeb, brought into public view new ethical and scientific ideas about adolescence and parenting. Fass argues that adolescence began to be identified as a dangerous period of life distinct from childhood; their gender, sexual preferences, and personal traits began to be emphasized. Concerns about the reduction of parental influences on children became a favorite theme of media sensationalism. Moreover, novel classifications of normality–abnormality regarding the behaviors of modern youth via psychology, using psychological tests–entered the public lexicon of social concern.

According to Fass, the media construction of parental kidnapping and adolescence was an extreme example of the twentieth-century trend toward a moral panic about the erosion of family life. Firstly, the definition of "innocence" regarding childhood led to evaluation of parental kidnapping as a harbinger of social breakdown. In the late twentieth century, much attention and energy, in media, in the social sciences, and among legal experts, was directed to this subject. It was transformed from a problem of famous or rich families into a popular fear of childhood trauma requiring examination by psychological, legal, and policy experts. Designing effective social policies in relation to parental kidnapping is "tricky," and it suggests that we need to reconsider "the modern vision of the family" (pp. 163, 165). Secondly, from the beginning of the twentieth century, adolescence has been framed in popular culture as a dangerous period, and technological improvements observed in the middle of the century often have been presented as threatening childhood "innocence." Therefore, we live in a time of heightened anxiety about "at-risk" youth and the end of childhood. This is happening while global technological and economic competition has increased the importance of education and resulted in children's spending much more time at schools–which has played an important role in further transforming generational relations.

After World War II, many middle-class parents and students shared the same goal: going to the best and most elite schools. By the mid-1960s, these colleges and universities were the center of radical political movements. Fass argues that these movements challenged families in terms of intergenerational relationships and by demanding individual liberation. Parents and youth began to view each other as a counter group. This was much like an "identity war" between two groups with different social backgrounds. Many youths left home and began to live alone or with their boy/girlfriends. Youths declared their liberty by engaging in sex, using drugs, and listening to rock n´ roll. Above all, the sexual revolution of the 1960s was powerfully based on contraceptive methods that allowed youths to consider a life without children and marriage while the emotional value of children remained high. A result was an acceptance of greater familial diversity.

Fass deals with globalization in the last part of *Children of a New World*, and suggests that, although the concept is associated primarily with economic indicators, it signifies something more than this for children. Although children exist in every part of globalization, unfortunately they are neglected. According to her, "Childhood is a critical point of social contention, a profound test of cultural autonomy, and a basic emotional reference point for all of us as we reflect upon the many meanings and consequences of globalization" (p. 203). Today, Americans shudder at the startling images of children living or working on the street, working in low-salaried positions in factories, or forced into prostitution either on the street or on the Internet. All of these tell us something about the power of cultural continuity and the contested nature of defining childhood and intergenerational relations. American children have historically experienced or are experiencing these problems in acute ways. In this respect, the American experience may be regarded as an example rendering possible insight into children and childhood on a global scale. Fass claims that historians should adopt a global point of view when analyzing the historical process about children and childhood. She believes it will enable us to view modern childhood more deeply, to compare childhood experiences of different children from different cultures depending on time and space, and to better understand the relation between values and institutions of adults and experiences of children.

The last two centuries have been a period in which significant changes have occurred in childhood. *Children of a New World* presents this change strikingly to readers by using differing social, cultural, and economic incidents, events, and experiences. In addition to presenting different examples about the social history of children and the cultural history of childhood in a systematic and analytical way, this book encourages us to ask new questions about how these distinctive stories fit into a larger modern transformation of childhood.

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