

inexpensively. While Reid reminds us that there was a great deal of diversity in teens' room décor, he also notes the irony of teenagers' increasing reliance on the ephemera of consumer culture—including pinups and posters, advertisements, pop and beer cans—used to supposedly express their own personal identity.

*Get Out of My Room!* could benefit from a deeper examination of the relationship between the teen bedroom and notions of sexual development and sexual experience. As Marie Louise Adams has argued, domesticity was a key facet of Cold War containment, increasing adults' desire to see adolescents develop what were described as normal heterosexual relationships.<sup>3</sup> Educational films from the period—few of which are examined in Reid's book—may have shed light on experts' views on the bedroom's role in the sexual maturation process. Also unaddressed is the question of sexual violence in teen bedrooms. Given the often-close relationship between victim and perpetrator in cases of rape and sexual abuse, it is worth asking how often these crimes were committed in teen bedrooms, and whether experts and families were concerned about them. Police and court records might be one way to explore the role of teen bedrooms in these tragic, but important, events.

Nevertheless, *Get Out of My Room!* is a valuable addition to the history of childhood and youth because it clearly demonstrates the central role that autonomous teen bedrooms have played in American culture, child-rearing and family relations, development psychology, and residential architecture. Reid successfully argues that the teen bedroom has been both an intensely personal and intimate space, as well as the frontline for debates about children's development, autonomy, and rights in American society.

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Jonathan Zimmerman and Emily Robertson

*The Case for Contention: Teaching Controversial Issues in American Schools*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. 144 pp.

The polarization in American political life is now profound. Spearheading the daily public controversy is the willingness of the president and his spokespeople to lie brazenly, and apparently to believe ardently in their own fabrications. This predicament emerged after ten years of Twitter, a few more of Facebook and the iPhone—the technological platforms for ideological schism—and decades into erosion of “the authority of experts,” identified by Thomas Haskell in a book by that name in 1984. It represents either the far end of a pendulum swing, after which reason, civil deliberation, and respect for evidence will become more prominent in public discourse,

<sup>3</sup> Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 84.

or the first steps into political and epistemological oblivion. Our historical moment elevates to unprecedented heights the importance of thoughtful teaching of controversial issues to the next generation.

So the publication of *The Case for Contention: Teaching Controversial Issues in American Schools* could not be timelier. A slim, 122-page collaboration between historian of education Jonathan Zimmerman and philosopher of education Emily Robertson, its four chapters comprise one of “historical reflections,” and another of “philosophical reflections,” sandwiched between an introduction and a conclusion. The historical account and the philosophical analysis are different genres, written in different styles. The collaboration thus offers a rich, bifocal set of insights and guidance. The authors hope to encourage more open understanding of, and preparation for, teaching controversy, both by teachers at the classroom level and policy makers beyond. Historical context and conceptual clarification are two pieces of the puzzle.

The history chapter consists largely of a dynamic interplay between community restrictions on teachers, and the responses to those restrictions. The chronological account starts with Horace Mann and the beginnings of public schooling in America. Restriction and discouragement were overwhelming in the nineteenth century, while promotion and encouragement emerged during some periods in the twentieth. Discouragement went so far as threats to assassinate anti-slavery teachers in the pages of a Virginia newspaper during antebellum years. While there were glimmers of classroom controversy in Progressive era current events, the First World War shut the door again, followed by a re-emergence with Harold Rugg and his colleagues at Teachers College, Columbia University in the New Deal years. Alexander Meiklejohn, “the era’s best known proponent of freedom in the schools,” offered this caution: “The teacher-advocate wants thinking done as the only proper way of arriving at conclusions...The propagandist wants believing done, no matter what the road by which the belief is reached” (19). But even in the midst of the political battleground of the Depression, conditions in schools, the limitations of teachers’ own preparation, and, most of all, a public mistrustful of teachers commonly pre-empted opportunity for widespread, thoughtful debate in schools. The Second World War brought more restrictions, followed by the virulent anti-Communism of the Cold War, when “... almost any other controversial issue could itself conjure the communist spectre” (25). Indeed, one teacher was reprimanded for telling students that the Soviet Union was “larger in area than the United States” (27). In the mid-1960s, spearheaded by “the new social studies,” a profound turnaround got under way. Civil rights and anti-war demonstrations galvanized students, soon followed by a young cohort of new teachers. The “new social studies” failed, however, to make deep inroads into most teachers’ practices, and the “back-to-basics” movement of the 1980s soon challenged its small successes. The history chapter ends with a string of court decisions that appear to further restrict teachers’ professional latitude in teaching controversial issues.

The authors’ mode of narration consists of a pastiche of anecdotes, interspersed with occasional results of educational studies conducted at the time. This gives us a visceral—and shocking to contemporary liberal sensibilities—feeling for the limitations on open dialogue in schools. While the story line swings back and forth, there

is an underlying bass note of restriction on teachers. Only in the conclusion do we learn that there is more widespread official policy support for teaching controversial issues today.

Chapter 3 provides a conceptual analysis. Eschewing the telling anecdote and the temporal narrative, the authors provide a systematic, schematic analysis, introduced by four questions that set the agenda, providing the structure and substance of the chapter. The first of the four, “What makes an issue controversial?” informs the three others. That there is disagreement is the first—and most obvious—criterion for contention. Then there is an “epistemic criterion”: that reasonable arguments on both sides of the disagreement can be made by knowledgeable, competent people. Third, “the dispute is persistent and the parties have an emotional investment in it” (49). And finally, at stake are matters of public concern, not merely positions taken by academics, scientists or experts. These criteria give rise to three different kinds of controversy:

- (a) Maximally controversial issues (where all four criteria are present).
- (b) Expert-public disagreements (where there is consensus among experts but a counter position among a significant portion of the public, e.g., the safety of vaccination or the impact of human activity on climate change in the twenty-first century).
- (c) Disagreements solely among experts (e.g., what is the best interpretation of *Hamlet*?)

On the second question, whether controversial issues should be taught in public schools, Zimmerman and Robertson array a multitude of pragmatic and prudential reasons that might dissuade teachers from taking them up. The authors nevertheless argue that such teaching is a key element in preparing students to participate actively in democratic deliberation. The tripartite typology of controversy (maximal, expert-public or expert-expert) has powerful implications for *which* controversies should be taught. Particularly problematic are expert-public disagreements, where closed and settled issues rise up as seemingly legitimate issues for classroom debate. The authors convincingly argue that entertaining such debates misinforms students about the current state of knowledge.

On the question of how controversy should be taught, the authors review a variety of moral and intellectual stances for teachers, again with a helpful taxonomy that should encourage reflection from practitioners. The final section asks what public policies are needed to promote and protect thoughtful engagement with controversial issues in classrooms, ending with six well-formulated, entirely reasonable proposals, ready-made for consideration by local school boards.

The conclusion is an elegant eight-page essay beginning with the aftermath of the 2014 police shooting in Ferguson, Missouri. Here, history meets contemporary policy and the two threads of the volume are woven together in a powerful picture, glimpsed through local and national media, of the limited capacity of schools to handle the really difficult questions of our time. While there is historically unprecedented lip service for the teaching of controversial issues, teachers have little legal or judicial

support in doing so. "...The bigger obstacle," the authors conclude, "involves the overall status of our teaching force, which has never received the same respect or credibility as other white-collar professions" (99). It is both unfortunate and ironic, therefore, that such a cartoonish cover was chosen for a masterful piece of writing on this serious and consequential topic.

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Robert C. Vipond

*Making a Global City: How One Toronto School Embraced Diversity*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. 249 pp.

How *did* Toronto make its twentieth-century turn from city of perceived Protestant Anglo-Saxon uniformity, to urban icon of multiculturalism and diversity? Commonly described in the century's early decades as the 'Belfast of Canada,' by the late 1990s Toronto city council adopted 'Diversity Our Strength' as the city's official slogan.

In *Making a Global City*, University of Toronto political scientist Robert Vipond deftly explores one Toronto elementary school's twentieth century experience to explain the forging of a more inclusive urban—indeed national—ethos of belonging. Through the prism of a single school, we see a city opening itself to diversity. Particularly compelling in this account are Vipond's expansive field of vision and clarity of connecting tissue. In fewer than 200 pages of text, he recounts 100 years of Clinton Street Public School's history, linking its role as an immigrant gateway to changing notions of citizenship, multiculturalism, and the purposes of schooling. Vipond writes with sophistication, appreciation, and affection of all that a neighbourhood public school is called upon to do.

Clinton School emerges in these pages as at once the driver, the arena, and the exemplar of evolving—often contested—approaches to relations among identities of difference. Much is explained here through the prism of a school. Schools have long taken on a mission of making citizens—inculcating values, behaviours and rituals deemed requisite to the role. Additionally, Vipond perceptively notes, schools are "the one state institution with which many citizens have daily and recurring interaction" (21). Accordingly multiple stakeholders strive to imprint their aspirations on a school. Vipond skillfully recounts the intersections of both 'history from above' (the roles of governments and school board) and 'history from below' (the roles of parents, teachers and students) in shaping "who belongs, under what terms, and to what end" (2). More prescriptively, he argues that "the Clinton model of citizenship" (18) has much to teach cities and states currently struggling with issues of citizenship and diversity.

Clinton School owes its starring role in the book to demographics and democracy. Over the twentieth century its neighbourhood received waves of immigrants, making