demonstrated that the evolution of women's work was more complex than Clark thought, her overall thesis has not been seriously undermined. This is no mean achievement, and the book deserves to be called a classic.

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Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock, eds. — *The European and American University Since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Pp. vii, 370.

The study of higher education has been so subject to simplistic polemicizing over the past decade that an academic book promising to explore the "complexity" of university life is a welcome corrective. Allen Bloom's 1987 bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind*, spawned a school of copy-cat publications, most of which denounced the quality and politics of the contemporary university and, without actually seriously studying the past, harkened back to a supposed golden age of higher learning.

This book, arising out of a 1987 conference in Sweden, takes history very seriously and is the sworn enemy of oversimplified assessments of university development, past and present. Its analysis ranges from insightful and original to turgid and puzzling. Given the obscurity of some of the topics and the length of the articles, which averages almost 40 pages, it is safe to assume that the book will not be a bestseller. Still, it merits careful attention.

The book is divided into four main sections, the first of which probes the meaning of liberal education. Sheldon Rothblatt traces the numerous iterations of this concept from antiquity to the present, demonstrating how universities have clung to this academic ideal, or at least elements of it, in a world otherwise consumed by change. By redefining liberal education to meet new circumstances, universities have proven to be both creative and opportunistic. (Sven-Eric Leidman's subsequent discussion of general education in nineteenth-century Germany and Sweden provides two case studies of this process.) Those who would impose on students an unchanging core curriculum have read their university history selectively, something Rothblatt's lengthy essay seeks to avoid. Though his own conclusion and prescription are curiously ambiguous — mostly sidestepping the "political correctness" debates — he wisely notes that "there is no subject that cannot be taught illiberally, no subject that cannot be taught liberally" (p. 64).

The book's second section examines professional education in Europe and the United States. Rolf Torstendahl assesses the ways in which changing market conditions in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, and France influenced the professionalization of engineering in the nineteenth century. He analyzes the impact of history, politics, and local conditions on the particular forms that this training took, though his schematic "minimal demands ... optimal norms" (p. 110) model of organizational behaviour obscures more than it illuminates of the professionalization process.

The most lucid and original article in the book, at least in my view, is Michael Burrage's study of school-based professional education in England, France, and the United States. He explains how professional practitioners, both before and after the institutionalization of professional training, usually within universities, managed to dominate, without entirely controlling, the education of professionals. He also contends, contrary to previous interpretations, that university training frequently failed to improve the quality of professional education. His work invites a reconsideration of this significant issue, which has already been engaged in a new Canadian book, *Professional Gentlemen* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), by Robert Gidney and Wyn Millar.

Aant Elzinga introduces the book's third section on university research with a critical examination of the history of research culture and policy in Sweden. Beginning in the 1930s, the 50-year reign of the Social Democratic government entrenched an instrumentalist approach to higher education in Sweden. Universities were expected to contribute to economic growth and accessibility, and the methods introduced to achieve these ends constrained university autonomy more in Sweden than in Great Britain and North America. In an environment now favouring market forces, the fate of the humanities and social sciences is again uncertain. But Swedish professors, acting sometimes in concert and sometimes not, have managed to derail, or at least delay, some state-driven policy initiatives.

In contrast to Elzinga, Roger Geiger provides an untroubled account of research developments in American higher education in the twentieth century. This extremely traditional interpretation traces the major growth of American research, particularly since the Second World War, a tribute, in the author's view, to the American university's ability to make itself "both useful and learned at the same time" (p. 259). The concerns raised by other scholars about the impact on the American university of the Cold War, of military research, and of the private sector are not addressed by Geiger. The theme of complexity takes a back seat in this article.

The fourth section, entitled "Complexity", consists of articles by Burton Clark and Martin Trow. Trow locates the major differences in the development of American and British higher education primarily in the more pervasive operation of the market economy and the culture of competition in the United States. Clark is not unaware of the problems that the market can create for universities, but in the end his message is engagingly optimistic. The explosion of knowledge, the inefficiency of bureaucracy, the limitations of state planning, and the multiplicity of specializations mean that academics, working in clusters that transcend institutional and even national boundaries, control university life in ways that they do not always recognize. The university can never again be what it once was, and "[f]or a realm that is so naturally pluralistic, and for which the future promises an ever-widening complexity of task and structure, a large dollop of pluralist theory is not a bad idea" (p. 277).

Björn Wittrock concludes the volume with a lengthy treatise that seeks to draw together the book's dominant themes and to challenge fundamentally the functionalist interpretation of the relationship between university and society. He asserts that universities are not automatic respondents to social and economic demand, nor do

they consist of "atomistic" individuals without influence or importance. The dynamic among higher educational institutions, their members, and the surrounding communities, as always, is "complex". Before the end of the nineteenth century, universities were bound by a common ideal linked to liberal education, but they evolved in unique ways that were rooted in national and local cultures. During the twentieth century, however, they became more alike, influenced by the missions of nation building and economic growth (an observation that would seem to reinforce rather than challenge the functionalist thesis). The state thus intervened in higher education, but human agency was not eliminated. Professors, students, and professional practitioners helped shape the environment by challenging, circumventing, or ignoring the powers that be. Wittrock's article could have made these summary points in a more straightforward, less discursive way.

This is a substantive anthology, though it is not an easy read. Furthermore, some important themes are missing. Religion, the experience of women, and student culture are virtually ignored. Those interested in a serious comparative treatment of higher education are likely to be both inspired by the book's sophistication and irritated by its periodic obtuseness. Those who especially need to read it, the trivializers and simplifiers of university life, probably won't.

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Mark Traugott — *The French Worker: Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 382.

Mark Traugott has carefully prepared a fine volume for which the social historian, college teacher, and many researchers will be most grateful. Traugott selected sizeable excerpts from seven worker autobiographies among the nearly 40 extant for the period between 1789 and 1899, translating them into an easy prose and adding explanatory footnotes to help the student or new teacher. In a 43-page introduction, he delineates the range of his autobiographies, then places them in context. He first explores the demographic, economic, and political dimensions of French society in the early industrial age. A description of the workers' world follows, bringing to light such elements as health, housing, food, and the dangers of injury on the job. The subsequent section reflects upon the use of autobiographical evidence in historical inquiry. Finally, Traugott provides a brief analysis of the changing patterns of work and protest illustrated by the autobiographies.

Armed with an array of special lenses through which to see the life histories (and with the names of people who will illustrate one dimension or another of working-class life), the reader should be thoroughly prepared for the stories to come. Not quite, however. These autobiographies have such a fresh quality that twentieth-century readers, and perhaps students especially, will be genuinely moved by workers' striking expressions of pain or of dignity. For example, the shock of young Jacques Bédé at his father's death, the resignation of Martin Nadaud at the