



## Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era

By Elaine Tyler May

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When *Homeward Bound* first appeared in 1988, it forever changed how we understand Cold War America. Elaine Tyler May demonstrated that the Atomic Age and the Cold War shaped American life not just in national politics, but at every level of society, from the boardroom to the bedroom. Her notion of "domestic containment" is now the standard interpretation of the era, and *Homeward Bound* has become a classic. This new edition includes an updated introduction and a new epilogue examining the legacy of Cold War obsessions with personal and family security in the present day.

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## Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era By Elaine Tyler May Bibliography

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**Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

May (history, Minnesota) seeks to reconcile two prevailing but contradictory images of the 1950s: the notion of domestic tranquility and happiness amidst the fears and tensions of the Cold War. She does so by locating American family life within the larger political culture and by arguing that the retreat to the privacy and security of the home was a response to the era's political insecurities. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including data on 300 couples, she finds ideological connections between Cold War policies and conservative social "norms." A provocative thesis that will stir debate. Marie Marmo Mullaney, Caldwell Coll., N.J.

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Review

"A major addition to the literature on the history of the family [that] significantly enhances our understanding of American society in the 1950s."

**-New York Times**

"As Elaine Tyler May...has explained, marriage was not necessarily a positive expression of love or family values in the '50s; it was also an expedient means of 'containing' sex among the young."

**-Frank Rich, New Republic**

"Skillfully piecing together a social history of sex roles and mores governing data, parenting, birth control, consumerism, and divorce from the Depression to the late '60s, May supports her thesis with a wide range of unusual evidence, from Hollywood scripts and movie magazines to opinion surveys, economic studies, and federal employment and civil defense policies."

**-Constance Perin, Los Angeles Times Book Review**

"May sets a new standard for social history by linking intimate family life of the 1950s with the larger imperatives of the Cold War. *Homeward Bound* should lay to rest forever the notion that the '50s represent some sort of benchmark for 'traditional values'...a fascinating look at this unique, even aberrant, decade."

**-Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Dancing in the Streets***

"Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound* is a revelatory and path-breaking work, a brilliant excavation of the gender bedrock beneath the surreal landscape of Cold War American life. By connecting the bomb and the bedroom, the fallout shelter and the nuclear family, May links the personal with the political on profound new levels."

**-Susan Faludi, author of *The Terror Dream***

"A provocative, always entertaining description of the interconnections between the Cold War anticommunism of post-World War II America and the domestic ideology that Betty Friedan unmasked..."

**-Signs**

"A provocative thesis that will stir debate."

**-Library Journal**

"This book helps the Baby Boom generation understand its genesis."

## **-Booklist**

"May offers a sensitive, nuanced reading of domestic ideology, judging but never blaming. Her men are not oppressors, her women not betrayers....History has a long-and often dark-shadow in this book."

**-Beth Bailey, author of *Sex in the Heartland***

"Particularly refreshing is May's superb use of images taken from Civil Defense publications....May's scholarship is superb."

**-Joseph M. Hawes, *Journal of American History***

"May is fundamentally correct...that something was cooking under the surface of those placid 1950s families with their station wagons and their bomb shelters."

**-Eric Black, *Minneapolis Star Tribune***

"*Homeward Bound* comes as a timely antidote to any nostalgia for the 'affluent' '50s or a revival of its domestic ideology."

**-Rochelle Gatlin, *San Francisco Review of Books***

"This fascinating book shows us that the Cold War took place in kitchens, bedrooms and family rooms, as well as in the Pentagon. This is not just for historians-it's a good read for everyone."

**-Linda Gordon, New York University**

"Required reading for anyone who wants to understand how the upheavals in family life of recent years could have happened so quickly after the baby-boom era of togetherness and stability."

**-Arlene Skolnick, University of California, Berkeley**

"A provocative, challenging, persuasive interpretation of the internal dynamics that shaped America family life in the postwar years."

**-William Chafe, author of *Never Stop Running***

## About the Author

**Elaine Tyler May** is the Regents Professor in the Departments of American Studies and History at the University of Minnesota. She is the author books including *America and the Pill*, *Homeward Bound*, and *Barren in the Promised Land*, which received Honorable Mention for the William J. Goode Book Award. The former president of the American Studies Association and the Organization of American Historians, May has contributed to *Ms.*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, among other publications.

## Users Review

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#### Sherry Stevens:

The ability that you get from *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* is the more deep you looking the information that hide within the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to comprehend but *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* giving you joy feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in certain way that can be understood by

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#### **Ann Walsh:**

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