

DISCOURSE OF DANGER: GENDER AND THE HISTORY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA, 1850-1880

Marjorie R. Theobald

Historians of women's education in Australia, Britain, and North America have long been interested in the meanings and tensions inherent in including females as teachers and learners in nineteenth-century elementary schooling systems.¹ Recent feminist analyses of the masculinist nature of the state, and of civic life generally, provide a potentially illuminating standpoint for this historiography of female education.² State systems of elementary schooling were, by their very nature, organized collectivities aligned with the public, and therefore the masculine, sphere. Yet the early care and socialization of children were traditionally women's work, carried out in the private sphere. Indeed the nineteenth century generated a crescendo of voices reminding women of their duties in this respect. The creation of systems of state schooling (largely, but by no means exclusively, working-class schooling) took the education of children into the public domain and to a much greater extent into the control of men. This intrusion of men into women's traditional sphere may also be conceptualized as a threat to the masculine sphere, as women were obliged to follow their traditional work into the fledgling bureaucracies—and as girls followed their brothers into this public learning space. As nineteenth-century society polarized the masculine and the feminine and their spheres of influence, it is time to ask whether dissonance between womanly propriety and the experience of schooling was built into the system. These issues of gender could not easily be addressed by either of the major paradigms which have emerged to explain the rise of mass elementary schooling, as both conceptualize the school child as the future citizen/worker—and therefore as male. The failure of revisionist historiography to take account of gender has recently been acknowledged by Michael Apple, Ian Davey, and Bruce Curtis.³

This paper explores one aspect of women's experience of public schooling in the elementary schooling system established in the Australian state of Victoria in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. The presence of females within this newly constructed public learning space generated a persistent discourse of danger, of moral danger, at odds with the dominant discourse which conceptualized the publicly funded elementary school as productive of public and private morality in a fragile colonial society. Unease about the presence of females in this public space tapped into nineteenth-century notions concerning the moral fragility of woman. Hers was held to be an intuitively apprehended moral goodness, easily corrupted in the public domain where the masculine mode of rational/inductive moral decision-making coped with new and unfamiliar moral dilemmas. The production of the "good woman" necessitated a paradigm of

moral and intellectual obedience to an ever-vigilant higher authority. Her innocence was predicated upon her ignorance. On the other hand, discourse concerning the moral development of man assumed a paradigm of knowledge, confrontation with evil, struggle, and resolution. I have argued elsewhere that this insistence upon gendered moral/intellectual process was related to the gradual emergence of the rational/scientific frame of mind which of necessity underpinned capitalist exploitation of the natural world. This historic realignment of knowledge forms and power in the nineteenth century necessitated the reworking of ancient taboos on female knowledge if women were to remain within the private sphere.⁴ The constitution of public learning space as a site of moral danger for women therefore tapped into the most basic of societal structures—the politics of gender.

As with most issues which touch society at its deepest level, the theoretical questions raised above were seldom addressed directly at the time. The historian committed to a gender analysis is presented with formidable problems of evidence and methodology.⁵ This paper looks first at nineteenth-century discourse concerning the propriety of coeducation, and the ramifications of that discourse for the school providers and their clients. It then analyses in some detail two cases of alleged sexual misdemeanour within the schools themselves.

In 1866 the Higinbotham royal commissioners enquiring into the state of public education in Victoria put the question of mixed or single-sex schooling in writing to all heads of major religious denominations, and indeed to all witnesses before the Commission itself.⁶ Their views are of particular significance in the Australian context, as before state aid to church schools was withdrawn in 1872 (the year varies from state to state), the major denominations were funded in partnership with the state to provide elementary, coeducational schools for their adherents. The only denominational system to survive the withdrawal of state aid was the Catholic system. Of the nine clergymen who replied to the Commission in writing, three were unequivocally against educating boys and girls together, three were in favour, although only if strictly segregated and supervised, two were doubtful, but on balance came down in favour, and the remaining respondent was in theory for coeducation, but against it in the rough colonial environment.⁷

Church of England Bishop Charles Perry was extremely cautious on the matter. He claimed to have seen successful coeducational schools in England, but pointed to the lack of "duly qualified and trustworthy male and female teachers" in Australia. He concluded that "there is a danger of the mixed system being in very many cases injurious." However, he appended a letter from one of his clergymen experienced in educational matters (Perry himself knew little about the day-to-day running of his denominational schools) and this advice he was reluctantly prepared to endorse. The gist of the letter was that with due care and supervision "the interests of morality would *not* suffer" through teaching the sexes together. Its interest in the present context is that the letter is almost exclusively concerned with the moral welfare of girls. On the positive side, the

unnamed clergyman/educator (possibly the Rev. Hussey Burgh Macartney, who also appeared before the Commission to speak on Perry's behalf) believed that the education of girls would consequently be more accurate and thorough, and that they would be under firmer discipline. The superior teaching ability of men, at least with older children, was an article of faith in the nineteenth century. His was the quintessentially middle-class view of promiscuous working-class life:

It must be remembered that boys and girls, such as attend our Common Schools, are, in their homes, thrown much together, and it is quite impossible that the children whose homes are in our smaller streets and lanes, can be brought up so innocently as can the children of parents in a higher rank of life. Girls must of necessity, I fear, be exposed to the hearing and seeing of many coarse things, and it is not so much by shielding them from the knowledge of evil, as by strengthening their moral and religious sense, that we can hope to preserve their purity.

He apologized for confining himself so closely to the moral welfare of girls and hoped, though it seemed to him "somewhat Utopian," that boys educated with girls might acquire "somewhat of gentleness of tone and manner," and learn to respect their own and their companions' sisters, reverence for women being "one of the most important moral qualities which a man can have."

The Rev. D. Macdonald (Presbyterian), who had been both pupil and teacher in the coeducational parish schools of Scotland, admitted that logic was on the side of such a system: families were mixed; mixed schools furnished a greater field for "emulation"; and men had superior teaching ability and control to women. However, like Bishop Perry he felt that in the colonies practical results were against mixing the sexes in schools. He had a very low opinion of the generality of Australian schoolmasters and argued that "uncouth manners in a mixed school have a much worse moral tendency than where the sexes are kept apart," especially in the large mixed schools in the centres of population. When Macdonald appeared in person before the Higinbotham Commission he was more specific as to who was at risk:

The education of girls, I need not say, is a subject that gives parents a special anxiety. Mixed schools are, upon the whole, an evil...the manners of the teachers go a long way indeed to determine with a mother whether she will send her girl to school or not...and the consequence is, that a very large proportion of our girls are taught now in private schools altogether beyond the influence of our Common Schools, and beyond the influence of State education. Mixed schools are better for the higher classes than for the ordinary classes. In Edinburgh, for instance, there are several mixed schools of the very highest class...and the boys and girls are sent by some of the very highest families in Edinburgh to those

schools. The tendency is the other way in our Common Schools, and mothers are very unwilling to send their daughters to such schools.⁸

Three years later the Rev. Macdonald headed the sub-committee of clergy who drew up plans for the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Melbourne.

Bishop Gould (Roman Catholic), who steadfastly refused to appear before the Royal Commission as a witness, sent via his emissary the Rev. Dr. Bleasdale a decidedly negative reply: "The members of the Board would surely not like to run the risk of their daughters being exposed to dangers such as beset girls in mixed schools." There was, of course, little likelihood that any member of the Board of Education intended to so expose his daughters. The Rev. A.F. Ornstein (Jewish) was also totally opposed to coeducation in Victoria's common schools. He also cast his objections almost exclusively in terms of the baneful effect of coeducation upon girls. It would deprive girls of that "modest and gentle training" so important in the education of the female sex; "good and modest women" could only be produced by a separate system of female education under the control of women teachers. Close companionship with the other sex caused girls to become bold and unruly, kindling "immoral desires, which will have a wretched influence over their whole life." The Rev. A. MacVean (denomination not known) was even more lugubrious about the danger to girls. Drawing upon thirteen years' close observation of the colony's common schools, he warned that

in all the schools that I have had to do with, there have been attempts on the part of the boys to corrupt the minds of the girls by obscene drawings, writings, cuttings in wood, and other representations. The intentional exposure of the person is of frequent occurrence. The severest punishments in several of the schools under my inspection have been inflicted on account of improper conduct; and the most watchful care has been necessary to prevent immorality.

It is difficult to believe that the Rev. Matthias Goethe (Lutheran) was inhabiting the same moral universe when he wrote in answer to the same question that

[in a mixed system] girls are kept from a false sentimentality; they get rid of their bashfulness; they learn to move more freely....Long experience has taught me that, through the sexes being together while under tuition, a foundation for morality is laid....Every seclusion incites to evil.

Several points emerge from the opinions of Victoria's leading clergymen on the question of mixed or single-sex schooling. Even the enthusiastic Matthias Goethe agreed that the organization of mixed common schools must be based upon strict segregation where possible and the strictest possible surveillance at all times. Several witnesses agreed that whatever the risks to public and private

morality of mixed schooling, the experiment was infinitely more dangerous in the Australian colonies where moral anarchy lurked just below the surface. And finally there is the insistent subtext that it was girls, rather than boys, who were in moral danger in Victoria's common schools.

What then is the relationship between this public discourse on the production of the "good woman" and that dense and tangled web of transactions between bureaucrats, teachers, parents, and children which we may, with the licence of hindsight, refer to as the creation of a system of elementary schools in the nineteenth century? Incontestably, there were more boys than girls on the rolls of Victoria's common schools before legislative compulsion began to muddy the waters of individual choice.⁹ The catch-all explanation for such phenomena, at all socioeconomic levels, is that nineteenth-century parents cared less about the education of their daughters than of their sons. Yet as the Rev. Macdonald testified, there were always more girls than boys in Victoria's private schools, even before the Catholic system was forcibly ejected into the private sector after the cessation of state aid.¹⁰

While the withdrawal of children of both sexes was a rough and ready form of local control in the nineteenth century, there is evidence in the files of the Victorian Education Department and its predecessor, the Board of Education, that it was daughters, rather than sons, who were withdrawn when the issue at state had a moral dimension. In 1877 at the remote Mallee school of Fort Cameron, headmaster Bilton's average attendance fell from 24 in March to six by July—largely through the withdrawal of daughters.¹¹ A self-righteous and sometimes violent man "of meddling and irritable temperament" who forged a letter to the Department in his own defence, Bilton had alienated his farming clientele over a series of contretemps, from excessive corporal punishment to colonizing the position of postmaster ahead of the district's most influential resident, the publican. The charge which finally brought Inspector Robert Craig to the spot concerned alleged immoral conduct with the girls at the school—kissing, joining in games involving physical contact, and inviting girls into his living quarters in the school. Craig was inclined to play down the charges, assessing Bilton's conduct as unwise rather than immoral, but by January 1878 the parents had begun their own private school in protest at Bilton's continued presence. This, of course, they were perfectly entitled to do. A case of alleged adultery involving R.T. Taylor, headmaster of the Yea school in 1879, led to the imputation that "some of his adult female pupils...had to leave his school and travel 4 miles to another Teacher."¹² And in 1877 parents of Maindample school petitioned the Education Department concerning the alleged drunkenness of the sewing mistress:

We do not consider it fair or proper but think it a great injustice that a lady teacher would be placed over our girls that would have even the least inclination to intemperance and by bad example contaminate their young minds.¹³

Such incidents are commonplace in the nineteenth-century correspondence files.

It would be a mistake to dismiss these local holocausts as amusing evidence of Victorian prudery or light relief in an otherwise serious historical enterprise, a response which is sometimes elicited by the appearance of females in the historical narrative. There is evidence that widespread unease about the presence of females in publicly funded elementary schools shaped the early education systems in ways which have been overlooked in the historiography of Australian education. Until 1872 parents in the colony of Victoria were not obliged to send their children to school, and for a variety of reasons, many sent them intermittently or not at all. Even after the 1872 Education Act the truancy clause proved difficult to enforce, for practical reasons with working-class families and for ideological reasons with middle-class families. Thus state-provided schooling was a numbers game, both at the centre, where administrators were under constant political and editorial pressure to increase enrolments (annual reports to parliament talked of little else) and at the local level, where teachers' salaries, fees, and "results" depended in part upon enrolments. With staffing controlled at the local level until 1872, parents could and did exert pressure in the matter of staffing. A gender analysis of this phenomenon suggests that women teachers—in husband and wife teams, as headteachers of separate girls' schools, and indeed as rival private proprietors outside the system altogether—had considerable bargaining power as the state was obliged to purchase respectability to ensure the presence of daughters in its elementary schools.

While the husband and wife team was the preferred symbol of moral propriety, especially in small country schools where the practice was near-universal, in the larger centres the same moral imperatives dictated that schools be divided into girls' and boys' sections. As with infant departments, the higher salaries, greater prestige, and considerable independence ensured that these positions as heads of girls' departments were coveted by women teachers. At the prestigious St. Mark's school in Fitzroy, Mrs. Mary Jenvey, the only female teacher to be called as a witness before the Higinbotham Commission of 1866-67, testified that she considered her girls' section an entirely separate school, sharing only the number (563) with the boys' section:

Q. What is the relation that exists between the female teacher and the head teacher of a school?

A. I am the head, as far as my school is concerned.

Q. Then is there any relation whatever between the head male teacher and the head female teacher?

A. Not the slightest.

Q. They are just treated as separate?

A. Yes, we are entirely separated. My school is separate from the boys' school, and my income is separate; and the school is separate in every

respect, expect that they are called by the same number on the books of the Board of Education.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, Jenvey regarded the mixing of boys and girls as "very inexpedient," adding that if the sexes were to be mixed in schools a female teacher should be employed as "boys suffer less under a mistress than do girls under a master." Mary Jenvey was, at the time of her appearance before the Commission, under suspension by her local committee following a disagreement over the proper division of fees between herself and the school, a battle which she subsequently won.¹⁵ This victory, together with her successful negotiation of independent status within the school, suggests considerable room for women to manoeuvre within the early state systems.

The subtext of the exchange between Jenvey and the commissioners was that these separate schools, or departments, were under siege in the 1860s, presumably on economic grounds. In their counterattack female headmistresses routinely invoked the threat of mass withdrawals of female pupils if schools were to be mixed. In 1874 the newly formed Education Department amalgamated St. Matthew's school in Carlton with Drummond Street school near the University of Melbourne. At St. Matthew's, Mrs. Helen Thompson had been for thirteen years headteacher for the girls' department. The Drummond Street school was conducted as a girls' school by Miss Bessie Stone—and indeed was referred to in a Departmental memo as a "select school," a nomenclature which usually signals a middle-class clientele. Both women at first declined to accept the position of first assistant in the mixed school under a male headteacher. Bessie Stone wrote to the Department that

with regard to the salary of first assistant teacher in St. Matthews School, I feel assured that from the fact of the boys and girls being taught together in the same classes, a number of the girls attending [my school] will leave, and the average attendance of the combined schools will not exceed by many the numbers now attending St. Matthews School, and as this will give a very small salary to the first assistant teacher, I beg most respectfully to decline the offered appointment as I consider my many years of service should entitle me to something better.¹⁶

At Pentridge school to the north of Melbourne, Miss Jane Trotter complained in 1867 that during the previous year "owing to the mixed nature of the public school five private schools have been opened within a mile of each other."¹⁷ She claimed that this had "very materially reduced the average attendance of the girls because the private schools are taking them for the same fees." Isabella Burton of St. John's school in inner Melbourne was also demoted from headteacher to first assistant, with considerable reduction in salary, when the separate boys' and girls' departments were amalgamated. The correspondent of the local committee, the Rev. John Barlow, wrote to the Board of Education on her behalf:

The mixing of boys and girls has had a very injurious effect on the attendance at the girls' school. I find that Parents have a strong objection to their daughters being taught in class with boys. My own experience of the results of the mixed school system is very unsatisfactory. I consider it to be injurious to both manners and morals of the girls.¹⁸

The Board relented and the boys and girls were once again separated.

Understandably, then, women teachers were strongly in favour of single-sex schools. Separate departments were developed to a high standard by successful teachers like Mrs. Tabitha Pike of St. James school, Melbourne.¹⁹ Under the protection of the Church of England and the state she was in fact running a very prosperous middle-class ladies' school. At Mrs. Pike's school, which advertised regularly in the Melbourne press, the tell-tale signs were the female accomplishments of music, painting, and French. Indeed the Church of England Dean of Melbourne testified before the Higinbotham Commission that Mrs. Pike had "70 young ladies doing accomplishments" and that he sent his own daughter there, although the latter chose not to mention the fact in her autobiography many years later when class boundaries had firmed between public and private education. Historians of education have long been aware that *de facto* boys' grammar schools, leading to matriculation and civil service examinations, and even to the university, had developed within the state system; the appearance of *de facto* ladies' academies funded by the state has yet to be systematically investigated.²⁰

Indeed the whole issue of middle-class use of state schools has yet to be satisfactorily investigated.

As Jane Trotter's letter concerning private girls' schools implies, parental preference for women teachers and single-sex schools also enabled women to continue as private proprietors on a far greater scale and for longer than has been realized. The various Boards and their inspectors persistently denigrated private proprietors, and female proprietors in particular, expressing astonishment that parents could be so gullible. The reality was more complex. The state courted many of these women, tempting them into the government stable as teachers in non-vested schools—that is, schools established and owned by the headteacher, but in receipt of a grant for staff salaries. This aggregation of private schools under public patronage facilitated the construction of parental "preference" for state schools in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.²¹ There are departmental files which deal specifically with complaints by women (and some men) who felt that subsequently they had been defrauded, or even abandoned, by the state.²² Other women left the state system when disputes were not resolved to their satisfaction, often taking many of their pupils with them.²³ There was a widespread perception in the 1860s that most small, private schools were run by women, and that was certainly still the case when government regulation produced the first possibility of a statistical profile of Victoria's non-government schools in 1905.²⁴ Historical analysis of this phenomenon has tended to locate

the private female proprietor at the extremes of colonial society—as dame schoolkeeper or as principal of the elite ladies' academy.²⁵ The class analysis characteristic of revisionist historians, while legitimate in itself, tends to push the female proprietor down the socioeconomic scale and to constitute the small, private school as a locus of working-class resistance to state-imposed schooling. The gender analysis already implicit in studies of the elite lady principal should reinstate such schools on a continuum of social prestige and recognize the much wider significance of private female schools in the construction of the "good woman." This form of schooling continued to be popular because many colonial parents did not believe that publicly provided schooling was suitable for their daughters.

Clearly then, the role of this newly emerging state/cultural form of the elementary school in the shaping of the "good woman" was problematical. Implicit in the discussion so far is Foucault's perception of sexuality as "brought into discourse" in the nineteenth century.²⁶ It is illuminating in the present context to see the nineteenth-century coeducational state school as an important means by which sexuality was thus "brought into discourse"; as a site in which deviance, and therefore normality, could be defined; and in which new forms of power, policing, and punishment could be created. Within this theoretical framework I will examine two cases of alleged sexual misdemeanour in Victoria's state schools. The cases will be considered, not as investigations into the "truth" of the matter, but as historical texts illuminating the ways in which the publicly funded elementary school became a site in which the "good/bad woman" could be defined and contested.

The first case occurred in the country town of Kyneton in 1880.²⁷ The story is difficult to unpick from the surviving documents, but in June 1880 a parent (female) complained to the first assistant at the Kyneton school, Mrs. Elizabeth Hall, about overhearing indecent language used by senior girls from the school in another public place. Mrs. Hall duly reported this to the headmaster, John Storie, who asked her to caution the senior girls *en masse* during their sewing lesson that morning—apparently taking somewhat literally the popular nineteenth-century notion that the act of sewing was itself productive of female morality. John Storie wrote later that he passed this duty over to Mrs. Hall because "a caution on such a delicate subject would come with more propriety from a lady." Here is our female teacher as moral guardian of female scholars.

Mrs. Hall proceeded to her task, in the presence of two female pupil-teachers, and it was, by all accounts, a fire and brimstone performance. As the girls left the classroom at 10:30 a.m., Mrs. Hall found on the floor a crudely suggestive note written to an assistant male teacher, William Littlejohn, in disguised handwriting, but apparently signed by a fourteen-year-old girl from his class named Euphemia Robbie. The note implicated two other girls, Kate Uren (also fourteen), and Margaret Sutherland (fifteen). The story becomes confused at this point, with the teachers sticking to their version, and the girls to theirs, to the bitter end. The headmaster tackled Euphemia Robbie, *she* says about the author-

ship of the note, *he* says only about the bad language as complained of by the parent earlier in the morning. Euphemia Robbie fled home, without permission, to seek the protection of her parents. She told them she had been accused of writing an indecent letter. The teachers' case against her thereafter rested heavily upon their contention that when she left the school the note had not been found, and therefore she must at least have had "a guilty knowledge of it."

The discourse of danger swelled. The headmaster acted immediately, "in order to avoid a public scandal," and suggested by letter to the Robbies that Euphemia be sent to "a private school where she could have the strict and constant supervision of a female teacher that her case seemed to...urgently require" (expulsion) and to the Uren and Sutherland families that they keep their daughters home for one month "subject to proper supervision and control" (suspension). The first assistant Elizabeth Hall seems to have visited the families to urge this course of action. The teachers, however, were not strictly speaking within their rights, and their precipitous action rebounded on them. All three families demanded that there be an inquiry by the local Board of Advice—a much watered-down form of local governance which replaced local committees after the 1872 Education Act. And so the network widened, and the discourse about the "good woman" passed into a legalistic mode with evidence, cross-examination, witnesses, character references, and the paraphernalia of an obsessive search for "truth." At least two members of the Board of Advice were local magistrates. The network widened again with an inquiry at departmental level by Inspector Thomas Brodribb, at which counsel for both teachers and families were present. Brodribb, while obviously suspicious of Euphemia Robbie, decided upon a verdict of "not sufficiently proven." The moral technicians of the state could afford to be chivalrous.

This expansion of social space controlled by the state gave to its agents, the teachers, inspectors, and boards of advice, the power to "name" the deviant female (and by implication to construct the "good woman"), to punish her (and hence to discipline *les autres*), and to establish surveillance over the behaviour of young women and their families. The enormity of naming Euphemia Robbie as the fallen woman was clearly understood by all parties—it was generally assumed that she would thereafter be outcast from respectable society. Hence the obsessive searching after "truth" and the reluctance to find her guilty. Yet it was taken for granted that this was acceptable punishment if she were "guilty."

For historians of women's experience the question to ask is: Guilty of what? This question brings into focus, in a specific historical context, the politics of knowledge. If Euphemia wrote the note, then she possessed forbidden knowledge of a sexual nature, knowledge forbidden to an unmarried female. Moreover, it was knowledge deployed in such a way as to indicate sexual agency, and paraded in the crudest masculine mode. The note proposed to William Littlejohn that "you must keep me in and I will give you a fuck. So do keep you cock still to tomorrow Friday because I want someone to put their big cock in me," ending with a somewhat comical blend of courtesy and crudity: "I remain,

Phemy Robbie to Mr. Littlejohn and K. Uren wants one too."²⁸ Two people commented on the *manner* of her possessing this knowledge. The headmaster wrote in his report that "the letter seemed to point to something worse than mere words picked up and used without meaning or understanding." W. Fisher, counsel for the teachers at the Brodribb inquiry, argued that "the indecent letter showed knowledge beyond which a mere child could possibly be possessed of." Did they mean to imply that Euphemia Robbie was sexually active? There is no direct suggestion of this at any stage, although as counsel became involved, evidence was brought that Euphemia had been on the public streets at night with a young man, apparently when her parents were in Scotland and she had been left in the care of a neighbour. Another schoolgirl was brought forward to testify that Euphemia had spoken of being given money by the young man. Her teacher William Littlejohn testified that he had heard her say, "I would like to have a fuck tonight"—while leaving the Temperance Hall where she had been singing in the Temperance choir! The "good woman" is by implication innocent/ignorant, and must appear to be so. Thus Inspector Brodribb wrote under a heading in his report: "Evidence against Euphemia Robbie: point four—Her personal appearance: she is only a young girl of 14, by no means womanly in aspect, but I consider that she has a very sensual mouth." The manifest possession of sexual knowledge brands the female child as deviant, indeed excludes her from the category of child, and the inexorable logic is that she must be removed from the school.

Incidental evidence suggests that the battle lines had been drawn up at the Kyneton school between an existing female culture and the state agents of moral rectitude. Euphemia Robbie's alleged misconduct merely served to bring matters to a head. Some of the senior girls had colonized this public space in a manner which fell lamentably short of the behaviour expected of the "good woman," and their behaviour had activated discourse concerning the moral fragility of women outside the protection of home and family. Their teacher William Littlejohn had been having a bad time with his class of senior girls; the term sexual harassment comes readily to mind, as does the analytical concept of resistance. The disruptive behaviour may well have been led by Euphemia Robbie. The headmaster's report to the Education Department stated that on the morning of the incident "knowing that E. Robbie's conduct had been repeatedly insubordinate and rude to Mr. Littlejohn I removed her and the other two girls to Mrs. Hall's room that they might be under female supervision." Hall herself was reported as saying "the fifth class was so unruly a class, that if she had a daughter in fourth class she would not allow her to go into the fifth." The Board of Advice reported that "certain complaints had been made of improper language and behaviour indulged in by several of the senior girls at the school." They believed that

there is a difficulty in a young man maintaining thorough discipline in a large class of elder girls [and] would recommend that an exchange be made so far as the teaching of the classes is concerned. The headteacher,

who is of mature years and sound judgement, taking the elder girls and the assistant master the higher class of boys.

This moral panic at the Kyneton school is reminiscent of the disapproving references in nineteenth-century newspapers and other sources to female culture formation in unfamiliar capitalist workplaces such as factories and mills. Disapproval was frequently conceptualized in terms of sexual "boldness" and harassment of male overseers or lone males in the streets, behaviour which could be construed as subversive of the gender order.

If the state elementary school and its personnel can be conceptualized as a geographical expansion of state surveillance over private morality, in the Kyneton case this worked in two ways. Firstly, the state intruded directly into the lives of the Robbie, Uren, and Sutherland families, passing judgement upon their "respectability" and upon their capabilities as parents. Secondly, in order to protect themselves and their daughters the families were obliged to invoke this newly created moral technology of the state. They demanded a Board of Advice enquiry which precipitated them into a series of official interrogations of a most intimate kind. We can admire their spirit and understand their distress at these public disclosures, which all parties claimed not to want. But we should be wary of applying the notions of "individual agency" and "family strategy" without thinking carefully about what has happened here. It is the rapidly expanding state which created these new possibilities of moral prescription, and the families had little choice but to fight on this unfamiliar terrain. Again with deference to Foucault, the paradigm shift is from older, more organic and intimate forms of social control (which should not be romanticized, and which were fermenting away below the surface in Kyneton in 1880) to more top-down, monolithic forms of moral regulation.

I am not merely taking a perverse delight in finding girls at the Kyneton school in 1880 tinkering with the dimensions of the "good woman." The naming of Euphemia Robbie as a bad woman under the circumstances described raises the possibility that, by an elision of sexual knowledge with knowledge itself, female sexuality and intellectual activity (even in this crude form of basic literacy and numeracy) were constituted as incompatible. If we accept that it was Euphemia who wrote the note, that she was daft enough to disguise her handwriting and sign her name, then it is still the Euphemias who drop out of our education systems first, leaving their chaste and obedient sisters to pursue academic honours which are subverted in more subtle ways. While headmaster Storie's fear of scandal may seem to us quaint, the work of Jane Kenway and Debbie Tyler suggests that the category "state school girl" itself may have been constituted in opposition to moral excellence, and to have expedited the class ordering of Australian society down to the present time.²⁹

The hapless William Littlejohn notwithstanding, the teaching staff at the Kyneton school were constructed in the official documentation of the Robbie case as an efficient and highminded lot, diligently pursuing the welfare of their

charges. Yet fears about the propriety of men and women working together in a public place also fuelled the discourse of danger which accompanied the establishment of elementary schooling systems. Outward proprieties and social norms regulating asymmetrical power relationships between men and women became entangled with impersonal, bureaucratically defined relationships and a different set of expectations characteristic of the workplace and of civic life in general. Gender-neutral terms such as teacher and scholar had to be decoded in the everyday life of the school. In extreme cases conflicting paradigms of gender relations precipitated the destruction of a school. This is precisely what happened at the Rose Street common school in the working-class Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy in 1866-67.³⁰

Had the school not erupted in public scandal in early 1866, the official records would once again have cast the staff and governance as a random assemblage of civil servants, duly ordered in the gendered hierarchy already characteristic of the state elementary school after only two decades of existence. There was the obligatory local committee (which before the 1872 Education Act had considerable powers) consisting of five local (male) dignitaries. The headmaster was thirty-four-year-old American bachelor James Eastwood, and under his authority between 1864 and 1867, although not concurrently, three female assistant teachers and three female pupil teachers, at least two of whom had percolated up from the lowly ranks of monitor/scholar. On closer inspection, however, the school was the personal fiefdom of James Eastwood, exhibiting just those overlapping paradigms of personal patronage and bureaucratic control which the historiography of elementary education has bleached out of the record. Rose Street was another non-vested school; Eastwood owned the buildings and collected fees, but was in receipt of a Board of Education grant for salaries. The local committee had been handpicked by Eastwood, it met only at his behest, and its members were not conversant with the workings of the school or the regulations of the Board of Education. Their ignorance greatly exacerbated the disaster which overtook the school. The senior assistant, twenty-five-year-old Englishwoman Mrs. Caroline Shepherd, was the wife of Eastwood's close friend Louis Shepherd. She was on leave for one month in late 1865—a discreet absence which usually signalled the birth of a child—and in December 1865 was appointed to her husband's common school in the Melbourne suburb of Prahran. In her place Eastwood appointed her sister Miss Mary Wood, newly arrived from England and two years her senior. Louis and Caroline Shepherd and Mary Wood lived in nearby Gore Street, where Eastwood was a regular visitor. Mrs. Annie Palmer, who became an assistant teacher in early 1866, and her carpenter husband James, were also friends of Eastwood's, as he recuperated from an illness at their home in 1865.

The crucial relationship, however, and the one which brought this cosy edifice crashing around him, was Eastwood's relationship with monitor/pupil-teacher/assistant teacher Agnes Jane Grant. By his own admission she was his protégée. He waived fees for her attendance at his night school as she struggled

to gain her Certificate of Competence as a teacher. By his own admission he took a benevolent interest in the struggling Grant household, taking her meagre wages directly to her mother and visiting the family on many occasions. Greater intimacy he steadfastly denied. Agnes Jane Grant had been born in Melbourne in February 1849, the eldest child of Scottish parents Elizabeth and Alexander Grant who arrived in Victoria a matter of weeks before her birth. Their immigrant family enterprise did not prosper as Alexander, who was variously described as a carpenter, builder, and contractor, died in 1865, leaving Elizabeth to care for five children under twelve years of age. Her struggle to maintain the family within the ranks of the respectable poor of Melbourne was unrelenting. In 1865 this female-headed family was renting a small weatherboard cottage of two rooms in Fitzroy, a few blocks from the Rose Street school. The maze of narrow muddy streets surrounding the school were the preserve of working-class people, with one pupil in every seven entered on the school roll as a destitute scholar. According to James Eastwood the attendance was most irregular due to "the migratory character and habits of many parents...a great number being masons, labourers and c."³¹

Once again, the bare bones of the story are necessary to the reader. When Eastwood purchased the Rose Street school in 1864 he found fifteen-year-old Agnes Grant there in that limbo of exploitation between monitor and pupil-teacher. She was appointed an assistant teacher under the Board of Education at Eastwood's recommendation in July 1865, although at that time she was still unqualified.³² In Eastwood's words,

she had been a monitress in the school, and when I went there I found them [the Grant family] in what I thought were poor circumstances; and, desiring to assist them as far as I could do, I took pains to give her private instruction along with other persons that came to evening school. She came without charge; and until she was appointed assistant I paid her out of my own pocket.³³

Thus Eastwood was apparently well pleased with Agnes Grant and she was well pleased with his attentions.

There are two sharply differing versions of what ensued. In September of the same year, according to Agnes Grant, Eastwood applied to Elizabeth Grant for her daughter's hand in marriage. He was accepted with the proviso that the marriage be postponed in deference to Agnes's extreme youth. There ensued a courtship which was doubtless a welcome diversion to the scholars at the school where Eastwood and Grant taught in the relationship of master and apprentice. As the romance developed, the Grants claimed, there were pleas for sexual intimacy which Agnes and her mother dragged out to confound the hapless Eastwood when matters had degenerated into the bitterness and indignity of litigation. James Eastwood denied the romance, the "attempted seduction," and the proposal of marriage *in toto* and characterized his relationship with the Grant

family as purely professional and charitable. He agreed that the subject of marriage had arisen, but claimed that the mother had thrown her daughter at him, offering to keep the marriage a secret and allow Eastwood to keep her salary as a teacher. Both parties agreed that the parting of the ways occurred immediately after Agnes's appointment as assistant teacher in July 1865. In fairness to Eastwood it should be noted that Mrs. Grant's recriminations about his conduct towards her daughter waited upon the latter's erratic progress towards certification as a teacher. The mother delayed until late in July, after Agnes had been appointed, before confronting Eastwood about his attempts on her daughter's virtue. Even so, it appears that she played her trump card too soon, confusing the appointment with the Certificate of Competency. The day of reckoning was Thursday, 18 January 1866. The petty spitefulness between headmaster and assistant erupted into a row that brought Elizabeth Grant storming up to the school for a public confrontation with Eastwood which thrust irrevocably into the realm of common gossip his alleged misconduct with Agnes. The encounter must thereafter have loomed large in the folklore of the Rose Street school and its hinterland in the small streets of Fitzroy.

James Eastwood summoned his moribund local committee, and after an enquiry at which the issue of his relationship with Grant was ruled out of order, she was found guilty of disruptive behaviour and given the opportunity to resign. This she declined to do, and when her eloquent plea for protection reached the Board of Education, it was the first they had heard of the dismissal—the local committee had breached their obligation to seek the approval of the Board for such an action. Inspector Joseph Geary was dispatched to the school to interview all parties and at this point Agnes Grant made her charge of attempted seduction against Eastwood. In the ensuing Board of Education enquiry, the local committee's decision was reversed, and the school's grant was withdrawn as long as Eastwood remained headmaster. The personal affairs of Eastwood and Grant therefore brought into confrontation the central Board of Education and the local committee. Neither body would submit to the authority of the other, and the confrontation dragged on through a further local committee enquiry, two supreme court cases, and a parliamentary committee of enquiry.

As with the Robbie case in Kyneton, it is this rich collection of documentary material which affords a way into the processes of state formation and the geographical expansion of state moral technology. The state's right to define appropriate expressions of sexuality, normative moral behaviour, and gender relations is assumed in Inspector Geary's report to his superiors after his visit to the Rose Street school in early 1866:

Miss Grant has brought charges of the gravest character against Mr. Eastwood, and her mother, who appears to be a truth-speaking person, bears them out. I candidly confess that Mr. Eastwood has admitted so much to me, as to his relations with Mrs. and Miss Grant, that I entertain a strong opinion that he is not free from serious blame. If the Board is

the guardian of morals as well as of literary efficiency in our schools, I think this matter should be sifted to the bottom...the statements are so strange, so contradictory, and yet showing the existence of relations the reverse of moral somewhere among the parties engaged, that it is due, in justice to Mr. Eastwood, whether he is guilty or not, to have his character cleared.³⁴

The powerful Secretary to the Board of Education, Benjamin Kane, was later questioned about the inquisitorial form which the Board decided to employ:

Q. The Board did not associate Mr. [Police Magistrate] Templeton with Mr. [Inspector] Geary because of an opinion on their mind that Mr. Geary would be partial?

A. Certainly not. I do not think we ever had a similar case to this, and there being a police magistrate in the district, it was thought well to have someone, and he was asked to act...especially as Mr. Templeton was in the habit of taking evidence and weighing it as a magistrate.³⁵

Thus while the initial local committee enquiry was held in the business offices of one of the members, the Board of Education enquiry was held at the Collingwood Police Court.

Of central concern to all the enquiries were the moral dimensions of Agnes and Elizabeth Grant, rather than the character of James Eastwood. They were obliged to defend their "good name" and their "respectability" by bringing character witnesses from middle-class clergy, city missionaries, and school teachers, and from their local working-class community. Forty-one people signed a petition attesting the "respectability, sobriety, and industry" of the Grants; all were residents of the Rose Street neighbourhood which one witness described as "remarkable. You could not go outside to do anything but it would be talked about all over the neighbourhood....It is like a country place there. There is a half dozen of small streets which are a place to themselves."³⁶ And it is clear that within the moral domain her interrogators included Elizabeth Grant's positioning within the economic and gender relationships of this community:

Q. You are a widow, I believe?

A. Yes.

Q. How do you get your living?

A. My boy is in the Government printing office—he gets 17/6d. a week, and I have a brother-in-law who assists me.

Q. If your Brother-in-law living with you?

A. No, he is in Brighton.³⁷

And to Agnes:

Q. What is your mother? Does she follow any business?

A. No....

Q. Do you mean your mother does not work for her living?

A. She does sewing.

Q. You mean by answering she had no business, you meant she had not a shop?

A. Yes.

Q. Has she a sewing machine?

A. No.

Q. She does needlework?

A. Yes.³⁸

Questioning returned time and time again to the vexed question of how a "good mother" could leave her daughter in moral danger at the school after the "attempted seduction" had occurred. Even the Grant's staunchest ally Inspector Geary wrote in his initial report: "I confess it is marvellous how a mother could allow her daughter to remain under a man who had made such proposals as are imputed to Mr. Eastwood in Miss Grant's letter."³⁹ And indeed these are precisely the grounds upon which the local committee believed Eastwood rather than Grant. They noted that twelve months had elapsed before Mrs. Grant made any mention of "so gross an act" as an attempted seduction, and concluded that "we cannot believe that any mother would allow her daughter to be daily and also attend evening school with a man who had been guilty of such an outrage upon her daughter."⁴⁰ Elizabeth Grant was questioned minutely on her handling of the affair:

Q. Did your daughter complain to you of improprieties in the conduct of Mr. Eastwood?

A. Yes, at different times she complained to me about him.

Q. Will you inform us, if you can, the first occasion of her complaining to you?

A. She complained of his wanting to put his hands into her bosom, and I told her not to allow such things to be done.

Q. Can you say when that was?

A. Very shortly after he came to our place—that would be in October—he came to me in September, 1864....

Q. What did she next complain of?

A. Then she complained in June or July—I think the end of June she complained to me about his wanting to put his hands up her clothes, and saying to her he would never make her his wife until he had seduced her. It was then I went to him.

Q. Did she only complain to you twice?

A. She had complained to me different times; but I cannot recollect the different times, because I was always telling her to be careful.⁴¹

On every occasion Elizabeth Grant invoked in her own defence the importance of the daughter to the fragile family economy:

Q. Did your daughter go to school after that?

A. Yes.

Q. How long?

A. Till she was dismissed; but he was never inside my doors after that,...I thought she had passed her examination, and I was going to remove her from the school because I know how difficult it was to get a school without a certificate, and we needed that money so much.⁴²

The Rose Street school scandal also brought into focus precisely those issues of female virtue and sexual knowledge invoked by the case of Euphemia Robbie. Notional categories of child and woman could not readily encompass evolving practices of teacher recruitment and training within the elementary schooling systems. Agnes's extreme youth and her exact status within the school at the time of the incident came under scrutiny:

Q. Were you a teacher in the Rose-street Common School?

A. Yes.

Q. How long were you there?

A. Four years I think.

Q. Were you a teacher or a monitress the whole of the time?

A. I was a scholar part of the time.

Q. When did you first know Mr. Eastwood?

A. When he came to the school.

Q. Were you a teacher at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. When did an intimacy first begin to exist between Mr. Eastwood and yourself?

A. At the end of September or the beginning of October, I am not sure which.

Q. In 1864?

A. Yes.

Q. How did that intimacy commence?

A. He spoke to my mother first, but he came to me afterwards and asked me if I would be his wife.

Q. What was your age then?

A. I was more than fifteen.⁴³

Judgement often appeared to hinge upon her "knowing" the full import of Eastwood's sexual advances. Persistent question and answer wove an intricate discourse on female moral action predicated upon a paradigm of innocence/ignorance, intuitive apprehension of moral evil, flight, and confession:

Q. In what way did the disturbance of amicable relations arise?

A. By his saying he would not marry me until he had seduced me, and insulting me.

Q. How came he to make use of such an expression as that? Had there been a conversation leading up to that, or was it an abrupt statement made by him?

A. Before that he had been speaking about allowing him to do what he would to me. I did not understand him till June or July, when he said he would not marry me until he had seduced me.

Q. You communicated the statement to your mother?

A. Yes....

Q. It would appear then that he had repeatedly made advances of the kind you speak of?

A. By allowing him to do what he wanted, but I did not understand what he meant.

Q. Why did you then refuse to allow Mr. Eastwood to do what he wanted, if you had not a knowledge that he wanted something wrong?

A. Not till he said something about seducing, then I understood what he wanted all along.

Q. Why did you keep that from your mother for three or four days?

A. I might have told her earlier than that.

Q. Why did you allow any interval to elapse after such a proposal was made to you, before communicating the fact to your mother; was it a matter of which you did not like to speak?⁴⁴

In the eyes of the local committee Agnes Grant's actions fell far short of this paradigm of female moral action. They placed great store by the fact that no exact date had been given by the Grants for Eastwood's action, concluding that "to a young girl this attempt would be such a gross outrage, that not only the month, but the day and the hour should be indelibly fixed upon her memory."⁴⁵

The rich documentary material generated by the Rose Street affair opens up the possibility of understanding the relationship between women and the state as "process" rather than as static functionalist domination, a model which has characterized much of the research in the area so far.⁴⁶ Such a theoretical stance allows an analysis which takes account of the complexities and contradictions of concrete historical situations. The Rose Street affair suggests a concept of state formation as an opening up of public space where struggle and contestation, and indeed significant material and subjective gains, were a real possibility for women. Indeed state formation as process is evident in the most obvious way in

the creation of elementary schooling systems. The Victorian Board of Education regulations had been promulgated only in 1864, and all parties to the Rose Street affair, from the Secretary of the Board (and his lawyers) to Agnes Grant herself, were engaged in a constant, if unequal, struggle to impose upon the regulations those meanings most conducive to their own perceived best interests.

But the theoretical standpoint of process has greater explanatory power than this. The Rose Street affair is also the story of two women and their struggle for survival in a society which decreed that the "good woman" was confined to the private sphere under the protection of her husband or father. Mother and daughter had in fact staked their claim to economic viability through the state institution of the elementary school. Although official rhetoric surrounding the recruitment of teachers in the 1860s constructed the elementary school teacher as male, economic space had been opened up for women. As we have seen, it was on the grounds of economic survival that Elizabeth Grant countered the charge of "bad mother" before the various enquiries in 1866-67. Moreover, to the incredulity of their male interrogators, mother and daughter had refused to concede the Rose Street school as enemy territory when their more traditional economic strategy to secure Eastwood as a husband for Agnes went awry. The popular version(s) of events, which occasionally bubbles up through the official record, has Elizabeth Grant publicly declaring that her daughter had as much right to the school as Eastwood, and that they could ruin him and the school along with him.⁴⁷

Events were brought to a head by the mother's physical invasion of the school in January 1866 to confront Eastwood with his alleged malfeasance. Moreover, it is clear that from the time of the break in their relationship, Agnes Grant had committed herself to the gadfly politics of the underdog. Her day-to-day tactics within the school are reflected in Eastwood's initial charges against her before the local committee:

- 1st. Neglect of her work in school, and waste of time in tattling.
- 2nd. Inquisitiveness, and carrying tales home to her mother (by her own admission) of all things transpiring in the school.
- 3rd. Disrespectful language of the head teacher and the senior assistant, and repeated disobedience to the former.⁴⁸

By February 1866 all parties, including Inspector Geary, agreed that the school had become unworkable. Agnes Grant mounted one final assault on the school after her dismissal in early 1866; she opened a private school in her home in Leicester Street, one block north of the Rose Street school. According to her mother, Agnes attracted as many as thirty pupils from Rose Street, but Eastwood and his supporters "raised a report that it was unhealthy" and when measles broke out the children deserted the school.⁴⁹

Nor did Agnes Grant relinquish her struggle to become a certificated teacher. She continued to study for the teachers' examinations of the Board of Education, attending night classes at another common school, but failed again in July 1866

and January 1867. She eventually passed in July 1867 and was classed in the second division of competency. She did not again find employment as a teacher until January 1869 (school committees were presumably influenced by her notoriety), and then it was in a remote elementary school in Central Victoria, an appointment necessitating a separation from home which would have in large measure subverted the economic strategy of the family. Nevertheless, her elevation from the ranks of the working classes of Melbourne to the profession of teaching afforded her the status and security, however meagre, which had eluded her mother when Alexander Grant died in 1861. When Agnes herself was widowed with a child to support some years later, she immediately returned to teaching. Her younger sister Eliza also became a teacher with the Victorian Education Department.⁵⁰

Yet the small measure of power over their own destinies which their alliance with the state afforded the Grant women was shot through with contradictions. For the two women were ultimately obliged to invoke the stern forces of morality against Eastwood, and in so doing, to deliver themselves as clients to the chivalrous state. Agnes Grant's letter to the Board of Education is a moving document, remarkable indeed from one who could not pass the modest examination for a certificate of competency to teach. She concluded:

Whether the charges brought against me are of such a grave nature or have been proven to the satisfaction of the Committee as to necessitate the severe measures they have adopted I have not to this day been informed. Which together with my duty to my widowed mother and family whose principal support I am has prevented me from complying with their request.

I may further state that everything has been done to enforce my resignation such as preventing me from signing the abstracts for January's salary thus attempting to starve me into compliance and threatening to have me suspended for five years on account of my age.

I now therefore beg humbly to lay those facts before you and crave the protection of the Board.⁵¹

The powerful men at the centre, removed from the hothouse politics of school and neighbourhood, believed in Agnes at once. Yet her actions once again brought into public discourse the moral propriety of men and women in the public workplace of the school.

The shadowy figure of Mrs. Caroline Shepherd now comes into focus. It was the Grant women who rendered problematical her presence in the school as first assistant to the bachelor Eastwood. Furious at her promotion to first assistant above Agnes, and suspicious of her friendship with Eastwood, the Grants did not hesitate to circulate rumours of an illicit relationship between the two, based on the flimsy evidence that Agnes had seen the pair spend time together alone in the office of the school. The accusation was later withdrawn. Caroline Shepherd's

husband Louis, who appeared as a witness before all the enquiries, threatened to sue the Grants, and the wife transferred to the safety of her husband's school in December 1865. When she was replaced by her sister Mary Wood, rather than by Agnes, the Grants came swiftly to the conclusion that Wood had come from England especially to marry Eastwood. It is possible to have some sympathy with Eastwood when he wrote to the Board in early 1866: "Hoping you are not so tired and disgusted as I am, I remain, Jas. Eastwood."⁵²

This paper raises more issues than it settles—as indeed it was intended to do. It has sought to widen the gender analysis of state-provided elementary schooling in the nineteenth century by drawing attention to a persistent discourse of danger concerning the presence of females as teachers and learners in this new, state-sponsored public learning space. The argument has therefore focussed in turn upon the problematical relationship between women and the nineteenth-century state. In the same decades that Australian women were systematically excluded from participation in new democratic state forms, their attendance at state-provided elementary schools became official policy and their services as teachers became essential.

What are we to make of this? Are we to focus upon the vastly expanded role thus appropriated by the state in the delineation of the "good woman"—the state as marriage broker for the working-class man? Or are we to focus upon the expanded educational opportunities afforded to women (however humble these opportunities may have been) at a time when structural changes were throwing up the possibility of waged labour for women—a consequence of capitalism which inevitably constitutes a threat to unequal power relations between men and women? Other contradictions abound. Fear for the moral safety of female pupils ensured that women teachers, inside and outside the state systems, retained considerable bargaining power, as did mothers who hesitated to commit their daughters to schools conducted in the public sphere. Yet their case for educational separate spheres was predicated upon a notion of the "good woman" which was vital to continuing patriarchal supremacy. The paradoxical relationship of women to state-provided schooling was encapsulated in the experiences of women like Euphemia Robbie and Agnes and Elizabeth Grant. An accretion of personal struggles such as theirs pushed the Australian states towards centralization in the 1870s and 1880s. Gender is by no means the only lens through which these matters may be investigated. But we must now ask whether women shaped the early education systems in ways which may have been as profound as church and state conflict, or conflicts based on unequal access to the means of production. The focus upon gender as a central category of analysis in the historical process is not going to be easy.

NOTES

1. See for example the work of Marjorie Theobald in Australia, June Purvis in England, Alison Prentice in Canada, and Geraldine Clifford in the USA.

2. There is an excellent overview of this work in Anne Showstack Sassoon, ed., *Women and the State: The Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), Introduction. For the construction of civic life as masculine see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).
3. For an example of the liberal-democratic paradigm see A.G. Austin, *Australian Education 1788-1900: Church, State and Public Education in Colonial Australia* (Melbourne, 1961); for the revisionist paradigm see Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society* (Adelaide: 1986). Miller's work shows considerable awareness of gender issues. The collective *mea culpa* from revisionist historians can be found variously in Michael W. Apple, "Standing on the shoulders of Bowles and Gintis: class formation and capitalist schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 28, 2 (1988); Ian Davey, "Capitalism, patriarchy and the origins of mass schooling," *History of Education Review* 16, 2 (1987); and Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (London, Ont., 1988).
4. Marjorie R. Theobald, "The accomplished woman and the propriety of intellect: a new look at women's education in Britain and Australia, 1800-1850," *History of Education* 17, 1 (1988).
5. For an eloquent statement of these problems see Anna Davin, "The jigsaw strategy: sources in the history of childhood in nineteenth-century London," *History of Education Review* 15, 2 (1986).
6. Royal Commission on Public Education 1867 (also known as the Higinbotham Commission), *Victorian Parliamentary Papers 1867*, minutes of evidence.
7. *Ibid.*; all replies are printed in Appendix 0, "Abstract of evidence of heads of religious denominations relative to the systems of mixed schools and separate boys' and girls' schools." All quotations are from Appendix 0 except the following extract.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 73, nos. 1042-3.
9. *Ibid.*, Appendix F.
10. See for example, "Returns of private schools" in the Annual Reports of the Minister of Public Instruction, *Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1878-93*.
11. Victorian Public Record Series (VPRS) 892, no. 609.
12. VPRS 892, no. 692.
13. VPRS 892, no. 631.
14. Higinbotham Commission, minutes of evidence, p. 284.
15. VPRS 892, no. 37.
16. VPRS 892, no. 417.
17. VPRS 892, no. 493.
18. VPRS 892, no. 117.
19. VPRS 892, no. 135, Higinbotham Commission, minutes of evidence, p. 112.
20. The two best known examples of *de facto* grammar schools funded by the state are the National Model School and the Geelong National Grammar School.
21. See for example the case of Sarah Jackson, whose private school became the Rose Street common school, in Marjorie R. Theobald, "Agnes Grant," in *Not So Eminent Victorians*, ed. R.J. Selleck and Martin Sullivan (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984), p. 82. The general point about empire building of this kind is made in Margaret Pawsey, "Backroom politics and educational reform: the National Board and Victoria's Common Schools Act," *History of Education Review* 12, 2 (1983).
22. VPRS 892, no. 330.
23. See for example Agnes Grant's attempt to set up a rival school—below.

24. The records generated by the Teachers and Schools Registration Act 1905 are contained in VPRS 10300 and 10061.
25. For the two extremes see Phil Gardiner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England* (London, 1984) and Marjorie R. Theobald, "Women and schools in colonial Victoria 1840-1910" (Ph.D. diss., Monash University, 1985).
26. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1979); *The History of Sexuality* (New York, 1978); *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, 1972). For an excellent example of the application of Foucault's theoretical framework to education see Bruce Curtis, *Educational State*.
27. VPRS 892, no. 736. All subsequent references to the case of Euphemia Robbie are contained in this file.
28. The actual note is contained in the above file.
29. Jane Kenway, "Some thoughts on private schooling, and the politics of knowledge," paper given at the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society Annual Conference, Canberra, August 1988; Debbie Tyler, "The case of Irene Tuckerman: understanding sexual violence and the protection of women and girls, Victoria 1890-1925," *History of Education Review* 15, 2 (1986).
30. The principal sources for the Rose Street common school case are VPRS 892, no. 35 and "The Report from the Select Committee upon the Rose Street Common School...with Minutes of Evidence and Appendices," *Victorian Parliamentary Papers 1867*, vol. 2. See also Marjorie R. Theobald, "Agnes Jane Grant."
31. VPRS 1226, reply no. 120, school no. 517.
32. Victorian Education Department Teachers Records—Agnes Grant.
33. Parliamentary Select Committee (hereafter PSC), p. 8.
34. VPRS 892, no. 35, Geary to Board, 66/3374.
35. PSC, p. 1.
36. PSC, p. 57.
37. PSC, p. 19.
38. PSC, pp. 15-16.
39. PSC, p. 52.
40. PSC, p. 49.
41. PSC, pp. 17-18.
42. PSC, p. 18.
43. PSC, p. 14.
44. Ibid.
45. PSC, p. 49.
46. My thinking on this point has been greatly clarified by Sassoon, *Women and the State*, and by Curtis, *Educational State*. The point made by Curtis about the private nature of many of the struggles surrounding the creation of state schooling systems (see his Introduction) seems to me to be particularly illuminating with regard to the agency of women. Conversations with my colleague Pavla Miller are ongoing and invaluable.
47. PSC, p. 50.
48. PSC, p. 55.
49. PSC, pp. 20-21.
50. Victorian Education Department Teachers Records—Eliza Grant.
51. VPRS 893, no. 35, 66/2402.
52. PSC, p. 55.