

Alain Choppin, dir. *Manuels scolaires, Etats et sociétés, XIXe–XXe siècles*. Paris: Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique/Service d'histoire de l'éducation, 1993. Pp. 228. FF 68,00.

Of 3,600 humanities and social science journals in North America, fewer than sixty are devoted exclusively to comparative international studies. In education, perhaps a half-dozen could lay claim to a comparative vocation. Law, social work, and political science account for perhaps thirty comparativist journals. And for historians there is *Comparative Society and History*, a strong journal well into its third decade. Although other journals publish comparative pieces from time to time, one wonders why, in an age of "globalization," relatively little comparative work makes its way into print in the New World.

The Europeans are in stark contrast. Comparison in history, economics, educational studies, sociology, and politics is the business of departments, institutes, and even whole universities. The impetus comes from a wide range of federal European institutions (especially the Council of Europe) and funding arrangements, but also from a revolution in the mindsets of scholars in many fields.

Despite these enthusiasms, skeptics on both sides of the Atlantic continue to ask what practical benefits come from comparison. Do European historians actually think there are "world systems" whose mechanisms become visible through international comparison? (New work on the rise of compulsory mass education in Europe after 1850 argues this view.) Or do comparativists think they are laying a foundation for "culture-free" explanations of great social changes—mass immigration, war and peace, communication/cultural shifts, changes in family life?

Without commenting on these controversial problems, I take the view that comparative history pushes historians to ask new questions, to notice new bodies of evidence, and to make new inferences from them. In practice, one may well end up working on a local or regional scale, even if one starts off with comparative intentions, but always in the expectation of subsequently explaining local phenomena in a comparative framework. *Manuels scolaires* shows how comparative research can jolt a somnolent field of historical research—the historical study of textbooks—out of localist somnolence.

Three of the seven essays in *Manuels* have a quantitative orientation, unsurprising in an area whose common currency is abstractions, structures, and numbers. Choppin himself describes a computerized survey of twentieth-century French writings (some four hundred-odd) on the history of school textbooks in France. Three-quarters of these writings are studies of history, social science, and humanities texts, with a mere 4.4 percent on the development of science textbooks. Choppin's piece surprises, not just because it

reveals a high degree of historical curiosity about textbooks, but also because it uses straightforward statistics to ask questions usually put in political and cultural terms.

For non-French scholars, the pieces by Gaulupeau (on colonial imagery in nineteenth-century elementary school history texts) and Caritey (on historical memory in Quebec history manuals) are full of comparative possibility. The Gaulupeau article proposes a highly original (and promising) quantitative technique to categorize drawings and symbols, an approach only partly derivative of iconographic studies published during the Bicentennial of the 1789 Revolution. He finds that the balance of text and image (percentage of page-space given to each) has changed little in a hundred years; that in 10,314 analyzed images, across the period 1880–1970, a clear periodization is difficult to resist, with triumphalist imperialism rising until the 1920s and falling away in the 1940s, to be replaced by an iconography in which the viewpoints of indigenous peoples have a part. The progression of themes, symbols, and arguments described in this fine research throws unexpected light on the textbook production of all the industrialized countries. It invites analogous research and is thus comparative history at its best.

Christophe Caritey discusses the vision of seventeenth-century New France found in Quebec history textbooks at four turning points in twentieth-century public school curriculum. Caritey's method was to ask former pupils what they remembered of this subject and theme, to make a detailed content analysis of the forty-five history textbooks in use in 1923–50, and to find what sorts of knowledge and what interpretation stuck in learners' minds. We learn from M. Caritey just how well Quebec pupils ingested various generalizations about their peasant ancestors, about Aborigines, and about the church, and how far these things may be explicable as the impact of textbooks in learners' minds. Although the explanation of these pupils' memory of Quebec history must also take into account the evolution of teaching methods and the growth of non-print media since 1930, Caritey's findings will reassure the writers and publishers of history textbooks. Textbooks really *do* matter.

The remaining essays in *Manuels* are on the politics of textbook adoption (Koulouri and Venturas on Greece, 1834–1937), on ebbs and flows in central State control of Spanish school books in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Escolano), on the content of Swedish literary anthologies from 1842 to the present (Englund), and on the historical anthropology of Latin manuals in England (Stray). Stray takes a superficially unrewarding subject and shows how it may be made to reveal whole new vistas. He pays especially close attention to the profits to be had from large-scale textbook publishing in an era of mass education, and the connection of this fact to the appearance of new ideologies of authority and power in official and popular talk about education.

This collection should encourage comparative historical study in North America, but not in the mechanist and discriptivist forms characteristic of some past work in the field. These authors' explanations do not depend on theories of underlying international "structures" and "forces," nor are the authors satisfied with detailed descriptions of local conditions and circumstances. They are driven, instead, by the *possibility* of comparison. Their questions and their arguments, taken together, show how the field of history of education has begun to renew itself.

William Bruneau
University of British Columbia

Kathleen L. Lodwick. *Educating the Women of Hainan: The Career of Margaret Moninger in China, 1915–1942*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995. Pp. xvi, 255. U.S.\$35.00 cloth.

Metropolitan scholars writing about colonial situations face a contradictory task. They can most easily access the experiences and historical records of the colonizers. Indeed, it can be the richness of these sources that stimulates their scholarly interest in the first place. However, these contexts cannot be fully understood without reference to the experiences of the colonized. *Educating the Women of Hainan* illustrates this dilemma. On the one hand, it is a highly successful biography of Margaret Moninger, an Iowa schoolteacher who worked as an American Presbyterian Church missionary in China for almost thirty years. On the other hand, the problematic nature of her experiences and activities in China, and the imperialist cultural assumptions that shaped them, are almost invisible.

Drawing upon a rich set of primary sources, Moninger's own detailed weekly letters home, Kathleen L. Lodwick creates a convincing and complex portrait of an educator/scholar of piercing intelligence and unshakable moral conviction. Arriving in China in 1915, Miss Moninger (as she insisted upon being called), quickly learned Mandarin Chinese and was posted to Hainan Island, off the southernmost coast of China. There she served in various missions as a schoolteacher, girls' school principal, and mission secretary. Moninger learned Hainanese, eventually publishing a Hainanese-English dictionary, and wrote several scholarly articles, including ethnographic studies of the aboriginal Miao people of the Hainanese interior. With the exception of two year-long furloughs back to the United States and several evacuations to Shanghai or Hanoi because of warlord invasions or communist-inspired