

fer, however slightly, is with respect to ideas of class and the role of the individual in society. Canada has historically been somewhat more class-oriented than the United States; we have, perhaps, a stronger sense of social responsibility and less enthusiasm for the idea of the rights of the individual. These considerations soften Herbst's rather pointed attack for the Canadian reader. Nonetheless, this history is one which concisely tells the story, poses the question, and demands a response. Educators must provide an answer.

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Marjorie R. Theobald and R.J.W. Selleck, eds. *Family, School & State in Australian History*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990. Pp. xiv, 202. \$19.95 paper.

If the primary function of anthologies such as *Family, School & State in Australian History* is to define "state-of-the-art" in particular fields, then the collection under review is an exemplary effort. Some of the essays, as well as the tenor of editorial direction, reveal a determination to place analysis in the service of synthesis and to test theory by the application of discrete historical practice. While contributors take justifiable delight in discovering the unique, they also offer

insights which pattern the play between character and circumstance. In short, the authors and editors are clearly seeking centres which hold.

Some of these themes are stated by Pavla Miller and Ian Davey in "Family Formation, Schooling and the Patriarchal State." Without denigrating the usefulness of the work undertaken by the "Whigs" in regard to institutional conflict, or the revisionists who sought to explain the emergence of mass education in processes of industrialization and urbanization, and in theories of social control, or concurrent efforts to focus on common people, families, and women, they speculate that a proper understanding of patriarchy as it was transformed in the course of its journey from cottage to factory will enable historians to link church and state, urban and rural, family, class, gender, and age relations in a new, more integrated history of compulsory education in Australia.

What strikes the reader long accustomed to history as sociological science is the unexampled toughness of individual persons and discrete families whose functioning often challenges the soundness of those intricate theoretical arches we construct over disciplinary abysses. Marjorie Theobald discovered more than a handful of women in the special case files of the Victorian Board of Education (1862-72) and its successor, the Victorian Education Department (1872-1986), whose successful or unsuccessful efforts to achieve financial rewards and professional status equal to their qualifications and responsibilities and to colonize "the

economic space opened up by the processes of educational state formation" ("Women's Teaching Labour," p. 32) both attest to the strength and resourcefulness of the individual spirit and put into question the credibility of a "static, functionalist approach which underpins simplistic notions of women's oppression by the state" (p. 28). In "A Goldfields Family" R.J.W. Selleck convincingly demonstrates how one immigrant family of teachers, the Millers, though grievously flawed by sins of the flesh, still managed to plow glorious furrows through the National and Denominational Boards' secular and sacred turf. That they were able to do so was a testament to individual orneriness and the strength of the family unit, whose members were able to grasp the connection between appropriate political processes and economic security. Both articles are a salutary reminder that the human spirit is an important factor in historical equations.

Equally important in Bruce Smith's estimation is that intimate venue, the classroom, within which individual teachers and inspectors lived, moved, and had their professional being. Once again we discover an intent to find in the voluminous archival record, rather than theoretical models, appropriate explanations for the transformation of Australian schooling. From his study Smith concludes that the primary impetus for state as opposed to local control of education is to be found in the virtually unanimous conclusion of Inspector Wilkins and his colleagues that local control of the classroom, and the free play of market forces, virtually guaranteed that

schooling would be cheap but not good. Only centralized authority could impose and safeguard the standards essential to good teaching in a properly equipped classroom, a venue which Smith describes as the "liberal classroom."

That "liberal classroom," however, generated a plethora of hazards which endangered the health of teachers. In "The Teacher's Lot in Queensland," Martin Sullivan and Andrew Spaul examine the occupational diseases which threatened the well-being of frontier teachers. These ranged from deafness and nervous exhaustion occasioned by teaching within a few hundred yards of stamping mills to exposure to communicable diseases in overcrowded classrooms to the stress generated by a harsh inspectorial regime which sought conformity to bureaucratic managerial patterns rather than the fostering of individual pedagogical talents. Ironically, this was the agency which was to function as a surrogate for the family, to compensate for its failure to promote the moral and educational well-being of the child, a shortcoming which augured ill for the future of society. In "Their Paramount Duty," Malcolm Vick argues that advocates of state responsibility in education sought to ensure that "school procedures, the relations within the classroom and the content of the curriculum...work together to produce good habits, right dispositions and valuable moral and social knowledge" (p. 189).

Just as Bruce Smith urges us to look, again, at the text of the inspectorial files with their reiterated complaints of poorly managed and

inadequately equipped classrooms, and to cool our contemporary passion for cultural subtexts, so Margaret Pawsey implies that our tendency to make once-renowned but now somewhat despised educators mere tailors' dummies, useful only when draped with ideological abstractions, violates sound historical practice. Surely, she contends, a study of John Bernard O'Hara's life, in its own terms for its own sake, makes sense. If the cultural matrix which his spirit made home was derivative, we ought to recognize that it "opened up beauty and conferred stability...gave him the predilection for melodious charm which made him a poor poet, but...gave his teaching that passion for inspiring his pupil with his own love of learning, and for the rich world of the mind, which made him a great teacher when he might easily have become a mere crammer" (p. 109).

Geoffrey Sherington's case study, "Families and State Schooling in the Illawarra," examines the way in which traditions of family and community life mediated the changes entailed by processes of modernization in New South Wales. In its own way Sherington's essay celebrates the tough and adaptive nature of the human spirit by demonstrating that parents did not constitute a community of passive clients for the emergent educational bureaucracy. On the other hand, state schooling did not greatly enlarge the prospects for those children who remained to work within the Illawarra. Their lives, Sherington concludes, while "touched" were certainly not "transformed" by the new schooling. This conclusion is certain-

ly borne out by Allyson Holbrook's examination of vocational guidance in the 1930s. While the advocates of vocational guidance contended it would improve "efficiency" by reducing the drop-out rate, they promised far more than they could deliver. In historical perspective, guidance—in its earlier years, at any rate, and judged by its results—was pure charade.

Many of the articles in this anthology confirm the existence of a determination in contemporary historiography to subject social scientific theory to the test of extensive archival research. In Canada, that willingness has most recently been exemplified in Bruce Curtis's *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (1988), a volume of substantial historical merit created out of equal parts arcane statist theory and archival resources by a sociologist prepared to confront the occupational hazards of systematic research in public archives, in an industrial-strength dust mask. Furthermore, it is encouraging to find individuals emerging from the pages of *Family, School & State* with their personalities intact and valued for their inherent worth rather than as stick (or stock) figures in a morality play. Under the circumstances, may one hope that full-scale volumes of good, integrated narrative history will follow?

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