

this given is *by nature* particular, various, and contextual.

Was Locke, then, a Cartesian revolutionary?

Ki Su Kim
Memorial University

Marie-Madeleine Compère and Dolorès Pralon-Julia, eds. *Performances scolaires de collégiens sous l'Ancien Régime: Étude de six séries d'exercices latin rédigés au collège Louis-le-Grand vers 1720*. Paris: Institut national de recherche pédagogique/Publications de la Sorbonne, 1992. Pp. 266. 130 F.

Historians of state-supported education since the nineteenth century are typically awash in documents. From Ontario to Galicia, the story was the same: about a century and a half ago, a mania for documents and records seized educators and their clients. The happy result was bulging archives. If the historian has difficulty with these archival riches, it is the trouble of *selecting* evidence fairly and representatively.

The contrast with the eighteenth or any earlier century is painful. Even in centralized and bureaucratized France, whole aspects of eighteenth-century educational experience are barely documented, much evidence having been destroyed or lost. It is a matter of delight and surprise when an archive unexpectedly produces an exception to the rule. *Performances Scolaires* is based on recently dis-

covered manuscript evidence of a largely undocumented but familiar educational activity—classroom translation to and from Latin, in prose and in verse.

Compère and Pralon-Julia found the manuscripts for this study in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In the early 1720s, the librarian of the Collège Louis-le-Grand was a certain Père Hardouin. This erudite man was forced out of teaching, and finally out of librarianship at the collège, when his ultra-conservative publications became theologically embarrassing to the Society of Jesus. Since the collège was the Jesuits' flagship educational institution in France, the publicity was unwelcome. Hardouin's publishing career thus came to an abrupt end, but not his private scholarly work. In old age, Père Hardouin wrote tracts on the Apocrypha, on the theological significance of the Mass, and on the errors of atheism. Being poverty-stricken, he could not afford the paper on which to write, and his former teacher-colleagues must have given him bundles of used exercise sheets from their Latin classes. Hardouin wrote on the backs of these sheets. His papers were later bound and deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale. We have the boys' Latin exercises through Hardouin's (temporary) notoriety.

The boys at Louis-le-Grand were by 1720 mainly boarders (*pensionnaires, internes*) from Paris and from central and northern France. From "good" families, these pupils could read and write French when they arrived at school. In most cases, the boys spent their entire adolescence (as we would call it) at the collège, and their

chief task while there was to acquire a serviceable Latin. The 199 sheets analyzed here are from six Latin classes (from the 5th, 4th, and 3rd-last years of the programme). They include two French-Latin prose translations, three Latin-French prose translations, and one Latin-French poetry translation (from Seneca's *Trojan Women*). Where the original texts were modified for school use, the editors provide a complete and defensible reconstruction of the steps by which the texts were changed, giving likely reasons for each step.

The curriculum and the teaching methods at Louis-le-Grand in 1720 were those set out in the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* of 1586, although with significant modifications in the teaching of the vernacular, and in the oral exercises then becoming popular at the collège. As in all Jesuit schools, the master ("le régent") was expected to set and to correct one Latin exercise each day, no mean feat in classes running to 50, 60, or even 100 children. In practice, as the editors show, children corrected each other's work, the régent choosing five or six exemplars to discuss with the whole class.

Moving back and forth between Latin and French and Latin again, these children learned to paraphrase and to translate, to write, and to declaim. Their texts were classical (the "good" bits from Cicero, Horace, Seneca, Tacitus, and the like) and religious (Christian prayers and scripture).

The editors announce early (p. 8) that they will not study the ideological significance of their texts, nor assess

the collège *Weltanschauung*, nor comment on possible connections between language teaching and evaluation on the one hand, and social discipline elsewhere in the life of this great school, on the other. Rather, they offer a close description of the work children actually did in their places. By the book's end, we know exactly how good their Latin and their French were, how much writing they did in a week, how their marginal drawing and pious scribbles went down with the régent, and how far their work embodied an aesthetic. We know, too, how exactly Louis-le-Grand's classroom instruction imitated the prescriptions of the *Ratio*.

As an enthusiastic Latinist, even to this day, I quite enjoyed *Performances*. And as someone who would like a mental map of the worlds from which came Bossuet, Pascal, Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert, this was a useful book. But without these enthusiasms, I should not have got past the first ten pages. The book simply does not make enough inferences, nor does it offer enough "connections" to retain the interest of any but the most specialized of specialists. The editors do not promise more or less than what they deliver, with hundreds of quotations and lithographs to give the work a concrete attractiveness it would otherwise lack. It seems unfair to ask for a book that the editors did not intend. But why did they not dare to do more?

As I read these exercises, I half-remember the textbooks from which I learned English, French, German, and Latin. Louis-le-Grand and my Saskatchewan high school were oddly alike. How can these similarities be

explained? Would Lévy-Strauss, Noam Chomsky, or Ludwig Wittgenstein be of use?

My language learning was magistrocentric and didactic—yet reasonably effective withal. Here again, the 1720s and the 1950s look alike. Is there something about language teaching and learning that pushes away argument and social inquiry? Were the textbook and the *Ratio* the causes of certain pedagogical effects, not because of their contents, but rather because of their social functions and their psychological utility, in the classroom and out?

What about the uses to which graduates of Louis-le-Grand would put their hard-won Latin? This collège was able to compete successfully for decades with several Parisian rivals. Was its success due to the verbal powers it fostered among its adolescent clients? How and why would these powers help a young Frenchman making his way in 1720?

These various questions are answerable by consulting other volumes in the remarkable series published by the Service d'histoire de l'éducation of the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique [INRP]. That is to say, it would have needed only a few more pages to make "connections" with a much larger historical audience, referring where appropriate to work already done by others, and done well.

Of course, not all INRP books can be expected to appeal to a vast historical audience. Since this volume embodies the highest standards of editorial care and exactitude, it is wor-

thy to join its sister publications. I hope only for a sequel.

William Bruneau
University of British Columbia

Patrick A. Dunae. *The School Record. A Guide to Government Archives Relating to Public Education in British Columbia 1852-1946.* Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Government Services, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, 1992. Pp. ix, 154.

Patrick Dunae is familiar to some readers of this journal as author of *Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981). Others know him as an archivist with the Archives and Records Service of the Province of British Columbia who returned to teaching history at Malaspina University College, Nanaimo, in 1990. Before leaving the archives Dunae had begun "a guide to the surviving records relating to the provision of public education in the Province of British Columbia and its colonial parents" (p. vii). Now Dunae and the archives will be praised for gaining the support of the British Columbia Education History Project, sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights and the Royal British Columbia Museum, to publish *The School Record*.