

Dans la très grande littérature de l'histoire de l'éducation au 19^e siècle en Grande Bretagne, il y a très peu de livres qui prennent l'Écosse comme champ d'étude. Bien que Paterson emploie des documents bien connus, ceux et celles qui ont compris la signification de l'architecture scolaire et des formulaires administratifs sont peu nombreux(ses). Mais ce qui distingue surtout sa contribution, c'est son expertise dans l'analyse à la fois sociologique et historique. Bien pratiquée, la sociologie historique permet la reconstruction des catégories sociales qui encadrent notre quotidien. Elle oblige d'une part les historiens et historiennes à questionner les origines et le processus de production de leurs sources, et, d'autre part, les sociologues empiristes à tenir compte des dimensions temporelles et spatiales de l'existence sociale.

Dans ce livre, la sociologie historique est pratiquée d'une façon fort adéquate et convaincante.

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Geoffrey Scarre, ed. *Children, Parents and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Pp. 204. \$39.50 U.S.

Until recently, philosophers tended to regard children as marginal people and childhood as a temporary state of being. Consequently, they relegated the study of children and childhood to those disciplines traditionally involved with children:

education, health sciences, and social work. British philosopher Geoffrey Scarre, however, asserts that the study of the moral and political status of childhood is a legitimate area of philosophical study. *Children, Parents and Politics*, edited by Scarre, is a collection of eleven previously unpublished essays by ten philosophers, one historian, and one political scientist, all of whom raise several very provocative questions and present several divergent points of view as to the nature of childhood and the moral and political status of children in modern society. Although the contributors, eight men and four women, represent British, American, and Australian universities, the questions they raise and the issues they discuss are equally relevant to Canadians in the 1990s.

This well-organized book is divided into three parts and focuses on defining children and childhood, examining the place of children in a democratic society, and considering the value and worth given to the lives of children. Part I addresses the issue "What Children Are" from an historical, social, and psychological perspective. Historian Ludmilla Jordanova notes that, in spite of a growing body of historical knowledge, as yet there is no authentic voice of childhood's past, and that it is impossible to find the "timeless natural" child. The study of children is the study of groups by class or gender in particular social settings, and the study of childhood is the study of a state of being. Through her exploration of two emotionally charged themes, sexuality and child

labour, Jordanova demonstrates the dangers of evaluating and assessing behaviours and values of the past by applying moral assumptions from the present.

William Ruddick's pivotal essay, "When Does Childhood Begin?" is one of the more thought-provoking and interesting essays in the entire collection. Ruddick asserts that the earlier in a child's development that society recognizes the beginning of childhood, the earlier parents may invoke public or state support or assistance in the rearing of that child; conversely, the later in a child's development that society designates the beginning of childhood, the longer parents may retain control over their child. He sets forth four alternatives for the beginning of childhood: at birth; at conception; at quickening; and after infancy. There is, Ruddick notes, an interplay of political, metaphysical, biological, and ethical factors in setting the beginning of childhood as an institutionalized concept at any of these stages. The emotional interplay of these four factors is clearly demonstrated in attempts by government to formulate and legislate new abortion laws. Ruddick also discusses the moral and political implications of deleting childhood from the life cycle.

If children are recognized as full members of a liberal democratic society, then any such society that excludes children from full political status is a flawed society. Philosopher Judith Hughes questions the wisdom of those who advocate that children's right to vote is an essential right in a democratic society. She examines the

philosophical implications of the enfranchisement of children and the impractical changes their right to vote could create in the political system.

The five essayists in Part II consider "The Child in the Democratic Polity," and attempt to define the place of children in a liberal democratic society. If equality among citizens is a criterion of a liberal democratic society, then what is the place and role of children within the family and within the society? Political scientist Jean Bethke Elshtain's thoughtful and well-written essay defends family authority as essential for the flourishing of the family, sustaining of a pluralistic culture, and survival of a democratic society. It is within families, which she defines as sets of relationships which vary with time and place, that children learn the combination of obligation and duty, freedom and dissent. While Hughes reflects a conservative view of parental authority as consistent with liberal democratic society, philosopher Richard Lindley contends that the treatment of teenagers is inconsistent with principles of liberal democracy. In a carefully constructed and well-argued paper, he strongly advocates that a range of adult rights and responsibilities be extended to teenagers. Logical as his argument may be, however, its implementation is probably impractical.

A very real problem facing many industrial societies including Canada is that of an aging population. In an essay entitled "Justice Between Generations," Geoffrey Scarre considers the social, political, and economic obligations of young adults

towards their part-contemporary generation and of the latter towards young adults. Scarre concludes that a greater role for young adults in planning and administering existing institutions would not only be consistent with the principles of liberal democracy, but would also bring a greater degree of pragmatism to public affairs and secure full status for young adults.

Drawing from ancient Stoic sources and on natural history, Stephen R.L. Clark provides another dimension to the discussion of the place of children in the liberal democratic process. In his essay, "Children and the Mammalian Order," he concludes that in spite of the concerns expressed by other philosophers, coercive paternalistic child-rearing practices provide a sounder model of morally ideal human relationships than any form of social contract theory.

With reference to new techniques in human embryology and surrogate parenthood, John Harris' essay examines "The Right to Found a Family." What moral constraints might or should be placed by individuals or public authorities on either sustaining or denying other individuals the right to found a family?

Part III, "The Worth of Children," includes three stimulating essays that address the attitude of adults towards the lives and experiences of children. If, as Scarre contends, children are people, then, philosopher Gareth B. Matthews concludes, they are worthy of moral and intellectual respect both for whom they are and for what they will become. Using the reaction of art

curators to children's art as his measure, Matthews notes that while a child's painting will be of value to a child (and probably to the child's parents), it is not of value to society. Citing the writings of philosopher John Rawls, Matthews argues that in western society the goods and products of childhood and of old age are not as valuable as those of young adulthood or middle age. He contends that a change in the attitude of society towards children will not only be a step in the direction of child liberation, but also a further step in adult liberation.

The short powerful essay by Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, "Should all Seriously Disabled Infants Live?" is the most disturbing essay in the book, as it addresses a life-and-death situation. Kuhse and Singer, both of whom are directors of the Centre of Human Bioethics at Monash University, Melbourne, base their conclusions on specific case studies. They conclude that every human life is not equally inviolable and valuable, and that the lives of seriously disabled infants who have no possibility of a quality life should not be prolonged by extraordinary or disproportionate means, particularly when an extension of life will not benefit the infant but only prolong its pain and suffering. They argue that once the decision is made that a seriously disabled infant should be allowed to die, it is often better to hasten death and spare further suffering.

In the final essay, "Why Child Pornography is Wrong," American philosopher Tom Regan systematically applies six moral theories in an

attempt to prove that child pornography is an example of a paradigmatic wrong. He considers the Respect Account as the most applicable model and contends that all children of whatever age or intellect are subjects-of-life who have a psycho-physical identity (a self) and therefore must be treated with respect. Pornography is a paradigmatic wrong because of one biological being's (an adult's) coercive use of another biological being (a child) to suit the needs, tastes, or preferences of the adult.

Children, Parents and Politics illustrates Scarre's contention that the study of the moral and political status of childhood is a legitimate area for philosophical study. Overall, it is a powerful book, whether taken as a whole or by individual essay, and it is a worthwhile contribution to the literature of our understanding of children in modern society. The writers address a wide range of issues and each essay poses provocative questions and logical dispassionate answers that encourage the reader to explore the writer's ideas without reference to the emotional reactions raised by such topics as the enfranchisement of children, euthanasia, abortion, or restrictions on who should found families. The writers, however, do not explain how they envision the incorporation of their ideas into modern society. On occasion, the search for the logical answer becomes tedious reading, but tediousness does not diminish the validity of the argument. *Children, Parents and Politics* raises issues that our changing society at large and

politicians in particular have chosen not to address, but these are the very issues that may well demand solutions in the future.

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Anthony J. La Vopa. *Grace, Talent, and Merit: Poor Students, Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany.* Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Professor Anthony La Vopa has provided for the specialist and the mature student a classic analysis of the poor student in the advanced educational setting of eighteenth-century Protestant Germany. His main point is to fit this student into a gradually changing intellectual and professional climate. In this pursuit, he has written an excellent intellectual history and placed its progression in the appropriate political, social, economic, and personal contexts. He has even reassembled "the structure" of mobility within the fairly rigid order of the old regime.

La Vopa starts from the underlying assumption that Protestant Germany enjoyed the existence of thriving universities at Tübingen, Göttingen, Frankfurt-on-Oder, Halle, Wittenberg, Leipzig, Erfurt, and Jena. Protestant Germany also had created decent elementary and feeder (Latin) school systems. To convey a feel for magnitudes, La Vopa sets the decennial average number of students