

however, Victoria worked hard at family chores and at the craft of tailoring she was learning.

When he was sixteen, "rural" lad Morris Treadwell reported in his diary that "a cud of tobacco was threw at the teacher. . . . It was laid to me, but the wrong one." Ten days later "the teacher called at noon & had an altercation about a little matter at school from which I think I shall not go to school anymore." In a later entry Morris reports going with friends "down to the river in the evening . . . & went in swimming. . . . We wrestled, tried out strength in different ways & had a bully old time." Four months later he wrote "I have been very low spirited this week, thinking over old times and other matters" (p. 197).

As these two examples suggest, Graff makes it clear that, like their modern counterparts, young people in earlier days experienced "the inescapable truth that growing up is hard to do." Contradictions, stress, and conflicts inevitably accompany a process in which a person gradually moves from complete dependence to autonomy. There was no golden age when it was easy to be a child.

Readers will find Graff's introductory chapter and notes a useful survey and commentary on the whole field of the history of childhood and youth. On each path they will meet interesting young people whose lives are told sympathetically but without sentimentality. Both for its argument and for its subjects *Conflicting Paths* joins the half-dozen or so core readings in the field.

Neil Sutherland
University of British Columbia

Daniel Murphy, *Comenius: A Critical Reassessment of His Life and Work*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995. Pp. ix, 294. US\$45.00 cloth.

Daniel Murphy's study of Jan Amos Komensky, better known in North American educational literature as Comenius, provides a new interpretation of the life and work of the famous Czech educator. In eight chapters Murphy puts Comenius's ideas in their Judaeo-Christian context with particular attention to the ethical and moral dimensions of his educational thought.

Chapter 1 argues for a counterbalance to what Murphy considers to be materialist interpretations of Comenius's views evident in the writing of such western thinkers as John Dewey. Although both Comenius and Dewey are cited as advocates of experiential and learner-centred activity in education, their similarities of thought conceal fundamental differences of an ethico-religious kind. Whereas Dewey is associated with a secular perspective linked

to the ideas of Rousseau, Comenius is identified with a religious outlook reminiscent of Buber and Tolstoy, both subjects of Murphy's previous investigations. Among decisive influences on Comenius' thought are the Moravian Christian movement after the Hussite Reformation in the fifteenth century, Lutheran and Calvinist efforts at educational reform, the classical-humanist tradition represented in the writings of Vives, Erasmus, and Montaigne, the developments of scientific realism encountered in the work of Bacon, and the pedagogical ideas of Ratke, Andrea, and Alsted.

Murphy's second chapter offers a biographical portrait of Comenius. Here Murphy raises questions more fully developed in later sections of the book, including the commanding influence of Reformation religion on Comenius's educational views, and presents Comenius's efforts to ensure the balanced and harmonious development of the pupil by recognizing the importance of both work and play, and to identify the purpose and process of education evident, for example, in his *Great Didactic*. Also noted are the beginnings of Comenius's pansophist views and his travels to England, Holland, Hungary, Sweden, and especially Poland, where the city of Leszno for many years provided the Czech educator with a home in exile and a congenial environment for the development of his ideas.

Chapters 3-7 explore in detail and comprehensively the cultural and historical roots of Comenius's educational thought. Here Murphy forges connections between the ethico-religious principles so integral to Comenius's world-view and his understanding of language education, concept of freedom, universal education, and adult and higher education. Refreshingly, Murphy attends to the views of central and east European writers, which for various reasons have often been overlooked by North American scholars.

The concluding chapter, "Comenius in Perspective," comments on the "liberal" and "radical" nature of Comenius's thought. Murphy revisits Comenius's religious and ethical principles, dealing again with the impact of central European events of the last two decades on pedagogical theory and practice.

Murphy's reassessment raises questions not only about the life and writings of Comenius, including the relation of his work to contemporary educational questions, but also about problems of historical research in an age given increasingly to the present. Where English translations are not available, Murphy turns to Latin originals housed in libraries in Oxford, Cambridge, London, and Dublin, along with collected works from the Comenius Pedagogic Library and Academia Publishers in Prague. Such carefully cited studies not only bring the reader to a closer understanding of Comenius's thought, but remind historians to consider anew the consequences of using translated evidence. Recent historical and literary theory underlines the importance of this point.

Murphy uses contemporary educational, social, and political writers to elucidate the ethical content of Comenius's ideas in the light of political changes in central and eastern Europe. Murphy successfully presents a counterbalance to the "secularist spirit" of many Comenius investigators partly by referring to the ideas of Havel and Skvorecky. It could be argued that the citing of contemporary thinkers to reinforce historical claims stretches the historian's traditional mandate, yet its application in this context not only accords with the author's intention, but suggests intriguing methodological problems for investigation. Put differently, the mixing of historical and contemporary commentary forces the community of historians to reconsider some more-established views of historical perception and research that perhaps have in some ways limited the study of the past.

Another question Murphy raises is the topography of the history of educational thought, an approach to enquiry that straddles disciplinary boundaries of history in its more empirical orientation, the history of ideas and philosophy, and the domain of intellectual history. This crossing of research borders invites connections between ideas and events.

Murphy's insightful analysis not only challenges earlier work on Comenius's life and work, but suggests possibilities for new research and debate. His critical reassessment is an important contribution to the history of education.

Henry W. Hodysch
University of Alberta

Byron K. Marshall, *Learning to be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp. xv, 320. US\$24.95 paper.

Japan's phenomenal rise to economic superpower status in the 1980s prompted investigation of its education system as a model for academic excellence. Strangely, there has been a dearth of research into the history of that system. Byron K. Marshall's authoritative account of the intellectual and ideological debates that shaped Japanese educational policy since the Meiji era (1868–1912) goes far to remedy this lacuna. With its useful endnotes and extensive bibliography, this survey of 150 years will be of value to students of educational history and Japanese studies alike.

Learning to be Modern is divided chronologically into nine chapters, each dealing with two or three decades from the end of the Tokugawa period to the present. Its underlying emphasis, however, is on politico-ideological discourses since the late 1860s. To the outsider Japan's technological achieve-