

are always reasons to be suspicious of nationalism, patriots are scattered across the full range of Canadian historical writing. As the daughter of a veteran injured during WWII and the niece of an Ontario teenager caught by a sniper in France in the last month of WWI, and someone moreover who appreciates full well the many, if relative, merits of our multicultural, classed, and gendered community, I am dismayed by *Who Killed Canadian History?* This doctor will not revive his patient.

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Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. Pp. 334.

The re-writing of educational history has taken many different forms since the 1960s but perhaps none are as important in Canada as the new historiography of children and childhood. Reconceptualization of schooling in terms of the larger context of growing up has profoundly altered the research agenda. One result was that Canadian scholars became key figures in an international historical debate about the making of modern society. By asking "Who went to school?" and "Can you read and write?," and by probing policies of child and family "welfare", Canadian researchers helped re-orient and redefine both the theory and the method of historical research.

A most important signal of Canadian leadership was the special issue of *The History of Education Quarterly* (Fall 1972) devoted to examples of the new research, enlarged three years later by New York University Press as *Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past*, eds. Michael B. Katz and Paul H. Mattingly. A noteworthy feature of this book was the scholar chosen to write the introduction: Neil Sutherland. Unlike historians whose attention to questions of education and social change has moved back and forth over various topics, Sutherland has concentrated on better understanding the ways in which children fit into the larger society. He published his own major contribution the next year under the title *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus*.

His new book will inevitably be assumed to be "volume two" of that now-classic monograph. But, as Sutherland emphasizes from the outset, this new book is not in fact the extension he had planned to produce; rather, it is a quite different book reflecting not only the author's own changing interests but also the evolving historiographical context of the 1980s and 1990s. The titles of his two major works make a meaningful distinction: "children" as opposed to "childhood." Sutherland sees them as probing related but different topics. The former explored the ways in which adults perceived children and how certain

adults developed policies for children (especially for those of other adults). His new book deals with the experience of childhood itself.

What was it like to grow up in the middling decades of the twentieth century? How did children see themselves and their parents, teachers, doctors, police officers, employers, and so on? What is "the story of the lives of children told from the children's point of view"?

Sutherland and his research assistants conducted some 200 extensive interviews with individuals born between about 1910 and 1950, mostly chosen in snowball fashion from two neighbourhoods of Vancouver (west-side Kerrisdale and east-side Cedar Cottage) and from the rural community of Evelyn in north-central British Columbia. Further interviewees came from eastern Canada, including Halifax and Toronto, though not Québec. Beyond this core oral research, Sutherland combed autobiographies, short stories, and novels for depictions of growing up in Canada from the 1910s to the 1960s and consulted contemporary social work theses, newspapers, and government records.

In keeping with Sutherland's conclusion that continuity was more significant than change during the decades under study, *Growing Up* is organized thematically. An initial methodological discussion is followed by three chapters on childhood in the context of siblings, parents, and other relatives. Topics range widely from children's clothing to their homes, and from their perceptions of themselves to their (mis)treatment by others. "The wider environment of care" (including foster homes) leads to children as paid and unpaid workers in both urban and rural settings. One chapter examines the "special occasions" of family life including vacations and Christmas celebrations. Moving outside the family context, the remaining chapters deal with schooling and the "culture of childhood"—playground relationships, going to movies, and reading the "funnies." Sutherland concludes with reflections on current debate about children in Canada.

Well aware of the difficulties in arguing that it is possible to use adult-created sources to analyse the "children's point of view," Sutherland includes an ongoing defence of his selection and use of evidence. In the end, some readers will be convinced by his informed and sophisticated blending of diverse theoretical and methodological approaches popular at different times since the 1970s. Others will perceive an unproblematized and contradictory piling-up of incommensurate epistemological assumptions and claims. But all readers can gain a great deal from the actual evidence presented and the numerous interpretations Sutherland offers as points of departure for further studies. Simply put, no one has done more research or thought more intensively about children and childhood than Neil Sutherland.

A major limitation on the use of Sutherland's evidence is that neither tapes nor transcripts of interviews will be made available to the research community. To guarantee the anonymity of his informants, Sutherland neither

identifies them directly in any way (even numerically) nor describes specific individual lives over time. (For these reasons he did not use the informant permission forms now compulsory under Canada's Tri-Council Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.") Sutherland does quote generously from his interview material, providing a great deal of oral evidence on an unprecedented range of topics. Taken together, his oral, written, and visual sources constitute an unprecedented body of evidence. His array of conclusions will undoubtedly enrich the opening paragraphs of countless future theses and journal articles.

Although Sutherland is now deeply impressed by historical complexity in keeping with current historical debate, he has the courage to offer sweeping generalizations. Convinced that the conceptualization of children arrived at by adults before World War I provided the framework of policy implementation in the subsequent years, he emphasizes continuity during the first half of the twentieth century over change. The result is stimulating, provocative, and a joy to read.

Sutherland ends his chronological account with the emergence of the "age of television" during which, he believes, the process of growing up changed fundamentally as the new technology moved into households. Why the arrival of television should be considered such a turning-point in the history of English Canada is touched on in only a single paragraph asserting that the continuity of the earlier twentieth century was irretrievably broken.

Sutherland nonetheless argues that "the emotional dimensions of childhood have remained virtually unchanged" (254) and that "it seems clear that happiness or unhappiness in childhood is only very lightly connected to the era in which it is lived." (264) Similarly, he perceives a sense of powerlessness as an "unchanging characteristic of being a child" (260), transcending differences of class, ethnicity, and gender. Well aware of the diverse economic roles played by children, and of the complex ways in which they attempt to control both their own destinies and the behaviour of those around them, he concludes that "whatever the form of the family in which they live, children themselves have no say in the making of it, or of its social and economic circumstances." (261)

Sutherland's argument for continuity holds great promise for further research. His argument about the stable emotional dimensions of childhood could be related both to the recent historiography of emotions and the relevant epistemological debates about studying the affective character of historical change. His emphasis on the powerlessness of children could be examined in a cross-cultural, international perspective.

Neil Sutherland has given us the fruit of decades of reflection and research, and it remains for those who come after him to refine, reject, or re-affirm his conclusions about growing up in twentieth-century Canada. *Children in English-Canadian Society* became the most cited study in subse-

quent research literature on the history of childhood in Canada. This new book will similarly become the point of departure for a whole new generation of historical debate.

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Glen Peterson. *The Power of Words: Literacy and Revolution in South China, 1949–95*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997. Pp. x,250.

Il existe une tradition chinoise plusieurs fois séculaire qui établit un lien entre éducation, d'une part, et prestige, autorité morale, et influence politique, d'autre part.

Conscients de l'importance du pouvoir des mots, pour reprendre l'expression de Glen Peterson, les Communistes chinois comprennent vite, suite à leur arrivée au pouvoir en octobre 1949, que la construction d'un pays à la fois politiquement indépendant et économiquement développé, requiert la mise en place d'une politique globale d'alphabétisation. La réalisation d'un objectif aussi ambitieux présente toutefois d'indéniables difficultés—ne serait-ce, mais c'est déjà énorme, que parce qu'elle oblige l'état et la société à définir une relation mutuelle et un mode de cohabitation qui soient acceptables aussi bien à l'un qu'à l'autre. Comme en témoigne l'exemple chinois, le problème tient en grande partie au fait que les leaders révolutionnaires ont une conception du rôle de l'alphabétisation et de l'école à la campagne qui diffère de celle de ses bénéficiaires les plus immédiats—les paysans. Ainsi, dans la foulée du modèle stalinien de développement économique qui privilégie l'industrialisation et, par ricochet, le développement des villes, Mao Zedong exprime une nette préférence pour l'école située en milieu urbain, au détriment de celle de la campagne, laissée à l'initiative locale. Mal supportée financièrement par un état communiste convaincu de la nécessité d'un tel choix, cette dernière suscite le ressentiment de plusieurs paysans qui la jugent, avec raison, de qualité inférieure. En adoptant cette stratégie, les leaders chinois créent et consacrent des inégalités entre la ville et la campagne—ce qui amène l'auteur à conclure, avec beaucoup d'à-propos:

If there is a single story line that emerges from this study, it is perhaps the tragedy of the peasants, who were largely abandoned by the revolutionary party that took power in their name (7).

Autre pomme de discorde: le rôle de l'éducateur à l'école. Très tôt, en effet, la controverse éclate entre idéologues (membres du parti communiste) et experts (éducateurs, linguistes, et philologues) à ce sujet. Les premiers voient l'école comme un instrument de mobilisation politique et de promotion de la lutte des classes; les seconds—et particulièrement une partie importante du corps enseignant qui soutient que sa tâche première est de donner un enseignement de qualité, non de poliuser—perçoivent l'école comme un lieu d'apprentissage et d'acquisition d'un certain bagage de connaissances et d'habiletés. Bien que lui-même enseignant de formation, Mao exprime