

maris sans raisonner. » (Ch. I: *De l'importance de l'éducation des filles*, p. 2)

Pourtant, les temps, eux, ont bien changé. La France a connu une révolution politique, religieuse et sociale d'importance, mais il semble qu'en succédant à la royauté, la république soit demeurée conservatrice à l'égard de l'éducation et du destin des filles. C'est le constat auquel Marcel Boisvert nous amène dans sa conclusion : telle que la dépeint Balzac, la jeune fille de province du début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle demeure sous une étroite tutelle. « Comme dans la réalité la jeune provinciale de Balzac est un petit monde qui est en voie d'évolution progressive mais extrêmement lente » (p. 203).

Fort joliment illustré de dessins de différents personnages extraits de *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1877), enrichi, en annexe, d'un index alphabétique des jeunes filles de province de *La Comédie humaine* et de quelques portraits-types des héroïnes de Balzac, l'ouvrage de Marcel Boisvert contient aussi tous les éléments (notes en fin de chapitres, bibliographie complète) susceptibles de profiter tant aux étudiants qu'à un large public. Notons en terminant la facture impeccable de l'éditeur Guérin qui rehausse l'excellence du travail dont le professeur Marcel Boisvert nous livre ici le résultat.

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**C.R. Day. *Schools and Work: Technical Education in France Since the Third Republic*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 236.**

*Schools and Work: Technical Education in France Since the Third Republic* traces the development of vocational and technical education in France from the late nineteenth century to the present, detailing its history and situating it in the broader context of economic modernization. That is a difficult task that Day fully achieves in a superb scholarly work.

The centralized French system of education has a complexity that belies its formal structure. As the first nationalized central system, dating from Napoleonic times, the

existence of old structure and vested interests has made change difficult. One of the most contentious areas has been that of technical schooling, which always had a secondary prestige but became increasingly important with the advance of industrialization. Professor Day, with remarkable clarity, reveals the debates, tensions, and accommodations of over a century and the significant restructuring of technical schooling since the Second World War. Utilitarian concerns versus those of general education, interests of industrialists versus the educational establishment, and shifting attitudes of political parties (for example, Communists' promotion of technical schooling for workers after World War II as against their former charges that it was a "tool of capitalism") are among the themes that weave through the manuscript. All the while, France remained unique in emphasizing schools, rather than the workplace, for training technicians. In recent years technological change, global pressures, and job concerns forced co-operation on groups that had hitherto been hostile to one another. In the last chapter Day shows especially well the linkages between industrial needs and redirection of schooling. There, as elsewhere, business seems to have pushed governments in new directions – for better or worse.

Technical and vocational education, before 1960 confined to an enclave within the educational system, now permeate the entire system. Business and industry, long isolated from education, today play a major role in educational decision-making. This involved a major change from the traditional, anti-utilitarian educational system of a generation ago. Then the system produced too few skilled workers, technicians, and engineers; today it meets the demand for skilled personnel in almost all fields and serves the economy while maintaining "a complement of general culture." Confronted with the challenges of globalization, increased competition, and de-industrialization, state and industry have been forced to redefine skill requirements, reform schools, and programs, and establish new forms of co-operation, notably in creating work-study, continuing education, and apprenticeship programs in imitation of the practices in Germany and other European countries.

Technical and vocational schools stand at the intersection of numerous, often contradictory, discourses in a hierarchical educational system that has tracked young people into superior and inferior levels, more often than not according to their social origins. These schools train skilled personnel for positions that

may or may not prove viable in a rapidly changing technology. They provide the possibility of social and professional advancement while confirming the marginalization of their mainly lower-class clientele. They are depicted as “bridges to success,” achieving meritocratic objectives of social justice and equality; yet in practice they often reinforce class distinctions, racial stereotypes, and gender inequality.

This volume is a worthy addition to Day’s *Education For the Industrial World* (1984), translated into French in 1991. In that book Day made a serious historiographical advance by showing how education, technology, and industrial needs coalesced in a unique technical schooling. This study continues that combination. Despite the complexity, it is succinct. It brings French scholarship to the Anglo-Saxon world, but it does more than that. Day considers in detail the debates and organization of the Division of Technical Education (under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to 1920, the Ministry of Education to 1960); examines the aims and accomplishments of individual schools; deals with the great changes during the last two decades (which French studies have not done); and demonstrates the different training intended for skilled workers and executives. He puts all of this in the context of political, social, and economic changes and the larger field of French public education. A major virtue of the book is its attention to the significant restructuring of technical training during the second half of the twentieth century. Many historians’ notions about French education are still rooted in the Third Republic. This work clearly explains post-1945, and especially post-1958, reforms. It is closely tied into present-day controversies and policy issues in France. Today these issues take on a broader interest in the context of debates over the economic and social impact of education in the European Union and in the western world generally.

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