

Jurgen Herbst. *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. Pp. xiii, 231. \$25.00 U.S.

Perhaps one of the most enduring questions in educational history is the problem of the teacher as professional. There remains a broad range of opinion on the issue; indeed one can be certain to find divergent perspectives among teachers themselves, for there seems to be something less than consensus about the degree and nature of authority each teacher should exercise over how and what he or she teaches in a given classroom. Many teachers regularly practise "creative interpretation" of provincial curriculum guidelines; some all but ignore those guidelines, preferring to fabricate their own curriculum; some abide to the strictest letter, as it were, of the law.

Jurgen Herbst offers a useful history of the processes by which the contemporary American public school teacher has come to be, as he puts it, "betrayed" by professionalization. *And Sadly Teach* traces a thread from the common school revival period of the 1830s—with particular consideration of schools in Massachusetts—right through to the proliferation of reform literature, and subsequent backlash, of the 1980s. This historical thread shows the numerous steps which have slowly eroded teacher training, taking the task from its once-esteemed place in American culture to its present locus, that of an adjunct to

the basic undergraduate degree. For Herbst, the classroom teacher has been the neglected party in American education, subsumed by the ambition of those who have aspired to greater status, power, and wealth in the administrative bureaucracy, and overtaken by the transformation of normal schools and teachers' colleges into multipurpose institutions. The impoverishment of both teacher and student has been the result. Professionalization has come, argues Herbst, to most everyone involved in education except those who spend every school day in the classroom. Until teachers themselves are accorded true professional status, they will continue to "teach sadly," knowing that they carry a burdensome load of responsibility for student outcomes, while at the same time yielding authority over curriculum and pedagogical technique, and settling for truncated status and substantially lower monetary compensation.

As suggested by the subtitle of the volume, an understanding of the history of classroom teachers in America requires consideration of the larger cultural milieu in which teachers have functioned. Herbst considers the socio-political context of teaching, the class-conflict (and yet apparent classlessness) of American teachers, and the vital importance of social perceptions of the role of women in education.

The "Atlantic Whiggery" of antebellum New England oversaw the first attempt at state-run schools in America, taking their cue from Victor Cousin and his glowing reports of Prussian seminary schools. This

forged a link between the body politic and the pedagogy which remains to the present day, a link which facilitated the professionalization of the educational bureaucracy in a top-down manner—that has yet to reach the classroom teacher. Herbst shows that it took less than a century for the fiery battle-cry of “As is the teacher, so is the school” to be extinguished by the overwhelming tide of change in the nation’s teacher-training schools. Training elementary and secondary school teachers was an important task in, for example, Horace Mann’s Massachusetts, and the teacher was considered the essence of the successful public school. But state Normal Schools gradually gave the task up to city and county training schools, following what Herbst calls the “siren song” of the professionalizers. This process of betrayal was complete by the 1930s, when even the graduate departments of education in American universities ceased training classroom teachers, and instead poured their resources into the training of specialists and administrators.

Herbst elucidates another important aspect of the historical process with his discussion of the influence of the Prussian model of teacher training. Although many of the methods used successfully in Europe were easily transferred to the American Normal School, the socio-cultural context of the job—that is, teaching widely esteemed as a respectable career—was not. The strongly class-conscious Prussian culture simply did not exist in America. Rather, teaching was generally perceived as a step up the ladder in the profession of education,

or as a stop-gap job for single women, or in some cases, as a job of last resort. Ideas of class were lost on the inhabitants of a young country where the future of the individual was regarded as open-ended. For Herbst this “classlessness” is a crucial point, as it partially explains the preponderance of males in administration, and the corresponding majority of females in the classrooms of the nation. In Prussia, male teachers were in the majority, within the context of teaching as an achieved status of considerable worth. In America, males in education generally sought to shake off the restrictive or limiting role of the teacher in order to pursue careers in *education*. These pursuits were but a reflection of the ideals of the culture as a whole, which reified the notion of achievement by the individual, not, as in Prussia, the society at large.

Ironically, the “escape hatch” for teachers—especially women—was the formation of unions for the betterment of the teaching career. Perhaps the most prevalent instrument of class-consciousness, the trade union, became the means by which teachers achieved a sense of definition for their work in the relatively classless society. An end-run, if you like, a path towards the trappings of a profession, made necessary by the insurmountable barriers of tradition, ideology, and latent sexism. But although Herbst hails the gains made by teachers’ unions, he challenges them to go the final step and take up the problem of total classroom autonomy.

As well as the Massachusetts experience, *And Sadly Teach* touches on several instances of teacher education

in other New England states and several midwestern states. Herbst laments the professionalization of education as it unfolds in these locales. But the implicit dynamic in this process is the cultural status of women, and how that status is imputed to the teaching vocation. It was the assumption of the transience of teachers that led governments and institutions to emphasize specialist and administrative training instead of classroom training. Resources were aimed towards those who were expected to remain in education over many years, and therefore bring the greatest return on investment. Both the community and the individual female teacher believed, with exceptions, that only single women were fit to teach, that married women and mothers belonged in the home and not in a classroom. Herbst shows that single women teachers responded with a sense of mission to the task of building a protestant nation, but they were called first to build their own families once married. The vocational powerlessness of women in America became the powerlessness of teachers.

And Sadly Teach manages to take contemporary issues in education and trace their origins well enough to give the reader substantial insight into the making of the present situation. It is this aspect of Herbst's work that makes it most useful; it is a history of timely relevance. It is also, to a degree, a revisionist history in the sense that the author refuses to acknowledge professionalization as a positive phenomenon in its present manifestations. Herbst does not hail the establishment and subsequent

accomplishments of American educational bureaucracies. Instead, he asks why the pillars of authority, autonomy, and professionalism are found in front of large buildings rather than in front of small classrooms. This is not a "whig" history.

Neither is it a radical history. For all his criticism and lament, Herbst assumes the public educational system as we know it. He describes a lengthy historical process, and prescribes a remedy to a number of contemporary educational ills. But he does not take the step towards a radical critique, one which would land him in the camp of a Friere or a Gintis or a Neill. Herbst writes his prescription, sounds his call, begs the attention of those who might effect change. But he does not ask them to throw the figurative baby out with the bathwater. Instead he makes his case by showing the reader what he believes to be the great mistake of American educators: the professionalization of education as an established institution without *first* professionalizing the teachers upon whom that institution rests.

Finally, a Canadian perspective. The question of teacher professionalization is certainly relevant in Ontario. The social forces that have been at work for many decades to shape preparation for, and practice of, teaching are in many ways similar to those Herbst describes. We have had similar experiences with the transmutation of Normal Schools into the present Faculties of Education, with the advent of teachers' unions, and of course with our traditional conceptions regarding the proper role of women in society. Where we may dif-

fer, however slightly, is with respect to ideas of class and the role of the individual in society. Canada has historically been somewhat more class-oriented than the United States; we have, perhaps, a stronger sense of social responsibility and less enthusiasm for the idea of the rights of the individual. These considerations soften Herbst's rather pointed attack for the Canadian reader. Nonetheless, this history is one which concisely tells the story, poses the question, and demands a response. Educators must provide an answer.

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Marjorie R. Theobald and R.J.W. Selleck, eds. *Family, School & State in Australian History*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990. Pp. xiv, 202. \$19.95 paper.

If the primary function of anthologies such as *Family, School & State in Australian History* is to define "state-of-the-art" in particular fields, then the collection under review is an exemplary effort. Some of the essays, as well as the tenor of editorial direction, reveal a determination to place analysis in the service of synthesis and to test theory by the application of discrete historical practice. While contributors take justifiable delight in discovering the unique, they also offer

insights which pattern the play between character and circumstance. In short, the authors and editors are clearly seeking centres which hold.

Some of these themes are stated by Pavla Miller and Ian Davey in "Family Formation, Schooling and the Patriarchal State." Without denigrating the usefulness of the work undertaken by the "Whigs" in regard to institutional conflict, or the revisionists who sought to explain the emergence of mass education in processes of industrialization and urbanization, and in theories of social control, or concurrent efforts to focus on common people, families, and women, they speculate that a proper understanding of patriarchy as it was transformed in the course of its journey from cottage to factory will enable historians to link church and state, urban and rural, family, class, gender, and age relations in a new, more integrated history of compulsory education in Australia.

What strikes the reader long accustomed to history as sociological science is the unexampled toughness of individual persons and discrete families whose functioning often challenges the soundness of those intricate theoretical arches we construct over disciplinary abysses. Marjorie Theobald discovered more than a handful of women in the special case files of the Victorian Board of Education (1862-72) and its successor, the Victorian Education Department (1872-1986), whose successful or unsuccessful efforts to achieve financial rewards and professional status equal to their qualifications and responsibilities and to colonize "the