

economic field. The arguments for control versus freedom, the concern for international justice, may well have coloured authoritative works upon which so many of us are tempted to depend. Whether those insecure generalities are also put to sinister use by advocates of economic reform is another matter; and Professor Platt is wise enough to let his doubts do their own work, without any unhistorical declarations of his own.

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Historical Anthropology of the Family. By Martine Segalen. Translated by J.C. Whitehouse and Sarah Matthews. Cambridge University Press, 1986. x, 328pp. NZ price: \$112.95.

THIS IS a book worth knowing about, whatever one's field — partly because it makes available, in an excellent translation, the methods and interests of a continental academic stable, but chiefly because it combines with the techniques of a sociologist both the perceptions of anthropology and the raw material of history.

One has customary misgivings: in spite of her avowal that 'now is not the time for a general theory', there are many instances where the isolated particularity of the evidence inspires only partial confidence in the author's conclusions; and inevitably much of her 'raw material' is lifted from other secondary works, where its argumentative purpose may have sifted out already its less predictable implications.

But the general logic of the book is stimulating and informative, allowing as it does a movement on the part of the reader from a consideration of kinship generally, through the dynamics of the parent-children group, to an examination of the family's relationship to and impact upon the economics and power structures of a wider society; all presented with constant attention to historical change.

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Auckland Girls' Grammar School: The First Hundred Years, 1888–1988. By Heather Northey with J.A. and M. Asher. AGS Old Girls' Association, Auckland, 1988. 286pp. NZ price: \$19.50.

HISTORIES PRODUCED to mark school centenaries are notoriously prone to a celebratory Prize Day version of the past. They are generally designed to publicize and promote the school in question, and to inspire the pupils of the present to follow in the footsteps of their successful and illustrious forebears. Such works, like school magazines, are potentially useful sources that express the official ideology, the rationalizations and self-image, even the doubts and contradictions, of the institution. They give comfort to past pupils who can organize themselves in the unfolding pageant. At the same time, they reinforce a notion of a distinctive school 'tradition' that usually legitimizes existing structures and ideals. The historical value of the enterprise, on the other hand, is strictly limited by the conflicting pressures which are at work to sanitize the past and to make it suitable for celebration. One might have hoped that a history of Auckland Girls' Grammar School, a school that has so often resisted the stereotypes imposed upon it, could have avoided this tendency. It is therefore something of a disappointment that Heather Northey's centenary history of AGGS makes no attempt to do so.

Northey's account charts the development of AGGS from its precursor, the short-lived Auckland Girls' High School, through its reluctant acceptance into the boys' grammar school in 1888, to the growth of the independent institution for girls that was eventually established in Howe Street in 1909. It provides a detailed picture of school life and of changes in the character of the school during the twentieth century, with the help of some interesting and useful photographs. Its value as a work of reference is much enhanced through the appendices which list staff, prefects, scholars, graduates, some notable old girls, member of the Board of Governors, and officers of the Old Girls' Association. But it consistently misses opportunities to illuminate the changing social and cultural roles of girls' secondary education in Auckland over the past century.

The main method adopted is to treat the history of the school in terms of the attitudes of its headmistresses and the ways in which they coped with challenges and problems. All emerge vindicated and usually victorious from their battles with officialdom. Thus the dominant perspective for each period of the school's history, significantly divided up according to the length of each head's 'reign' or 'era', is that of the headmistress herself. This means that the book emphasizes in each case the official rationale for actions and responses to events, and little attempt is made to inquire more deeply. The book also fails to discuss in any adequate way the relationship between the school and long-term social change. There is some discussion of the early problems of girls' secondary education, but the issue of how far the school has enabled girls and women to achieve equality in society and employment in relation to boys and men is hardly examined and never clarified. Moreover, there is almost nothing here on the social class relationships of girls' secondary education, even when dealing with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century developments, during which time such aspects were especially striking. The rosy image of racial harmony and equality that is evoked does little to help us understand deep-seated educational inequalities and the ethnic conflicts of late twentieth-century Auckland.

The book makes no use of the important scholarship on the history of girls' education that has emerged in the past decade, either in New Zealand or overseas: the local work referred to goes little further than the work of Ian and Alan Cumming and a sprinkling of earlier school histories, and the British material cited is antediluvian. Nor does Northey make much of the very good primary source material that is available on the history of AGGS itself. These sources should certainly have led the author to question or moderate the benign and charitable interpretations of the school's role that permeate the book, for example on the issue of zoning in the 1950s and 1960s— if the book had not been designed for a very different purpose. In sum, while there is clearly scope and demand for this kind of exercise in organized nostalgia, the social history of grammar school education for girls in Auckland is still to be written, and it will be assisted in only a partial way by this particular work.

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Presbyterian Church Archives: Care and Conservation: Guidelines for the Keeping, Care and Preservation of Church Records and Archives. Published by the Historical Records Committee of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, Dunedin, 1988. 44pp. NZ price: \$6.50 incl. postage.

THIS ADMIRABLE little handbook gives guidance on what records should be kept by church organizations; what are the best conditions for storage; how should one index, and