

The aforementioned arguments about passive models and lived cultures points out a final weakness in Gonzalez's book. By seeing schools as being the agents of monopoly capital, agents that fundamentally shape the consciousness of their students so that these students fit unerringly into the appropriate slots in the social, racial, and sexual division of labor, one can do no more than assume successful socialization to the ideology of capital. Students totally accept it. Ideological reproduction is a closed circle. Yet, this is simply wrong. Working class and other students in the past and now often resist, mediate, and transform the ideological messages of the school based on the strengths of their own lived class, race, and gender cultures, just as their parents have historically done in their workplaces.

While I have criticized this book for a number of conceptual and political reasons, this is not to say that it is not valuable in other ways. Exactly the opposite is the case, in fact. The most valuable section, however, is actually not found in the volume proper, but is added as an appendix. This is Gonzalez's interesting political and ideological case study of the history of educational reform in Los Angeles and its effects on the Chicano community. Nor can one doubt Gonzalez's very real political commitment or his evident — and correct — passion in caring for oppressed people. Furthermore, the volume, like the series in general, needs to be supported if only because of the politics of knowledge distribution in our society. Alternative social criticisms from the left are rarer than they should be and any consistent, self-critical, and rigorous attempt to engage in it deserves our attention.

With this said, though, certain problems limit the book's usefulness. There is no notion of the relative autonomy of the state or culture. Given the book's political commitments it is also oddly undialectical. As I noted, class, race and gender actors seem passive, as if there was no response by any of these groups to what was happening. And, finally, it is somewhat limited by its specific brand of Marxism which seems to ignore the immense progress made by other Marxists in the last decades in our understanding of the complex relationships among education, class, culture, and economy.

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Gillett, Margaret. *We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill*. Montreal: Eden Press, 1981. 496 pp. \$18.95.

In recent years the history of Canadian education has been substantially rewritten. The familiar, and frequently deadly dull, chronicle of democracy's steady advance within the little red schoolhouse and its successors is giving way to a complex portrait of class, regional, ethnic and sexual variation. Margaret Gillett's *We Walked Very Warily. A History of Women at McGill* (Montreal: Education Press Women's Publications, 1981) contributes to this revision by setting out the uncertain process by which one major Canadian university accepted women. Covering more than a hundred years from the mid-19th century to the 1970s it describes how women gained access to and shared, most often incompletely, in the promise of undergraduate, graduate and professional education.

The Introduction titled "What Would You Have a Woman Know?" is especially useful. In its breadth of coverage it seems designed to become the standard point of departure for undergraduate discussion of female university education. We are introduced to the ways in which the cultural definition of women — most particularly the genteel ideal — set the terms for female education. Advocates of the 'lady' favored a body of knowledge restricted by conventional notions of what was proper. Unrestrained intellectual inquiry was not for women. The persistence of this sentiment consigned girls and women, at McGill as elsewhere, to a relatively narrow range of scholarship. Gillett goes on to illustrate how female students and faculty slowly, often courageously, came to find a place at McGill.

The Introduction does, however, reveal two difficulties which bedevil the remainder of the volume as well. If ideas about the lady were prevalent and powerful cross Europe and North America, it is arguable that there was a substantial difference in their articulation, for instance, at the University of Cambridge and Oberlin College. The scholarly tradition like the much less democratic membership of British universities can be distinguished from the more utilitarian and popular orientation of American state and even private institutions of higher learning. University training in England, like one suspects France and Germany, admitted women to a restricted class-defined meritocracy. In contrast, the United States to a much greater degree, and certainly by the 20th century, largely rejected the appeal of a clerisy. Such differences had implications for women's experience of university life and its aftermath. They need greater attention if we are to understand McGill, an institution which combined, at one time or another, inspiration from a variety of sources. The concept of the lady sustains an

argument best when systematic attention is paid to its national and class particularities. Unfortunately, Gillett ignores these.

There is a second concern as well. The matter of class is nowhere directly confronted. From its founding McGill was preeminently the instrument of the middle and upper classes of English Montreal. Its 'sweet girl' graduates came at least initially from the best families. The society which educated them confined the majority of both sexes to unrelenting hardship. Women's situation at McGill reflected and perpetuated the inequities of class as well as sex. The sacrifices of the educational pioneers are not demeaned by acknowledging the class-bound nature of their goals and analysis. More attention to the fact of class might have helped organize more effectively the mass of documentation which Gillett has unearthed and kept in check a recurring tendency to hagiography.

Part I entitled "Admission" includes four chapters. The first focuses on Principal J. W. Dawson the administrator whose devotion to a femininity rooted in religiosity, altruism and submission set the terms of women's entry. Female nature, according to Dawson, required specialized and separate instruction. Careful chaperoning and segregation would protect the daughters of Montreal's elite. Chapter Two — "The First Steps" — sets out the progression of normal, private and public school classes which over time built up the clientel and the case for higher education. In 1871 the creation of the Montreal Ladies' Educational Association brought non-credit but reputable intellectual fare to the largely well-to-do membership. The success of the MLEA like the academic laurels of the graduates of the Montreal High School for Girls won champions. Most notable was Professor J. Clark Murray, a philosopher, who became the firmest advocate of co-education and the arch-opponent of Dawson. A bitter debate ensued as to whether university training would be co-educational or separate. In 1883 four graduates of the Montreal High School confronted Dawson with their pleas. The following year the offer of the Honourable Donald Smith, later Lord Strathcona, to contribute \$50,000. to a college for women bought their admission to Arts.

Chapter Three examines the Donalds of 1884-86, that intrepid group who tested McGill's generosity. The complications of separate rooms and lectures were considerable and soon uncertainly honoured. Despite the demands of expediency and Murray's continued support for co-education, Smith, under pressure from Dawson, insisted on the separatist strategy. For all the controversy that surrounded them and the very uncertain welcome they received the first graduates did very well. Chapter Four continues discussion of the mounting disagreement between Doctors Dawson and Murray. Ironically enough, there is more detail on these men, their families, and their ideas than on any of McGill's women.

Part II concentrates on Royal Victoria College and student life. Chapter Five describes the founding of RVC in 1899. This separate woman's college depended again on the obscure motivations of Donald Smith. He too is discussed in some detail. RVC was intended to provide "an academic, administrative and recreational centre for resident and non-resident women students." (p. 163). Staff, headed by a warden after the English model, was carefully screened for gentility and scholarship. The first warden Hilda Oakeley (1899-1905), a brilliant Oxford student, provided a model of female scholarship for Montreal's colonial community. Despite teaching in the Philosophy Department she was not admitted to the Faculty of Arts until 1904, the first woman so honoured. The second warden Ethel Hurlbatt, (1906-1929) also hailed from Oxford. Both women became conscientious and powerful advocates of intellectual excellence. Unfortunately, Gillett does not elaborate on the larger implications of the British model of female scholarship. Did Oxford and the British tradition embodied in these magnificent spinsters direct the aspirations of McGill's women over time or did Canadian successors with different backgrounds have more lasting influence? For all the strengths of such wardens, RVC students continued to find McGill an uncertain home. Not until 1931 after a battle, for example, were women admitted to the Students' Council. Misogynist articles appeared regularly in the *McGill Daily*. Ironically enough, such hostility co-existed now with co-education. This supposed equality helped justify the loss, indeed near theft, of RVC's main building in 1970. The wardenship was subsequently demoted as well. By the 1970's RVC was primarily a residence and seems, although Gillett does not dwell on this, to have lost the scholarly character set by the early Wardens.

Chapter Six examines student life. Outstanding female staff and faculty are identified briefly followed by a discussion, again rather cursory, of student activity in culture, sports, religion and politics. In the 1960s and 1970s the Women's Union and the Director of Women's Athletes disappeared, victims of the faith in integration. The former, however, re-emerged in the 1970s, a feminist testament to the shortcomings of the co-educational experiment. This chapter also includes a number of revealing reminiscences from graduates.

Part III takes up the unprepossessing story of the "Professional Faculties". Chapter Seven considers the traditional male preserves. Medicine, held out against women until wartime pressure in 1918. The Faculty of Law admitted female applicants in 1911 but admission to the Quebec bar was denied until 1941. Dentistry took

the plunge in 1911; Engineering and Architecture in 1939; Theology in 1918. Not until the 1970s did substantial numbers of women appear in these fields. Chapter Eight treats the so-called female professions of teaching, household science, nursing, social work, physiotherapy, and library science. Only here did women students or faculty find real encouragement. The trend to more men in these areas has in recent years, however, undermined these strongholds without equivalent gain in the traditional bastions of male power.

Part IV identifies "Women of Action" with Chapter Nine focusing on the "Women's Movement on Campus". This is defined broadly to include all cooperative efforts to attain rights and privileges "previously reserved for men" (p. 369). Gillett sees four stages: the first involved the late 19th and early 20th centuries' struggle for education, the second saw students and graduates move beyond campus to larger social concerns, the third in the mid-20th century brought artificial liberation and the fourth phase from the 1960s to the present encompasses the modern woman's movement. The final stage receives two-thirds of Gillett's attention, a focus in contrast to the rest of the volume which dwells on the earlier years. Condensed as they are, issues ranging from peace in the 1930s to the women's liberation in the 1960s are treated rather summarily. Very much absent is a profile of McGill women either as individuals or as a group. The latter in particular would have given the reader a surer sense of the expectations and experience of female students, staff and faculty. Only with the first Donaldas do we have a somewhat satisfactory collective portrait, a product no doubt of their small numbers. The Conclusion entitled "What Have We Learned" reaffirms that equality is not yet won. Anti-feminism needs to be confronted by women organized together and with male allies. Otherwise, if McGill's past history is any indication, "women, their interests, needs, accomplishments" (p. 445) will be ignored.

Gillett adds considerably to our knowledge of Canadian women's experience with higher education. There is many a potential thesis topic in the issues she raises and her own research is often impressive. Too often, however, the appetite is whetted only to be disappointed by brief or uncritical treatment. This is especially true for the long period between the heroic pioneers and modern feminists. The years from World War One to the 1960s need a great deal more elaboration before we are to understand them. Despite such limitations *We Walked Very Warily* is important reading for those wishing to come to terms with the history of higher education in Canada.

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Sheila Fletcher, *Feminists and Bureaucrats: A Study in the Development of Girls' Education in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. viii & 249 pp. \$29.50(U.S.)

The Endowed Schools Act of 1869 was passed at a time of unique activity in women's education in England. The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, formed in 1857, provided a platform for women to press for equality of educational opportunity for girls and boys. With support from some men influential in government and civic organizations, reform minded women, led by Emily Davies, had successfully requested that the Cambridge lower examinations for boys be opened to girls, had instituted lectures for older women in several cities, and had opened a college at Hitchin designed to provide women the same education as men received at Cambridge University.

All plans for higher education, however, were doomed to failure without an infrastructure of primary and secondary education to prepare women for work at a university. Hence, the inclusion of provisions for the education of girls in the Endowed Schools Act was a coup for the forces of reform. In her book *Feminists and Bureaucrats*, Sheila Fletcher claims that one of the Act's most original components was the provision that endowments should be taken from traditional foundations to establish schools for girls. The provision succeeded in relatively few cases because of opposition to it from trustees and headmasters of endowed boys' schools, apathy in some places towards girls' education, and a change in attitude towards the provision among those administering the Act after 1874. However, Fletcher draws the reader's attention to the boldness of the plan which "at a time when, to all intents and purposes, secondary schools for girls did not exist, when hardly anyone wished them to exist, this Act created them." (p. 2).

Fletcher examines closely the work of the Endowed Schools Commission set up by the Act, savoring the details. Three commissioners, five assistants, and a secretary to the commission divided the country among them, and set out to restructure school endowments, one by one. For each endowment they had to draw up a plan for revision, known as a Scheme, which had to be negotiated with the public of the locality, and accepted by the