Neil Sutherland's contribution to the history of childhood initiates this trans-Atlantic perspective of nineteenth century child centred reform. Legal supports and safeguards, a "bewildering array" of practices and institutions, the invention of new juvenile categories, and increasing State intervention into children's lives tempt us into a broad conceptual framework that explains the general urge to universally institutionalize all children in the common school and through other means.

PATRICIA T. ROOKE*

The "Child-Institutionalized" in Canada, Britain and the United States: A Trans-Atlantic Perspective

Although it has been somewhat like "Waiting for Godot" after a genre of books which seemed to consist of documents and articles, and having been sorely disappointed in *Family, Schools, and Society: In Nineteenth Century Canada* (1975) on this count, at last we have a substantially documented and thoroughly researched work in Canadian education to make a trans-Atlantic perspective of child-centred reform possible. Neil Sutherland's *Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (1976) is such a book and as its title suggests (but he fails to cogently argue) it describes how the mid-nineteenth century urge to reform expressed itself in a multitude of activities, programs, attitudes, and laws, intended to improve the life of the most vulnerable member of society — the child.

In many ways it is a confusing book for it details as much of childhood as seems possible in one volume and herein lies a serious weakness. Child nurture, family relationships, public health, nose-blowing demonstrations, teeth-brushing drills, mental hygiene, baby health clinics, industrial schools, juvenile legal reform, feeble-mindedness, eugenics, immigration and communicable disease — these are a few of the topics it covers. In this respect Sutherland is frequently pioneering new territory not only in Canadian education but also Canadian social history, but one is left frustrated, seeking throughout its pages for a strong central thesis to tie it all together. Perhaps an Introduction to the book could have provided the sense of focus it needed. Nonetheless I must hasten to add that I cannot praise Professor Sutherland enough for the painstaking effort put into this book. It gives us what has been lacking, some solid groundwork from which to formulate appropriate interpretations. It is a solid work, and demonstrates once again that the monograph is, in the long run, invaluable, and that no matter how succinctly argued, articles cannot provide us with the comprehensive coverage necessary for significant advancements in scholarship. The facts do not speak for themselves but neither can we explain them or formulate interpretations without them. Sutherland's work gives us an abundance of facts and will prove eminently useful for historians of Canadian childhood for years to come.

Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, Volume 11 (1973) is the appropriate British parallel to the Canadian work. Not only do they nicely complement each other in specific fields but also by being veritable mines of information. The British book gives attention to the

---

*Patricia T. Rooke is an Instructor in the History of Childhood, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta.

transportation of "waifs and strays" through the organizations of Annie McPherson, Maria Rye, and Dr. Barnardo, while Sutherland attends to the same young emigrants from England by examining their reception and placing-out in Canada.[1]   In a review of Pinchbeck and Hewitt for this journal in August, 1974, I wrote that this book dealt not with children or childhood but about "welfare schemes involving children,"[2] and in many ways I could repeat this comment for *Children in English-Canadian Society*.   The two volumes from the other side of the Atlantic cover Tudor times to the Children's Act of 1948, with the second volume examining the variously related child-centred reforms of the nineteenth century including emigration, ragged schools, vagrancy, delinquency, illegitimacy, child pauperism, cruelty to children, parental neglect, and increasing State intervention.   Child centred concern flourished in nineteenth century Britain in ways not dissimilar to the Canadian experience.

On this side of the Atlantic again, this time south of the Canadian border, an impressive body of literature on childhood points to similar trends.[3]   The urge to child-centred reform likewise expressed itself through the concomittant urge to child institutionalization.   Deviant children, cottage home systems, female orphan asylums, the "Ladies of Chicago," the Children's Aid Society, placing-out, newsboys lodgings, comic books and dime novels, the urban child, halfway houses, truancy, and the United States Children's Bureau, all serve to enrich the history of nineteenth century childhood in that teeming, and according to David Rothman, "disordered" Republic.[4]

As it is virtually impossible to adequately review the materials individually, the common theme of the books chosen for this review will be taken as the "child-institutionalized."   The essay will try to give some coherency to the flood of reforms, attitudes, and practices promoting the welfare of children at different levels, the strengthening of family life by custom and law, the extension of the State, and the rehabilitative measures deemed necessary for the "deprived" and "depraved" youngster.   All books deal with the efforts of humanitarian and altruistic child saving societies and reformers and suggest, if not directly discuss, the professionalization of social control strategies of juvenile offenders and the eventual institutionalization of all children.

Nevertheless we are left with the crucial problem which asks what are we to make of the new imperative for child-centred reform in the nineteenth century?   How can we find an appropriate theoretical framework to give the unity their variety might otherwise defy?   Of course, historians of various persuasions have argued for this unity under as many themes which in the end might

---

[1]Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, Vol. II (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) pp. 546-581. Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) pp. 3-12.

[1]Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, Vol. II (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) pp. 546-581. Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) pp. 3-12.

[2]*Journal of Educational Thought* 8 (August 1974): 113-116.

[3]As the body of literature in books and articles on childhood is vast and covers many dimensions of the subject I have selected several of the well known works on child institutionalization.   Robert Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 1973); Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Robert S. Pickett, *House of Refuge* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1969); Joseph M. Hawes, *Children in Urban Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) and Stephen Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

[4]David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).

explain the society generally but not necessarily the new wave of practical sentiment surrounding children.   The nineteenth century has been variously seen as the century of social control,[5] of social uplift,[6] of "framing the twentieth century consensus."   Similarly it has been described as the age of anxiety,[7] of the Victorian conscience,[8] of the institution,[9] of ferment,[10] and of improvement.[11] Perhaps to add to these is superfluous. However "the age of childhood" is peculiarly appropriate, for indeed this was the century when childhood came of age.

In trying to come to grips with the multitude of data at hand the title of Alison Prentice's article, "Education and the Metaphor of the Family: The Upper Canadian Example," suggested a promising framework providing perspective not only to the Canadian case but to the trans-Atlantic experience.[12] In brief, Prentice claims that nineteenth century Canada saw a shift from the old order of traditional household to the new "ideology" of the nuclear family — the "family metaphor."   Child-centred reform is to be understood in this light as her colleague Susan E. Houston acknowledges in an article on Canadian juvenile delinquency.[13]   Educational reformers such as John Strachan and Egerton Ryerson apparently reflected the conflict inherent in the family metaphor on the matter of residential colleges with which the middle class family was also disaffected.   Strachan, it is suggested, identified with the old household view whereas Ryerson saw the new family ideology as a preferable setting for students living in family settings in the towns.[14]

However those reasons Prentice herself gives for Strachan's and Ryerson's divergent views on boarding halls are by far, more compelling, than her metaphor of the family.[15]   Their views can be equally understood in the context of Ryerson's and Strachan's different and well known views on sectarian education.   Strachan saw the residential college as providing the sectarian identification and sense of community he desired for students with like religious affiliation whereas Ryerson was disinclined toward the denominational model because he approved of social and religious diversity among students attending colleges. Perhaps even more simply, Ryerson may have been influenced by the American shift away from halls of residence toward the German ideal.[16]   The Americans saw residential colleges as economic millstones as well as incitements to riot![17]

---

[5]Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

[6]J. F. C. Harrison, *Learning and Living* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1961).

[7]Lloyd deMause "The Evolution of Childhood" in *The History of Childhood*, Ed. Lloyd deMause)New York: Harper & Row, 1974) pp. 1-74.

[8]Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1957).

[9]Rothman.

[10]Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944).

[11]Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1954).

[12]Alison Prentice, "Education and the Metaphor of the Family: The Upper Canadian Example," *History of Education Quarterly* (Fall 1972): 281-303.

[13]Susan E. Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience," *Ibid.*, pp. 254-280.

[14]Prentice, pp. 287-300.

[15]*Ibid.*, pp. 291, 293-295, 296-297.

[16]Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[17]Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) and John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: An American History, 1636-1956* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

Strachan, on the other hand, preferred the British collegiate models of Oxford and Cambridge, a preference in keeping with so many of his other attitudes.

Professor Prentice's use of "ideology" in the case of the family metaphor as a unifying concept was not fulfilled; in some ways neither was her explanation of the changes occurring around the family. As to the first, her understanding of ideology was more socio-political a la Talcott Parsons than that of "weltanschauung" or world-view, which is a central image in the works of Mannheim and Erikson.[18] As the order of family came to embrace a vast majority of society by eventually crossing traditional socio-politically conceived class lines, a socio-political use of ideology does not do justice to the significance of the total embrace. As to the use of family, this too is described largely as a socio-political unit and less as a sentimental entity with love as a necessity and childhood as its centrality. Surely this is the fundamental of the "modern" family? That family is a necessary correlary to a mass society is dubious and even more dubious that childhood could only have become as institutionalized as it has, due to the expansion of the *family* metaphor. It does seem possible that childhood is logically distinct, although practically related to, the family. That is, we can conceive of a society committed to those supports and institutions which ensure childhood without it being a society equally committed to the modern family. Prentice's attempt to boldly conceptualize the phenonemon of nineteenth century family life and its relationship with child-centred reform is praiseworthy but the development of the "metaphor" does not seem convincing enough at this stage to use as a framework for this essay.[19]

Aries, of course, supports Professor Prentice's claim that the mid-nineteenth century saw a move away from boarding schools[20] but unlike Prentice attributes this to the growing realization that day schools with their proximity to the family itself could provide ideal moral support to family life. A point on which Prentice apparently disagrees in her observation that the new "inward looking institution" was reluctant to commit its children to schools "for longer and longer periods of time" but that schools "ultimately compelled" parents to do so which generated great anxiety in the process.[21] While Aries dates his claim that family and schooling actually complement each other at least to the Reformation[22] we must then ask what caused Canadian middle class parents to respond in a manner quite different from their middle class counterparts elsewhere? One can presume it *is* the middle class which resisted schooling and not any other group (which is quite another matter) because Prentice describes the contradictions which were inherent between the "new family ideal" and the demands of the school. It was after all the middle class which she argues embraced this ideal so enthusiastically. Far from being contradictory we might postulate with Aries that in seeking to protect

---

[18]Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950) and *Young Man Luther* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958) p. 22. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harvest Book, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1957).

[19]That "the traditional ideals of the household — family or of elite networks like the Family Compact could no longer be effectively sustained in what was rapidly becoming a mass society," is one of Prentice's least convincing postulates. Pp. 286-287. Indeed, one can only recall that according to Neil Sutherland and affirmed by Don Wilson mass society has apparently been able to sustain "networks" even among historians of education! Neil Sutherland, "Introduction," in *Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past* ed. Paul H. Mattingly and Michael B. Katz (New York: New York University Press, 1975), xi-xxxi; J. Donald Wilson, "Historiographical Perspectives on Canadian Educational History," *Journal of Educational Thought*, 11 (April 1977): 49-63.

[20]Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965) pp. 269-285.

[21]Prentice, p. 286.

[22]Aries' chapter on the "Little Schools" dates the solicitude of family and school over the education of younger children. Pp. 286-314.

their children from the evils of society the middle class readily recognized the impossibility of providing their children with all the education and training necessary for their success in a society where apprenticeship and service were no longer the main means for occupational competence. Thus the middle class family turned to an institution — the school — which could provide the necessary training, and more importantly, provide it in a guided, segregated, and protected environment conducive of all the conditions of childhood.

In fact, from a completely different theoretical perspective, Barbara Finkelstein has argued in two articles published in the *History of Childhood Quarterly*, that in the American case at least, the middle classes were driven to send their children to school.[23]   Secondly, she demonstrates the concern of the teachers, school officials, and parents, for the moral development of children in the schools.[24]   And this is from a perspective which is basically antagonistic to Aries.

Finkelstein's arguments in both "Pedagogy as Intrusion" and "In Fear of Childhood," agree with Prentice on one count, that of the "anxiety" of middle class parents.   However, her "anxiety" relates to a psychological state which clearly reflects Lloyd de Mause's psychogenic theory of childhood which postulates that as the parental response to the demands of their children increase so too does parental anxiety but "the reduction of adult anxiety is the main source of child rearing practices in each age."[25]   Using the "intrusive mode" of child rearing we see the parental determination to "master the wills" of children by the increased use of psychological controls and that parents were actually *eager* to have some related support for this in schooling.   Moreover, Finkelstein adds that it was particularly middle class women who were most eager for schooling for these were the ones who bore the burden of children about them all day without the supports of kin and relations common to the old order.[26]

In short one must be cautious about generalizing a parental anxiety about sending children to boarding schools in Canada, or elsewhere, to a reluctance about sending children to all schools, including state supported day schools. Thus in 1832, M. Stairs wrote to her "dear son" who had been placed at boarding school, that his "removal from the paternal room was a cause of great anxiety," but added that his "father's very strong desire" to have the boy at Horton overcame her "scruples."[27]   This is certainly a case of maternal anxiety about separation from her child but there is no indication that this "affectionate mother" had anxieties about sending her son to school itself.

There remain two other interpretations of childhood history which might provide some trans-Atlantic perspective to the materials examined by incorporating them into some overarching theory.   These are the familiar psychogenic theory of Lloyd de Mause first elaborated and subsequently expanded

---

[23]Barbara Finkelstein, "Pedagogy as Intrusion: Teaching Values in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth Century America," *History of Childhood Quarterly* (Winter 1975): 349-378 and "In Fear of Childhood: Relationships Between Parents and Teachers in Popular Primary Schools in the Nineteenth Century," *Ibid.* (Winter 1976): 321-336.

[24]"In Fear of Childhood . . . "

[25]De Mause, "Evolution . . . " p. 3.

[26]"In Fear of Childhood . . . " p. 329.

[27]Alison L. Prentice and Susan E. Houston, *Family, School and Society in Nineteenth Century Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975) p. 15.

elsewhere, in "The Evolution of Childhood" (1974),[28] and the argument of R. L. Schnell in a paper titled "Childhood as Ideology: A Reinterpretation of the Rise of the Common School," which was introduced to the Canadian Association of Foundations of Education (1977). The first overview, although seductive, is so fraught with difficulties that in its present form its usefulness remains limited. De Mause's theory and its network of theorists require such an extensive overhauling that, although a temptation, it is not within the scope of this article to do so.

The second overview might be summarised as follows. Schnell asserts that the *conceptual* argument used by Philippe Aries and historically evidenced by him can be usefully extended into the nineteenth century experience but this has not been done so far. From its outset the developing concept of childhood imputed notions of "rescue" and when the concept is emptied of all extraneous characteristics, four necessary conditions remain which demonstrate the essence of childhood as rescue. These include segregating children into a distinct social category, a separate world of children; protecting them from the moral contaminations and physical abuses of the adult world in keeping with a newly discovered "innocence;" making them dependent, that is economically and socially non-productive and thus extending their childhood even to incorporate adolescence, and fourthly, in the above process, delaying their responsibilities for their actions as members of society until adult society deems it appropriate for them to take upon themselves the rigors of adulthood. Thus, protection, separation, dependence, and delay of responsibility, are conceptual conditions as distinct from psychological, physiological, or development ones. A further stripping of these conditions leave protection and dependence as necessary and sufficient. These are in keeping with Aries concept of childhood involving notions of rescue. I might add that former categories of "infancy" and "youth" have been replaced by these conditions of childhood and adolescence into a much lengthier period of social gestation for children aided by the conscious implementation of the conditions.[29] Schnell then argues that childhood had by the twentieth century become a world view, ingrained as it were in the popular mind as "ideology", so that what is not apriori has become a socially structured reality and we cannot conceive of children as other than what we have made them. To paraphrase Albert Cohen — in creating the concept we have given life to the thing.[30]

The second part of the argument then postulates that the most efficient means for ensuring the four conditions of childhood, while serving the society which structured the social reality, was the institutionalization of *all* children in the common school. Those children who were the last to assume all of the conditions defined in the middle class mentality as natural and necessary were the urban poor and the rural classes. Clearly a rural child contributing to the farm was not protected from hard labour, perhaps even exploitation; his responsibilities were seen as prematurely thrust upon him. His position asserted a bold independence not in keeping with the new "world-image" created by the middle class for their own children in the nineteenth century but extended to all children by the turn of that century. The street urchins, news vendors,

---

[28]Also see "The Formation of the American Personality Through Psycho-Speciation," *Journal of Psychohistory* 4 (Summer 1976): 1-30 and "The Psychogenic Theory of History: Overgrams for a Unified Psychohistory," *Ibid.* 4 (Winter 1977: 253-267. Among some of the difficulties with de Mause's theory of Childhood history is the added overtones of ethnocentrism and worse, racism.

[29]Aries, pp. 15-32.

[30]Cohen said the word "teenager" had been "invented because we have created — all unknowingly — the thing." F. Musgrove, *Youth and the Social Order* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965) ix-x.

shoe-shine boys, those "trained up to vicious courses, public plunder, infamy, and ruin,"[31] those children in the mills, mines, and manufactures, and the till-friskers and pick-pockets, were not seen as absorbed by childhood, if left as they were.[32]   They were all too responsible for their own survival in an all too brutal world.   They were unprotected from adult vices and economic demands.   They were precociously independent and their presence represented an insolent reminder on what childhood ought not to be.   They were seen as Sutherland tells us "morally dense, proudly wayward, and defiantly lawless youngsters."[33]   The middle class mentality asserted itself over the lives of these miniature adults.   Thus the "lower orders", the "dangerous and perishing classes,"[34] and the ethnic and culturally diverse, were the last to be assimilated into the world of childhood through legal and moral crusades, increasing institutionalization, campaigns of child-centred reform, and the various coercions and seductions that embraced those outside the pale of childhood.

In considering Susan Houston's statement "that the obvious existing institution that might transform the street arab was the common school" for it "promised redemption"[35] (rescue) we must remember that this remains only part of the story.   The "school promoters"[36] were in the final analysis "seeking to extend a good to *All* children."[37]   No amount of social control theory can convince us otherwise because the common school as "imposition" remains inadequate once we realize that the society as a whole came to accept it and want it.   Childhood as ideology is set in the successful and eventually unquestioned transmission of its values, so that former contending groups came to acquiesce and agree on the necessity of it assured by the common school.   The word had become flesh.   Childhood was incarnated in its most logical consequence — the school — or any similar institution which represents universally institutionalized rescue of all children.

> Those who had "fallen" by chance or by will from any or all of the necessary criteria of childhood had to be rescued — rehabilitated or reformed — and to prevent the majority of children from falling at all they had to be rescued before the fact.   Thus the common school was eminently suited to the task.[38]

Using psychological paradigms rather than historical argument to express a not too dissimilar point of view, John Cleverley and D. C. Phillips in a recent Australian contribution to childhood called *From Locke to Spock* (1976) strengthen the argument on ideology in their chapter, "On Seeing Children."

> Children are among the 'everyday objects' that we observe.   What is seen when we look at children is influenced by the theories that are held and the assumptions that are made.[39]

The authors agree that childhood was not like Topsy who "just growed" but that the institutionalization of children was created by the manner in which

---

[31]Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 419.

[32]Henry Mayhew classified criminals under five major headings and over one hundred categories which included names for wayward youngsters. J. J. Tobias, *Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967) p. 62.

[33]Sutherland, p. 94.

[34]Coined by Mary Carpenter in 1851 and appearing in the Oxford dictionary in 1959. Tobias, p. 54.

[35]Houston, p. 259.

[36]Alison L. Prentice, *The School Promoters* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977).

[37]R. L. Schnell, "Childhood as Ideology: A Reinterpretation of the Rise of the Common School," p. 24.

[38]Schnell, p. 26.

[39]John Cleverley and D. C. Phillips, *From Locke to Spock* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976) p. 2.

we had come to see our world. How we came to see children created the very means to keep them the way we wanted them to be, or to make them how we thought they ought to be! In a trans-Atlantic perspective then "childhood as ideology" became the normal way of structuring our social reality. The Common School and all those other institutions in keeping with the "child-institutionalized" came to represent the normal conditions of childhood especially those pertaining to protection and dependence.

If "childhood by definition is universal" as N. Ray Hiner[40] suggests in his historiographical essay on American childhood presented to the Organization of American Historians (1977) then it must be conceded that this is a very recent state of affairs. Certainly this universality was not the case in Canada, Britain, or the United States, for the vast majority of people in the nineteenth century, thus the frenetic thrust to make it so. The final enabling condition to make all children partake of childhood and its necessary criteria was undoubtedly the institution of the common school alongside "that host of institutions . . . created or expanded to satisfy the needs of children at each stage of development."[41] As Hiner himself observes, "if the sheer quantity of attention devoted to children is a measure of improved conditions then the nineteenth century should receive high marks."[42] Surely what Professor Hiner intended was not that "childhood" by definition is universal, rather that "children" are by definition universal. What I am suggesting here is that childhood is not analytic but it has synthetic truth because it has been made universal by the structuring and expanding of its reality. It is a term given reality by its usage and its usefulness, such as social class; it is not an entity in itself, but a set of social circumstances and enabling conditions. More importantly it is an idea — a concept which has structured the world by its acceptance as ideology.

By the nineteenth century most of the middle classes had firmly committed themselves to "*an ideal childhood*"[43] and must have found statements such as that uttered by Canadian child saver, J. J. Kelso, undisputable, that all children ought to partake of the "ordinary joys of childhood and the endearments of home ties."[44] Thus the young offender was no longer to be treated as a criminal "but as a misdirected and misguided child" and one "needing aid, encouragement, and help."[45] The ideology had become so pervasive that by 1918 the Canadian Conference on Charities and Correction insisted society had a duty to make a child "into what a child ought to be."[46] The English child no less than its Canadian peer was to be "gradually restored to the true position of childhood," sentiments which were early expressed by Mary Carpenter in *Juvenile Delinquents — Their Conditions and Treatment* (1853). Moreover he "must be brought to a sense of dependence by re-awakening in him new and healthy desires which he cannot himself gratify." This is as perfect a statement proposing the universal conditions of child dependence as could be uttered. Carpenter added that well-worn rationalization that to bring the reluctant child into "submission" was "for his good."[47]

---

[40]N. Ray Hiner, "The Child in American Historiography: Accomplishments and Prospects," p. 8.
[41]Hiner, p. 8.
[42]Hiner, p. 16.
[43]Sutherland, p. 13.
[44]Sutherland, p. 115.
[45]Sutherland, p. 123.
[46]Sutherland, p. 128.
[47]Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 474.

Platt observes of the American case that the "sanctions on premature independence and behaviour" rescued children from a state "unbecoming to youth."[48] The conditions of protection and dependence were the precepts behind the new ideology and they believed, as if "a natural law" that "dependence is a child's natural condition" as G. E. Howe affirmed in *The Family System* (1880).[49] The "dependence" referred to here is not that undeniable natural dependence of young members of any society upon adult members for protection and care to ensure their survival and well-being. Rather the dependence is of a different kind and helped create an extension of childhood itself in another category, that of "adolescence."

> Children must not only be withdrawn from adult society, from an early participation into meaningful labour, but the "weaknesses" of children must be emphasized and made absolute though temporary disabilities. In brief, dependence demanded the notion of childish incompetence.[50]

Ironically the final separation of older children from the "socially useful" was their final protection.[51] And as reiterated by the Board of Public Charities, Illinois, in 1885, and then again in 1911 by the Vice Commission of Chicago, the dependence of wayward children on remand centres, reformatories, half-way houses, and on the *parens patriae* principle of State intervention, seemed perfectly natural too.[52]

As is not infrequent with the history of ideologies "childhood" became sufficiently popularised to be acted upon and unite people with otherwise widely divergent political, religious, and social views. In organizations and crusades operating either on private philanthropy or later on public scientific charity the conservative found himself amiably agreeing with the radical on principles of child nurture, and the humanitarian was able to agree with the evangelical on assumptions of child nature. Thus, we see the wide range of interests and personalities of the child reformers such as the Canadians, Lady Aberdeen, J. J. Kelso and Judge Helen MacGill; the British counterparts such as Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Barnardo and Mary Carpenter; the Americans, Jane Addams, Charles Loring Brance, and Samuel Gridley Howe. The agreement all too often resulted in a zealous commitment to childhood and the promiscuous institutionalization of various orders of youngsters so that in 1864 Levi Silliman Ives of New York Catholic Protectory was incensed enough by the child-placing practices of various agencies and could charge, "What charity commenced fanaticism has grossly perverted."[53]

The most recent contribution to the American field, Stephen L. Schlossman's *Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of "Progressive" Juvenile Justice 1825-1920* (1977) is the most incisive and interpretive of the studies. This is predictable given the impressive body of scholarship and subsequent models he has to work with. Part of Schlossman's argument includes the scarcely astonishing conclusion that despite the proliferation of care exercised in the lives of deviant youngsters things had not substantially altered in the period under study. "Continuity rather than change best characterizes American thinking on the subject of delinquency causation."[54] Using sixteen case studies, and two non-seminal institutions as illustrative, "progressive"

48Platt, p. 176.
49Platt, p. 63.
50Schnell, p. 7.
51*Ibid.*
52Platt, pp. 100 and 61.
53Mennell, p. 64.
54Schlossman, p. 69.

transformation of theory into practice did not make any difference in the treatment of delinquents. Although he rejects the idea that childhood was a new nineteenth century discovery he agrees that it had "long since been ingrained, at least in prescriptive literature."[55] He argues that the development and psychological theories of childhood although popularised took a longer time to become assimilated into the reformist moral philosophy and that the implications of "adolescence" were slower to be internalized into the rendering of moral judgments. Therefore his book brings fresh insight into the gap between childhood beliefs and practices but helps us understand the dynamics involved in childhood becoming ideology as the gap closed in the acceptance of certain beliefs if not in the practices toward wayward youngsters.

Neither the analytic philosophers nor the sociologists of knowledge would be surprised at a failure to "cure" delinquency despite a faith that it might be done by the creation of all manner of legal supports and family surrogates for such youngsters. They would quickly recognize that the hardening and institutionalizing of a concept results in a perpetuation of problems related to non-conformity to the same concept.

> The same social structure and culture that in the main make for conforming and organized behaviour also generate tendencies toward distinctive kinds of deviant behaviour.[56]

As long as childhood's conditions remain unquestioned those who deviate create new categories which in turn require appropriate measures and practices to incorporate them. Thus in Canada, Britain, and the United States, despite the determination to alleviate the problem, like the poor, the delinquent was always there.

The concept of childhood tends to assume if not an inherent biological truth then an innate, psychological one, although the very sophisticated legal and custodial structures we have created suggest the artificiality of these "natural" conditions. The women's movement illustrates the case. Those women unable or unwilling to be constrained by the roles and natures defined for them by the traditional understandings of the concept of "womanhood" bear the burden of their deviation. Thus one of the crucial arguments to many feminists surrounds aspects of biological and psychological theories related to women. As we all know a falling away from true "womanhood" as socially structured gives birth to an enrichment of our vocabulary, containing any number of expletives which describe such a woman. A falling away from the true concept of "manhood" is no less onerous and "milktoast" is one of the more charming names given to describe such a man! The falling away from the understood conditions of childhood leads to such terminology as "delinquent," "truant," and "juvenile offender."

Hiner observes that the great bulk of the history of childhood represents that of the new social historians who see "the fundamental changes in the quality of human relationships" as neither "spontaneous nor independent from social or technical change."[57] This is true of the books used here generally. Few of them deal with the "subjective experience" of past childhoods[58] but one can observe that the presence of children without ideal childhoods influenced adults considerably, to the point of establishing elaborate institutional structures and legal mechanisms. The concentrated attention given to children are often

---

[55]Schlossman, p. 67.
[56]Pickett quoting Robert Merton and Robert Nisbet, p. xvi.
[57]Hiner, p. 5.
[58]Hiner, p. 8.

directly related to those socio-economic and demographic factors historians usually deem significant, thus the determination to alleviate poverty and eliminate crime by the inculcation of middle class values into those who could only hope to have lower class expectations.

It does seem that the socio-economic factors need not be seen in crude cause and effect relationship; rather they can be seen as interdependent upon the prevailing beliefs that were part of childhood even when those socio-economic factors of the nineteenth century did not pertain. It is conceivable for instance, as David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (1971) argues that pauperism, crime, disorder, and overcrowding, could have been dealt with in ways other than the creation of institutions[59] and the zealous solicitude toward children. Such a "bewildering array" of new practices, unprecedented to the best of our knowledge in history, must leave us asking the question — why the concentration on children particularly in the last century? The rash of public and private solicitude toward society's children was after all as Sutherland observes "a very *ad hoc* process with few precedents for anyone to follow."[60] Nevertheless as Pinchbeck and Hewitt remark last century came to "a general recognition . . . that children are the most valuable asset of the State."[61] Indeed the most important historical actors in a reform movement for a "transformed childhood"[62] were those who had previously been viewed with either disinterest or repugnance — the children of the lower orders.

A trans-Atlantic perspective of childhood brings out not so much the similarity of the socio-economic experience in the three countries for they were as different as they were similar, but the hold of childhood over the English speaking, and probably western "mind." Childhood may not have required urbanization or industrialization or even mass society to permeate the popular mind as Alison Prentice suggests. The roots of childhood as a concept can be traced to several centuries before mass society, long before industrialization it had become a *tour de force* in the middle class mentality.[63] The institutionalization of childhood came of age in a century when industrialization was prevalent but this could have been coincidental rather than causal.[64]

Sutherland concludes that "what the reform movement did accomplish was to draw plans for and rough in many of the dimensions of a *transformed childhood*."[65] The child was transformed into the "child-institutionalized" in the classroom, in foster homes, by his placing-out, through the juvenile court, in his graded school, and by the arrival of mass society, he was transformed by *a common history*.[66] This common history (a theme which Schnell needs to expand) is an important aspect to any ideology. Ethnic, cultural, and social diversity could be transcended by the common history provided by the common school. We have all been "schooled" and partially formed by that historical event. Our history is sealed by the fact of our childhoods, that social reality

[59]Rothman, p. 294-295 and *passim.*

[60]Sutherland, p. 24.

[61]Sutherland, p. 20.

[62]Sutherland, p. 241.

[63]The writings of humanists such as Erasmus, Elyot, Ascham, and later educators such as Locke, Comenius, and Rousseau and de la Salle, were speaking to middle class parents about childhood in a "modern" way. Much of childhood history supports these ideas of the pedagogues and philosophes.

[64]William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: The Free Press, 1963) argues there is no relationship between family structure and industrialization.

[65]Sutherland, p. 241. Emphasis added.

[66]Schnell, p. 23.

of a time that was protected and separated, a time when dependence and the delaying of responsibility set us apart from the adult world yet served as a preparation for our adult participation in the "common weale."[67]   This is no less true for us than the children to be socialized by the humanist educators, or by Plato for his *Republic*, or for that matter by any other Utopian who recognizes the imperative of such a common history.   In this sense we can understand Bernard Wishy's *The Child and the Republic* (1968) whose theme is transmission of specific middle class values into children's malleable natures intended to create a sturdy republican.   It is however clear that precisely the same middle class values were elsewhere producing young monarchists in Britain, and loyal British subjects in Canada.   The statement by the Canadian, Reverend J. Edward Starr that "take care of the children, and the nation will take care of itself" is reasonable, no matter what the polity.[68]

It is imperative that we do not overlook the importance of individual studies though we recognize the universality of certain experiences such as childhood in Britain, Canada, and America.   Individual studies of similar phenonemon in different countries, and regions within the same countries and particular institutions throughout these regions add the warp and weave to the tapestry of childhood.   As Bernard Wishy commented, "although a broad general movement happened almost everywhere does not clarify its particulars or undermine their significance anywhere."[69]   That is why the unique case study remains the foundation upon which history is written and why the importance of another country's contribution as found in Sutherland cannot be underestimated. However, Professor Sutherland perhaps could have adopted Wishy's posture a little more bravely.   Sometimes his self-conscious Canadianism seemed redundant, as if he were anxious that his reader should not mistake or forget the book for what it is, a *Canadian* history.

On one hand Sutherland insists that "Canadians . . . clearly looked upon themselves not as consumers of ideas produced elsewhere but as contributing members of a world-wide community" who did not respond "only in imitation of others."[70]   On the other hand he adds rather hastily that "despite their many and often important individual efforts, however we must not overestimate the Canadian contribution to 'trans-national' health, welfare, and education."[71]   Why this was an important issue to the writer remains obscure for in trans-Atlantic perspective who was first, second, or even last, within the context of a few years, is in the final analysis irrelevant.   The point of such a book is not to make an issue to of whether such and such a practice originated in X, and was transferred to Y or Z, but to *establish the distinctive Canadian mentality which led to a particular response.*

Generally speaking, Professor Sutherland fails in this charge.   We close the book with the knowledge of when and where certain responses took place but not really why they were thus perceived nor how they became so universally accepted as a twentieth century "consensus."   The mentality required in this transformation remains mystifying although the accidents of the process are elaborated.   Admittedly the failure is not entirely the author's.

---

[67]Humanist educators consciously trained youth to serve princes and take on leadership in the "common weale."   An example is Thomas Elyot, *The Governor* as well as Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, and Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*.

[68]Sutherland, p. 17.

[69]Bernard Wishy, *The Child and the Republic* (Pennsylvania: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968) p. x.

[70]Sutherland, p. 234.

[71]Sutherland, p. 235.

What was required to give this work the necessary focus was a substantial body of intellectual history such as Schlossman had to work on. An intellectual theme could have given the work a world view: an explanation of the distinctive Canadian mentality which arose out of the country's unique historical conditions as a British colony, a parliamentary democracy, an underpopulated but vast geography, and a bi-cultural society.

The American historians in the field of child institutionalization use to advantage the intellectual themes available to them. Thus we see in the American explication of the eugenics movement[72] its peculiarly American character in terms of those theories of race which were wretchedly spawned from the mainstream's relationship with slavery and distinctive concern with race theories.[73] The "new education" with emphases on I.Q. testing, guidance, junior high schools, agricultural and industrial schools, came out of a mentality which had an unparalleled faith in the efficacy of the common school and ideas of egalitarianism and progress. Pragmatism was a peculiarly American philosophy which fitted the American mentality so nicely and I cannot imagine any country but America quite producing the William George Junior Republic with its unabashed capitalist virtues![74] What was it about the Canadian ethos which made its child-reform movement a specific expression of how Canadians understood their world? The book leaves us wondering just what it was that transformed child-centred reform in Canada from "essentially pilot projects into nation-wide practices."[75]

Those who did not guarantee protection to children from labour, cruelty, disease, or exploitation, or seemed disinclined to give their children a longer dependency, were seen already by the nineteenth century middle class as perhaps loving their children but certainly "in a queer way."[76] This "queer way" may have been a reflection of an old view of childhood. If there was "little awareness for the inner life of youngsters" or of seeing them as "individual persons"[77] this was perhaps due to the nature of those rural and urban communities where such views seemed absent. Childhood as a distinct social structure was not incorporated into the mentality of such communities because their views were quite feasibly still part of the old order, or Aries' "milieu." Both Sutherland and Pinchbeck and Hewit quote the case of the little waif who cynically remarked that " 'Doption, sir, is when folks get a girl to work without wages."[78] Obviously this little girl had been an independent wage earner before immigration! But her statement was probably as true for biological children in the rural family as for adopted or "placed-out" children. The old order retained apprenticeship and service because the family was viewed through compelling circumstances as an economic unit. However when the "the most important function of many families *qua* families changed from economic production to the nurture of children" then a generation of Britons, Americans, and Canadians "moved children towards the forefront of its consciousness."[79]

[72]Mennell, "Scientific Explanations for Delinquency, 1880-1910," pp. 78-101.

[73]See William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) and Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968).

[74]Hawes, pp. 128-145 and Jack Holl, *Juvenile Reform in the Progressive Era* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1971).

[75]Sutherland, p. 123.

[76]Sutherland, p. 96.

[77]Sutherland, p. 6.

[78]Sutherland, p. 10 and Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 568.

[79]Sutherland, p. 27.

It is not hard to imagine how difficult life must have become when compulsory common school attendance made children in such families into "financial liabilities" and seen now to be a "substantial *cause* of poverty."[80] Nevertheless, despite driving economic compulsions the universal institutionalization of children in the common school was a fact by the turn of the century. This cannot be dismissed absolutely as "imposition." Even those who were least able to afford the privilege of delaying their children's responsibilities had somehow succumbed to the idea that the common school represented a good. Attendance laws, it has been argued, at least in America, merely reflected what already existed.[81]

Among the major books discussed a body of them fits into that school of history known as the "social control" model. This is peculiarly appropriate in the case of delinquency and dependency although less so in the case of common schooling. At no time would the reformers have denied that they intended to "socially control" those groups of people they saw as undesirable. Indeed a whole paper could be replete with confessions of an ardent desire to so control and there was no more passion than that expressed by those involved in child health programs. However, Sutherland seems to see the doctors, dentists, and especially the notorious school nurses, as caricatures of middle class officiousness and sanctimony, whose function was to see if the child "was in good running order."[82]

In a subsequent article from his book which appeared in a modified form Sutherland confesses that despite the "rather wholesale procedures" involved in disease inspection, dental hygiene campaigns, and forms of preventative care, "it was the rarest exception to have objections made by either parent or pupil."[83] I am not altogether sure why the poor were apparently expected to object to the extension of health programs into the lives of their children. Is it the "culture" of poor people to enjoy lateral curvature, ring worm, smallpox, whooping cough, syphilis, or any of the other ailments Sutherland mentions? Although such social control at the grass roots level may represent to some, intrusion or even imposition of middle class values, it would appear odd to be on the side of dipheria or decayed teeth. De-personalized health care, and mechanistic procedures are certainly not preferable to personalized health care, but surely it is preferable to none at all? Sutherland has conceded that "*ad hoc*" procedures were understandable, if not inevitable, so perhaps the extension of public child health care was a small enough price to pay in the process of child institutionalization.

In conclusion several observations might be made in lieu of the "child-institutionalized", especially as the rhetoric since the sixties has tended toward the "de-institutionalizing" of children and adolescents. We see this in the writings of British, Canadian, and American de-schoolers and the so-called "kiddies libbers." These represent the new child-centred reformers who appear unable to break out of the paradigms created by "childhood as ideology" despite their sincerity to do so. Their views still demonstrate an implicit and often romantic faith in how we have come to see children

[80]Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 651.

[81]David By Tyack, "Ways of Seeing: An Essay in the History of Compulsory Schooling," *Harvard Educational Review* 46 (August 1976): 355-389 and Timothy L. Smith, "New Approaches to the History of Immigration in Twentieth Century America," *American Historical Review* 71 (July 1966): 1265-1779.

[82]Sutherland, p. 50.

[83]Neil Sutherland, "To Create a Strong and Healthy Race: School Children in the Public Health Movement, 1880-1914," *History of Education Quarterly* (Fall 1972): 321.

although they insist on diminishing the alienation of the child and adolescent from the adult world. The older child is to gain some of his former freedoms but without the former disadvantages and risks. In his "escape from childhood" the child is still to remain in a limbo, "free" from participating in the realities and responsibilities of the adult world. Few of the "socially useful" tasks which were assigned to the young members of former and contemporary societies (such as China and U.S.S.R.) are vigorously advocated.

Obviously I am not callously proposing that thousands of young children be sent off to fill in the swamps or go back to the manufactures! Any society's youngest members, due to obvious physical and developmental factors, are unable by the logic of their vulnerability to be other than dependent and require our utmost protection. However, the alienation of the adolescent does seem related to his institutionalized delay in engaging in those socially useful tasks. History has evidenced that children have been ready and able to enter that social and physical world which does not require the more extraordinarily sophisticated technologies of contemporary society. It is feasible they still could if we structured their realities differently while not sacrificing the obvious advantages gained for children by the nineteenth century crusaders. Given Erikson's careful exposition of the "latency period" at approximately seven years, the new child-savers' advocacy of school as play rather than school as child's work may not always fulfil the requirements of this period satisfactorily. Certainly it cannot remotely satisfy the crucial stage of adolescent "identity crisis."

Child savers are still with us as we see in those who advocate and implement alternate schools.[84] They are operating within the very mode they too easily criticize their nineteenth century counterparts of — that of rescuing children. In creating alternate institutions they want to give children more appropriate childhoods by creating more refined notions of the "true position of childhood" and the more refined the concept the further away the child's world is from the adult world. The alternate schools intend to rescue children from the tedium of the public system and protect them from the indoctrination of the separate system. The new child savers are as committed to extending the values of personality, creativity, and self-expression or whatever, as their predecessors were in promoting character, obedience, and industry, and of convincing the ordinary folk of the worth of these although they theoretically eschew the imposition of middle class values.

As with the nineteenth century the new child saver is as concerned with the quality of family life as of school life. With the emphasis on 2.2 children per family, if not zero population growth, childhood is viewed as being potentially more liberated. Nevertheless one suspects the family ideal will remain fundamentally unaltered because with fewer children to fulfil society's posterity these fewer will command a greater interest in their welfare. They will be viewed as even more "special" than they are presently. Also the fewer the children per family the greater the degree of intimacy in such a family and the greater control may be exerted over fewer children. Two children to two parents means more time, money, concern, and attention, to be distributed among fewer siblings. Tomorrow's child will likely have greater love invested in him and possibly a greater psychological debt associated with such an emotional investment.

---

[84] I was pleased to see that Schlossman made a briefer but similar observation that the spokespersons for "the rights of children" form loose counterparts to the child savers of earlier years. P. 192.

The family can now control not only the lives of its children in planning their future careers and socializing their children to fit the plan but the future promises more, not less, planning and controlling. The number and spacing of children, and the kind of children is becoming more prevalent. By the kind, I mean, that they be as much as possible brilliant, healthy, and preferably beautiful and perhaps the future will offer opportunities for choice of their sex too. The imperfect child stands an increasing chance of not being born or if born of being promptly institutionalized. Parents with less economic pressure distributed among fewer children will be able to give their children "an ideal childhood." The so-called liberation of the child by giving him fewer siblings and more material advantages might serve more as the liberation of parents. Thus the growing emphasis on the child's right to day-care programs preferably with "educational" facilities will lead to further "institutionalize" the child at an even earlier age. Once again the middle class reformers are the most articulate of those committed to day-care and argue the case for the working class, as did last century's "Ladies of Chicago". Their convictions remain the same only the cause has altered.

The "child-institutionalized" was the offspring of the nineteenth century reform movement. "Childhood as ideology" will likely continue to exert over the child his right to be dependent, protected, segregated, and have his responsibilities increasingly delayed. All of this however at some cost. As John P. Blessington observed in *Let My Children Work* (1975)

> Youth feels its energy and its power . . . it knows when it is time to begin work and increase that level over the years. This generation, between too little work at home and virtually none in the marketplace, may go down as the most serviced (and deprived) in history . . . This frustrates the natural potential of youth.[85]

RESUME

La contribution de Neil Sutherland à l'histoire des enfants nous donne accès à cette perspective trans-atlantique au sujet des réformes centrées sur les enfants du dix-neuvième siècle. Les supports légaux et les sauvegardes, un "déploiement ahurissant" de pratiques et d'institutions, l'invention de nouvelles catégories pour les enfants et l'intervention grandissante de l'Etat dans la vie de ceux-ci nous attire vers une large charpente de concepts qui soutient et explique ce désir général de voulvoir placer tous les enfants dans des écoles communes et en se servant d'autres moyens.

---

[85]John P. Blessington, *Let My Children Work* (New York: Anchor Books, 1975) pp. 60-61.