

designed to be of maximum relevance in teacher training institutions and take up in a simulation situation the issues raised in that section of the book.

The New Zealand focus of the book is clear and unmistakable. As such, it will be a major contribution to educational thinking in that country – but what of its relevance outside New Zealand, particularly in Australia? In this country the book will be important in two areas: on the one hand it will acquaint readers with an overview of the New Zealand education system – which is generally not well known in Australia; and on the other hand it will contribute forcefully to the quality of debate in Australia about the place of education in society. The issues the

author raises are certainly relevant in Australia: in particular the societal myths with which the author takes issue (that existing society is egalitarian in a classless, non racist, and non sexist manner) are contentious debating points in the Australian context. The implications for the process of schooling are the same in Australia as they are in New Zealand. Ramsay challenges us to look again at our goals of education, the assumptions that underlie these goals and the procedures that are employed to achieve them – this clearly applies in both countries.

Who, then, will find it a relevant book to add to their shelves? Certainly teacher training institutions will find it valuable, and the book therefore achieves one of its

primary goals. But also it will be useful for those individuals involved in critical analysis of current school practices, or who are rethinking their understanding of the issues and pressures that are relevant to schooling. School administrators, boards of education, school councils, parents and teachers should particularly consider this book. Professional not directly involved in education, but whose involvement with children and youth brings them into contact with the school system will also find this volume a useful reference from which to selectively read.

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**M.D.A. Freeman, ed., *The State, The Law and The Family*, Tavistock Publications Ltd. Sweet and Maxwell Ltd., London, 1984 pp. xi + 318.**

This is a compendium of writings on Family Law by sixteen of the foremost English scholars of the discipline, plus one Scottish and one Dutch expert. It is an outstanding collection, conspicuous by its realism, topicality and relevance to the social problems of the family.

The book is divided into four parts. The first, *Women, the State and the Law*, is written largely from a feminist perspective. Carol Smart, who has a refreshingly breezy style of writing, challenges the conventional English wisdom, exemplified in the *Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984*, of placing the primary burden of maintaining an ex-wife on the husband. She argues indeed against any reduction of State benefits, especially for working-class women. This theme is taken up by Hilary Lang, while the third essay, by Jan Pahl, is an intriguing study on the "political economy of the household". Miss Pahl cites several types of household to illustrate the remarkable diversity of financial arrangements that obtain among on-going families as to housekeeping allowances and the management of household affairs.

Undoubtedly one of the major essays in the collection is by the editor, Michael Freeman. Mr. Freeman reveals himself as a rare bird indeed, a male feminist. His piece on Domestic Violence is based on the premise that the law has a most significant role to play, and has so far done very little. The few cases which have provided a remedy to battered women are the exceptions that prove the rule that essentially the law has done nothing to improve the overall position of women. The reason for domestic violence, in Mr. Freeman's view, is not to be sought in psychological failings of individuals, but rather in social or cultural injustice. Mr. Freeman, who writes powerfully and persuasively, concludes with a diatribe against the immunity of husbands who rape their wives.

Katherine O'Donovan's essay poses the doctrinal problem, should the law provide



special protection for women or should it aim at perfect equality? Her conclusion, that equality in all things should be sought, seems to me rather facile. Surely pregnant working women should be given some special protection and immunity, if not for their own benefit, then at least for that of their embryo.

Most readers of this journal will probably find Part 2 of the book of most immediate relevance. For it deals with children, and highlights the perennial problem of family autonomy *versus* state intervention.

An outstanding essay by Robert Dingwall and John Eekelaar considers the criticism that the state has been intruding more and more into family life. The statistics, they say, do not justify any sinister inferences. The authors support greater use of procedures for termination of parental ties when *emotional* harm is foreseeable. And while they frankly acknowledge that recognition of children's interests necessarily entails the abridgement of

family autonomy, they have no qualms about advocating the greater use of interventive powers.

This position is challenged, however, by both Madeleine Colvin and Michael King, in Chaps. 7 and 9. Miss Colvin argues that there are too many children in care. By intervening, the State is abdicating its responsibility to provide services to prevent children from being separated from their natural family. Mr. King also cavils with Mr. Eekelaar. In a valuable comparison he adjudges the English juvenile jurisdiction much inferior to that of the *juges des enfants* in France. These judges actively seek co-operation with parents, and moreover, there is a flexible machinery for periodic review of wardship in France. Anyone with an interest in a child, including the child himself, may apply to any time to the *juges des enfants*, who is obliged to consider whether to terminate the wardship.

That English (and Australian) Law has much to learn from European wisdom is also clear from a most humane and perceptive essay from Madzy Rood-de Boer, probably the best-known Dutch Family Lawyer. Mme de Boer is inclined to lament the diminution of state intervention in Holland.

Susan Maidment (Chapt. 10) looks at the effect of children on divorce. She is critical of the philosophical basis of the provision by which a divorce can be refused if the judge is not satisfied with the arrangements made for the children. (Cf. Family Law Act 1975, s.63). For my part, I find this provision not only justifiable but scandalously glossed over. Nor can I unequivocally accept Mrs. Maidment's thesis that the effects of divorce on children are "not as serious as is believed". (p.177).

Part 3 deals with financial aspects of family law, and once again reveals the tensions between public and private responsibilities for the victims of family breakdown. Jennifer Levin is critical of the new Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act, surely the *bête noire* of this team! She pours wrath on the successive British governments that have failed to implement the recommendation of the Finer Committee (1974) that a guaranteed

maintenance amount be paid to single parents. She advocates a Child Support procedure, quite separate from the proceedings ancillary to divorce by which child maintenance is usually assessed. It is difficult not to agree that the maintenance awarded to child victims of divorce is scandalously low and imperfect in its enforcement.

Dr. Eric Clive analyses recent Scottish proposals for deferred community of matrimonial property. This essay is particularly topical in Australia.

John Eekelaar and Mavis Maclean neatly analyse the types of wives who seek maintenance in divorce cases, and consider that the law should prescribe different rules for childless marriages and those where children are involved.

Judith Masson's essay deals with the thorny question, whether a step-parent should be permitted to adopt the child of his new spouse. She would abolish this practice altogether. She points out that, despite the provision of the Children Act 1975, discouraging adoption of step-children, in fact many adoption orders are still being made.

Ruth Deech (Chap. 15) points to the unsatisfactory state of English matrimonial property law.

Part 4 of the book deals with proposals for family courts and for conciliation in divorce cases. The essays of Elizabeth Szwed, Antonia Gerard and Ann Bottomley all reveal great dissatisfaction with English tribunals which deal with family matters. It is, perhaps, a pity that an Australian scholar was not called upon to give an account of the Family Court of Australia, which, frankly, is far ahead of the models studied by the said authors.

This is undoubtedly the most important collection of essays on English Family Law that has yet been compiled. It reveals great scholarship, wisdom and humanity, and justifies careful consideration by Australian scholars of laws and other disciplines who are grappling with similar issues.

Apart from consistent misspelling of the noun, "dependant", and the bizarre plural, "guardian *ad litem*" (p. 270), the only serious stylistic solecism that I could trace was Miss Masson's constant use of "she/he", "her/him" and "her/his". No doubt she would claim this as a victory for "non-sexist" language, but let her re-write *Paradise Lost* in this fashion, and we shall see how Masson compares with Milton.

J NEVILLE TURNER,  
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#### RESOURCE BOOKLETS

- Development in Childhood
- Development in Adolescence

*Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education, School of Library and Information Studies, Lindfield, 1984, 102 pages (paperback).*

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This publication consists of two booklets describing development in childhood and development in adolescence. It has been specifically designed as a resource for students studying within the Graduate Diploma in Information Studies (Child/Young Adult) at the Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education.

As the resource booklet is compiled for such students, it may be easy to assume that the publication might only be relevant to a specific audience. However, this is arguably not the case.

The booklet is structured in such a way that the reader is presented with a chronologically presented overview of child and adolescent development.

The first section clearly explains to the reader the format of the booklets, by providing explanations of how the material is presented. The authors also include a section on extension activities, designed

to enable the reader to further explore the material presented. The nature of some of the material discussed under this heading, is quite specific to the particular students for whom this booklet was written, however, the scope of most of the material could arguably be relevant to people from a variety of backgrounds.

The authors further divide the booklet into sections providing an overview of development in childhood and adolescence, and highlight some principles and practices for studying children and adolescents. The booklet then proceeds to take the reader through the various stages of development in childhood and adolescence, covering in each stage such areas as physical development, perceptual development, through to social development. Emphasis is also given to the influence of the environment, including cultural and socio-economic considerations, with some limited attention given to issues of gender. Each section is then completed with a list of extension activities and a bibliography. As such, the reader is presented with a comprehensive overview of material.

The bibliography at the end of each section while quite extensive, is directed in part to the audience for which the booklets were designed. As such, some narrowing of focus is apparent. Absent from the bibliographies, however, are references to some of the major theorists discussed? for example, Piaget, Erikson, Bandura, To name a few. As the authors state in the introduction to the booklets, they have written the material with the purpose of

being introductory. The absence of such references in the bibliographies could possibly prove problematic for some readers who lack any familiarity with this area. Another relevant point here may be that, although overall the authors do provide clear explanations of some of the concepts they discuss, there are occasions where this does not occur. In particular, this is apparent when they discuss some of the concepts contained in the theories of the above-mentioned authors. Again, as this material is introductory, this omission could prove problematic for some readers new to it.

In spite of these omissions, the format of the booklets provides a most useful overview of development in childhood and adolescence. The content is generally precise in its attention to the issues, and whilst introductory in its nature, it is sufficiently covered to enable the reader to obtain a basic level of understanding of the material presented. The bibliographies provided can then guide the reader into more of the specifics as they see appropriate.

In presenting the material in such a comprehensive manner, the authors have provided a useful resource for students and others who are looking for an introduction into the area of development in childhood and adolescent. It is also a useful basis for those more familiar with the material to build upon their knowledge. As such, these booklets are useful for both students and practitioners from a variety of disciplines.