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## BOOK REVIEWS

Hagan, J., McQuilton, J., and Carter, H. (1997). *Dispossessed, Diggers and Democrats: Australia 1788-1880s*. Wollongong: Department of History and Politics and Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources, University of Wollongong.

*Dispossessed, Diggers and Democrats* is CD-Rom courseware which provides an introduction to nineteenth century Australian history for upper secondary and undergraduate university students.

The content is comprehensive and conventional with the addition of sections reflecting some of the research themes of the past twenty years, such as Aboriginal Australia, Ethnicity and the 'Great White Walls' of racism. It is surprising that there is not a section titled Women in Australia but a focus on women is provided in appropriate sections.

Similarly, expectations are that there should have been sections on the environment, the history of art, and music-making and literature. A modern history should go beyond the essential political and economic frameworks to include contemporary interpretations by individuals of the impact of a new environment on a transported, ancient but rapidly changing culture. Such an emphasis would have enabled the producers to make better use of the visual and auditory advantages of the medium.

Within each section there is a minimum of narrative material and a focus on a major controversial issue or clash of perspectives. This has the effect of enhancing the appreciation of historiography. The student's understanding of the craft of the historian is developed through the reading of original

documents and associated exercises. The great advantage of the medium are the self-correcting exercises which serve to clarify and refine the essential framework being developed in the student. The controversial issue approach adopted throughout makes the program an ideal foundation for tutorials and could ensure the active involvement of each student in the thinking process.

The imperial context in which the Australian colonies were developing towards federation and nationhood should have been presented in a more systematic way. Nationalism has never been strong in Australian history because from the beginning of modern Australian society, Australians have seen themselves as members of a global empire and citizens of the world. Constitutional developments in Australia were matched by similar ones in Britain, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States and elsewhere. While the global empire was led by Britain in the nineteenth century it is now being led by another child of the empire.

Modern history courses tend to be fragmented and lose a lot of their impact by becoming subservient to the social sciences. History as narrative is lost when it is reduced to providing case studies for illustrating aspects of generalising theories of the social sciences. This CD-ROM can be used to reinstate the study of history as the narrative of the particular.

It was developed with Macromedia's popular multimedia authoring software Authorware. The program's authors have aimed to create a comprehensive learning resource on nineteenth

century Australian history, incorporating an extensive library of bit-map reproductions of original source documents. Readability of these images and documents is reasonably good at screen size 640 x 480 pixels and the program operates reliably with no interactions and students have the opportunity of participating in a simulation game where students can play the role of a selector.

Use of the medium is, however, relatively modest. For example, there is only rudimentary use of sound and the only video located concerned the study plan. This is a pity, since the subject matter clearly lends itself to much, much more. Are we to believe, for example, that there is no musical tradition associated with the Gold Rushes of the 1850s which might have been used? And what about the infamous Kelly Gang which has fascinated (generations of Australian film makers and is amply represented in the holdings of the National Film and Sound Archive)

Other aspects of design and implementation might also have received more attention. For example, there is no use of anti-aliased text on screens and grayscale Authorware buttons appear from time to time. Question and answer interactions are implemented as part of the lesson plan, but system variables are not used to provide meaningful feedback on scores. Animation might have been used to introduce modules in an attention grabbing manner, but first screens are mostly static. The CD itself is attractively packaged, but there is no supporting documentation other than an on disk text file.

In conclusion, the authors of *Dispossessed, Diggers and Democrats* have succeeded in creating a useful on-line media resource which contains many

reproductions of original documents and which should provide students with a good grounding in the role of original source documents in historical method. However, *Dispossessed, Diggers and Democrats* fails to excite as multimedia. Historians contemplating interactive CD as a publishing format, should bear in mind an audience of sophisticated users whose expectations are being shaped by the convergence of information technology with communications. This trend in the trajectory of computing, makes on-line publishing a far more demanding medium than traditional print, as the project budgets of major multimedia publishing houses amply demonstrate. With on-line information systems, the medium is increasingly the message, and developers must make full use of the tools available to them or the message will be lost.

In the last analysis we have to ask whether the CD-ROM is better than a good, well-written and well-organised text book. We do not believe that the producers have exploited fully the visual and auditory advantages of the medium.

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Armour, K. and Jones, R. (1998). *Physical education teachers' lives and careers*. PE, sport and educational status. London: Falmer Press. Paper back; 154 pp; ISBN 0-7507-817-4

I was asked to review this book at the very time my own research interests have increasingly turned toward the personal development of teachers, i.e., in the role their lives 'outside the school gate' play in the values, beliefs and commitments they bring to teaching. In New South Wales' schools, physical

education teachers teach PE as a subject entitled 'Personal Development - Health and Physical Education'. I wonder about the personal development of those charged with teaching it! This matter (teachers' 'private' lives) is almost completely ignored in most educational professional development work and even in the recent Australian Senate's Report on the Status of Teachers: A Class Act (March, 1998). What would Armour and Jones' contribution on English PE teachers' lives and careers hold?

The book's title suggested I might discover a more comprehensive approach to the topic of teachers' private lives than my literature searches have hitherto unearthed. But, alas, it presents, in eight, five-to-eight-page stories, only brief accounts of how the personal philosophies and professional practices of secondary physical educators in English schools have been influenced by their personal involvement in sport. This runs counter to the "holistic understanding of the interviewees as physical education teachers" (p. 6) the authors claim to be presenting through a 'life-story' approach to interviewing and interpreting teachers' stories. The few insights we are given are confined to the role of sport in teachers' formative years and in their pre- service preparation. This falls short of Armour and Jones' claim to 'holistic inquiry' because we learn little of the teachers' knowledge of and skills in the field of what the broader literature identifies as 'life management' or 'personal growth'. Nevertheless a helpful book review should not be unduly influenced by a reviewer's current research interests. There was much to commend in the approach the authors adopted to understanding teachers' attributions of success and failure in their

careers; enough, at least, for me to add the book to several of my classes' booklists as a recommended text next semester.

The book has several strengths. In the Introduction we are offered insights into some methodological issues involved in conducting interviews of the kind presented in the book. This treatment of method will be of interest to postgraduate students considering collecting qualitative data as part of their research. Secondly, also in the introduction, a rationale and conceptual framework is presented for the four 'theme chapters' which the authors hope "will add to our knowledge of some well-worn issues by locating the teachers' stones in the body of existing literature, whilst also identifying the new areas for debate and research" (p. 15).

A third area of strength lies in the theme chapters themselves. Teachers' stories are interwoven with the interpretive work of the authors. The role of language and the epistemological underpinning's of teachers' views of their own school subject structure the interpretive work in the first theme chapter on the relationship between physical education and sport. A critical edge is given to the theme because the merit in seeking to make a distinction between the two is, itself, contested.

In the second theme chapter, 'Striving for Status in the Education Club', the roles of the physical education profession, the broader educational community and the teachers themselves in determining the subject's status are examined. the status-problem of teaching practical activities in a field (education) which Joseph Schwab has already identified as a 'practical' art is openly addressed, as is the profession a grab for academic respectability

through the examination of knowledge-based content, especially at the senior levels of schooling.

'Caring in Physical Education', the third of the four theme chapters, draws on the work of Noddings and Pring to examine relationality and the ethic of care. Two other dimensions of care are also examined: claims to care through the social/moral value of physical education and sport and the significance of caring role models in a sporting environment. In the final theme chapter the systemic and micropolitical dimensions of career development are gathered under the (chronologically ordered) headings: moving in, moving, up and moving out (the latter applying, to the book's teachers who moved out of secondary school physical education teaching).

A final chapter draws together the interpretive theme chapters in proposing "what fundamental research in physical education would look like" (p. 137). The authors conclude that more needs to be known about the "enormous educative scope" (of physical activity). We must, they advocate, contest and, where appropriate "verify the knowledge claims ... identified in national and international contexts" (p. 138). It is in this chapter that the authors have themselves been hoisted by their own petard, calling for "painstaking and detailed research" (p. 138) but ignoring a growing body of literature on the significance of the sport education curriculum model in physical education. Their curt references to the 'narrow sport-focus' of Siedentop's sport education model cite only a 1987 chapter from published conference proceedings. The authors, it seems, show little interest in undertaking a good-faith examination of sport education's proclaimed merits extant in the literature since the early 1990s.

However this is one of the few criticisms I would make of Armour and Jones' offering. It stands as an instructive study of the interpretive research method which, in itself, has general appeal to a postgraduate audience. It also offers much of substance to those interested in a more sophisticated understanding of physical education teachers and their profession. As I said earlier, it is on my booklist for next semester.

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