

statements mentioned on pp. 62–64, in other words to use the potentials of Mikhail Bakhtin, albeit in the theoretical part of the thesis Nilsson clarifies that she “will not carry out a pure or systematic analysis of the SSF-texts in Bakhtin’s sense.” This means that Bakhtin’s theory only intends to be used in a general way, as an inspiration to observe the texts as indirect dialogues between the SSF-authors and the readers of the text, i.e. teachers and the girls and boys in school. This reservation towards the use of theory might restrict the potential answers to the overarching gender research-questions.

To sum up Ingela Nilsson’s thesis is relevant, thorough, and well written. The historiographic references are adequate and well related to the research questions. The theoretical setup is relevant, albeit some aspects could have been utilised more in depth. The empirical basis of the thesis is multifarious and well selected, and the conclusion is convincing. Was the Swedish peace-movement in the interwar years a loser’s case? One of SSF’s main targets was to change the traditional nationalistic history education in schools and replace it with patriotic pacifism; however this does not seem to have been accomplished. In spite of that, Ingela Nilsson argues that Swedish policies that followed World War II, like neutrality and a more democratic concept of citizenship, were rooted in the peace pioneers activities in the interwar years.

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## Edited collections and series

Charlotte Appel  
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*Da læreren holdt skole: Tiden før 1780. Dansk skolehistorie 1: Hverdag, vilkår og visioner gennem 500 år*, ed. Charlotte Appel & Ning de Coninck-Smith  
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2013, 446 pp.

This first volume of the new five volumes history of education in Denmark covers the period from the Late Middle Ages until about 1780. An abundance of visual illustrations, colour photographs of paintings, etchings, book covers, maps and artefacts of various kinds, make the publication into a book with exceptional aesthetically qualities. It is a book of great beauty. The visuals also carry much information, and much can be learnt from just leafing through the illustrations and reading the explanatory text for each picture. Clearly, the publication is intended for a wide audience of readers, both for scholars in the field and for the general public.

The authors describe the state of the art in Danish historical educational research on this early period - with a few exceptions - as a continuation of Joakim Larsen’s classical account and his narrative of educational development as national progress: from education for a few, to education for the many, organised by the state. In this story line, the 1814 reforms is the significant historical event, and the previous centuries are characterised mainly by the lack of educational provisions. Larsen’s account, and those who have followed his tradition, have primarily focused on educational initiatives from above, generally neglecting initiatives from below, and they talk about “the school”, in the singular, thus downplaying the variety of schools, pupils and teachers that existed at all times.

The ambition of the authors is to rectify this narrative by highlighting educational variety and education initiated from below, from groups of parents and even single families that organised individual tuition in their home. Throughout the period there was a variety of schools catering for different groups. Educational provisions differed

for boys and girls, for children from different social backgrounds and between geographic regions. The traditional focus on Danish national education is replaced by a more comprehensive account, which also covers the Duchies, Norway and the Danish colonies in India, Africa, Greenland and the West Indies. Education in the Faroe Islands and on Iceland is also presented.

The authors have settled for a broad definition of schools, as the general practice of transmitting book culture. Thus, a school is said to exist “when a person with or without formal qualifications assumes the role as teacher for a group of children and conduct activities that have to do with books and scripts” (p. 15). This definition includes informal transient arrangements, such as groups of parents who have engaged a person to teach their children to read, as well as the formally organised and historically enduring Latin schools. The authors include the Latin schools in their account with the justification that the lower lectia, during the major part of this historical period, catered for lower age groups and focused on teaching the basic skills of reading and writing in the vernacular. Moreover, the broad definition of “school” is justified by the usage of the term among people at the time. Whenever someone taught skills connected with the book culture, it was called school, regardless of the physical and institutional context.

The authors have adopted a “cultural approach” and their aspiration has been to write a cultural history of education (p. 375). Still, changes at the level of social institutions, i.e. relations between education, the state and the church, which are structural rather than cultural changes, are thematised. Also the issue of state educational policy is addressed, especially in connection with the two major educational reforms of this period, the reformation, with the Church Ordinance, and the 1739-42 legislation from the pietist period.

A contested issue, starting with the reformation, concerns state policy toward private schools. The authors claim that the Ordinance explicitly allowed town authorities to decide whether or not to establish schools in writing and arithmetic (p. 45). Elsewhere (p. 157) it is underlined that the writing schools were the responsibility of the town authorities, as distinct

from the church and the state. In neither case do the authors assume that the state, through its legislation, wanted to promote writing schools as public schools and as an alternative to private schools. However, other historians have seen the statute in the Ordinance about writing schools as an expression of state interest in promoting public at the expense of private education. This interpretation is corroborated by later legislation and rescripts, in which the town authorities were ordered to establish Danish schools, though without much success (Tveit & Thuen 2013). Other studies on the educational legislation of the Lutheran reformation portray it as a lasting legacy of state responsibility for the education of its citizens, either carried out directly by state institutions or by delegation to local public or private agents. After the reformation, in the Lutheran German states, the responsibility for organising schools was transferred from the church to the secular town authorities, and private schools were forbidden, though without much success (Witte 2002). That this policy, in many cases, and notably in Denmark, did not succeed in eradicating private schools, is another matter.

Concerning the legislation of 1739-42 the authors argue against established accounts among Danish historians who have seen it as a failure, one of the most serious setbacks of the absolute state. They claim, on the contrary, that the acts had a long-term effect by defining elementary education as a state project and removing the schools from parental control (p. 201). The children became “officially defined as school children”. The reform, however, partly cemented and partly augmented regional differences in educational provisions. “Since schools had existed everywhere before the enactment of the legislation, its effect was primarily to provide a common frame for existing and very variable ways of organising schools” (p. 216). One could say that the 1739-42 legislation transformed informal education into formal education. Thus, the authors might have benefited from making the distinction between formal and informal education, which their broad concept of “school” has collapsed.

Ironically, this volume’s descriptions of early Danish education does not at all contradict the British sociologist Margaret Archer’s comparative analysis of Denmark

(Archer [1979] 2013) whose influence in the international literature the authors see as “regrettable” (p. 369). Archer’s study object is formal education, and the transformation of educational structures, which does not entail a prohibition against studying informal education and exploring the variety of educational provisions. It is just a different undertaking and a different research project. There are strong affinities between the present volume’s descriptions of continual parental and local engagement in initiating education outside state control and Archer’s conception of the Danish educational system as decentralised. Decentralised systems have “no leading part”. In such systems efforts to implement state policy are constantly challenged by educational initiatives from other groups. Processes of change originate from “the bottom” as much as from “the top”.

Notwithstanding these critical remarks, there is every reason to congratulate the authors with this beautiful first volume of the new Danish history of education. They have succeeded in presenting a convincing account of the great variety of educational provisions during this early period and in drawing attention to the existence of informal and private schools promoting literacy and other basic skills before the state engaged in legislation on elementary education for all. A generous helping hand to further research has been extended by the literature reviews at the end of the book.

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*Da skolen tog form: 1780-1850.*

*Dansk skolehistorie 2: Hverdag, vilkår og visioner gennem 500 år*, ed.

Charlotte Appel & Ning de Cninck-Smith

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2013, 428 pp.

Revolutionsåret 1848 deltog N.F.S. Grundtvig i en skolpolitisk debatt med kyrko- och utbildningsministern Johan Nicolai Madvig. I en skarpt polemisk attack anförde Madvig att de skolor som kommit att kallas latinskolor i själva verket var *danska* skolor, att universitetet i Köpenhamn, sitt romerskt katolska ursprung till trots, var *danskt* och skulle så förbli. Madvig ville dock inte medverka till bildandet av ”en särskilt, karakteren af danskhed monopoliserende undervisningsanstalt”. Striden vanns vid det tillfället av Madvig och det skulle dröja en tid innan Grundtvigs nationellt orienterade skolor skulle förverkligas. Även om Grundtvig vid detta tillfälle i första hand avsåg folkhögskolan har nog det grundtvigianska programmet ingått i alla andra danska skolformers mer eller mindre dolda läroplan. Detta svåröversatta program om folk, nation och språk, med rötter hos Herder och Fichte, kom också att sätta sin originella prägel på dansk utbildningspolitik under det kommande århundradet.

Det är därför förklarligt att flerbandsverket *Dansk skolehistorie* verkligen är en dansk historia. ”Den danske skole” betyder i denna andra volym skolorna i kungariket Danmark under perioden 1780-1850. Författarna har emellertid inte skrivit en dansk skolhistoria i inskränkt och anakronistisk mening, som skett så många gånger förr, alltså exklusivt om skolorna i Danmark inom 1864 års gränser. Här behandlas tvärtom också skolförhållandena i hertigdömena Slesvig och Holstein, Norge (fram till 1814), Island, Färöarna och Grönland. T.o.m. skolorna i de utomeuropeiska besittningarna tilldelas en del spaltutrymme. Man får dock känslan av att författarna menar något mera med uttrycket ”den danska skolan”, en skola som är arteget dansk i en specifik och karakteristisk bemärkelse. Det finns nog goda skäl för det.