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The male primary school teacher: a threatened species?

Pat Grant

University of South Australia

Introduction

Great difficulty has been experienced in inducing young men to enter the profession
(Madley, SAPP 1875, p15).

The above quote by the then headmaster of the City Model Schools, Lewis Madley in his report to the South Australian parliament shows his concern about the number of young men embarking on teacher training in 1875. 129 years later similar concerns are being expressed by politicians (during the last federal election), the media and educationalists. In 2004 the most recent figures from the department (Department of Education and Children's Services DECS) show that only 22% of the teachers (including principals and deputy principals) in primary schools are male. Given Madley's comment in 1875 one might ask the question: have there been many periods in South Australian public primary schools when males outnumbered females or were at least 50% of the teaching population? This paper (part of a larger historical study of teacher education in South Australia) through an examination of three periods of time in South Australia and via official documents such as the South Australian Parliamentary Papers (SAPP) traces the issue of male teacher numbers and how the subject (the primary teacher) has been shaped and produced as a result of and in some cases despite particular historical discourses and practices. The three periods of time include; from 1874 -1884 the beginning of compulsory education and official teacher training in South Australia; from 1910 -1920 the period around and including the First World War; and from 1943-1953 which was the period including the end of the Second World War and the beginning of a significant population explosion for South Australia. As I describe below these periods in South Australia are significant in both educational and social terms. This paper focuses on the primary teacher and does not look at gender roles in the wider society which of course contributed to the production of the subject primary teacher, (see for example Miller, 1986, Bacchi, 1980 for discussion of these issues). The paper begins with an outline of the research methods used and then discusses the significance for education of each period, before analysis and discussion of the figures and some of the official documents.

Research methods

This is an historical study informed by Michel Foucault's genealogical work. Genealogy is a 'methodological device' (Kendal and Wickham, 1999, p29) which can be used to examine the assumptions governing the way people think or talk about an issue and as a way of uncovering origins or antecedents which have become hidden over time. Such an

examination means interrogating the networks of ideas (or discourses) through which and by which the object of the study (or issue) has come to be constituted. A genealogical study begins with the 'problematization' of a current issue, in this case 'how has the primary teaching profession come to be dominated by females?' However, the issue being problematized is not an end point because to Foucault histories and problematisations are ongoing. Indeed to Foucault 'the present is just as strange as the past' and he uses history 'as a way of *diagnosing* the present' (Kendal and Wickham, 1999, p4). This paper attempts to contribute to a diagnosis of the present issue of a lack of male teachers in primary schools in South Australia today.

Two methods of analysis are used. Firstly a descriptive quantitative analysis is used to establish the number of male teachers in the particular time periods described above. Data was collected from the South Australian Parliamentary Papers (SAPP) of the relevant years. Throughout the period covered by this paper the Minister for Education made an annual report to parliament in which he (always male in the periods covered) presented spending for the year, a variety of statistics about the schools in South Australia and particular points of importance from the Inspectors of Schools reports. The inspectors' reports were also appended to the report. The number of teachers in the service was always listed by gender and separated out Head Teachers and others in leadership positions. Percentages of male teachers (and males in leadership positions) were then calculated in order to reveal trends over time. It should be emphasized that these figures only reveal trends and can not be regarded as definitive. For example the 1875 figure for the total number of teachers was 391, whereas the previous year it had been 552 and one year later in 1876, it was 550. A closer look at the figures across the three years suggests that sewing teachers had not been counted in 1875.

The figures themselves tell only part of the story about the gendered construction of the primary school teacher. Data from the parliamentary papers, the South Australian Education Gazettes and published writing and unpublished theses about the history of education in South Australia (e.g. Theile, 1975, Miller, 1986, McGuire, 1999) have helped to provide the social and historical context for the paper. The second method of analysis is based on the theoretical assumption that we live in a text mediated world where language and discourse characterise our social life (Luke, 2002).

Thus in this paper, the Inspectors' reports to parliament are treated as text and analysed through critical discourse analysis, CDA (Fairclough, 1992). CDA is a multidisciplinary approach drawing on language and social theories using both close linguistic analysis at the word and phrase level of the text and analysis of the text genre. CDA follows Foucault's notion of discourse as social practice in that discourse is seen as both 'socially constitutive as well as socially shaped' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p258). That is because discourse 'constructs subject positions' for people and 'social relationships between people' as well as constructing 'systems of beliefs' (Fairclough, 1992, p64). In this paper I am showing how the discourses in official documents such as the SAPP construct the subject primary teacher.

1874-1884: The beginnings of official teacher training

Primary education in South Australia commenced with the establishment of the colony in 1836 through private (largely church run) schools although with some government assistance. Teachers may or may not have had teaching qualifications. Some had come from England or Scotland with teaching qualifications but others just set up schools as a way of earning a living. The 1851 Education Act established a Central Board of Education whose main function was the certification and payment of teachers. There was no specific training of teachers in South Australia at this time although the Act had provided for the setting up of a 'model school' for the training of teachers. However this was not provided for in the budget and the Board had to 'make do' by using 'a large city school as a temporary model school and [by] encourag [ing] the employment of pupil teachers' (Miller, 1986, p27). And so a pupil teacher system began to emerge although it was administered in an ad hoc way.

It was not until twenty years later in 1874 that an apprenticeship model was made official policy. This was largely forced upon the government because of the increased prosperity in South Australia. 'Bumper wheat crops in 1872 and 1873 led to a rush northwards for farming lands. New towns were...laid out grandly' (Theile, 1975 p19) and these included and required many more schools that could not be staffed from the existing pool of teachers.

The period from 1874 is significant for two reasons: firstly because it was the beginning of official teacher training via the apprenticeship model and secondly because of the enactment of the 1875 Education Act. When the apprenticeship model became official policy, the state for the first time had some control of who could become a teacher. This was further developed with the opening of the model schools (boys, girls and infants) in Grote Street and the opening of the Teachers Training School in 1876. This was to be a pre service model of teacher training. The Training School opened on the site of the Grote Street model schools with 30 students. Entry requirements were good character, good health, an age between 17 –36 years and an ability to pass an entrance examination in 8 specified subjects. (SAPP 1877 No 21 p2). Candidates also had to spend one month in 'pre training' to see if they had sufficient natural ability (SAPP 1877 No 34 p5). In effect this was a monitor system prior to entry into the training school. These entry requirements provided a diversity of students (particularly with regard to age) but this changed in 1882 when a new entry requirement demanded that students have had some teaching experience. By 1885 entry requirements 'preclud [ed] all except pupil teachers who had completed their four years of apprenticeship, or those persons, between the ages of nineteen and thirty six years, who had been engaged in at least six months of teaching and who could pass the customary entrance examination' (Hyams 1976 p211, SAPP1885, no. 34 Education Regulations 1885, p9). So in effect what had been set up as a largely pre service teacher training program became an adjunct to the apprenticeship model.

The course length was six months or one year depending on students' ability to pass the examination, which was offered after six months training. If students failed, they could re sit the examination six months later. There was a high failure rate particularly among the

women. Adjustments were made to the curriculum and eventually the course became one year for all students (Hyams 1976 p211/12). However, only a minority of teachers was trained at the Training School. For example during the period 1874-1884 approximately thirty students attended the Training College each year. Most still became teachers via the pupil teacher apprenticeship model. In 1880 students at the Training College (as it now became known) were also able to study at the University of Adelaide (established in 1876) although Physics and Chemistry appear to be the only subjects studied at this time. Again only a minority of students was involved and most of these were men thereby ensuring that men would have higher qualifications which would ultimately lead to more men holding senior positions in the profession as Table 1 below shows.

The 1875 Education Act established a state education system. The head of the new Board of Education was John Anderson Hartley who was already a significant player in South Australian Education. As head of the Board he was to exert considerable influence in the next twenty years. This new Board of Education provided schools and teachers throughout the state and demanded compulsory attendance for pupils from 7 -13 years old for a minimum of 70 days per half year (Theile, 1975, p11). However despite this state control of education, including the training of teachers there was shortage of teachers and a concern about the lack of male teachers as the report of the Central Board of Education in 1874 points out there were difficulties in attracting ‘qualified youths for pupil teachers.’

The supply of suitable teachers for vacant schools and for the post of assistant teachers has not been equal to the demand. Some difficulty has been experienced in procuring the services of qualified youths for pupil teachers. The scarcity of skilled labor of all kinds, and the numerous vacancies for clerks and appointments in offices of a similar character, have no doubt in great degree contributed to the deficiency in the number of candidates for teacherships in the public schools’ (SAPP, 1874, Vol. 2, No.24, p4).

The figures below in Table 1 bear this out. Males were only 10% of the pupil teacher population although 70 % of the licensed teachers. Of the total teaching population 44% were males. Even at this early stage of primary education in South Australia more women than men were involved as teachers although the majority of the women held the subordinate positions such as pupil teachers and they were paid less, reflecting of course the same gender discrimination in the wider society at the time.

Table 1: Teachers in South Australian schools, 1874 (SAPP 1875, Vol. 2 pp 15/16).

Staff	Males	Females	Totals
Licensed Teachers	217 (70%)	91	308
Pupil Teachers	26 (10%)	218	244
Totals	243 (44%)	309	552

One of the key discourses in the public sphere (e.g. in the Parliamentary Papers) at this time was a justificatory discourse as to why males were not going into teaching. There

was a scarcity of 'skilled labour of all kinds' as the 1875 SAPP report (above) says, and poor remuneration particularly in country areas. In small country schools teachers' salaries were related to the number of students who attended school. Consequently it was difficult to staff small country schools as William Wyatt (Chief Inspector of Schools) expressed in his report to parliament.

Among the twenty seven teachers who have sent in their resignations, either during the course or at the end of the year, there are many whose valuable services can ill be spared, especially as from the want of a more liberal scale of remuneration the difficulty of finding competent persons to fill up vacancies in the list is daily increasing' (SAPP, 1874, Vol. 2, No.24, p10).

Lewis Medley's Report on the Training School to Parliament in 1878 continued to talk about the 'paucity in the number of male applicants for training' despite the rise in remuneration.

I regret to state that there is a paucity in the number of male applicants for training. Hitherto, the small allowance made to married men might to some extent account for this, and it is to be hoped that the increased grant now made by the Council will have the effect of bringing forward more of this very desirable class of applicants. There seems to be an unaccountable unwillingness among competent young men to devote themselves unreservedly to the work of teaching. This should not be: under the administration of the Council, the teacher's position and pay have been much improved, and young men who enter the training school with an honest desire to work, may now look forward confidently to an honourable position in life, where their services will be adequately compensated.

Looking to the future, I would urge the Council to materially increase the number of male pupil teachers in our schools, as it is upon that class we must rely for our chief supply of teachers in the future. The supply of female students is fully equal to the demand, and the class of candidates who offer themselves is satisfactory. If parents would show the same desire to place their sons in the Council's service as they do in the case of their daughters, there would be no lack in the supply of teachers.

The discourses here are complex. On the one hand male pupil teachers are referred to as a 'desirable class of applicant' but unwilling to devote themselves to teaching, whereas female pupil teachers are described merely as 'satisfactory' although by implication prepared 'to devote themselves unreservedly to the work of teaching.' Madley tries to justify the lack of male candidates for teaching by hinting that parents are to blame for not encouraging their sons to go into the profession. But despite this obvious preference for males by Madley, females continued to dominate the ranks of the trainees.

Another justification for the lack of males in the profession offered by the Inspectors in their reports was the arduous nature of the work of pupil teachers particularly in the small country schools where few certificated teachers were employed. Pupil teachers taught

classes all day, had lessons with the Head Teacher either before or after school hours, homework and preparation for the next day's teaching. A number of Inspectors comment on this in a number of the Parliamentary Papers during this time. Typical of these comments is the one below from Inspector Burgan.

Many of the school staffs are largely composed of pupil teachers of both sexes, and, with one exception I can bear testimony to the industry, zeal, intelligence, and skills with which they perform their very arduous and responsible duties (SAPP, 1879, Vol. 3 Paper 35, p33, Inspector Burgan's report).

Males were favoured as teachers particularly by parents as this interaction in the SAPP 1881 Vol 4: the minutes of evidence on education shows. Mr C. L. Witham (Inspector of Schools) was being questioned.

750. What is the proportion of male to female teachers in your district? – There were 59 male teachers at the end of last year [1880], twenty five female teachers, twelve assistants (some males and some females), thirteen pupil teachers, twenty three sewing mistresses, and twenty paid monitors. That was in December last.

751. Do you hear complaints from parents about the female teachers – that they do not like to send their boys to schools under a female teacher, and that there has been a want of discipline in such schools? Yes; but as a rule I do not place much weight on the opinion of the parents on this matter.

752. Do you know of instances where parents have taken children away for that reason? No; but I have heard of an instance where they have applied for a male teacher, as at Blyth, where I could not recommend an alteration.

753. (By the Hon J. Colton)-You could not send a male teacher there? I could not very well as I am satisfied with the teacher. You might take Caltowie as an example. It has had both male and female teachers, and the discipline was never so good under the male as under the female teacher.

Interestingly Witham does not fully answer the question about the proportion of male to female teachers in his district. He does not give the gender breakdown for assistants, pupil teachers or monitors although given the overall figures for that year they are most probably overwhelmingly female. Sewing teachers were always female. He appears to be supportive of the abilities of the female teachers despite what parents may say. However he is also acting as the pragmatic bureaucrat here knowing that overall there are more females than males in the teaching profession and that it would not be possible to meet the demands of all parent groups who requested a male teacher for their school.

The Inspectors' reports to parliament during this period continued their justificatory discourses of poor remuneration and the large workload endured by pupil teachers as the reasons why few were attracted to the teaching profession and especially males. The local press also provided a justificatory discourse about why fewer males chose to enter the profession. This related to the leadership style of the Head of the Board, John Hartley. Thiele (1975:19) quotes the *Register* (local newspaper) writing of Hartley as displaying

“hauteur and dictatorial conduct” and issuing veiled warnings that “the imperative mood is necessary with boys. It is rarely desirable with men.”

The figures for male teachers during this period show a general trend downwards in the overall figures although a trend upwards in the figures for Head Teachers as Table 2 below shows.

Table 2 Percentage of male teachers and male Head Teachers 1875-1884 (Source SAPP 1876-1885, Ministers of Education reports).

Year	Total teachers	% Male teachers	%Head Teachers/locum tenens for Head Teachers
1874	552	243 (44%)	na
1875	391	218 (55.7%)	71.1%
1876	550	243(44.1%)	73.4%
1877	653	284(43.4%)	76.6%
1878	699	300(42.9%)	76%
1879	788	328(41.6%)	77.4%
1880	837	353(42.1%)	75.6%
1881	786	345 (43.8%)	75.6%
1882	900	370(41.1%)	77.3%
1883	952	384(40.3%)	78.3%
1884	1000	400(40%)	77.6%

The exception for this downwards trend is the year 1875 when there appears to be a rise in the percentage figures but a drop in the total number of teachers. In 1874 the total number of teachers was 552 but only 44% were male. This anomaly could relate to the fact that sewing teachers (who were all female) were not counted in 1875. In 1876 for example there were 111 sewing teachers and these are included in all the following years. Sewing teachers were often involved in more than the teaching of sewing particularly in the small country schools. Here sewing teachers were often the wives of the Head Teachers and as such were involved in other areas of the teaching program particularly if pupil teachers were difficult to employ.

Thus the feminisation of the subject, primary teacher continued to develop during this time despite the onerous nature of the training, the lack of acceptance of female teachers by parents, the high failure rate of female students in pupil teacher and Training College exams, the clear favouritism shown towards males by Inspectors and the head of the Training College. Lower pay scales also contributed towards this feminisation largely because the Department could employ more teachers at a lower rate thereby balancing the budget and staffing the burgeoning number of schools in South Australia. This was to be the case across all three time periods discussed in this paper.

However this feminisation of the subject primary teacher can not be viewed in isolation from the social context of the time and the discourses surrounding male and female roles. The wider societal discourses about these roles of women in society are not so obviously seen in the Parliamentary Papers of *this* time. However something of this emerges in the discourses of the inspectors' reports in the next period I have chosen to explore.

1910-1920: Around the First World War

In 1910 South Australia was coming out of a rural recession and new growth was occurring particularly in the Mallee and in the Riverland. This growth brought families, railways, and concomitantly new schools to these areas. The building of these schools could not keep up with demand and as a consequence teachers and students were housed in temporary schools. These were usually tents and conditions were primitive (Theile, 1975, p90/91). Similarly the city of Adelaide was growing and public transport in the shape of electric trains was making travel around the city more accessible. The burgeoning population meant the building of new schools which in turn brought a demand for more teachers. So this period too, was a period of teacher shortage. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 compounded this shortage. 1914 also brought one of the worst droughts South Australians had known and this meant less money for education. Teachers' salaries were the lowest in Australia. At the end of the war education in South Australia was in dire straits with "run-down schools, a shortage of teachers, financial stringency, rising inflation, the great post war influenza epidemic...heavy demands on resources. And the morale of teachers was low" (Theile, 1975, p140). But by the end of the decade (1920) things had begun to change and the outlook was more optimistic albeit briefly.

Teacher training also changed during this time. Adelaide High School opened in 1908 and this meant that pupil teachers could continue their education at secondary level. Adelaide High School would provide 3 years of general education and, as the then Minister of Education said, 'time would be found for a greater amount of professional training than had been possible in the past' (SAPP 1910, Vol. 3, no. 44, p20). This general education was to be followed by a year of practical training as a 'junior teacher' and then one year at the University Training College for some but not all the junior teachers (McGuire, 1999, p76). Those junior teachers who did not take up the training college year became acting assistants or unclassified teachers (SAPP 1910, Vol. 3, p 9).

By 1910 there had been considerable modification of the Training College course. Students could opt upon entry to the Training College to complete a one or two year qualification. A one-year course would lead to either an Infant Teachers' Certificate or a Primary Teachers' Certificate. Those undertaking a second year would complete the Primary Certificate and then in the second year prepare for the Diploma of Education (SAPP 1910, Vol. 3 p9). This Diploma was developed by the University of Adelaide in 1912 and taught by the Training College staff. It was open for both primary and secondary trainees but secondary trainees largely took it up.

One of the effects of this new model of teacher training was that infant and primary teachers (who were mainly women) began to have less access to university qualifications and therefore less access to senior positions in primary schools. (They did not need to proceed to a Diploma of Education because of the newly developed Infant/Primary Teachers' Certificates.)

[The] restructure led to a division between primary and secondary teachers where the former were discriminated against in terms of pay, conditions, status and even promotion opportunities well into quite recent times. Such institutionalised discrimination against primary teachers can be seen to have its beginnings in the removal of access to university graduation opportunities for them (McGuire, 1999, p78).

Alfred Williams as Director General of Education at this time was trying to improve the qualifications of all teachers particularly those in small schools who in the main had no training. To this end he established a six-month short course in 1912 at the Observation School. This was compulsory for all teachers who were to staff small country schools. This coincided with the 1912 Commission of Enquiry into Education (SAPP 1912 No 27 pp42, 77, 116) which singled out the apprenticeship model of teacher training for scathing comment. But the 'apprentices' had changed. They were no longer the Pupil Teachers that were so dominant in the nineteenth century. Between 1908 and 1913 the Monitors took over from Pupil Teachers as the real apprentices. Monitors assisted in schools and they used their position as a preliminary step to becoming a Junior Teacher.

New rules and regulations for Monitors (the new 'apprentices') were introduced in 1913 although they were much like those that were set for Pupil Teachers when they were officially introduced to the system in 1874. Candidates had to be 14 years of age, and 'the District Inspector had to be involved in their selection using the criteria of physical fitness, character and general academic ability at fifth class level' (McGuire, 1999, p83). They also had to teach during school hours and have some free time for study. (SA Education Gazette, January 1913, p30).

During this time the number of male teachers in primary schools fell from 31.5% in 1910 to just 25% in 1918 as tables 2 and 3 below show. However as in the previous period discussed, males continued to hold the majority of senior positions.

Table 3. Teachers in South Australian schools 1910 (SAPP 1912, Vol 3., Part 1, Report of the Minister of Education p7).

Rank	Male	Female	Total
Head Teachers	238 (89.8%)	27	265
Assistants in charge of departments	7	–	7
Assistant teachers	68	234	302
Acting assistant teachers	4	68	72
Provisional assistant	4	65	69

teachers			
Pupil teachers	34	61	95
Monitors	25	61	86
Provisional teachers	54	343	397
<i>Locum tenens</i> for head teachers	17	4	21
<i>Locum tenens</i> for provisional teachers	-	2	2
Totals	451(34.2%)	865	1 316
Teachers of needlework(p/t only)	-	113	113
Grand totals	451 (31.5%)	978	1 429

A summary of such tables for the period 1911-1920 appears below in Table 3. As can be seen there was a 5% decline in the number of male teachers (including head teachers) during this time. However there was a 20% decline in senior positions (SAPP 1920, Vol., 2, Part 2, p21), suggesting at a first glance that largely males in leadership positions had volunteered for service in the First World War.

Table 4 Percentage of male teachers in South Australian schools 1911-1920 (Source SAPP 1912- 1921, Ministers of Education reports).

Year	Total teachers	Total % male teachers	% Male headmasters/head teachers/locums
1911	1325	386 (29.1%)	88.8%
1912	1565	445 (28.4%)	88.1%
1913	1667	470 (28.1%)	87.8%
1914	1767	504 (28.5%)	81.6%
1915	1854	526 (28.3%)	86.4%
1916	1982	534 (26.9%)	86.9%
1917	2071	563 (27.1%)	83.8%
1918	2178	546 (25%)	80.2%
1919	2160	550 (25.4%)	74.9%
1920	2170	551 (25.3%)	68.4%

Clearly the war had some effect on the overall decline in the number of males engaged in primary teaching but the decline in leadership positions was not just related to the war given the description of those who volunteered. For example males who enlisted for active service during 1915/16 included 16 head teachers, 7 *locum tenens* for head teachers, 15 assistants, 1 acting assistant, 5 junior teachers, 33 teachers (Class IX) and 2 *locum tenens* for (Class IX) teachers. This was a total of 79 from the teaching profession. During 1917 – 1918 the number of teachers on active service included 12 head teachers, 8 *locum tenens* for head teachers, 19 assistants, 3 acting assistants, 14 junior teachers and 33 (Class IX) teachers making 89 in total. It is not clear from these figures as reported in

the Parliamentary Papers whether 10 extra men volunteered between 1916 and 1918 or whether in fact it was 89 extra men. However a claim by the Superintendent of Primary Education (below) in his 1920 report to parliament suggests it was the latter. It is also possible that some of these teachers may have taught in the 21 secondary schools which existed in South Australia at this time.

Nearly 200 of our teachers responded to the Empire's call to arms during the years of war. Twenty three of these gave their lives for the cause in which they had enlisted, and their names will be treasured by us as a sacred memory, for "How can man die better?" (SAPP 1920, Vol. 2, Part 2, p21, Appendices A).

However, suffice to say the war was blamed for the teacher shortage and the disparity between the numbers of male and female teachers.

The scarcity of teachers has been severely felt by the Department, hence on several occasions our students have been called on to take temporary duty in the schools in and around the city. This arrangement has proved a relief to the Department which would have been unable to meet the legitimate demands for staff, and the experience gained by our students has been of great value. The disparity of numbers between men and women trained is partly accounted for from the fact that the men are away discharging their duty to the Empire, so whilst in normal times few men entering the service would cause us much concern, under present conditions we would not have it otherwise. (Extract from the report of the Headmaster of the Observation and Practising School, T H S Nicolle, SAPP 1918 Vol 2 p30).

As the number of male teachers in primary schools declined the primary teaching profession became increasingly feminised. Not only was this the case in terms of numbers but the primary teacher was also constructed as female in the reports to parliament of two Inspectors of Schools extracts of which are shown below.

Owing to the great extent of the mallee districts, South Australia has a great number of ... small schools. The great majority of the teachers, whatever their deficiencies may be in the matter of academic attainments, work zealously and industriously, and show themselves to be imbued with a true missionary spirit.

Probably South Australia gets a better return from the money spent on her rural schools than the citizens generally receive from the expenditure in any other direction. English and American writers, whether journalists or the authors of more solid tomes, have borne very full testimony to the general intelligence and knowledge of the Australian soldier, a product of the Australian Government school. Over and over again one comes upon such unsolicited praise. Surely the teacher of the country school may claim to some share in the foundation of that intelligence, that patriotism, that high spirits of endeavour, that personal initiative that has distinguished our gallant soldiers.

The problem of the country teacher is not confined entirely to the schoolroom. In an environment where the teacher must be thrown so largely upon **her** (my emphasis) own resources for the cultivation of the graces of character, and the elegancies of living, the teacher's sanctuary must be found mainly in literature. Here only may the teacher rest in company with the best people of the ages, each at **her** (my emphasis) best. Here, if anywhere, may **she** (my emphasis) find fresh sources of inspiration, and draw upon the great storehouse of our English literature (Extract from the 1919 report of Mr W Ham, Assistant Inspector, in charge of short course training (training for teaching in small schools) SAPP 1920 Vol. 3, Paper 44, p34).

Inspector Ham's discourses about teachers and education more generally here are interesting. They are set within a broad societal discourse of the time, patriotism and the bravery and intelligence of the Australian soldiers as described by 'English and American writers'. Because Ham is an Inspector in charge of training in small schools he wants a part of the glory attached to this patriotism and he does this by claiming that it was the small schools in which the soldiers were educated that played a role in their high achievements on the battlefields of Europe. He validates this by referring to the high numbers of small schools in South Australia at this time. However what is more interesting is his referral, in the final paragraph to the teachers in small schools as female. He uses the pronouns 'her' and 'she' to refer to the teacher in the small schools and this at a time when writing conventions used the male pronouns to refer to both male and female. The discourses Ham draws upon relate to the civilising influence of the teacher through her reading of English literature. The female teacher was the keeper of public morality as also described by Theobald (1996, p141-148) about Victorian teachers and schools. Female teachers whilst being the moral guardians of the young work 'zealously and industriously and show themselves to be imbued with the missionary spirit'. The use of the term 'missionary' also seems to suggest the upholding of Christian morality. The construction of the teacher in small schools as female as described in the above was not restricted to Inspector Ham. Inspector Pavia in his report of the same year also described the teacher in country schools as female with his persistent use of the pronoun her and herself.

When an inspector notices a promising teacher, capable of benefiting **herself** (my emphasis) and **her** (my emphasis) school by association with progressive teachers, I suggest he be given the power to recommend such teacher to visit a particular school for periods of one, two, or three days. Such absence from **her**(my emphasis) own school would be reported in the school journal, and a report of the visit sent to the inspector who would of course have directed the visiting teacher to note particular points during **her** (my emphasis) visit. In this way progressive methods would find their way into country schools at present cut off from the experimental centres of the city schools (Inspector Pavia's report to parliament SAPP, 1920, Vol.3 Paper 44, p27).

Here the teacher who will improve education in the country through developing 'progressive methods' in the classroom is a female although of course dominated by the

male inspector who will select the relevant female for professional development and guide what she is to observe. The implication here is that the primary teacher (female is capable of learning about 'progressive methods' it is the male inspector who proscribe these methods thereby maintaining the patriarchal hierarchy of the primary teaching profession.

Whilst the dominant discourses were about how the war had brought about an imbalance of male and female teachers, other discourses promoted the construction of the primary teacher as a hard working female guardian of society's morals and someone capable of learning and adopting 'progressive methods' in the classroom. But also interestingly during this time in 1915 a regulation was enacted that required women to resign upon marriage and only return to teaching as temporary teachers. 'The marriage bar had been effective from the 1880s in South Australia although it appeared in the regulations only in 1915' (Vicary, 1997). This was possibly to protect the jobs of soldier teachers returning from the war. However, in terms of overall numbers of teachers in schools during this period, female teachers were in the majority. The question then arises did the men return to teaching after the war? The next period under investigation in this paper is during and after the World War II. This was another time of social upheaval, population increases and teacher shortages.

World War II and beyond: 1944-1954

In 1944 Australia was involved in both the war in Europe and the war in the Pacific. War brought stringencies for all and the Education Department in South Australia was no exception as it struggled with reduced teaching staff and minimal and/or rundown resources. Despite the stringencies imposed by the war an Education Inquiry Committee was set up at the end of 1942. The first progress report of the Education Inquiry headed by E. L. Bean was presented to parliament in May 1945 and the Final Report of the Bean Committee of Inquiry into Education was brought down in 1949. It was 'a three volume report, written over seven years of deliberations, [and] was a remarkably – and self consciously – radical document (Miller, 1986, p 220). It was significant for all levels of education. One of its most radical recommendations for primary schooling was its rejection of streaming. This meant 'grading children according to age' and emphasising learning through 'individual progression'. It called for all children to be admitted to secondary school when they reached a certain age rather than having to pass an examination (The Qualifying Certificate) which of course some children would never pass and therefore have no access to secondary education. If these changes were to take place then teachers who knew how to teach in these ways would be required. The report recommended that all teachers be trained for a period of three years. Quite obviously this latter recommendation and those that called for class sizes to be reduced to less than thirty- five and an increase in the teaching staff were expensive budget items (SAPP, 1949 No. 15, p3) The Playford government did not implement these recommendations specifically although some reforms had begun during the life of the Bean Committee, for example the abolition of the Qualifying Certificate in 1944 (Miller, 1986, p222). Other reforms from this committee were not enacted until much later; for example the length of teacher training courses was not increased to three years (for all students) until 1971.

After the war there was an unprecedented growth in population due to an increased birth rate (the 'baby boomers') and high migration including refugees from the war in Europe.

During the period 1947-1958 Primary and Secondary enrolments in the United States rose by thirty nine per cent, and in the United Kingdom by thirty five per cent. In South Australia the rise for the same period was 110 per cent. (Theile, 1975, p214).

Clearly more teachers were needed. The South Australian Education department recruited in a number of ways. In 1948, a temporary short course with a lower entrance level was introduced at the teachers' college. It consisted of a few months training and some practice teaching. 'This new program was comparable in nature to the one year training offered earlier in the century to less academically competent student teachers who would be content to receive appointments to small rural schools' (Tabor, 1979p6/7). The department also advertised in the Education Gazette, (December 1949 p219) to ex teachers to be employed in a temporary capacity.

An amendment to the Public Service Act provided for the re employment of retired men and women teachers up to the age of 70 years and 65 years respectively. The teachers will receive their superannuation benefits and will be employed as temporary assistants so that the normal flow of promotions will not be impeded (SAPP 1948, No44, p3).

The department also tried to recruit fully trained teachers from Britain (Thiele, 1975, p213).

Another strategy the education department used to obtain more teachers was the development of short courses that were outside the realm of the teachers' college. These were often described as 'pressure cooker' courses. People were taken into schools, given 'training' for a term and then given their own class as Temporary Unclassified Assistants (TUAs). Apparently this scheme was not gazetted but appointments of TUAs were listed in the Education Gazette. This scheme expanded rapidly. For example in the July 1952 Education Gazette (p159/60) there were 60 newly appointed TUAs listed. This trend towards TUAs was not thought 'desirable' but 'unavoidable' given the teacher shortage.

The consequence upward trend in the proportion of unclassified teachers in the service is not a desirable one, but it seems to be unavoidable under present conditions and its effects are being closely watched (SAPP 1953 Vol 2, No 44 Report of the Minister of Education for the year ended December 31, 1952).

Despite all these measures it was still difficult to recruit people into teaching particularly young women. The Women Teachers Association of the Union in a special report issued in 1948 pointed out that it was rather obvious why young women were not choosing teaching when they could choose other jobs such as office work, telephonist and factory work where wages and conditions were far more attractive than teaching (Theile, 1975, p212/3). One of the blatantly discriminatory conditions under which women worked at

this time was that which required them to resign from their permanent teaching positions upon marriage and become temporary teachers with attendant loss of status. The Minister of Education’s report to parliament in 1952 notes that over half the women employed in primary schools are classified as temporary and this at a time of the ‘ highest number of pupils instructed in the history of the Department.’

It is not difficult to keep up the numbers of men on the permanent staff: they increased by 50 during the year. But there was a decrease of 56 women, with the result that the permanent staff now comprises nearly twice as many men as women. Women on the temporary staff, however, show a very marked increase, and they now comprise 46.4 per cent of the total women employed and 56.4 per cent of those in primary schools. The large majority of the women on the temporary staff are trained teachers: of the 761 employed at the end of the year, 65.3 per cent were either certificated or classified, and of the 319 newly appointed during the year 195 or 61.1 per cent, were in this category (SAPP 1952, Report of the Minister of Education for year ending December 31, 1951, Paper 44).

However it should be noted that whilst there were fewer women on the permanent staffs of primary schools during this period the overall numbers of women in teaching were rising and the overall numbers of men were falling as Table 5 below shows.

Table 5 Percentage of male teachers in South Australian schools 1944-1954 (Source SAPP 1945- 1955, Ministers of Education reports).

Year	Total teachers	Total % male teachers	% Male head teachers
1944	2151	915 (42.5%)	82.1%
1945	2301	1042 (45.2%)	85.7%
1946	2350	1102 (46.8%)	86.5%
1947	2410	1083 (44.9%)	88.1%
1948	2428	1055 (43.4%)	87.2%
1949	2411	996 (41.3%)	81.5%
1950	2480	1006 (40.5%)	83.1%
1951	2628	1036 (39.4%)	84.2%
1952	2775	1026 (36.9%)	84.7%
1953	2995	1039 (34.6%)	85.4%
1954	3437	1046 (30.4%)	83.5%

(This table includes teachers permanent, temporary and part time in all primary schools and the Correspondence School in South Australia. It does not include figures for Northern Territory primary schools which were administered by South Australia at this time and neither does it include playground supervisors.)

The drop in numbers of male teachers from 46.8% in 1946 to 30.4% in 1954 is quite dramatic especially given the education department’s efforts at recruitment. On the other

hand it might be fair to say that the high of 46.8% is an aberration in the general trend and may relate to the fact that during the war and just after, a number of retired teachers were hired and it is possible that the majority of these were men who saw such an undertaking as a way of contributing to the war effort given that their age would have barred them from service in the military .However the primary teaching profession continued to be dominated by females although males continued to hold over 80% of the leadership positions, women were paid less and they had to resign on marriage to become temporary teachers.

Conclusion

It would appear that in South Australia during the periods covered by this paper that male primary teachers were rarely and perhaps never 50% or more of the primary teaching profession. However they were always the majority in the leadership roles from a low of 68% in 1920 to a high of 89.6% in 1912. Throughout this time there has been a continual cry for more male teachers from politicians, the media, and educationalists. Little has changed today in that respect. There have been numerous calls from the media, politicians and parents for more male teachers. For example the Prime Minister, John Howard speaking on the ABC AM program March 10, 2004 suggested that the Sex Discrimination Act might need to be amended to allow the Catholic Education Commission to offer men only teaching scholarships. The question then becomes what has changed in the last 130 years? During the periods discussed in this paper the number of male teachers in South Australian primary schools ranged from 25% in 1918 to 46.8% in 1946. However there has not been a steady decline over this time rather there have been times when there were more males (after World War II) and times when there were fewer(after World War I) males. Although this paper has not looked at current figures for South Australian primary teachers in any detail, a snapshot from September 2004 (Table 6 below)shows a lower percentage of males than at any time during the periods discussed in this paper although I suspect a more detailed study of all the figures since the development of compulsory education in South Australia (1875) would reveal there have always been fluctuations in the percentage of male teachers in primary schools and that there have always been fewer male teachers. What is different today though is the number of males in leadership positions. The figures in the table below show that 52% of principals are male but when all leadership positions are added together only 46% of leadership positions are held by males .This is considerably less than the lowest figure of 68% in 1920 but it is still represents more than the number of males as a whole in the primary teaching force. So whilst more women are in leadership positions today men still dominate relative to their overall numbers.

Table 6: Teachers located in school type primary (Source Department of Education and Children’s Services) September, 2004

Position	Total	Males	Females
Principals	394	206 (52%)	188
Assistant Principals	85	18 (21%)	67
Deputy Principals	172	80 (47%)	92

Teachers (including coordinators)	4921	928 (19%)	3993
Total	5572	1232 (22%)	4340

This paper is a partial historical examination of the issue of the construction of the subject primary teacher as female and it needs to be read alongside class, gender and societal analyses of the relevant periods if we are to more fully understand present day concerns about the lack of male primary teachers in South Australian schools.

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