

organization among Ontario farm women, it is weighted towards studies of relatively traditional forms of political participation. Most of the chapters deal with involvement in left-wing political parties and political organizations — some concerned with electoral politics and others concerned with political organization and education.

To some extent, there is a noticeable contradiction running throughout the book between the positive energy of the descriptions of women's political activity, and the rather less optimistic conclusions to most of the chapters, which suggest that the efforts were rather less than successful. In part, this may be a question of personal attitude (the half-empty or half-full glass), but it is also a question of the criteria for evaluation. Is success to be able to identify women active in politics, or is success to be judged by the inclusion of issues relevant to women or by the changing economic status of women? This relates to one's political ideology and sense of political strategy. And this, in turn, brings us back to the complexity of the relations between gender, class and ethnicity.

Beyond the Vote does not solve these questions for us, but it does provide a wealth of fresh, new material for us to reflect upon and, for this, we should be grateful.

Caroline Andrew
University of Ottawa

Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective. Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren (eds.), *Calgary: Detsileg Press, 1987, Pp. 398 paperback.*

This book has its origins in a conference, so it is not surprising that it takes the form of a number of separately authored articles bound together by a brief overall introduction, section introductions, and a concluding chapter entitled "Future Directions." The sixteen papers make up four sections called (1) Women as Mothers, Women as Teachers; (2) Unequal Access to Knowledge; (3) The Nature of Curriculum, Whose Knowledge; and (4) Beyond Schooling, Adult Education and Training. The authors are primarily from Ontario or British Columbia, reflecting the locale of the conference (Vancouver) and the dominance of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in this scholarship in anglophone Canada; however, Quebec and Alberta are also represented.

In spite of the conference origins of the book, a number of the papers were actually published or read elsewhere, and some are best described as classics in feminist studies.

Such articles as Dorothy Smith's 1975 analysis of ideological structures and academic women, Danlylewycz, Light and Prentice's 1982 article on the sexual division of labour in teaching, and Smith and Griffith's more recent paper on mothering as discourse, best fit into this category. Each one is excellent, setting the stage for new directions in our thinking about women and education.

As promised by the editors, almost all of the papers deal with Canadian education. However, one reaches back to historic British literature (Ruth Roach Pierson's paper on Mary Astell, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Virginia Woolf), another addresses adult women's literacy education in a Hispanic community in California (Rockhill), and yet another reports research on British women returning to university as adults (McLaren). It is possible to justify their inclusion by arguing that they were all written by scholars working in Canada — which is true. However, and perhaps more importantly, they are, I think, highly relevant to the education of women in Canada. The only one of these three studies which is a little weak is the article on Hispanic women; however, its critical pointing to relationships between immigrant women's attempts to acquire literacy in the official language of the host country and violence from their male partners certainly merits its inclusion.

The editors state their goal as being to explore the relationship between feminist research and education, claiming that the authors in the volume are united by their insistence on the importance of female experience. Although the material written by the editors shows both sensitivity to and knowledge of general feminist scholarship and methodologies, the individual papers included are uneven in that regard. The Sheehan paper, which is an interesting review of the way women's organizations in Canada contributed to public school curriculum reform in the first part of this century, is also an example of an author insensitive to language usage. "National" women's organizations are clearly defined by the author as white, anglo-saxon and protestant, but the implications of this for the analysis are superficially dealt with at best. Not only is there little awareness of the diverse immigrant, religious and native contexts in which these women's groups sought reform, but there is also no sense of franco-phone Quebec. In fairness to the author, it should be noted that feminist scholarship has only begun to address seriously "our differences" across race, language and culture in the past few years. Indeed, if there is a weakness in the book as a whole, it is the omission of issues confronting these differences. This is true not only along linguistic

and cultural lines, but also in the book's silence on lesbian experience.

Most of the chapters have excellent bibliographies and most are well worth reading. Any of them could be the sole subject of a review, but I will comment further on only one which was totally new to me and both useful and interesting. It is a paper by Alison Dewar entitled "Knowledge and Gender in Physical Education" and is drawn from her doctoral thesis at the University of British Columbia. Dewar looks at the social construction of gender by students in an undergraduate physical education program, a program in which biological sciences and "practical" knowledge are highly valued. In this area, gender differences can be treated simply as facts, and Dewar's very careful analysis gives us insight into the nature of ideology and the "facticity" with which our socially constructed world is presented to us. In her study, curriculum which presents material from the biological sciences and applied behavioural sciences does not challenge this construction; curriculum from the social and cultural sciences does. One result is that students see this second type of curriculum material as not useful or as not really important and, therefore, dismiss it. Dewar's analysis of this phenomenon, based on lengthy interviews with staff and students and a "grounded theory" approach, is a delight to read. More than that, it speaks strongly to my experience teaching in a Faculty of Education, and I suspect to all of us teaching in professional faculties. Indeed, it may well help account for our teaching experiences throughout the university. This paper alone is worth the price of the book.

There are a number of places in the book in which copy editing is very poorly done, and it is thoroughly irritating. When one is presenting excellent material to students, but material of doubtful legitimacy, it is even more important than usual that it not contain such errors. There is also a convention used throughout the text which I find irritating, although it is widely practised in academic literature today. That convention is the use of the date of a recent translation or publication of an older text for citation purposes. When the social science citation convention is used, with the year incorporated into the text after the name of the author, this gives the impression that the book has been written recently and completely distorts the historical record of scholarship. We experienced scholars well know that neither Durkheim nor Marx nor many others whom we cite were writing in the 1960s, but our students have much more difficulty developing an understanding of the relations among these authors and their ideas.

These problems, however, seem small when the quality of the articles is considered. This is a good book and a welcome contribution to Canadian scholarship on women and education.

Marilyn I. Assheton-Smith
University of Alberta

Feminist Research: Prospect and Retrospect/Recherche féministe: Bilan et perspectives d'avenir. Peta Tancred-Sheriff (ed.), *Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1988, Pp. 303 paperback.*

This book is a collection of papers presented at the 1986 CRIAW conference entitled "Feminist Research: Prospect and Retrospect." As the theme of the conference suggests, the range of papers presented was very broad. While, on the one hand, this serves to better present the scope of work being done by feminist scholars, on the other hand, it makes it very difficult to provide a cogent summary of the dominant focus of the collection. As both Peta Tancred-Sheriff and Marguerite Andersen point out, "it is frequently not possible to synthesize all the feminist research even within one subfield" (p. ix). This makes the task of trying to review the collection exceedingly difficult.

In terms of the organization, the book is divided into six sections which include: (1) Reproduction and Maternity; (2) Education: Pedagogy and Consequences; (3) Women's Work in Historical and Developmental Perspective; (4) Women and Well-Being; (5) Women and Literature; (6) Power and Political Strategies. It is quite clear that an important emphasis of this collection is to present an interdisciplinary approach to feminist research.

Marguerite Andersen provides a very thought-provoking introduction to the collection on "Women's Thought: The Road of Feminist Research in Canada." Quoting Marion Colby, she concludes that there are three essential processes for feminist research: "Consciousness-raising and awareness of self; acquisition of knowledge and formulation of theories, political action and social change" (p. 9). This, Andersen argues, is a process that must occur time and again as awareness is renewed, new knowledge acquired, new theories formulated and new action undertaken. The gap between theory and praxis must be narrowed. In my opinion, it is in light of these processes that this particular collection of research articles should be read and evaluated.