

we return to the pith of Cornford's *Microcosmographia*, which is held to epitomise university politics (either the time is not ripe, or it has all been tried before),* and remain immobile in the face of challenge? Will Harris himself be able to organize the data of the past twenty years, data with whose production he has had no small part, with the same success and within the same format in the volume which is to follow? Canadian academics owe no small debt to the Carnegie Corporation for the studies of Canadian academic history, life and problems; no small debt to the individuals who laboured on successive projects of their funding, and an especial debt to Robin Harris who has been associated for so long with so many. We now look forward eagerly to the early publication of the volume which is to follow.

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(Editor's note)

*F. M. Cornford. *Microcosmographia Academica, being a guide for the Young Academic Politician*. Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1908. A book remarkable for brevity (24 pp.) and wit; a precursor of Parkinson.

J. Roby Kidd and Gordon R. Selman, Editors.
COMING OF AGE:
CANADIAN ADULT EDUCATION IN THE 1960s.
Toronto: Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1978.
410 pp. \$8.95 paper

Coming of Age: Canadian Adult Education in the 1960s is a veritable smorgasbord of writings on adult education. Sixty-five authors whose contributions are arranged in six topical sections offer us a taste, but only a bite-sized taste in most cases, of the wide variety of written material produced in the adult field in the decade preceding our own. Of course, any anthology has its limitations, and this one is no exception. Not only is the considerable contribution of French Canada to the field of adult education left unexplored (as the preface indicates), but the unevenness in the nature of the contributions, ranging as they do from the peripheral to the profound, makes synthesis difficult. John Heron with his Bank Letter, Chief Dan George talking to teachers — each contribution admirable in its own way, no doubt, but what do they all add up to? A.S.R. Tweedie conjures with definitions of adult education one-fifth of the way through the book, and forty or so pages further on Coolie Vernor adds flesh to this skeleton in an excellent discussion of organizing concepts, so that gradually it is possible to arrive at a set of principles concerning the nature and scope of the subject as it was perceived in the 1960s. The arrangement of material in this anthology does not make it easy for anyone with a particular interest in the development of the foundations of adult education to do this, however. Nor will the teacher of adults looking to

improve his on-job performance find much emphasis placed on professional development, at least in the narrower sense in which the term is usually understood.

Reading *Coming of Age* is to become aware of the great shift of perspective on adult education which took place in the period between the late 1960s and the late 1970s. Ah, for the halcyon days of Expo '67 — that “major experience in adult education,” as Leonard Marsh would have it in his contribution to the setting of the topic. In those far-off days the educational universe, if not quite unfolding as it should, was at least visibly expanding. Ten years later, with declining enrolments plaguing every educational sector except the adult, and with teachers' unions insisting on the strictest interpretation of seniority rules, the setting for adult education is vastly different. For one thing, adult educators may soon have to defend their field against an invasion of ill-prepared place-holders grasping at last straws. For another, the stately skepticism which marked the entrance of many of the more established universities into the area of adult education has given way to a less dignified scramble for registrations at any price, and the accompanying threat of jurisdictional disputes with the community colleges who, understandably enough, regard adult education as their own special preserve. In the face of this kind of tension, much of the material of *Coming of Age* seems today to be rosily optimistic in tone and somewhat removed from the harsher realities of educational life.

But perhaps this kind of comparison is unfair. *Coming of Age* is essentially what it purports to be — a collection of written material broadly representative of Canadian adult education in the 1960s. It is a worthy successor to the companion anthologies *Adult Education in Canada* (1950) and *Learning and Society* (1962). As such, it extends by yet another volume that convenient repository of information about adult education that will, in the future, prove invaluable to the authors of more definitive texts.

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Jeanette Llerena Webber and Joan Grumman.
WOMAN AS WRITER.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.
451 pp. \$9.45 (paper).

One supposes that in some future age of androgyny, it will no longer be necessary to title a book in this manner; perhaps the myth of “male writing” and “female writing” will have rightfully dissolved, and such collections will be viewed as historical curiosities. For current audiences, however, this excellent collection of women's writing serves well the authors' purpose of sharing with readers the literary and emotional range of these works and the sense of tremendous potential for creative women.