are not difficult, and while this would be a disadvantage to a graduate audience, or to an expert in the field, it is an advantage for the audience intended. For both teachers and administrators this book is a good introduction to the breadth of research in Canadian education.

Stewin and McCann's text is a broad overview of the field, and a useful one; and the selection of articles conveys the sense that social issues in Canadian education are different. However, a major issue not treated in the text is the fundamental differences provincial and regional divisions bring to education. Differences persist in per capita and per student spending, the availability of libraries, retention rates, the extent of dependence of school finance on the economy, and administration. While there are similarities in provincial systems, the differences must be explicitly addressed in a study devoted to the articulation of problems facing Canadian education today.

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Ratna Ghosh and Mathew Zachariah, (Editors).
EDUCATION AND THE PROCESS OF CHANGE.
New Delhi: Sage Publications; 1987.
pp. 301. $36.00

This is a quite remarkable collection of essays which were derived from a conference held at McGill University in 1985. A dozen speakers, mostly Indian, who either hold important positions in India, or who teach about that country in universities outside, discussed a wide range of broadly educational aspects of social development in India since independence was achieved in 1947. One of the editors, Ratna Ghosh, writes in her introduction that the "conference aimed at taking a comprehensive look at the role education has played in the reconstruction and revitalisation of Indian society over the past four decades," and its purpose was "to rekindle interest in India as an area worthy of scholarly study in the social sciences, particularly in education."

There is little doubt that the aim has been achieved. Western educators who have read these well written papers will have gained at least a superficial understanding of the relations of education to changes in the social structure of India with all its disconcerting complexities and inter-relations. They will have seen something of the antagonistic forces of change on the one hand and of inertia on the other. They will see how education, which in the euphoric days following independence, was seen as the major instrument of advance, can also retard growth. In the system of

education inherited from the British, instruction from infancy through to the university was given in English. It prepared students for work in government, in the professions, and in management. Since then there has been an enormous increase in educational provisions at all stages. Private schools patterned on the English "public schools" have proliferated, with instruction still in English; at the same time indigenous schools using one of the very many vernacular languages and others using more than one language have been provided. It was hoped that universal access to elementary education would give equal opportunity to all who wished it to enter the highest levels of education that their abilities would allow. Unfortunately this has not happened. Almost all children now have physical access to school, but socio-economic factors and cultural inertia ensure that very many children of rural and labouring parents reject the use of the available facilities. The children from middle and upper class homes, whose parents had been educated in English at public school-type schools, are the ones who have benefitted greatly from the expanded educational provisions. These are the children who fill the universities and make India's the biggest university population of the whole world (p. 14). Women, rural children, and children of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are important among the large group which has very little more mobility today than they had 40 years ago.

American readers will recognize a similar situation in the U.S. where special provisions for black students have been seized by those from already successful, well-off homes, while the poorest children are left in their poverty.

Many of the essays make it clear that the English-speaking, educated elite, who shaped the new constitution, planned the patterns of industry, the economic structure, and the system of education, were wildly optimistic in the time-scale they envisaged for the development of a revitalized, secular democracy. A very great deal has been achieved in industry, manufacturing, technology, research, and training, but in many important areas much less has been accomplished than was hoped and than is urgently needed. The special case of the position of women in the new democracy has a prominent position in the topics presented in these essays. Many people outside India noting, not only a woman head of state, but also such public figures as Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a cabinet minister, Mrs. Vijayalakshimi Pandit, President of the United Nations General Assembly, and Dr. Sushila Nayar, a Health Minister, formed the opinion that Indian women had been dramatically liberated from seclusion and powerlessness into the limelight of high public, even international, office. Unfortunately this was not true. The number of distinguished, influential women was a very small part of a huge population. Their backgrounds were exceptionally privileged; they were educated in English, usually in England or in the U.S.; they had little

in common with the vast majority of Indian women and had only limited contact with them. It is pointed out by Vina Mazumdar (p. 198) that although the Government has removed virtually all restraints impeding the entry of women to higher education and to employment in the professions, the civil service, management and so on, and even though the ratio of women to men in higher education is higher than in many developed countries, nevertheless the over all proportion of illiterate women in the population has hardly changed in forty years. About three-quarters of all Indian women are still illiterate. Further, and quite disturbing, those areas of India with the most liberal provision of educational facilities have the highest proportion of illiterate women to illiterate men. The opposite is also true in those areas judged to be more educationally backward.

It is argued that better designed schemes of educational provisions might attract more women and reduce female illiteracy. This could accelerate the effect which newspapers and other non-formal educational media have on personal development. A higher female rate of literacy is thought to be associated with a lowering of the birth rate through knowledge of contraception and planned parenthood. Similar problems arise over the resistance of the armies of working children to education. By joining the labour force at a very early age and doing low level jobs, these children turn their backs on formal education which they think irrelevant to their needs and a poor return for their investments in time and effort. Further, they and their families are so poor that they cannot afford to give up their employment in order to go to school. At present, this impasse seems insurmountable. Mahatma Gandhi's schemes of basic education do not seem to have much support; among the many possible arrangements discussed, that of setting up day-care centres near schools seems promising. Mothers and older children could then attend school while sharing the care of younger children.

The problems of learning and instruction in particular languages is very real. There is no longer strong nationalistic pressure to teach, learn, and work in a vernacular language, but the present system creates and maintains a great cultural chasm between the English-speaking elite who hold the high status jobs and the much larger group of poorly paid workers in menial work who speak one of the large number of regional languages. The hope that the traditional elite would be gradually replaced by well educated indigenous vernacular speakers has not been realized. Economic reality has increasingly made English the language of business, of the professions, and of research publications. A target of 100 percent literacy in one language has been set for 1990. But in the light of the problems associated with the production of teaching materials in English, Hindi, and even the most used regional languages, and of the fact that in developed countries, with only one language, perhaps one in six adults is functionally

illiterate, this would seem unrealistic. Frequent references to the use of remedial education may also be indicative of unwarranted optimism.

A striking feature of this collection of essays is their frankness over the problems, failures, and shortcomings of India's educational endeavours. In fact there seems an almost masochistic need to downplay achievements and emphasize deficiencies. The purpose of this may well have been to find a way of identifying and defining problems and then of formulating possible solutions. This is specially true with reference to the universities. These are exposed as being of poor quality with little evidence of scholarly publishable work, with widespread dishonesty by staff and students. References are made to plagiarism, to spurious data and inappropriate methods of research, to falsified mark-sheets, and fraudulent entry qualifications. The prodigious rate of expansion in higher education has outrun the available resources in high quality man-power and materials.

Among the many questions posed by these essays, the most immediate and probably the most important is: "What will happen as a result of the discussions, opinions, and hypotheses formulated here?" The stated purpose of the original conference was the very modest one of rekindling interest in the study of India among academics in the social sciences; but one would hope for much more. Academics in developed countries like Canada can do little except discuss and perhaps, from greater or less ignorance of the lives of Indians, offer tentative solutions to some of the problems outlined here. What is necessary is that ideas should be propagated in India where they may have an impact on those who have the knowledge and the power to change the social structure, including the educational system.

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Russell L. Hanson.
THE DEMOCRATIC IMAGINATION IN AMERICA.
Princeton: Princeton University press; 1985.
312 pp. $45.00 US, hard cover/$9.95 US, paper.

The author is critical of progressive and revisionist historians. To him both of these schools are essentially antihistorical and transhistorical. The basic weakness of these approaches is that they assume American democracy to be a developmental process, advancing in a positive direction under a pre-designed, utopian manifesto. Its designer is a mythological hero, or some trans-terrestrial divinity who sowed democratic seeds that would bring forth in time the American democracy in full bloom. The final product is seen as a result of progressive stages that follow a "preordained" format.