

dimension of Canadian education and on how the differences in the regional economies affect schooling. These directions need to be explored for all levels.

The books edited by Wotherspoon and Livingstone are excellent, up-to-date collections of work in the Canadian political economy of education. They are not just treatments of Canadian education by political economy, but reflect developments of a distinctively Canadian political economy. They would be appropriate for a senior undergraduate class in the sociology of education, and they should be necessary reading for students of education.

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**Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code & Lindsay Dorney.**  
**CHANGING PATTERNS: WOMEN IN CANADA.**  
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988.  
345 pp. \$16.95 (paper).

**Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin & Margaret McPhail.**  
**FEMINIST ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE:**  
**THE CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN CANADA.**  
Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988.  
332 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

**Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson & Naomi Black.**  
**CANADIAN WOMEN: A HISTORY.**  
Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1988.  
496 pp. \$22.95 (paper).

Popular opinion about the current status of women in Canada ranges from the view that "Nothing has changed" to the notion that the battles for equality have been essentially won and we are now living in the "post-feminist era." The truth may lie anywhere along this continuum. As we approach the last decade of the 20th century, we may scrutinize the opportunities given women, the respect accorded them, their constitutional rights, and their educational advances but still find these indices of social justice wanting. Or we may rejoice that, unlike our grandmothers, Canadian women are legally "persons," we constitute more than half the undergraduate population at Canadian universities, we may have access to all kinds of jobs and professions, and we can lay claim to "equal pay for work of equal value." On the one hand, we could say that discrimination has not disappeared, rather it has become more difficult to deal with because it is

now more subtle; or we could, on the other hand, maintain that many positive changes have taken place and women are considerably better off than they were at the beginning of the century.

Whichever way we evaluate the current status of women, one thing we cannot deny is that there is an increasing body of scholarship in this area. The hundreds of volumes on display at the third **International Women's Book Fair** held in the summer of 1988 provided evidence of this that was almost literally overwhelming. The three books under review here, all published in Toronto in that year, are but a small sample of the significant work that is being done in Canada to record, analyze, and interpret women's role in society.

*Changing Patterns* is a collection of eleven essays. Despite the fact that these are written by eleven different women and that the idea of "pattern" does not infuse each chapter, the book forms a coherent whole. It begins with Lorraine Code on "Feminist Theory," a brief introduction to formalized concepts about women – from Aristotle, through 19th century liberalism, to the contemporary feminist movement. Most attention is given to the latter. Different categories of feminist theory such as "Liberal Feminism," "Marxist and Socialist Feminism," and "Radical Feminism" are identified, and particular ideological stances such as those relating to feminism in France are outlined. Code's chapter is the kind of overview that undergraduates appreciate because it "gives them a handle" on an increasingly diffuse and complex field. It also provides a firm base for the specialized chapters that follow.

"Pioneers and Suffragists" by Jane Errington and "The Canadian Women's Movement" by Naomi Black together give a succinct account of the people and events that have shaped the women's movements of the last two centuries. Like Code's theoretical chapter, these two run the risk of superficiality, but all three offset this danger by providing useful, up-to-date reading lists that flesh out the material and indicate the enormous range of research that has been done on women. The remaining chapters deal with specialized topics of contemporary interest such as the changing family, immigrant women, women and literature, public policy, medicine, psychology, and reproductive technology.

Altogether, this is a work that should prove to be a text for many an introductory course in Women's Studies. Its basic thrust is intended to show that the status of women has been radically altered in a positive direction. It may not be entirely convincing but it does set forth basic information and ideas clearly, leaving the way open for more advanced and probing studies.

*Feminist Organizing for Change* is not likely to be as popular with undergraduates as *Changing Patterns*. Its unwieldy title is a reflection of its

awkward internal structure. It represents an experiment in style that does not quite succeed. In a very honest effort to deal with the complexity of the contemporary feminist movement and to acknowledge their own places in it, the authors openly enunciate their biases. Like other feminist writers, they reject the possibility of pure objectivity in the social sciences and forthrightly identify themselves as "socialist feminists." They also acknowledge the individual viewpoints that, consciously or unconsciously, are reflections of the experience of the three persons who wrote the book. From time to time, the authors step forward, out of the text as it were, and speak in their own voices. This technique, too, becomes tedious.

Nevertheless, this is a dynamic book. It gives a feeling of the struggle women have in making sense of the movement, of making choices, questing for truth, seeking identity both individually and corporately. In their account of the history of the women's movements (the first and second waves) in Canada, authors Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail are not only aiming to record and understand change, they want to make change. They are indisputably involved. Their attempt to engage the readers, too, may not always work but it was an effort well worth the making. Their bibliography, appendices of unpublished documents, and lists of women's organizations make the book a helpful reference source for still further study. It is a pity that the potentially helpful chronology seems to be too quixotically chosen to live up to its promise.

*Canadian Women: A History* is the most substantial and satisfying of the three books under review here. Like the others, it is multi-authored and, like them, it covers a vast range of material and ideas. It records the lives of Canadian women from pre-European days to the present; it sympathizes with their hardships; it admires the ingenuity and fortitude of individuals; it analyzes the goals and methods of groups; it takes account of general social conditions and prevailing ideologies; and it examines the controversies among women, showing that the "Canadian Women's Movement" is by no means a monolithic entity. This work is enriched by anecdote and detail, by carefully selected quotations, by photographs, and by excellent statistical tables and graphs. It is likely to become a standard work, not just because of the prestige of its authors, but by the quality of its scholarship.

All three works considered here contribute constructively to the understanding of Canadian society. All three should be read by the academy and the population at large. It will be a great waste if they only stay within the reach of students of the women's movement. They can all help us to determine the nature and degree of real change in the lives and the potential of Canadian women.

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