

Brodrribb, Somer and O'Brien, Mary, "Women and Education I and II," Theme issues of *Resources for Feminist Research/ Documentation sur las recherche feministe*. Vol. XII, No. 3 (November/novembre 1983) and Vol. XIII, No. 1 (March/mars 1984).

Since the early 1970's, a small group of feminist scholars housed primarily at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has continued to produce one of the most singularly useful tools for research on women and gender roles available. Published originally under the title *Canadian Newsletter of Research on Women/Bulletin d'information canadien* and now as *Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la recherche feministe*, this interdisciplinary periodical contains abstracts of Canadian and international publications, bibliographies, information about research in progress, innovative women's studies course outlines, and comprehensive guides to periodicals and other relevant resources. Of the four issues published annually, two focus on selected themes, the most recent being education. Indeed, the editors note that the response to the subject of women and education was so strong that they decided to devote two consecutive theme issues to the subject. As a result, scholars interested in women and education now have a rich and valuable resource.

The issue entitled "Women and Education I" will be of interest to teachers at all levels for it contains information on resources that are available for use in classrooms and material on curriculum and course development across Canada. Also included is an update on the 1978 compilation of courses and programs in Women's Studies available at community colleges and universities.

One of the more fascinating aspects of this issue can be found in the section on curriculum development in secondary schools for the editors have chosen to reproduce the replies they received from ministries of education across the country to a request for information on Women's Studies in the high schools. The replies tell a rather sorry tale not only about the state of Women's Studies in secondary schools but about the level of understanding and consciousness of provincial and territorial employees responsible for curriculum development. It is likely that a survey of teacher federations and associations would have elicited more useful information about what is really going on in schools and what teacher-produced learning materials are available. Indeed, the failure to include information on the work of Status of Women Committees of the various teacher groups leaves a significant gap in the "Women and Education I" issue.

The second issue, "Women and Education II," includes material on non-traditional education and on international and francophone education. The link between school and work is also given attention through summaries of research in Canada and Scandinavia. While the books reviewed in the first issue tended to be about the history of girls and women in education or about specific curriculum issues, the books reviewed in "Education II" emphasize contemporary sociological analyses of gender and education.

Each of the two issues contains a review essay. For "Women and Education I", Mary O'Brien contributed a stimulating and useful article entitled "Feminism and Education: A Critical Review Essay." This essay looks at education as a political process, provides succinct summaries of the educational perspectives of conservatism, liberalism and socialism, and concludes with an examination of why "the education of women is likely to remain a contentious, creative, confusing and vital issue for feminism" (p. 12). In "Women and Education II", Ruth Roach Pierson writes about "Historical Moments in the Development of a Feminist Perspective on Education." This essay selects three specific periods in English intellectual history and examines feminist positions on education through the writings of Astell, Wollstonecraft and Woolf. This essay provides an excellent summary of the educational perspectives of three particular, though significant, women and, like O'Brien's essay, will prove to be a useful addition to classroom reading lists at the post-secondary level.

Many sections of both "Women and Education I and II" depend heavily on the solicited contributions from individuals and institutions around the world but especially from Canada. This has inevitably created some gaps in the information provided. For example, the summary of courses and programs in Women's Studies available at Canadian post-secondary institutions is incomplete through no fault of the editorial staff. In matters Canadian, however, it is my perception that *RFR/DRF* continues to be somewhat overly focussed on central Canada. Hence, several pages of "Women and Education I" are devoted to a listing of materials available in the Women's Educational Resource Centre at OISE in Toronto which is all very well if one lives in Toronto or is able to readily visit that city. But what about others who might like to access the material? Is the material available for circulation through the mail? Through inter-library loans? And what about information on other similar centres across the country? Is this a case where people have been asked for input and have failed to provide it or is this a

case of regional bias? Having said that, let me hasten to add that the staff of *RFR/DRF* works long and hard and that they produce one excellent issue after another on a very limited budget. I am simply making a plea for more recognition of feminist work across the country.

The only really disappointing omission in "Women and Education I and II" is the failure to include a review article on feminist pedagogy and andragogy. O'Brien introduced some important questions about feminist educational practice and these might well have been taken up in another article reviewing several recently published books including *Learning Our Way: Essays in Feminist Education* edited by Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollack and *Learning Liberation: Women's Response to Men's Education* by Jane L. Thompson.

Taken together the two issues of *RFR/DRF* on women and education provide much needed information on sources and resources that are available as well as information on published and ongoing research. Anyone doing teaching, course and/or program development or research, particularly in (but not only in) the area of feminist education should have these two issues. Single copies of each issue can be purchased for \$6.00. Five sets or more may be purchased for the special package price of \$10.00 per set. Orders should be sent to: *RFR/DRF*, c/o Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1V6.

Rebecca Coulter
Athabasca University

Goodlad, John I., *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future*. Scarborough, Ont.: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1984, 396 pp. \$25.95 (hardbound), \$13.95 (paper).

In his book, *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad once again takes us behind the classroom door in order to enable us to better understand what goes on there and to consider what reforms are both possible and good there. This book is based partly on the conclusions reached in Goodlad's recent, massive research project, *A Study of Schooling*. This study was carried on over several years and during which time researchers, under Goodlad's direction, travelled to most regions in the United States in order to visit 1,016 classrooms, 1,350 teachers, 8,624 parents, and 17,163 students. This book is also grounded in Goodlad's long experience as a researcher in and thoughtful theorist about American curriculum and schooling practices. In an important way, this book represents the thinking of John Goodlad as much as it does the information collected during his *Study of Schooling*. Perhaps, put smartly, this book is Goodlad's act of synthesis.

A Place Called School is more properly considered as two books, rather than as one. On the one hand, it consists of descriptions of what is the case generally about American schooling. On the other, it is composed of prescriptions for what can be and should be the case with schooling. So, *A Place Called School* is as much about what actually is, as it is about what is possible for American schooling.

Regarding the first and empirical dimension of the book, the salient question to ask clearly is the seemingly benign one. What is it that we know now about schooling that we did not know before? Simply, a lot. Some of the empirical claims that Goodlad presents, particularly in chapters four through seven, enable us to travel far beyond the conventional wisdom of and current research claims about the practices of schooling. The data, as Goodlad points out, once mustered around their research questions, provide for the formulation of thick and rich descriptions of the way things are. At times even Goodlad confesses astonishment over the research conclusions, conclusions which certainly underscore the sensible notion that we do not know all that we need to know about schooling in order to bring about proper reforms.

The empirical claims in *A Place Called School* are presented for at least two reasons. The first is obvious: to illuminate some poorly understood schooling practices and to reveal some of their deeper structures. The second, while less obvious, is probably more important. Goodlad claims that if Americans are to be able to reform their schools, they first must understand intimately the schools they have. Too often, school people have attempted to improve schooling practices without having proper understanding of what it is they are attempting to improve. Such efforts typically result in failure. Goodlad's point is a simple and cogent one. Reform necessarily begins from what actually is the case in and with schooling. But, what actually is the case is not properly understood. *A Study of Schooling*, while demonstrating this point, does make a contribution to this sorrowfully needed under-