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BOOK REVIEWS

The RoutledgeFalmer reader in history of education

Gary McCulloch (Ed.), 2005

London, RoutledgeFalmer

£75 (hbk), £22.99 (pbk), viii + 256 pp.

ISBN 0-4153-4569-3 (hbk), 0-4153-4570-7 (pbk)

A short review cannot do justice to the rich variety contained within the leaves of this reader. In one essay on ‘home’, ‘race’ and the making of national identity, four texts spanning the whole of the twentieth century, personal testaments to the everyday life of school, are taken as a starting point for reflection on the discourse of education and schooling; such themes pervade the formal and informal curriculum of school and everyday life, encountered, recollected and recorded in autobiography, rediscovered by historians in documentary and pictorial evidence. The contemporary import of this historical study is its concern with the role that education plays in the making of national identity; where New Labour’s ‘stake-holding society’ has aimed to generate a sense of belonging to a homogeneous national project through combined reform of the constitution, economy and welfare state, this analysis of history evokes the need to imagine new ways of being British, acknowledging the nation as plural, fragmented and differentiated, avoiding nostalgic evocation of a simplistic and homogenized past.

Elsewhere, in another essay on the transition of schoolgirls to the world of work, ‘the city’ is invoked as an educative and semiotic space in which that rite of passage was experienced by middle class adolescent girls of the later 1950s. Fictional representations in girls’ career novels are juxtaposed with the memories of women interviewed about their experiences of leaving home and moving to large cities, following their girlhood in suburban schools; fictional accounts made great play of the physical move away from home, but for all the freedom and glamour that the city promised, these interviewees were still aware of the ties that bound them to their families and existing moral standards. Intelligent historical studies of this kind enhance our critical awareness of the social and cultural factors that determine the complex transition from school to work in the present time.

The selection of essays included in this reader, and their arrangement, may serve to challenge some long-held assumptions about the priorities of education history. The collection begins, unusually and refreshingly, by considering higher education. Customarily a terrain for specialists, universities being until recent decades the preserve of a tiny elite, most education historians have focused their attention on popular education for the masses especially as it became universal and compulsory, and part of the state apparatus. Yet there are good historical grounds for the precedence given to higher education insofar as, institutionally, universities have a longer continuous history than schools. And here it is indeed a *longue durée* in Lawrence Stone’s overview of

Oxbridge and Edinburgh from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Significantly, too, this section is followed immediately by a treatment of ‘informal agencies’ of education, by convention an afterthought to the study of formal schooling, but recognized here for its centrality, the education received within the family and society; and again the antiquity of this mode of learning is acknowledged through a study of literacy in the Renaissance, from the pen of Harvey Graff.

Of course the provision of universal state schooling must predominate, by reason of its scale and impact, but here the chosen examples reflect important analytical studies, of relationships between the family and the patriarchal state (Pavla Miller and Ian Davey), of the role in state formation of scientific and technical education (Andy Green), and of the political role of women in the local government of education (Jane Martin). Moreover, as mass schooling is addressed, successive sections tackle some ‘big questions’ historically, such as the extent to which education has effected social change (Brian Simon, Roy Lowe), its relationship to the economy and the world of work (Alison Wolf, John Springhall), and its contribution to the forging of national identities (Ian Grosvenor). And the essential processes of schooling are represented in a selection of studies that explore the curriculum (Tony Mangan, Tom O’Donoghue), pupils and teachers (Michael Coleman, Phil Gardner).

At the same time, this collection combines classic and recent literature, as well as reflecting the international scope of historical research on education. Stone, Graff and Simon, with writings here from the mid 1980s, represent an earlier generation of scholars whose contribution to education history has been long established, whilst Dyhouse, Gardner, Green, Grosvenor and Martin typify a younger generation of researchers whose prolific output continues to extend boundaries and present new ways of seeing the past. Data deriving from Ireland, Italy, India and Australia, remind us that historically education has been a universal phenomenon.

A fitting climax to the collection is that by Grosvenor who confidently asserts that ‘history as a subject has the potential to illuminate the human condition both in the past and the present. Historians can aid understanding of the present complexities of life and consequently can influence the framing of the future’ (p. 276). The volume as a whole is testament to continuing vibrancy and relevance of education history as its boundaries have been dissolved especially with social and cultural history, to pursue the phenomenon and the experience of education within families, communities and polities. The intrinsic interest and wide range of these essays bode well for the continuing health of research in the field, and hopefully too for its teaching at undergraduate and master’s levels. Gary McCulloch is to be congratulated on compiling such a useful and attractive resource for learning and teaching education history.

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Educational policy and social reproduction: class inscription and symbolic control

John Fitz, Brian Davies and John Evans, 2005

London, Routledge

£22.99 (pbk), 166 pp.

ISBN 0-4152-4005-0

This volume explores the way that education policies in the UK have evolved over the last 60 years and the impact that this has had on the educational opportunities of students—and subsequently, their life expectations and experiences. In doing so, the authors draw upon the theories developed by Basil Bernstein on the realization of power and control in and through pedagogic discourse and social reproduction—the view that by managing the educational opportunities and the nature of that experience, it is possible to demonstrate how learner identities are formed and how this is traced to a close link with social class.

The authors develop a powerful case. They propose that by controlling the educational experiences of young people, policy-makers and politicians are well placed to dictate the learner identities of generations of people—and that inevitably, this is closely entwined with social class.

Developments from selection embedded within the 1944 *Education Act*, to a comprehensive education system in the late 1960s, together with the more recent shift of emphasis towards a ‘market’ orientated, skills-based education system boosted by the 1988 legislation are critically examined. The influence of greater centralized control on the education system and teacher education is traced throughout this chronological journey and the dynamics analysed from a sociological perspective that the authors openly expound from the outset.

The authors do not pretend to offer a comprehensive analysis and declare the necessity to be selective in the policy issues they identify. Within a volume of this nature and of this size, it would have been futile to attempt a more expansive approach. By dint of their selective skill, they have succeeded in producing a book of considerable value to students at various stages of their university careers.

Since the volume is designed to be accessible to undergraduate and postgraduate students of education and education policy alike, care has been taken to start the volume with a chapter which introduces the reader to the discipline of education policy and the key concepts underpinning Bernstein’s views on pedagogical discourse and its influence on power and control. This logically leads to a close consideration of the way in which education can be viewed as a force for change in class divided societies. This message is at the heart of the book and the authors reflect on the unfortunate inability (or inertia) of policy-makers in addressing the influence of social class—and the part played by gender and ethnicity within—on educational success and failure.

Following the introductory chapter on policy and understanding pedagogic discourse, the volume then focuses its attention on selected themes. It is structured in a way that addresses the consequences of key landmarks in the post-Second World War education system in the UK, focusing on the 1944 *Education Act* with the introduction of the

tripartite system of selection and the subsequent development of comprehensive education, before exploring the policy implications following the *Education Reform Act* of 1988. In doing this, the authors examine the impact of reduced selection on social mobility and compare it to the outcomes of the more selective regime of the tripartite system in a search for an answer to the larger question regarding the role (if any) that school regimes have in combating inequality and promoting social justice.

The authors observe that despite the introduction of systems that appear to offer greater opportunity to all young people to aspire to the upper reaches of occupational structures, it continues to be those from 'families already socially located at this level' that generally succeed. Changing educational structures seems to have little impact on the relationship between social origin, educational attainment and employment prospects.

The dramatic shift in power and control represented by the post 1988 movement, incorporating the market-driven education system that significantly enhanced centralization and substantially greater government intervention, is also explored—as are the consequences of a series of major national initiatives. These are all considered within the context of choice on diversity and ultimately, social reproduction.

Helpfully, the volume also contains an extensive collection of additional sources and texts that serious students of the subject can access to enhance their knowledge. In addition to its scholarly management of complex issues, the authors have orchestrated the entire volume in a way that is likely to keep the interest of readers throughout. This is a book that I will certainly be recommending to my students at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels.

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Teachers leading change: doing research for school improvement

Judy Durrant and Gary Holden, 2005

London, Sage

£60 (hbk), £19.99 (pbk), 208 pp.

ISBN 1-4129-0066-2 (hbk), 1-4129-0067-0 (pbk)

This is an accessible, practical and authoritative book for teachers and for the extended community of professionals involved in supporting school-based, teacher-focused school improvement. The authors argue that by harnessing and energizing the internal motivation and commitment of teachers, change is more likely to be relevant, effective and sustainable over time. Furthermore, positioning teachers at the heart of the change

process is perceived as central to the development of vibrant learning communities. This book not only offers a clear theoretical and professional rationale for the development of teachers as change leaders but also provides some valuable case material to ensure that theory is inextricably linked with the realities of teachers' lives. It is apparent that the authors have a wealth of experience in schools and they draw on this extensively throughout to help readers understand how to adapt and implement theoretical concepts to suit a range of situations and school contexts. Certainly, most teachers reading this are likely to feel valued, respected and empowered as professionals and this is to be welcomed.

The early chapters review the literature on school improvement and school culture to develop a coherent and convincing argument for teachers' leadership of learning as the driver for school change. The key emphasis is on developing teachers' capacity for and confidence in school-based enquiry to develop both the internal conditions for change and the social infrastructure necessary for sustainable professional learning communities.

Over half the book (chapter 4) is devoted to issues, influences and strategies involved in undertaking school-based enquiry. Subsections explore aspects of teacher research from both professional and practical perspectives and offer the reader a range of school-based examples to deepen understanding of research issues and of the processes involved in conducting different types of enquiry, such as the case study and critical incident analysis.

A range of frameworks and probing exercises permeate the main body of the text and encourage reflection on personal, interpersonal and institutional issues. These opportunities are designed to fine-tune awareness and support individuals and staff teams to manage the transition from passive reader to active leader of learning. Similarly, a number of web-based staff development materials are offered to facilitate engagement with the key concepts and themes in the book. Overall, these resources are well conceived and, in keeping with the generosity of spirit that characterizes the book, readers are invited to customize the materials to suit their particular context and needs.

A refreshing feature of this book is its attention to the personal and interpersonal dimensions of school change processes. The authors advocate learning through and not just from enquiry so that readers are encouraged to self-consciously manage the research process to ensure this is an inclusive and shared endeavour and therefore is more likely to make a positive contribution to collegiality and school culture. Leadership is premised not just on enquiry but also on the capacity to develop robust relationships based on trust. There is some recognition of the emotional dimensions involved in managing and supporting change in self and others but the focus is primarily on the positive dimensions of influencing and relating. For many teachers, however, managing negativity and resistance in self and colleagues can be the most sensitive and challenging aspect of teacher leadership and requires high levels of self-awareness and human relations skills. This aspect of the book is somewhat disappointing and fails to offer the exemplars and attention to detail evident elsewhere. Teacher leaders need, and often feel they need as much help and support with people management as they do with management of the enquiry process. This is one area in which they may be left with more questions than answers.

The strength of this book however, is its capacity to bridge theory and practice, to establish a convincing rationale for teacher enquiry as leadership and to identify and illustrate practical, workable ways to develop and support teacher leadership in schools.

This is an energizing and stimulating account, which will hopefully engage and inspire a new generation of teacher leaders

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Transforming schools: illusion or reality?

Bernard Barker, 2005

Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham Books

£16.99 (pbk), 192 pp.

ISBN 1-8585-6364-X (pbk)

Transforming schools: illusion or reality? is a readable and informative case study of successive heads struggling to transform a comprehensive school in special measures. Its author, Bernard Barker, himself a successful head and consultant, describes it as ‘a detailed record of actions and events’, but as the author acknowledges, it is not without its methodological challenges: no students or parents were interviewed and half the participants had dropped out by the end of the research period. Although it is not clear the extent to which the author ‘participated’ in the school’s recovery, and it has the feel of a doctoral thesis, it is essentially a book by a head teacher for head teachers, and a good read at that.

Chapter 2 is a review of school improvement and effectiveness literature, which is disappointing in one respect: that the US study by Ron Edmonds (1979) is not mentioned alongside Michael Rutter’s (1979) *Fifteen thousand hours* as the seminal study in the genre.¹ Edmonds’s (1979) work was undertaken independently of Rutter’s, but both examined whether schools showed an impact when account was taken of differences in student populations. According to Peter Mortimore (2001), who was part of Rutter’s research team, neither Edmonds nor Rutter knew of each other’s work, but their findings were similar: schools make a small but significant difference to their students.

Chapters 3 through 6 form a more or less continuous (and interesting) narrative, centring on the change processes in the school and how they fit within the theoretical constructs described in chapter 2. The relevance and usefulness of Government leadership models is fairly handled. Transformational leadership is identified as very ‘New Labour’, usurping the chief executive model promulgated by preceding Conservative Governments. In that sense, Barker identifies the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) as part of the transformationalist paradigm, and he does not shirk from inferring some criticism. It would be unreasonable to expect a book such as this to tackle the issue of NCSL efficacy to any greater extent, but the NCSL view that

transformational leadership is largely non-problematic—and more fundamentally, that good leadership can transform bad schools—needs to be challenged more widely by researchers and theorists. While it is true that good leaders and good schools are found together in the same place, it is a long way from being able to claim that good leadership is the conditional element in the proposition. Cause and effect is far from proven.

The author does well to juxtapose the school improvement and school effectiveness paradigms—they are potentially critiques of each other, as Brian Fidler (2001) and others have said—but he does not do as well in relation to the rationale for school inspection, beyond criticizing Ofsted for distorting the matrix in which schools operate through ‘fear of failure and the threat of punishment’. There is an argument to be had as to whether (and how) school inspection is entitled to differ from inspection in other areas of public life, and how inspection impacts on our conceptualization of professionalism, but it doesn’t happen in this book, which I feel is a missed opportunity given how well Barker writes. It is an argument about the growing culture of compliance and de-professionalization in the public sector, and it should lie at the heart of any discourse on Government policy since 1997. The final two chapters come close to having that argument, drawing conclusions as they do from the case study, but conclusions are difficult to draw from what is essentially a single narrative. Barker might be offering a summary of the entire corpus of school improvement research when he says of his own case study:

A nagging doubt remains ... [The] main quantitative indicators failed to show a progressive trend at any stage during the school’s recovery. There is at least a suspicion that the transformation may have been an illusion, produced in the artificial environment of special measures and resting on a flattering contrast with the long-term decline experienced [by the previous head]. (p. 133).

To say that theory is the distillation of experience is to understate the effort required to coalesce the multifarious efforts of practitioners into something identifiable and cumulative for future generations, and if the school improvement movement has come up short in any respect, it is in its flight from theory.² Year after year, books are published which purport to cull insights from practitioners, mediated by involved and committed academics. Noble though these endeavours are, they accelerate a rush to action that has characterized both research and Government policy in recent years and has left schools increasingly uncertain as to what exactly is known and how it can be brought together in a comprehensive way. This book is at least an attempt in the right direction and Barker should be congratulated on his effort at taxonomizing his experiences. It is a book for practitioners with an eye to the bigger picture; a good book, worth its place on the reading list for masters students, though perhaps better appreciated when read alongside more generalist critical work.

Notes

1. Actually, the provenance of school effectiveness research can be traced to Coleman (1966) and Jencks (1972), who famously concluded that differences in attainment would be affected by less than 1% if all American high schools were equally effective (Mortimore, 2001).
2. School effectiveness and school improvement research differ subtly in respect of this, their relationship with theory. School effectiveness is essentially experimentalist and testing of theory; school improvement is about coalescing what is known and is developing of theory.

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Schooling as violence: how schools harm pupils and societies

Clive Harber, 2004

London, RoutledgeFalmer

£78 (hbk), £22.99 (pbk), 168 pp.

ISBN 0-4153-4433-6 (hbk), 0-4153-4434-4 (pbk)

This is a shocking book. It is important that books like this get published. It is more important that they get read. Harber relentlessly describes the extent to which schooling in societies throughout the world underpins violence and is itself a violent institution. There are of course some books and articles that explore such themes but, as Harber points out, not many. Attention is rather on issues of pupil-to-pupil violence, bullying, rather than the role of schooling itself as a place where violence is structured for social, political functions. Harber takes a global view: what is the role of schooling in the violence throughout the world? It is frightening reading. The chapters explore its authoritarian underpinnings, that school can be a force for violence, that it is an agency of control, surveillance. Harber goes on to explore its role in terrorism throughout the world, in learning to hate the other. He discusses schooling as sexual abuse, its role in making people ill and in learning how to kill. The discussions are supported with a considerable range of reports and research literatures. He is concerned to show the role of schooling in violence as a world-wide phenomenon with research drawn from every continent.

It ends, of course, as it has to, with a chapter on ‘education for democracy and peace’. After the catalogue of terrifying facts, this necessary chapter seems a little weak. Harber

points out that since schooling is a social construction it can therefore be changed. No small task, that. As I pointed out in my own book many years ago (Schostak, 1986), violence is fundamental to contemporary societies. As also pointed out, there is a useful distinction to make between schooling as a moulding and fashioning of minds and behaviour and education which can be used as the term through which challenges to the prevailing orders are ‘drawn out’ (educated, in one of its older meanings). This is where the politics comes in, a radical democracy in Laclau and Mouffe’s terms (cf. Mouffe, 2005; Laclau, 2005). Education and radical democracy are in my view indispensable to each other. It is here that the issues raised so forcefully by Harber can be drawn out, discussed, and politically engaged with in ways that promote peaceful, constructive, creative actions.

Harber clearly describes the global extent of the tragedy—perhaps betrayal is the correct word here—of young people by ‘educationists’ engaged in their ordinary everyday acts of schooling or training teachers to school their children ever more efficiently to meet various officially prescribed and socially demanded targets. It is a betrayal too by researchers, eyes fixed firmly on the glittering grants and RAE promotional rewards, to have neglected the research and development appropriate to challenging the conditions of contemporary schooling in order to transform it creatively and democratically so that children experience democracy as a reality in their early lives rather than authoritarian practices and the development of what I called the violent imagination.

Harber’s book reminds us of what is at stake. Consider for a moment how many schools might pass the ‘democracy test’, if there were such a thing. Harber writes:

Power and authority over what is learned, when, where and how is not with the learners and, in many cases, not even with the teachers. This is despite article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which says that children have the right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child. Modern mass schooling systems are not on the whole contributing to the development of more democratic and peaceful individuals and societies and indeed were not primarily designed to do so in the first place. (p. 138)

I hope this book is read and its message taken to heart by researchers, teachers, teacher trainers, parents and policy-makers. I hope it makes a difference.

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A larger sense of purpose: higher education and society

Harold T. Shapiro, 2005

Woodstock, Princeton University Press

\$24.95 (hbk), 174 pp.

ISBN 0-6911-2363-2

This book is a gem. It is essential reading for anyone who believes in the idea of a university as a place holding the key to liberal democracy and better futures. Yet it is sometimes an uncomfortable read, not just for those who share such a view, but for those who don't. Those who believe the relationship between higher education and society extends no further than a simple faith in bending the mission of universities into simple suppliers of products and services will be particularly disappointed.

In four accessible, but provocative essays, Shapiro takes the reader on a breathless trek through the values, purposes, anxieties, compromises, opportunities, contradictions and ethical responsibilities that mark the public purpose of the university. The primary focus is the American research university and, perhaps fittingly for someone who chaired, at President Clinton's invitation, the National Bioethics Advisory Commission between 1996 and 2001, there is a particular focus on the ethical and public policy issues raised by biomedical research. But such is the narrative sweep and clarity of argument that wider questions about researching the scientific frontier are always involved.

The first essay signals intent. Universities help to invent the future. Leaders must maintain the capacity to do this by ensuring the university remains a 'truly liberal and liberated institution' (p. 11). It must sustain society's most important values, be sufficiently adaptable to fill new and modified roles, shape new cultural commitments and expand others. The role of the university as an independent source of knowledge and thoughtful critic is an essential characteristic of a healthy system. But the author fears independence is threatened by the general retreat from the commons of the mind, especially by the rise of the biomedical enterprise. New knowledge creation is a collective social enterprise and 'we should use caution in assigning personal property rights in this area' (p. 23). Universities must not avoid their connectedness with changing social needs—only through dialogue and with sensitivity towards social responsibilities can the intellectual independence of the university be maintained. Change and evolution, along with anxiety and uneasiness, are constant companions on the journey—get used to it, celebrate it.

Shapiro's second essay reminds us that any set of institutional arrangements has a complex set of historical roots. The focus is the transformation of the antebellum college. Here perhaps the narrative is a little more familiar, since to an extent it treads some of the territory already covered by Rothblatt, Trow and others, particular on the origins of American exceptionalism. Still, there is a timely reminder of just how far universities have come, in both America and Europe. From places that were marginal to intellectual developments, even regarded by intellectuals with complete disdain, the emergence of the modern research university, large and secular, devoted to scholarship and science, linked symbiotically to economic leadership and liberal democracy, is well-traced. This transformation was all the more remarkable in the American context since it

occurred in the absence of a unifying intellectual language or well-articulated vision for the emerging structure. Instead the language and culture of business held sway, obscuring the special communal features of university life. Shapiro argues that America continues to struggle with this reality, something transatlantic borrowers of policy and practice might do well to reflect upon.

The next essay forms the intellectual heart of the book. Shapiro's purpose is:

... to remove some of the accumulated debris that has distorted our common memory and thus has hampered our clear perception of the evolving nature and role of a liberal education and its relationship to professional education, moral education, and liberal democracy, and our understanding of who has the ongoing responsibility to protect the soul of the university. (p. 88)

It is an ambitious agenda, but one that is generally achieved. The author unpacks the slippery concept of liberal education, but then helpfully reassembles it with a conviction that those in universities must embrace the question of what sort of society they wish to sustain. He reminds us that liberal democracies retain the somewhat novel idea that the state itself should support institutions (like universities) that prevent state monopoly over power and truth becoming too extreme. There is no escape from the 'reality' that we share a moral universe with those who exercise leadership and power and the university therefore needs to directly address its role in the moral development of its students. Shapiro recognizes the pain of such argument in some quarters, but does at least have the courage to suggest ways in which this might be done.

The final essay extends this analysis to the ethical dimensions of scientific progress. Again the university is no innocent bystander but deeply implicated. The strength of this essay however is the demonstration of the timeless quality of the dramas and dilemmas that accompany 'new technologies and their impact on the human condition'—the 'tension between *what is* (which seems "natural") and *what we are about to create* (which seems "unnatural," optional, or artificial)' (p. 120). Sophocles, Tolstoy, Goethe, Pope, the Old Testament and a host of others in various ways commend essentially the same story. Weaving together the perspectives of the scientist and non-scientist, the artist and policy-maker, Shapiro traces the evolving role of the university as the primary vehicle of publicly sponsored research, of science policies and the science agenda itself. His central argument is that scientists and non-scientists are part of a common moral community bound by a shared vision of the 'kind of society we would like to become' (p. 123). Of course, some are appalled by the triumph of science over nature (or God). But the challenge is how to adapt our current narratives regarding the meaning of human existence in the light of new scientific knowledge.

What impresses most in this book is the willingness to confront the sometimes awkward ethical questions and moral challenges raised by the university's role across the scientific frontier. Arguably, not since Sir Walter Moberly's (evangelical Christianity) inspired analysis of *The crisis in the university* (1949) has morality or ethics figured so prominently in (post) modern critique of the contemporary state of higher education. Whilst we may not agree with everything the author proposes and some no doubt will feel 'uneasy' with the concept that the university has any moral or political responsibilities at all, few will surely quibble with the questions raised in this thought provoking analysis.

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A feminist critique of education: 15 years of gender education

Christine Skelton and Becky Francis (Eds), 2005

London, RoutledgeFalmer

£85 (hbk), 336 pp.

ISBN 0-4153-6391-8 (hbk)

I was delighted when I was approached to review this book. Having spent seven years or more in Sweden, and just returned to Scotland, it was exactly what I needed: a retrospective review that would swiftly bring me up to date. However, I was somewhat disappointed when the book arrived, and it became clear to me that these were not new articles but a re-publication of '21 seminal articles from the journal *Gender and Education*' and part of the Routledge/Falmer Education Heritage series which packages, in book form, selections of classic journal articles. Structured and edited by leading scholars in the field, with Christine Skelton and Becky Francis as editors in this case, the argument is that such volumes provide in one, easy-to-access place, an authoritative reference book containing a collection of articles that have led the field. 'It should find a place in every library and every departmental bookshelf', so the blurb tells us. In hardback, and priced at £85, I reflected on who were actually most likely to be the main beneficiaries of this venture; students, libraries, contributors, or publisher.

Putting my prejudices to one side, I began to peruse the book, and though familiar with many of the articles through my longstanding subscription to the journal, the collection of articles began to make sense, mainly as a means by which feminist debates and theoretical insights concerning education could be introduced to a new generation of educational research scholars. Helpfully, the editors highlight changes and emphases in the field over the last decade and a half, in particular in relation to gender identities, theory and method, and more recently, educational policy and management. They also note the relative over-representation of contributions from the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, which are seen, questionably in my view, to be more generally relevant than articles from researchers in developing countries who have a tendency to write 'case studies exploring specific issues in particular countries' (p. 2). Evident also is the lack of contributions from old and new Europe, perhaps also because they are seen to be limited in some way or another. The methodology for deciding on which articles should be included, which was consultation with former and present *Gender and Education* Board members, merely continues, it seems, to perpetuate the hierarchical

structures of this field—despite the stated feminist nature of the enterprise. Or perhaps, and this is a complaint I heard many times from Swedish colleagues, the book reflects a self-absorption of researchers from Britain (mainly England) and ex-Commonwealth countries with specific forms of ‘Britishness’ and its derivatives, and specific forms of policy-making and governance, who are therefore unable to embrace other ways of doing things.

The book is divided into seven sections: ‘Gender identities’ contains five articles, authored respectively by Sheila Riddell, Amanda Coffey and Sandra Acker, Jane Kenway and Lindsay Fitzclarence, Diane Reay and Shereen Benjamin; ‘Theoretical debate’ has two contributions, by Alison Jones and Bronwyn Davies; and ‘Educational policy and management’ comprises five essays, by Sue Lees and Maria Scott, Nelly Stromqvist, Johanna Wyn, Sandra Acker (again) and Elisabeth Richards, Amy Stambach, and Bronwyn Davies (again). The section on ‘History’ has two articles, by Jane Martin and June Purvis, while that on ‘Sexuality’ is allocated three, by Gillian Squirrell, June Larkin, and Debbie Epstein; ‘Ethnicity’ has two, by Fauzia Ahmad, and Louise Archer and Hiromi Yamashita, as has the final section on ‘Social class’, by Diane Reay (again) and Helen Lucey, June Melody and Valerie Walkerdine. Rather than publish two articles by the same author, however important, room might, perhaps, have been made for newer, more diverse and heteroglossic voices.

There are some new (to me at least) and promising girls on the block, however, including Shereen Benjamin, who focuses on the much neglected area of gender and special needs to show how femininities are employed by secondary school girls ‘to attract and retain adult and peer help’ as well as perpetuating ‘vulnerability and neediness’ (p. 81); and Fauzia Ahmad, who argues that despite popular misconception, Muslim female students maximize their social and personal advantages by playing ‘an active role the construction and reconstruction of their social and personal identities, within and despite patriarchal structures in both public and private domains’ (p. 282).

Overall, then, this is both a useful collection of articles by well-established and reputed authors, though writing from a somewhat limited perspective, and an opportunity lost for the creation of a more inclusive field of gender education studies.

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