

Selman, G. (1991). *Citizenship and the adult education movement in Canada*. (Monographs on Comparative and Area Studies in Adult Education). Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 168 pp., \$18.00 (softcover).

Selman's text is a useful description of a liberal democratic tradition in Canadian adult education written by a liberal democratic professor and practitioner who has been based at the University of British Columbia for almost 40 years. As a historian of adult education, his has been a lonely voice on a barren subject in Canada. His efforts must be applauded. Selman acknowledges all the usual players in the liberal democratic tradition: institutions like Frontier College, St. Francis Xavier Extension, and the Centre for Community Studies at the University of Saskatchewan; organizations like the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), Women's Institutes, and the National Film Board; and individuals like Corbett, Kidd, Thomas, Coady, and Hoodless. He introduces these players as part of the citizenship education he sees as the central concept in Canadian adult education. This description of liberal adult education offers nothing new. The extensive bibliography lists the substantial literature we already have. The main contribution is bringing this all together in one volume.

Selman commences his story about citizenship in Canada by virtually excluding one-third of the country. He explains in the introduction:

The author regrets that very little information appears in this study concerning developments in the Province of Quebec. The tendency towards "two solitudes" which exists in Canadian society as a whole is reflected in the field of adult education. This is perhaps reinforced in this particular field by the constitutional provision which assigns education to provincial jurisdictions. The account which follows makes a few references to programs in Quebec, but in the main deals with English-speaking Canada. (p. 6)

This limitation is much broader than first appears. It seems he equates Quebec with French-speaking Canada, thereby excluding thousands of French-speaking Canadians living outside the province. In addition, he seems to be excluding English-speaking Quebecers. These exclusions, in a series on comparative studies in adult education, are curious. His sense of "who represents what" is fuzzy when he refers to Saskatchewan-born former Governor-General Jeanne Sauve as a Quebecer (p. 57). How are these labels determined?

Selman's words seem to be confining the adult education movement to formal education which is a provincial responsibility. This limits his story by ignoring where most adult learning takes place — that is, outside the formal education system in the home, community, temple, service clubs, the army, and so on. It is unclear who an adult educator is in this book. He claims that a CAAE stand on an issue was "not one which appeals to the vast majority of adult educators" (p.

65), but offers no indication of who that vast majority were. Are the parent, community leader, priest, friend, librarian, and social worker excluded? According to whose criteria? An academic's? Myles Horton and Paul Friere might not have excluded those groups.

Selman is clear that he is writing about a liberal democratic tradition. He does acknowledge a social change element but seems to be uncomfortable with it. Chapter 6 is entitled "Education for Social Change." I question what Selman means by social change. He does not explain. He notes that the National Film Board's Challenge for Change program turned out to be a "powerful instrument in the social change progress" (p. 131). What is that process? I am not convinced that education for social change equals citizenship education. Does social change education mean social improvement within the existing state structure? Perhaps some adult educators think so. Others may not — for example, those in the Participatory Research Group based in Toronto and reflective of many in the International Council for Adult Education, the Transformative Research Network, and the International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education.

I would say that Selman is careful to avoid elements of Canadian life and of Canadian citizenship that are painful to admit. How have adult educators dealt with racism, sexism, poverty, and other Canadian realities? He notes Canadian immigration policies that clearly were racist (p. 24) but does not tell us how adult educators have handled this historically. Do we simply ignore them? Do we even admit our biases? Do we ever ask critical questions of ourselves? Can we afford not to?

Selman believes that adult educators should be neutral about sociopolitical issues. How can we be so and face our inadequacies honestly? In his words: "Education is not always conceived of as value neutral" (p. 17). Does this mean that it is usually so perceived? By whom? In whose interests? When the rest of the world is alive with self-criticism and a new enthusiasm for democracy, how do we Canadians justify neutrality? Is neutrality not simply support for the status quo? Who benefits?

Clearly this book is useful if it encourages questions. My main disappointment lies in Selman's disinterest in the future. As a student of history, I am aware of E.H. Carr's advice that history should be a dialogue between the future and the past. Only on the second last page do we see some concern with the future. Selman writes:

The world has changes. With the increased prominence of the New Social Movements and their readiness to engage in strongly confrontational tactics in their advocacy efforts . . . the "atmosphere" or context of the discussion of many public issues has profoundly changed in Canadian society. It would be a brave — perhaps foolhardy — adult educator indeed who would put on a program for the general public about policy on abortion, Native land claims or

certain ecological questions. The institution would run the risk of the program itself being disrupted, and in all likelihood would not be willing to risk alienating, inadvertently or otherwise, a significant section of the public. It is simply safer not to take the risks at all. In this way, the world has become a more dangerous place in which to program about controversial issues. The climate which has been created by the new style of social movements and their tactics has had the effect of circumscribing even those adult educators who might otherwise be willing to organize active programs in the field of education about public affairs. (p. 145)

Is this adult education for the millennium? Where is our courage? Have we had any in the past? This is unclear after reading this book.

We need a vision of a better life if we are to capture the past that does exist in the movement. We may have to take risks in order to find out. Many adult educators have done so in past. Many do so at present.

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Selman, G. and Dampier, P. (1991). *The foundations of adult education in Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 310 pp., \$24.95 (softcover).

Canadian adult educators have long needed a road-map through the many and varied blocks that form the foundations of our field of study, our field of practice, and our movement. We need encouragement to sort through adult education in its formal, non-formal, and informal sense. It would be helpful to know if our foundations were indigenous or imported, or both. Indeed, it would be good to know just who Canadian adult educators are.

Selman and Dampier introduce some foundation blocks and should be congratulated on attempting an enormous task. However, they fall short of providing a statement about *the* foundations of adult education in Canada. This book is a collection of essays about some foundations of formal adult education in Anglophone Canada seen from the west coast. As such, it is a contribution to the adult education literature.

While introducing the contents of their book, Selman and Dampier make a significant apology. Because neither is fluent in French, they found it necessary to exclude adult education in French speaking regions of the country, thereby excluding at least one-third of Canada from their story. At the same time, they introduce Mark Selman as a special contributor to the chapter on functions and