

Book Reviews

Martin, J.R. (1994). *Changing the educational landscape: Philosophy, women, and curriculum*. New York: Routledge, 252 pp. (Softcover).

Jane Roland Martin's latest book is the story of an intellectual journey in which she seeks her true voice. She tells her story through a collection of papers she has written over the past 25 years. As one reads the papers, one feels Martin's increasing confidence in and commitment to the importance of what she has to say. Although everything in the book is thoughtful and interesting, in her most recent papers she is speaking with a strength and conviction that are truly impressive.

The book includes her 13 papers done from 1969 to 1994 plus a long introduction, entitled *One Woman's Odyssey*, that outlines the way in which her thinking has changed. The papers are in two sections, the first (six papers) dealing with women in education and the second (seven papers) focused primarily on curriculum issues. Only two of the papers – both in the curriculum section – predate 1980, the year in which, the author tells us in the Introduction, her life changed.

There is indeed a striking change in Martin's voice as the essays develop. Martin began her academic career as an analytical philosopher of education, working well within the conventional boundaries of the field – more concerned, as she tells us, with clarity of definition than with any of the real problems of educational practice. The early essays have that detached tone and that concern with nuances of meaning that is typical of so much analytical philosophy. Arguments are framed carefully, at considerable length, but with no hint of emotion or feeling about them. This was, Martin says, the training she received and the tradition in which she initially worked.

In retrospect she is highly critical of an activity that saw distance from practice as more important than addressing the pressing issues of the day. It was her work on the place of women in education, which really began with a sabbatical in 1980, that brought her back to a focus on educational practice. Her work was always unapologetically from a philosophical perspective.

In each later essay Martin delves more deeply into the importance of gender in thinking about education. She becomes increasingly involved with

feminist analysis and at the same time increasingly concerned about educational practice. In the most recent essays in the book her voice has changed completely. A commitment to detachment is gone, replaced by a deep caring about what her work says and what its import might be. She strives to take her own advice, to create forms of learning that can embody caring, concern, and connection as well as intellect and objectivity. The early essays are interesting to read, but the later ones engage our hearts as well as our minds – surely Martin's goal.

Martin's critique of education is a powerful one. She doesn't simply comment on the absence of women in writing about education, but points out forcefully that education is a double bind for women. By this she means that traditional liberal education is held up as the ideal of a civilized person yet women who become educated in this sense are looked down upon by men as unfeminine and at the same time estranged from much of their sense of themselves. She notes that a liberal education that focuses only on the intellect and on what she calls the productive aspects of society ignores both the importance of feelings and the necessity of education for reproductive aspects of society – the home, the family, children. She makes a compelling case that an education which is inadequate for women is an education which is inadequate for everyone, and that our common conception of liberal education fails on both counts.

There are two ways, however, in which Martin's work remains incomplete. First, she has not yet dealt adequately with issues of power. To some extent, of course, power is a central concern in all feminist work in that the situation of women is one embodying unequal power relationships. But only in the very last essay in the book does Martin directly address the willingness (or lack of it) of those with power to share it more equally. She appears to be rather pessimistic on this score, which surely suggests important implications for those interested in her agenda. If women lack power, how are the changes she wants to be brought about? Second, Martin has not yet carried her critique to the next phase, which is formulating a program for schooling that would unite "thought and action, self and other, reason and emotion" (p. 211). How is this to be done? How is the concept of "Schoolhome," developed in her 1992 book, to be realized? Martin's discussion remains abstract. Although the later essays do include some real examples and stories, they remain largely abstract discussions of concepts. Teachers, administrators, and policy-makers who are attracted to Martin's vision of education – as I am – will find much in this volume to help them understand what is wrong with schools, but little that will help them to improve schools.

Perhaps this is too much to expect of one person. Perhaps others will have to take up the challenge of creating, in schools, the kind of education Martin so eloquently espouses. My doctoral advisor, the late Thomas B. Greenfield, was often criticized because his trenchant attacks on standard social science were not accompanied by work of his own that illustrated the alternative perspective he was advocating. But Greenfield's work did lead many others to try to undertake what he had proposed, and he played an important part in creating permanent changes in the study of educational administration. Jane Roland Martin's work deserves to be read widely and her ideas need to be put into practice in many places. If many are encouraged by these essays to try to remake schools, Martin's objective will have been met and, more importantly, all of us will be better off.

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Berthelot, J. (1994). *Une école de son temps: Un horizon démocratique pour l'école et le collège*. Montréal: Centrale d'enseignement du Québec et Les Éditions Saint-Martin de Montréal, 288 pp. (Softcover).

Le livre de Berthelot fait état d'une recherche, demandée par la Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec, visant à alimenter la réflexion sur une redéfinition de la mission de l'école. Un premier constat dégagé par l'auteur est que "*L'école québécoise est en crise et se trouve à un carrefour.*" Cependant, selon Berthelot, la nature ou les causes de cette crise ainsi que la question de la mission de l'école ou des réformes qui s'imposent, sont loin de faire consensus. En effet, on retrouve, selon lui, deux forces sociales qui s'opposent en permanence. L'approche technocratique et le modèle néo-libéral axé sur la concurrence et le "chacun pour soi" qui s'oppose au modèle social-démocrate qui poursuit les idéaux démocratiques en se préoccupant de la réussite pour tous et de l'autonomie.

C'est à partir d'une étude des événements qui se sont succédés dans le système d'éducation au Québec, que l'auteur met en évidence les moments de