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**The History of Women's Education:
Assessment and New Perspectives for the Future**

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Within the framework of this conference, I would like to reflect with you on how the history of women's education has been integrated into the principal surveys of Canadian history that have been published over the past two decades. In my view, this integration – which, at present, is far from being achieved – would be a major contribution to what could be referred to as “mainstream history.” At the same time, this integration would confer recognition upon women's education, a new field in the historiographical landscape. Such recognition would amount, in a way, to the kind of legitimacy that Thomas Kuhn associates with “normal science.”

It should be stressed, however, that the issue of integration as discussed here concerns as much the history of women's education as it concerns the history of education as a whole – a field whose status remains problematic within surveys of general history. Nonetheless, I will throw light essentially on women because, first, I am more familiar with their educational trajectory – which has long constituted the primary focus of my research investigations – and second, because the relatively young age of this field as well as its dynamism make it particularly interesting. Indeed, the history of women's education gave rise to some important empirical research, in Quebec as much as in the rest of Canada. Also, many of these projects are in keeping with a broad perspective, both theoretically and methodologically, because they are linked to a global reflection on women's history, and integrate, as a result, the fundamental debates that have permeated this field for the past three decades.

But do not worry; I will not be using the time that has been allocated to me to praise the historiography of women's education by presenting it, too simplistically, as a success story. If this were

the case (since “happy people don't make the news”¹), the history of women's education would be at risk of sinking into a lethal nirvana – which would certainly not solve the problem of its integration! In fact, my objective, as explained earlier, is rather to analyze the primary challenges that this new research area faces as it becomes integrated into surveys specializing in the history of education, and above all into large-scale surveys of general history.

But what does such an integration imply, in effect? If one were to consider the question from a strictly quantitative perspective, one would simply focus on the space accorded to women's education when comparing surveys with one another. The amount of text then becomes the bottom line, as a function of the author's interest in the topic. More interesting, however, would be to examine the nature of this discussion. Is women's education understood as an appendix, a mere addendum to the global fabric of history? This would amount, in the end, to putting the history of women's education aside, and even to isolating it. It should be clear, by now, that a genuine integration requires much more than that. In particular, it demands that the author of the survey places women's education within the broader web of social relationships related to the historical framework under study – be these social relationships political, ideological, or economic. An integration process thus entails a multifaceted analysis which takes into account the different societal dimensions and social groups involved. It becomes clear, then, that the way to achieve this integration is necessarily bound to follow the path of contextualization – a path certainly full of promises, but which also constitutes a real challenge, as I shall later discuss.

When applied to women's education, contextual analysis allows us to identify webs of multiple causality, and, as a result, to flag the power relationships which have, in the past, generally informed the fields and levels of knowledge conceded to women. Now as we know, such power relationships are not readily identifiable when the historical analysis is conducted through a narrow field of vision. Also, contextualization facilitates comparative analysis – a form of analysis central to the kind of problematics currently informing numerous researches in women's history.

1 Translation of a common French saying that goes as follow: “Les gens heureux n'ont pas d'histoires.”

However, one cannot overlook the fact that contextualization generates two contradictory effects. On the one hand, it delineates the contours of a circular halo in the middle of which the subject under study benefits from additional light. On the other hand, it also constitutes a sort of detour which disrupts the (hypothetical) straight line that would lead directly to the anticipated research results. In this respect, it can even be considered as an all-too-real factor of added time-consumption, which thus slows down the research process. And, as we all know, in the world of research, time constitutes a scarce resource, and academic institutions demand that we “waste” as little of it as possible to be able to publish our results without delay. Therefore, time invested in contextual analysis will continue to remain both a necessity and a considerable challenge. Yet, as we are all aware, this approach nonetheless remains a precious tool from a methodological point of view.

I had the opportunity to verify for myself both of these observations during each of my research projects. I am not referring here to my research because I consider it to be exemplary, but rather because its genesis, progression, and difficulties, in particular, are most familiar to me. For the sake of illustrating my argument, I will limit myself to my research on the training offered to women in two professions, dietetics and physiotherapy, in Quebec and Ontario between 1930 and 1980. This research was conducted jointly with Aline Charles, Johanne Daigle, Johanne Collin, Ruby Heap, and Lucie Piché, over a period spanning more than five years. In order to understand the complex dynamics underlying the changes these professions' curricula frequently underwent, we had out of necessity to extend our gaze to the global context of the health system. It was only then that we were able to realize the extent to which the changes occurring in the realm of knowledge were dependent upon power relationships – either subtle or obvious – between 1) the paramedical professions under study, 2) the physicians as members of an older and more powerful profession, 3) and finally, the state as a health administrator. Had we not taken this necessary step, we never would have been able to grasp the extent to which these power relationships can affect even the very content of the professionalized knowledge made available to women.

However, this contextualization process, which is indispensable for analytical purposes, consumed almost one-third of the time allocated to our research. Nonetheless, I keep thinking that contextualization remains a key component of the

incorporation of the history of education – and of women's education in particular – into broad surveys of general history. Now, in my view, the authors of such surveys, who are not necessarily specialists in the history of education, are less inclined to indulge in the long and demanding work of contextualization that would be required were a genuine integration of education-related questions into broader historical narratives to be performed. Could we wager, then, as historians of educations, that by taking upon ourselves such a work, we could, in a way, facilitate the incorporation of educational issues into large-scale surveys of general history? I will return to this matter after having reviewed some of these surveys.

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Now that I have explained to you the objectives of this presentation, and specified the broad outlines of my problematic, I wish to map out the general structure of my argument. In the first part, I plan on reviewing briefly the literature in order to examine the importance and the status accorded to women's education in selected surveys of the history of education, for both Quebec and Canada. In the second part, I will conduct the same analysis, but apply it this time to selected surveys of general history, for both the French-speaking and the English-speaking worlds. I will examine in turn the importance given to the history of education in these surveys, and particularly the history of women's education, with a view to determining the extent to which these two areas have been actually incorporated into the books under scrutiny. At the same time, this will enable me to examine the status accorded to women's history within these surveys.

I only selected books released, for the most part, between 1980 and 2000, and analyzed them by chronological order of publication. This has enabled me to observe, over an adequate time-frame, the evolution of historiographical tendencies. I must specify that, given the limited scope of this presentation, I have decided to select, out of all the numerous historical surveys available on the market, only those which seem to be the most frequently used in academia.

Because of the necessarily incomplete nature of my sample, my conclusions will take the form of observations rather than actual demonstrations. I accept beforehand the limitations that this will induce. In my opinion, however, such limitations do not affect, for all intents and purposes, the validity of these

observations, nor do they cancel out certain problems highlighted in the process.

Finally, I shall conclude by offering some explanatory hypotheses derived from my own historiographical observations. I will also reflect on some possible solutions meant to offer new perspectives for the future.

1. The importance given to the history of women's education in selected surveys of Canadian and Quebec history of education

1.1 The surveys of the history of education published in Quebec

As a preliminary step, I wanted to see whether women's education was given more attention in the main surveys of the history of education, than in the surveys of general history – at least from 1980 onwards. Given the limited time frame allocated to me, I will not review all the books that I have examined. I will rather select, for illustrative purposes, some examples that I have placed into either one of the three following categories: 1) the category in which the history of women's education is simply out of the picture, 2) the category in which this history is covered, but with no serious attempts at achieving its integration, 3) and, finally, the category in which the history of women's education is very well connected to the broader socio-educational frame under study.

In Quebec, it seems that large-scale surveys, such as those historical epics after the manner of Louis-Philippe Audet in *L'histoire de l'enseignement au Québec, 1608-1970*, 2 vol., 1971, have been relinquished for the past two decades. There is, however, a piece of work that is somewhat comparable to L.-P. Audet's book in terms of its structure and chronology: *L'école sous la mitre*, éditions Paulines, 1980, by Bernard Lefebvre. This survey, which focuses on the work accomplished by the "Comité catholique du Conseil de l'instruction publique" between 1859 and 1964, covers a rather wide time-frame. It takes the form of a neutral and highly descriptive narration, but is unfortunately devoid of analytical perspective. It can nonetheless be credited for providing a considerable amount of pertinent information on a wide array of topics, including, in particular, women's education. Acting as a pioneer in the field, the author grappled with a series of data pertaining especially to schools of household science and female teacher training schools. He also made the effort to

frequently compare boys' and girls' respective curricula and educational options. Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, such highly relevant information is subjected to neither analytical scrutiny nor, correlatively, to critical reflection. Furthermore, the information is sometimes partial and, as a result, often leads to conclusions which are known today to be erroneous.

It should be mentioned, however, that B. Lefebvre published his book in 1980, that is, before systematic researches on the history of women's education in Quebec were undertaken. In some respects, he has thus conducted pioneering work.

The second survey under scrutiny is *L'entreprise éducative au Québec, 1840-1900*, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000, by Jean-Pierre Charland. This survey constitutes an illustration of successful contextualization and of successful integration of women's education into the general fabric of the history of education. This approach is omnipresent in every theme discussed throughout the book. The information pertaining to girls – and to boys as well, for that matter – is not only much better documented than in Lefebvre's book, but is also organized in a more systematic and coherent manner. But most importantly, it opens the way to a meaningful comparative analysis that leads to more novel conclusions. Such conclusions both enrich and nuance – and sometimes rectify – the ones previously reached by mainstream historiography with respect to gender differences in status within the school environment.

It should be noted, however, that when he conducted his survey – published 20 years after that of Lefebvre – J.-P. Charland had at his disposal a much wider pool of research and publications in the area of women's education. In my view, it is nevertheless the case that it is first and foremost Charland's problematic that allowed him to get the most out of the literature.

1.2 Surveys of the history of education published in Canada

On the English-Canadian side, I have also identified two very different categories of surveys. The first one has something in common with the approach adopted by L.-P. Audet. I am referring to surveys where the feminine gender is meant to be subsumed under the masculine gender, which results, of course, in rendering the history of women's education completely invisible. As a matter of fact, this is often the case with surveys focusing first and foremost on the political dimension of education, as in Ronald

Manzer's *Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective: Public Schools and Political Ideas*, University of Toronto, 1994, or in Robert M. Stamp's *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976*, University of Toronto, 1982. This latter survey provides an elaborate analysis of educational structures, curricula, and school pedagogy. However, it almost completely overlooks the gender category.

In contrast to this model, there are surveys which could be referred to as exemplary as far as the integration of women's education is concerned. The two following surveys could be placed into this category: *Matters of Mind: The Universities of Ontario, 1791-1951*, University of Toronto, 1994, by A.B. McKillop, and *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914*, University of Toronto Press, 1999, 2nd edition, by Paul D. Axelrod. Both of these authors have very well incorporated into their work the data and analytical perspectives provided by the increasing body of research in the history of women's education in Quebec and Canada. In these authors' books, such information, far from assuming the form of a mere appendix, is rather perfectly incorporated into their carefully performed reconstruction of the broader educational context. Furthermore, as in the case of J.-P. Charland's book, this information is always contrasted with the situation of boys for each conjuncture and chronological period under study.

In doing so, Axelrod and McKillop demonstrate that integrating women's education into large-scale surveys of the history of education constitutes a highly beneficial process from a historiographical point of view, for it confers upon such surveys greater credibility and analytical depth.

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One conclusion that has emerged from my analysis of these surveys of educational history is that there is a tremendous difference between authors who purposely decided to ignore the gender category in their work, and those who have integrated it, even making the effort to integrate it thoroughly, as in the cases of Charland, McKillop, and Axelrod. The latter group has not only adopted a new and original problematic, but has also made the decision to read the literature in the history of women's education, and to keep up with new publications, which have mushroomed over the past two decades. What is also manifest is that their

efforts lead invariably to more significant historical surveys, compared with those of their predecessors.

2. The importance given to the history of women's education in selected surveys of general Canadian and Quebec history

2.1. The surveys of general history published in Québec

The first survey I have selected is the one by P.-A. Linteau, R. Durocher and J.-C. Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporain. De la Confédération à la Crise*, Boréal, 1979, vol.1, 660 pages. In this survey, the history of education gets a very modest share of attention, since, out of 660 pages, only 25 concern education. The topics dealt with relate, for the most part, to the evolution of educational structures, public school funding, curricula, and the size of student bodies and teaching staffs. Such information – which, on the whole, is already scarce in the first place – covers so many different topics that it ends up providing for each of them an overview which is inevitably very brief. Nonetheless, out of the five surveys I have examined, this one places the greatest emphasis on the history of education.

The situation is even more deplorable as far as the history of women's education is concerned. Thus, all of the information concerning women is limited to fragments scattered here and there within a global overview of education, which is itself very short. Overall, the information pertaining to women does not add up to more than one page and a half! The authors can hardly be said to have overdone things in this respect. And of course, within such a limited space, one cannot expect to find even the ghost of a contextualized piece of information.

However, to be fair to the authors of this survey, two points should be kept in mind. First, in 1979, very few studies were concerned with the history of women's education. Also, publications in this field were for the most part limited to a handful of master's dissertations and articles, which, besides, were fairly outdated. The second redeeming factor for the authors is that the little information they offer about the history of women's education is, at least, frequently contrasted with the situation of men for the same period. For instance, we gain valuable comparative perspectives regarding the salaries and the size of the female teaching staff.

Finally, I have observed that *Histoire du Québec contemporain* constitutes the first survey of Quebec history to make room for the history of women's education, a field which, back then, was at an early stage of its development. However, the amount of space given to this topic was very modest and, unfortunately, did not increase seven years later in the second volume, as we shall later see. But the fact remains that, in 1979, it was unprecedented to incorporate into a survey of general history – catering to both the general public and academics – data drawn from research on the history of women's education and pertaining to women's relationship to labour, family, and political power. It actually constituted a historiographical first – even though the whole thing took up as little as 14 pages in total (in a book of 660 pages!).

The second volume of this survey, entitled *Le Québec depuis 1930*, Boréal, 1986, 730 pages, and written by the same authors – with the addition of François Ricard – provides interesting opportunities to examine whether the authors' treatment of the questions raised here had changed at all seven years later. One could have expected, in particular, to see the status of the history of women's education improved. Well, this was hardly the case.

But first, following my initial plan, I shall examine how well the history of education as a whole fares in this second volume in terms of its share of pages. It appears that, seven years later, this share had not increased in sheer numbers; it still stretched over 24 pages. But in terms of percentage, this share turned out to have decreased since we are now dealing with a book that has 100 more pages than its predecessor. Time has thus played against the history of education.

As for the history of women's education, it seems to be on its way to disappearing almost completely from this second volume since the information relating to it amounts to a little less than one page, as opposed to twice as much in 1979. In this respect, the scarcity of information can be said to have reached unprecedented levels. Furthermore, because of the restricted space accorded to women's education, the information relating to this topic is all the more laconic and partial and, above all, is even less contextualized and subjected to serious analysis. For example, regarding high school's accessibility to girls, readers are being told, with no consideration whatsoever for explanations, that "The choices offered to young girls, beyond elementary school, are strongly conditioned by the ideology defining women as the 'queen of the household,' and the person in charge of caring for the family." We

also learn that “girls were [rather] encouraged to register at regional schools of household science, which expanded rapidly under the leadership of Father Albert Tessier, from 1937 onwards...” Then, the paragraph ends on a note meant to be reassuring, by specifying that “a minority of young girls, however, could attend private boarding school, teacher training school, or the ‘cours classique’” (pages 93-94). Explained this way, these three tracks seem to be on equal terms whereas, as we all know, that was hardly the case, each one differing in terms of tuition and accessibility. Also, such succinct information leaves the reader unaware that the limitations on girls' educational options were due to a multiplicity of factors, some of them being just as important, if not more so, as the ideological factor stressed by the authors. Think of the economic factors (low family income and the obligation to earn a living early in life, positions non-accessible to women on the labour market, even with a high school degree in hand, etc.) or the political ones, which often took the form of structural discrimination such as the double standards of curricula made “easier” for girls in public high school up until the early 1950s, or the low number of post-secondary institutions catering to the female population. Finally, this survey fails to inform the reader about gender variations in size and status within the student body for each of the various educational tracks under scrutiny – most notably at the university level.

Further on in this survey, in the section dealing with female teachers, the same information shortage and the same lack of contextual and comparative analysis are to be reported. For example, we are told, without any further comments, that “there is a considerable [income] gap between males and females...” But the reader who pays careful attention to the nearby table on the same page will realize that this gap, said to be “considerable,” calls for further elaboration insofar as male teachers earn, on average, 3.5 times as much as their female counterparts. This anomalous gap certainly deserved additional explanations.

Yet, as far back as the early eighties, several researchers had already started to do pioneering work in the field of the history of education. Their research had already given rise to a few master's dissertations and academic papers and, most importantly, to a certain number of well-documented books, published five years prior to the second volume of *Histoire du Québec contemporain*. Thus, in 1982, Nicole Thivierge published an important book on schools of household science: *Écoles ménagères et instituts familiaux. Un modèle féminin traditionnel*, IQRC, 475 pages. It

was followed, in 1983, by a book edited by Micheline Dumont and myself: *Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d'école*, published by Boréal, 413 pages. Our publisher was in fact the same one which also published *Histoire du Québec contemporain*. Based on this experience, we can conclude that, as far as the history of women's education is concerned, it would have been more beneficial for us to share with our colleagues and peers the same intellectual objectives, rather than the same publisher. The global picture is thus alarming: at a time where the volume of publications pertaining to women's education was growing remarkably, the attention given to this new field of knowledge was decreasing within a survey which was not only a bestseller, but was also highly popular within academic circles.

However, it should be noted that, if women's education is the poor cousin in this second volume of *Histoire du Québec Contemporain*, the status of women's history had not worsened, although this topic is still given very modest attention: 15 pages in total, as in the first volume, provide information on female labour as well as on women's relationship to the family and the exercising of political power. The greatest shortcoming remains the lack of attention paid to women's education.

The third survey I have analyzed is the one by Jacques Lacoursière: *Histoire populaire du Québec au 20^e siècle, 1896 à 1960*, vol. 4, Septentrion, 1999, 411 pages. In this book, where the political dimension overshadows everything else, the history of education is almost out of the picture. It boils down to a series of information on the political quarrels surrounding the issue of separate schools in Manitoba and Ontario. The whole thing takes up a meagre three pages in total (in a survey of 411 pages!).

As for the history of women's education, the inventory was quickly made, and a conclusion was soon reached: there seems to be room, in this survey, for neither this field of history, nor for women's history as a whole. Yet, the book is presented as a "People's History." Should we assume, then, that, in the author's mind, women are not part of the "people," perhaps falling somewhere above or below this category? As for women's education, it must have been perceived by the author as a matter apparently disconnected from the game of politics. Major league politics, that is: a terrain (or playground?) not only reserved for men, but preferably for important men.

The fourth survey I have examined is more encouraging as far as the history of education is concerned, but still fares poorly with respect to the history of women's education. The book is entitled

Histoire du Canada. Espace et différences, by Jean-François Cardin and Claude Couture, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000 edition, 397 pages. While the history of education gets special treatment in this volume, around 30 pages being devoted to it – a first for this kind of historical survey – women's education is simply ignored. Perhaps the authors took for granted that the feminine gender is subsumed under the masculine one, as in French grammar.

Finally, in the fifth and last survey under examination, namely *Canada, Québec, 1534-2000*, Septentrion, 2001, 591 pages, by Jacques Lacoursière, Jean Provencher, and Denis Vaugeois, the history of education is reduced to a meagre four pages, while the history of girls' and women's education ends up being, once again, completely disregarded. One could have thought that, by the year 2001, things would have finally improved in that regard. This was far from being the case! Some historians were still deeming it legitimate to ignore completely, in their survey, the numerous publications at their disposal at this point in time in the field of education and in the history of women's education.

I shall now examine, in the next section, how the topics discussed above, namely the history of education and the history of girls' and women's education, are treated within six English-language surveys of general history published over the past decade.

2.2 The surveys of general history published in the rest of Canada

The first two surveys under scrutiny are *The Structure of Canadian History since Confederation*, Prentice Hall, 1990, 483 pages, by D.N. Sprague, and *An Introduction to Canadian History*, Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991, 811 pages, edited by A.I. Silver (written by a collective of authors). I have put these two surveys into the same category insofar as they share certain commonalities in terms of how they integrate the themes I am concerned with. I have observed that neither of them provides information on the history of education, nor do they deal with women's history and women's education – although, in Silver's book, there are fragments of ethnographical information on Native women.

The third historical survey I have selected is *The Peoples of Canada: A Post-Confederation History*, Oxford University Press, 1992, 581 pages, by J.M. Bumsted. In this book, the information on the history of education, although condensed and diversified, is rather scarce quantitatively speaking, as it takes up 13 pages in

total. Although the political dimension is the primary concern in this book, social and pedagogical aspects are also taken into account. Education, far from being understood as a parallel universe, is rather integrated into the fabric of general history, each of the issues covered by the author being placed in a much broader context. For instance, connections are made between the development and increasing democratization of the educational system during the post-war period, and concomitant events such as industrial development, the need for skilled labour, and the demographic growth resulting from the baby boom. However, the history of women's education is almost totally out of the picture. The author devotes only half a page to this topic when dealing with higher education; he compares the size of the female and male teaching staffs as well as the average age and years of schooling among each group without, however, commenting on these figures. As far as women's history is concerned, once again, the book does not suffer from an excess of information, the topic being scattered over as few as 11 pages while being very superficially analyzed, unlike the history of education.

The fourth survey to be analyzed is *History of Canadian Peoples: 1867 to the Present*, Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993, 631 pages, by authors Alvin Finkel, Margaret Conrad, and Veronica Strong-Boag. In this imposing volume, in which social issues are given special attention, the portion dedicated to the history of education remains very small. Indeed, this topic is scattered over a meagre total of 10 pages. The primary focus is on the political dimension of education-related questions, more specifically on religious and linguistic conflicts between majority and minority groups in certain provinces. The history of women's education is barely discussed. As for women's history, it takes up a modest portion of this survey, which deals rather succinctly with female labour, the suffragette movement, and women's relationship to the family. This situation is all the more surprising since two out of the three authors are experienced researchers and professors in women's history.

The fifth survey under scrutiny is *A Short History of Canada*, McClelland & Stewart, 1997, 363 pages, by Desmond Morton. Unfortunately, not much needs to be said about this survey, except perhaps that, like some of its counterparts from Quebec, it embodies a traditional approach to history, understood first and foremost as a saga portraying political events, be they of great or little magnitude. In this type of survey, social history is given little attention. As for the history of education and women's history,

they are simply missing, probably being perceived as alien to the political arena and its web of power relationships.

The sixth and last survey to be analyzed is *Destinies*, Harcourt, Canada, 2000, 4th edition, 597 pages, by R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith. While the pages dedicated to the history of education added up to about 15 in the 1992 edition, they were brought down to 12 or so eight years later. As for women's education, which was only granted a single page in the 1992 edition, it is now simply gone. Yet, in this most recent edition, the amount of information relating to women's history is growing somewhat: it is now scattered over 22 pages (as opposed to 18 previously) dealing with women's relationship to labour, the family, and political power. However, women's education remains the poor cousin in this book.

It can be concluded from the analysis of these six surveys that, in three of them, the history of education is given very marginal attention (13 pages, 10 pages, and 12 pages), while remaining practically ignored in three others. As for the history of women's education, it is limited to mere fragments in one survey, while being totally absent in five others. This is certainly depressing news.

However, one cannot ignore the important place held in the English-Canadian academic world by "Readers," which constitute a particular kind of historical survey. For this reason, I have scrutinized four of them, also published over the past decade, so as to analyze them through the same framework as the one applied to the previously examined surveys. The four selected Readers are:

1. R. Douglas Francis and Donald Smith, *Readings in Canadian History Post-Confederation*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 3rd edition, 1990, 4th edition, 1994, and 5th edition, 1998.
2. Ian McKay, *The Challenge of Modernity: A Reader on Post-Confederation Canada*, McGraw-Hill, 1992.
3. J. M. Bumsted, *Interpreting Canada's Past. Vol. Two. Post-Confederation*, Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1993.
4. Chad Gaffield, *Constructing Modern Canada: Readings in Post-Confederation History*, Copp Clark Longman, 1994.

My analysis led to the following conclusions:

1. The history of education as a whole is completely absent from these Readers.

2. The history of women's education is echoed in only two articles, in two different Readers: a) the one edited by R. Douglas and Donald Smith (1990 edition), including a paper by Veronica Strong-Boag, "Growing Up Female" (note that, in the 1994 and 1998 editions, no articles on women's education were to be seen), and b) the one edited by J.M. Bumsted (1993 edition), which includes an article by Alison Prentice and Marta Danylewycz: "Canadian Education before the Great War."

On the whole, not much can be found on the subject in the Readers.

Women's history as a whole is given significant attention in the Readers under scrutiny, clearly more than in the previously analyzed surveys of general history. However, once again, the themes covered in these Readers are, for the most part, the same as those covered in the above examined surveys, namely women's relationship to labour and to the family, and the struggles for women's suffrage.

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One obvious conclusion that emerged, when comparing French and English historical surveys, is that the history of women's education has managed to carve a better niche for itself within the Readers than within surveys of general history, be the latter written in French or English. However, in both linguistic groups, whether French or English, the general history of education is not much evident, and when it is, the focus is predominantly on the political dimension of socio-linguistic conflicts. Finally, the most notable absence in surveys of general history is the history of women's education; and when it is included, its presence is limited to traces which occupy a space varying between half a page and two pages. How can we account for such a mediocre share?

Conclusion

In an attempt to interpret the conclusions that have emerged from this study, I will put forward some explanatory hypotheses, which will also take the form of interrogations. These hypotheses can be summarized as follows:

1. While in several surveys of the history of education, significant efforts have been made to incorporate and contextualize the history

of women's education, that is far from being the case in almost all surveys of general Canadian and Quebec history. Could it be that the history of education is perceived by the majority of our colleagues as a specialty of history, and, as such, as a distinct history? That is, a history too specialized and too distinct to be easily incorporated into the history said to be "general"? Basically, it could be that it is not considered as an integral part of social history. Conversely, for more than two decades, labour, unionism, social movements, and even health – which are automatically included in this new area of historiography called social history – managed to force their way into mainstream political history. As for education, it seems that it can only do the same if its political dimension is emphasized. Indeed, it appears to be the only dimension through which education can secure a certain legitimacy for itself, and thus a place, however minor it may be, within the majority of the surveys of general history. One can thus find in these surveys a succession of great political figures, or school laws related to certain political conflicts, but rarely will one find questions relating to school funding, school attendance, curriculum, or teachers.

2. Also, could it be that there is little inclination to incorporate education into the fabric of general history due to a certain compartmentalization of current academic structures? Indeed, in many universities, the history of education often overlaps two worlds, namely the departments of history, and the faculties of education. In many cases, these two worlds operate through separate research networks and separate channels of diffusion, despite the fact that, for many of us, crossing these boundaries does not pose any problems (as proved by the audience composition of conferences such as this one).

3. As for women's education, it could be undermined by the same problem which has for long affected women's history itself: our colleagues do not integrate it into general historical narratives insofar as they simply do not know – or do not take the trouble to know – how to connect the topics relating to this area to the global historical context in which they are anchored. This is a problem that we, as historians of education, make worse when we happen to neglect ourselves the contextual dimension in our research.

Moreover, it may be this very same challenging contextualization which acts in favour of women's history in the

Readers – a formula that encourages the juxtaposition of different subjects without requiring that they be placed in their respective context.

It should be noted, however, that the hypotheses put forward here will only prove to be heuristic insofar as they are subsequently verified through well-documented empirical studies. Obviously, we are bound to explore many other paths before being able to remedy the current status problem incurred by the history of education – and even more so by the history of women's education – within future historical surveys. We will thus be dealing in the future with historical surveys which ought to be closely monitored.

**Liste des Ouvrages Examinés
List of Books Reviewed**

I. Synthèses d'histoire de l'éducation / Surveys of the history of education

1. Audet, Louis-Philippe. *Histoire de l'enseignement au Québec, 1608-1970*. Holt, Rinehart et Winston, 1971. 2 volumes.
2. Axelrod, Paul D. *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914*. University of Toronto Press, 1999. 2nd edition.
3. Charland, Jean-Pierre. *L'entreprise éducative au Québec. 1840-1900*. Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000.
4. Lefebvre, Bernard. *L'école sous la mitre*. Éditions Paulines, 1980.
5. Manzer, Ronald. *Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective: Public Schools and Political Ideas*. University of Toronto Press, 1994.
6. McKillop, A. Brian. *Matters of Mind: The Universities of Ontario, 1791-1951*. University of Toronto Press, 1994.
7. Stamp, Robert M. *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976*. University of Toronto Press, 1982.

II. Synthèses d'histoire générale / Surveys of general history

1. Bumsted, John Michael. *Interpreting Canada's Past. Vol. Two. Post-Confederation*. Oxford University Press, 1993. 2nd edition.
2. Bumsted, John Michael. *The Peoples of Canada*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
3. Cardin, Jean-François, et Claude Couture. *Histoire du Canada. Espace et différences*. Presses de l'Université Laval, édition 2000.

4. Gaffield, Chad. *Constructing Modern Canada: Readings in Post-Confederation History*. Copp Clark Longman, 1994.
5. Finkel, Alvin, Margaret Conrad, and Veronica Strong-Boag. *History of Canadian Peoples: 1867 to the Present*. Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993.
6. Francis, R. Douglas, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith. *Destinies*. Harcourt, 2000. 4th edition.
7. Francis, R. Douglas, and Donald B. Smith. *Readings in Canadian History Post-Confederation*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 3rd edition, 1990, 4th edition, 1994, and 5th edition, 1998.
8. Linteau, Paul-André, René Durocher, et Jean-Claude Robert. *Histoire du Québec contemporain. Vol. 1. De la Confédération à la Crise*. Boréal, 1979.
9. Linteau, Paul-André, et al. *Histoire du Québec contemporain. Vol. 2. Le Québec depuis 1930*. Boréal, 1986.
10. Lacoursière, Jacques. *Histoire populaire du Québec au 20^e siècle, 1896 à 1960*. Vol. 4. Septentrion, 1999.
11. Lacoursière, Jacques, Jean Provencher, et Denis Vaugeois. *Canada, Québec, 1534-2000*. Septentrion, 2001.
12. McKay, Ian. *The Challenge of Modernity: A Reader on Post-Confederation Canada*. McGraw-Hill, 1992.
13. Morton, Desmond. *A Short History of Canada*. McClelland and Stewart, 1997.
14. Silver, Arthur Isaac, ed. *An Introduction to Canadian History*. Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991.
15. Sprague, Douglas Neil. *Post-Confederation: The Structure of Canadian History since Confederation*. Prentice Hall, 1990.