

## Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streitz

►Counts, George S. *Education and American Civilization*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952. 496 p.

To read this book is to have an experience in seeing order, design and meaning emerge from the confusion of charges, countercharges, warnings, threats and optimistic opinions by which we are constantly confronted. Through his historical description of trends in our society, his interpretation of our national and international predicament in the present and in his forecasts of the future of civilization, Dr. Counts leads us to a certain feeling of security. It is the security one gets when one knows what the dangers are and how the difficulties are to be met and, most important, the alternatives to action and struggle towards the goal. This is a hopeful book because it makes us feel that like the pioneers before us, we can use intelligence, ingenuity and ability to work cooperatively and find our way through the hazards to a new civilization.

### Re-thinking Educational Programs

This is also a brave book. The author does not mince words or pull punches when dealing with our national weaknesses and fainthearted tactics. He admits mistakes in judgments including his own, in understanding the Soviet Union. He demands that we re-think our educational programs in the light of changes in our industrial culture and in world interdependence. He points out that "as long as we practice the doctrine of racial, national or

religious superiority our democracy will be corrupted at the core. . . ." "We must live at a higher plane of understanding and conscience than ever before in our history."

The great need for gathering all our resources to fight against the forces of communist tyranny is stressed again and again. Dr. Counts describes the communist terror as more horrible than the cruelty of the worst of the Tzars. Free men must fight while there is yet time against this force of darkness and evil.

Dr. Counts traces with fascinating clarity and sensitivity the social, spiritual, technological and scientific developments in America. He makes the reader thrill at the accomplishments of a country of "common people" who framed a great charter of political rights, duties, processes and institutions.

### Sources of Values

The description of the sources of our values is one of the most timely parts of the book. Dr. Counts shows how the Hebraic-Christian background has given us faith in the supreme worth and dignity of every human being. He emphasizes this ethic as the only moral foundation for peace through brotherhood of mankind. He also describes the Communist threat to these values.

This section on values also includes chapters on the Humanistic Spirit, the Effect of Science, the Rule of Law, and the Democratic Faith. Each of these might well be the basis of a fine forum. This section should serve as a stimulant for discussion the nation over.

## Building a Better Society

The section on Education for the Emerging Industrial Age is probably the one Dr. Counts most enjoyed writing. For in this section he reiterates, like waves beating the shore, his central theme. We can and must develop democracy into a society far more wonderful than any that mankind has yet known. He describes his conception of education which will build this society. Each individual will be developed to his utmost capacity and will live in a society of equals. He stresses the need for citizens who are aware of dangers which beset our political liberty. Teachers must set examples of active citizens and reveal in their lives their deep devotion to the principle of human liberty. This education must also prepare citizens who can build an economy of security and plenty which will make possible the almost unlimited refinement of our culture. "Made in America" should come to mean something fine, honest and beautiful.

## The Challenge to the American Teacher

The last section is a special challenge to the American teacher to "be sensitive to the profound moral implications of his calling." Dr. Counts realizes that there are forces at work which make it difficult to have great teacher leaders. We need teachers who know children, the history of our people, who are willing, like the teachers of Norway during the German occupation, to face their responsibilities to defend truth and who have a great and noble conception of our civilization.

This book is one which all thoughtful educators must read and then pass on to neighbors and friends. This is one way that those of us who can not write books like this can serve our

schools and country.—*Frances K. Martin*, professor of psychology and education, Central Michigan College of Education, Mt. Pleasant.

►Samachson, Dorothy. *Let's Meet the Ballet*. New York: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1951.

*Let's Meet the Ballet* is written on a first meeting basis; and, like a first meeting, only the obvious and most general impressions are made. The plan of the book is good; it starts with a history of ballet, discusses the parts the choreographer, the composer, the designer and the dancers contribute to a finished ballet. It tells from what sources ballet has gotten dance movement and explains some of the influences which are being made on ballet today.

A few of the better known and more often performed ballets and ballet tech-

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niques are listed, pictured and described briefly. The book concludes with a listing of some familiar ballet music, books written on ballet and famous ballet dancers.

The style of the writing is simple, even childish, as though the audience for which the book was written were very young—inexperienced in reading anything but the simplest sentences, uninterested in more than general, surface knowledge.

An attempt is made to glamorize the ballet by letting the reader see behind the scenes, in order to let him understand that a ballet does not arrive full-blown the night of performance without much hard work from many unseen people—the choreographer, the musician, the designer and the dancers.

We are told that a ballet does not evolve without a great display of artistic temperament—each dancer demanding the privilege of doing “the star

turn” constantly. The result of reading this section is a feeling that backstage is a world made up of rather small people.

### **Ballet—the Dance of the People**

It is a good idea to include in a book on ballet the information that ballet dance has its roots in the dancing of unprofessional dancers—dances of the people. In many instances the steps of the ballet have been dreamed up by untrained dancers and made dreamy by trained dancers and by choreographers whose life work has been to see the beauty in movement of people who just like to dance and to let that beauty emerge, intensified, on the stages of the world; for ballet does have world-wide appeal, perhaps because it came originally from people all over the world. It is good also, to include the information that ballet has been a growing art, changing

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through the centuries, and that changes are continuing in this century, mostly because of the concept of the Modern Dance and the artists in this field who have discovered new ways of moving expressive of this century.

### Interesting Personalities in Ballet

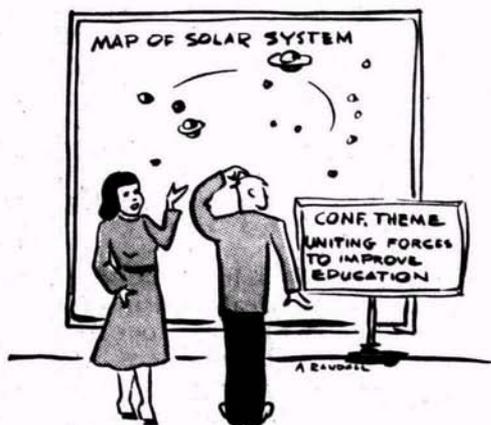
The most interesting parts of this book to me were the interviews with Alexandra Danilova on the Ballet, Yura Lazowsky on Character Dance, Madame La Meri on Ethnic Dance and with Doris Humphrey on Modern Dance. Here, as nowhere else in the book, the questions were detailed and the answers were direct. An understanding of the personalities of those interviewed was delightfully and interestingly projected.

The photographs in the book are good and varied—each kind of dance is well represented.

If by "meet" the author means a slight acquaintance with the subject, she has fulfilled her title, *Let's Meet the Ballet*. But if she means "to know," "to understand," "to be familiar with" the ballet, then she has failed.—*Nellie Bond Dickinson*, Florida State University, Tallahassee.

### ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

A variety of books of probable interest to readers of *Educational Leadership* have crossed this reviewer's desk this month. Robert W. Richey's *Planning for Teaching* (McGraw-Hill, 1952) is an attractive and generally excellent volume for use in introductory courses in education. Richey breaks with the conventional pattern of many introductory texts to stress planning a teaching career, economics and the teacher, and an over-view of conditions in education. His interpretation of what it means to work with and for children (pp. 291-374) is appealing.



IT'S an education conference, the map has nothing to do with it. The Universe is not on the agenda this time.

Another first-rate publication from the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation is *Cooperative Procedures in Learning* by Alice Miel and others (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952). The book recounts some of the findings of school workers who have cooperated with the Institute recently, and is a professionally thrilling account of ways in which cooperative procedures can be treated as a method of learning. Of great value is the way in which the material inspires the reader to feel that "This is something we, too, can and should be doing!"

*Education and the Nature of Man* (Harper and Brothers, 1952) by Earl C. Kelley and Marie I. Rasey is worth the designation "infinite riches in a little room." Although its documentation might and could have been broader, this fact does not detract from the writer's magnificently successful treatment, in a scant 200 pages, of concepts pertaining to human development which if the profession but uses them wisely can help us ". . . for the first time to reach out and grasp civilization."

As provocative as the Kelley and Rasey volume, but distinctly different in orientation, is *The Republic and the Person* (Regnery, 1952) by President Gordon K. Chalmers of Kenyon College, who calls for a thorough reversal of thinking in American education. This education is deemed by Chalmers to be on a sentimental journey in which wishes are misconstrued as facts. Readers will find it intellectually stimulating to spend a week end reading first this volume, then *Education and the Nature of Man* (see above). It will not be a lost week end!

Bernice Baxter, Gertrude Lewis and Gertrude Cross have contributed to the education of children with *The Role of Elementary Education* (Heath, 1952).

In the field of educational foundations that careful writer, Frederick Eby, has revised *The Development of Modern Education* (Prentice-Hall, 1952), originally issued nearly 20 years ago. The present (second) edition is thoroughly reorganized. Emphasis is placed on the historical roots of the present, with but one chapter on the current century, *per se*.

Three other worthy items on which space permits little comment here are: (1) Emma Sheehy's enlarged *There's Music in Children* (Holt, 1952, 2nd edition), a good interpretation of creative music experience; (2) the Florence Stratemeyer, Margaret McKim and Mayme Sweet booklet, *Guides to a Curriculum for Modern Living* (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952) which implements the 1947 volume, *Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living*; and (3) a second edition of *Adolescence and Youth* (McGraw-Hill, 1952) by Paul H. Landis, which should experience renewed popularity.—Harold G. Shane, professor of education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

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