

Significant Books in Review

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Juvenile Delinquency. By Joseph S.

Roucek, editor. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1958.

This book is for people who wish to examine thoughtfully the perplexing problem of juvenile delinquency. The book suggests that an adequate understanding of criminal behavior is based on the theory of multiple causation, that it is always a combination of causes which produces juvenile delinquency, and that this combination varies from one case to another. Two fundamentally opposed views clash in the treatment of the juvenile delinquent. One is the view that the delinquent must be censured and punished because of the act committed against society and in order to deter him and others from further acts of delinquency. The other is the view that the goal of treatment should be the protection of society and the rehabilitation of the juvenile delinquent into normal law-abiding activities.

Written by specialists—and thus authoritative, although sometimes wordy—a series of chapters covers many of the relevant causative factors of delinquency, i.e., legal, biological, psychiatric, sociological, economic, cultural. Chapter II, "The Legal Aspects of Juvenile Delinquency" makes the interesting observation that ". . . delinquency is a legal concept and delinquents are lawbreakers even if not criminals. . . . We need to give delinquency clarity and substantive

meaning in law before we can even define the problem we are attacking. And, if the civil rights of children are injured in our attack, then the cure is worse than the disease."

The psychiatric approach must be recognized as being mainly a value-laden position as to how delinquents should be viewed and dealt with. It cannot be looked upon as representing a scientifically founded set of understandings and skills specifically applicable to the treatment of delinquents. The sociological approach regards delinquency as deviant behavior which is learned predominantly from association with delinquent peers. Among the cultural factors in contemporary America that are relevant to an understanding of delinquency are (a) social disorganization, (b) cultural heterogeneity, (c) internal migration, (d) rapid technological change, (e) urbanization, and (f) America's "unique" traditions. While the school is of major importance and significance as an agency in delinquency prevention it needs the cooperation of other community agencies in order to do its best work in this respect.

The chapter on "Rural Delinquency" suggests that rural deviant behavior must be studied before we can arrive at a more complete understanding of the whole problem of juvenile delinquency. The data on mass media indicate that no positive correlation can be established between the content of mass media and de-

linquent behavior. There is a need here for additional research efforts. A theme agreed upon by several of the researchers is that although a great diversity of behavior by children comes to be labeled "delinquency," initially distinct types seem to merge into each other perhaps because delinquents increasingly develop common subcultural traits the more they are exposed to identical treatment by noncriminal society and its official agencies.

The consideration of the international trends in juvenile delinquency, a topic too often ignored in many textbooks, is considered, but insufficiently. A cooperative-community approach, such as that advocated by Kvaraceus and others, for the identification and diagnosis of school delinquents appears to be missing in the section on education. The book, despite its disciplinary biases, and lack of remedies, is an important contribution to research, particularly in highlighting those areas with a paucity of knowledge about specific factors, causes, and preventatives of delinquency. Each chapter is well-written, although the communion of ideas could be more neatly tied together.

The volume provides much thought-provoking material, both for teachers of sociology, social work, mental health, and for those interested in the solving of the problems of youth.

—Reviewed by MELVIN R. KARPAS, assistant professor of social science, Willimantic State Teachers College, Willimantic, Connecticut.

Education in Society: Readings. By **Bernard N. Meltzer, Harry R. Doby and Philip M. Smith.** New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1958. 498 p.

The compilers of this volume have presented a series of readings useful as supplementary material for courses in

educational sociology, and have correlated their articles with six texts in the field. The book is organized in the logical pattern typical of the various subject matter disciplines, rather than on the basis of existing social problems. After a brief section introducing the field of educational sociology, the remaining parts discuss the culture and the school, cultural change and problems of education, the social functions of education, the social control of education, the school and the community, the teacher as a person, the student as a person, social factors in the learning process, and controversial issues in education.

This latter section, which one would hope to be the strongest part of the book, is the weakest. The first issue in this section is entitled "The 'Progressive Education' Controversy." The desirability of such a name for this problem is questioned in the very first selection, where Paul Woodring paraphrases John Dewey in stating that the fundamental issue is not whether progressive education is superior to some other type of education. Another "authority" on progressive education whose ideas are included in this discussion is Albert Lynd. (There is a noticeable variation in the quality of contributors to this book.)

The choice of titles for the section on progressive education and articles dealing with the "controversy" is unfortunate in that progressivism is represented as one extreme on a sliding scale whose other limit probably is ultra-traditionalism. But there is nothing radical about progressive education. Indeed, congeniality with prevailing economic, political, and social opinion has been a definite tendency of the progressivist.

The authors have dealt with the subject matter of the twentieth-century so-

cial scientist. In this event, there might have been the anticipated use of the methods of the social scientist. In no explicit way does one find the readings centered around problems upon which students might hypothesize, criticize or structure eventual discussions.

A second controversial issue is entitled "The Problem of Desegregation." This is, however, not a problem in and of itself, but rather one phase of a larger question, the issue of second class citizenship. To what extent is the existence and maintenance of second class status—for not only the Negro but the Spanish-American, the Oriental, the Mexican—compatible with the democratic process?

A volume dealing with education and society should be concerned at length

with the intellectual schizophrenia of our society. The root of this problem lies in the existence of absolute values in a culture which also has relative values. Values derived from the experimental method are unlikely to maintain compatibility with values derived from something beyond nature. This is the critical factor which no consideration of the school and society can overlook. Although Meltzer, Doby, and Smith have envisaged their book as a supplement rather than basic text material, it will be difficult to justify their failure to get at the heart of the issue of value conflicts, to discuss its causes and—even more important—its effects.

—Reviewed by DAVID Z. TAVEL, Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.

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There has likely been less experimentation with an individualized reading program on the primary level. Yet some teachers have discovered the rich possibilities here and would recommend it to others. Perhaps the most rewarding efforts come from using the individual method with those children whose reading achievement lies most distant from the median—that is to say, the more advanced children and those who are making the slowest progress. We tend to retard the abler children when we hold them to a group situation and have them wait their turns to read. They should be helped to soar and feel the absorbing joy of the printed pages. The slower child usually gains more from five or ten intimate minutes with his teacher and his book than he gains from a half hour in a reading group composed of his classmates. His attention can be more easily

held and he benefits emotionally as well as academically from "time alone with teacher." Of course the teacher must keep a record of each child's reading progress. This might be a notebook with several pages reserved for each child upon which are noted the book title, page, vocabulary problems, phonetic weaknesses, and similar teaching guides.

In recent years we have frequently heard the term "action research." This writer would like to encourage more teachers to pursue this type of research as related to an individualized reading program. Let us question the long accepted tenet that reading is best taught in groups. Let us search for other methods that may be more productive.

Sincerely yours,

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