

SELECTED FOR REVIEW

Reviewers: Meyer M. Cahn
Robert B. Nordberg
Clarence R. Olsen
Glenn Conner
Susan Kirchner Sperry
Millard Clements

The Degradation of the Academic Dogma: The University in America 1945-1970. Robert Nisbet. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971. 252 pp.

—Reviewed by MEYER M. CAHN, Professor of Higher Education, California State University, San Francisco.

Among other things, what I received from this book was a clearer sense of why inequities related to freedom, autonomy, privilege, tenure, and the like exist between the academic world and the world outside it. Nisbet knows his history; and he clearly illuminates the origins of this privilege, and indicates how much of this is about to disappear in favor of a nonmedieval structure now forming. His focus is upon the university as a place of faith, where bonds exist among its members (and with society), that its tenets of purity of scholarship, teaching as a major concern, and only indirect service will be observed.

As one who has enjoyed much of the privilege and status of academia, I join Nisbet in mourning its departure, but mine is less sincere. I seem more willing to allow

the university to come in closer contact with society and its needs, and with its changing appreciation for other than rational concerns. To be sure, I readily agree with him that the university seriously alters itself when it plays footsie with the Pentagon, when it politicizes itself, and when its independent entrepreneurs cast a strong vote deciding its destiny. However, I disagree with Nisbet's premise that the university is destroying itself when it pursues a path of "humanitarianism," when it increases student input, or when it performs certain adjunctive government services.

Clearly, his book is a controversial one, and he knows it. In these days of great support for the "open" university, Nisbet comes off as a hard-core conservative. What he would conserve is the university's primary dogma for the past 800 years, its dogma of scholarship, and its primary concern for "the discovery and the teaching of knowledge." Were we to do this, he feels, we would be entitled to the life of quiet, contemplation, comfort, security, and noninterference from nonuniversity forces.

The only problem, though, is the world

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outside which looks anew at authority, at privilege, and at what it values, even in scholarship and knowledge. That Jacques Cousteau's filmed research appears to the public, even before professors can learn of it, is a fact of scholarship today, and this is replicated in many areas. Knowledge has become too explosive to remain within the confines of the university, and none of us will any longer be able to sit on top of it and own it for ourselves. Nor will we be able to prolong the myth which has prevailed that education was only for certain classes of people and not for others. If only for its racial undertones, Nisbet's proposal (even if half-hearted), that we go back to the good old days, fails.

But his book does not fail. He reminds many of us who have lost sight of it that the university does have a central function. And there is no reason to depart from that. This is most helpful, particularly for those of us who are more than willing to set subject matter aside occasionally, as we spend our energies intensively looking at process issues. Nisbet's reminder is to look at the other side, too. □

Controversy in American Education—An Anthology of Crucial Issues. *Harold Full, editor. Second Edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972. 422 pp.*

Politics of the New Left. *Matthew F. Stolz. Beverly Hills, California: Glencoe Press, 1971. 190 pp.*

Ambivalent America—A Psycho-Political Dialogue. *June L. Tapp and Fred Krinsky. Beverly Hills, California: Glencoe Press, 1971. 211 pp.*

—Reviewed by ROBERT B. NORDBERG, Professor and Director of Graduate Education, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"No great advance has ever been made in science, politics, or religion, without controversy," wrote Lyman Beecher. Here are three paperback anthologies presumably intended to advance us through that means. Two of them are addressed primarily to

politics. Matthew Stolz of San Francisco State College edited a collection designed to show that those in the New Left "are not nihilists bent upon random destruction; the new radicals are this nation's present-day populists" (p. vii).

June L. Tapp and Fred Krinsky of, respectively, the University of Chicago and the University of Southern California, wanted to examine political controversy from a multidisciplinary frame of reference. "We reject the notion of a single norm," they wrote, "as *the* American pattern from which departures are merely deviations" (p. xi). Nevertheless, they hypothesize that "all of American political life in theory and in practice arises from a constant pull in two directions: towards freedom, and towards authority" (p. 1).

The third anthology, edited by Harold Full of the City University of New York, is addressed to controversies in education, although it meanders in various directions such as "learning to live with science" and "priorities for the seventies." Full's aim is to present "a sampling of the dissension, debates, and disputes that characterize controversy in American education today" (p. v).

An editor of an anthology enjoys a power not granted to mediators of most debates: He can determine which voices shall be heard. The critic who dismissed a performance by Katherine Hepburn as running "the emotional gamut from A to B" might, with slight paraphrase, make the same point about many a collection of literary pieces. In some cases, the editor takes note of what the basic positions are and is at pains to include skilled spokesmen for each. In other cases, he has an axe to grind and either excludes those who do not share his basic views or chooses inept spokesmen for them. On the whole, Full's anthology fairly and effectively represents the range of convictions on each topic he includes. Some of his contributors are Barry Commoner (a writer of extraordinary sophistication and insight), Henry Steele Commager, Norman Cousins, Roger Rapoport, Eric Hoffer, and John I. Goodlad.

The two political compilations are less

representative. Each has a message, and each editor tends to select contributors who will reinforce that message. Tapp and Krinsky at least see that there is something to be said for authority, but Stolz is interested almost exclusively in selling us his view of the New Left.

Space does not permit detailed citing of the contributors to the three volumes or description of their organizational designs. With few exceptions among the many authors, there is a curious sameness of style: abstract, lacking in examples and color, some objectionable language, and a weakness for the glittering sociological generality. Tapp and Krinsky are to be praised for going back to such sources as Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Orestes Brownson, and James Fenimore Cooper.

Controversy in American Education should be a useful text. So should *Ambivalent America* and *Politics of the New Left* if users remember that the dice are loaded. □

The Little Red School Book. *Soren Hansen and Jasper Jensen, with Wallace Roberts.* New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. (Pocket Books), 1971. 253 pp.

—Reviewed by CLARENCE R. OLSEN, Chairman, Department of Education, Chicago State University, Chicago, Illinois.

The Little Red School Book will be found in the hip pockets and handbags of youth across the country. Educators and other adults will not accept it as readily. Some will severely criticize the book; others will consider it a godsend. Why should a book written for youth create such divergence of opinion?

Roberts, who translated the book from the Danish language, presented the reasons in his introduction to the American edition. He indicated the book was written to show youth some ways in which they can cope with poor teachers or unjust school regulations, to provide them with information they cannot usually get in school or from most grown-ups about sex and drugs, and to give them some ideas about how they can use

the schools for their own purposes. Youth are informed that the book cannot give them solutions for their problems, but that it can serve as a guide that shows them how to make the best of their situations. Recommendations for accomplishing this are presented under three broad headings relating to schools, student issues, and the system.

In the discussion of schools, Hansen and Jensen, the Danish authors of the book, place the responsibility for learning with youth. They indicate that teachers can provide youth with opportunities and encouragement for learning, but cannot do the actual work of learning for them. The authors recognize that many constraints are placed upon teachers that force them into molds which tend to discourage learning. Chief among these constraints is the need for order which imposes "class teaching" upon teachers and students alike. They contend that, through the use of innovations designed for individualized instruction, order can be maintained while students are involved in decisions related to learning.

Hansen and Jensen indicate that the individual youth can influence learning situations by enlisting students, teachers, administrators, and school-oriented groups in cooperative group actions. Pressure groups, formal complaints, and, upon rare occasions, student strikes represent kinds of actions which could be used. They argue that any of the actions must be based upon a valid grievance backed by solid evidence, and that resolution should be sought through the chain of command.

The second section of the book considers students and their individual differences and needs. The authors discuss the influence of value systems upon students' thoughts with regard to individuals. Intelligence (IQ) is defined and the roles of heredity and environment in its determination are presented. Youth are cautioned against the blind acceptance of assessments based on teacher expectations, special classes and schools, and/or tracking systems.

The final section of the book deals with change as it relates to the system. The authors indicate that adults outside the edu-

cational system generally decide how the schools operate. They argue that students and teachers have little impact on the decision-making process for schools. It is their recommendation that students and teachers must work hand in hand to bring about more meaningful learning situations for youth.

Even though *The Little Red School Book* is youth oriented, educators, parents, and other adults associated with education should read it. Although the issues found in the book and the questions it will elicit from youth are not new to or totally accepted by many adults, the ideas represent valid educational concerns for the majority of our youth. For this reason alone the book is worthy of adult reading. □

How the Mouse Was Hit on the Head by a Stone and So Discovered the World. *Etienne Delessert. Foreword by Jean Piaget. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971. 30 pp.*

—Reviewed by GLENN CONNER, Graduate Student, California State University, San Francisco.

How the Mouse Was Hit on the Head by a Stone and So Discovered the World is a most original children's book written and illustrated by the Swiss-born graphic designer Etienne Delessert. Though its originality is refreshing, its most unique feature is the fact that the story and the illustrations were laboriously "child-tested" prior to publication. In a foreword to interested adults, Jean Piaget delineates the process of child-testing and illustrates the degree of care taken in following the suggestions of children five and six years old regarding both the text and the illustrations.

Delessert's mouse ought to attract young people the world over. He is, after all, just five years old—the same age as his intended audience. When he accidentally tunnels through to the surface of the earth and discovers a world full of new and strange phenomena, he begins asking many of the same questions that most five-year-olds ask as their awareness expands. He gets answers

acceptable to the dawning, but undeveloped, logic of others his age.

The answers, to be sure, are a blend of fact and fantasy. The sun, for example, tells that he warms and lights the earth and that he began when a gentleman lit him with a huge match. "Every morning he throws me high in the sky, and I shine; but in the evening he catches me again." Piaget assures us in the foreword that this blend of reality and embellishment is not the least bit troublesome for the young audience.

The mouse converses as well with clouds, night, a flower, the moon, and the stars. He learns a great deal about these and related phenomena, but best of all he becomes their loving friend. Alas, there are new adventures to be had and new friends to be met. The mouse puts his sack on his back and readies himself to follow the sun.

The story is accurately and beautifully supported by Delessert's illustrations. The quality and variety of color reach a perfection rarely seen in children's books. The surrealistic content of the illustrations is precisely consistent with the personification and fantasies of the text. The print is clear and the layout attractively designed, with generous amounts of white space on every page.

A bonus, at least for adults, is the final illustration showing many of the new friends that the mouse is about to meet as he follows the sun. Among the fish and the frogs and the butterflies and the snails, is Piaget himself—a friend without whom no five-year-old's cosmos is complete. □

Montessori: A Modern Approach. *Paula Polk Lillard. New York: Schocken Books, 1971. 155 pp.*

Language Training in Early Childhood Education. *Celia Stendler Lavatelli, editor. Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1971. 185 pp.*

—Reviewed by SUSAN KIRCHNER SPERRY, Doctoral Student in Urban Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

The impact of programs such as Head Start and Follow Through, as well as the

British Infant School movement, and the influences of Piaget have generated heightened interest in the field of early childhood education. The focus of these books, *Montessori: A Modern Approach* and *Language Training in Early Childhood Education*, is again on two of the central issues in the field. In what way does the Montessori method complement the growing body of literature concerning how best to build environments where children grow? And, in the latter book, can current psycholinguistic theory add to our understanding and the development of a more defensible method of language training, especially compensatory language training?

The followers of Montessori in this country have remained a small devoted group whose existence has been surrounded by the aura of a cult. They are rarely identified with the forefront of the American free school movement. Mrs. Lillard has gone into considerable detail to reflect accurately the philosophy and methods espoused by Montessori, emphasizing the logical relevance for today's children. Montessori's emphasis on cognitive development rather than fixed intelligence, sensory-motor intelligence as the foundation of thought, the child's spontaneous interest in learning, and the value of repetition as the basis for moving into abstract thought, has found new respectability in academia. This review of her work is especially helpful to parents and interested professionals not well versed in the theory and its applications.

The chief criticisms leveled against the method, namely unevenness of quality from one school to another, the development of oral language in a Montessori school, and whether or not there is a relative de-emphasis of social and creative development, are answered, at best, indirectly. Before the

Montessori approach can take its rightful place on the American educational scene, these challenges must be answered with the best the modern Montessori has to offer.

The Lavatelli book challenges several conceptions in early childhood education. First, it attacks the notion that any deviation from white middle class speech indicates a need of training. Instead it searches out that "small subset" of differences which put individuals at an educational disadvantage. It seeks to document the idea that lower class preschool children have the syntactic and phonological competence (the basic rules) but lack the ability to use precise descriptive language, especially when the speakers cannot rely on props in the environment or previously shared information. The first section outlines current psycholinguistic theory; section two illustrates three training methods based on the theory; and the third section outlines two methods of evaluation.

To go beyond the use of the immediate environment and drill on syntactic rules, the authors emphasize talk about past experiences, the use of a screen, and other means to put psychological and physical distance between reality and its reconstruction. The Tucson Method of Language Teaching represents a model using extension of a child's natural language in a systematic fashion based on a psycholinguistic theory. The Mackey-Thompson movable words materials and the Gahagan-Bernstein Educational Program, both from England, stress ways to improve linguistic performance at the more complex levels. While few would challenge the notion that an enriched language environment is beneficial for infants, Painter's infant training program illustrates the problem of at what cost and to what extent educators should provide a systematic language program for the young infant.

Selecting New Aids to Teaching

32 pp.

Stock Number: 611-17840

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Both these books contain pertinent material that would help persons faced with the challenge of constructing more valuable alternatives to our current practices in early childhood education. □

The Lonely Trip Back. *Florrie Fisher, as told to Jean Davis and Todd Persons.* New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971. 212 pp.

Youth and the Drug Problem: A Guide for Parents and Teachers. *Harold D. Love.* Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1971. 101 pp.

Stamford Curriculum Guide for Drug Abuse Education. *Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1971. 96 pp.*

—Reviewed by MILLARD CLEMENTS, Professor of Education, New York University, New York City.

What kind of problem is the drug problem? Can the books under review provide us with insight into the social dilemmas we face?

Florrie Fisher's *The Lonely Trip Back* is a depressing, rather pornographic, account of her life as a prostitute. She reports her introduction to cannabis, then to prostitution, and finally to heroin. That she had a hard life and that as a young person she did many foolish things seem apparent.

Her descriptions of her cannabis experiences are at variance with the entire literature dealing with cannabis. Yet reactions to cannabis, as to aspirin, can sometimes be idiosyncratic. Perhaps her reactions were accurately described, and they are simply unique. The British publication *Cannabis*¹ has an extensive bibliography dealing with a multitude of studies of cannabis and is well worth pursuing.

The Lonely Trip Back is more interesting for its sexual content than for its information about drug use. The author became involved in a maimed sexual life. From her

earliest years, she appeared to have an impoverished emotional life.

She misused money, sex, and her life. That she has now developed a more fulfilling personal life is a worthy achievement, but little wisdom about drugs is to be found in this tortured book.

Harold D. Love's *Youth and the Drug Problem: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* is a harmless, rather uninformed, series of definitions and moralistic statements. There are sedatives and stimulants; hallucinogens and narcotics; addictions and habituations; pot and grass. The author believes that the use of alcohol and grass is an expression of deep personal problems:

Adults with their alcohol and tranquilizers and students with their marijuana and LSD are both reacting to conditions which negate human values and human worth (p. 9).

There may be some kind of truth in this view; but what kind of truth, and what does it mean for our laws, for public policy, for public health? A preoccupation with sex, or money, or power over others can be as destructive as the quest for drugs. The author probes no issue in depth and makes no comment on the criminalization of what he identifies as a social problem.

The *Stamford Curriculum Guide for Drug Education* might be thought of as a curriculum guide based on the perspective of *Youth and the Drug Problem*. The *Curriculum Guide* proposes that teachers should engage students in a form of group therapy that deals with questions such as these: When am I happy? When am I sad? What are your needs? What do you think are your most important needs?

The purpose of dealing with these questions is to develop emotional maturity in children, because emotionally mature children will not use drugs. Incidental to this group therapy, there is an introduction of some selective information about drugs. More information is provided high school students than grade school students.

The books under review do not extend our insight into the meaning of drug use in our society. □

¹*Cannabis*. Report of the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968.

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