

## REVIEW ESSAY

Ross, Malcolm, *The Aesthetic Impulse*, Oxford, U.K., Pergamon Press, 1984, \$14.50 (paperback).

Malcolm Ross is the voice of aesthetic education in England much as Ralph Smith, founder and editor of the *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* is in the U.S. Ross has dedicated his professional support to this philosophy since the 1960's. The emphasis on aesthetic education arose with a shifting paradigm in the visual arts, from production and creativity to an academic and cultural study. These broad concepts and educational paradigms exemplify the ongoing search for meaning in visual arts education. Curricular content has been as elusive as the term art itself. Moreover, in its plural form, the arts (representing all fine arts) nearly defy a common rationale. However, aesthetics, like brain hemisphericity and creativity, has surfaced as a legitimate theoretical basis to justify the artistic segments of school curricula. Ross warmed to this, his first major publication, by editing a series of 4 small volumes on curriculum issues in arts education, also published by Pergamon. He contributed one or two essays to most of these annual books of readings from summer workshops or conferences at the University of Exeter, prior to authoring *The Aesthetic Impulse*. This small book (1984) composed of 12 short chapters is introduced by a preface in which the author's general theme and purposes are announced. He illuminates his justification for arts education with key concepts expressed in these typical terms and phrases: "the qualification of sensibility", "the development of intelligent feeling", "a way of knowing", "poetic or cultural experience", "personal knowledge", "the experience of being in the world", "value as process rather than product", "sacred dimension", "spiritual, numinous, daydreaming or sacramental character", "liminality and communitas", "the otherness of art", "heartfelt immersion in the regenerative abyss".

Ross' enthusiasm for arts education strikes the reader as pure advocacy if not sustained eulogy. His stance is poetic without real poetry, philosophical without a clear philosophy, psychological without a developed psychology and theological without a theology. It ranges over a vast territory of literary references through a facile verbal fluency. With the distracting exception of numerous nonsentences, Ross communicates a joy of literary showmanship. He skips and hops over most of the theoretical claims and arguments in the literature of aesthetic education and espouses the most general and ideal, as well as the least functional of them, in addressing the problems and purposes of aesthetic education. If the reader is searching for clues to specification and management of an aesthetic curriculum, disappointment ensues. Teaching, for Ross, is characterized by "enigma", by "jesting", by "being a fool, a vagabond, a guru, a shaman", by being "impulsive, non-purposive, non-judgemental, entertaining" and the like. He suggests that teachers follow children's pursuits, rescue the arts from their debilitating and inhibiting effects and aim them toward "sensuous liberations" in order to foster students' efforts in making their marks on culture. Further, he contends that schools and systems are inimical to this growth. We need new teachers, he claims, who share experiences with learners in participatory interactions, who blur boundaries in "cordial engagements" and who provide aesthetic curricula which perceive all subjects.

Regarding the curriculum itself, Ross claims that, "only impulse can give a child's expressive experience particular and personal significance"<sup>1</sup> and "the heart of the experience is impulse".<sup>2</sup> Yet, he admits that, "Activating and sustaining children's expressive actions causes me the most headaches and most reveals my limitations as their teacher."<sup>3</sup> He advocates improving attitudes (indoctrination), art as revolution, stressing the popular and vernacular rather than fine arts, emphasizing feelings and sensibilities over mind and self or private education instead of norm referenced schooling. He sees improvisation and spontaneity as the best way of engaging a slow contact with art media so that the learner moves from exploratory formless functioning to a habit of forming uninterruptedly while experiencing an unawareness of time. His non-conforming idealism, and even anarchical tendencies seem irreconcilable with the real classroom that teems with the demands of dozens of burgeoning humans.

On the topic of evaluation, Ross states that we need some identification of levels in the development of sensibilities. He distinguishes among 3 levels of attention and three types of reward before detailing developmental descriptions of four stages in each of the arts. In spite of an acknowledged need for convivial assessments, he admits a disturbing dilemma between legitimacy through public examinations and the risks of becoming extra-curricular without them. He decries the tyranny of examinations and competitions but enjoins his colleagues to find congenial criteria for assessments.

In summary, Ross's account of aesthetic education offers few methods for schooling and even less content for the teaching and learning of the arts. Like most advocates of aesthetic education, he addresses theory with little related classroom practice or application. Are theorists in the visual arts so limited to the traditional Bohemian concept of artist that we cannot reconcile art with education? Are we so entrapped by artistic terminology that we fail to recognize the foundational skills or educational content for visual, symbolic competency? How many more global theories must we endure and exhaust before discovering the basic, substantive, educational content for graphic literacy? Our romance with Art has been long lasting without asking the educational question, can one begin learning a discipline at the level of making or studying its art? Where are its roots? If a symbolic system is the object of teaching, then what is the foundation of that modality? How does a neophyte learn to handle the symbols, to form them, to modify them and to employ them for communicative purposes? Can one produce art or even appreciate it without some mastery of the basic, image-making skills and knowledge? To promote unchannelled sensation and undirected experimentation is hardly an asset for learning any discipline, the arts included. Configurational and spatial imagery is basic to thinking through all symbolic systems. Visual arts are as dependent upon perceptual skills and symbol making strategies as are the language arts, music, and mathematics. Consequently, graphic, tonal, linguistic and gestural modalities of expression require appropriately substantive sequences of curricular content for effective learning just as do the sciences and other disciplines. We may presently lack the motivation to identify this content in some of the "arts" fields, but if and when this fact is accomplished, our creative enthusiasm will find ample challenges in relating the most engaging methods for teaching these basic contents.

Malcolm Ross' vitality and facility harnessed to real, classroom problems in teaching and learning the image-making skills might have the effect of transforming this peripheral school subject of visual art into the core of our educational programs. Just as imagery is basic to all symbolic thought, visual symbol-making is foundational to image formation. Visual education cries for professional attention and the new technologies challenge the image maker today.

Surfeited with the advocacy of aesthetics devoid of educational applications, this reviewer of yet another publication, albeit one of the most impassioned and articulate accounts of this pervasive philosophy, is reluctant to recommend this book to theorists or practioners in art education.

Helen Diemert  
University of Calgary

## BOOK REVIEWS

Hargreaves, Andy and Woods, Peter (Eds.). *Classrooms and Staffrooms: The Sociology of Teachers and Teaching*. Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1984, 256 pp., \$15.00 (paper).

*Classrooms and Staffrooms* is a reader in sociology of education that focuses on teachers and teaching. All materials, except the introduction, have been previously published in books or journals. The reason for their being selected for re-publication in this reader is that they all employ the ethnographic method. They are analyses of school processes and cultures based on field observations or interviews. Following the "new sociology of education" trend, the editors have deliberately avoided studies that center on the effect of home background and socio-economic status on educational output. The classrooms and the staffrooms are seen from the perspective of the teachers and tend to exclude reference to the wider society and to the casual relationships between variables over time.

There are attempts to make explicit some features of the school culture which usually are taken for granted and go unnoticed. These features are considered as keys that explain the orderly management of schools. All chapters give detailed observations of life in schools and offer several useful insights and concepts. But the often-minute phenomena generally lack an overall theoretical integration as well as a sense of perspective of the school in its dynamic societal context. The emphasis is laid on an analysis of problems rather than on theory-building, and the focus is on the school, rather than on the school in society.

The author's chosen perspective can have important implications for teacher training: new teachers can become conscious of tacit knowledge and routine behaviour, which could improve their effectiveness. However, the ethnographic method in the study of schools could lead to an underestimation of the constraints exerted by the larger society and culture on the school.

The sub-title of the book claims to present *the* sociology of teachers and teaching. More modestly and appropriately, it should announce a sociology of teachers and teaching.

Jacques LaMontagne  
Université de Montréal

Noddings, Nel, and Shore, Paul, J. *Awakening the Inner Eye: Intuition in Education*. New York, N. Y.: Teacher's College Press, 1984, 236 pp., \$29.95 (hardcover).

*Awakening the Inner Eye*, is an attempt to consider seriously the meaning of intuition and to explore ways in which it may be used in the classroom as a tool for promoting productive thinking. Noddings and Shore argue that training in intuitive modes of thinking has been neglected leading to an imbalance in schooling in favor of what they call analytical/propositional thinking. They propose to redress this imbalance by re-defining intuition, by making it more attractive and comprehensible, and by attempting to establish dialogue among scholars, teachers, artists and scientists, and thus lead to further research.

The first three chapters of the book, which the authors suggest pedagogical practitioners do not need to read, are devoted to an intensive philosophical review and definition of the concept of intuition. The argument they put forward appears to be philosophically adequate, but the definition of intuition appears sometimes to be driven by a need to derive educational implications without substantial reference to contemporary cognitive psychology. The views of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, the Cynics and the Epicureans are reviewed briefly to demonstrate that philosophers have always felt that "ways of knowing" other than by direct observation were necessary if man was to understand his world and thus himself. Such knowledge did not necessarily coincide with "truth", but to this day, laymen hold the view that "moral good", at least, can be apprehended directly by intuition.

During the middle ages, the validity of intuitive knowledge was downgraded as the Aristotelean notion of interplay between reason and insight was rejected by Christian theologians. Though still accepted as a way of "seeing", intuition was further denigrated during the Renaissance by Descartes and Spinoza because it failed to yield to rational analysis. Only the works of Kant and Schopenhauer and Romanticists such as Rousseau, who stressed the natural virtues of man, kept the notion alive. With few exceptions philosophers did not, however, emphasize its place in education. Early psychologists, too, paid little attention to the intuitive faculty. Serious consideration of intuition in the past century came primarily from educators such as Pestalozzi and Froebel.

The 20th Century brought a new impetus to the consideration of non-rational ways of knowing. After an initial romance with the scientific method, ideas about non-reflective consciousness, the guiding forces of human Will, inductive modes of thinking — often described as heuristic thinking — and discoveries of differentiated brain function all operated to re-emphasize alternate routes to knowledge. Support for these views was provided by the psychoanalysts and by philosophers such as Husserl and the Existentialists, as well as by scholars such as A.N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell. Gestalt principles paved the way for accepting the concept that the brain supplied information which led to knowledge not attributable to mere perception. The personal experiences of great thinkers such as Albert Einstein and Buckminster Fuller suggested that the human mind could go well beyond linear processes of thought.

The authors summarize four principal views of intuition (p. 41) and state what they themselves are prepared to accept.

With empiricists generally, we shall accept sensory intuitions; with rationalists intuitions that make experience possible. Finally, we shall adopt an agnostic position on mystical intuition . . . . Most importantly, we explore a relation largely ignored by both rationalists and empiricists: the relation between Will and intuition or, put differently, the connection between our individual quest for meaning and our immediate apprehensions. (p. 42)

Intuition, then, is a form of seeing by direct contact with objects but not associated with the truth of propositions. It is basic to learning, creating, expressing and problem solving but not a phenomenological tool for understanding the structure of consciousness or a substitute for constructs such as perception, representation, receptivity, understanding or consciousness.

Intuition is that function that contacts objects directly in phenomena. This direct contact yields something we might call "knowledge" in that it guides our actions and is precipitated by our own quest for meaning. When the intuitive representation is created primarily for cognition (but, of course, a report goes also to Will), we may properly refer to that which guides us as "intuitive knowledge". (p. 57)

Again, one might be concerned about the practicality of this somewhat mystic definition. The case for a discrete form of mental operation has not been made; in fact, the authors might well have found a better term for what they want to define as, for example, logical operations vs. operations based on images or sensory input. In spite of these limitations in language, however, a convincing case is made that education should do more than exercise analytic thought.

Noddings and Shore now suggest that a number of traditional schooling practices (for example, control mechanisms) tend to inhibit divergent thinking. An over-emphasis on language development has similar effects. What is needed are programs directed at establishing an intuitive mode characterized by involvement of the senses, receptivity and commitment, a quest for understanding and the maintenance of attention through tension between subjective certainty and object uncertainty as the Will struggles against reason. Students who practice such thinking will be prepared to set aside instrumental goals in favor of understanding, enjoying and embracing.

Teachers can facilitate intuitive thinking by being aware of the nature of the process and the factors which support it. Because the intuitive mode is not a familiar way of approaching problems, it may be accompanied by feelings of indecision leading to avoidance. As with the creative act, the setting must be appropriate; warm-up exercises are useful; and routines are necessary. There is a need to establish a universe of elements and to provide for periods of incubation and illumination. Children must be brought into contact with objects, but such encounters are useful only if readiness has been established and inappropriate anxiety reduced. The authors appear to be well aware that their advice is somewhat vague and that further research on definition and impact are necessary.

In Chapter 6 the authors attempt to come to grips with how intuition can be fostered through classroom arrangements and the presentation of subject matter. They eschew the notion of behavioural objectives in favor of the use of metaphor, imagery, and structure to pique interest and engage the Will by having students involved in the construction of their own purposes. Examples of activities in mathematics and social studies are included. The teaching strategies suggested are not new, nor are they as precise as one might hope. In fact, little of what the authors suggest as outcomes would provide serious difficulty for teachers who practice the use of behavioral objectives. While the authors suggest that formal evaluation may be counter productive, it is difficult to see how precision teaching can be achieved without some way of collecting evidence of success, if for no other reason than to change strategies that are not effective.

In Chapter 7 the authors make a substantial leap to suggest that intuition will not be enhanced without the addition of what they call *Caritas* or love. Such love implies human contact, commitment to subject matter, and commitment to the acts of teaching and learning. Functioning, thinking and feeling result only from a holistic approach which has its basis in interpersonal relations. Love is the binding link between intuition and learning. Given the current milieu which surrounds education, this "humanistic" view is quite acceptable. Most concepts are carefully defined and kept at a reasonably objective level. The emphasis on *Caritas* is probably needed to counteract the tendency to stress factual learning, but its major advantage is that it underlines the importance of affect in the teaching/learning process.

The final section of the book includes references to surveys of current intuition studies and a review of "how-to" materials, a list of organizations concerned with intuition, a review of major books in the area, and suggestions about how intuition relates to spirituality. Some notions about the state of contemporary trends in the study of intuition are presented and research topics are suggested.

A brief overall conclusion is presented. The authors are quite openly skeptical, even about their own work. A number of interesting questions are raised. For example, they discuss the possibility of a place for intuition in the development of artificial intelligence. But, above all, they come back to the major question:

Can education change so that our students can become present-day seers? Surely, it is possible to make many of the changes we have suggested. Most of them seem entirely practical financially, structurally and pedagogically. But the question may, nevertheless, induce negative responses from many persons simply because any sort of change in schools is so difficult to make. Change in the direction we envision requires commitment, a willingness to abandon self-interest and the comfort of well-entrenched methods. Education, obviously, can be changed. Will it change? (p. 205)

Noddings and Shore have put forward a bold hypothesis based on a careful analysis of "what is" and "what might be." Whether the concept of intuition as defined by the authors can stand up to the scrutiny of philosophers and psychologists, and whether the pedagogical implications can actually be validated by practising teachers remains to be seen. This book deserves to be widely read by scholars and teachers who are concerned with stretching the minds of students beyond the sufficient to the possible.

W.R. Unruh  
University of Calgary

Harling, Paul. (Ed.), *New Directions in Educational Leadership*. London and Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1984, 426 pp., (paper).

It is an interesting experience to review a collection of papers dealing with a national school system one left twenty years ago. On the one hand, there is a sense of *déjà vu*. Looking back with the joint benefits of hindsight and all that has been learned in the interim leaves the impression that not much has changed. On the other hand, there is also the realization that things are no longer quite the same.

Part of the *déjà vu* comes from the similarity between schools in different parts of the English-speaking world. They are all places in which adults, with greater or lesser degrees of skills, patience, and accomplishment, try to bring children and adolescents to learning. The problems of managing the facilities and encouraging the people to reach and maintain high levels of effectiveness are similar, whatever may be the political and administrative structures outside the school. Despite this, it is still a major fault of educators that our outlook tends to be limited to our jurisdiction. We remain centred in our own region, largely unaware of the experience of others. It is thus a useful exercise to look at the self-analyses of those operating and studying in other places, where organizational cultures and things taken for granted may be different from our own. The parallels and the differences provide a mirror against which to compare our own situations and experiences.

Studies of leadership and its problems at different levels of a country's educational system provide a cross-sectional portrait of that system; all of its problems appear on management desks sooner or later. The impression given by this collection of papers on leadership in British education is that in the aftermath of local government reorganization in the 1970's, and with a deteriorating economic climate, all is not well.

The editor defines leadership as "efforts to shape the behaviour of groups of people, or individuals within an organization or system in such a way that benefits will ensue and the purposes of the organization or system will be fulfilled" (p. 3). Not ringing poetry, perhaps, but certainly an appropriate point of departure for this wide-ranging collection of specially commissioned and "completely revised" papers. The selection covers the field of British education well, dealing with holders of line and staff leadership positions in primary and secondary schools, local education authority hierarchies, and further education. There are papers dealing with Her Majesty's Inspectors, educational politics at the national and local levels, control of curriculum, and the influence of teachers' unions.

Papers on education and local government, national policies for education, and the role of Chief Education Officer of a local authority together set the context for the rest of the collection. That context is one of ideological conflict among the national political parties over educational policy, a conflict echoed at the local level through national party involvement in local councils. The papers by Hornsby, Hunter and Pile together set out the effects of increased politicization of local government in Britain, and the increased size, complexity and scope of educational services. The papers also deal with the effects of the change on education from its formerly unique status among local government services to a new status as one of a number of services whose most senior local officials report to an even more senior country or municipal executive, who in turn reports to the local council.

Hornsby, in particular argues in this context for "a more positive role in leadership" (p. 120), for the (national) Department of Education and Science, especially in matters of curriculum. The implication is that a vacuum has come to exist in terms of professional leadership in educational matters, and that vacuum may come to be filled by others who do not necessarily have the long-term interest of children and society at heart. Brighouse, writing of the unprecedented publication activities of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in the late 1970's, indirectly points out the dangers of such a vacuum in a context of intense political conflict over educational policy. "Such a flurry of activity (on the part of H.M.I.'s) may have been designed to avoid less welcome, over-prescriptive, even damaging initiatives by politicians" (p. 92). Educators world-wide should pay attention to this British experience.

In light of the discussion provided of the demands on Chief Education Officers in this political context, Canadian and American superintendents, who are becoming the subjects of a body of literature of their own, might consider as relatively matter-of-fact their problems of dealing with boards of trustees.

The overall impression created by this collection is thus not a pleasant one. But all is not doom and gloom. Sometimes the mood is lightened by the terminology, instances of which bring to mind the description of the North Atlantic as an ocean on either side of which live peoples separated by a common language. The use by Murgatroyd and Reynolds of the term "pupil pursuit work" to identify an inspectorial technique in which "one of the senior staff will sit in and watch the teacher teach" (p. 291) brings to mind images of fleeing children. The fault here is the reviewer's, not the author's.

This is a well-assembled collection of insightful articles. It presents a cross-sectional portrait of British education in the late 1970's and early 1980's which will be useful both for comparativists and students of school administration. As with most collections, however, one must select from it with care.

Arthur M. Schwartz  
University of Calgary

Holmes, Brian. (Ed). *Equality and Freedom in Education*. London: Allen and Unwin, Inc., 1985, 259 pp., \$11.50 (paper).

In an era when comparative education is flooded with literature, Brian Holmes' *Equality and Freedom in Education* deserves serious attention by scholars in this field.

Undertaking the monumental tasks of comparing six major educational systems in the world — British, French, American, Russian, Chinese and Japanese — the book is highly systematic, thorough and informative. It is systematic in the sense that the educational systems discussed are easily compared with each other through the structure of the text: Aim, Administration, Finance, Structure and Organization, Curriculum, Teacher Education and Higher Education. It is thorough and informative in the sense that each section reveals the historical changes leading to the present state of affairs, with additional data to drive home the descriptive account and further readings to permit in-depth exploration.

The central theme of accommodating the conflicting principles of ensuring equality of opportunities and the individual's freedom of choice is well illuminated in different social structures. Indeed, the choice of the title for each chapter dealing with the respective countries provides strong clues as to why the problem of achieving both the equality of treatment and individual flexibility of choice is hard to resolve. In the case of England, the national educational policy is severely compromised by many local education authorities with different philosophies. In France, the tradition of liberty is at odds with a centralized system professed to ensure equality of resource allocation. In America, the extreme legal protection of individual freedom defies attempts to equalize opportunities for all. In Russia, the cultivation of a talented 'new Soviet man' runs counter to the political ideology of egalitarianism. In China, the forces for preserving tradition and the urgent need for change have led to dramatic shifts of direction. In Japan, the severe competition for the prestigious higher institutions challenges equal opportunity for the masses.

Given the careful structure of the book, one might wonder about the need for a detailed introduction provided by the editor himself. Perhaps a summary section highlighting similarities and contrasts in attempts to achieve the uncompromising principles would be less repetitive and more rewarding to the readers.

If one wishes to be more critical, one might quarrel with the uneven quality of the individual contributions, an effect which is typical of books consisting of collections of papers by different authors. The accounts provided respectively by Jones and Turner about education in Britain and the USA, for instance, are more analytical than Tomiak's far more factual section dealing with the USSR system. This observation might strengthen the present reviewer's point that a final chapter which presents a synthesis of preceding chapters, both factual and analytical, would be helpful.

Overall, however, one should readily concede that *Equality and Freedom in Education* with its systematic presentation of six major education systems in the world has contributed significantly to the field of cross-cultural studies. It lends itself equally to classroom instruction and to research in comparative education.

Y.L. Jack Lam  
Brandon University

Lee, James Michael. *The Content of Religious Instruction: A Social Science Approach*. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1985. xvi, 766 pp., \$14.95.

James Michael Lee has provided the religious studies expert with a substantial introduction to and an in-depth study of a social science approach to the content of religious instruction.

In this third volume of a trilogy on religious instruction, a trilogy which represents "an attempt to put the teaching of religion on a firm scientific basis" (p. 749), Lee focuses on the substantive content of religious instruction. The substantive content, according to Lee, consists of nine types of molar forms: product content, process content, cognitive content, affective content, verbal content, nonverbal content, conscious content, unconscious content, and lifestyle content. Lee devotes a lengthy chapter to each of these content forms and the various learning or social science theories which contributed to his comprehension of the subject matter. By identifying content in its molar forms, Lee forces the religious education teacher, whether a Sunday School teacher, a parent, a minister, or a college instructor, to approach the teaching of religion in a multidimensional manner giving adequate attention to each content. Lee correctly identifies the necessity of placing pedagogy, in the secular classroom and the religion classroom, on a scientific and effective basis. The religious and/or secular educator who heeds Lee's advice to marry multidimensional content forms with innovative and learner-centred pedagogy should be an effective teacher.

The central thesis of Lee's social scientific approach to religious education is that instruction is to focus on the learner, not on theology or dogma. In his view, teaching of theology has too long dominated religious education, which has been deadened by ineffective or inappropriate methods of instruction. Neither the teaching of theology nor the traditional practice of religious instruction treats the learner in a holistic manner. The religious educator must teach from the learner's existential situation for it is the learner and the learner's environment, not theology, that is the centre of the religious education process. While this is not a new approach to teaching religion, it has been too often ignored by religious educators who feel pressured to inculcate a particular theological orientation into the students. Lee, who argues persuasively that theology is simply part of the cognitive content of religion, emphasizes the need to teach religion from a laboratory approach. That is, the instructor and the learner are actively engaged in assessing their lives and living from a religious, in this case a Christian, perspective. The laboratory for Christian living, that is the everyday life of the learner, provides "that kind of purposive and fruitful structure which will tend to optimally promote successful experimentation with various kinds of Christian lifestyle activities and behaviors" (p. 623).

There are two fundamental problems with Lee's volume. First, Lee attempts to be too comprehensive. In addition to the social science jargon which permeates the volume and frequent teleological statements which substitute for argument, his inclusive discussion of the heterogeneous social science theories which influenced his thought on the process and content of religious instruction undermines the effectiveness of his treatment of the content of religious education. For example, Lee's explication of the theories on the unconscious by Freud and Jung are cogent and precise. The impact of this discussion is weakened when, in the same chapter, the religious educator is apprised of the ideas of Ram Dass, a transpersonal-spiritual view of the unconscious and dream theory. There is, unfortunately, little consistent effort to synthesize in a manner useful to the religious educator these conflicting psychological and sociological learning theories. While Lee's intent, that of informing

the religious educator of the varied approaches of social science theory is noble, the result is a catalogue of theories each with some usefulness in themselves but unusable in the present context.

Second, Lee has an inordinate faith in the objectivity of social science. Apparently, he ignored recent theoretical literature in the social sciences which questions his basic premise, that a social science approach is value-free and completely objective. Indeed, by presenting a broad survey of social science theories and conflicting evidence, Lee implicitly recognizes that there is not *one* social science approach. Hence, Lee's juxtaposition of social scientific theories each with its own validity for the religious instructor without a clearly enunciated overarching approach, would produce more perplexed religious educators, not confident guides to a richer religious experience for the learner. Once again, while the intent of providing an introduction to social science theory is noble, one questions how the uninitiated beginner in the field of religious instruction, for whom this 766 page volume and two companion volumes are intended, will be able to sort out the best combination of social science theories and pedagogical tactics to put into practice what is, in the end, an excellent method to teach religion or any other subject.

This is a not a work that will be readily employed by the interested and devoted layperson (the Sunday School teacher and the religion teacher in the private or public school). It is too complex and too cumbersome to be readily employed by the non-specialist. The volume is *not* "for beginners in the field of religious instruction" (p. 750). Rather, it is a useful compendium of social scientific discussions of the content of instruction with a particular emphasis on Christian teaching. Selectively employed, even experienced teachers would learn much from *The Content of Religious Instruction*.

Michael Owen  
Athabasca University

Coombs, Philip. *The World Crisis in Education: The View from the Eighties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, 353 pp., \$15.50 (paper).

Philip Coombs gazes into his global crystal ball and tells us he sees dark clouds — educational systems in crisis. All nations, developed or developing, have witnessed an accelerating growth of learning needs. For instance, more and more people have migrated into urban areas leaving behind old values and old lifestyles while searching for the fulfillment of their new-found dreams, i.e., abundance of consumer items and technological razzle dazzle. Especially in developing nations, schools have come to represent a transition house that destroys beliefs and traditions before access to the modern world is granted. In such a situation, education no longer plays the role of transmitting the best of a culture. The English (foreign) language, mathematics and natural sciences become bridges into an alien 20th century lifestyle, the passports to the new world, not the upholders of the old.

Notwithstanding education's pivotal role, educational funding is on the decline worldwide, especially in time of cost cutting and restraint.

Additional problems have also shown up:

- i) The economies of developed and developing nations are unable to employ the recent graduates their educational institutions produce;
- ii) access to higher education is still too often not based on student talent or aptitude but on students' financial and political connections;
- iii) despite costly educational ventures a vast number of the earth's population is still illiterate, and further increases in world illiteracy (to 683 million) are projected for 1990;
- iv) in many countries access to schooling is still gender based with girls coming out second best;
- v) serious regional and economic disparities do not allow equality of access to education worldwide.

To substantiate his observations, Coombs relies heavily upon statistics generated by UNESCO, even though he himself casts doubt upon their accuracy. Reporting procedures, especially in developing countries, are not

standardized while statistics from Iron Curtain countries are made public only if they reflect communist ideology. Nonetheless, the overall trends, he claims, are reflected through the statistics.

While the book takes a global view of education, it runs the risk of being too general; of absorbing too much breadth at the expense of depth and detail. A case in point is his discussion of moral education. Now, anyone who has done any reading at all on this topic would have to include the name of Lawrence Kohlberg as one of the main figures (if not the central figure) of the moral education movement in the 1970's. Yet Kohlberg is not mentioned; neither is the cognitive-developmental theory of moral growth. This omission strikes me as serious and makes me question just how closely Coombs has examined particular educational achievements. Also omitted is a reference to China. For a book which claims to take a wide perspective, this omission is notable.

My biggest regret is that *The World Crisis in Education* never lives up to its title. The word "crisis" usually refers to a state of affairs in which decisive change for better or worse is imminent; where one is at the brink of something extraordinary about to happen. Yet after the reader has dutifully digested generality after generality, one is left with the question: "Where is the crisis?" By the end of the book one concludes there has indeed never been a "crisis," only a host of persistent educational problems which, during the past ten or fifteen years, have not gone away. These are problems that are clearly not new. Nor is it the case that Coombs offers a new strategy for dealing with the problems; he makes virtually no substantive recommendations.

In summary, *The World Crisis in Education* is somewhat disappointing. Its interesting elements are outweighed by lengthy discussions of the obvious, while conveying little new information. The book could easily have been edited down to one-half or one-third of its size. Ironically, it is itself a symbol of one of education's ailments: voluminousness has been allowed to replace precision.

H. Walter Ott  
University of New Brunswick