

Reviews

The programmatic format of the books presents the student with a perception of Canada's political emergence against a backdrop of historical events.

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R. Magnuson.
EDUCATION IN THE
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.
Montreal:
McGill University
Printing Services, 1974.
91 pp. \$2.25.

Several years ago, the United States Superintendent of Documents released a small book entitled *Education in the Province of Quebec*. Throughout this volume, Roger Magnuson was able to succinctly and interestingly navigate the rather complicated trails of Quebec education. Dr. Magnuson's book has just been re-issued with the addition of an excellent ten-page final chapter which brings the story of Quebec education right up to and including Bill Twenty-Two.

The author does not simply limit himself to the role of chronicler, but offers relevant insight into the factors in Quebec society which have accounted for the latest directives of the National Assembly and the Ministry of Education. Magnuson sees the decline of the traditional role of the Roman Catholic church, coupled with the growing secularism of the new provincial bureaucrats as a major factor in Quebec education in the seventies. Further, as this trend accelerates, perhaps even matching the centralism of education in France, the hitherto independent universities and private schools may succumb to the pressures of Provincial control.

There is no doubt that Quebec's educational system has entered a new era, and one can only applaud the reprinting of this excellent and relevant book.

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Paul H. Hirst.
KNOWLEDGE AND
THE CURRICULUM:
A COLLECTION OF
PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS.

London:
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
189 pp. \$7.25.

William Pinar, ed.
HEIGHTENED
CONSCIOUSNESS,
CULTURAL REVOLUTION,
AND CURRICULUM THEORY.
Berkeley, Calif.:
McCutchan, 1974.
173 pp. \$9.50

It is somewhat mischievous to bring these two books together in a single review. It is true that both works deal with an important and increasingly cultivated area of inquiry which may be described as philosophy of curriculum. It is also true that both are in the form of anthologies: one a collection of essays which Paul Hirst has written over a number of years, the other the proceedings of a conference held in Rochester in May 1973. But they represent such startling differences in both style and substance that I suspect both Hirst and Pinar would be shocked to be considered bedfellows, in the unlikely possibility that they even knew of each other's existence.

Paul Hirst is a philosopher in the Idealist tradition who employs analytical methods to bring much-needed clarification and precision to some of the basic concepts used in curriculum discourse. Arguing from a theory of forms of knowledge, he explores with great care the relationship between curriculum and knowledge, the structure of objectives, the meaning of liberal education. He then turns his attention to more precise topics including the nature of teaching, the logical and psychological aspects of teaching a subject, the possible meanings of curriculum integration, and the place of the arts and of moral education in the design of curriculum. The works of philosophers are not always relevant — nor even intelligible

— to those concerned with the theory and practice of education, but the inquiries of Professor Hirst are not only relevant and intelligible. They are even sensible. The reader can see an evolution and refinement of the basic themes as he moves through the essays, there is the coherence which only a single author can bring to a collection, and there is an open, cool, and disciplined style. One is also left with a sense of intellectual tidiness and remoteness from realities, including curriculum realities, that is at once the strength and limitation of such an approach.

In contrast, one could certainly not lay a charge of tidiness and remoteness against the contributors to the Pinar collection. The seven major papers form a broad spectrum of approaches and concerns, ranging from "Curriculum Theory: Controversy, Challenge, and Future Concerns" (Robert J. Starrat S.J.), "Toward a Remaking of Curricular Language" (Dwayne Huebner), and "The Politics of Curriculum" (Donald R. Bateman) to the increasingly mystical and poetic "Cognition, Consciousness, and Curriculum" (Maxine Greene), "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education" (James B. Macdonald) and — yes! — "In the Stillness is the Dancing" (William F. Pilder). William Pinar, as convenor of the conference and editor of the collection, tries bravely to put the pieces together in the opening chapter, as do the reports of seven reaction groups that are included at the end. Despite this diversity, the contributions generally reflect a strong existential orientation, a highly personal approach, and a

good deal of anxiety (and some pessimism) about education, society, and the human condition. All of the papers are at the very least provocative and honest, and reading the book is itself an experience in curriculum consciousness-raising — with all the strengths and weaknesses of *that* approach.

It would be easy and cheap to caricature each approach: to count the pedantries dancing on the head of the analytical philosopher's pin or to use a pin to prick the balloon of consciousness-raising pretensions. But there is a substantial community of concern between Paul Hirst and the participants in the Rochester Conference: to ask the important questions of meaning which are — or should be — at the core of curriculum theory and which should provide the rationale for the technological approaches to curriculum development and evaluation so prevalent in the literature and in the practice. Furthermore, a conference of existentialists on heightened consciousness, cultural revolution, and curriculum theory could have its focus sharpened by inviting someone like Paul Hirst, and Professor Hirst might be enriched by having his terrain extended beyond his circle of philosophical colleagues and the Report of the Harvard Committee to Paulo Freire, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Theodore Roszak.

I hope that curriculum theory is sufficiently ecumenical to appreciate the valuable and distinct contributions which these two works have made to the field.

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