

for learning, proposed by such psycholinguists as Miller. Aitchison does a thorough job of reviewing the copious experimentation on comprehension and production that was undertaken in the sixties, and she is astute enough to point out that many of these experiments were constrained by the inadequate linguistic models upon which they were based. For example, the early experiments which attempted to show that the difficulty in comprehending sentences was directly proportional to the number of syntactic transformations which that particular set of sentences had undergone, ignored the semantic differences between negative and passive transformations.

For the reader interested in pursuing any of the topics introduced in greater detail, Aitchison has thoughtfully included a section entitled "Notes and suggestions for further reading." The omission of an index is the only feature detracting from the book's otherwise attractive format. It is a pleasure to recommend *The Articulate Mammal* because its scope is ideally suited for those concerned with language pedagogy, and because it has so capably reviewed the findings of psycholinguists during the sixties and seventies. It would be an even greater pleasure to know that the theoretical insights gleaned from psycholinguistics could be translated into more inspired teaching, and more effective learning, in language classrooms in the decades to come.

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Byron G. Messialis/Joseph B. Hurst.
SOCIAL STUDIES IN A NEW ERA.
New York: Longman.
501 pp. \$9.95.

When one thinks of the numbers of books on Elementary Social Studies, one is inclined to see a parallel in Tennyson's brook. Unfortunately, this particular "brook" is beginning to have all the appearances of a Mississippi: these books become bigger and bigger, and longer and longer, and yet seem to say less and less. It is pleasant to find in this particular issue a volume which has something in particular to say, albeit it takes nigh on five hundred pages.

The particular concern of Messialis and Hurst is that Social Studies as taught in the USA has led to parochial attitudes at a time when internationalism and the organizations of international and national governments increasingly rub shoulders one with the other. Interestingly enough, these authors cite Social Studies as taught in the elementary schools of Canada as being superior in this respect. The Canadian elementary pupil, in their opinion and those of the researchers they have examined, is more aware of the provincial and the national, even of the continental, setting than the American pupil would appear to be.

Messialis and Hurst have attempted to take the parochial setting and, by means of examining the organization in terms of its power structures, challenges, and responses, create from it a micro-system which could then be applied to the macro-systems at state, federal, and international levels; hence their subtitle "The Elementary School as a Laboratory." Alas and alack, they rather forsake this initial approach in the "Preface" by stating: "When formal learning is not relevant to the world of the child, it should be abandoned or revised."

It is only a small saving grace that they do not say "immediately relevant," and that revision is allowed to modify the extreme of abandonment. After all, the relevant world of the child in Arizona will be somewhat different from the relevant world of the child in The Bronx or New Orleans. If the child is to get any sense of proportion about his own world (at this stage I should say that I much prefer "surroundings" to "world" for a child) some considerable degree of formal learning must take place. Thus the relevant world of the child in Arizona is the formal learning for the child in New Orleans.

In the hands of a well-educated elementary school teacher with the courage to carry out formal and functional learning in juxtaposition, this book has some good stuff. My own fear is that with most elementary school teachers (whose training in the Social Studies is, to put it mildly, minimal) this book will be a model used in isolation. It will end up reinforcing if not fossilising the parochialism which Messialis and Hurst so rightly fear, and which they wish to dilute to a balanced interest in the locality and the community.

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