

educators, his findings suggest video games do not lead to poor school performance or excessive aggression but rather are "associated with improved cognitive skills, including attention, logical thinking, and hypothesis testing" (p. 129). I was glad to see an excellent chapter on play psychotherapy by D. Singer entitled "Play as healing." She gives a good practical introduction to her own eclectic style of play therapy, with fine illustrations from two cases.

The highlight of the book was Sutton-Smith's chapter, "Does play prepare the future?" I liked the fact that he didn't write "Does play prepare for the future." That would have been too pragmatic and educational. Sutton-Smith goes beyond that. He enters the world of dialectics and paradoxes. Play is meaning and existence. The kids have a right. They live and know play. The problems are the adults who "act-out" destructively (rather than live playfully and imaginatively) and the "serious" educators who reduce playtime and recess in our schools. Play stimulates vitality, exploration, and curiosity, and creates a life worth living.

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JAMES MOFFETT. *The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual awakenng through education.*
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
 367 pp., US\$25.00 (hard cover) ISBN 1-55542-607-7.

The quality of society and of individuals is really all one, so intimately do they influence each other. Both are evolving, co-evolving. How may the public education base affect culture and the individual consciousness it interacts with? (p. xv)

Since the 1960s, eminent American educator and school reformer James Moffett has written a number of books in which he identifies problems with the school system and provides practical recommendations. In his most recent book, *The Universal Schoolhouse*, he addresses not only educators but also the general public. In response to the current concern about the predicament of public education and the "fate of society," Moffett maintains that the solutions to these huge problems lie in the personal development of each citizen; he equates personal development unequivocally with spiritual growth. Moffett maintains that spiritual development must be the key to solving public problems because "no matter how collective the action, (solutions) depend on mature, enlightened individuals to call for and indeed insist on these solutions" (xvi).

Acknowledging the negative connotations some people attach to the word "spirituality," Moffett explains that it simply means "the life force that animates us and the rest of creation, uniting all things within it." A person develops spiritually by becoming aware of self, and of how s/he fits into the "whole"; as well as by fostering critical consciousness and respect for all aspects of society and the environment. In a very readable style, he claims that not stupidity but knowledge and intelligence are responsible for the ills of today's society. Thus to continue promoting knowledge and power without cultivating morality and spirituality is to court disaster. To answer those critics who cry narcissism or accuse him of "navel gazing" Moffett argues that quite the opposite is true. The spiritual disciplines teach that as a person evolves, it is mandatory to take others with her. New knowledge is to be shared. "So spiritual education is practical not only in generating more knowledge and power but in keeping them within a safe, holistic context where consciousness and culture nourish each other (p. 27)." Personal development, according to Moffett, goes beyond the post-Freudian meaning as being psychologically aware. Although this is an important first step to spiritual growth, Moffett interprets "know thyself" as ultimately meaning "know **they** self." This knowledge of the Self is synonymous with comprehending the cosmos.

Moffett's historical review of school reform boldly discusses the detrimental contribution that our priorities, both political and economic, have made on the educational system and, consequently, on society itself.

In Moffett's opinion school reform up to now has been well-meaning, but it has failed because the "system" on which it is founded is "partial." True reform lies within the holistic or "cosmic framework" of *The Universal Schoolhouse*. Moffett proposes that each community organize an individualized, interactive, interdisciplinary, project-centred, community-based learning network so that learners of all ages could access information at any time. Eliminated would be the traditional notions of curriculum, exams, and teacher-directed, text-book driven classes. The nature of the reform he suggests is one of individualized education characterized by choice and sharing which fosters inner growth as knowledge is absorbed. Self-selected curriculum complimented by tutorials and by peer exchange plus access to electronic technology encourages a learning which becomes self-directed and which allows each person to reach her own potential.

Moffett, as pragmatic as he is spiritual, asks what there is to lose by trying his reforms. He contends that people who adopt "the spiritual view" are inclined to feel better about themselves, to experience success in their undertakings, and behave more charitably towards others.

The Universal Schoolhouse is an enlightening book which offers possible solutions to our societal ills through an educational reform which is preventive rather than remedial. Reducing crime, drug addiction, and the sky-rocketing costs of social services are some rewards Moffett promises. His proposal offers much food for thought. I recommend that both educators and parents read *The Universal Schoolhouse*, but, even more, I recommend it to administrators, to government officials, and to Corporate America because only they have the power to make the changes.

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WAYNE E. FULLER. *One-Room Schools of the Middle West: An illustrated history.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas (1994). 156 pp. 329 B & W photographs. \$29.95. ISBN 0-7006-000673-8.

Using highly selective sampling as his data, Professor Fuller presents a descriptive survey of some 90,000 one-room schools that once flourished in the Middle-West of America. In successive chapters he traces their first appearance as primitive structures of the early pioneers, through "the little white house" of the twentieth century, to their piece-meal closure under policies of consolidation after the Second World War. Throughout, he is not blind to the defects and deficiencies of "one-roomers". But he is also quick to identify these schools' many strengths, not least that of being the heart-beat of continuity in the little farming communities they served.

His style of writing is relaxed, urbane, conversational in tone, which makes for attractive reading. His chapter on "School Days" is very much a sentimental journey into the past, familiar perhaps to Canadian readers from L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. Indeed, Fuller (as have some other writers) regularly falls under the powerful spell these long-gone schools continue to exert. He opens with a poem which is a nostalgic tribute. He himself can wax poetic, as in "the mill is silent, save for the water from the mill-pond spilling over the dam" (p. 127); or elsewhere "for more than a century children had played beneath the shade-trees in the school-yard, or had perhaps attended the