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Linking education to life: [Review of the book Education and the good life by Frederick Mayer (Washington, D.C: Public Affairs Press)]

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BOOKS REVIEWED

A new Journal for historians.



The Journal of African History (Edited by R. A. Oliver and J. D. Fage). Vol. 1, No. 1. (C.U.P.).

The vigorous revival of interest in Africa's rich historic past, marked by the appearance recently of such intriguing books as Basil Davidson's "Old Africa Rediscovered", has very fittingly resulted in the appearance of this new journal (20/- per issue, or 30/- per annual volume of two parts), the first purely historical magazine on Africa.

It contains scholarly, and very readable, articles by world experts on such subjects as the classical origins of the name of Nigeria, the methods of recording the oral history of the Bakuba, the part played by pressures from inside Africa itself on the partition of the continent, and it also includes an excellent survey of the archives of tropical Africa and reviews of all the main books on African history published during the last three years. There is a detailed and devastating condemnation, by Professor C. R. Boxer, of Dr. S. R. Welch's contributions to our knowledge of Africa during the Portuguese era. A magnificently illustrated article on patterned walling in African folk-building, by James Walton of the Basutoland Education Department, drives yet another nail into the coffin of what we might call the "Queen of Sheba" school of thought about the origins of Zimbabwe. The articles are full of unexpected fascinations — the weird details of the annual ritual exhumation of the skeletons of the Ashanti kings, the rise of the lowly Negro slave-soldiers of Mulay Ismail of Morocco to a position where they made and unmade Sultans, the unexpected cropping up of Mongol coins on the coast of East Africa.

A Kuba proverb quoted in one of the articles says "Listen to the smith, don't listen to the one who works the bellows"; in other words, listen to the experts. The contributors, British, American, French, Belgian and South African, are all experts in their fields. No one interested in African history can be anything but grateful for the decision of the Cambridge University Press to launch this journal.

C.T.G.

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Today's educational bases.

The Function of Teaching by A. V. Judges. (Faber).



During the last quarter of a century many attempts have been made to identify the spiritual essentials that understrut our rapidly changing social structure. Most serious teachers are very much aware that an armoury of techniques, methods and machines is of little use to the educationist who hasn't decided to what purpose he teaches. In a period in which goals are confused, **"The Function of Teaching"** by A. V. Judges (Faber) may serve a very helpful purpose. Professor Judges lectures in the History of Education at London University, and his survey includes T. S. Eliot, Karl Mannheim, Jacques Maritain, Martin Buber, Sigmund Freud, William James and William Temple. Each essay is written by a specialist. The contributors include Lord James of Rusholme, Jean Floud, and the former Bishop of London, J. C. W. Wand.

To read this quite excellent anthology is to be subjected to immediate thought, for it must rank as one of the most lucid and provoking of recent publications. It quite rightly offers no central formula, merely presenting with fine clarity the views of seven great modern thinkers. The collapse of the intellectual, the confusion of the humanist, the loss of a consensus of opinion and the absence of any clear sense of direction are all outlined in essay after essay. Each writer has his own solution. Each redefines goal and journey. One does wish that Professor Judge has added as an eighth an essay on some prominent existentialist, for it would have helped the reader to perspective in appreciating the existentialist tendencies in Maritain and Buber.

A member of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) which has just brought out its report on the Adolescent (under the single title: 15 to 18) Professor Judges has already published two other notable books on education.

B.W.R.

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Linking Education to Life.



Education and the Good Life by Frederick Mayer. (Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C.).

This book is one of a series from the prolific and aphoristic pen of Dr. Mayer. Other titles in the series are **Education for Maturity** and **Education for Survival.** Dr. Mayer writes well and convincingly, and unlike many American educationists is not committed entirely to a philosophy of pragmatism which he shows may degenerate into a philosophy of power. Rather he is an anti-authoritarian. He emphasises again the suffocating effect of totalitarian philosophies and the cult of uniformity, whether it be that of Sparta, St. Bernard, Calvin, Nazi Germany, or, may we add, the latest edict from a local education office.

In a penetrating analysis of the teachings of Dewey on the one hand and on the other of Robert Hutchings (the vigorous opponent of utilitarianism to whom college courses in typing and home economics were anathema; who abolished football and compulsory attendance at lectures when he was head of Chicago University; and who was influential in the Great Books Movement), Mayer shows that both philosophers had taken up extreme positions, and sums up his argument briefly in these words: "Knowledge without action leads to intellectual isolation; action without knowledge leads to social sterility."

BOOKS REVIEWED

A chapter on Progressive Education follows in which he makes a careful re-assessment of the disadvantages and advantages of the movement in the light of the needs of American education today.

In spite of the conflicting philosophies of education. in spite of the shortcomings of teachers, in spite of all the social problems which education does not seem to touch, Dr. Mayer holds to his optimistic belief that education, in the broadest sense and not limited by any educator's hobby-horse, can lead to the good life. "The purpose of knowledge is not only to control nature but to promote human happiness.' "Life ultimately is not an economic or a psychological, but a **religious** problem."

Other chapters in the book deal with such topics of perennial interest as the conquest of fear, the dilemma of the liberal, and the nature of God. Although there is nothing especially new, the whole book is written in a refreshing, positive spirit, and is very well worth a leisurely, contemplative reading.

H.H.

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A useful reference of new writing for the senior English Teacher —



Owing to the printing strike in Britain a number of annual publications have been delayed. Among them is THE YEAR'S WORK IN ENGLISH STUDIES (O.U.P.) which is an essential for all who try to keep up to date in these fields. The latest volume covers the year 1957. and may be slightly passé for those who are involved in research, but for the less specialised reader there is still much that remains valuable despite the time lag. **The Year's Work in English Studies** contains critical notices about all the most important books and articles published each year, and it therefore serves a most useful purpose in guiding the reading of those of us who are limited both by time and expense. One notices, occasionally with the recognition due to an old friend, such works as **On Human Communication,** by C. Cherry (M.I.T. Press) a most important work, and a **Handbook of English Grammar** by R. W. Zandvort (Longmans) which the editors describe as "by and away the best" of its genre for 1957, and which follows an excellent bilingual grammar of English for Dutch students. Shakespeare attracts considerable notice, and the work of Bernard Spivak, for instance, traces in the Shakespearean plays the morality structure, which makes Falstaff a Vice and his death tolerable in the old convention. A book on the History plays, **The English History Plays in the Age of Shakepeare** by Irving Ribner (Princeton and OUP) sees in Lear's conduct political rather than ethical crimes. William Blake was the subject of **Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake,** under the main title of **The Divine Vision,** edited by V. de Sola Pinto (Gollancz).

B. R. Jerman (PMLA) refutes the usual contention that the Duke in Browning's **My Last Duchess** is issuing a warning, and N. P. Davis in a biography on Wilkie Collins, brings to light much new material, some of which bears on Charles Dickens. Collins is shown as an antidote for too much Forster.

The Year's Work in English Studies is a most valuable desk book for every senior practitioner of English.

B.W.R.

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A very valuable source book for those interested in audio-visual aids —



Audio-Visual Instruction: Materials and Methods, by J. W. Brown, R. B. Lewis and F. C. Harcleroad. (McGraw & Hill).

This publication bids fair to become a standard work of reference for teachers in search of ideas and sources of Visual Materials. While dealing with methods in a comprehensive fashion, its chief value lies in the fact that it is a veritable mine of information about the where and what of the subject.

The work is written in three parts, each profusely illustrated with diagrams and photographs, some of which are in colour. Each chapter has a very comprehensive bibliography appended.

Part One: Background for Teaching:— This handles some aspects of the theory of Learning and Communication and of Planning for Active Learning.

Part Two: Selecting and Using Ready-made Materials:— The eight chapters in this part cover items such as — Resources for Active Learning, Free Materials, Text and Reference Books, Globes and Maps, Filmstrips and Slides, Films, Radio and Recording and Television.

Part Three: Creating Instructional Materials:— For the practising teacher these eleven chapters in many ways constitute the most valuable part of the book. In them a host of ideas and techniques coupled with their practical applications is listed covering Displaying, Construction ,Demonstrating and Dramatisation, Tape Recording, the use of Community Resources, Modelling and two useful chapters on Still Pictures and Photographic techniques. The final chapter provides some hints on gilding the lily —an encouragement to sometimes discouraged teachers to make the most of the admittedly inadequate resources in many schools.

A reference section completes the book in which every conceivable type of electronic, projection, printing and copying device usable in Schools is dealt with from the practical viewpoint.

Altogether a most enlightening book.

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