Book Review Editor
Ruth Stewart

and their sense of identity. Children's experiences with their friends may also have major effects on their later development, including their orientations towards friendship and love as adults.

Along with individual chapter references (should any piece of research or relevant reading want to be followed up), Rubin also makes practical implications in several of the chapters concerning the important role teachers and parents can play with regard to children's friendships. He believes that cross-sex play among pre-schoolers should be encouraged, and that many children tend to choose same-sex peers due to culturally imposed barriers which should be broken down. Such cross-sex play would then expose boys and girls to a wider range of behavioural styles and activities, expand their pool of potential friends and help to give them a fuller appreciation of the qualities that are in fact shared by the two sexes.

Similar advantages can be applied to cross-age friendships as well. Mixed-age settings, whether in school or socially are able to allow children greater flexibility in finding their 'peers'. Often same-age groups breed competition and aggressiveness, and interaction across age lines may help to diffuse such problems. Such mixed-age interaction can provide younger children with the stimulation and guidance of the older ones, and in turn the older children can benefit from a sense of increased competence, pride and responsibility that comes from helping others. Rubin notes that such benefits of cross-age interaction are increasingly being exploited in tutoring programmes set up in some American primary schools where children of higher grades tutor some of the younger ones on a regular basis. In Australia more widespread use of such 'pupil teaching' could have positive advantages for both child and teacher in instances of composite grades within the one classroom setting. There is also reason to believe that such cross-age relationships might enhance the younger child's conversational repertoire and ability to grasp new concepts.

Many of the advantages of cross-age interaction may be observed between brothers and sisters where the older siblings often take a special interest in the well-being of their younger ones. Cross-age friendships however may also have their negative side, leading to bullying of a younger child by an older one, or rejection of the older by peers because of the younger friend. Parents and teachers might also need to watch that the younger child is not being pushed into advanced activities or that the older child is adopting immature behaviours.

Adults are faced with a dilemma when it comes to their influence on children's friendships. The line between helping and interfering is a fine one and pressure put on children to 'make friends' may lead to an over emphasis on congeniality, dependence and conformity, or on the other hand, withdrawal. Rubin suggests that parents might assume an unobtrusive role respecting the real differences between each child and helping him work toward a quality rather than quantity in those friendships. Losing friends can sometimes be difficult and upsetting for children, so parents should not underestimate these losses. Rather, Rubin feels that the parent could talk with the child about the friendship and turn the experience into a positive one for future friendships.

Throughout this insightful and easily readable book Rubin demonstrates an understanding of children's friendships as best understood in the child's own terms. His examples clearly show the wondrous state of being friends — human relationships of remarkable strength, satisfaction, and importance for future growth.

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CHILDREN AUSTRALIA, R.G. Brown 282, pp Geo. Allen & Unwin, in association with the Morialta trust of South Australia, Sydney 1980, Price $19.50 hardcover, $9.95 paperback

Anyone looking for a broad, general text on children and their families and their relationship with certain social institutions, in Australia, about five or six years ago would have been disappointed. Mounting such a search quite recently this reviewer could find only one such book and that was not even a generalised study and what is more, it was published in 1963. Today the situation is improved, the past couple of years has seen the publication of a number of general texts. The book under review here is a welcome addition to what one may tentatively venture to nominate as the beginnings of an Australian literature on child welfare.

Children Australia is a reader on a number of facets which span issues such as the relationships of children to their families and other institutions in society, the status and rights of children and the changing conceptions and policies relating to their welfare. All this is cast against a background of rapid changes in our society's social and economic conditions. The book helps us to

appreciate just how profound and wide-reaching these changes have been since, say, the period of World War 1; a long time? Not really as there are still many elderly citizens with us who would be able to recount these changes from their personal experience instead of the documentation which is the basis for writers such as the contributors to this volume.

There are twenty-two contributors to the book, many of them working in or otherwise connected with South Australia, but the writing is directed to all-Australia and it is a tribute to the contributors to say that not a hint of State parochialism creeps into the text.

There is always a certain amount of pondering on the part of a reviewer about how to approach a review of a reader; the criteria that have to be applied are somewhat different from those relevant to a one-author book. In this particular case this reviewer has thought it best to share with the readers of this journal the criteria he set up. It also makes it easier then to discuss the contributions in terms of the criteria rather than go through those contributions one by one which, in any case, seeing that there are twenty-two of them, would produce too big a review and probably fail to do justice to each of the contributors anyway.

Before using the criteria though, it would be useful to state that the book is divided into eight parts which between them deal with topics like children in society, children in families, ethnicity, values, children's health, education, the economics of child rearing and law.

Now for the criteria; there are six of them:

1. Is the subject fully covered?
2. Are the contributions of a minimally acceptable literary and scholarly standard in terms of the readership to which they are directed?
3. Do the contributions hang together; i.e. does the book present as a coherent statement?
4. Is there anything new in the material as distinct from a reworking of known issues; does the material use the latest available data and information?
5. Is the style of writing and presentation at an acceptable level?
6. Does one put the book down with a feeling of satisfaction as having fulfilled the expectations with which one picked it up?

We can now go through these criteria in a little more detail:

Is the subject fully covered?

Coverage is wide but by no means comprehensive. Whilst, as already indicated, ethnicity, including aboriginal children, values, health education, child rearing economics and law each rate a chapter, there is virtually nothing on demography, child abuse or substitute care, outside of adoption. Children's rights, a topical issue, is covered as a legal issue, in Richard Chisholm's chapter. It receives only scant attention as a philosophical one, here and there throughout the book.

Of course it is understood that the book does not set out to be comprehensive and therefore one should not criticise it for omitting matters which were not part of its brief, still...

Are the contributions of a minimally acceptable literary and scholarly standard in terms of the readership to which they are directed?

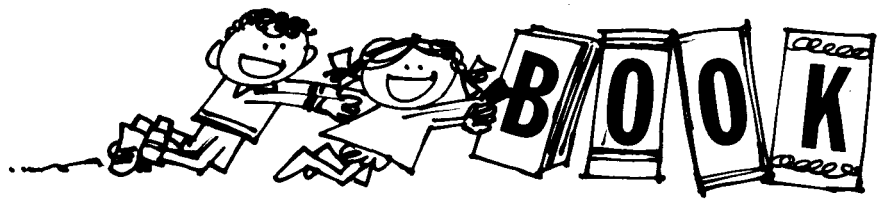
The book is stated to be of likely interest "to all who are concerned for Australia's children". One could not get a broader readership than that, so how can one judge the literary and scholarly standards? Strictly speaking this is impossible. What this reviewer has done instead is to imagine this to mean a reader who is at a standard of comprehension equivalent to those people who have got, at minimum, a few H.S.C. subjects to their name. At that level the book is comprehensible and the writing refreshingly free from jargon and generalisations are backed up by evidence. All the subjects' specialists represented here do this well and there is substantial recourse to references throughout.

Do the contributions hang together, i.e. does the book present as a coherent statement?

The answer to this is 'yes', one gets a sense of the theme of child welfare through the range of contributions. It is difficult to know whether these were specially commissioned contributions, Jim Giles' contribution clearly wasn't as he opens it with a reference to "responding to Dr Smolicz' paper", which does not find a place in the book, and evidently that response was written for a seminar. That apart, one senses the touch of Ray Brown's editorial hand smoothing out the wrinkles which any book with so many contributors must inevitably produce.

Is there anything new in the material as distinct from a reworking of known issues; does the material use the latest available data and information?

Here too, as far as one can judge, the material presents as fresh. Obviously where ideas, as distinct from facts, are offered, these have been around for some time and it is difficult to present anything that is really novel. But even so, writers like Goodnow and Burns or Brown himself manage to discuss ideas in a refreshing manner and Graeme Speedy, in particular brings us up to date in an excellently written chapter on children and values in which he features important writers on moral development like Piaget and Kohlberg. Others who write on ideas *and* facts like Malcolm Skilbeck, do an equally creditable job. Skilbeck is Director of the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra, recently consigned to the furnace by the Razor Gang. If Skilbeck's contribution reflects the standards of that Centre, as the reviewer is inclined to believe it does, then it would be better if the Razor Gang were so consigned rather than that Centre. Those writers whose stock in trade must be more heavily dependant on empirical data also deserve praise. Drs Hetzel and Vimpani's article on



children's health is really instructive and does make use of the most up to date information and shows by comparison with the medically most advanced countries how much we still need to do in Australia before we catch up. Peter Saunders on the economic costs of children and child poverty in Australia is equally sound and presents material that is not normally available to the general reader. Richard Chisholm, on law, presents one of the best, concise overviews to be found in Australian writing.

Is the style of writing and presentation at an acceptable level?

Mention of the general lucidity of the writers' style has already been made and satisfaction expressed. Equally Ray Brown's editorship has been commended. But there are rather more mistakes in the actual production than one would expect to see, especially in a book which comes from one of the world's highly respected publishing houses. There are many typographical errors, there is one, long, duplicated paragraph, which should have been spotted at the proof reading stage and in Eckermann's chapter on Aboriginal children, references are numerically mismatched. Trivial? Maybe, but faintly irritating just the same.

Does one put the book down with a feeling of satisfaction as having fulfilled the expectations with which one picked it up?

Presumably that depends on one's expectations. This reviewer had high expectations and with only a few exceptions he was satisfied. Even the exceptions do not refer to the whole of any one contributor's writing, rather that here or there a few important points were glossed over — e.g. in Skilbeck's chapter, when he failed adequately to address the issues on education raised by neo Marxist writers or even by non-Marxist critics of education, or when Eckermann's analysis on Aborigines becomes too partisan and reads rather distorted, toward the end of her chapter.

But one can't have everything and all in all, the book stands up well to criticism, unless indeed one takes one or other particular, doctrinaire, ideological stand, and then, of course, it would be all condemnation from a reviewer.

In conclusion then, this is a well assembled collection of contributions of good quality which do what they set out to do. This reviewer, for instance, has no hesitation in placing it on his reading list for his tertiary students and equally has no hesitation in commending it to any other reader who is interested in children and concerned about the child welfare policies pursued in Australia.

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ANNIE'S COMING OUT. Rosemary Crossley and Anne McDonald. Penguin Books, Australia. 1980. $4.50. 251p.

Reviewed by J.M. Houston. B.A. Dip.Soc.Stud. Post graduate student in Behavioural Science, Department of Social Work, LaTrobe University.

Anne McDonald suffers from bilateral hemiplegia and athetosis resulting from birth injury. When she was three, she was placed in St Nicholas Hospital, an institution for profoundly retarded physically handicapped children, where she remained until she was eighteen.

When Anne was sixteen, Rosemary Crossley, a ward assistant at St Nicholas, began to believe that Anne was not retarded. This book is an account of her successful struggle to have Anne discharged by order of the Supreme Court and against the wishes of her parents.

Anne cannot speak and she appears to have no voluntary movement. Miss Crossley believes that she is able to communicate with her, with the aid of an alphabet board. She describes how she stands behind Anne, pushing her head and shoulders forward, supporting her arm and providing stimulation to the extensor muscles (p.53) This is a stressful and slow procedure and the sections of the book written in this way must have taken many hours.

The first part of the book describes the period immediately following Miss Crossley's suspicion that Anne was not mentally retarded. It could have been a most moving story but Miss Crossley tends to concentrate on the teaching of mathematical ideas rather than the communication of Anne's thoughts and feelings.

The academic progress described is extraordinary. Within thirty days of the first attempts at communication, Anne is said to have been deducing the rules for dealing with negative numbers and resolving Algebraic equations. (p.105).

Through the alphabet board, Anne reveals that she had been interested in mathematics for some time. She learnt numbers from Sesame Street, fractions from another severely handicapped resident with whom she communicated in a secret language, and geometry from watching the napkins being folded.

> "I had a go at the speed of light using the distance of the moon from the earth (which had been given coverage during the Apollo missions) and the stated delay time for radio signals. My calculation was unavoidably rough, because the time was to the nearest second." (p.107)
>
> "I ruined a large part of a stupendous work on A bombs because I could not divide