

Reviews

The Child and the City

Colin Ward

London: The Architectural Press.

ISBN 0 85139 118 4. £5.95

There have been countless books on children but none like Colin Ward's. In terms of importance, originality and impact it has to be rated alongside the seminal works of writers like Piaget and Bruner as a study of children's behaviour. Not that *The Child in the City* bears any resemblance to the classic studies of childhood. Colin Ward's brief is quite different; to see the built environment of the city from the eyes of the child, to see how he responds, to understand why he does so and then to use this understanding to ask how the link between city and child can be made better to the mutual advantage of both.

But to state the purpose, even one so noble, is still to miss the essential quality of the book — the author's perceptive eye for the physical environment that picks up all the details that are usually missed by even the most practiced observer, but which are central to the child's world. Such details are the network of scaffolding, the curved under arch of a bridge, the strange properties of street debris and above all, the availability of water in the summer city. But it is not only the objects that are to be seen, it is the essential space around them and between them where the child's life is lived that is identified in this volume. Here Ward is wonderfully helped by Ann Golzen's remarkable photographs.

The child's world so portrayed is far removed from the picture-book image of the country child that dominates so much of our thinking about the young. Ward replaces these cosy illusions with reality — the reality that the majority of our children live in cities and know little or nothing beyond their immediate environment.

Yet the picture Ward portrays is not without joy; the account of New York children bathing in the waters of the fire hydrant can stand alongside most idylls of childhood. But the essential feature of the child's use of the city is that it is largely achieved by stealth or challenge against authority. For Ward the official policy of most cities is the segregation of the child; ostensibly to protect him but in reality to prevent him from interfering with adult life. To achieve this the city is made 'child proof' — odd corners are fenced off, junk is cleared away, restrictive legislation is enacted, public facilities are made indestructible and segregated parts are set aside for the young. For Ward the way forward is precisely the opposite. 'A city that is really concerned for the needs of its young will make the whole environment accessible to them because, whether invited to or not, they are going to use the whole environment'. Unquestionably Ward and the children are on the same side and on their behalf Ward persuasively

argues that his way of thinking may well reduce the very large numbers of children who are at war with their environment and those who control it and convert them to exciting, satisfying exploitation of the city environment.

The book is of immense importance for design educators. Not only can it help them to see the built environment around them with new eyes but it can also help them to share the consciousness of the children they teach — a consciousness that is all too often ignored, undervalued or suppressed in the school. This book, along with the results of the project on art and the built environment currently being directed by Ward at the Town and Country Planning Association (reviewed in *Studies in Design Education and Craft*, Vol. 9.1) are likely to make an immensely powerful effect on the course of design education.

John Eggleston

Engineering Science for Technicians Vol. I

M. Donagh, Waterworth and Phillips

Edward Arnold, £2.95

This new text, written and illustrated by a partnership of electrical and mechanical engineers, is designed for TEC Engineering Science courses for mechanical and production engineering technicians.

Electric circuit theory comes first and a clear start is made with current realistically presented as electron flow, correctly defined in S.I units — although the form C/s is preferred to the more usual Cs^{-1} . The positive current model is used for electromagnetic field interactions without it being stated that this connection is in the opposite direction to electron flow.

Calculation methods are developed logically in a way students will understand, with equations to be remembered strongly emphasised and plenty of numerical exercises. One third of the book is devoted to electrical fundamentals with a generally traditional approach and well-trying teaching methods.

Almost two-thirds of the text is given to basic mechanics, beginning with static forces but again using the unconventional N/m^2 form instead of Nm^{-2} . Technical diagrams are of a high standard and follow accepted practice; an elementary treatment of thermal energy completes the book.

The treatment throughout this text emphasises practical and observable phenomena; the presentation is of a high standard, consistent and meticulous, and, in addition to its intended purpose, the book would make an adequate text for parts of a traditional A-level Physics syllabus.

Ann Griffith (editor) — Appropriate technology, a school and community hit — Community Service

Volunteers, 237 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NJ (no price given).

Practical ideas for teachers are always welcome and this package of 8 units and an Introduction brings some important fresh thinking; each unit consists of 6-16 A4 pages.

The *Introduction* unit emphasises the inefficiency of inappropriate technology — wasteful use of resources, indifference to natural environment, complex and impersonal organisations — whilst drawing attention to the material and cultural values of simple technologies through studies in History of Technology and the current Alternative Technology movement.

Subsequent units are of variable quality, but all incorporate tested ideas for teaching and project work. *Windpower*, for example, provides data for propeller design, whilst *Solar Energy* makes do with rough sketches and some inexplicit photographs. Production of *Methane* as a fuel from organic waste appears to be a practicable (if slow acting) school project, but the *Recycling* unit consumes a lot of the space on its recycled paper with some inconsequential illustrations. From recycling of resources (from paper to buildings) we move to bicycling in the *Transport* unit, and ideas for investigation projects in transport use and attitudes.

Spinning, Weaving and Dyeing is particularly good on facts, economically presented, to assist constructive practical work, whilst *Print* uses up 10 pages with examples of untidy and shabby workmanship in amateur publishing. The *Farming* unit opens promisingly with suggestions for farming your school field or garden, or adjoining derelict land, but quickly points out the responsibilities for daily care of bees, goats and fish.

One must admit that this package contains many good ideas, but also much that may well prove impractical — either because of inadequate information or because local conditions are unsuitable; the point about 'appropriate technology' being that a given technology may be appropriate in only a few localities. Another factor that worries your reviewer, at least, is an impression of untidiness and inefficiency in presentation of the material, that appears to defeat its object. Before reprinting, the authors might gather to consider whether the package is to be designed for appeal to the pupils' sense of mediocrity, or to provide serious information to teachers who may not be impressed by slapdash sketches, incomplete diagrams, or unexplained photographs.

Michael Sayer

Teaching Industrial Education Principles and Practices

Robert C. Andrews and Emanuel E. Ericson
Chas. A. Bennett Co. Inc., Peoria, Illinois

This book appears to be designed mainly to help the American student who is preparing for a career as a teacher of industrial arts. If you are looking for something about practical craftwork in schools this book is not for you, but for those interested in comparative education it holds much of interest.

It is divided broadly into two aspects. The first half of the book traces briefly the early history of craft education, starting with Francis Bacon and John Comenius, and working up the centuries through John Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Fellenburg, Froebel, Scandinavian Sloyd, Uno Cygnaeus, Otto Solomon, and then into the history of manual training in the USA. There follows a catalogue of research and development programmes that have taken place over the years and of the effects they have had on curriculum trends. This leads to a chapter on course construction and one on goal orientation — our jargon is 'aims and objectives'. We then come to program emphases — a program being a course — which is followed by a chapter on the design and management of the 'laboratory' which I think we would recognise as a school workshop. The second half of the book deals with things such as beginning the school year, class organisation and discipline, teaching and learning, media and technology, safety, evaluation of students and closing the school year. There are also two chapters on effective teaching and professional development.

I think you will see from this synopsis that this book seeks to offer an almost birth to death experience for the budding teacher. There's nothing wrong with that, of course, provided that the life in-between is of reasonably rich quality, which brings me to the book proper.

The title itself reflects a problem not unknown in our own design and craft field — the search for a suitable name; one that carries dignity and status without deserting our craft heritage. We have tried handicraft, craft, design and craft, creative craft, technology and the like. Our cousins have settled for 'industrial arts' or 'industrial education' but there are clear indications that they, no more than we, have quite cracked it yet:

'Over the years, substantial updating and refinement have occurred in the curricular of programs of industrial education. This continuous alteration has resulted from teacher dissatisfaction with traditional subject matter, student and teacher boredom with annual project repetition, and low esteem of 'practical' education by academicians and the public. Resultant innovations or 'revolutions', have failed to find wide acceptance, however, and their impact on the profession has been relatively small'.

It is interesting also to note similarities with our own curriculum in the development of integrated approaches that have sought to embrace home economics, fabrics, art, science, mathematics, environmental studies of pollution, education for work, careers and so on. In one way or another this book relates industrial arts to almost every facet of the curriculum. Indeed the basic message is not much different from current thinking in our own design and craft field, and one might be forgiven for wondering on which side of the Atlantic some of the ideas originated.

Another similarity worth noting is that it abounds with the same fond assumptions one reads so often in our own literature about the outcomes we expect from the teaching process:

'For those students placing emphasis on career preparation, industrial educators should try not to focus on skills as specific as those desired by machinists, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, welders, press operators, or auto mechanics. Since most individuals alter or completely change their occupations during their lives, it is imperative for all students to understand educational flexibility. For example, the press operator, although deeply interested in making a particular contribution, is usually a better citizen and a more effective contributor to society and his or her job when he or she has gained a necessary perspective regarding his or her occupation. Motivation and contentment, so important to the effective industrial enterprise, are easily understood by the worker who knows the value of his occupation'.

If I interpret this passage correctly it centres on a charmingly naive assumption that 'the worker' will be a better member of society if he has been taught something of the dignity of his work and of its value to the community. But when I speculate on, for example, the miners' strike of 1974 and the strike record of key factions of the Leyland work force, to name but two industrial groups, it seems to me that our educational system already does a pretty fair job, one way or another, of teaching folk the value of their occupations.

But for most British readers the main problem of the book will be one of semantics. Allowing for legitimate American style it is packed with needless jargon. For example:

'Data Communication. The communication process begins with thought conception, or ideation, resulting from an awareness of needs. Next, research and analysis intervene before messages and meanings are encoded for transmission. The act of communication requires a channel or transference medium to carry the messages to a receiver. Intelligence comes into play for decoding and evaluation prior to trial and experimentation. The process is complete when the original message sender acknowledges feedback from the receiver through observation or implementation'.

I think this means that you need to have an idea before you can talk about it.

Perhaps the type of question that a review of this book should seek to answer is of what value will it be to a craft teacher faced on a Monday morning with a class of less-able fifteen-year-olds. I must confess that I found difficulty in relating it to the reality of such a situation, but, of course, allowance must be made for the fact that it is written in relation to American schools.

But I wouldn't have thought that American fifteen-year-olds were so different from our own.

Denis Taberner

Salt-Glazed Ceramics

Jack Troy

Watson-Guptill, New York: Pitman, London. £11.50

Salt-glazing, unlike most ceramic techniques, originates in Europe rather than in the Far East, more precisely in the Rhineland. It may have started as early as the 12th Century, was brought to a high degree of perfection around 1500, after which date salt-glazed stonewares were widely exported and prized for their durability. Nobody knows for sure how it was discovered that sodium vapour from salt in the kiln fire-box reacts with clay bodies to form a fine transparent glaze. An attractive theory is that old barrels in which sauerkraut or salt fish had been stored were used as fuel. At any rate the secret was closely guarded by the Rhenish potters. Other traditions suggest that the discovery may have been made independently in several places including the Staffordshire potteries around 1680, though this seems unlikely. John Dwight of Fulham, a genius among potters if ever there was one, has a far stronger claim to have invented or introduced the technique to England and much litigation was required to protect his patent.

Salt-glazing has attracted a number of artist-potters — particularly in the USA — in recent years, less, one suspects, for reasons of the economy of a once-fired method and more because, like Raku, it offers the possibility of influencing clay objects in a creative manner *during the firing process itself*. Notable among these American potters is Don Reitz who contributes an embarrassing foreword to this book: (Dear Jack, Can't for the life of me figure out how you managed to sit on your posterior and assemble this compendium of facts on salt-glazing). Thank goodness 'Dear Jack' generally writes better than this: he is a potter and teacher working in Pennsylvania and his 'compendium' is a lavishly illustrated guide to an ancient mystery with the emphasis in text and plates heavily upon its development in the hands of contemporary potters.

The author is a practising enthusiast rather than a scholar and his first historical chapter is sketchy

though readable. It is odd that he omits any mention of the Martin brothers while giving three pages of illustrations of the work of the Lambeth Doulton artists and one would have expected to find in the bibliography Blacker's *A.B.C. of English Salt-Glazed Stoneware* since earlier and inferior books are listed. However, British readers will particularly welcome the numerous illustrations of the robust, functional objects made in their 'groundhog' kilns by North American potters in the 19th Century. It is interesting to learn that they often farmed in summer and made pots in winter in the same way Staffordshire potters had done two hundred years earlier.

Mr. Troy's subsequent chapters on clays, slips, glazes, decoration and on building, stacking and firing salt-burning kilns are thoroughly informative and full of hard-won practical advice. Proper attention is paid throughout to considerations of health, safety and pollution. He is obviously fascinated by the endless scope for experiment offered by salt-glazing but experiment can become an end in itself and the method almost a way of life. Only about a quarter of his own work is in salt-glaze and he retains a healthy sense of proportion, writing that 'Vapour glazing is no different from any other ceramic technique in the sense that it can be seen as a way to bring about a satisfying synthesis of form and surface'.

The sixteen colour plates and two hundred black and white illustrations are generally excellent and well captioned. Proof reading gets a trifle slapdash at times; a North Staffordshire reviewer is bound to wince at 'Barslem' and 'Hanlet' for Burslem and Hanley, but these are minor blemishes in a handsome and useful book which will interest potters even if they have no scope for burning salt in their own kilns.

Michael Paffard

American Book Design and William Morris

Susan Otis Thompson
Bowker: London and New York.
ISBN 0 8352 0984 9

One of the major influences exercised by William Morris was through his Kelmscott Press. Through it, he brought about a revolution in typography, illustration and book production in general that equalled if not transcended his influence elsewhere in the art and craft movement. He did far more than redefine the book as an *objet d'art*; he arrested the crudity and traditionalism of Victorian book production and in many ways was responsible for the high quality not only of specialist but also of a great deal of the mass production volumes of the twentieth century.

If the opportunity for a renaissance in book production in Britain was great, it was even greater in the United States. Susan Otis Thompson analyses in this book, with impressive scholarship, the dramatic impact that Morris's ideas had upon printers and publishers in America at the end of the nineteenth century. She demonstrates that the effect of Morris's ideas and example was greater there than at almost any other place and time. In the short period from 1891 until the early years of the twentieth century a transformation of style, quality and sensitivity occurred in American book production; the author has produced an immensely detailed and impeccably researched account of the events of that period. After an historical account of the work of Morris and his period, she devotes her volume to an account and analysis of the American publishers, illustrators and printers in which she traces not only the development of ideas of the art and craft movement, but also the related impact of Art Nouveau and the Aesthetic Style.

The numerous, beautifully reproduced illustrations of rare, inaccessible books that illustrate the analysis are alone sufficient to make the book a desirable and welcome possession, whilst the appendix, Morris's Statements on Book Design, form one of the finest guides to the principles of good design in existence and should be engraved on the walls of all design studios by law.

The overall quality of the book — in type, paper, illustration, printing and binding — amply lives up to Morris's concepts, though it is a pity that in no place was colour used to reproduce some of the superbly coloured originals. And one final criticism must be made — the publishers persist in the American tradition of failing to acknowledge the printer — leaving us with the conventional 'printed and bound in the United States of America'. Even the author in her generous list of acknowledgements fails to remember the printers and the binders. Morris, whilst almost certainly welcoming the author's endeavour, would not have approved of such an omission.

John Eggleston

Terracotta: the Technique of Fired Clay Sculpture

Sculpture by Bruno Lucchesi.
Text and Photographs by Margit Malstrom
New York: Watson-Guptill. London: Pitman. £11.50

This book is, in part, an adulatory pictorial tribute to Bruno Lucchesi, a farmer's boy from Tuscany who moved to the USA in 1957 and is described on the dust jacket as 'the undisputed modern master of terracotta technique'. It opens with a photograph and verbal portrait of this latter-day Donatello followed by plates and a representative sample of

his work. To one viewer his facility with clay seems perilously close to slickness and the feeling expressed in his neo-renaissance work to verge at times on sentimentality or the propaganda-realism of the rent collection courtyard of Tayi. At least he does not seem to inhabit the same world as Marini, Giacometti, Frink or even Rodin.

Margit Malstrom, a sculptor and freelance writer who has been a senior editor with the publishers, contributes two introductory chapters on 'Tools and Materials' and 'Working in Terracotta' and a final chapter on 'Firing and Finishing'. These are brief and informative at an elementary and practical level if you can stomach her style. Sometimes she sounds like a trans-Atlantic parody of a WI lecturer ('get a burlap bag from your local coffee importer ... wire is available from hardware stores'); at other times she coaxes away inhibitions like a popular sex-manual ('a sensual, tactile experience ... move it around, manipulate it any way you please ... Try as many approaches as you can. Experiment. Above all play!!).

The meat of the book, however, which may be helpful to the amateur modeller, comprises seven picture-sequences of Lucchesi at work. There are roughly fifty pictures each of him making a male and a female torso and briefer sequences of standing, seated and reclining figures, a bas relief and a portrait head growing to completion. The artist's decorated hands and hairy forarms are seen about their sensual business, stroking the full roundness of a buttock here, adding a penis there, in a way that often makes the wordy captions redundant.

No concessions are made to the British reader in the list of suppliers though dollar prices are translated into sterling in the text and Plexiglas (available at 'five and tens') is explained as Perspex.

Michael Paffard

The date to book in your diary now...



International Craft, Design & Technology Education Exhibition

The first major specialised international exhibition for this increasingly important aspect of education.

Open only to professional visitors.

HARROGATE EXHIBITION HALL
Thursday, Friday, Saturday
November 2nd, 3rd, 4th 1978

Member
aeo
Association of
Exhibition Organisers

Details from:

International Craft & Hobby Fair Ltd.,
3, Rothesay Drive, Highcliffe,
Christchurch, Dorset.
Telephone: 042 52 72711.