Plunkett, D. (1990). *Secular and spiritual values: Grounds for hope in education*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 156 pp. $45.00, (hardcover).

Dudley Plunkett contends that "our hope of locating a unifying purpose to life, one that will allow us to become regenerative in education and society, depends upon the recognition that we are all spiritual beings" (p. 14). For Plunkett, a spiritual being finds his or her meaning, purpose, and direction in life in relationship to a divine presence who has ultimate power over human existence. "One radical conclusion to be drawn . . . is the taboo that modern society has imposed upon the spiritual vision of humanity issuing from a Creator's intention must be broken. In other words, enquiry into questions of ultimate meaning and purpose must again be seen as a meaningful activity in itself" (p. 15).

Criticism of the market economy of education is discussed in chapter 2. Plunkett defines his purpose: "I see the whole relevance of this book as depending upon education's potential to impact upon the political world through its concern with values" (p. 27). Education is required to give a public account of itself as either an item of consumption for which an economic cost has to be paid, or an investment from which an economic return can be derived. The human person is displaced and rights, needs, and wants are disregarded, except insofar as these can generate a monetary transaction. In Britain, the national curriculum developed from the need for schools to hear the complaints of industry and thus more easily meet industry's educational requirements. "Curriculum innovation was based upon a whole-hearted acceptance of the wisdom of subordinating education to the market economy and a notion of vocation as a response to the market rather than to a 'calling' from within" (p. 31). According to the author, the emphasis upon measurable outcomes has led to the widespread phenomenon of teaching to the tests. Personal and moral education receive little attention.

Plunkett continues with a critique of those theories which place critical reasoning above all other considerations. Marxists see ideas and ideals as having a purely material or economic source: Human progress depends essentially upon scientific and material progress. The liberal-humanist view has "a kind of worship of humanity and of human intelligence" (p. 52). Morality, genetic improvement, and interpersonal and international relations can all be modelled and promoted through human reasons and only by human reason. The inadequacy of this view is seen because "rationalism is being discussed here as a partial view of reality, as essentially atheistic *a priori*. Its reality in fact ends with the human mind, which means that it leaves entirely out of account the possibility of a Creator who has given humanity the basis for its existence, for evolution, for morality and the purposes of human life" (p. 58).

The holistic model is an alternative in which the whole person, body, mind, and spirit and also the person in community are recognized. The role of the teacher is less to be a source of information and ideas than a guide toward enriched methods of enquiry and learning. Personal values play an important part in the fruitfulness of holistic educational approaches and education in values cannot be left to chance or treated as insignificant. Personal, social, and moral education are part of the core of learning. Plunkett appreciates this more inclusive approach and feels that its theoretical potential as an alternative to pragmatic and rational education is great, but that in practice it risks becoming polemical, accusatory, politically marginalized or alienated, sectarian, and self-righteous due to the fact that there is no holistic orthodoxy or consensus — merely widely discrepant and therefore competitive variants of the basic insight. What then, does Plunkett's transcendent perspective have to offer? The aim is "not to argue for an exclusive mode of thinking, but to ensure that, in considering rational and holistic contributions to educational policy, the claims of the spiritual are not forgotten or underestimated" (p. 79). A spiritual nature carries radical implications for life as a whole and thus also for education. "The implication is not that our rational powers are unavailing, or that our imaginations are misled, but that we need always to leave space for the whole scope of our awareness, rational, holistic and spiritual, in all aspects of existence" (p. 80).

Reading this important work is not easy. The many references to curriculum projects in Britain undoubtedly aid the British reader in attaching Plunkett's comments to actual curricula, but it makes reading and understanding more difficult for those less familiar with educational practices in Britain. Readability is also hampered by a somewhat labored style in the early chapters as well as small print and a crowded appearance.

However, it is worth the effort in that the author explicates the increasingly important view that discovering meaning in life must be part of the educational process. Plunkett, however, can only partially accomplish the task of telling us how to translate the spiritual into relevant educational policy and practice. He does say that it is necessary for teachers to seek to identify their own educational values and purposes. Value discrepancies within a given staff do exist, but a core of shared values may emerge with discussion and reflection. Plunkett hopes for major experiences of personal development among teachers who are encouraged to recognize and accept their cultural and spiritual responsibilities in developing schools and teaching based upon thought-through values. He desires "to reexamine the proposition that there is a source of ultimate values" (p. 124). He feels professional concern about teaching controversial issues all too often results in a values agnosticism in which substance is abandoned in favor of strategies of procedural neutrality. It may be more useful to speak of "contentious" issues in which it is legitimate to recognize a diversity of truths,

where each one matters to whoever hold it, including the teacher. The vision of the educational process as one in which the search for meaning in life is encouraged and modelled by both teachers and curriculum is a pleasant one. Educators would do well to take Plunkett seriously.

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Silver, H. & Brennan, J. (1988). *A liberal vocationalism.* New York: Methuen, 277 pp., $22.00 (softcover).

Apparently the Duke of Edinburgh once stated that "If it's easy to start an argument about transport, it is just as easy to start a riot about education and training." Going beyond this provocative quotation, Harold Silver and John Brennan attempt to stop the riot by stimulating a discussion. A debate between relative differences in education and training should challenge the values of educators as they plan for entry into the 21st century. It is indicative of the problem, however, that the topic remains a fringe discussion in most curricula. The worth of this monograph, which examines and calls for a review of basic assumptions, might be of most significance if the "hybrid phrase" (p. 233) of the title attracts thinkers positioned on either side of the issue.

The book, based upon research sponsored by the Council for National Academic Awards, London, is divided into three parts. Section 1 is an excellent summary of the stigma and dichotomies that have evolved out of polarized arguments that split theory and practice, knowing and doing, reflective thought and skilled action. The authors also place the context of their research within the realities of the late 20th century by recognizing that public demands for accountability and relevance are likely to shape public policy for the indefinite future. Canadian educators, wishing to understand how their educational system evolved, will find the historical analysis of how schisms between education and training were created in England and Scotland a useful framework for consideration. Some reflection about educational roots would place in context the existent distinctiveness of the Canadian educational systems.

Section 1 is worth a read just to review the quality of the arguments; included are references to John Stuart Mill, Cardinal John Henry Newman, C.P. Snow, Lord Eric Ashby, the Duke of Edinburgh, A.N. Whitehead, John Dewey, and Martin Trow — all illustrious articulators of the classical academic tradition. While there is not unanimity of opinion, phrases such as "intellectual vision," "special illumination," "contribute(s) both to his own happiness and his social usefulness" and "creators of knowledge" are characteristic descriptors of the value of higher education (pp. 4, 9, 15, 36).