

Ryken, Leland. WINDOWS TO THE WORLD: LITERATURE IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1985. 192 pages, paper, \$7.95.

Two questions regularly arise when we use a Christian framework for selecting and reading literature: What constitutes morality in literature, and How shall we deal with fiction?

In *Windows to the World*, Leland Ryken, Wheaton College English professor, addresses these issues. He also defends art as a legitimate part of life, calling it an incarnation of ideas or meanings that interpret and extend our world. In *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, he reminds us that we learn the fact that "lovers have died young and fair"; and in the story of the Good Samaritan we find a literary, rather than expository, definition of *neighbor*.

We don't merely look at art, Ryken says; we look through it to our experience in the world. Thus the artist/writer's imagination can present Truth in various ways: through people speaking in sonnets, through scenes made out of paint, and through sculpture larger than life.

Ryken points to the biblical use of poems, stories, and visions—literary forms that engage the imagination—all of which are more prevalent in Scripture than sermons and expository theological explanations. Ryken also cites figures of speech, "poetry's thoroughly fictional element," which are not only entertaining but also useful in stating truth much in the same way that "lies" such as *the sun rises* and *a bear of a truth* "state a truth."

Committed to a biblical definition of morality, Ryken explores the complex issue of literature and morality. He reminds his reader that literature can embody a moral viewpoint by negative examples and urges the Christian critic to discriminate between subject matter—settings, characters, and events—and theme or perspective.

Then he sets up some guiding principles: We shouldn't confuse manners and morals. We should look with suspicion on a work that moralizes because it probably fails to qualify as good literature. If it isn't good literature, it probably lacks the power to make an impact on the reader.

On the other hand, one criticism often leveled at Adventist writing (rewarding of virtuous behavior and punishment of evil-doing) deserves reappraisal if judged by Ryken's defense of "poetic justice." Although the writer may not think life is just, he may use the ending to send the reader back to the work as a whole.

Ryken's advice—to view the whole before interpreting the final meaning—is a help in reading his book as well. Although he seems to overstate the case for examining a writer's intentions and distinguishing between expository and literary writing, his other chapters bring balance to these emphases.

Windows to the World could enhance a literary criticism course. It is rich in references to critical and literary works—more than 150 footnotes are conveniently listed with consecutive numbering. The book will also help teachers prepare a defense of literature study. It could assist an acquisitions librarian or literature course designer.

Windows to the World offers specific ways to look at literature, including Northrop Frye's heady *Anatomy of Criticism* paradigm, as well as a world-view paradigm that includes philosophy's major questions: What does this work imply about reality (What really exists?); about morality (What is good/bad behavior?); about values (What is of worth in experience?); and about the nature of existence. Ryken's rich subsections on each of these questions can offer needed perspective when teachers feel they have strayed too far into the trivial, tedious, or academic.—Edna Maye Loveless.

Dr. Edna Maye Loveless is Professor of Communication at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

McDowell, Josh. WHAT I WISH MY PARENTS KNEW ABOUT MY SEXUALITY. San Bernardino, California: Here's Life Publications, 1987. 232 pages, paper, \$6.95.

While not offering any new theories, this book does review and reinforce aphorisms that are often bantered about but never really documented. For example, more than 50 percent of the 21 million American teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 are sexually active; of church youth surveyed, 62 percent

said they were involved with oral sex; there are more than one million teenage pregnancies each year in the U.S.

The book's technique of allowing teenagers to speak for themselves about premarital sexual activity, impelling sex drives, and media influence is effective. Teens talk compellingly of what they need from us as parents, teachers, and churches. The section on communication with teenagers may not offer new insights, but it does reinforce time-honored principles that we would do well to review.

One section speaks directly to reasons why teens get involved sexually, how they can be helped to meet the ever-present beckonings for involvement, and includes some specific suggestions for how to say "No."

The chapter entitled "The Stain That Will Never Come Out" might have been brightened by reassurances about God's forgiving grace. I believe that this needs to be said so that all young people can understand it, and not give up in despair over their mistakes. Other than this drawback, I believe that Seventh-day Adventists would not have any problems with the ideas and values put forth in this book.

What *I Wish My Parents Knew About My Sexuality* is easy to read, and though a bit repetitious, could be helpful to teachers, administrators, and board members—as well as parents.—Alberta Mazat.

Alberta Mazat until recently was Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California. She is a Certified Family Life Educator, a Certified Sex Educator, Counselor, and Therapist. Now retired, she writes from Loma Linda, California.

Levine, Melvin D., M.D. DEVELOPMENTAL VARIATION AND LEARNING DISORDERS. Cambridge, Mass.: Educators Publishing Service, Inc., 1987. Hardbound, 626 pages, \$46.00.

In this book Dr. Levine does an excellent job of summarizing current literature and his own experience as it relates to children, adolescents, and young adults who are not succeeding in school. What he calls "The Disappointing Child" has been a source of confusion, frustration, and anger for everyone—parent, teacher, psychologist, and physician. This book helps explain many

causes of possible dysfunction that can interfere with a child's ability to perform as well as giving practical suggestions for dealing with the problems.

After describing the disappointing child, Dr. Levine discusses seven specific developmental areas that can disrupt the learning process. This section offers abundant examples that aid in applying developmental concerns to education. The next section deals with specific academic skills. Profiles of poor performance in areas such as reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics help to distinguish the most common causes.

Next, Dr. Levine gives a thorough overview of predisposing factors, methods of evaluation and treatment, and expected outcomes of learning difficulties. The book closes with an invaluable appendix, which discusses the most commonly used diagnostic tools. Whether the testing instrument be educational, psychological, or medical in origin, the descriptions help in applying the results to every discipline.

While this book may be a little heavy for cover-to-cover reading, it would make an excellent resource for educators, school psychologists, and health-care professionals who deal with nonachieving children. Its complete index makes the individual topics quite accessible. This book has the potential for helping bring educators and physicians together in helping each child achieve his or her best.—R. Franklin Trimm.

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Louise Bates Ames, IS YOUR CHILD IN THE WRONG GRADE? Rosemont, N.J.: Programs for Education, 1987. 151 pages, \$10.95.

Is Your Child in the Wrong Grade? should be required reading for every elementary school teacher and principal. Those responsible for placing children in kindergarten or first grade should make this book their bible. Adventist educators will find our traditional philosophy of starting children later to be the cornerstone of this book's philosophy and research.

One of the more difficult educational

tasks is to convince parents and even teachers that intelligence is not the only part of a child related to school success. More important than IQ is a child's developmental or behavioral age. Behavioral age is a much better predictor of school achievement than chronological age or IQ—even high IQ. Just as each flower unfolds according to its own schedule, so does each child.

The book says that at least one in three children may definitely be overplaced and struggling in a grade. This conclusion, is based on considerable research, including a three-year study conducted by the famed Gesell Institute of Child Development. The author of the book, Dr. Louise Bates Ames, associate director of the institute, was one of its cofounders in 1950.

Studies have also found that unready children do not, in succeeding years, "catch up" with their classmates. The author contends that no child sets out to be a failure or to dislike school. Instead of believing that a child "could do better if he would," Dr. Ames asserts that a child "would do better if he could." She recommends replacing a child whenever the problem of overplacement becomes evident.

Aimed largely at parents, the book addresses their placement concerns and objections. Every educator should have sev-

eral copies to share with overeager parents who want to put their children into school too early or to push them ahead too fast. As a school counselor, I have successfully used this book with parents.

The book contains four parts, which can be read easily and quickly. Part I discusses correct initial placement and addresses the fears relating to repeating a grade. Part II reviews developmental stages between ages four and eight, with special focus on behavior and maturational age. Part III explains how parents and educators may determine readiness. And Part IV summarizes conflicts in educational placement philosophy. A final chapter uses a "Dear Abby" format to answer parents' questions.

Is Your Child in the Wrong Grade? makes a strong argument for flexibility within the educational system, a topic that deserves greater attention by teachers and administrators.—Valerie Halliwell-Smith.

Valerie Halliwell-Smith is a counselor who divides her time between John Nevins Andrews School and Sligo Adventist School, both located in Takoma Park, Maryland.

