

BOOKS

Anton Powell
Londonwalks
 Holt, Rinehardt, and Winston
 1981
 Reviewed by Denis Hlynka

CJEC does not review travel books. Yet *Londonwalks* by Anton Powell is very different from the run-of-the-mill travel book, and holds special interest to the educational technologist.

Whether Anton Powell realizes it or not, *Londonwalks* is grounded firmly in that most basic of all educational media paradigms, the "Cone of Experience" of Edgar Dale.

First, the theory. Back in the 1940's, Edgar Dale of Ohio State University put together what has since become one of the classic formulations of our field. The "cone of experience" postulated that the value of media lay in its ability to provide realism. Different media provided different degrees of realism. The basic assumption was simple: learning will be more complete as the number of cues within the learning situation increases. Thus, Dale was able to suggest that learning could be conceived as a cone of media experiences ranging from the abstract to the concrete. Most abstract was verbal communication, followed by audiotape, pictures, etc. And at the bottom of the cone, we approach direct purposeful experience itself. Although Dale would hasten to add that his cone does NOT imply that concrete media are always better than abstract media, nevertheless, there is no doubt that the emphasis is that teachers need to keep that abstract-

concrete dichotomy firmly in mind.

Anton Powell is not an educational technologist; rather he has a PhD in history. But today, while most educational technologists are thrusting themselves into contemporary high technology, Dr. Powell is re-discovering the most basic medium of them all . . . direct purposeful experience.

He suggests, in *Londonwalks* that the way to see London, indeed the way to know London, is to walk its streets. His book is a solid guide providing four such walks: The London Dickens Knew, Legal and Illegal London, The Old Palace Quarter (St. James), and London's Latin Quarter (Chelsea). In addition to the four walks, the author provides us with some 17 introductory pages of "information and advice."

The introduction sets the stage for the lucid commentary to follow. The text contains

"four walks, each taking about 2 1/2 hours, a pace which allows you to look at places in proper detail — at metal cones by house doors used for putting out torches in the eighteenth century, at tiny windows barred against nineteenth century child thieves, at forgotten courtyards, and eccentric business. London has to be discovered on foot."

Most important, the book works. It is a unique combination of polite chat, of erudite history; of popular legend, and of necessary tourist information.

I had the good fortune to meet the author in London on a cold miserable Sunday in November of 1982. I was en-

joying the tail-end of a sabbatical and found myself with a few hours to spare. The newspaper informed me of a walking tour of early Roman London to begin from the Embankment tube station within the hour. I grabbed my coat and umbrella, then headed for the subway. There were a dozen others huddled together when I arrived. The wind was chilling, the rain intermittent and cold, but at precisely the pre-announced hour, Dr. Powell straightened up, introduced himself, then proceeded to lead us on a fascinating walk tour of Roman London. It was a highlight of my visit, conducted by a man who loved his city, and who knew its history intimately.

The book reflects the man and his enthusiasm.

My stay in London was exciting and rewarding. As an educational technologist from Canada, I had much to learn. From the British Open University I saw how that institution conducted a vast university program via television and print distribution systems across the entire country. From the CEDAR project at Imperial College, I saw some of the most up-to-date developments in CAI in Britain. From the Council for Educational Technology I saw PRESTEL in action, and glimpsed something of its educational potential.

But author Anton Powell brought me back to the basics. From him, I saw London . . . living, dead, past, present, and even future. No educational technologist could have done it better.

FICTION ABOUT TECHNOLOGY: THE CLASSICS

Capek, Karl (1920)
R.U.R.
 Various editions available
 An early exploration of the theme of artificial intelligence, this is the book which introduced the word "robot" to modern usage.

Huxley, Aldous (1932)
Brave New World
 Various editions available
 A scenario describing the potential condition in which the world might find itself, in the year 632 After Ford.

Butler, Samuel (1872)
Erewhon
 Various editions available
 A utopian satire. Erewhon is the

word "nowhere" spelled backwards.

Dickens, Charles (1854)
Hard Times
 An in-depth critique of the effects of industrialization on British society. Thomas Grandgrind is the unforgettable teacher who believes that children should learn facts and only facts.

Orwell, George (1949)
1984
 Various editions available
 Another future scenario. Orwell's two-way television is suspiciously similar to the promise of today's information systems. And 1984, of course, is only 3 months away!

Verne, Jules (1892)
Carpathian Castle
 A little known Verne novel which predicts television.

Forster, E.M. (1928)
The Machine Stops
 Various editions
 Another classic future scenario, this short story uses a sophisticated two way communication system which looks like videotex.

Andersen, Hans Christian (1844)
The Nightingale
 Various editions available
 This is the classic fairy tale of a mechanical nightingale which replaces a real nightingale.

— D.H.

FILM



Taking Care of Our Own

Reviewed by Terry Kolmeychuk

Traditionally, Indian children requiring care have been placed in non Indian homes. Eventually, the result is alienation and loss of cultural identity for these children. The Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services (DOCFS) of Manitoba is the first Indian run child welfare system created to reinforce Indian cultural identity by answering not only the physical needs of children coming into care situations, but their emotional needs as well.

Taking Care of Our Own was made in order to share with other emerging Indian child welfare organizations the experience of the DOCFS during its first highly successful year of operation.

The film seeks to promote an understanding of the traditions and values around which the DOCFS operates. Detailed information is provided

through a series of interviews, meetings and candid comments. This technique works well, however the film length of 54 minutes, makes the film often seem repetitive and tedious. The absence of a voice-over narrative to set scenes and tie them together leaves the viewer with a disjointed perspective and no sense of where the film is headed.

The detail provided through these scenes does however lend an insight into the feelings and reactions of the parents and children involved in these dilemmas.

A statement made by a band elder summarizes succinctly the film by saying "Indians are going back to solving their own problems." Indians are trying to establish their own social welfare systems and not be dependent of a white welfare system that does not serve the interests of the Indian community. The feeling that there is more to a child welfare system than apprehending and placing children in foster or adoptive homes is brought out time

and time again.

The film itself is loaded with information and content, but slight on cinematic quality. It is ideally suited for the audience that wants information on this subject. The film has few redeeming cinematic qualities as most of the images are head-and-shoulders shots. The film conveys little sense of urgency or emotion evolving around these issues, save for one scene as a father relates his personal experience about his 3 sons being shipped to the U.S. for adoption. However, as the film unfolds we come to understand the philosophy, structure and operation of the Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services.

For further information and previewing please contact:

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