



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Virginia Theological Seminary
3737 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304
Joyce Ann Mercer, Editor-Elect
rejournal@vts.edu

BOOK REVIEW POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

A book review in a professional journal is a service to the readers. It brings to the reader's attention new publications in the field that the reader might want to add to his or her own library or use in the work setting. Thus, one purpose of the review is to help the reader decide whether the new book is worth acquiring. But a reviewer is also part of a dialogue shaping the field itself, and is alert to the politics determining how books and authors can reinforce dominant understandings or suggest new directions. Therefore, another purpose of the review may be to push the boundaries of the field; to question stagnant positions and promote promising ones; to help locate a book within current perspectives and issues; and to challenge conventional criteria for judgment where necessary.

All reviewers should detect and report any implicit bias or exclusion related to gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. The review, therefore, must simultaneously convey the content and contribution of the book to the field, critically assess its quality and usefulness for various audiences, and address its potential positionality in religious education discourse.

As you read the book, if you decide that it is not worth reviewing, please let me know. Review space is precious. We would like to review books that set a direction for the field, are useful, or open up important issues for us to consider.

GUIDELINES

A good review is pithy, thoughtful, and bold. Lively writing is always welcome, but clarity is essential. An effort will be made to publish reviews that critically evaluate the book as well as capsule its content.

A critical book review should contain three types of information: (1) an overview of the content, (2) an evaluation, and (3) a recommendation.

1. Overview of the Content. The content overview should briefly describe the book's purpose, the author's viewpoint and the general content. This information should be kept to a minimum.
2. Evaluation of the Book. Evaluation of the book is the heart of the book review and should be given much thought. In evaluating the book, the reviewer might consider the following:
 - What is the author's perspective, and where is this located in the current theory and issues of the field?
 - Does the author indicate self-reflexive awareness of his or her perspective and its

positionality?

- Is the subject matter approached in an unusual or unique fashion?
- How does the book address gender, race, class and other dimensions of difference? (If these are omitted, is such omission appropriate given in the book's topic?)
- What are the book's strengths and weaknesses – and with what criteria do you make these judgments?
- If appropriate: Is the scholarship rigorous, well-supported, and well-developed?
- Is the organization of the book congruent with its style, argument and purpose?
- How successfully did the author accomplish his or her objectives?
- How worthwhile are these objectives – and with what criteria do you make this judgment?

3. Recommendation. This material should focus on the following questions:

- To whom (if at all) would you recommend this book and why?
- In what way(s) would you suggest the book be used?
- What potential contribution does the book make to the field of adult education in terms of theory or practice?

Aspects of content, evaluation, and recommendation might be treated separately or interwoven throughout the narrative review. Do not use the critical book review as a forum for personal biases or research interests. Finally, avoid dwelling upon extraneous or peripheral concerns, minor points in the text, or technical printing errors.

BOOK REVIEW SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. The review should be approximately 500-700 words in length, double-spaced, and in electronic format. Please justify only the left margin of the text.
2. If quoting directly from the book, place a page number in parentheses after the quote.
3. If quoting from a source other than the book itself, use the appropriate format from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th edition.
4. At the top of the review include author, title, publisher, place and date of publication, number of pages and price. Here is a sample of the format to use:

A Transactional Perspective on Teaching and Learning: A Framework for Higher Education, by D. Randy Garrison and Walker Archer. New York: Elsevier Science, 2000. 222 pp., \$89.00 (hardcover).

5. At the end of the review list your name and institutional affiliation as you want it to appear when the review is printed, in the following format:

GYPSY M. DENZINE
Northern Arizona University

SUBMISSION OF BOOK REVIEWS

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