

members as mere tools for the organization). Nowhere are there proven specifics about how to improve nonacademic writing or how to better manage its expanding technology. Nor are there any rules or hints for those of us who would like to make our everyday writing of e-mail, technical manuals, and administrative evaluations more efficient and effective. Instead, one of the chapter authors, Dorothy Winsor, concludes that it cannot be taught by rules—although she offers no practical, tested alternatives. (Curiously, experts who go unmentioned in this and the other chapters *have* demonstrated the worth of simple principles for improving nonacademic writing; e.g., Anthony Trollope, working to improve the reports written by officials of the postal system a century ago, brought about significant changes in the clarity of, and time invested in, administrative writing.)

So would *Nonacademic Writing* make worthwhile reading? Perhaps only to those interested in the theories and philosophy of nonacademic writing and its technology. To me, a psychologist with a private practice for academic and nonacademic writers, this book offered no returns for a difficult read. Those of us who want to "get things done" (to paraphrase the editors) might want to wait for a more nonacademic account of nonacademic writing.—Robert Boice, *State University of New York at Stony Brook*.

Poverty: A Global View: Handbook on International Poverty Research. Eds. Else Oyen, S. M. Miller, and Syed Abdus Samad. Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Pr., 1996. 620p. \$59 (ISBN 82-00-22649-2.)

The United Nations has proclaimed 1996 the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. This fifth publication from the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) compiles a prodigious amount of information on alternative poverty conceptualizations, theories,

policies, and research, although it is not a handbook in the customary sense of the term nor strictly a comparative treatise on methodologies of poverty research, as the title might suggest. The Programme itself was created through the collaboration of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and UNESCO's Sector for Social and Human Sciences, both of which provided funds for this monograph along with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and the Centre for Health and Social Policy Studies of the University of Bergen, Norway.

Poverty: A Global View is appropriate to both social sciences/social welfare and area studies collections. Its twenty-five chapters are organized into six parts, the first and last of which are composed of a total of six chapters providing a comparative review of poverty concepts and theories. The analysis reveals the political nature of social research in general, and how political regimes and institutional bases of research support influence the characterizations of the poor and the etiologies constructed to explain poverty within developed and developing countries. The diffusion of Western (especially U.S.) definitions and measures of poverty around the globe is particularly interesting given the lack of consensus for a standard among researchers and policymakers here. Having adopted the notion of a "poverty line," which demarcates the poor and nonpoor, researchers in other countries have waded into this intractable measurement mire. Taken together, these chapters elucidate the many different conceptions of poverty from absolute to relative need, and from personal to structural explanations.

The remaining central parts of the book provide country-specific poverty research approaches and findings. These four parts focus on, respectively, the Asian region (South Asia, Korea, India, Southeast Asia, China, and New Zealand); the African region (Egypt,

Anglophone West Africa, and South Africa); the Western region (Western and Eastern European countries, Israel, and North America); and the Latin American region (Latin America, Brazil, and Mexico). Individual chapters vary in comprehensiveness based on the history and volume of poverty research in a country. Although adhering to a standardized format, each chapter stands alone as a description of the individuals and/or institutions engaged in poverty research, their theories and methodologies, and the resulting research programs and data sets. Unfortunately, the chapter focusing on the U.S. and Canada footnotes the two leading national data collection agencies rather than specifically identifying poverty research initiatives (with the exception of reports emanating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty and the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center's Panel Study of Income Dynamics). Although they allude to their results, specific reference to major studies such as the Seattle/Denver Income Maintenance Experiments and the Survey of Income and Program Participation would have been appropriate for a "handbook."

Although the editors are to be commended for assembling an internationally representative panel of contributors, the predominance of sociologists and economists has limited the range of disciplinary perspectives and methodologies. An integrative, cross-national discussion of inequality, such as found in geographer David M. Smith's *Where the Grass Is Greener: Living in an Unequal World* (1979), as well as in his subsequent publications, would have added balance. So, too, would a thorough review of the contributions of applied anthropologists to our understanding of poverty through ethnographies undertaken in developed and developing countries, rather than repeatedly lamenting the paucity of qualitative work. Finally, the absence of any

mention of some of the better-known leftist writers (from liberal to Marxist, e.g., Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven to Ralph C. Gomes) suggests that some views are less well represented in the political debate over the causes of poverty. But then the Far Right is too often presented as conservative, leaving conservatives and centrists to share the label "liberal."

Overall, *Poverty: A Global View* fills two gaps in the reference literature. First, it brings together in one volume summaries of the major poverty research efforts and findings for regions and countries worldwide. Second, it conceptually and analytically integrates this information through introductory and closing chapters. Furthermore, the detailed subject indexing across all chapters readily enables comparisons across countries by topic (e.g., concepts, definitions, and measures of poverty, and construction of poverty lines; data sources; and the roles of various international organizations) and by subpopulation (e.g., aged, children, women, rural/urban residents). Ironically, it is the quality of the indexing that revealed the paucity of specific attention given to the role of ethnic, racial, and political violence, as well as internal migration and immigration, in regard to the prevalence and persistence of poverty. Nevertheless, the strengths of the volume far outweigh its weaknesses, and it is hoped that the latter will be addressed in either regularly updated editions or separate topical monographs within the CROP series.—Gary McMillan, *Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

Schiller, Herbert I. *Information Inequality: The Deepening Social Crisis in America.* New York: Routledge, 1966. 149p. \$55.00. (ISBN 0-415-90764-0.) LC 95-46613.

Herbert Schiller, professor emeritus of communication at the University of California at San Diego, is sounding an alarm regarding a lurking social crisis that has