

better understand what a spiritual and cultural pedagogy could “sound like” and “feel like” because one cannot provide a recipe for such a pedagogy.

Finally, Tisdell does an admirable job of launching the discourse linking a spiritually grounded, culturally relevant pedagogy with transformative learning, critical and feminist pedagogy, and multicultural and critical multiculturalism. While the connections definitely demonstrate a theory-in-progress, she clearly positions a spiritually grounded, culturally relevant pedagogy as having an important place in adult and higher education.

Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education is a significant contribution to the literature of adult and higher education and is recommended to scholars and reflective practitioners. While the book has an impressive range and depth of exploration, Elizabeth Tisdell honours a spiritually grounded, culturally relevant pedagogy. Beginning with her own story, inclusive of personal and professional examples, Tisdell openly and authentically reminds us that this is much more than an intellectual exercise, but it is “the work of her soul and part of an ongoing life work” (p. xix).

References

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LITTLE MOSIE FROM THE MARGAREE: A BIOGRAPHY OF MOSES MICHAEL COADY

Michael Welton. (2001). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc., 280 pages.

Where does one find the “best data” to depict another person’s life? What constitutes reality in summarizing another’s entire life? Bourdieu

(1991) tells us that “reality... is not an absolute. It differs with the group to which the individual belongs” (p. 189-207). Consider the challenge of writing a biography of Moses Coady. If you live in Antigonish as I do—home of the famous Antigonish Movement—Moses Coady is a revered figure. Here is one “absolute reality” that Welton might have turned to through oral history. Or, if you work at St. Francis Xavier University as I do—indeed in the very building where Coady had his office—or work with academics whose reality is typically based on reflective scepticism, absolutism becomes obscure. However, Welton *could* have built this book on the views of other scholars, or supplemented those with local oral history, or added primary documents, or used other combinations and other options for this study, but he did not do these things. Welton tells us in his Preface that he has “relied almost exclusively on original, primary documents...[to stay] as much as is humanly possible, inside Moses Coady’s world outlook and actions” (p. 8). The reality he chooses is revealed in primary documentation, mostly found here in the StFX archives. And, to my delight, this huge scholastic initiative received the highest award for research in the field: the Imogene Okes Award. In my opinion, *Little Mosie* should be recommended reading in every adult education graduate program, including those in the U.S.A. and abroad. But, I think his decision to choose archival reality as the “one best reality” creates something of a problem for Welton and for this important book. The author of his own destiny, I think Welton ends up feeling confined by his criterion, so he abandons it. For me, the problem that slowly emerges through the first 252 pages ultimately culminates in the closing chapter; a controversial chapter as I will explain.

Welton uses carefully detailed analyses of primary documents, copious footnotes, well selected photos, and his familiarly robust, highly engaging prose narrative to make this a major scholastic contribution to adult education. Chapters one and two show the formation of the Antigonish Movement, and the forming of Coady himself in his boyhood years. The next three chapters detail the building of the Antigonish Movement through the 1930s—a time of economic desperation and world-wide political upheaval. Chapters six through nine complete the picture of the struggle as we watch how Coady attempts to turn a vision into an Atlantic Renaissance of Economic Empowerment. Throughout, we see Coady’s world through his own eyes and those of his contemporaries. It is a truly fascinating immersion in our local history and culture here.

By chapter ten, we have had many glimpses of the Emperor undressed. According to the primary documentation presented, Coady became exactly

what he had urged others to fight against all of his life—an authoritarian “legislator of the truth” (p. 258) exhorting, effectively “conspiring” (p. 259), with others to force his vision into being. Welton shows how Coady came to think he was “God’s architect” (p. 258), and how he ended his life pathetically “calling the Church and ordinary folk to impossible acts of dedication and effort” (p. 258). Here, as Welton puts it, is our “formidably flawed prophet” (p. 256), naked, exposed, Lear-like, at the end of his life. But is it a fair conclusion? Is this how history should remember Little Mosie? I have heard this book called a “character assassination,” but is it?

If one accepts that the archives at StFX comprise a sufficient reality for this biography, then the only question that *should* remain is if the preceding nine chapters support Welton’s interpretations. Does the documentation as presented lead to the inevitable conclusions Welton says they do? To this point, with some moments of hesitation, I would answer “Yes.” While I personally remain unconvinced that archival documents can ever give the full multi-dimensional picture of anyone’s life, let alone of a man who cannot be uncoupled from a persona that inspired and gave hope to thousands in this region, as Welton seems to believe; and while I still want to balance this book with the other reality sources in this community and in other texts, the problem for me is that, at the end of chapter nine, Welton seems to regret his own reality choice. As noted, he set out to write about Coady from “inside Moses Coady’s world outlook and actions” and then offers “some provocations” (p. 263) in chapter ten. Of course he has the authorial license—if not responsibility—to take on the role of critical interpreter at the end of the book, and, as mentioned, we can argue about how well his interpretations are supported by the text. But Welton, almost as an apology, also tells us he has spent “years of attempting to breathe life into a person out of endless heaps of paper” (p. 263). He grows weary. He abandons the “heaps of paper.” He re-enters the reality of his own contemporary academics who have written (brilliantly) on civil society. But I wish he had stopped where he had promised to stop. Instead, Welton goes on and runs afoul of presentism when he claims the Movement “did not have an adequate theory of citizenship” (p. 260). What would an “adequate theory of citizenship” for those barely able to feed themselves in the 1930’s fishing villages look like from the vantage point of a 21st century scholar? He says Coady “could not see that the domains of civil society and state governance...were relatively autonomous spheres” (p. 260). If Coady had read contemporary civil society discourse would the Movement have been different? While I won’t argue that

Welton's books are among the most important written in the past two decades within this field, I only wish the "heaps of paper" and his provocations based on their interpretation had constituted the last chapter. I guess I wish Michael had left his 21st century theorizing to the group to which he and it belongs.

That being said, here is a truly informative, provocative important contribution to knowledge on one of Canada's most important, but least understood, historical figures. If the book generates controversy and further research, then the group and field I belong to will be even stronger for it.

Reference

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