

challenge of liberation movements' and 'Is this what the counter-culture's all about?' These have been subsumed under blander headings, such as 'The challenge of changing values', but still the treatment lacks conviction and the book smacks more of lecture notes than the product of careful research.

According to the cover notes, *Australian Office Administration* was written to "fill a gap resulting from the lack of an Australian textbook covering office supervision and management". There are several books on office administration available, but they are either aggressively American or British in content or very low level and poorly written, so this is certainly a fair claim. The Australian content is not overwhelming, but that is not a criticism since there are not that many aspects of organising an office which are nationally conditioned.

It will, therefore, remain a valuable text for the level at which it is directed, and most of the amendments are an improvement. It is a sad indication of the changes which have taken place in Australia between the publication of the first and second editions of *Australian Office Administration* that the second edition excludes the first edition's 'Work in an affluent society', in favour of a section entitled 'The unemployed and the underutilized', but blame for the more pessimistic tone here can hardly be laid at the feet of the author.

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STUCK! Unemployed people talk to Michele Turner, by Michele Turner

(Penguin, Ringwood, Vic., 1983) pp. 263, \$6.95.

As the subtitle suggests, *Stuck!* is about "living without work — the stories that statistics can't tell". The book has a useful and necessary introduction by Keith Windschuttle, who reviews briefly, from a structural point of view, the current unemployment situation. He examines unemployment in relation to the recession, older workers, men, women and families, youth unemployment and the impact of immigration policies. One omission, however, seems to be the whole issue of multiple income families. If it could be made economically viable for families, with relevant expectations, to achieve financial stability on one income, then the work that was available could be shared more equitably.

In a nutshell, the book is a condensation of some 37 field interviews carried out with unemployed people. The author classifies her interviewees into 16 categories, although she does not specify how she arrives at the final classification. These categories are in three main groupings: (1) Who can't get a job; (2) Surviving unemployed; and (3) What else? The interviews were obtained voluntarily by the author visiting various Commonwealth Employment Service offices in her specially appointed 'interview truck'. These interviews, largely unstructured, were tape recorded and then typed.

One Chapter is entitled 'A degree isn't a work ticket' and deals with the

'educated' unemployed. In all cases documented, the graduate was prepared to take a job much further down the skill ladder. Such low skilled jobs, however, are open to many with requisite skills. In such circumstances a degree can actually be a drawback. In one case the interviewee, after learning that a degree can actually put people off, would ask that the degree not "be held against her".

At the other end of the scale are the 'less skilled' — the process line workers, the day labourers with few family resources to fall back on. Consequently, clothes, telephone, travelling to interviews, all proved difficult. It is worth noting that such communication and information constraints to job search persist and yet should be capable of solution. In many such stories the interviewees bring out their stark sense of desperation when they look to the future, especially if there are children involved. Often being different, for example, a migrant, reduces the chances of getting a job, especially if one is not fluent in English.

General conditions that arise from being unemployed include loss of self-esteem and ability to cope. One interviewee describes this as a "slow natural process — it is very painful". Further, one loses motivation to do things. Another problem is powerlessness; of seeing the bureaucracy from the perspective of a client, someone who 'needs help', but has little if anything to offer in return. For some people physical symptoms such as loss of energy and appetite, and stomach cramps, can be made worse by a bad diet and a reluctance to seek early medical advice due to lack of money and motivation.

Often people accept poor working conditions and part-time work as "part-time is better than nothing". While some of the interviewees turned to crime, other 'solutions' included a return to school to help cope with the competitiveness in the labour market. This strategy, however, can be self-defeating as completing courses makes one older and entitled to more pay, and consequently not as attractive as 'juniors'. Yet another option is to join the counter culture and 'drop out'.

The methodology used is a qualitative one and as such it is difficult to fault. A uniform demographic profile on each interviewee was needed and could with advantage have been incorporated in the introductory remarks for each interview. I agree with the author that a change of awareness and a change of heart is needed. We do need to face the personal and devastating human costs of unemployment in our present society. One thing I noticed in reading *Stuck!* is that awkward moments arose when I realised how well off I was compared to the interviewees. Confronting one's own values makes one realise that solutions to unemployment can benefit all society. The burden of unemployment needs to be spread more equitably in society.

I sometimes wonder whether our obsession with employment and busyness is not an indication of a deeper inability to come to terms with a changing society. Technology and structural change suggest that it may never again be possible to achieve the sort of full employment we knew in the secure sixties. Consequently, accepting the personal and social costs of unemployed people, as graphically portrayed by the author, what do we do

about it? Reading *Stuck!* forces us to ask what are the requisite policy responses.

In conclusion, I found *Stuck!* a well laid out, valuable and sometimes touching book to read. It made no pretence at being a 'statistical analysis' of unemployment. At times I thought that the issue of 'where to from here' should have been dealt with. Michele Turner has succeeded in bringing the human face of unemployment to the surface.

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Managing with Micros, by Colin D. Lewis

(Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983) pp. viii + 199, \$29.95.

A direct result of the silicon chip technology has been the development of the micro-computer. Micro-computers have taken the western world by storm and their true impact has yet to be realised. It is interesting to note that *Time* magazine, in 1982, declared a 'Machine of the Year', namely, the computer, rather than its historical Man of the Year. Micro-computers are now found in motor vehicles, washing machines and video games.

Against such a background, then, the book by Colin Lewis is timely. Lewis restricts himself to studying the micro-computer as it can be applied to small business. It would seem that the task of such a book is to cut through the jargon involved and allow the decision maker to see implications clearly.

The computer world has been criticised for its use of jargon. Whether it has more or less jargon than any other profession or trade is debatable. Nuclear physicists, for example, would use just as much jargon, but one suspects that nuclear physicists need to communicate mainly with their peers. This is not so with those dealing with computers. Because of the ubiquitous nature of computers, many persons, other than full time specialists, have to be able to appreciate the significance of the terms involved, if they are to make adequate decisions on how best to utilise these machines in their own particular sphere of work.

The book is divided into eight chapters, two which introduce the subject and six which are directed to specific application areas. Application packages covered are word processing, VISICALC, data base management and information retrieval, sales-purchase-ledger, stock control, and payroll.

The description of hardware in the text is well done with a good handling of the basic building blocks of a micro-computer. However, much impact is lost by giving simplistic descriptions of some manufacturers' equipment and including no less than seven photographs of visual display screens and five pictures of character printers. Furthermore, there is no treatment of 8 bit micros versus 16 bit micros.

The second chapter deals entirely with the industry in the United Kingdom, though the points made are generally applicable in Australia. However, the pricing details, being in pounds sterling, are not directly relevant in the Australian scene. Furthermore, the list of equipment is