one of the more interesting social movements that marked turn of the century life in America.

Howard Jacob Karger
Louisiana State University

P. Nelson Reid and Philip R. Popple, *The Moral Purposes of Social Work.* Chicago: Nelson Hall Publishers, 1992, $18.95 papercover.

This volume is a compilation of ten essays that trace the professional social work history of conflicts, dichotomies, and dilemmas in formation of a moral vision. It encompasses themes of social control versus social justice; individual treatment versus collective action; individual rights versus social welfare; and proprietary interests versus commitment to serving the poor and oppressed. In general, the essays advocate for revitalizing traditional commitment to working with vulnerable populations. Many of the contributors are well known in the field of social work ethics and moral philosophy. The book helps to invigorate moral discourse by providing a foundation in professional moral history and a synopsis of salient moral issues.

Reid characterizes social work's social role as the normative control of dependence and deviance. He seems to advocate for benign forms of control, such as rehabilitation of individuals and preservation of stable social order. While acknowledging the question of whether the social order thus being maintained is just, he does not answer this extremely important question. Nor does he explore the inherent tendency toward political conservatism of deviance theory and functionalism. In contrast, Billups proposes that the solution to strengthening professional commitment to uphold *both* individual helping *and* social system changing is a radical connection of individual critical reflection, consciousness change, and collective action.

Popple suggests that it is natural for social workers to experience moral tension, because we are often caught between an "objective necessity" (social mandate) to control deviance and a "subjective necessity" (personal commitment) to change unjust aspects of society. Hutchinson addresses this ambiguity

by discussing conflict between moral principles in work with involuntary clients, viz, individual liberty, duty to aid the vulnerable, and protection of the common good.

Several contributions decry the defection of many social workers from social change efforts on behalf of the poor and oppressed. O'Neil McMahon proposes strategies to help social work schools strengthen commitment to public welfare and social change activity. Keith-Lucas goes so far as to wish that either social workers who confine themselves to the practice of psychotherapy cease calling themselves social workers, or, that those workers who continue to commitment to the poor find another name for themselves besides "social worker," if that term has been coopted.

Claims of moral imperative rest upon ontological and spiritual assumptions and experiences. However, despite frequent references to social work's religious roots, the ontological and spiritual foundations of morality are slightly addressed in this book. For example, Reamer traces the historical shift from early professional religious conceptions of divine calling for charity and justice work to current secular careerism. He advocates for a secular sense of calling toward altruistic service for the disadvantaged. Yet, the term "calling," connotes that a God or trans-human source issues the call. Reamer does not explain how a secular framework would provide a calling in order than loose metaphoric terms.

Siporin explores the religious and spiritual implications of moral philosophy for social work in the most detail. He believes that the individualistic, narcissistic trend of the 1960s and 1970s has reversed, due to the influence of New Age popular thought, existential philosophy, humanistic critique of scientific positivism, and diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives. Peebles-Wilkins and Koerin provide an all-too-rare account of the history of the black mutual aid tradition, linked to African communalism, resistance to slavery and oppression, and Christian morals.

These essays indicate that our moral vision must transcend the constraints of narcissism, proprietary motive, sectarianism and ethnocentrism—but none of them specify what can or should supply such a transcendent vision. This book provides

a valuable service in stimulating further discussion to deepen philosophical and spiritual reflection upon our profession's moral purposes.

<div align="right">Edward R. Canada
University of Kansas</div>

J. W. Murphy, and J. T. Pardeck. *The Computerization of Human Service Agencies*. New York: Auburn House, 1991. $39.95 hardback.

Science, as embodied by computers cannot substitute for human reasonableness. Murphy and Pardeck make this assertion in this thin book which reviews philosophical and logistical implications of computerizing social service agencies. From a discussion of the epistemology of computerized knowledge to analyzing the promises of management information systems, Murphy and Pardeck provide a literate essay on how people interact with computers in social service agencies.

Because the authors are knowledgeable about computer applications, social service agencies, and philosophies of science, readers will find themselves agreeing with the book's thesis: the human cost of computerizing social service agencies has seldom been recognized and frequently ignored in modern information processing. The authors believe, with good reason, that social service agency administrators implement computerized clinical data collection and storage with an eye towards short term gains. The authors argue that the promises of routinized data collection, of expert systems, of "paperless" information storage, and increased efficiency have seduced managers and administrators into routine use of computers. In many cases, the seductive promises have not materialized; in other cases, the side-effects nearly outweigh the original concern. Take, for example, expert systems. In developing computerized systems that include impressive clinical decision-trees, the goal was to gain precision and to eliminate egregious errors. The authors state that in expert systems, reasonableness has been replaced by reason. Perfectly reasoned decisions can be entirely unreasonable. In abandoning common sense, expert systems have