



Times of Surrender

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

Child psychiatrist Robert Coles has published dozens of books and hundreds of articles. In an interview included in *TIMES OF SURRENDER*, Coles reveals the secret of his productivity: Every morning, he sits down with a yellow legal pad and writes: “I write on a quota basis. I try to write three or four yellow pages a day, five days a week. And if you keep on doing that with some--almost religious--dedication, the books mount up over the years.” Indeed they do. In 1987, Coles published excellent short biographies of Dorothy Day and Simone Weil. In 1988, in addition to *TIMES OF SURRENDER*, he has two more books scheduled for publication: from University of Iowa Press, *THAT RED WHEELBARROW: SELECTED LITERARY ESSAYS* (a companion volume to *TIMES OF SURRENDER*), and from Crossroad/ Continuum, *HARVARD DIARY: REFLECTIONS ON THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR*.

Can a writer so prolific have anything new to say? What does *TIMES OF SURRENDER* have to offer, either to the veteran Coles fan or to the reader who is new to his work? The “essays” label is a bit misleading, insofar as it suggests long, closely argued pieces. The forty-one pieces collected here are almost all quite short; many of them are book reviews. James Baldwin and Martin Luther King; Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, and B.F. Skinner; Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr; Anton Chekhov, Georges Bernanos, and William Carlos Williams; the Holocaust; children’s stories: Coles approaches his diverse subjects with some recurring, fundamental questions about how we live and how we should live. By turning his questions on himself he avoids preachy arrogance; his style is unpretentious, conversational.

TIMES OF SURRENDER, then, is a good bedside book--not a book to read straight through but one to dip into, browse in, an invitation to engage in a little of the self-scrutiny that distinguished the Puritan founders of Coles’s native New England.

Copyright Notice

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:
<http://www.enotes.com/times-surrender-salem>