BOOK REVIEWS

REVIEW ESSAY: Soltis, Jonas F. *Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Part I.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. pp. 281. $17.50

This part of the yearbook, Part I, consists of eleven chapters. The first and second describe recent activities of the profession, philosophy of education. Professor Jonas F. Soltis in the editor's introduction, and Professor H.S. Broudy in the second chapter, agree that in the past (witness the N.S.S.E. yearbooks of 1942 and 1955), the profession has tried to answer educational questions by appeal to philosophical systems — idealism, realism, pragmatism, etc. . . . Broudy shows how this appeal was lessened by the report to the American Philosophical Association of its Commission on the Function of Philosophy in Liberal Education (1945); by the new emphasis in the training of philosophers of education, on philosophy generally taken, beginning after World War II; by the rapidly enlarging place in philosophy of conceptual and linguistic analysis; and by the dynamism of the G.I. bill, the demand for equal treatment of minorities, and the disillusionment generated by the Vietnam war. But he holds that the older view is not wrong, and that the reader still has a right to expect from some philosophers of education, "a synoptic, systematic, coherent set of beliefs and arguments about education that deals with the educational enterprise as a whole . . .".(5)

Soltis suggests that while the older view is not wrong, it does not characterize the current fashion. Many philosophers of education now regard philosophy as not so much a coherent set of beliefs, as a collection of more or less disparate philosophical considerations ("subareas of philosophy", in his language); and philosophy of education, as a treatment of educational problems in the light of the outcome of such considerations. The main purpose of this eightieth yearbook, Soltis suggests, is to explain this conception of philosophy of education by exhibiting it to the reader, (2), and to show what educators "might expect to gain from a particular bit of work in philosophy of education . . ." (11) What they might expect to gain, six of the remaining chapters clearly show, is advice concerning the best way to proceed in one dimension or another of their task of educating.

For Professor Jane Roland Martin, the question is the curriculum proper to liberal education. She considers the answer given by Paul H. Hirst — that it consists in seven forms of knowledge or seven classes of true propositions: mathematics, physical sciences, moral judgements, etc. . . . She finds this view mistaken. A successful initiation into these forms would leave the student either intellectually or emotionally incapable of acting; and such an "ivory tower person" cannot be one who enjoys a liberal education. Its curriculum must include, besides the forms of knowledge, the ways of cooperating with other persons towards communal objectives, and of feeling at one with all of nature. Hirst took as paradigm for liberal education the cultivation of the mind — the activity that supervises coming to know that propositions are true; educators should take cultivation of the person instead — the activity that supervises not only coming to know, but coming to feel and to act as well.

Professor Donna H. Kerr asks a question about the value (she calls it "quality") of teaching. I think it is the question, what that value consists in. But she does not attempt to answer that question. She argues, rather, that its answer must await the discovery of the neighborhood in which its subject resides.

But she does make that discovery. The locale of the value of teaching is determined by the nature of the act of teaching. This act consists in three subordinate acts — that of choosing a subject to help someone learn, of choosing a plan for helping him learn it, and of executing the plan chosen. (74) Each of these subordinate acts, she holds, is embedded in another — that of 'taking into account and bringing to bear upon it' certain beliefs about the nature of what the teacher chooses to teach, about the nature of learning, about the nature of the learner, about the nature of available means and resources, about the nature of the moral and economic attitudes towards his subject entertained by his society, and for each of the subordinate acts, about the nature of the other two. The beliefs that the teacher must take into account and put to use in choosing his subject and plan, and in executing that plan must be those that are accepted for true by "the research community" that surrounds the teaching. (90) Thus, Kerr seems to wish to hold that teaching really is a complex of three acts, each of which is itself complex — a complex of the teacher's act of taking into account and bringing to bear the research community's beliefs upon 'his act of choosing a subject', 'choosing a plan', and 'executing that plan'. The value of teaching resides in ". . . what is taken into account and brought to bear when doing each of the three teaching actions . . ."(88-9) — in certain beliefs accepted for true by the research community. This conclusion may surprise the reader. He may have supposed that the value of teaching resides in the learner's acquiring knowledge of the subject as a consequence of the teacher's teaching.

Kerr holds that though we have a true sketch of the character of teaching, that sketch is not at all fully developed. She advises educators and others to proceed to fill out that sketch in order to find the value of the act it sketches, insisting that until we bring about that development, we will fail to understand its value, fail to evaluate teaching correctly, fail properly to focus research on its effectiveness — fail, indeed, to teach, let alone to teach to teach. (92)

Soltis considers the question, 'From what perspective should the educator view knowledge?' Until recently, he has viewed it from the 'egocentric'. In this perspective, knowledge appears as an artifact of individual minds, originating in data presented to individual minds; and therefore, as subjective and culturally relative, at best. As a consequence, education has appeared as the educator's imposition on his students of something that, though clad as objective truth, is really an exploitive ideology, and as a process that cannot be directed toward action for common goals.

The educator should assume the 'sociocentric perspective'. In it, knowledge appears as a social construction that is formed by individuals, but also, itself, forms individuals (97) — a construction, both personal and public, "designed to make sense of and provide for effective action in a reactive, malleable yet independently existing reality". (98) If the educator views knowledge as a social construction, education appears, not as the imposition of an ideology that precludes cooperative action, but as the transmission to the young of something that makes the world intelligible to all, an action for the common good effective. (107) In the egocentric perspective, the educator cannot understand the student who grows up in a different culture or minority group, and direct his education properly. But in the sociocentric perspective, there are no barriers to understanding, and education can proceed without let or hindrance.

Professor Maxine Greene considers aesthetic experience and holds that it consists in attending to things in either of two ways: either as cognitive symbols that convey information (a view like Nelson Goodman's) or as denizens of a special "province of meaning" distinct from that of ordinary life (the phenomenologist's view e.g., Alfred Schutz). (124-128) In both cases, the thing attended to has meaning; and Greene describes aesthetic attention to things as aesthetic literacy. (133) Engaging in this way of reading things confers a great value upon both nature and art.

Greene advises educators to make a much larger place for teaching aesthetic literacy than is now allotted to it, and to train teachers of it by teaching them to do aesthetics, to practice at least one art and, themselves, to appreciate all things vividly and with discrimination. Such teachers will enable students, by reading the aesthetic meaningfulness of natural things and works of art, to "come closer to discovering how to be free." (141)

Professor Robert H. Ennis is concerned with the nature of rationality. He presents a conception of it that contains three major constituents — proficiencies, tendencies, and exercises. The rational thinker is proficient at observing, inferring, generalizing, conceiving, reasoning, evaluating, and "detecting standard problems and realizing appropriate action." He tends to "1. exercise these proficiencies 2. take into account the total situation 3. be well-informed 4. demand as much precision as the subject permits 5. deal with the parts of a complex situation in an orderly fashion 6. consider seriously other points of view than one's own 7. withhold judgment when the evidence and/or reasons are insufficient 8. take a position (and change the position) when the evidence and reasons are sufficient to do so 9. accept the necessity of exercising informed judgment". (145) And he exercises not necessarily all, but at any rate most of these proficiencies and tendencies in good judgment. (149) Ennis illustrates some of the proficiencies and tendencies that make for rationality. He believes that ". . . there is a widespread and increasing belief among educators and the public that schools at all levels should promote high quality thinking, and that the study and discussion of educational theory and practice would profit from higher quality thinking." (144) He advises educators to teach students to think in accord with the conception of rationality he presents, but he does more. He tries to help the reader, himself, through his own reading of the essay, to "develop sound thinking skills". (144)

Professor Clive M. Beck is interested in the nature and organization of values, especially of moral values. From a brief consideration of the opinions of Aristotle, Hobbes, Bentham, Dewey, and Morris Ginsberg, he develops the view that there are very general value principles, common to all men, that provide a justification for the varying and specific values that guide human affairs. (185, 209-10) To teach people to value things correctly, and especially to engage in correct moral actions, is to enable them to identify the principles of value ("basic values"), to perceive that "intermediate range values", e.g., moral rules, fall under them, and to bring them to desire to adopt those principles and intermediate values in their own lives. (185-86) Beck says that there are four ways in which values can be taught: organizing the school so that it exemplifies them, treating value questions as they arise *ad hoc*, integrating instruction in them into instruction on other topics, and courses devoted to teaching them explicitly and alone. (200) He advises that the schools should teach values, especially morals, in all four

ways, but emphasizes that separate courses in values both increase the usefulness of the other three procedures, and are, themselves, much more effective. (201-2)

What shall we make of the advice these chapters offer? The curriculum for a liberal education, proposed by Martin, contains the forms of knowledge, but other subjects, also, that would unite human beings in cooperative action with each other, and with all of nature. But the question as to what those subjects are remains as much unanswered now as it has for millenia. And one wonders how, on her terms, there could be any education other than the liberal, and whether, therefore, the adjective does not lose significance. Plato saw that there are curricula other than that provided for his guardians — the curricula for the economic and the military vocations; and for him, the notion of a curriculum for liberal education would not collapse for want of an opposite. This advantage pertains to Hirst's version of Plato's view as well. And Martin's advice wants shoring up against the objection that it has no point — that it does not distinguish between the curriculum for a liberal education and the curriculum for education as such.

Kerr advises us to develop the theory of teaching that she sketches, holding that until it is developed and put to work, there will be no teaching, no understanding of its value and no properly focused study of that value. Some questions about this advice come readily to mind. Have we not been able, for some time, properly to study the value of the teaching of the Buddha, of Socrates, of Jesus and of Abelard? Does the value of their teaching reside in certain beliefs about their subjects, their students, etc. that their 'research communities' accept for true and that they took account of and brought to bear in their teaching? Can we really believe that their teaching, as well as that of a myriad, unlettered, peasant mothers of mankind consisted in choosing a subject, choosing a plan, and executing that plan in the light of certain beliefs held by the research community? All this does seem a little doubtful. The sketch of teaching Kerr provides is more plausible if we fill in only classroom teaching. But for it, too, we shall want to ask whether teaching must take into account and bring to bear what the 'research community' accepts for true, and whether it must consist in acts of choosing and of executing that are anything like conscious acts. But if now conscious, then we must try to make out what an unconscious choice and execution might possibly be. And if we succeed in that difficult task, we must try to see how taking account of and bringing to bear what the research community accepts for true does not transmute teaching into propaganda for the establishment.

Soltis advises the educator to think of knowledge as a social construction in order that teaching should not appear as the imposition of an ideology, and in order that, by thus precluding cultural barriers to understanding, education may be directed more effectively. We need to ask, about this advice, how the sociocentric perspective really differs from the egocentric. All knowledge — 'that', 'but', 'how', 'to', 'for', 'why', 'from', indeed, every one of its conjunctional and prepositional forms, however numerous (but do not multiply beyond necessity) — comes into existence in individual minds and through individual activities. Of course, individual persons do affect one another, so that any bit of knowledge, let alone its totality, can hardly be regarded as the artifact of one person and of only one. But it is not clear that this fact makes knowledge a social construction in any sense of the term "social" that precludes its being, also, an individual or personal construction. But then, it is not clear how the sociocentric perspective on knowledge can remove any difficulties for education that it might labor under in the egocentric.

Greene advises that educators should teach people to be aesthetically literate, and holds that this literacy is the ability to read, in both nature and in art, either aesthetic cognitive meaningfulness of the kind Goodman finds it to possess or of the kind phenomenology attributes to it. We must ask whether the conjunction "or", here, allows one and the same object to possess both kinds of meaningfulness; and if so, whether so rich a symbol is a possibility. If not, which natural objects and works of art possess the one, and which the other. And we may wish to ask whether the statement of each does not need a good deal more precision. And last, we must ask whether courses in appreciation of the arts are not more useful both to bringing people to be aesthetically alive and to teaching others how to conduct them to that status than are courses in aesthetics which may at best, especially when required, do no more than sickly art over with the cast of pale and crabbed thought.

Ennis hopes that by reading his essay, the reader will develop sound thinking skills, and advises educators to use the conception of rationality he presents in their teaching of them. There are some difficulties on both counts. They stem from a less than formal presentation of the conception, and from a total lack of explanation or defense of it. 'Proficiencies' and 'tendencies' seem very much alike, but occupy distinct places in the conception. And if both manifest themselves in 'good judgment' that manifesting is beclouded by their indeterminateness. Within each category, proficiencies and tendencies, redundancy is rampant; and the same notions, inference and reasoning for example, often seem to appear under both headings. This disarray in the conception makes the advice to use it somewhat non-directive. Then, too, some 'components' of his 'rational thinker' seem to have no title to their place. It is surely not always rational, for example, to "withhold judgment when the evidence and/or

reasons are insufficient." Indeed, faith with respect to many subjects is just what rationality requires where evidence cannot do its work. But the main difficulty lies deeper. Perhaps in earlier times, but certainly since that of Descartes and the Porte Royale logicians, many have thought to teach people to think clearly. It cannot be done. The ability to think is a natural endowment; and if practice does perfect it (a proposition not at all obviously true) it certainly does not perfect it by giving it rules. God did not make men bipeds and leave it to anyone, not even to Aristotle, to make them rational. Of course, one can show people how to test whether their thinking is rational. Books of fallacies have been with us for a long time. But they do not teach people to think rationally. Only at best, to see where their thinking has fallen short.

Beck advises that the schools should offer courses in which values, including moral values, are explicitly taught, as well as other less formal modes of teaching them. But the old question, whether values can be taught, should receive more attention. It is not clear that by instruction, as it is ordinarily understood, one person can bring another to an understanding of a value concept. It is not clear that, if he can, he can bring the other to commit himself to an action that will apply that concept. It is not clear that if he can do that, the other will actually perform the act to which he is committed. And if all this is not clear, neither is the value of courses in values, explicit and non-explicit. Of course, the schools ought to exemplify values. But of course, so should every other institution.

The last three chapters of the *Yearbook*, while they deal with questions that interest philosophers of education, offer little serious advice to educators. Professor Kenneth A. Strike asks: "what precisely is the evil of segregation and what is the nature of the good or the right that is served by desegration". (214) His answer emerges from a consideration of two moral principles, each of which might justify the desegregation brought about by *Brown v. Board of Education* and related cases. One is the principle that goods ought to be ". . . allocated on relevant rather than irrelevant criteria" (216) — the principle of distributive justice. The other is that all human beings are equally human (227), and therefore equally worthy of respect. Segregation violates the first principle by producing a circumstance in the black child's life — feelings of inferiority (Clark) or a corrosive peer group (Coleman) — that make his educational opportunities, in fact, unequal to those of the white child, that reduces the social goods those opportunities bring, and that allots them to him, therefore, on the irrelevant criterion of race. The evil of segregation, its deviation from the principle of distributive justice depends upon its production of this life circumstance. The good of desegregation, on the first principle, consists in its removing race as a criterion for alloting social goods by removing the black child's feelings of inferiority or his corrosive peer group — the latter, through some device like busing.

The evil of segregation on the principle of humanity is its clear, implied assertion that the black child is less human than the white, and is less worthy of respect. It is also the subjective counterpart of that evaluation, which is the failure by the black child to respect himself. The good of desegregation is not its distributive justice. It is its embodiment of the principle of humanity, and its encouragement in the black child of self-respect.

Strike's chief point, if I understand him right, is that these two principles are conceptually connected — that to adopt the one rationally requires adopting the other. After having specified the principle of distributive justice into the form given it by John Rawls (a specification that will surprise no one now that Rawls's good book has undergone transubstantiation into Holy Writ), he says, first, that that principle presupposes the principle of equal humanity. (230) The irrelevance of criteria to differences in goods distributed depends upon the fact that those criteria lie within a single humanity. To distribute different education to blacks and to whites is to use such a criterion for that distribution. So far, adopting the principle of distributive justice requires, presupposes, adopting that of equal humanity: but, so far, adopting the latter principle does not require adopting that of distributive justice. But Strike wishes to assert this latter relation as well. He writes: "There are not then two kinds of segregation, one which maligns the basic humanity of blacks and a second which 'merely' maldistributes social goods. There are just different ways to fail to extend to blacks a recognition of their full humanity". (232) And he ends by saying that the two moral principles ". . . imply one another and . . . when separated each gives an incomplete view of what is at stake in issues of segregation and desegregation". (234) He adds a point to which he attaches much importance — that self-respect, one's recognition that his own humanity is equal to that of any other human being, is a primary good, that it is essential to the ability to affirm one's own rights, and that it ought to be justly distributed to all persons, regardless of race. (233) The evil of segregation, then, is its distributive injustice, especially its maldistribution of self-respect, together with its implication that black children are less human than others; the good of desegregation is its distributive justice, especially with regard to self-respect, together with its recognition of the equal humanity of all children.

Two questions naturally arise concerning Strike's chief thesis. The first is whether the two principles do not imply one another but are really one. Suppose that distributive justice is the duty toward all human beings of alloting social goods to them on relevant, and never on irrelevant criteria. Might not the duty of respect for

humanity be just this duty also? Certainly the opposite of respect is contempt, and certainly contempt distributes goods on its own irrelevant criterion. So that the opposite of respect, contempt, is the opposite of just distribution also, unjust distribution. But then respect for humanity and justice have the same opposite, and appear, therefore, to be one principle, not two. The other question concerns self-respect. Should we not think of it as awareness of the moral value of what one does rather than of the value of what one is? Awareness of the value of what one is too easily becomes the narcissistic, overbearing self-assertion and moral excess of establishment and minority alike. To be aware of the moral value of what one does seems to be the path of right action for both. And we must ask, also, no matter how we understand self-respect, whether it is, like educational opportunity and money, something that can be distributed at all — justly or unjustly.

Professor D.C. Phillips formulates doctrines central to relativism and "The 'New Methodology' of Science". Central to relativism is the proposition that the foundations of a theory are not susceptible to criticism that depends upon a theory resting on a different foundation. (234) It is now current among philosophers of science because of the work of Kuhn, who perceived that "scientists throughout history were working within a series of discontinuous or incommensurable paradigms" (239); and of the later work of Wittgenstein, who "discussed the multitude of games that are played with language, such as giving orders, reporting events, speculating, testing hypotheses, making jokes, 'asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying'" (241), each of which activities has its own set of rules or criteria. Winch's work "brings out clearly the similarity between the Wittgensteinian and Kuhnian theses." (241), and makes relativism with respect to scientific theories, a plausible view. The new methodology of science has developed out of the work of Lakatos and Feyerabend. It rejects the older view that particular pieces of scientific work can be sensibly evaluated, and asserts that the only proper subjects of scientific appraisal are entire programs of research. Particular theories enjoy the immunities of relativism, but programs of scientific research may be criticized "from outside one's own theoretical frame." (255)

Phillips suggests that research in education reflects scientific relativism. The comparison of educational practices in different cultures is of doubtful significance; comparison takes place in the paradigmatic language of one culture in particular. That Kohlberg's fixed stages of moral reasoning are common to all cultures may be a delusion brought about by his worker's translating their little dilemmas into the language of the culture of their charges, again and again, until they obtain the responses that the theory requires. He holds that while much research in education does not reflect the new methodology of science, (256) some does. The hypothesis of the genetic and that of the environmental determination of intelligence may be treated as different programs of research rather than as competing theories; and the same treatment may be given to Kohlberg's work, though it can scarcely claim a rival.

Phillips explicitly refuses to give any advice or draw any conclusions. (261) His essay is simply a report of some controversies that have taken place recently in the philosophy of science. Unfortunatley, they do not make those controversies very clear to the uninitiated, and raise questions that make them hard to understand for all readers. Kuhn's paradigms and their "discontinuity and incommensurability" demand some analysis, even an incorrect one, if the reader is to understand, however inadequately, how they make for relativism of scientific theories. And the concept, 'language game', must be explained if the reader is to understand, even incorrectly, how Wittgenstein's later work might also support relativism. Incidentally, making jokes with language and describing human affairs with language may both be playing language games; and we certainly cannot criticize Herodotus's *Histories* on the grounds that it is a poor book of jokes. But would anyone ever have supposed that the irrelevance of this remark assures relativity to the *Histories?*

Professor James E. McClellan expounds and advocates what he calls "first philosophy". It results from consideration of mathematics and physics and the sciences based upon them. Any scientific sentence, McClellan holds, refers either to some, or to all the things that are, in a certain class — that are values of a certain variable; (276) and the classes are determined by the property, 'measurability in centimeters, grams, and seconds', and the property, 'being referred to by mathematical statements', e.g., by $z = \sqrt{2}$. (276-77) But the being of things of both kinds is identical; (278) and since there is nothing except what the mathematical sciences refer to, there is no mental self and consciousness, but only a self and consciousness that can be described in terms of centimeters, grams, seconds. That there are mental selves and consciousness, as well as physical things, is dualism, and it is made plausible by our knowing of propositions which, unlike other forms of knowing, e.g., 'knowing how' and 'knowing to', seems incapable of analysis into scientific terms only. But this incapability is mistaken. Knowing propositions is believing, and believing is a material disposition or a material state. And since such dispositions and states are measurable in centimeters, grams, seconds, knowing of propositions does not require reference to mental selves and mental consciousness. (281-83) Thus, McClellan accomplishes a major part of a major task of first philosophy — the removal of all remaining traces of Cartesianism from philosophy of education. (272)

McClellan advises us to purge the theories that guide educational research and practice of all statements that commit us to the existence of mental selves and consciousness. And he says that if we cannot make our theories consistent with "our scientific theory of the world," the thing to do ". . . is to organize with the working class to seize the means of production and smash the capitalist state." (288) But he has not made it clear that we are not required by our theories to admit mental selves and consciousness. Even if knowing propositions were believing and believing were being in a material disposition or state, it is not clear that that material disposition or state is not just a tendency to know and to believe — not clear that mental selves and consciousness are not with us all the while. But that we should engage in revolution is a desperate non sequitur, and the desperate act of revolution itself, is one we need contemplate a good deal less than that McClellan pulls the reader's leg.

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Townsend, Richard G. and Lawton, Stephen B. *What's So Canadian About Canadian Education Administration?* Toronto: OISE Press, 1981. $8.75.

Described by its editors as a "text with a consistent Canadian approach to school administration", this set of essays promises to perplex, provoke and underwhelm its readers. Although a seemingly researchable question is posed, the essays are best characterized by one contributor (Erickson) who introduces his piece by noting "I do my best work when unhampered by hard evidence." That same author also provides an apt counter question: "Canada is different from the U.S., Manitoba from Ontario, Flin Flon from Medicine Hat, and Prince of Wales High from Lord Byng." So what?

The purpose of the monograph is never stated, although it seems evident that contributors were invited to draw from their experiences and comment on Canadian education in whatever area suited them. The result is a collection whose strengths vary widely and which lack a disciplined context. Many contributors wander into a curiously dated round of implicit yankee-bashing. Canadianism is equated with non-Americanism.

When *this* author draws on his experience in education, he is reminded of how superior tans distinguished the visiting Australian cricketers from the host Oxford team; of how a Swedish colleague chided gently about the attention we paid to our 75th anniversary activities; and, of how a Chicago school administrator described the court cases pending in his area. Whether those anecdotes are more appropriate to EAQ, or Chatelaine depends on how rigorously they are reported, what disciplined analysis is applied and what lessons are learned.

The 28 essays are organized around 7 topical themes: Frameworks For Understanding; Equality of Opportunity; Policy Environment; Structures of Governance; Political Processes; Working Administrators; and, Academics. The collection is introduced with a pragmatic analysis by Hickcox which acknowledges the theoretical base of education administration as being shaped by American scholars. On the other hand he points out that ill-founded efforts to struggle with a Canadian uniqueness may deflect efforts away from more effective applications. Problems arising from Canadian geography, history, sparce population, and distances require solutions which are not logically limited in their national origins.

With respect to conceptual frameworks and styles of research, the aging debate between the subjective humanist and those preferring goals and measurements is displayed. The sources cited in the three essays in this section draw heavily from the eduational literature of the 1970s. One must wonder if the continuing tendency to look within the educationist Community over the recent past will provide the conceptual tools to overcome the impasse.

The section dealing with equality of opportunity apparently tries to ask an American question of a Canadian context. Indeed, the observation that Canada's inherent elitism requires a different definition of equality is perhaps the most important observation to draw from this section.

The policy environment for Canadian education is treated from several viewpoints. For example, based on Parson's framework, Hills finds the fundamental differences between the United States and Canada to be modest. Taking the policy context quite literally, Manley-Casimir draws on the legal environment to describe the Canadian context as more predictable than the American.

Governance structures are reviewed from national, provincial and local perspectives; the principal curiosity about Canada being the lack of a federal department of education. Predictably there is almost no discussion of the