In disagreeing with R. Ennis' definition of critical thinking as "the correct assessment of statements" McPeck repeatedly makes the claim that critical thinking is not restricted to propositional knowledge and that any activity requiring deliberation is capable of employing critical thinking. Since critical thinking requires knowledge of the field in question, McPeck argues, it is reasonable to assume that one should know something about the foundations of various types of belief, i.e., the epistemology of the field. Hence the title of his last chapter: "Forward to basics", i.e., to "the reasons that lie behind the putative facts and various voices of authority." Although I am sympathetic to this suggestion I find it rather vague. I wish he had spelled out more clearly how the teaching of the epistemic foundations of a field is supposed to develop or reinforce critical thinking. What would it mean, for example, to study the epistemic foundations of activities such as studying the behavior of mice in a laboratory, mountain climbing, or playing chess (all of which require some deliberation) and how would such study contribute to the development of critical thinking.

Critical Thinking and Education has many merits: it is well-written, clearly and rigorously argued, free of technical jargon and it illuminates a central educational issue in a masterful way. It is a truly liberating and enabling book and I recommend it to all educators and students of education, especially those who feel confused and intimidated by pretentious pseudo-scientific claims about education.

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David Nyberg and Kieran Egan. *The Erosion of Education: Socialization and the Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1981. x + 145 pp. $US 15.95 (cloth). $US 10.95 (paper).

It is not that socialization is unimportant. Nor would Nyberg and Egan argue that schools should not socialize. Schools do socialize, and they should continue to provide opportunities for the necessary socialization of young people. The authors are concerned rather that socialization is becoming the sole task of schools, to the exclusion of education. They are worried also by the propensity of some so-called educational theorists either to use the terms "socialization" and "education" interchangeably, or else to regard young people's socialization needs as more important than their educational needs. With so much educational literature urging this, a book which boldly defends the cause of education is particularly timely.

Given the agenda which Nyberg and Egan have adopted, it is essential that they distinguish clearly between socialization and education. The former consists of "those activities directed toward enabling students to perform as competent agents within their society." (p. 2) Socialization is a necessity and, given the actual social arrangements and practices within a society, the specific ways in which particular individuals should be socialized can be stated fairly precisely. Education, on the other hand, is not a necessity and important educational attainments are difficult to specify. They do, however, enrich human life. Education contributes not to the possibility of life in society but to its quality, and questions about the proper content of education are much more controversial than those about socialization. Accordingly, after explaining the distinction and defending it as a crucial one for educators, Nyberg and Egan develop, in outline, a positive educational theory to guide the selection of educational content and procedures.

The development of this theory constitutes one of the central theoretical tasks of the book. What is sought is a theory which

> focuses on the educational aspects of development, learning, and motivation: one that directly yields principles for engaging children in learning, for unit and lesson planning, and for curriculum organization at each stage of a typical person's development. (p. 58).

The theory proffered identifies four stages of educational development: the Mythic, the Romantic, the Philosophic, and the Ironic. These stages are differentiated not in terms of psychological characteristics of developing persons, but in terms of the kinds of categories they use to make sense of the world and their experience of it. Because education is concerned with understanding, a theory thus rooted in people's categories of understanding will be an educational theory, not a theory of socialization.

Although the theory as presented seems plausible enough when tested intuitively against experience; we must ask whether the theory has any firmer validity than such *prima facie* plausibility. Being able, in retrospect, to see how one's experiences fit the categories of a theory may be necessary, but it is certainly not sufficient to establish the validity of that account. It is difficult to know how the theory could be tested further because Nyberg and Egan equivocate on whether they are advancing the theory as an empirical theory or as a prescriptive theory. There are a number of indications that they intend the theory to be empirically descriptive.

The focus [of the theory] will be on the main categories children seem to use at different ages to make best sense of the world and experience. If this scheme seems plausible, revision and refinement may follow, based on further observation and empirical testing. (p. 58).

. . . the above four stages do more or less accurately describe a common process of educational development within our culture. (p. 74).

Yet in discussing the Philosophic stage they indicate that "The outline is of something more near to an ideal than to a norm" because "a very large proportion" of children reach this stage "only in the most tenuous way, if at all." (p. 66-67) Although they do not say so, even fewer reach the fourth stage, the stage of Ironic intelligence which presumably is also an ideal towards which education should be directed. But why should this ideal be fostered? Because of the aesthetic pleasure which it provides persons. (p. 73) Although this could be a straightforward empirical affirmation, one suspects that Nyberg and Egan wish to commend the ideal because it is the nature of persons that they take pleasure in the exercise of philosophic and ironic capacities. Thus, although their theory of educational development claims to be empirically descriptive, it at least flirts with the metaphysical.

Another question which must be asked of this stage theory, as of all stage theories, is why educational development should be divided into four stages, and why the divisions should be at the points indicated. Why is Nyberg and Egan's four-stage theory an improvement over Whitehead's three-stage account? They, like Whitehead, present their theory persuasively, but how could their theory, or his, actually be tested? Although the theory as presented is enticing, the outline presented needs further elaboration and justification.

Towards the end of the book, Nyberg and Egan explore the different kinds of objectives appropriate to socializing and educational curricula. This is a tightly argued chapter and it does not make easy reading. However, it is one of the most significant chapters in the book. Particularly thought-provoking is the section on instructional objectives where the authors bring a fresh perspective to the assessment of the behavioural objectives approach and argue that although behavioural objectives may be appropriate for a socializing curriculum, "one cannot put a unit of education into the form of a behavioural objective." (p. 116) It is not that Nyberg and Egan are opposed to precision in the statement of educational objectives or to efficiency in their realization. They deny, however, that behavioural objectives are any more precise than non-behavioural ones or that education would be effected more efficiently if all objectives were stated behaviourally. Education is necessarily concerned with breadth of understanding, and this must be reflected in all educational objectives. Thus, to help students "develop an historical consciousness" (p. 116) is a precise statement of what is sought in historical education, and any objective which fails to reflect this concern is simply not an educational objective. There is much to consider in this whole discussion.

Two further general weaknesses of the book deserve special mention.

First, the Canadian reader is struck by the incredible provincialism of the references. Granted, in a philosophical argument reference to empirical circumstances is illustrative and not evidential. However, the authors clearly wish to ground their philosophical reflections in an actual problem; their motivation in writing is a dissatisfaction with observed educational practice. In the opening chapter in particular the authors wish to establish that education is being eroded. What a pity they show no awareness of current schooling or educational practices outside the United States. Some references to circumstances elsewhere would have helped to establish that the problem is not localized.

Second, there is a disturbing unevenness of both style and substance. Some chapters are written in a light, and sometimes even light-hearted, style which makes maximum use of imagery and of shocking "truths" such as "that 27 percent of all [all *Americans?*] high school seniors" believe that Golda Meir is the president of Egypt. (p. 5) Other chapters are more ponderous in style and much more closely argued. More extensive planning and editing would have ensured a greater overall unity of style and approach.

The unevenness is not just a matter of style. There is an unevenness in the coherence of the various chapters around the central thesis. The first five chapters are well-considered treatments of different aspects of the declared thesis, but most of the remaining chapters are more tenuously related to that thesis. Chapter 6, "Teaching and Believing," is, as the authors declare, "consistent with our view of education in contrast to socialization," (p. 89) but they do not show how it advances their thesis. Again, more careful planning would have produced a greater unity of substance.

These flaws notwithstanding, the book should be a useful text for undergraduate courses in educational theory. When supplemented with some of the literature criticized by Nyberg and Egan and with resources concerning the nature of education, *The Erosion of Education* will enrich and focus an introductory course.

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CEA Task Force on Public Involvement in Educational Decisions. *Strategies for Public Involvement* (Final Report). Toronto: Canadian Education Association, 1981. 104 pp. $6.00.

Based on a perceived need for "clarification of the concept of public involvement, and the exploration of its possible implications for educational governance and administration," (p. 5) the Board of Directors of the Canadian Education Association (CEA) established in 1978 a Task Force on Public Involvement in Educational Decisions. Three years later Task Force activity culminated with the publication of its final report, *Strategies for Public Involvement.*

The first of the six chapters making up the report is devoted primarily to defining three concepts judged to have major importance in dealing with the assigned topic. Working from a somewhat questionable assumption that the concepts "could be understood most clearly from a *school board's point of view,* " (p. 10) "the public," was defined simply as *"the school board's electorate."* (p. 11) The second concept, "educational decisions," was equated with school board decisions or those which "are formal motions made at a duly held meeting of the board members, or trustees." (p. 12) As for the third of the major concepts, the Task Force's position was that "public involvement" occurs when (and apparently only when) a board makes the public aware of its decision to invite involvement and the public responds with a commitment to collaborate with the board. For the most part, the definitions accorded the major concepts were judged to be so restrictive as to substantially reduce the impact potential of the study.

The second chapter presents the results of a review of the literature as well as some perspectives on public involvement. Bearing in mind the declared position of the Task Force that first priority be given "to Canadian materials, or to materials dealing with Canadian systems" and "the primary emphasis should be on material dealing with public involvement at the school board level," (p. 17) the literature review is a reasonable effort both in its coverage and organization. The results of the review clearly indicate that insofar as the Canadian scene is concerned, there exists a severe shortage of quality material and, further, that which does exist tends to focus on the school level of operation. As for the section dealing with some perspectives, while one might question its placement in the report, one cannot question the success of the "attempt . . . made to encapsulate conservative, radical and liberal positions." (p. 32)

"To give a brief overview of current school board practices with regard to involving the public in the decision-making process" (p. 37) is the avowed purpose of Chapter 3. Unfortunately, this purpose is fulfilled only slightly. The first section dealing with provincial regulations and legislation does present a reasonable overview of the Canadian scene. Such a claim cannot be made for the overviews of "School Board Policies" and "Structures and Procedures for Public Involvement." Lacking in both instances is a clear indication of the number and nature of the school boards surveyed. Without such information, the reader has difficulty with generalized claims such as "many school boards . . . have an unwritten policy to involve the public whenever it seem appropriate . . . . " (p. 38) Much more useful is the information given that relates to the policies and practices of eight identified local jursidictions.

Of all the material presented in the report, that contained in Chapter 4 probably possesses the greatest potential worth for the declared primary target reader, that is, the practitioner. Starting with an examination of "six key assumptions about the nature of the educational decision-making process," (p. 46) the chapter presents two guiding frameworks. The first, labelled a "Framework for Understanding School Board Decisions," essentially is an examination of two contrasting decision-making styles or approaches open to a school board. One of the approaches, "the best solution approach," is defined as "the process which identifies a problem, considers all possible solutions and then selects the alternatives that will permit the board to most closely attain its professed goals," (p. 48) and is identified as being "strictly a rational decision-making approach" (p. 48) used when the dominant concern is for decision quality. The other approach, referred to as the "political approach," is brought into play when the prime concern is public "acceptability" of a particular decision.