

BOOKS

Review Essay

Cohen, Brenda. *Means and Ends in Education*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982. viii, 113 pp. \$19.50 (US) cloth, \$7.50 (US) paper.

Degenhardt, M.A.B. *Education and the Value of Knowledge*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982. viii, 104 pp. \$19.50 (US) cloth, \$7.50 (US) paper.

Straughan, Roger. *Can We Teach Children To be Good?* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982. viii, 115 pp. \$19.50 (US) cloth, \$7.50 (US) paper.

In 1982 George Allen and Unwin (Publishers) introduced a new educational series entitled *Introductory Studies in Philosophy of Education* under the general editorship of Philip Snelders and Colin Wringe. The stated purpose of the series is to make available a collection of "short, readable works" which, besides being philosophically sound, are accessible to professional teachers and teachers in training, including those who have no previous knowledge of philosophy. The works are intended for use in integrated courses rather than philosophy of education courses. Each of the texts "takes a real and widely recognized problem" in education and explores the main philosophical approaches "which can illuminate and clarify it, or suggests a coherent standpoint even when it does not claim to find a solution". (Editors' Forward).

The series is meant to fulfill a need of concerned practitioners for theoretical studies which clearly bear on their problems "and on their dealings with children". This is a laudible undertaking and a primary consideration in this review: are the identified problems of major concern to teachers, and how well do the authors succeed in bearing on these concerns? These texts are not merely an alternative to the well known Students Library of Education series in philosophy of education, first because they are not written for philosophy courses and second, because they deal with much the same literature, that of the Hirst-Peters "school" of educational theory. They all defend the liberal humanistic tradition of education and the first two (Degenhardt and Cohen) focus attention on the issue of intrinsic worth in education.

Over the past decade the undergraduate study of philosophy of education as a disciplinary foundation of teaching and education has declined significantly for several reasons. Fewer teacher education programs require compulsory study of philosophy. Many programs require only a general foundations course as part of the student's qualification, the study of philosophy in these courses may or may not be significant. Other programs expect students to select one of the foundational studies of history, sociology and philosophy of education. The editors of this series are quite correct in claiming that the philosophical study of education must also be provided to students and teachers in a new form and context. The context is the study of teacher-identified problems, concerns and interests. The form is short, readable philosophical discussions of those problems, concerns and interests. Such publications are much more likely to be used in curriculum and psychology classes and more likely to be shared and debated among teachers in the schools. It is very important that this kind of work be available, for philosophical inquiry arises out of the uncertainty, incompleteness or inadequacy of any and every activity. The professional teacher has both the right and responsibility to participate in this inquiry as it

applies to schooling and education. Professional philosophers of education have the opportunity to frustrate this participation or facilitate it. The *Introductory Studies in Philosophy of Education* series is well founded. It remains to be seen how well it succeeds.

Of the three works now available in the series, Straughan's is most likely to be used for the intended audience, not only because it more adequately deals with a real concern of the classroom teacher, but because it is more accessible to the audience. Degenhardt and Cohen succeed but to a lesser degree. In terms of clarity of purpose and expression, direction of argument, and address to practice, they fall short of the objectives set by the editors and achieved by Straughan. Degenhardt addresses the problem of curriculum justification; Cohen discusses the confusion of ends and means in schooling; and Straughan addresses the challenges of moral education in schools. [The publisher's notice indicates three forthcoming works in this series on mixed ability grouping (by David Bridges and Charles Bailey); religious education (by John Sealey); and the education of emotion (by Francis N. Dunlop).]

In *Education and the Value of Knowledge*, Degenhardt attempts to deal with only one aspect of curriculum justification - the possibility of valid grounds for curriculum choice independently of the usefulness of what is studied. Degenhardt claims that much of what we teach in schools (e.g. natural sciences, history, literature and art, comparative religions and ideologies, and advanced mathematics) is hardly useful to everyone and seems only justifiable, if at all, by its intrinsic value alone. Warning his readers that the pursuit of reasons for the intrinsic worth of some knowledge has been unsuccessful, Degenhardt makes his case for the theoretical disciplines on the basis of their having value other than intrinsic value and usefulness. His claim is that study of the traditional disciplines is necessary to our making the best possible sense of our lives, to our working out a best possible "world view" or "philosophy of life". It is important to note that Degenhardt's argument maintains credibility only because he questions the curricular justification of these disciplines in the beginning on the basis of a general sort of occupational usefulness and not on the basis of theoretical utility. The ongoing debate in the liberal humanist school regarding intrinsic and instrumental educational worth of a discipline has centered on their theoretical contribution and not their "daily-task" or vocational utility. That the disciplines are justifiably taught for their contribution to our judgment of world view or our choice of way of life has been well shown by J.P. White in *Towards a Compulsory Curriculum* and by Woods and Barrow in *An Introduction to Philosophy and Education*. In both these works the authors show that the judgement of educational worth is an instrumental judgement and not a judgement of intrinsic worth, i.e., of that which is an end in itself. Woods and Barrow make clear that this judgement must be based upon "broad utilitarian principles" and not on "the gross, pragmatic variety" (p. 41). For White, educational value is in that which informs one's intelligent choice of a way of life. This is the same as Degenhardt's "third value category" - those theoretical disciplines whose value is in helping us "in the inescapably human enterprise of forming a 'world view' or 'philosophy of life' whereby we set ourselves ends in life" (p. 89). This third value is also basically the same as the theoretical usefulness that R.S. Peters identified in his search for the purely intrinsic quality of the theoretical disciplines in *Ethics in Education*. Degenhardt's identification of a third value category depends upon treating instrumental value as two different categories of value, both categorically distinct from each other as they are each categorically distinct from intrinsic value; theoretical or educational usefulness and general usefulness. It is possible that this distinction can be adequately demonstrated and that it can be shown to solve the problem of curriculum justification, Degenhardt however does neither. The necessary distinction is not made when usefulness is introduced as a commonly held criterion of curriculum justification. Nor is the distinction made in Degenhardt's discussion of White's disavowal of the pursuit of intrinsic worth in favor of educational worth in curriculum justification. And finally the distinction is not made or demonstrated when Degenhardt introduces the third value category in the last pages of the book. The credibility of Degenhardt's work rests on his assumption that many teachers will interpret the notion of curriculum usefulness in terms of general (i.e. occupational or daily-task) utility, and that this is likely to be the substantial focus of the problem of curriculum justification for classroom teachers. The assumption may well be correct. If it is not however, few teachers are likely to find what follows of great interest.

The basic problem with this book is that it is addressed to students of teaching and written for students of philosophy. This unfortunate confusion of purpose misdirects the author and leaves the reader less informed on the real problem. The author claims to deal with the problem of justifying the

study of subjects which teachers recognize are not generally useful, yet the author introduces the argument of a third category only in the last chapter of the book. The greatest part of the book (73 pages out of 93) is devoted to showing how unproductive is the pursuit of demonstrable intrinsic worth in the theoretical disciplines. This lengthy exposition can hardly have been written to disabuse students and teachers of an expectation they didn't have. The original problem arises out of teachers not being able to claim general usefulness, not out of their being committed to the principle of intrinsic worth. Certainly the several theories of the inherent worth of knowledge discussed in this chapter are well organized and well summarized by Degenhardt; and students in an introductory class of philosophy of education will find them helpful. The theories of justification discussed include those of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, the English utilitarians, Dewey, J.H. Newman, G.E. Moore, A.J. Ayer, Mary Warnock, Paul Hirst, R.S. Peters, and J.P. White. The exposition is in each case short and interesting, and Degenhardt offers a brief critical statement in most cases to show in what ways the claim of intrinsic worth fails. The organizational structure in this middle chapter seems more appropriate to an introduction to philosophy than to meet the teacher's need to understand why he is compelling the study of what very few people will find useful. Teachers and students in education will want to know what can be said and what cannot be said philosophically about *their* educational problem. They will be much less interested in what is largely a problem of philosophers. Degenhardt might have dealt with the relevant arguments embedded in his account of philosophers' theories in a clear and progressive exposition of his "positive answer". In this organization of the inquiry the insights of J.P. White, for example, could become a crucial part of the case to be made for the curricular justification of the theoretical disciplines and not just another philosophical statement on the matter.

In chapter three Degenhardt provides an interesting and stimulating, if brief, response to the problem of curriculum justification. In the first three pages of that chapter he provides a very good reason for paying much less attention to the pursuit of knowledge which is an-end-in-itself. Introducing an argument for the utilitarian worth of the theoretical disciplines, i.e., that the value of these areas of knowledge is in their nurture of useful powers of mind, Degenhardt points out that the qualities of mind associated with the various disciplines are "inseparable from, and constitutive of, those areas of knowledge" (p. 83). Now, although this looks very much like a mirror image of R.S. Peters' final argument for the intrinsic worth of knowledge, i.e. that these areas of knowledge are involved in asking the question 'why do this rather than that?' as well as in answering it, Degenhardt takes it to show that the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic worth breaks down. It is a small step from here to the view that organized bodies of knowledge help "... to shape a man's view of things in general so as to become part of the very texture of how he understands and lives his life". As such, the disciplines of thought, socially inherited and critically applied, help us to form meaning as world-view. This is the book's point of distinction and it closes just where it might better have begun.

Brenda Cohen's *Means and Ends in Education* is concerned with teaching as a practical undertaking and the need of the teacher to evaluate various techniques and processes which confuse means and ends. Cohen sets her focus on one set of contrasts:

Between approaches to teaching where teaching is simply a means to some other end; approaches in which the end determines the means; and approaches in which means and ends are integrated and education serves an intrinsic purpose (p. viii).

The first type of approach is exemplified by Skinnerian operant conditioning, programmed instruction and techniques such as hypnosis and sleep-teaching. The second type of approach includes discovery method and learner centred teaching. The final type of approach is the liberal humanism of Peters and Hirst. Israel Scheffler, the American, gets honorable mention.

Allowing that evaluation of means and ends depends "upon the ethical and educational judgements we find ourselves able to endorse", Cohen asserts that the first type of approach is weighted in favor of the needs of society, and the other two in favor of the needs of the individual; that it is reasonable to call the second type of approach 'therapeutic'; and that the third type "sees education as providing in a special way for the needs of the individual, and only incidentally for the needs of society" (p. 12). This exposed but undeclared preference of the author for the third view, though in itself unproblematic, does allow room for unintentional bias in her evaluation of the other two approaches.

Cohen illustrates the need for teacher evaluation by presenting five clear and distinct cases of teaching which are individually engaging, and which in juxtaposition erase any doubt the reader might have that professional teachers must evaluate teaching techniques and processes. The examples are of Socrates and Meno, Rousseau and Emile, the Doctor and one of Tom Brown's schoolmates, an idealised self-directed classroom described in the Plowden Report, and one of J.A.B. Watson's experiments on conditioning. Cohen effectively uses the examples throughout the text to illustrate and expose the techniques and processes under evaluation.

The chapter on conditioning is basically a brief presentation of Skinner's behavioral view of learning with a much briefer account of the criticisms made of this view by Hamlyn, Wilson, Peters, and Chomsky. Cohen concludes the chapter with an informative account of the significant reliance on reinforcement in both traditional and contemporary schooling, and with an important analysis of its ethical limitations. This latter is a fine statement of the complex regard for individuals which every professional teacher must take.

The second chapter of *Means and Ends in Education* is an evaluation of educational technology which Cohen categorically declares is the practical expression of behaviorism in the classroom. She argues that Skinner's teaching machines and programmed learning entail the reduction of subject content to the terms and conditions of behavior alteration and exposes both advantages and disadvantages of this for classroom learning. She concludes, unfortunately, that the educational technologist:

... wishes to impose his view of the subject matter on his pupils; he is bound to see questions as having only one right answer, or at least to rule in advance as to which alternatives may be conceded. He devises tests which suit the convergent thinker but offer little scope to the diverger, or lateral thinker, who's ability consists in being able to think outside the conventional framework ... (p. 35).

Finally, Cohen cautions us regarding the impersonality of the approach of educational technology, and the lack of a human relationship which makes subject matter intrinsically less interesting. The attitude expressed in these assessments is unreflective and uninformed. It may be one of the best examples we could have of how scribes probably responded to the first printing press: ideas are reduced to what a machine can print, editorializing is lost for ever, and the intrinsically human element in writing is eliminated.

The simple association of educational technology with behaviorism and programmed instruction is remarkable, given the amount of contemporary research related to the use of television and the microcomputer in schools. Cohen describes the use of television as a "one sided" encounter with no indication as to what she means by 'one sided'. Does she mean that whatever is presented must be biased in some unfortunate way, or simply that the child cannot respond to the presenter, or that the child has no control over the presentation, no active participation in the presentation? Clearly, it is not true that a television presentation need be any less objective and rational than a teacher's lesson. Obviously, the opportunity to respond in discussion and written work depends on the use the classroom teacher makes of television programmes; a child may exercise as much control by asking a teacher to turn off the television as he may in asking a teacher not to go on with the lesson; and more significantly, the well known research of scholars like Gabriel Salomon of Hebrew University, Tel Aviv, demonstrates that children are active participants in television and film viewing. The participation may, at least, be as intelligent and divergent as the child's teachers encourage and facilitate. Children ordinarily are not so heavily dependent on adults for intelligent and reflective participation as Cohen implicitly suggests, and neither is the human relationship of instruction eliminated when one sets the television and a microcomputer beside the textbook (programmed or unprogrammed) in a classroom of teachers and children.

There is an unfortunate discrepancy between Cohen's sentiments regarding educational technology and her excellent analysis of free will and its exercise in schooling (chapter three). The discrepancy is explained by her complete association of educational technology with the assumptions and excesses of Skinnerian behaviorism. Her discussion of free will arises in the context of the potential association of technology and "mind control" techniques such as hypnosis, drugs, and subliminal advertising, in the training of children. The meaning of this association for critical thought and free action initiates

Cohen's valuable discussion of philosophical behaviorism, human will and creativity, and teacher judgment. This discussion is clear, well reasoned and appropriately challenging to undergraduate readers in education.

The discussion of educational technology is uninformed by the educational research with microcomputers. The educational research of the Artificial Intelligence unit at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, based on Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, has resulted in a microcomputer programme which very young children actively control and manipulate for purposes they themselves devise. As Seymour Papert describes it, the programme, called the Turtle, is an "object-to-think-with" so that the child learns mathematics, for example, as he would learn French by living in France. Children not only programme the Turtle by teaching the Turtle new words by typing them at a keyboard, they may also programme the Turtle to make music and to dance. (*Mind Storms: Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas*, New York: Basic Books, 1980).

In this technology the machine has become a device of the learner as well as of the teacher, and its availability enriches and activates the learning environment for both. One of Papert's colleagues at MIT, Marvin Minsky, has recently argued (*Psychology Today*, December 1983) that just as we feared the diminution of our humanity implied in the Darwinian theory of evolutionary origin, we now fear the possibility that the human mind is basically a machine. Our fear of the machine is that it may limit our freedom not because the machine could serve to control us as suggested by Cohen's arguments, but because the intelligent machine may expose the human mind as machine. Our understanding of free will and creativity may be demystified by this kind of research, and our potential for freedom and inquiry may be significantly enhanced. Teachers should know about this technology and its potential for education.

"Learner-Oriented Approaches" constitutes the examination of approaches in which the end justifies the means. It includes an informative analysis of the use of the term "discovery", a discussion of the mistaken expectations for discovery methods, and an indication of the appropriate use of discovery in schooling. Cohen includes an informative discussion of some philosophical theories of schooling in which the learner is the agent of change and development. A critical discussion of the de-schooling theories of Illich and Reimer leads appropriately to consideration of the structure of knowledge as a necessary discipline of self-expression and autonomy.

The final section on liberal approaches to teaching clearly explains the nature of the discipline and autonomy of the educated person as it is understood by Paul Hirst and R.S. Peters. The section concludes with a critical exposition of teaching as it is understood in the liberal humanistic view of education. The last chapter takes up the interesting challenge that all teachers face with some uncertainty at one or more points in their careers: the challenge that whatever the teacher does, even if open rational discussion is maintained, the outcome of teaching is indoctrination, i.e., the acceptance of a particular view of things, of a particular ideology and approach to life. Cohen's refutation of this skeptical view is based on the claims that impartiality, as fair and balanced presentation and consideration, is a requirement of the liberal perspective, and that the teacher as educator understands that he is responsible for this effort to the student as an autonomous person. The argument is convincing and will help many teachers make sense of their daily task. Its likely attractiveness to students of education is not unrelated to the biased and incomplete consideration made of behaviorism and of educational technology in the early part of the book. This seriously limits the benefits of the book.

Roger Straughan's *Can We Teach Children To Be Good?* is the most successful of these introductions. The problem is clearly stated as the charge that teachers in schools "are not doing enough to impart the right values to children, and to ensure that their behavior is socially acceptable" (p. 2). Straughan immediately shows what philosophical questions must be understood and answered in order to realistically undertake moral instruction: what kind of claim is this? what exactly are moral values? are moral issues a matter of personal opinion or are they resolved on objective grounds? can we rely on some authority? what do we teach and how do we teach it?

In answer to the question "what does it mean to be good?" Straughan first describes how the philosopher undertakes second-order study to answer questions, and then he carefully proceeds, with occasional brief asides to explain what he is doing. He first identifies the least controversial features of

morality as independent judgement, freedom of choice, and action; he then shows how the distinction between form and content is important in dealing with the issue of moral education. These first two chapters are an excellent exposition of philosophical attitude, purpose, and method. Throughout the book Straughan uses pointed examples of how we speak about morality and moral education. He presents the case for particular claims about what *being moral* means on the basis of what may be claimed and what may not, referring to significant philosophers easily and unobtrusively so as to maintain attention throughout the book on the analysis itself. His occasional exposition of particular theories is also succinct. He makes the relevant points of the theory, expressing them simply without diversion or loss of significance. His criticisms are always directed to the point of the analysis. For example, his references to Sartre's work exposes immediately its limitations as ethical theory and its contribution to the study of what it means to be good.

In the examination of arguments made about the form and content of morality (a distinction which he shows to be so blurred that one cannot argue merely from form or content), Straughan carefully exposes what can be reasonably shown to be 'typical features' of morality "without pretending that we have thereby succeeded in laying down a conclusive set of necessary and sufficient conditions" (p. 82). To qualify as a moral agent one's moral decisions must be freely made, intentional, and based on some degree of independent judgement, recognizing others as authorities when they are. His judgement must take account of implications and consequences, he must try to visualize how it will affect others and what good or harm it may do. By this consideration, he seeks reasons of a general and disinterested kind to justify his decision. His reasons will be expressible in the form of a rule or principle which he is prepared to apply in similar situations. Finally, having thus made up his mind, he will care enough to act on a decision, doing what he judges is right (pp. 82-83).

This account of moral education which, as Straughan notes, has much in common with John Wilson's components of a morally educated person, results from a convincing analysis of what can be said about morality. Straughan's very significant contribution to the study of education and schooling by students and teachers is in getting it as clear and straight as it may be had while recognizing that we each are still responsible for understanding better what it means to be moral. Throughout the analysis all readers, including the undergraduate and the professional, will recognize that she or he is participating in a conversation with Straughan. He shares insight and responsibility with the intelligent thoughtful reader. The book ends with an informing statement of what it means to teach others to be good. Every professional teacher will be positively challenged by this statement. The discussion on teaching children to care about morality is a major contribution to the literature on moral education. The discussion resolves the problem of teacher neutrality by showing how it is the teacher as a serious moral agent at work in relationship to students that the students can understand the mutual entailment of thinking rationally and trying to be moral.

This book is one of the best introductions to moral education for any reader and it is an excellent statement on teaching children to be good for all teachers and students of education.

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Salter, Brian and Tapper Ted. *Education, Politics and the State*. London, England: Grant McIntyre Ltd., 1981, 247 pp., \$16.95.

Potential influences inside and outside the educational system *both* must be taken into account in generating any adequate theory of educational change. The tendency to ignore this methodological truism has been pervasive. As Salter and Tapper note, with particular reference to British educational sociologists, contemporary interpretations of educational change "... have either been obsessed with one parochial part of that system (e.g. the curriculum) and neglected to relate it to the rest of education, or they have been concerned with broader social issues (e.g. social mobility, cultural reproduction) where the dynamics of educational change are of secondary importance" (p. 2). Certainly those working from either structural functionalist or Marxist theoretical perspectives commonly have been