

examples to help establish the vision that is projected. There's almost an existential angst or mistrust that surfaces when attempting to explore the realities of modernity. The mistrust, at times, seems directed at those classical traditions which have weathered the test of time but seem to be losing authenticity and power in the modern arena of thought and practice. The behaviourist suggests a change of circumstances and our responses to them; Bowers suggests a change of relationship to our symbolic worlds or, at least, a recognition of them. The difficulty of this position is that it implicates us intellectually, politically and psychologically. It renews the educator's purposes — to help students recognize their place *in* history and to examine their genesis throughout it in a much more demanding sense than our modern modes of consciousness command. In a sense, today, "thinking against the grain" may mean touching wood again to recognize its metaphorical impact. But, as Northrop Frye noted in *The Educated Imagination* "there are no courses in remedial metaphor." C. A. Bowers', *The Promise of Theory*, urges us to explore the liberating possibilities of such a project.

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Hirst, Paul, H. (Ed.), *Educational Theory and Its Foundation Disciplines*. Routledge: Kegan, Paul, Boston & London, 1983, 145 pp., \$11.50 (paper).

If one were to ask the resident experts in Britain what was happening there in the Foundation disciplines of education and hope for a concise and summary reply, one could not do better than read Hirst's collection. In the opening chapter Hirst provides his own statement on the progress of British scholarship with regard to the relationship between theory and practice. The other four contributors — Richard Peters, Brian Simon, John Nisbet and Brian Davies — each present a chapter reviewing the state of the art in their particular disciplines. The reader is treated to brief and personal analyses of the philosophy, history, psychology and sociology of education, with both the strengths and shortfalls that accompany brief and personal statements. But none were intended to be exhaustive and complete. Rather, they were gathered together to provide a general but scholarly glimpse. All but one of the papers published in this volume originated as public lectures at the University of Cambridge.

In Chapter One, Paul Hirst carries on his continuing debate with D. J. O'Connor with his argument that we must develop a kind of educational theory that is pertinent to the educational enterprise itself. He speculates that this kind of educational theory will involve not only the sciences, including the social sciences, but also beliefs and values. This does lead educational theory into the confusion surrounding values and the uncertainty of practical reasoning but so it must. That is the nature of the educational enterprise.

In the search for educational theory which will develop rational principles for educational practice we must draw upon theoretical knowledge from educational psychology and the sociology of education, as well as from history and philosophy. As a consequence educational theory is a composite, but a coherent composite, with its unity provided by a focus on a consistent set of principles for educational practice. Hirst's contention is that there are practical policy questions facing educators and there is both the need for, and the possibility of, developing principles of educational theory which enlighten these questions of practical policy. In this context he argues that the disciplines provide the reasons for the principles and, as such, the disciplines are "crucial for the justification for what is claimed in the theory" (p. 6). But the progression from the disciplines to the principles to particular educational activities is not a simple one and Hirst tackles the critics of this relationship for ignoring its very complexity. He does recognize John Wilson's criticism of his approach as only a methodology for educational theory, but claims he was proposing an "outline of the logic of the theory" (p. 9) and not a methodology. His paper carries this concern for the nature of educational principles and their justification beyond a simple appeal to the disciplines and into a "complex pragmatic process that uses its own appropriate practical discourse" (p. 26). Hirst sees this new territory as somewhat uncertain but outlines how it might be approached. He concludes his quest for the appropriate relationship between theory and practice with the speculation that practice may indeed precede theory and if that is the case then what is needed is much more "self-critical, reflective and reconstructive analysis and judgment by . . . practitioners . . . using the disciplines to maximum degree" (p. 28). Although he presents a persuasive appeal for this shift to a practitioner's locus in order to make more explicit the structures underlying practical, pre-theoretical know-how, he nevertheless envisions practitioners returning to

the disciplines for rational stimulation. Whether or not practitioners will bring a touch of the philosopher's stone to the study of the disciplines and forge linkages with practice is an open question. This may be another example of Hirst's struggle with methodology. We can surely look forward to John Wilson's reaction.

Richard Peters' opening paragraph tells the reader exactly what his paper accomplishes: "I am concerned to give an account of what has happened to philosophy of education in Great Britain during the past two decades, to give a brief resume of its main controversies, and to ruminate on what directions I think it should take" (p. 30).

The historical sketch begins with the 'implications of philosophy for education' period and moves through the Great Educators approach, the 'principles of education' era, the age of 'analysis,' and, finally, the present state of focus on educational problems which has engaged the attention of Paul Hirst and Richard Peters.

The main controversies discussed by Peters include the debates over the nature of educational theory and its relation to the philosophy of education the question of whether there are any incontestable things that can be said about 'education' and 'teaching' and the controversy about the 'neutral teacher.' He comments briefly on the lack of work done in the philosophy of teaching particular subjects (e.g. religious and moral education) and the almost complete absence of attempts to answer fundamental questions about the curriculum as a whole. Social, ethical and political questions have also received scant treatment in educational contexts.

As for the future of the Philosophy of Education in Britain, Peters speculates about what he would like to see rather than what he believes may transpire. He hopes for a development out of the 'London line' which is at the same time both more philosophical and more deeply involved in current practical problems. This is very much like saying that Philosophy of Education should deal much more with Philosophy and Education. The reader had hoped for a little speculation.

Following a brief reference to earlier historians of education and their various ideological and institutional emphases, Brian Simon makes it quite clear that in this chapter he is 'specifically explicating' (p. 65) his own approach to the study of education. There is no attempt to survey or critique others. He argues that those professionally engaged in education need an understanding of education that is shaped by their knowledge of why we have the particular form and process of education that now exists. His thesis is that the present arrangement is an expression of past social and ideological movements and cannot be understood outside of such context. This desire to seek origins and understand the dynamics of change is what continues to drive historians.

But the scope and definition of historical study in education is much in need of attention. The scope must surely be broadened beyond the history of schooling and provide an overall reconstruction of all the important educational influences operating within a society. The formative influence of the mass media, popular literature and powerful social movements cannot be ignored by the historian of education in seeking to define his field. Although organized, institutionalized education must form the core of study it must be studied within the larger social, political and religious context. Indeed, Simon contends that we need to bring the dialectics of Marx into our study of systems of education so that their growth, inner contradictions and demise can be linked with political, social and economic phenomena. This approach to the study of education reveals both its complexity and its dynamic character.

Simon terminates his positional statement on the history of education with a perspective on the nature of the relationship between structure and ideology or, as he calls it, theory of education. He uses the rise and fall of psychometrics to illustrate what he regards as a clear relationship between economic and social conditions, the type of structure in the educational system and the dominant theory legitimising the structure. It is an interesting 'theory' on the nature of educational theory but the brevity of the argumentation on behalf of his 'theory' leaves one with many questions, not the least of which is how it grooves with his earlier interpretation of Marxism.

John Nisbet's 'state of the art' review of educational psychology sees it laboring under the image that it is a 'mere shadow of its former self,' (p. 85) having been crowded, since the 1940's, by a resurgence of philosophy and history and the emergence of sociology and politics of education. This image is premature and Nisbet contends that the contributions of psychology to the understanding of cognition, especially during the 1970's, are crucial.

The framework for Nisbet's analysis is provided by a survey of colleagues in Britain who responded to his question, 'Which are the important and promising developments in educational psychology (and also the topics of declining interest)?' (p. 86). A consensus of opinion did emerge around the disenchantment with psychometric

assessment and a concomitant shift to a new preoccupation with process. Nisbet judiciously weighs the abandonment of psychometrics and manages to salvage something of value while at the same time embracing the study of the processes of learning and teaching and information-processing.

Three other themes emerged from Nisbet's respondents: the influence of cognitive psychology on recent educational thinking, the importance of current work on strategies of learning, and the concept of stages of development. Once again the reader must be impressed with Nisbet's cautious assessment of the sophisticated development of each of these themes. He aptly defines the stage of maturity that cognitive psychology has achieved and describes in simple terms the complexity of the relationship between learning strategies and personality types. Although avoiding Egan's rejection of Piagetian developmental theory he does provide us with a critical analysis of traditional 'stages of development' thinking and presents a more believable 'life-span' psychology.

For the most part Nisbet presents a rather hopeful view of educational psychology, but in the last two pages turns from the promising future he sees for the study of cognition and explores the neglect of the emotional and motivational aspects of psychology. Perhaps his final observation puts everything in perspective. The field of educational psychology is struggling to rise from a bed of fragmentation and lost territory. Such new specialties as curriculum studies and evaluation continue to invade and create the possibility that psychology will be further reduced to a minor role in education; but even here, there is a hope. The 'psychopedagogy' of Edgar Stones may provide an opportunity for the psychology of teaching to emerge with some dignity and its integration with clinical psychology could once again enable psychology to form a broad base for educational theory and practice.

Brian Davies' review of the last twenty years of sociology of education in Britain sets out a definition of sociology in terms of the link between individual identity and societal structure. His personal use of this definition calls for the acceptance of more than one type of social theory and a conscious rejection of the single theory that contains our own 'happy endings.' Davies regards the sociology of education as rather poorly connected to the parent discipline, although even in its adolescence much larger than the parent. In Britain this may have been partly the result of filtering the sociology of education through the American connection. It is Davies' perception that education for the individual is no longer taking place in a world that is steadily improving. Along with the personal 'good' that may accrue there is also much 'bad' associated with schooling which now looks to 'the maintenance of an exploitative *status quo*' (p. 103).

The central portion of Davies' piece is an historical sketch weaving the names and emphases of literally dozens of sociologists into a panorama of 'who's who' and 'what did they say' over the last two decades. This annotated list of contributors to the sociology of education is carried into the present through the selection of trends organized around such topics as: schooling and social formation, organization levels, study of the curriculum and the classroom, and language in education. These trends lead Davies to the conclusion that the sociology of education has now passed out of the age of innocence and entered an era where extreme differences are giving way to convergence upon key ideas. The locus of these ideas, usually related to the processes of power and control, is now focused in schools.

Finally, a comment on the collection of the five papers which constitute this volume. Each was a personal point of view on the state of the art in the author's respective domain. Whether it is philosophy, history, psychology or sociology there is evidence that the Foundation disciplines in Britain are emerging as mature disciplines with the 'foundation' much more clearly seen to be classrooms, schooling and teaching. The work and the workplace of education are beginning to be seen as appropriate grist for the scholars mill!

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