Clive Beck, *Educational Philosophy and Theory: An Introduction.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974. Pp. VIII, 328.

This book represents a serious attempt by a respected philosopher of education to complete a near impossible task — to provide an introductory text which does justice to the basic components of the field without leaning too far in the direction of any one established approach. Dedicated analytic philosophers of education may not take too kindly to such a work, however, because the most popular approach in the field today predominantly features a concern for ordinary language analysis and its concomitant activities of clarification and word arrangements.

Professor Beck's approach seeks to combine the best of two worlds in that the book does some analysis, notably in the third section dealing with educational inquiry, but at the same time he does not shun other orientations as meaningless or irrelevant. More specifically, it is Beck's intention to "break away from the analytic tradition in educational philosophy and theory while avoiding the loose thinking and dogmatism of certain traditional approaches " (p. 2). The analysis offered constitutes a high calibre discussion making available to the beginning student a good coverage of the fundamental language of philosophical analysis, i.e. propositions, prescriptions, slogans, definitions, etc. Other sections similarly engage in analytical discourse although the primary objective in them is to enlighten the reader about other aspects of the educational enterprise.

Considerable debate may arise from Beck's choice of subject matter if his work is to be considered introductory. So much is attempted at once that the beginning student may be confused as to what philosophy of education is all about since nothing seems to be left out. The reader is informed that the book is actually about education and the word "theory" is included in the title merely to indicate the breadth of the presentation. And breadth there is including the plea for a new independence for philosophy of education to a discussion of some controversial areas of education. The wide range of subject matter is justified on the basis that the improvement of education is the basic aim of the book and no singular institution is focussed upon so that both form and informal education may be considered.

The first of the three major parts of the book deals with goals in education and includes a discussion of ultimate life goals, objectivity and educational value, intrinsic values in education and a consideration of the question of education having an aim. Also treated are the topics of education for life, the relation of education and society, and the future place of education in society. Much of the discussion in this section is not new or novel and makes reference to the work of R.S. Peters on the question of an educational aim, takes an elementary look at existential educational theory, and discusses John Dewey's concept of education having no ends beyond itself. Beck's analytic expertise is obvious in his suggestion that Dewey was mistaken in claiming that education has no ends beyond itself noting that the latter was led into this mistake by a remarkably broad definition of education being one with life (p. 37).

The second major section investigates contemporary claims about the processes in education — freedom and authority, teaching and learning, curriculum and contemporary educational controversies. Beck is at his best in breaking down educational concepts for reader understanding and his well outlined presentation should enable even college freshmen to gain some appreciation for the intricacies of language and conceptual analysis. Recognized authorities are quoted generously throughout the discourse although some of the issues raised in this section border on pedantry. An example of a not-too-rigorous discussion is Beck's treatment of the democratization of educational institutions in which he concludes that by no means should all authority be hierarchical but indeed every individual should have some authority. The reader is not told *how much* authority each individual should possess nor what kind. Instead, the author concludes, " . . . as our society and educational institutions become more free and less authoritarian in the detailed relations of everyday life, it may be possible to place less emphasis on central institutional structures." (p. 125). This statement is perhaps more indicative of a hope than a promise, more like a wish than proof.

One of the more thought provoking topics in *Educational Philosophy and Theory* is the author's exploration of the concept of curriculum with the adjoining discussion of assumptions which underlie curriculum formation. Offered for the readers' examination are a series of curriculum-making suggestions formulated by Professor Beck with the caution that these are to be regarded as suggestions, and the enterprise of making a curriculum is to comprise a middle ground between advocating that members of educational institutions exercise a high degree of self-determination in curriculum-making, and a plea for individual freedom for doing the same. The criteria (suggestions) offered by Beck lend themselves easily to use through either approach.

The chapter dealing with education in controversial areas (chapter eight) does not discuss sex education, education of women, nor any of the other currently "in" topics, but contents itself with more academically controversial areas such as the problem of indoctrination, moral and religious education, and approaches to dealing with so-called controversial areas of education. As is the case with each chapter, an articulate summary concludes the presentation with references in the form of footnotes gathered at the end. Each chapter is well outlined and the type of subheadings is clear and readable making the book an attractive package for students.

But what about the possible success of *Educational Philosophy and Theory?* Its approach and content is radically different from current texts in philosophy of education, and, in some parts of North America the teaching of courses about the field of education generally is not an established practice. Further, it is not exactly clear as to who should read the book — beginning students in education or those better acquainted with some of its fundamental components and areas of question. Still, the book does constitute a new approach if intrigue qualifies in that category, and thus should be sought after by virtually anyone with an interest in the field of education, be he student

or teacher. As for philosophers of education specifically, Beck's presentation will hold some surprises because he has demonstrated in this volume that while the analytic approach is valuable, it may also be capable of broader application than its proponents have heretofore realized.

John Friesen
The University of Calgary