

Dr. Leinster-Mackay does not mention this, presumably because Defoe's reaction appears not in his published works but as an incidental comment in a confidential report to the Government. Yet Defoe was above all else a kindly man, sympathetic towards children even though, according to Dr. Leinster-Mackay, his view of youth soured somewhat as he grew older.

Defoe approached education on a broad front, and this study lists no less than 45 of his works which relate to education. Almost all of them were published in the last phase of his career, i.e., from 1714 onwards when his political involvement was less intense. Dr. Leinster-Mackay has assembled Defoe's views on education from these diverse sources with painstaking care and the result is a valuable contemporary commentary on English education in the early eighteenth century. Moreover it is the way of educational commentaries that in addressing their own problems, they frequently challenge posterity, and this is true of Defoe. For example, as a religious man in what was still to a great extent a religious age, he was deeply concerned about the moral and religious aspects of schooling and would have rebuked our excessive latter-day concentration on intellectual education. Defoe was also a strong believer in the family, and, in the days before universal schooling, he saw a considerable educational role for parents. However Defoe, like some modern observers, was distressed at the lack of respect shown by children for their parents and he also discerned a lessening in the authority of teachers because some parents would not permit their children to be disciplined at school. If this was the case, then modern teachers would seem to have more in common with their predecessors than they are accustomed to think. But Defoe was critical of teachers also, accusing them of unimaginative teaching methods, dealing in words and syllables "as haberdashers deal in small ware". In regard to discipline, Defoe, as a man of his time, recognized "the natural propensity we all have to evil" and accepted the need for chastisement in love, according to Biblical injunction. Defoe, of course, was born too soon to absorb the full optimism of the eighteenth century philosophers about human nature and human abilities. On the perennial question of nature versus nurture he took a middle role, recognizing the value of schooling yet startlingly forthright in his assertion that the teacher was limited by the intelligence of his pupil. "Give a Blockhead learning; you make him a worse kind of Blockhead than he was before." Modern progressivists, no doubt, will wince at this, but they will be the first to applaud Defoe for those other insights which carried him well ahead of his age. He proposed, for example, a University in London to compete with Oxford and Cambridge, a project carried to fruition by the Benthamites a century later. He also suggested an institution to safeguard the development of the English Language and colleges for military studies, especially engineering. Defoe was very radical too in his proposals for the education of women, whom he regarded as being quite equal to men in ability. He thought that all subjects in the curriculum should be available to them and that centres should be established in each county where they could study without male interference. Defoe was interested also in the education of the deaf and dumb, partly because his son-in-law, Henry Baker, was a well known teacher in this field.

Altogether this short volume amply repays its author's considerable labours and is a welcome addition to our knowledge of Defoe and his age. Few readers are likely to quarrel with Dr. Leinster-Mackay's conclusion that Defoe's view of education was broader than Locke's, more consistent than Rousseau's, but less profound than that of either philosopher. Our author notes that apart from Rousseau's extravagant praise of Robinson Crusoe, little notice has been taken of Defoe by modern educationists and he attributes this to the "journalistic pace" of Defoe's existence which prevented him from blossoming into a philosopher even if he had the ability and inclination to become one. No doubt this is true. The Book of Ecclesiastes declares that wisdom comes with the opportunity for leisure and Defoe certainly had little of that throughout his life. But Defoe's admirers, who are legion, will be more than content to accept him for the great Englishman that he was.

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Barrow, Robin. *The Philosophy of Schooling*. Brighton: Harvester Press 1981 (Pp. IX) Pp. 211. Hardback £15.95. Paperback £4.50., John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1981 \$16.95(U.S.).

On picking up this book I found myself asking the question: Do we really need yet another introduction to the philosophy of education? The author of the book anticipates this very reaction and proceeds, most convincingly, to justify the writing of this introductory text. However, on putting the book down I find myself reflecting that Barrow need not have gone out of his way to justify the publication of another introduction to philosophy of education, for the book speaks for itself: it adopts a most refreshing approach to a subject which has too often been treated in a way which hardly warrants the description 'introduction'. In *The Philosophy of Schooling*, gone

is the overriding preoccupation with the analysis of concepts so typical of earlier introductions. Instead we find an emphasis on an examination of the justifications offered in educational debate: Barrow takes a close and critical look at the arguments and assumptions underpinning the pursuit of educational practices in schools under Western democracy.

The book is refreshing in another sense too: it combines, for the most part, rigorous argument with a readable style which facilitates ease of understanding, a rare combination in a book of this kind. Certainly Barrow demonstrates an unusual facility for anticipating and removing the barriers to understanding which the reader, new to philosophy of education, is likely to encounter. His most effective strategy in this regard is to qualify those remarks which, in his judgment, might be misunderstood. Furthermore, he anticipates those objections to his claims which rest on faulty reasoning, and he clearly and cogently identifies the nature of the errors implicit in such reasoning.

For the reader the refreshing nature of the approach adopted in *The Philosophy of Schooling* cashes out in the *accessibility* of the book. It is accessible precisely because Barrow studiously avoids an approach which seeks to initiate the reader into a *discipline*. Rather, his concern is to articulate and discuss in plain, straightforward language those questions which are the perennial concern of thinking educators, but which they seldom find addressed in any obvious way in other introductions to philosophy of education. Given Barrow's general purpose here, it is not surprising that, in comparison with most other introductory texts, we find a limited number of references to the views of other philosophers: the author chooses not to impede the reader's understanding with lengthy, opaque quotes or distract his attention with footnotes on almost every page; footnotes are listed at the back of the book. In adopting these strategies Barrow produces a book which represents a substantial advance on other attempts to introduce the subject, including his own *An Introductory to Philosophy of Education* (co-written with R.G. Woods).

However, it might be said that comparisons with earlier works in introductory philosophy of education are unfair since Barrow's book is concerned with the philosophy of *schooling*. But, as the author himself points out, his concern is with education, but not *only* with education; he argues that his book represents a development in the field of philosophy of education because it draws attention to *other* functions which schools have, functions which give rise to a number of questions which would benefit from being handled with more clarity of thought. To this end Barrow discusses such topics as socialisation, physical training and vocational courses in an attempt to widen the area of the philosopher's concern.

As a preliminary to discussing the purposes which schools should serve and the means by which such purposes should be realised, the author confronts the deschoolers' claim that there *is no* persuasive rationale for schooling. Clearly, Barrow has to effectively counter this claim if the rest of his book is to have any import, and indeed, he proceeds to offer a cogent critique of the deschoolers which clears the way for his analysis of the concept of education, the main interest of which lies in the author's exploration of the importance of critical thinking as a necessary feature of the educated man. Barrow then goes on to discuss such topics as indoctrination, child-minding, social role selection, education of the emotions and creativity.

He follows up with a well-argued chapter on control and authority in schools but fails to maintain this level of argument in his subsequent chapter on curriculum content. More specifically, I find his arguments for the content of the core curriculum rather contentious. Even if we agree that awareness of individuality is a necessary feature of the educated man, it is not at all clear that the study of English literature is going to acquaint the student with human nature such that he will understand people's individuality. Barrow goes on to make another large claim on behalf of the study of English literature: it develops the student's discriminatory power, a key element in critical thinking. I find the author's handling of this particular claim one of the least satisfactory features of the book: Barrow uncharacteristically relies on assertion rather than argument to state his case.

Perhaps the *outstanding* feature of the book is the first chapter which, in my view, is the clearest exposition yet to be found in any introductory text in philosophy of education on the nature and point of philosophy. It is unfortunate, though, that the chapter is marred by what can only be described as an aberration: Barrow argues for a procedure for analysing concepts — as an alternative to analysis based on ordinary language usage — which fails to stand up to examination. He argues that rather than concerning ourselves with what is meant (publicly) by a particular concept we should be articulating our own private conceptions and where these are unclear, clarifying them. The quality of our conceptions lies not only in their clarity but in their internal coherence and consistency, and the extent to which they square with our other beliefs; further, we must discern and accept the implications of our analysis. Thus one's conception of, say, education, may be highly idiosyncratic but if it meets these criteria, one cannot, on Barrow's view, be wrong. However, one might meet all the criteria and yet arrive at a rather bizarre account of one's conception, and indeed Barrow unwittingly raises this objection

himself when he dismisses a particular conception of education on the grounds that it is "unintelligible," while on another occasion he objects to a suggested definition of education on the grounds that it is most idiosyncratic!

I suspect that Barrow's inconsistency here, as well as his failure to give serious consideration to possible objections to his analytical method are to be explained by an undue haste in writing the book. Certainly his omission from the bibliography of three names to which he has referred in the text — together with the explicit instruction that the reader consult the bibliography — suggests that Barrow wrote the book in a hurry. This impression is confirmed by the extent to which the author strays from practical schooling concerns in his chapter on morality and religion and makes excursions into such matters as the logical possibility of moral knowledge and the nature of moral discourse. However, Barrow does return, in the last chapter, to more urgent pedagogical concerns: assessment, streaming, banding and setting, the last three being topics which have rarely, if ever, been treated in an introduction to philosophy of education.

In summary, the book is to be strongly recommended to the student of education, with a caution: do not be persuaded of Barrow's preferred method of undertaking conceptual analysis, for it can lead to the formulation of unintelligible views. The book might also be profitably read by those more experienced in the art of philosophising but who need reminding that ". . . there is no truth so profound that it cannot be presented in a simple and clear way. . . ." (p. 17).

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John E. McPeck, *Critical Thinking and Education*. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981, 170 pp. \$13.50.

There is a remarkable tradition of critical thinking in our civilization that goes all the way back to the first Europeans, the Presocratic philosophers. One of the salient characteristics of that tradition is the recognition that there are appropriate public tests for our truth claims and similar criteria of success for our performances. An early expression of this critical spirit is Heraclitus' plea "listen not to me but to my argument." In making this request Heraclitus presupposes that this argument can be assessed rationally, i.e., on the basis of relevant reasons and according to the principles that govern such assessments. The admonition also suggests that his contemporaries were capable of avoiding arbitrariness, unthinking conformity and subjectivity and, like the rest of us, often failed to do so.

Another prominent characteristic of this tradition of critical thinking is its anti-doctrinaire attitude with respect to the way we must hold our beliefs and knowledge claims. An impressive early demonstration of such an attitude can be found in another Presocratic philosopher named Xenophanes. Here are some of his striking fragments that have survived:

. . . In the course of time, through seeking, men find that which is better But as for certain truth, no man has known it, nor will he know it . . . and even if by chance he were to utter the final truth, he would himself not know it; for all is but a woven web of guesses.

It is understandable why the teaching of such an important tradition should be considered a central task of our educational institutions: critical thinking is an extraordinary human achievement and as such does not unfold spontaneously, it requires our best efforts; that during its long history this tradition has been often betrayed, vitiated, perverted, or abandoned simply serves to underscore this point. In our days there have even been some persons, like Thomas Kuhn, who have attempted to question the very idea of critical thinking.

In his excellent book *Critical Thinking and Education*, John McPeck does not deal with this latest challenge to the idea of critical thinking — and perhaps for very good reasons. His main concerns are to clarify critical thinking (a concept "both over-worked and under-analysed") and to determine whether education requires it. The rest of the book is devoted to a rigorous criticism of current views on the nature of critical thinking and of programs designed to develop or test it.

McPeck argues that although most people are in favor of critical thinking it is not clear that they agree on its meaning or that they would continue to approve of it if they knew what it meant. The first step towards clarifying the meaning of critical thinking is to recognize that thinking and therefore critical thinking — is *about* something, i.e., some problem, activity or subject area. It follows then that there cannot be a subject called "critical thinking" which can be taught as such. The nature of critical thinking varies with different activities, and since there are "innumerable activities and types of activity that can be thought about critically, so there are innumerable ways in which critical thinking can be manifested."