submerged in long rambling paragraphs or descriptions. The use of sub-headings or titles to help the reader focus on the key issues in each chapter would be useful. Unless a busy teacher is seriously committed to the teaching of politics and takes time for careful review of the monograph, much of what is contained therein will remain uncovered and not be put to use in Canadian classrooms.

In summary, the monograph can be recommended to a number of constituencies: certainly to classroom teachers, especially at the secondary school level, who are seeking ways to approach the teaching of politics in their classrooms; to social studies educators within school boards, government offices or university confines; and to the lay readership which seeks for some understanding as to how education can contribute to the making of an active, informed citizenry.

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Egan, Kieran, *Education and Psychology: Plato, Piaget, and Scientific Psychology*. New York and London: Teachers College Press, 1983. 210 pp. $16.95(U.S.). Available in Canada from the Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto.

Kieran Egan's latest contribution to education advances one of the most provocative arguments in educational theorizing to be seen for some time. And it is fair to speculate that it will leave educational psychologists talking to one another, if not to Egan, for a long time to come. For in this book Egan argues that educational psychology has not advanced the cause of education one whit, and that our continued reliance on the alleged "findings" of educational psychologists has been, and continues to be, positively pernicious. As Egan says:

> The argument of this book is that no psychological theory has, or can have, legitimate implications for educational practice . . . I hope to show that the notion that one can move, however cautiously, along a line of implication from psychological — or other human or social science — theories to educational practice is mistaken, and in practice damaging to education. (pp. ix,x)

Egan begins his sweeping attack by first distinguishing an *educational* theory from a *psychological* theory in the following way. An educational theory, according to Egan, consists in a set of normative prescriptions which answer the questions "What should we teach? How should we teach these things? When should we teach them? What should our end-product be like?" (p.1) However, a psychological theory, according to Egan, cannot legitimately answer these normative questions because its job is merely to describe (scientifically) *what is the case* with respect to "necessary constraints on our nature". If, and Egan stresses the "if", such necessary constraints on our nature could be discovered, then psychology would have some limited role in helping to answer *some* of the normative questions in education. However, the greatest portion of Egan's book is designed to show that psychology has come nowhere close to discovering such natural constraints on our nature, and is, therefore, effectively irrelevant to education, and educational theorizing. Indeed, Egan sets out his general argument in the form of a clear syllogism:

> Major premise. Psychological theories can have implications for education only if they describe constraints on our nature.
>
> Minor premise. No psychological theory at present describes constraints on our nature.
>
> Conclusion. Psychological theories at present have no implications for education. (p.125)

Four of Egan's five chapters are spent defending the premises of this argument in very interesting and illuminating ways. The longest chapter consists in a sustained criticism of Piaget and his followers, arguing that: (a) whatever appears true in Piaget's theory does so because it consists of certain logical tautologies (*e.g.* "children develop in stages"), (b) what is not tautological in Piaget's theory is unsupported by available empirical evidence, and (c) the theory issues in contradictory prescriptions for teaching. In sum, Piaget has not discovered anything that educationists need take seriously, and continued respect for Piaget can only stultify students and teachers alike.

Aside from one chapter which praises (very uncritically in my view) the virtues of Plato's educational theory, the book concentrates on attacking many of the major paradigms of educational psychology that have appeared in the past forty years. Among those criticised are: behaviour modification (Skinner, Bandura, *et al.*), teaching

effectiveness research (Gage, *et al.*), Robert Gagné's learning hierarchies, Bruner's theory of instruction, behavioural objectives, and Aptitude-Treatment-Interaction (ATI) research *à la* Cronbach *et al.* Again, Egan's conclusion is that none of these research traditions (*some* of which he calls "theories") has any valid application to education. And his arguments here go a long way toward making plausible his general negative conclusion.

The major strength of this book is that it forces us to take a hard look at what educational psychology has and has not been doing in education. And if Egan's arguments are taken seriously, it cannot help but clarify, and force us to reassess, much of what now passes for educational research. Such hard-nosed criticisms are difficult to come by, and are long overdue.

That said, however, there is also much in this book that is confused as well as confusing, and in the end the major thesis of the book (quoted above) is never really established, and much too strenuously overstated. In particular, the Major premise of Egan's syllogism employs some very peculiar (and unorthodox) notions of what a "theory" is, and also what is meant by "constraints on our nature". Among other things, he appears to pick and choose the types of psychological studies which he regards as employing a "theory" rather at random, and the principle for this selection remains unclear to the end.

That is, Egan says he is not against empirical research in education as such, nor against empirical research done by psychologists of education, but rather he is against empirical research which is based on any psychological *theory* as such. However, this is far from satisfactory because it is at least arguable that any empirical research worthy of the name is based on some kind of theory, or theoretical perspective, however vaguely defined a given theory may be. What are the criteria for distinguishing research that is based on a theory from that which is not? Egan has nothing to say about this except that he is against the research which is based on a theory. But let us consider some cases which appear to be counter-examples to Egan's thesis. Arthur Jensen's work on I.Q. is of interest here for several reasons, the first being that it has clear implications for education, such as compensatory education programmes, streaming, and the like; and secondly it can legitimately be described as studying "constraints on our nature". Is Jensen's research based on a theory? Without addressing the question directly, Jensen merely claims to be factor-analyzing, and interpreting, certain available data about intelligence. Yet Jensen would not be averse to our describing him as defending "a theory about the heritability of intelligence", and this is a perfectly normal use of the word "theory". Such examples are not only counter-instances to Egan's Major premise (of his syllogism), but they highlight the systematic ambiguity in claiming, as Egan does, that he is not averse to empirical research but only to research "based on a theory".

Moreover, Egan energetically criticizes "teacher effectiveness research", in particular the work of Nate Gage *et al.* Gage himself, however, in many places throughout his work explicitly denies that he is advancing a "theory", as such, about teacher effectiveness; he says he is merely reporting the results of various empirical studies on the question. But quite apart from the meta-question of whether Gage's research *is* advancing a theory or not, the point is that Egan *takes him* to be advancing a theory despite Gage's claim to the contrary. How else explain Egan's determination to refute this research, since he professes to criticize only psychological "theories" in education? I submit that nowhere in this book does Egan come clean on which research he construes to be "based on a theory" and which not, nor what his criteria are for deciding the question. And whatever plausibility there may be in his major thesis, much of it rests on his pervasive equivocation on the meaning of "psychological theory".

Similarly, the meaning Egan gives to the crucial phrase "constraints on our nature", which appears in both premises of his syllogism (quoted above), remains vague and mysterious throughout. Does it mean "constraints" which people are born with by virtue of their genetic make-up, in which case they cannot be changed? Or does it mean the "constraints" which work upon a person by virtue of contingent environmental factors? The overwhelming contextual evidence in this book suggests that Egan means constraints which are non-contingent, and therefore universally necessary for our species. Indeed, it is only this meaning of "constraints" which: (a) lends any punch (or impact) to his syllogism in the first place, (b) enables him to charge detractors with committing the so-called "psychological fallacy", (c) explains (or justifies) his spending most of his energies attacking Piaget — who professed to have discovered such constraints, and (d) enables Egan to counsel educators to feel constrained not by "regularities which are socially contingent" but only by those which are "natural and therefore necessary". However, this view of "constraints", in the phrase "constraints on our nature", presents at least three serious problems. The first is that it simply begs all the questions of the long-standing "nature *vs.* nurture" controversy without arguing the point directly, and merely asserts that the "nature" view is correct. Secondly, even if the "nature" view of the controversy should be correct it would still not follow that educators could disregard research that describes "contingent regularities" — indeed, it would be irrational to do so because those regularities (i.e. "forces") are at work in real classrooms even if they are contingent regularities. And thirdly, it is only by investigating empirical regularities (of whatever type) that we could ever come to

discover which regularities are contingent and which necessary. If they are truly *empirical* regularities, then there cannot be any *a priori* way of determining which regularities are which. This argues for more eclecticism in empirical research than Egan seems prepared to countenance as educationally valuable.

If, however, Egan means that contingent environmental factors are the *loci* of "constraints", in his phrase "constraints on our nature", then it is difficult to see how his syllogism has any force since he would not then be talking about constraints on *our nature*, as such, but simply constraints *simpliciter*— which might have little or nothing to do with "our nature". Indeed, on this interpretation, talking about "our nature" at all is more of a hindrance than a help in the discussion because what constitutes a "constraint" in any given instance could be something merely accidental, or fleeting, or idiosyncratic to one individual, but not necessarily generalisable. On this interpretation, that is, the flood-gates are open as to what could count as a "constraint": presumably, only some sub-set of all possible constraints would be educationally or psychologically important. But which are these? To answer: "those which constrain our nature", is merely to return us to the question again, what does "constraints on our nature" mean?

Moreover, if Egan means to include contingent environmental factors in what might constrain us (*i.e.* constrain learning), then it is difficult to understand his justification for charging:

> If we allow [culture-specific regularities] to suggest implications for educational practice we commit the psychological fallacy — allowing a description of something contingent on past forms of cultural initiation to constrain our prescriptions for the future. (p.137)

On the latter interpretation of "constraints on our nature", however, "contingent forms of cultural initiation" is precisely the source of those kinds of constraints which it is supposed to be psychology's job to discover? On this interpretation of the phrase "constraints on our nature", then, Egan would be committing his own so-called "fallacy". I therefore think the former interpretation of his meaning is closer to his intended mark since the latter interpretation leads to flagrant inconsistency.

In sum, there is much in this book that is illuminating and much that is confused. But all of it is provocative and interesting to read.

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Gumbert, Edgar B., *Different People: Studies in Ethnicity and Education*, Atlanta, Georgia: Center for Cross-Cultural Education, Georgia State University, 1983. 49 pp., $5.00(U.S.).

Ethnicity has become again a popular theme among scholars and the public at large. These concerns and interests have given birth to numerous books and articles. The book under review here is one of many; it gathers papers which were originally lectures at Georgia State University. Thus, as in many edited works, one can find a very general common thread, but very little in terms of theoretical analysis. Except for the introduction, which attempts an analysis and a linking of the different papers, one finds here three different units on different topics, and no general comparison. We shall try to review these different articles.

The introduction by the editor stresses that increased knowledge and understanding will help make ethnic societies work, but that racism is still prevalent. A second part underlines the diversity of the ethnic phenomenon, mentioning the political and economic concerns as well as power and authority relations. Unfortunately, there is no analysis and the examples given are highly contestable. For instance, it is mentioned that "the over one million pieds noirs who entered France from Algeria after it gained its independence in 1962 were as despised by the metropolitan French as the Algerian or Moroccan immigrant workers who came later." There is no proof of this, and what struck sociologists has been the fact that, after a few tensions, the pieds noirs settled and were accepted in France, to the extent that their group identity is now, twenty years later, a folkloric and unimportant characteristic. Returned pieds noirs were never assassinated and rarely aggressed, contrarily to the North African immigrant workers. A third part presents the general context of the immigration of workers, stressing that these workers are not immigrants settling down and are "judged by the distance they keep from the host culture." This is an interesting idea, but should be given some proof. A brief review of the race issues in Britain and then of the U.S. immigration policies and the most recent waves of refugees are briefly mentioned. In Education, the "identity seekers" movement in the U.S., initiated by Blacks, has transformed the prevalent assimilationist