Brent, Allen, *Philosophy and Educational Thought*. Winchester, Mass.: Allen & Unwin, Inc., 1983. 353 pp. $28.50(U.S.) cloth, $12.50(U.S.) paper.

This book is announced as a sequel to an earlier book entitled "Philosophical Foundations for the Curriculum." The present book is an attempt to answer some of the criticisms made by philosophers in reviews and journal articles, as well as an attempt by the author to develop some of his earlier views concerning the curriculum. The book includes three chapters concerned with behaviourism (in classical, Skinnerian, and "logical" forms), two chapters on marxism (in classical and phenomenological forms), two chapters on curriculum proposals, the first that of Bloom, the second by self-proclaimed marxists (Young and Hand). There are three chapters developing the author's defense of Hirst's categories of knowledge, and one final chapter on educational implications of the author's epistemological position. The last chapter is seen, finally, as a bridge towards an upcoming third book, which will criticize secular education, and defend religious education. This is a difficult book which can be read, *in its entirety*, only by professional philosophers. Chapters VII, VIII and IX are particularly technical, and it is difficult to imagine readers in other areas of education coping with the style. The earlier chapters are somewhat easier and the discussions of Bloom on Marxist pedagogy and Multiculturalism (Chapters IV, VI and X) could be read profitably by students in all areas of education.

This book is filled with material which is clearly argued and presented with humor. The behaviourist chapters are introduced with the practical example of Julie doing her practice teaching with Mr. Callaghan. Julie and Mr. Callaghan reappear twice more in the book, in a freer school, to introduce the Marxist argument, and in a more open school, to introduce the discussion about changing curricula.

The point of the practical examples is to emphasize one of the author's major tenets: common-sense observations lead to the theoretical formulations which can then, in turn, be used to pronounce upon other common-sense observations. The author illustrates this tenet with an original formulation of Newton's though-processes (asking himself why apples don't stay still). His application of the tenet to behaviourism in its various forms is also well-argued. We are shown the behaviourist's attempts to go beyond common-sense to a model which is meant to clarify. Brent shows how the behaviourist gets into the contradiction that the model itself makes use of some of the common-sense notions it is trying to dispel. The author summarizes this contradiction in terms of the rule following versus rule conforming models.

The example of the bees (borrowed from Jonathan Bennet) is used to illustrate the difference between the two kinds of rules. Since the distinction is crucial, one would have expected *some* discussion about the relationship of logic to language. When the bees are accused of not being able to show they can judge "my home was once there" on the basis of their inability to reason "since beams cannot, and since this is not a beam, it is a hive...", one wants to know whether human beings have this ability. The "transcendent ability" (borrowed from Peters) talks of generalisation — the ability to judge generally, to make general classifications. Furthermore, the entire question concerning different kinds of rules and the relationship of language and/or logic in regard to our ability to break them (the author's criterion for them being type one, rule-governed) has been questioned by psychologists and philosophers. Between the bees (real and imaginary) and human beings there are other species. Various (nonhuman) primates follow rules, would seem able to break them, and yet are not acknowledged to have language. Do they have the propositional logic of the bees cited above?

There is off hand reference in the same early chapter (p. 30) to empiricism's difficulties with the concept of memory. There is no discussion of memory at this point, although the contention of the author is intriguing. The only references later on in the book concern the inability of "empiricist" authors to understand such events as Jesus walking on the water (p. 137). There the authors claims that what historians fail to note is that the reason why the Gospel uses this phrase is because the Creator was described in this way (p. 138). There are three dissatisfactions with this passage: 1) How does this help clarify the general notion cited above about empiricists and memory? 2) How does the author know that his explanation is the better one? 3) Why does this religion example appear in the midst of an otherwise excellent discussion of Bloom's taxonomy and its behaviourist roots? The impression is that the author wished to bring in the religious dimension at all cost. This suspicion is reinforced by the fact — already noted above — that there is a polemic for religious education at the end of the book.

In regard to the question of logic and language, and rules raised in the earlier chapters, one might expect a much fuller discussion in chapters VIII and IX, where Chomsky's theory of universals along with the later Wittgerstein's "family resemblance" are discussed. Once again, however, there is no satisfaction on the discussion of these earlier points. Chomsky's theory is outlined and used to defend the author's view that it bolsters Hirst's view of "forms of knowledge" for use as categories in regard to curriculum. Since Hirst himself

(with the aid of Hamlyn) has rejected Brent's view, the purpose of these chapters in the present book is to defend his earlier point against their attacks. The debate is protracted and complicated and difficult to summarize.

One major point which I was able to grasp was that both Hirst and Hamlyn have difficulties with Chomsky's notion of unconscious rules. This then is reason enough not to use his view to bolster their theory. Hamlyn's suggestion of prelinguistic categories is sufficient for their purposes. Brent tries to show that there is no very good reason for preferring the Hirst-Hamlyn pre-linguistic view to the Chomsky-Brent view of unconscious linguistic rules. Perhaps not. But then he also fails to show that there is very good reason to accept Chomsky's notion either, which remains, of course, both unproven and contested. Once again, one would have thought that some mention of chimpanzees who use symbols to make sentences might have been discussed. In any case, none of this throws much light on the fundamental questions raised in the earlier chapters. The argument for *those* distinctions (rule following versus rule conforming and language with logic vs animals "communication") is considered already sufficiently argued by the author. Perhaps some of the later chapters might have been cut in order to solidify the argument of the earlier ones.

Hirst's "forms of knowledge" in regard to the curriculum raise important points which are ostensibly in conflict with other views such as, for example, Bruner's notions of concept-development. This latter view, very popular with curriculum experts, stresses the overlaps between say scientific, political or historical teaching. The three chapters of the author devoted to Hirst make *no* reference to these views. The technical discussion about what the best formulation of Hirst's view might be gives the impression that these other questions have already been settled.

One of the most rewarding chapters, in my view, is that on Bloom and his "taxonomy." The arguments against the behaviourist presuppositions are repeated clearly. The best feature, however, is not the general philosophical argument, but the use of practical examples to illustrate the point. The criticism of the taxonomy in regard to cognition and affect is well-done and, what is more important, untechnical enough to be able to be read by non-philosophical colleagues (enthusiasts of Bloom, for example). One example I found thought-provoking concerned the author's criticism of Bloom's cognitive operation of "distinguishing cause-effect relationships." This operation is meant to apply, according to Bloom, to history as well as to science. Here the author points out: "that there is a presupposition of similarity in regard to cause within three different contexts." The point is interesting, and one would certainly agree that human contexts (moral, legal as well as historical) provide differences for causal attributions from purely scientific ones. There are, however, despite Brent, many similarities between the different domains as well as overlaps. A variety of different kinds of psychological research on the manner of determining causality (with or without responsibility) demonstrates that the rules (of reasoning) in different contexts (human and non-human) are not as different as the author suggests.

The second-best chapter, in my opinion, is that on marxist pedagogy, and once again because the argument is couched in terms easily understood by educators other than professional philosophers. The examples of science-teaching, and teaching of literature from a marxist perspective are well explained, and the criticism is devastating. The only problem I had with the discussion was the author's refusal to consider the ethical perspective in regard to marxism, as well as in regard to its criticism. This is intentional on the part of the author for he emphasizes many times that he wishes to give an epistemological, rather than an ethical basis to curriculum decisions. This dichotomy is, I believe, overstated. The marxist view outlined by the author (using Marcuse among others) might also have been developed along lines suggested in the writings of Erich Fromm or Charles Taylor. These formulations of marxism portrayed an ethical dimension allowing human beings to develop their nature without alienation. Furthermore, arguments against marxism can be, and often have been, made on the corresponding ethical grounds. Certain features about man's nature (desire for property perhaps) cannot be accounted for by marxist values. The author has provided *his* presentation of marxism and *his* reasons for rejecting it, which is fine. My objection is to the impression that there exist no other ways of presenting the view or of rejecting it.

The dichotomy between ethical views and epistemological ones appears many times in the book, but perhaps most clearly in the final chapter. Perhaps a better characterisation of these two philosophical sub-disciplines is to say that they are intertwined. The author, for example, subscribes to the "fact-value distinction" (pp. 272-346). This distinction appears within ethics (metaethics?) but is also an epistemological distinction. Within educational contexts, particularly I am convinced and have argued elsewhere (see the Jensen, Flew Controversy, Philosophy, 1973) there is no clearcut fact-value distinction. Often this distinction is used to mask or camouflague some specific recommendation by pretending to science (it's "fact") rather than to preference (it's a "matter of value"). In the case of the present book, the subject is multiculturalism (the author is against) and religious education (the author is for): "Those who would deny that religion is a form of knowledge and who would try to

reduce religious understanding to social or psychological facts about religious believers, become, *on our argument*, the real indoctrinators . . . The knowledge of God becomes the proper discipline of human inquiry . . .'' (p. 351). The only argument is Brent's restatement of Hirst's position of ''forms of knowledge'' where religious category (''awe'') is listed as equally necessary to the empirical, mathematical, historical. Returning back to the pages of that earlier chapter (pp. 338-343) we get a defense of a formulation of Hirst's position against certain philosophical attacks, including one based on Quine's theory of radical translation. But even if the entire argument of Brent's were acceptable, what support does that give to a religious category? Is it so clear that ''awe'' is unrelated to human attitudes, beliefs, desires, in other words psychological concerns. If the author detects in this reviewer a confirmed secularist-pluralist, I confess. Teaching ''knowledge of God'' in schools, represents to me a perversion of education. What ''knowledge and which God?'' In a time when a fight for non-parochial, ''non-confessional'' schools is being fought (particularly here in my territory of the Province of Quebec), the author will perhaps forgive my prejudice. Indoctrination is — pace Brent — a moral concern, and is too easily dismissed by him (in one off-hand reference to White's view concerning ''intentions''). As Olivier Reboul has said, it is a perversion of education to be indoctrinating. The burden of proof remains upon the author to demonstrate that the teaching of religion is non-indoctrinating and does not conflict with certain fundamental values of tolerance and rationality. He hasn't done this in the present book. He has, however, promised us a third one on this very subject.

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