BOOKS

Kneller, George F., *Movements of Thought in Modern Education*. New York, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984, 279 pp. $14.95.

Described as a sequel to his *Introduction to Philosophy of Education*, Kneller's new book seems clearly designed to be a textbook in philosophy of education, brief enough, in the author's words, to be mastered in a single term. It consists of eight, relatively self-contained, studies of contemporary theories and approaches which have influenced education. A glance at the topics covered will confirm that Kneller's conception of philosophy's compass is generous indeed. He looks at, in turn: analysis, phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, positivism, Marxism, romanticism and conservatism. The reader is introduced, in capsule form, to the views of more than thirty philosophers, sociologists and psychologists, and Kneller offers a brief critique of each and an overall appraisal of the general movement to which the individual has been assigned.

On the positive side, it must be said that Kneller is scrupulously fair in setting out the various positions. The author makes a valiant effort to identify the central aspects of each movement, suggests in a non-dogmatic way some general lines of criticism, and tries to salvage the essential contribution which each has to make to education. Used as a reference book, as a kind of compendium or digest, an education student would get a reasonably accurate, if very basic, overview which might indicate that a particular author was worth following up. The book is better seen as a prelude than a sequel.

Kneller's suggestion, however, of the student *mastering* the material in a single term is bound to give one pause. Since a student could not properly master the methods, problems and insights of even a single movement in one term, mastery here can only mean filling one's head with snippets of information and potted criticims. Then students are not learning to think philosophically about educational problems for themselves. The very virtues mentioned above may, in this context, encourage a mindless eclecticism rather than a genuinely critical orientation.

As an introduction to philosophy of education, it fails to bring out what is distinctive about philosophy. Kneller tells us that philosophy of education deals with the most fundamental questions raised by educators. This is true but uninformative, since the same can be said of history, sociology and the other educational disciplines. Again, we can agree that philosophical issues arise in the work of psychologists such as Kohlberg, but this is no reason to blur the difference between philosophy and psychology. His own criticisms of particular authors involve factual, conceptual and moral points, but Kneller does not show how these demand very different kinds of support.

The book communicates very little sense of any interaction among the various movements identified. Kneller makes no attempt to provide any general perspective on the movements, though there are interesting possibilities here as Soltis has recently shown. Apart from the occasional cross-reference, the positions are presented as if they developed in isolation, with no suggestion that they are often different answers, competing or complementary, to the same questions. A large part of the agenda of analytical philosophy of education, for example, has been the examination of the concepts and arguments of the romantics and conservatives but this is not made clear in the account of analysis itself or in the much later discussion of romanticism and conservatism. Positivism appears as chapter five with no indication that historically it preceded and gave way to less doctrinaire forms of analytical philosophy. Kohlberg appears here as a structuralist but his indebtedness to analytical moral philosophers like R.M. Hare is not brought out.

The chapters on phenomenology and hermeneutics, with the exception of the section on Kuhn in the latter, are probably the least successful. In the former chapter alone, we meet Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Buber, Freire, and the proponents of the "New Sociology" in England - all in less than forty pages! It is difficult to see how a student could possibly be in a position to assess the validity of the criticisms suggested

by Kneller on the basis of this acquaintance. There is much heady stuff about Being, anxiety and other notions, but it is surely significant that elsewhere in the book Kneller never finds it necessary to invoke these concepts in trying to understand or appraise a movement. Like many others, Kneller finds "immense promise" in phenomenology, but there is little indication that the promise is about to be fulfilled. It is fine to be told that we must try to identify common and essential elements in experience. But *how* is this to be done? And what are the criteria of *success*

Generally, the level of discussion is appropriate for an introductory work, but the standard of argumentation is uneven. At his best, as in the critique of romantics like Kohl and Illich, one of the more successful chapters, Kneller can be concise and penetrating. Though rarely original, his criticisms have the merit of being sensible and clearly expressed. But there are many lapses from this standard. For example, Kneller employs the well-known self-referential objection against the relativism espoused by the "new" sociologists (p.60); but later, in discussing Kuhn, he maintains without any attempt at justification that relativism is a defensible position (p. 94). In his comments on Peters on authority, Kneller objects to the distinction drawn by Peters between authority and power on the grounds that authority involves the right to ensure by *force* that others comply. But this objection does nothing to answer Peters' point that this *right* may exist though one is *powerless* to enforce it. No doubt such inconsistencies and weaknesses arise in part from the fragmentary and sketchy character of the book.

Kneller's concern to reach out to other traditions is certainly commendable, but with no attempt to discern a direction or current, the movements in question are as ships passing in the night. Many teachers of philosophy of education will continue to prefer to begin with educational problems and issues and then to proceed directly to the leading voices in various traditions for arguments and suggestions. A competent summary of an argument is no substitute for the argument itself.

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Huppert, George, *Public Schools in Renaissance France*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984, pp. 159, $19.95.

Public Schools in Renaissance France adds to our understanding of the development of French secondary schooling, but it is a flawed book. It demonstrates that social demand, rather than State or Church leadership, encouraged expansion of education. Laymen prodded reluctant clerical and state authorities to increase educational opportuntiy. This same process has been demonstrated for the eighteenth century by Furet and Ozouf and for the nineteenth by Grew and Harrigan in revision of republican historiography that had claimed initiative emanated from above. Huppert shows too how control of schools became a matter of dispute between town councils and diocesan authorities. There are interesting discussions of the problems of financing expansion of schools, of how money was raised, and of the beginnings of standardization of curriculum and classes before there was a national authority over schools. When the Church, notably the Jesuits, reentered the educational arena forcefully it was in part at the behest of the King who wanted to promote religious and educational hamageneity.

The book has many faults. Exaggerating its own originality, it emphasizes its differences from Dainville, Chartier, Julia and Compère, criticized by name but never quoted. It never refutes, however, their thesis that the Jesuits were the dominant figures in secondary education of the ancien regime and were the ones to establish a "system" of schools. And, if there was important lay involvement in fifteenth-century schooling, laymen more often increased their influence in existing Church schools than they founded new ones. Many of Huppert's descriptions of later secondary schools are wrong; e.g. labelling them as "the special preserve of the bourgeoisie until well into the twentieth century" (p.x), assuming that the nineteenth century "banish[ed] all daring thoughts in favor of self-interest" (p. 142), claiming that "after the Revolution only one path remained to ambition, a path that led, necessarily, through the secondaire" (p. 143). exaggerating the importance of the Revolution (p. xi). He neglects important studies of the later direction of the colleges - articles by Bailey,