
BOOK REVIEW

Philosophical Issues in Education, by John Kleinig, London: Croom Helm, 1982.

John Kleinig's *Philosophical Issues in Education* has been written at a time when the philosophy of education is in an uneasy state of transition. The analytic paradigm, epitomized in the narrowly conceived methodological styles of R. S. Peters, P. H. Hirst and their colleagues, began to wane a decade or so after its inception and establishment, and although a Marxist philosophy has appeared on the horizon which promises political and economic critique in place of ahistorical analysis, its emergence as a replacement has not yet been greeted with a wide acceptance in the professional community. The gradual decline of the analytic paradigm, then, has left something of a vacuum. Certainly, no longer does it have the self-assured direction it had in the sixties. Kleinig's book both reflects and recognizes this state of affairs: thus, he attempts to recognize "both the value and limitations of conceptual analysis on the one hand, and the concrete historical forces which inform and colour the philosophical task on the other," (Introduction). Yet this recognition and the implications for philosophy of education are neither explored nor adopted by Kleinig.

The initial and brief chapters - "Philosophy of Education" and "Education" - are disappointing. Although they indicate the inherent inflexibility of the earlier conception of APE and its associated account of education, and even indicate the need to consider the socio-historical context, there is no attempt to spell out the implications of accepting an historical philosophy of education - its incompatibility with the method of conceptual analysis - or to realize its theoretical underpinnings. It is simply assumed that it is possible to carry out analyses à la Peters that pay heed to socio-historical factors. Yet the method of analysis and the notion of conceptual truth seem, at least in principle, to be at odds with an historical or genetic account. Given the transitional state of philosophy of education one might have expected a more comprehensive discussion of the nature of both philosophy of education and the method that characterizes it - especially in view of the analyses that follow.

In a series of eighteen chapters Kleinig then explores a variety of topics which cover the educational spectrum: teaching, learning, indoctrination, autonomy, neutrality, equality, discipline, punishment and so on. Each of these is lucidly written and represents a mastery of both the literature and the conceptual issues involved - features that anyone familiar with John Kleinig's work has come to expect. The standard fare of the analytic philosopher of education is supplemented with analyses of less familiar material - chapters on notions of intelligence, competition, assessment and grading - and further there is a I so reference to the issues of schooling and the institutionalization of education. The range and topic-centred approach, the lucid exposition and competent discussion, serve to make *Philosophical Issues in Education* a comprehensive and useful text with a wider relevance than to courses solely in the philosophy of education. The chapters on intelligence and assessment would have an applicability, for instance, in the areas of educational psychology and curriculum planning.

While the topic approach lends itself to the parcellation of interests that has come about with the increasing specialization that has occurred within the field of education - and which, therefore, promotes the book's overall versatility - at the same time it does not leave the reader with any general sense of direction of having travelled or of having arrived at any particular destination.

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