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WHAT WE OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT PHILOSOPHY

Philosophic guidance gives us a sense of direction and a set of regulative principles. It helps us to locate and orient ourselves on the slinding scale of systems—absolutist conclusivism on the right, naturalistic instrumentalism on the left and the processes of scientific investigation in the middle.

Philosophy is a form of rest, refreshment and reconstitution of our ideas. It is a source of consolation and security—an agency that helps us to go back for a better start. It is an attempt to profit from an overall view of human endeavor—and more particularly from our personal adventures and enterprise. It is a means of passing from an indifferent attitude of skeptical unbelief to an urgent, self-reliant mood of fact-finding. Despite considerable inescapable arm-chair speculation, philosophy is not necessarily primarily theoretical and impractical. It tends to use abstract ideas, but it is never content to be static or reactionary. Its subject matter is invariably subjective, but it lends

itself to character-changing appreciation and application to the objective situations of our everyday personal problems.

Pioneer philosophers

Philosophy is synthetic in nature and frequently too general and concerned with ideal values to be comprehended and enjoyed. It considers carefully the purpose and goal of our existence. It is the role of science to discover and establish the basis of belief, whereas philosophy explains and integrates doctrines of promise. Again philosophy deals with the content of reasoning, with science more concerned with sense data quantitatively treated. Traditionally, philosophy seeks truth in the exalted realm of ultimate reality, with science satisfied with emphasis on present appearance.

For Thales, flourishing 585 B. C., *water* was the ultimate reality. Anaximander was thriving 565 B. C. and calling the end-point of his assiduous search the "boundless infinite." Anaximenes flourished 545 B. C. and derived satisfaction from *air* as the source of life and growth and achievement. Pythagoras lived 580 to 500 B. C. and gave *number* high position as a universal force. Heraclitus lived 535 to 475 B. C. and voted for *fire* as the bonafide ultimate reality. Parmenides flourished 490 B. C. and gave preeminence to *being* as the philosopher's favorite form of reality.

Socrates lived three score and ten, 469 to 399 B. C. He was unspoiled by academic rigidity, composition routine or the limitations of ideology. For many years he was surrounded and motivated by the presence of several blossoming intellects—Plato, Xenophon, Alcibiades and Isocrates. He took pride in accustoming the thoughts of youth to orderly procedure. He induced his protégés to understand themselves, their associates and the then known world. For Socrates the two chief aims of education were —(1) Lead students to comprehend the major concepts of piety, virtue, courage, self-reliance; (2) Train the young minds to manipulate these concepts flexibly and convinc-

ingly. This wily dialectician sought to direct youthful intellects from unconscious ignorance to a conscious need to know, this method being classified as ironic and destructive. And by elaborate and persistent questioning he aimed to lead his ambitious young patrons from self-conscious ignorance to the thrilling search for truth light and self-realization. This approach has been called the seductive and constructive technique.

Plato lived eighty years—427 to 347 B. C. He thanked the gods daily for four favorable conditions of his life—(1) Being born human and not animal, (2) Being privileged to claim membership in the masculine category, (3) Being free and not a slave and (4) Being permitted to live at the same time as his master Socrates. He said society should be divided into four levels: A—Slave, who must be obedient and diligent workers. B—Tradesmen, who must be honest and trustworthy. C—Warriors, who must demonstrate heroic bravery. And D—Philosophers, who are informed, enlightened and wise enough to govern. Today, as then, this would not be a workable system of society, but many of the intellectual giants of history owe much to Plato—Saint Augustine, Copernicus, Newton, Goethe. The best features of Christian ethics, Moslem principles, John Calvin's theology show the far-reaching influence of "Mr. Philosophy." Plato traveled more widely than most of his contemporaries—Greece, Italy, Sicily, Egypt, Babylon. Here is a parallel with John Dewey who was influenced by visiting Mexico, Turkey, Russia, Japan, China. Plato excelled in definitions, formulations, refined phraseology and in the dissemination of doctrine. His dialogues are masterpieces of sharp thinking.

Aristotele's period was 384 to 322 B. C., representing sixty-two years of plain living and high thinking. About his credal statements the expression "Ipse dixit" was used throughout the Middle Ages. He believed in balance, harmony, serenity in contemplating the world scene. He tutored Alexander and helped him to earn the title associated with his name in history. He prepared a frame of reference still in use, an introduction to

the cosmology of the universe. He saw weaknesses in the Sophists, in Socrates and in Plato's pursuit of reality. When Plato and other wishful-thinkers were star-gazing behind the beyond, Aristotle featured observation of nature and logical thinking about the earth's flora and fauna and the behavior of real people around him.

Questions to be answered

Beardsley Ruml recently urged professional educators to insist on an educational audit as a means of proving to the public the effectiveness of their program of service. He submitted the following questions that must be answered confidently and satisfactorily:

1. Are schools being operated efficiently now?
2. Are the best teaching methods being employed?
3. Are basic subjects being taught effectively?
4. Is the school producing a quality of citizenship good enough for the modern world?
5. How successful is the school program in terms of more than 30,000,000 children?

The White House Conference scheduled for November 1955, will attempt to answer these questions:

1. What should our schools accomplish?
2. What are our school-building needs?
3. How can we get enough well trained teachers and keep them?
4. How can we finance our schools productively?
5. How can we obtain a continuing public interest in education?
6. In what new ways can our schools serve the nation better?

It will not be enough to make specific, objective studies of our needs. We shall find it helpful to involve philosophy—to

clear away the fog and to clarify the issues. Shakespeare warned us against "the pale cast of thought," and Hamlet lamented he must think ponderously about the domestic and moral problems of life; but John Milton proclaimed "how charming is divine philosophy, truth, now I shall see thee bright and clear." Descartes simplified the otherwise complex business of intelligence by recommending—"Analyze every problem minutely, and all will be well."

Fiction is a source of philosophizing of great interest and value. Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon" is full of stimulating distillations, dealing with sacrosanct individuals as well as heartless totalitarian systems. George Santayana's *The Last Puritan* is full of epigrammatic aphorisms and jewels of philosophic interpretation of the American, English, French and Italian manner of life.

Man has always had a crying need for more metaphysics—and an unsatisfied desire to seek a fuller, richer understanding of our place in the universe. Suppose there had never been any metaphysics—or suppose there were to be a moratorium on philosophy; in less than a decade there would be a hue and cry for the complete restoration of philosophical studies and publications. The human mind is inherently and incurably introspective and disputational. We are fond of brooding, the "brown study" being a favorite posture of man thinking. We look for opportunities to ascertain the ultimate nature of the elusory something called reality. We seek earnestly to conceive the total scope and meaning of our environment and its function. It takes a sense of philosophic mission to invest time and strength in a campaign to uncover facts about the origin, structure and development of our world. It takes drive and dedication to seek the true sources of our knowledge of the human race and its struggle for global supremacy.

There is quite a range of conceptions and opinions concerning who are the great philosophers, several of whom have had a world re-building urge and a cocksure attitude of finality in their viewpoints and conclusions. Some have been known to

boast their systems supersede other creeds, with lesser minds reaching only an approximation of the truth. Bertrand Russell, however, states that to be cocksure is an evidence of weakness and incompetent. It is a controversial point whether reputable philosophers have a right to look on their systems as feasible, verifiable and all-round satisfactory. Philosophy is seldom epochmaking, but it requires the same fearlessness, initiative, persistence as geographical exploration. It is hard work just to carry on solid, consecutive thinking. It is labor of a most exacting type, whether we work back through the Enlightenment to the Renaissance or face the issues of the present moment. Too many contemporary philosophers are gloomy and desperate as they contemplate man's historical fate and yield hopelessly to the threat of a succession of human failures.

The role of ideas

To live in the realm of ideas, to be encased in the armor of logic—an ideological Sir Galahad continuously in pursuit of the Holy Grail of doctrine is to find a life of reading and reasoning definitely uplifting, heart-warming and fruitful. To make the acquaintance of French giants like Buffon, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Montesquieu and the German masters Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Herbart, means to become a member of a most ennobling family of culture-molders. We learn how essential it is for us to be liberal and elastic—to be free from the slavery of unwarranted dogmas and to keep the channels of information wide open; to look on our expanding democratic society as plastic, sensitive and capable of improvement from several metaphysically sound, super-scientific and spiritual approaches. We generate wisdom and faith from knowledge and experience. Revelation in a form intellectual awakening, sense data well interpreted and the soul stirred by the contingencies that impinge and prod our daily lives; and we who teach are the centers whence can be provided intellectual vitamin theses of great nutritional worth.

The pleasurable practice of philosophizing

We have indicated confidently that the pleasures of philosophy are not inconsiderable. We read with youthful delight Arthur Christopher Benson's *Beside Still Waters* and *From a College Window*. The writings of Josiah Royce, George Herbert Palmer, William T. Harris, William G. Summer, Franz Boas, Irwin Edman have attracted us and held our interest. They all emphasize the sheer delight derived from reflective living. Gilbert Chesterton boasted that the most important thing about us is our philosophy of life. Pythagoras in his day proudly proclaimed that having a passion for wisdom is more commendable than being perfectly exact in the handling of facts. Plato urged us to contemplate speculatively and rejoicefully the main events of the stream of time. Hocking's early confession acknowledged that as we mature intellectually we can no longer endure seeing merely through the eyes of others. William James said we are on our way toward becoming wise when we discover how little we know about ourselves and our neighbors. John Dewey revealed that philosophy becomes articulate and official when a civilized nation discovers its consciousness of evolving ideals and aspirations.

The efficacy of belief

People are never the same after a belief gets hold of them. A better way to put it: Human beings are discernibly changed when they grasp a great idea and subscribe to a notable belief. Doctrine is what counts from the long-term consideration point of view. It is characteristic of many thinking individuals to enjoy talking about their philosophies and the insight they derive from them. We all know persons who would fight for their philosophies as readily as for anything else; and they seem to generate fortitude from making their creeds known to others. They gladly affirm that their faith sustains them in emergencies. They are the ones who realize that what makes philosophy difficult sometimes also makes it most valuable. We ripen spirit-

ually when we learn from experience that it is our beliefs that matter most in determining our destiny. Several excellent books have been published dealing with the effect of belief on character development and on the successful outcome of our vocational careers. Men and women stand up to be proudly counted in behalf of beliefs that have helped to make them prosperous, distinguished and happy. And we are all hedonists enough to recognize this as both important and creditable.

Two inviting volumes have appeared recently. Lloyd Douglas has produced *The Living Faith*. This is not a book of evanescent abstractions, but a progressive plan for enriching the days and years of our lives. Here is an alluring companion for the *Magnificent Obsession* that gripped us so profoundly. The other publication is from the pen of Robert Pollock — *The Mind of Pius XII*. The reader will find a vast range of topics — education, labor, communism, personality. It was our pleasure May 2, 1954, to hear Pope Pius speak in Saint Peter's Church — his first public appearance since the protracted illness that disturbed us all. We were impressed and deeply moved by the sincere respect and affection displayed by the thousands who were present. As a boy we revered Leo XIII, whose 1810-1903 span of life was phenomenal, one of the most extended and admirable religious careers of all time. Having been stirred by these sacred scenes during two days of Vatican visitation, we read Pollock's selections from Pius XII with great relish — and become convinced more than ever of the efficacy of belief.

Steps up the ladder

In the hierarchy of ideas we move from the lunatic with his single fixed idea to the lover with his frantic idolatry for a friend and to the poet and his fine frenzy for the ecstasy of living. Thence we go to the student with his flaming desire to learn the facts of life and to the teacher with his irrepressible yearning to share his most uplifting experiences and some of

the ideas that have shaken the world. Willima Shakespeare and Dr. William Osler — British, Canadian, American medical philosopher — agree that this series is climaxed by the philosopher with his radiant and unswerving devotion to truth, which carries with it also a consecration for expanding and adopting our wisdom in the cause of general human welfare.

What man wants most in this world has been clarified — and perhaps over-simplified — by our psychologists:

1. Freud asserts man wants most to be loved.
2. Jung claims we crave most to be secure.
3. Adler insists we labor most ardently to be accepted as significant and indispensable.
4. William James popularized habit perfection as the feature of our behavior of which we are most proud and for which we like to be most widely emulated.

All of this finds objectification in our personalities, which likewise can be over-simplified as introvert or extravert. Better to say that the basis of personality is physique, intelligence and temperament.

1. Body physiognomy, stature
2. Mind capacity, aptitudes
3. Character . . . behavior in terms of training and innate disposition

A sharper and more technical classification will prove helpful as we seek the ways and means of cultivating the higher types of conduct. These terms have been employed for the scientific categories:

1. Endomorphs soft, comfortably well-rounded
2. Mesomorphs hard, muscular, sturdy
3. Ectomorphs slender bones and stringy tendons

Philosophy and psychology in this area of educational art blend their forces and contribute realistically to our knowledge

of how to get along with all sorts of human eccentrics. In our hierarchy-sequence we could have begun with the infant mind and its limited range of cerebration and advanced by revelation-gradations to the exalted state of the philosopher and the scholar. All life is informally, inadvertently and subconsciously a continuum of character-building and genius unfoldment, which gives to parents and teachers a pedagogic project steeped in the adventure of personality architecture.

Philosophy applied to education

We are forced to bring philosophy to bear on education, because there are so many complicated and unsolved problems; and it becomes increasingly necessary to direct education toward partially pre-determined ends. We must become more certain that our brand of schooling is the best type of instruction for today's youth. There are numerous intriguing questions —

1. Should formal education sponsor slow social evolution or favor a series of doctrinal revolutions?
2. How can we most effectively use both public and private schools as instruments of cultural assimilation and citizenship training?
3. In what specific form can philosophy make possible a broad-front approach to education?
4. How does philosophy foster suspended judgment until more experimental findings have been interpreted?
5. In what ways does philosophy warn us against fascism, reactionism, communism and pollyana attitudes toward progressive education?

It is beneficial and laudatory for us to be philosophically-minded —

- A. It dignifies and glorifies our profession
 1. Giving us prestige and privileges
- B. It directs and conserves our energies
 1. Giving us drive and stamina

- C. It inspires and animates our personalities
 - 1. Giving us a radiant and inviting approach
- D. It enriches and utilizes our scholarship
 - 1. Giving us power and widening opportunity
- E. It enhances and heightens our prospects
 - 1. Giving us a cheerful relationship with the future.

Professional educators need philosophy for the purpose of formulating instructional objectives on a high plane — and for the cautions, value-searching appraisal of classroom outcomes. The analysis and definition of aims are difficult without the assistance of philosophical criteria and long-range inferences. We should be forever mindful of the philosophical forces that have affected academic practice; also we must be seriously concerned for the broad scholastic implications of democracy. In connection with our Occidental mode of life —as distinguished from the Oriental— what features and relationships contribute most extensively to the kind of wisdom that could prove most useful in our professional conduct? When we have the personal poise and reassurance to stand on our own intellectual feet, acutely conscious of the necessity for sharing our spiritual heritage with our children and helping them to grow in moral and cultural stature, then philosophy has been of real service.

Indictment of modern education

Here are some of the more captious criticisms of American public schools —

1. Educational institutions are supposed to belong to the people, but professional educationists monopolize the policy-shaping privilege.
2. Philosophy of pragmatism and instrumentalism is not acceptable to many keen-minded Americans.
3. Schools usurp aspects of child life not hitherto belonging to the academic realm.
4. Educative processes are becoming excessively anti-in-

tellectual, stressing muscular and dramatic activity out of balance with the larger psychological aims.

5. Children are failing to acquire desirable skills in reading, computation, written expression.
6. Public schools are blamed for youthful bad manners, delinquency and juvenile disrespect for elderly persons.

In rebuttal it can be stated that test authorities believe spelling, handwriting and orthodox decorum are the only fields where our children are actually inferior. In adaptability, originality, initiative and leadership, modern youth is reputed to be conspicuously superior, and in self-expression through the fine arts, athletic participation and industrial skills there is no evidence of close competition. Books like "Educational Wastelands" and "Quakery in the Public Schools" are now being severely condemned as unjust and inaccurate. With all our pedagogical faults we have not erred in reasoning, judgment and the objective presentation of data nearly so grievously as those who unjustifiably allow themselves to grow bitter toward what we are trying to do for the security and advantage of their children. We seek always and consistently the general proficiency and continuing happiness of "all of the children of all of the people."

In *Life* magazine for October 16, 1950, Elmo Roper reported that 67% of our people believe public instruction is more worthwhile than 20 years ago. Saying less worthwhile were 13%, with 20% admitting they knew of very little change. In response to the question whether they were satisfied with our schools 33.4% testified they were very well satisfied, 38.8% said fairly well satisfied, making a total of 72.2%. Two other groups—16.8% not satisfied and 11% uncertain. Here is nourishing food for philosophic consumption.

Doubtless educational scientists are in the ascendancy over metaphysical-minded teachers. Educational theory is condemned as a left-over from prescience days, making it popular to pigeon-hole the philosophy of education as esoteric, impotent,

conjectural and even fantastic. But if we don't look ahead conservatively, we stumble and fall; and if we don't look back, we lose our way. Philosophy helps us to establish sign-posts along the trail of educational practice. Philosophy is a counselor we must not indict or ignore, as we face the necessity of achieving a more unitary international culture. Philosophy gives us friendly and suggestive instructions as we move forward on the highway of educational progress.

More historic contributors

In ancient and medieval times the *actor* was loudly applauded and encored back to the stage. The *orator* was widely respected, with every community boasting a public speaker of renown. The *poet* was also a thoroughly admired figure in the larger towns and colonies. But more than any of these the *philosopher* was consulted on strategic personal and institutional problems. He was a scholar with leisure and disposition to explore, examine and look ahead constructively. There have been many revered Christian counselors —

- A. *Clement of Alexandria*: 160-220
 - 1. Philosophy springs from God and circulates through good men in serviceable form.
- B. *John Scotus Erigena*: 815-877
 - 1. Philosophy is the religion of right living.
 - 2. Life at its best is a probing of the philosophical depths of human nature.
- C. *Albertus Magnus*: 1193-1280
 - 1. Erudition is the source of pride on a high plane.
 - 2. Philosophy is a living fountain of inspiration and hope.
- D. *Thomas Aquinas*: 1225-1279
 - 1. Philosophy is the cornerstone of character.
 - 2. Thomas Aquinas was an angelic theologian whose mind is still remembered for its brilliance and majesty.

3. Philosophy is inescapably available for all willing and able to alert themselves to the psychological and spiritual blessings surrounding them.
- E. *Roger Bacon: 1214-1292*. Pythagoras, Plato and Kant also lived to be just 80.
1. Educational ideas too dependent on old notions and discredited traditions.
 2. A great need for inductive thinking to take precedence over deduction.
 3. Undue weight given to the opinions of officials.
 4. Ignorance being presumptuously concealed by use of artificial substitutes for knowledge.
 5. Objective contacts needed to expose the futility of repetitious abstract theorizing.
 6. No justification for the continuity of futility.
- F. *Francis Bacon: 1561-1626*. Pointed out chief causes of error.
1. Idol of the tribe: Racial propensity to blunder.
 2. Idol of the den: Individual tendency to distort truth.
 3. Idol of the market place: Language deception.
- G. *Johann Gottlieb Fichte: 1762-1814*
1. Lived to be only 52, same as Shakespeare.
 2. Addresses to German people while Napoleon's troops still occupied Prussia.
 3. Started movement to improve German education and galvanize the people nationally.
- H. *William James: 1842-1910*
1. Talks to teachers of Cambridge, Mass.
 2. Psychological problems given ennobling treatment.
 3. Philosophy of habit formation available for classroom application.

It is well known that the French philosophers Condorcet, Diderot, Fenelon, Montaigne, Rousseau and Voltaire proclaimed such advanced and penetrating ideas that socially prominent women were induced to organize schools that were drastic varia-

tions from the traditional institutions — Mesdames de Maintenon, de Lambert, d'Épinay, Necker, de Stael and de Saussure. In several countries it has been revealed how influential philosophy can be when applied to life and education.

Norman Woelfel divides American educators into three categories: 1) Those who derive their doctrine mainly from history, 2) Those who refer to nature in generating their action principles, 3) Those who base their philosophies on the ultimacy of science. These are the right, left and central positions. Sharper's terminology would call these areas authoritarian, naturalistic and gradualistic. Still different nomenclature — idealism, pragmatism, realism. Names are not to be neglected; also they are not binding. Along the scale of flexible creeds we should strive to orient our thinking by locating our position fairly accurately — and frequently attempt clarification through exposition orally and in writing.

Synthesizing fragmentary solutions

Great fundamental problems are never fully solved. Every thesis is said to have an antithesis — or oppositional viewpoint, with an eventual and nominal synthesis discernible in the distance. A fair example represents the aristocratic classes in offices of authority, following Plato's dictum; and diametrically different is the Karl Marx "thunder on the left," with the masses taking over the reins of leadership. Ultimately between the elite on the right and the left-wing proletariat will emerge an expansively enlightened and refined middle class — capable and deserving and successful in operating our democracy. Our continuously changing world produces new situations to which all earlier dogmas are destined to adjust themselves. Modern civilization is a problem-maker more than a problem-solver, for which reason we are compelled to learn how to live with question marks all around us, rather than how to achieve any final or absolute solutions.

In behalf of the middle way it can be maintained that the

extremes are almost always controversial and possessed of striking weaknesses. The terminal point positions are vulnerable, requiring subscribers to leap off the deep end of radical thinking, whereas the middle represents a centrally safe and advantageous position for occasional reconnoitering. The middle is relatively secure until a more ideologically defensible location can be delineated. This central stronghold is not necessarily eclectic or a composite concoction. It is a strategically established realm, serviceable for securing maximum resource material for building a more elaborate philosophical rampart through the student's maturing years.

The virtue of middle ground

Several years ago a horse named Middleground won the Kentucky Derby. It would be interesting to know the circumstances and details. Probably with no application to our project. There are all kinds of dilemmas, race-courses, parallels. Let us be content here with this list of meanings for a philosophical middleground designation —

1. Being hospitable to any creditable and inviting ideas
2. Receiving benefit from a gradual movement in a particular direction
3. Considering patient moderation a virtue
4. Stressing the need for full comprehension of everything we do
5. Having the benefit of a bifocal attitude toward problems
6. Extremism and sensationalism as earmarks of the creedless teacher
7. Middleground guarantee of some success better than gambling on the intellectual Jackpot
8. Excessive uniformity and standardization less attractive than a middle easily manipulated
9. Understatement as the technique of middleground realists

10. Spectacular academic claims discounted by serenely conditioned philosophers of education.

Now we are ready for some adaptations to educational realism, testing out the utilitarian quality of the middle position.

- A. No sound social order without broad program of public education
- B. Education can be made to resolve the conflicts and uncertainties of 20th century conditions
- C. Necessary to humanize our social system by means of a liberal school provision
- D. Discover, preserve, cultivate originality and independence
- E. Use intelligently all of our potential greatness and follow the leadership of our most competent associates
- F. Learn the facts of our complex world so we can cope with the daily adversities of life
- G. Using a creatively conservative approach to the problems of life
- H. Scientific knowledge rests on more than the unexpected phenomena of capricious and commonplace events
- I. Realism is a scholarly attempt to piece together the knowledge we possess in order to see what it all means.

We are all philosophers

There are three classes of philosophers — 1) Professional writers and teachers of philosophy, 2) institutional students and patrons of philosophy lectures and literature, 3) the rank and file of those who get bright philosophical ideas sporadically. Many elements in our normal daily living make us all philosophers —

- a. Mere process of maturing and aging
- b. Domestic problems calling for a sober reflective manner

- c. Vocational responsibilities demanding philosophical counsel
- d. The cumulative effect of environment, metaphysically impressive and motivating
- e. The challenge of our evolving postwar involvements
- f. The stimulation of numerous personal contacts
- g. The enrichment transformation benefit of travel
- h. The subconscious infiltration of the fine arts.

The good philosopher possesses a strong desire always to know more about the signs of the times. He displays caution habitually in the way he states his belief and makes recommendations to others. He employs logic as a vehicle of discussion and argument. He believes in a precise, complete appraisal of both national and international events. He makes a notable effort to abolish vagueness. He is offended by precipitous, sentimental and half-baked speeches, orally premature individuals usually proving to be shallow and unenlightened.

To be recognized as a philosopher represents an uphill climb of lifelong duration. We can never coast downhill to easy conclusions. Actually we must carry on intricate experiments with our own thought behavior. This field of thinking forbids the dilatentism of conversational exhibitionism and the practice of publicizing snap judgments. We must collaborate with science cordially, reading the record of the rocks and studying the story of the stars. Philosophy assigns research problems to science and then interprets the findings painstakingly. This two-way service is especially needed in education. Also we need a more thoroughly formulated and validated philosophy of the science of education. The integral parts are to be found in Dewey, Judd, Bode, Bagley.

This philosophy of education business

Our kind of world makes a philosophy of education essential to school administration. It is easy to be wrong in these

times of many alternatives. It is difficult to decide what is right in the face of so many possibilities. The honest philosopher is customarily brief in any attempt to present a preview of our unpredictable prospects. A philosophy of education is an action-chart in support of a clear-cut plan, a "bill of rights" for teachers, pupils and tax payers. It is a platform on which to stand and from which to go to work on any beckoning enterprise. It is a core of judgments undergirding procedures typical of accredited practice.

Idealistic we all are comprehensively, and pragmatists we are compelled by circumstances to be every day. As middle-road realists we are impelled to be fact-finders in search of common sense blueprints of meritorious class-room conduct. Every school official can benefit materially from an acute awareness of the philosophical criteria of educational quality and pupil achievement. A more sensitive conscience we need — from kindergarten through the university. Our lip loyalties are too thin and effervescent. The concrete implications of our philosophy are the service-points where we apply scientific principles and techniques. It is our philosophy of education that reveals the shape of curricular and methodological things to come. This philosophy of education business is winning widening support for what we call the science of education and the art of teaching — and providing us with a sound, seductive and dividend-paying literature.

The new harmony of discord

We have pragmatism, realism, idealism — the left, middle and right; laissez-faire, experimentation, authoritarianism; progressive adventurers, sincere agnostics and conservatives. These categories are not infallible; but they are workable. We have long been accustomed to diversity and multiplicity, but uniformity we never coveted, because of our contempt for totalitarian structures and dictatorship methods. In our democracy we agree mutually to disagree vigorously; yet the outcome is favorable

in the long run. We are occasionally awkward and fumbling. Our maturation is slow and tedious. We seem not to be efficient enough. We are momentarily frustrated and frequently confused. We all need take our bearings — step aside to let the world go by. We can benefit from watching what others are doing. It pays periodically to be a mere spectator, to take a look at the appearance of things so as to be able to discover reality and deeper meaning, and thus to be better prepared for a return to the front line of professional action.

Often we observe that we are not solidly anchored. We must be serene, dispassionate and sympathetic as we search diligently for solutions, recognizing the merit of a wide range of ideas and considerations. It is better to follow the philosophy of both than to be pushed into the either-or-dilemma. The former moves us in the direction of a forthcoming fusion, but the latter drives us discouragingly toward desperate crises.

The content of our philosophy of education

There is danger that we yield to the temptation of making the substance of our philosophy too technical or high-sounding. The best suited subject-matter lies all around us — in and out of school. Any hour may serve us surprisingly. The essence of our philosophy of life may emerge dramatically. We hold that education is guided living and the learning process an apprenticeship to acceptable behavior. All the schools we have attended, lectures audited, discussions shared, books read, classes visited, notes taken, surveys conducted and experiments projected — these are sources of the valid content comprising our philosophies of education.

Every chapter of our lengthening professional experience and every aspect of our expanding intellectual lives help us to formulate and fulfill philosophies of education complimentary to the communities we serve. American philosophy is founded on austerity and the pioneering spirit, overcoming internal difficulties, integrating the elements of the frontier and mobilizing

our national urge for freedom. The ingredients of our educational philosophy embrace pragmatism, looking on man as nature's favorite organism; realism, considering man the crucial product of the creation system; idealism, rating man as primarily spiritually endowed.

Idealism is the strongest doctrine traditionally, involving theistic transcendentalism. Man is in the image of God, with truth residing in his mind as the result of God's goodness. The true world is changeless, and all worthy human purpose is idealistically inspired.

Pragmatism is very popular, the ultra-modern viewpoint. Man is central in the physical world, and reality is the outcome of experience. The world is always changing, and purpose is without the benefit of formal design. Effects are preeminently consequential.

Naturalism is a historically recurring emphasis, fostering the materialistic outlook. Man is subject to growth and subsequent deterioration. Reality is in the certainty of developmental stages, and purpose resides in the native potential and normal direction of the developing organism.

Humanism is a classical point of view, stressing high intellectual interests. Intelligent man is at the heart of science, art, literature and the pageantry of civilization. Reality is in the rational phases of human life, with a surrounding world full of the "Glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." Purpose is always culturally conditioned, with youth undergoing nurture in the classical mode.

Intuitionism is primarily a European philosophy, stressing propositions that are underived and uninferred. It comprises viewpoint in which both understanding and behavior rest on direct and primitive experience, possessing an ultimate and self-evident essence. Spontaneous insight is the main feature of learning, with the intimate touch vital to thought as a source of judgment.

Existentialism is currently an over-extended point of view, finding acclaim from some who seek to justify their way of life. Psychologically it refers to behavior objectively available for analysis. Philosophically it is concerned with knowledge as the pure data of consciousness, uninfluenced by feelings, resolution or any prejudice related to social environment or institutional affiliation. Sensory data in the stream of consciousness determine both the source and the nature of knowledge. Conduct is accounted for in terms of biological functioning, neurological reactions and necessitous nutrition. This is a non-metaphysical approach, with a simple, naive and limited interpretation of reality. American pragmatism and Watsonian behaviorism have roots in this method of treatment, but there is danger that this kind of thinking may encourage fatalism.

Neo-Thomism emphasizes education for enlightened living, moral greatness and cultural permanence. This rehabilitated medieval synthesis is the open sesame to lure us to noble ethical heights, with a superior educational metaphysics now taking shape under the leadership of contemporary examples of the Thomas Aquinas prototype.

Realism is one of the loftiest conceptions sponsored by science. Factualism implemented by experimental application is the main feature. Man is nature's agent for attaining the truth, and reality is the chief attribute of the universe. The world of culture and socialization advances through research and the utilization of thoroughly developed principle of life. Improvements are accomplished by means of a formal program of carefully planned public education. Nature is man's laboratory of investigation, and truth is the quality of thought most intimately related to reality. Our inner belief must conform to the outward world, with subjective obstacles to this objective approach being neutralized and eliminated.

Realism is a tolerably suitable approach to educational practice, when cautiously probed and sympathetically tested. Pedagogical dividends accrue generously following conscientious and extensive investments in this realistic faith.

Sample philosophies of education

A. N. *Whitehead's* cyclical theory of learning involves interest, discipline, freedom as major requisites. Our youth are not automatically educated by merely listening to oratorical or oracular professors. Study must be motivated by a desire to satisfy curiosity and interest. It must be prosecuted by means of self-discipline and ambition for personal improvement. Only then can study be climaxed and consummated by a consciousness of freedom and intellectual liberalization. We should insist that our pupils study their lessons three times —

1. Read for interest.
2. Read again for discipline critically dedicated to self-development.
3. Read once more to satisfy their demand for mastery and the freedom that follows.

William Ernest *Hocking's* principles of learning are equally pertinent and applicable —

- A. Not to recognize basic presuppositions is to short-circuit the educative process.
- B. Not to emphasize the reality of fundamental meaning results in the sacrifice of enthusiasm.
- C. Not to accentuate the meaning of the whole of life is to fail in understanding the parts.
- D. Normally intelligent human beings grasp the meaning of life.
- F. Philosophy challenges us to clarify meanings, values, explanations.

Thomas *Huxley* has contributed quality to our emerging modern philosophy, and the same holds for Herbert Spencer, Charles Eliot, Bertrand Russell and George Herbert Palmer, whose analysis of the ideal teacher has captured the fancy of all of us. William Lyon Phelps and Ralph Barton Perry are in the same galaxy of distinguished educators, to whom our philosophies owe more than can be expressed. Residual instruc-

tion, forks-of-the-road teaching and the book-action method stem also from top-level educational thinking, for all of which we are exceedingly grateful.

Two things we should know about philosophy —

- A. It is unfortunate that so many deserving youth have so little opportunity to learn about the mission of philosophy.
- B. It is an unwarranted claim that panacea benefits can be obtained from a protracted study of philosophy.

Two other facts we should keep in mind —

- C. The profitable reading of philosophy is not for academic high-brows only,
 - D. Some of our best philosophers never came even close to earning a Ph. D. degree.
 - E. The Doctor of Philosophy degree sometimes has almost nothing to do with knowing, understanding and practicing philosophy.
2. The field of philosophy is wide open, and the grass is very green, alluring and nourishing.

So back to John Milton, a poet whose fluid intelligence and blazing imagination knew to bounds and whose mind ventured forth to the outer portion of Paradise. We are invited to stroll in the garden of seductive ideas and buoyant anticipation — “Tomorrow to fresh fields and pastures new.”

And back to Voltaire who lived eighty-four years with his exceptionally high *I Q* — and without the benefit of hygiene, sanitation, surgery or vitamin tablets. From this giant we derive these three bits of keen observation —

- A. There is nothing in life to which we are not at least moderately related.
- B. There is nothing in life so rewarding as the serious and continuous reading of the philosophical masterpieces.

- C. There is nothing in life that the detailed study of nature cannot help us to penetrate.

The firmament above us, the voices within us, the stimulating personalities we call "our neighbors" and the vast realm of theories, suggestions and prognostications to be found in science, religion and literature are the raw material from which we can fashion the philosophy that will give us more than a foretaste of eternity.