

A Review of **'Philosophy of Education: An Introduction'**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Moore's 'Philosophy of Education: An Introduction' is divided into six chapters preceded by General editor's note and Acknowledgments. The first chapter distinguishes 'Philosophy and philosophy of education', while the second chapter elaborates on the 'General theory of Education'. Knowledge and the curriculum are discussed in the third chapter. Chapter four is an exposition of 'Teaching and educating', followed by an exposition on 'Education, morals and religion'. The last chapter is titled 'Social philosophy of education' in which Moore discusses Equality, Freedom and Democracy and how they relate to Education.

II. CHAPTER EXPOSITIONS AND ASSESSMENT

2.1. Chapter One: Philosophy and Philosophy of Education

2.1.1. Exposition

In this chapter, Moore occupies himself with determining the relationship between General philosophy, Philosophy of education and Educational theory. He meticulously lays down distinctions necessary for separating the three areas. The first set of distinctions is about two types of problems, that is Pseudo problems and Substantial problems. Pseudo problems arise from conceptual confusions and by extension linguistic confusions(p.2), and they are metaphysical. As for Substantial problems, Moore indicates that they arise out of daily practice (p.2). The second set of distinctions is the distinction between the Dissolution of problems and Solutions to problems. A problem is dissolved or is dissolvable if and only if it is Pseudo problem while Substantial problem can only be solved not dissolved. These clarifications are thus used by Moore to first distinguish between General Philosophy and Philosophy of Education. According to Moore, General Philosophy is concerned with dissolving Pseudo Problems, False Problems, Metaphysical Problems or merely put 'Problems arising from conceptual confusion' while 'Philosophy of Education preoccupies itself with solving Substantial problems or problems that arise out of (Educational) practice. He posits " Philosophers of education are not normally preoccupied with metaphysical confusions" (p.2). However, Moore observes that both General Philosophy and Philosophy of Education are High order activities and that Philosophy of education is related to general philosophy partly by its purposes but more directly by

its methods".(p.1). To illustrate the level of activity under which to classify Philosophy of Education, he posits three levels namely: Educational Practice which involves among others the acts of Teaching and Learning and which occupy the lowest Level(also known as First order activity), followed by Educational Theory which he observes that it is descriptive and belong to descriptive sociology. The highest order is Prescriptive and pedagogical because they give recommendations as in the case of Plato's Republic, Rousseau's Emile, Dewey's Democracy and Education, Froebel's Education of man. At the high order level, Philosophical level, Philosophy of Education necessarily borrows philosophical methods to deal with Educational Theory and Practice. Two concepts emerge namely Educational Theory and Educational Practice. Moore notes that Essentially Education is a first order activity but with high order processes. He states "Education has its immediate higher-order activity, educational theorising, the making of theories about education and theories of education"(p.5) which relates with Philosophy of Education as another high order activity but which is parasitic upon the practice(first order) and theory of education(high order Education). Therefore Philosophy of Education is not the same thing as educational theory, but it takes the theory as its main subject matter.

2.1.2. Assessment

In this chapter, Moore has managed to clarify the fact that Philosophy of Education is an applied branch of not just Philosophy but restrictively, of Philosophical Methods. As an applied branch, it is directly depended on Educational Practice and Theory.It means that ideally Philosophy of Education deals with real problems emerging out of Educational practice, rather than splitting hairs on linguistic confusions of Metaphysics. However, labelling General Philosophy as a Focus- on- Pseudo Problem and Linguistic confusion are to assume first that language is not relevant in solving educational problems and that there is no correlation between the way people in Education communicate, attitudes, and their subsequent effects on daily activities in Education. The common understanding is that language is an expression of a people's thinking and practice which makes Philosophical problems Substantial problems. Further, Moore limits Philosophy to Metaphysics when he implies that General Philosophers are predominantly preoccupied with

metaphysics; He states "Philosophers of education are *not normally* preoccupied with metaphysical confusions". He is oblivious that Philosophy is more comprehensive than Metaphysics and as such it also encompasses Epistemology, Logic and Axiology. Besides, Pragmatism, Analysis, Phenomenology, Existentialism, Realism, Progressivism are but some of the schools of Philosophy. The vastness of Philosophy caters for the needs of the practical persons as well as for the abstract oriented thinkers. Pragmatism, Existentialism, Realism, Axiology, Positivism are but a few of the practical Philosophies. Lastly, Moore limits Philosophical nexus in Education by positing that the point of convergence between Philosophy and Education is in the Methods of Philosophy and Substantial problems. The question is, What about Philosophical principles and their nexus in Education?

2.2. Chapter Two: 'General theory of Education'

2.2.1. Exposition

In this chapter, Moore concentrates on an examination of the assumptions made about 'education and its end (its aims and purposes)' and the assumptions made about the nature of man. He lays background to this examination by distinguishing between General Theory and Limited Theories.

With examples from Plato's Republic and Rousseau's Emile, Moore states that a General theory of education sets out to give a comprehensive programme for producing an educated man. Limited theories of Education are concerned with particular educational issues within the confines of General theories of Education. In the Republic, Plato's general theory aims at producing a man capable of ruling the state enhanced by Limited theories which attempt to deal with particulars like how to give children a sense of orderliness, how to deal with poets and poetry in education, how to make sure that the future soldiers are healthy and strong. In Rousseau's Emile, the General theory of Education is to fashion the child according to nature and to produce a 'natural man'. Rousseau's theory is cascaded down into limited theories on sensitivity training, Physical training, training in self-reliance and social awareness. In a nutshell, Moore infers that a general theory of education will thus contain within itself some particular and limited theories as part of its overall recommendations for practice. In all these, the nexus of Philosophical interest is in the analysis of concepts like 'education' and the 'educated man', assumptions about ends to be achieved, about what is to count as an educated man, assumptions about the nature of knowledge and of methods, and arguments offered to support practical recommendations.

Assumptions made about education and its end: Like any other practical activity, the beginning point of Education is the aim, the reason why a person wants to engage in that activity. A person would want to engage in an activity because it is desirable. So, the reason, the forecasting and desirability, form what is known as the aims. For instance, the one and the only precise aim of education is to produce an Educated man because an Educated man is a desirable man.

However, the Philosopher of education comes in to either provide criteria and analysis necessary for marking off the educated man from one who is not. Philosophy of Education is also normative; it explains the substance of educational aim by locating the way in which the aim of Education is supposed to be in some particular social, political or religious context. For instance, Plato's Educated man was one who had acquired knowledge and intellectual development sufficient to enable him to support himself in an industrial and commercial society.

In summary, Moore insinuates that an aim is a logical prerequisite of practical theory. Moore further goes on to make a distinction between the Aims and Purposes of Education. He States that a purpose is some external end to which an activity is directed while to talk of aims is not to refer to External ends but to the activity itself. It is Internal end. In short, an aim answers the question 'what are you doing?' while purpose asks 'what are you doing it for?'

Assumptions made about the nature of man: For a human being to be educated, there must be an assumption that informs us of the nature of man. Moore posits that nature of man constitutes Educability and Malleability implying that a human being can change and learn, and in so doing become better. These assumptions can either be explained logically/metaphysically/ religiously or empirically. The view on the nature of the nature of man is varied and affects the Educational procedures and aims. He gives an example of a Calvinist view of man as 'born-evil-with-original sin'; Calvinist anthropology as such would demand that education be pre-occupied with delivering the child from the old – Adam. Moore, further observes that Rousseauian view of the pure goodness of the child aligns Education towards adopting the child to its nature of goodness and environment.

Further, John Locke regards the child as *Tabula Rasa*, and so the aim of Education will be to fill the empty slate. He keenly notes that Rousseau and Calvin do not base their assumptions on empirical or *posterior* evidence. Thus, he expresses more regard for Piaget, Freud, Kohlberg and other child-study specialists on whom he comments '...have more to offer in this respect than the great names in traditional educational theory'(p.15)'. In the final analysis, Moore notes that there are two conceptions of man, the mechanistic conception propounded by Thomas Hobbes, the French philosopher Helvetius, James Mill and B.F. Skinner and the organic conception held by Rousseau, Froebel, Dewey and other 'Rousalians'. The Mechanists hold the view that humans are machines and therefore their education and educational outcome should be based on external behaviour and performance, as envisioned by the society while the organists view humans as more than tissues and bones.

2.2.2. Assessment

It is important to note from the outset of the chapter that Moore is practically oriented. His view on the role of Philosophy is practical both in Aims and purpose and in the

intertwining connection between Anthropology and Educational aims. He openly shows a predilection towards the empirical thinkers especially in regards the nature of the child, because he believes that Education is mostly a praxis. His stance rhymes with the positivist and pragmatic schools of philosophy. It is vital to note, though, that Assumptions on the nature of man cannot elude the Metaphysics he despises in Chapter one. This can be seen in his having recourse to metaphysics, religion and Calvin(p.14). Although he contradicts himself in regards to Metaphysics, he returns to it in this chapter perhaps unknowingly.

2.3. Chapter Three: Knowledge and curriculum

2.3.1. Exposition

Chapter three answers two critical questions: 'What is knowledge? , and what knowledge is of most worth? The answer to the first question introduced two possible paradigms of knowledge: Formal knowledge as found in mathematics and logic, and empirical knowledge, which constitutes the various sciences. He points out that the general theory of education is individuated by what (Knowledge) ought to be taught, or transmitted to the child so that he becomes an educated man. The Educational Philosopher plays the role of analysing what 'Knowledge is' and justifying what(knowledge) ought to be taught.

Knowledge: Regarding what knowledge is, Moore postulates that it can be considered in the general context; in which case it involves paradigms like Mathematical paradigm and Scientific paradigm. Mathematical paradigm is based on Rationalist conception of knowledge as that which 'if known must be known indubitably'. The rationalists, especially Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz borrowed from Plato's epistemology. Plato made a clear distinction between knowledge(Episteme) and belief(Doxa). He confined knowledge to the apprehension of certain non-sensible objects which he called 'Forms' or 'Ideas'. These objects stand outside the empirical world, it is outside space and time and can be known only by a kind of intuitive grasp which comes, from a special kind of quasi-mathematical training. The objects of the everyday sensible world cannot, strictly, be known for Plato knowledge involved a special kind of certainty. Whatever is known must be known indubitably, and to him that we could have no certainty about the everchanging empirical world or world of Phenomena, which can only be grasped through belief or doxa. Episteme is demonstratable through deduction, and most include maths and logic.

On the other hand, the scientific paradigm holds that knowledge is not a matter of deduction from self-evident principles. Instead, it comes as the result of observation and experiment in the empirical world; This view is held by Hume and James Mill and the logical positivists who assert that Mathematical and Metaphysical knowledge is not substantial or informative of the actual world. Most importantly, however, Moore advocates for less fundamentalism or exaggerations because both paradigms are not perfect. For

instance, he points out that a Rationalist does not provide information about the actual world while Science Paradigms can face contradictions of new evidence but also depend on logic for ordering its information.

In his exposition on Knowledge, Moore goes further to illustrate the meaning of Knowing: He explains what knowing is, by first eliminating what he thinks is an insufficient perception of "Kowing". He indicates that in general sense, Knowing is a mental activity or a mental performance. However by observing that one can know something without necessarily involving oneself in an activity as in the case of knowing one's name, the name of a local cathedral. Such knowledge occurs without much activity. Moore deduces that Knowing is an *achievement*, a position or a product. He states "roughly; it is to be in a position to guarantee the truth of the proposition concerned. To be in this privileged position is to justify the claim to know" (p.22). There are three conditions of knowledge; Truth, Certainty and Justification. Truth states that a proposition p is true as a matter of fact, Certainty asserts that the Knower of the proposition p must be sure of the of the truth of p, while Evidence(Justification) posits that a claim p qualifies to be known if there is evidence to support it otherwise the claim p remains to be a simple belief. Central to the understanding of Knowledge is evidence of knowledge which is enunciated through activity and then the concept of truth which Moore explains by appealing to the classical theories of truth that are: Correspondence with the facts, coherence within a system, or pragmatic efficiency" (p.23) The Knowledge exposition ends with Moore's distinction between 'Knowing that', 'knowing how' and 'believing. He posits that while 'Knowing that' is propositional or theoretical, 'Knowing how' is the practical application of the 'knowing that'. For one to know how he must first of all be able to 'know that'. Believing is to have a psychological conviction, It is the foundation of knowledge though it is not knowing.

Most Worthy Knowledge: The question on what knowledge is, is directly linked to a curriculum . In Moorian conception, Curriculum is all about knowledge. It is about Knowing that, Knowing how and some sets of beliefs. A curriculum must contain, from a normative perspective, what is worthwhile, or valuable. However, for a philosopher of education the concern is on the justification of what is worthwhile, and so the critical question is why a particular discipline needs to be taught. In response to this question, Moore Proposes three theories: Utilitarian curriculum, based on utilitarian Philosophy as in the case as in Marxist utilitarianist curriculum which should promote the goal of a social class. A curriculum can also be tailored for rationality and therefore prepare the learner to be rationally active in all spheres of life. It is traced back to Plato. The third assumption is a heritage curriculum which seeks to promote the point of view that education is to bring children into what exists as a public tradition of shared knowledge or merely the traditions or culture.

2.3.2: *Assesment*

This section is perhaps the best-articulated section of the book. It appreciates the fact that Education is an epistemological activity. At this point, we can deduce that Moore plunges the reader deeper into the world of Philosophy. Epistemology is a classical branch of Technical or formal Philosophy. He elevates his ideas to the plane of formal Philosophers like Bernard Lonergan, Aristotle, Plato and other re-known epistemologists like Kant. His criteria for knowledge perfectly fits the classical definition of knowledge as 'Justified True Belief', coupled with the three classical theories of truth. The connection between Knowledge and curriculum as elucidated by Moore can simply be called 'Epistemological basis of curriculum', and in so being it makes the work to be a Philosophy of Education Proper.

2.4. *Chapter four: 'Teaching and educating.'*

2.4.1. *Exposition*

In the fourth chapter, Moore deals with a group of related concepts which have to do with the actual process of educating and pedagogy. He opines that for education to go on, someone must learn something, but a person learns because he is taught. Whoever is teaching (The teacher) must be at an epistemological level higher than whoever is being taught (The learner). Thus, no one can educate another unless he is an authority compared with his pupils. Learner on his part must be disciplined and committed to the teacher; Learner must know that he/she is in a pedagogical relationship with the teacher. The teacher thus has the right to be regarded as an authority. The exercise of authority maintains the regime in which education can effectively take place, and so when authority fails in practice the regime may need to be preserved by the use of punishment or the threat of it. When authority fails, education is put at risk, and this fact constitutes such justification for punishment in schools. Authority, however, can be abusive especially when it is exercised simply for its own sake; it degenerates into authoritarianism, a form of tyranny. When authority inhibits criticism, it becomes indoctrination, a tyranny of another kind. Education also demands participation by both pupil and teacher. In each case, there must be assumed a body of knowledge which is desirable that the pupil should acquire, and an assumption about the external conditions in which the knowledge may be most effectively acquired.

2.4.2 *Assesment*

Moore's conception of Teaching is well elucidated and tied not just to learning but also content. He observes that Teaching cannot be fully considered without its intrinsically related concepts of learning and curriculum. In other words, Moore attempts to communicate that Education is a triad and if one aspect is affected the whole circuit is disconnected. This view is similar to Ducussan conception of Education and teaching. Perhaps the most crucial aspect is the statement of the relationship between the learner and the teacher, in which

the teacher is considered an authority over the learner, albeit for practical purposes. However, it is crucial to assert that the learner relates to both the teacher and the content, and the teacher must also interact not just with the learner but also with content. The interaction of the teacher with the content is left out by Moore, yet it is the foundation of the teacher's authority and a predeterminant of a successful Teacher learner interaction.

2.5. *Chapter five: 'Education, morals and religion.'*

2.5.1. *Exposition*

The fifth chapter deals with the relationship which exists between morals and religion, and that which holds between these two areas and education. Moore examines the meaning of moral and religious education, the justification of morality and religion as candidates for inclusion in the curriculum. He points out the suggestions that neither morals nor religion should be held as monopolising the educational enterprise and that neither should be regarded as permeating every aspect of education. Moral and religious education, it is argued, are specific forms of education, both necessary in their way to a complete education, but neither necessary in the sense of being the whole point and purpose of education. Moral education, it is argued, involves giving children the Knowledge about what to do in regards to behaviour which affects the well-being of others, together with an understanding of the rationale involved. Since moral education is closely linked with moral training, a person who was thoroughly educated, morally, would be one who not only knew what he ought to do and why he ought to do it but was also disposed to act consistently in the light of this knowledge. Religious education, similarly, involves knowledge-acquisition, knowledge about religion indeed, but whether a complete religious education would imply a commitment to a belief in the truth of religious doctrines is a matter of controversy.

2.5.2. *Assesment*

Postmodernism has little room for Religion. It is an exhibition of balance on the part of Moore to find the convergence of Education, Morals and Religion. The role of religion in moralization cannot just be wished away yet. This is because humans are innately religious. However, as clearly indicated by Moore, Religious Education is more than indoctrination. Religion taught in school follows the rational order rather than phenomenal order.

2.6. *Chapter six: Social Philosophy of Education.*

2.6.1. *Exposition*

Chapter six deals with three major theories of Educational practice which spring from the social aspect of education. The theories are: that education is expected to distribute its goods and advantages equally amongst those it deals with; that education should be conducted under conditions of freedom, both for pupils and their teachers; and finally, that education

should aim at producing citizens for a democracy and that, as a means to that end, schools themselves should be democratic institutions. By the appealing to Plato's Republic, Durkheim's theory on education and John Dewey ideals, Moore discusses Equality and Education, Freedom and Education and Democracy and Education respectively.

Equality and Education: Moore analyses the concept of equality by first rebutting the notion of some egalitarians who assert that Equality refers to the sameness of all humans. For him, this notion is faulty just as the notion that Equality being interpreted as 'regarding others in the same way'. He gives the example that prisoners cannot be regarded in the same way as free persons. Finally, he settles on equality in Education about Equal opportunity and access to all.

Freedom and education Freedom: The basic idea of 'freedom' is that of not encountering impediments and of being let alone to do what one wants to do. However, a human being may be hindered by circumstances which do not amount to restraint by others, that is, one's shortcomings, physical, mental, financial and social. Education cannot increase freedom except in those special cases where an educational qualification is needed to comply with a law or regulation, where the law will be invoked against anyone who is not so qualified. In general, education can only increase one's ability to make use of the freedom one already has. Education is a means of assimilating abilities without which this freedom is not worth. The freedom, however, does not depend on or arise out of education. Freedom rests on laws, regulations, social decisions. Freedom, in so far as it is good, is a political good. Education may enable people to make use of a good made possible by the social system in which they live. So far we have spoken of 'freedom', and it was suggested that this concept carries strong emotive overtones. Freedom is generally regarded as a right, something worth having. The practice of education assumes certain freedoms, both for the learner and for the teacher while limiting or blocking others.

Democracy and education: The genesis of the term Democracy is connected to the description of a government by the 'many people', but it has now broadened in meaning to cover almost any kind of social levelling or any group participation in events or decisions. It can indicate a mixed pedagogical and social theory, namely, that schools and other educational institutions should themselves be organised on democratic lines.

2.6.2 Assessment

Equality, Freedom and Democracy are the pillars of a well ordered society. They are marks of civilization. Moore could have said more, especially in regards to Democracy because of the three it is the most elusive concept. While every society strives for Democracy, lack of equality and Freedom thwarts every democratic efforts.

III. CONCLUSION

This review not only presents the outline of T.W.Moore's 'Philosophy of Education: An Introduction' but also evaluates each chapter's efficacy. The review criticises weaknesses of the author and appraises him whenever necessary. Chapter one seems to be partially characterised by confusion on the nature of Philosophy, but it is resolved in chapter three. The book can be rated above *per* in matters Philosophy of Education.

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