

Elusive rivalry? Conceptions of the philosophy of education

Paul Standish (2007) outlines what he sees as two rival accounts of the philosophy of education. The first is the analytical approach, the second a 'wider, more inclusive characterisation' that 'can recognise the role and merits of work in the analytical philosophy of education', but, being 'pluralistic in its understanding of philosophy', embraces much more than this (p.159). Standish makes it clear that his own allegiance is to the second account.

His distinction seems clear-cut enough. While, I assume, leaving open the possibility of other rival conceptions of the subject, his paper suggests that these are the two leading contenders. It leaves me with a picture of Analytical in the red corner and Broader in the blue.

But does this image fit reality? To find out, we need to know more about what the two contestants are like. In this paper I will focus entirely on A, on the 'analytical approach'. We also need to find out more about B, but I won't tackle that here.

So what is the analytical approach? Standish gives us several pointers.

[1] One is close to a definition: analytical philosophy (in general, not only in philosophy of education) 'understands philosophy to involve a process of conceptual analysis in order to arrive at clear and distinct ideas; it takes the point of enquiry to be the uncovering of the underlying logic of the matter at hand' (163).

[2] The analytical approach was introduced into philosophy of education after 1962 by R S Peters and his colleagues at the University of London Institute of Education, notably Paul Hirst and Robert Dearden (163). Elsewhere Standish uses the phrase the 'London School' (164. 165).

[3] Possibly the purest form of this approach is found in John Wilson's work, notably in his assertion that 'all that philosophy can do (if indeed it can) is to explain to me the criteria of reason which apply to value judgements' [Presumably, Wilson has in mind not *every* branch of philosophy, but only the kind of philosophy that deals with value judgements.] (163).

[4] Standish comments on [3]:

'To insist that all that philosophy can do is to explain the criteria of reason, as opposed to, say, attempting to justify value claims, is indeed to circumscribe the role of philosophy in relation to education. There is no doubt, however, that the work of analytical philosophers of education has gone beyond this, and, in some respects, it seems that some of their most notable achievements have departed from the conceptual analysis that they have typically claimed to be their method' (164).

[5] There are three references to analytical philosophising as ‘dry’ and ‘abstract’ (161, 162, 169). It tended to alienate teachers who were studying it (169), especially those in initial teacher education. The ‘vitality of current philosophy of education’, having moved away from ‘the abstract, dry forms it once took’, makes it better able to engage with students (162).

[6] The analytical approach ‘favours a kind of exclusiveness’. ‘Alasdair MacIntyre, who was at one time dismissed by the London School as non-philosophical’. ‘As this last example shows, the philosophers included in this second [= Broader] account have tended to be marginalized or condemned by those adopting a more exclusively analytic approach because of the alleged lack of clarity or precision in their arguments. Sometimes – as , for example, in the case of Heidegger – they have been regarded as simply incoherent and as not worthy of study.’ (165)

[7] Standish links analytical philosophy with social atomism: ‘Much as I have continued to value analytical approaches to philosophy, I have been struck by various ways in which they can reinforce a set of metaphysical assumptions that have had a prevailing influence in the modern world. What needs especially to be challenged within these assumptions is – to put this briefly and in exaggerated terms – the idea of human beings as individual and perhaps isolated subjects, standing in a relation of observation and cognition to the objects of experience, and having relations to other human beings of a quasi-contractual kind’ (165).

[8] The final point is that the analytical approach lives on. Talking of today, Standish states that ‘the philosophy of education, though still important, is likely to be diminished in its relevance to practice if it restricts itself to the more constrained self-conception found in the first of my rival accounts’ (169). The contemporary relevance of the analytical approach is, indeed, implicit in the notion of the broader account as embracing its better qualities; and also in the statement (170, note 5) that, ‘for an indication of some aspects of the differences between these two accounts’, see the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 37(1), 169-173. This 2003 piece is a response by Paul Standish to views in the same symposium about what was claimed to be his negative stance towards liberalism.

Note 5 on p.170, just mentioned, also mentions Standish’s co-edited *Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education* (Blake *et al* 2003) as ‘an attempt to present a state-of-the-art collection of work brought together in the light of an inclusive conception of philosophy of education’. The *Introduction* to this, co-written by Standish, contains further remarks about analytical philosophy and philosophy of education which are worth adding to the list so far:

[9] ‘Analytical philosophy of education relied too much on the notion that distinctions in ordinary language, once recovered and clarified, have the power to sweep away the obscurities introduced by tendentious ways of thinking and writing. Its aspiration to map the logical geography of educational concepts was naïve in its supposition that there is such a geography, unitary and two-dimensional, to be definitively mapped’ (p.3).

[10] In ethics, the analytical tradition in general philosophy on which analytical philosophy of education (henceforth APE) drew in its earlier years ‘was always unfriendly to norms and values’, engendering a ‘pervasive scepticism’ about their existence (p.3).

[11] APE ‘sometimes treated philosophizing as *merely* a matter of exercising techniques, as if they could be brought to bear irrespective of the material or topic under analysis, and without any great knowledge of matters of substance’ (p.4).

[12] Following on from [11], ‘it was therefore largely insouciant about the history of philosophy, and about work being done in cognate areas of philosophy (such as political philosophy or aesthetics)’ (p.4).

[13] Finally, a close link is made between APE and personal autonomy as a primary educational aim (5) and thereby with liberalism. This comes out very clearly in the remark, referring to the 1970s and 1980s, that ‘there were at the time distinctive problems and issues that began to turn attention away from an analytical and Kantian approach. First, problems with liberalism itself grew sharper’ with the growth of economic liberalism under governments of the New Right in UK, USA and New Zealand (p.6).

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How far do these characterisations of APE make up a coherent and convincing picture? In what follows, I shall be drawing a lot, for reasons that will become clearer, on what was happening in British philosophy of education in the 1960s and early 1970s, especially at the Institute of Education in London. Few of us working in the field today know from experience what it was like forty years ago, and many of us have to make do with received wisdom. As someone who first began to study philosophy of education around that time, I feel I can do something to set things right. Hence this paper.

[1] and [2]

Let’s begin by taking the first two of the thirteen points together, [2] associates APE with the work that Peters and his colleagues, ‘the London School’, developed at the London Institute of Education in the 1960s and later. [1] says that APE, like analytic philosophy in general, involves a process of ‘conceptual analysis’, its point being to uncover the underlying logic of the matter at hand.

It is true that Peters and his colleagues saw conceptual analysis as an important part of their work. But it was by no means the whole of it. Philosophy, for them, was also concerned with justification. Much of Peters’ classic work *Ethics and Education* (Peters 1966), for instance, is about how ethical values underlying education – equality, freedom, respect for persons, and so on – can be shown to be rationally grounded. Hirst and Peters (1970) write in *The Logic of Education*

Philosophy, in brief, is concerned with questions about the analysis of concepts and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, belief, actions and activities. (p.3)

In issues to do with school punishment, for instance, we need to get clear about what punishment involves on the way to asking whether there are good grounds for punishing people and, if so, what they are.

[1] does not say that conceptual analysis is *all there is* to analytic philosophy, only that the latter ‘involves’ it. So far, then, this is fully in line with what Peters and his colleagues were doing. [1] also says that the point of conceptual analysis (CA) is to reveal the underlying logic of the particular concept. This is fine as a characterisation of CA, but not as an account of the purpose to which Peters and others put it. As I have just made clear, analysing concepts in our discipline was never seen as important in itself, but only in relation to wider concerns. (See Hirst and Peters 1970 pp. 8-12; ‘The point of conceptual analysis’). It was not, for instance, as a self-contained activity that Robert Dearden (1968) explored the logic of ‘growth’. His starting point was a desire to improve primary teaching and he knew from his own long experience as a primary teacher in the 1950s and 1960s how confusing the influential developmentalist ideologies of the time were.

[3] and [4]

Let’s move on to other points. [3] and [4] also go together. They imply that in its purest form, as in John Wilson, APE has not been in the business of justifying value claims. If this was true of John Wilson’s thinking – and I have no firm views on this – it was not true of Peters and those influenced by him, as we have just seen.

Standish recognises in [4] that in some of its most important work APE has gone beyond conceptual analysis, but sees this as a departure from what its proponents ‘have typically claimed to be their method’.

I do not know of any source to back up this last quotation. On the contrary, on the first page of *Ethics and Education*, Peters made it clear – as I have already stated – that philosophy goes beyond examining the meaning of terms. Writing of contemporary philosophers, he stated

The disciplined demarcation of concepts, the patient explication of the grounds of knowledge and of the presuppositions of different forms of discourse, has become their stock-in-trade. There is, as a matter of fact, not much new in this. Socrates, Kant, and Aristotle did much the same. What is new is an increased awareness of the nature of the enterprise. (Peters, 1966, p.15)

In a summary account of his methodological approach to the subject, etched into the minds of everyone who studied with him, Peters went on to say

What distinguishes the philosopher is the type of second-order questions which he asks. These are basically the same questions asked by Socrates at the beginning – the questions ‘What do you mean?’ and ‘How do you know?’ (op.cit., pp.15-16).

A centrally important ‘How do you know?’ question in Peters and his successors has been about the justification of ethical principles and values. I have already mentioned Peters’s work on the justification of what he saw as ultimate moral principles like equality, benevolence, and liberty. Dearden initiated a tradition of exploring the justification of personal autonomy that has persisted through to the present century via the work of Eamonn Callan, Christopher Winch, and others.

[10]

This is a convenient place at which to bring in point [10], the claim in the *Blackwell Guide* that ‘in the realm of ethics analytical philosophy of education was particularly ill-served by the tradition on which it attempted to draw’ (p.3). This tradition, from Hume to Ayer, was ‘always unfriendly to norms and values’. Its positivism ‘brought with it as its shadow, pervasive scepticism about norms’.

Is it true that APE drew on the tradition of positivist ethics in Ayer and others? I would be interested in seeing the evidence for this, as it seems far off the mark. It is true that ethical emotivism was a topic of discussion at the Institute of Education in the 1960s, but so were Bentham’s and Mill’s forms of utilitarianism, Moore’s and Ross’s intuitionism, and Kant’s transcendental ethics. If there was a single tradition into which Peters’ ethical theory fitted, it was surely the Kantian. Emotivism, like utilitarianism and intuitionism, yielded, in Peters, to Kant’s superior insights.

[12]

What I have just said also casts [12] into doubt. Where is the evidence that APE ‘was therefore largely insouciant about the history of philosophy, and about work being done in cognate areas of philosophy (such as political philosophy or aesthetics)’? If you look at the names of philosophers who take up more than one line in the author index to *Ethics and Education*, you will see that eleven of the sixteen are Aristotle, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Locke, Marx, J S Mill, Plato, Rousseau, and Socrates. Those among us who were students or staff working in the Institute in the 1960s and 1970s will recognise texts by these thinkers as staple sources of inspiration and critique.

The suggestion that political philosophy was unknown territory makes no sense to me at all, given Peters’ work in the field from *Social Principles and the Democratic State* (Benn and Peters (1959)) onwards, as well as that of Patricia White, who taught and wrote on the subject from the late 1960s. As for aesthetics, although this was indeed a blank page for Richard Peters, it was far from this for Paul Hirst (see, for instance, Hirst 1974, ch.10). Ray Elliott, by most accounts the most profound thinker of the London group, published not only superb analytical work on the concepts of creativity,

imagination, the justification of education, development, objectivity, and understanding, but also essays in general aesthetics that were path-breaking in that field.

[11]

The last few paragraphs also challenge the statement in [11], that APE ‘sometimes treated philosophizing as *merely* a matter of exercising techniques, as if they could be brought to bear irrespective of the material or topic under analysis, and without any great knowledge of matters of substance’. This is another unreferenced, and off-target, allegation.

[6]

[6] charges APE with ‘a kind of exclusiveness’. It claims that the London School at one time dismissed Alasdair MacIntyre as non-philosophical. Again, it would be good to know the reference for this. It can hardly come from the 1960s or 1970s, since MacIntyre’s work was held in high esteem at London. His works on the unconscious, on the history of ethics, and especially on the aims of education were widely read as excellent examples of philosophical analysis in practice. It can hardly come from the 1980s. Like other people, several London philosophers of education were bowled over by *After Virtue* (1981). They invited MacIntyre not only to deliver one of the three Richard Peters Lectures (Haydon 1987) on the latter’s retirement in 1984, but also to spend a week in the Department, giving seminars and meeting staff and students. In a festschrift for Richard Peters (Cooper 1986), Patricia and John White wrote a critical appreciation of MacIntyre’s ideas in *After Virtue* and their importance for education.

Followers of APE are also said to have regarded Heidegger as ‘simply incoherent and as not worthy of study’. Is this true? Without chapter and verse, it is difficult to know. It is certainly not universally true. Robert Dearden (1968: 112, 116, 118) took up, among other things, Heidegger’s notion of ‘the equipment’ in his own discussion of ‘practical concepts’. Several of us studied *Being and Time* in the 1960s under the tutelage of Ray Elliott. I found its treatment of being in the world insightful in places, even though I struggled to make sense of most of that prolix book.

[7]

Let’s now look at [7]. Standish sees analytical philosophy (in general) as reinforcing metaphysical assumptions about human beings ‘as individual and perhaps isolated subjects...and having relations to other human beings of a quasi-contractual kind’. This rings no bells for me. On the contrary. The general philosophers most closely in touch with the Institute, those at Birkbeck, Kings College and University College, London, as well as most if not all the Institute philosophers, were overwhelmingly of the opinion that human beings are necessarily social creatures. An interpretation of Wittgenstein’s ‘private language argument’ was, rightly or wrongly, seen as providing support for this belief. Insofar as human beings are concept users, the idea that human beings are essentially social atoms makes no sense, since there must be public criteria for the application of concepts. Birkbeck’s David Hamlyn was a leading exponent of this ‘social’

thesis, in both general philosophy and philosophy of education. See his *Experience and the Growth of Understanding* (1978).

[13]

The charge of social atomism may or may not be linked with the comment under [13], that problems with liberalism in the 1970s and 1980s began to turn attention away from an analytic approach. Liberalism, with personal autonomy at its core, has been often criticised for working with an a-social conception of the individual, and it may be that analytical approaches and liberalism have been yoked together as equally inadequate on this score. But the charge against liberalism is unfounded. (See Mulhall and Swift (1992), index references to ‘asocial individualism’).

[5]

[5] describes APE as ‘dry and abstract’ and says it alienated teachers studying it, especially in Initial Teacher Education. It is certainly true that many of the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) students taught at the Institute and across the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s were turned off by philosophy of education. – Not all. At the Institute, there was always a large class choosing to take the Philosophy Option course on top of the compulsory Philosophy lecture course plus seminar. These enthusiasts apart, I cannot deny that many other students at best put up with our subject, and at worst voted with their feet, leaving summer term seminars extremely sparse in numbers.

Why was this? Was it because of APE’s aridity? Would another kind of philosophising have engaged students better, as Standish suggests?

I doubt it. What really bugged those students was not the *kind* of philosophy taught them, but the sheer amount of ‘theory’ they were expected to master on such a short course. At the Institute, we had weekly compulsory lectures and seminars not only in philosophy of education, but also in sociology of education and psychology of education, plus a compulsory option course in one of these education disciplines. The main philosophy of education course, as well as the option, was examined at the end of the year by a three-hour written paper.

It is not at all surprising that this régime alienated many students. Apart from an academic minority pleased to be able to prolong university studies, most PGCE students put more weight on practical experience and the guidance their subject tutors gave them.

In the late 1970s the Institute, like other such institutions, began to change its PGCE into a more practical course. Advised by the late – and great – Ted Wragg, it removed the multiple courses in the education disciplines, replacing them with an Education Course based on lectures and seminars on topics close to school experience, like racism in education and problems of tackling discipline. Disciplinary perspectives, including those

from philosophy, were not absent, but brought in on the back of practical topics in order to cast wider light on them.

At in-service level, I don't have any evidence of student alienation from our subject. Quite the opposite. Full- and part-time Diploma and MA courses continued to attract large classes until the Thatcher administration changed the funding rules in the mid-1980s, making students pay out of their own pockets for these courses, which previously had been funded by central government.

[9]

Point [9] says that APE relied too much on ordinary language distinctions and that its attempt to map the logical geography of educational concepts was vitiated by the false assumption that there *is* such a geography. Is this a fair assessment?

The truth is, I think, more nuanced. On the first point, some philosophers of education in those early days were indeed impressed by distinctions found in ordinary English usage as a guide to how concepts are to be understood. Peters himself is an example. From the field of philosophy of psychology, take, for instance, his treatment of the concept of motivation in his book of that title. Suppose a man crosses a road to buy a paper. Peters is impressed by the fact that we would normally never ask what his *motive* is for crossing the road, as we only ask for this when there is something *untoward* about an action. On the strength of this, Peters builds this 'untowardness' requirement into his account of the concept. This seems wrong. It makes perfectly good sense to say that the man's motive was to buy a paper, even if we would rarely, if ever, use this term here.

The influence of 'ordinary language philosophy' on philosophy of education was both slight and short-lived. General philosophers had subjected this approach, associated with J L Austin, to convincing critique by the time Peters took up his Institute chair in 1962. Although traces of it still pervaded the work there towards the end of that decade, colleagues generally understood in the 1960s that, although everyday usage could occasionally be helpful in the first steps of understanding a concept, it could also be too imbued with idiosyncrasies of the English language not found in, say, Japanese or Xhosa. It was fully accepted that philosophy has to conduct its conceptual investigations at a deeper level, seeing how one concept is logically connected, often in complex ways, with a web of other concepts.

The second charge under [9] is that APE was misled in its focus on the logical geography of educational concepts by its assumption that there *is* such a geography. There is indeed a problem here, but this way of putting it obscures it.

A key project of Peters in the 1960s was the study of concepts specific to education, like *learning*, *teaching*, *indoctrination*, *socialisation*, and, of course, *education* itself. He persuaded colleagues, including Paul Hirst, and Patricia and John White, to join him in this, as well as colleagues from general philosophy like David Hamlyn, Gilbert Ryle and

Godfrey Vesey. Israel Scheffler was following a parallel path at Harvard, investigating the concepts of *learning* and *teaching*.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the identities of different ‘philosophies of’ were becoming more clearly delineated. The philosophy of science, of religion, of mathematics, and of law were all establishing themselves as sub-disciplines of philosophy. Those working in these fields spent a lot of time investigating their central concepts: *cause* and *verifiability*, for instance in science, *God* and *miracle* in religion, *number* in mathematics. Peters and his colleagues saw themselves as doing a similar job in education.

By 1970, however, the project was running out of steam. For different reasons. With *teaching*, for example, there seemed little to explore once one had connected it with the intention to bring about learning and with success in that task. *Indoctrination* turned out to be rather more complicated, partly because of the different ways in which the term is used. With the demise of this kind of linguistic philosophy, work on indoctrination petered out in the early 1970s. *Education*, Peters’s own favourite concept, had a different fate. Critics fairly accused him of writing his own views about what education should be for into his analysis of the concept (Dray 1973: 34-9). Colleagues and students, like Robert Dearden. Robin Barrow and others, preferred to tackle issues about educational aims more directly – an endeavour that has persisted down to the present time.

To come back, then, to the second charge under [9]. The problem is not that it was not possible to map educational concepts. Some such mapping certainly took place and was useful to a point. The real problem is that after a short time there seemed little more to say. It became clear that the specifically educational concepts were unlike the more deeply entrenched, and therefore more puzzling, ones that general philosophers had always studied: *knowledge*, *time*, *mind*, *rationality*, *pleasure*, *the good life*, and so on. Indeed, it is concepts like these, rather than those peculiar to education, whose study has preoccupied philosophers of education over the past fifty years. This is not surprising. Investigating the concepts of *teaching* and *learning*, for instance, swiftly brings you to the concept of *knowledge* and related ideas like *belief*, *truth* and *rationality*. Once at this deeper level, that is where one is likely to stay. Fundamental ethical and political concepts, like *morality*, *personal well-being*, *autonomy*, *equality* and *democracy* have proven even more magnetic.

The two criticisms of APE raised in [9], about reliance on ordinary language, and about educational concepts, have little purchase on what has been happening in our discipline since around 1970. Even before this time, these two topics were only a part of the total picture. As pointed out above, there was far more to 1960s and early 1970s philosophy of education than the analysis of educational, or, indeed, other concepts. A large part of it centred on critique of others’ educationally relevant ideas, including those of the child-centred thinkers studied by Dearden, and the Harvard Report on general education degouted by Hirst (1974: 32-8). Another large swathe, as I have said, was about the justification of ethical principles held to underlie educational activities. Much of the early work, as I have also just hinted, was about educational aims and procedures. The pioneering treatment of such aims as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, moral

goodness, personal autonomy, happiness, and preparation for democratic citizenship belongs to this period.

More generally, the application of ethics not only to aims, but also to other educational topics, like punishment in schools, equality of educational opportunity, the authority of the teacher, the school as a democratic institution, the freedom of the child also originates in the 1960s. Peters in fact discussed all the topics just mentioned in *Ethics and Education* (1966). His treatment of them was probably the most popular part of his book among intending teachers and especially among seasoned ones. It is interesting for us to look back now to the 1960s from an age when applied ethics – in the fields of medicine, peace and war, the environment etc – has long since become an accepted feature of the philosophical landscape. The ethics then taught in general philosophy was almost exclusively second-order. What later came to be called ‘normative’ and ‘applied’ ethics (the Society for Applied Philosophy was founded in 1982), had not yet appeared on the scene. – Except in philosophy of education. Peters’s work on punishment in schools and the other topics mentioned was the headspring of later discussions over the next four decades on these same issues, as well as others, including children’s and parents’ rights, teaching about homosexuality, environmental education, state control of education, and faith schools.

The more one thinks of Peters’s achievement in setting up his version of philosophy of education, the more one appreciates its richness and diversity. The breadth of the gamut along which his work stretched – from, at the deeper end, ‘transcendental’ justifications of ultimate moral principles, through philosophy of mind and philosophical psychology applied to education, to applied ethics as just described, to policy critiques like his assessment of Plowden (in Peters 1969) – has been a model for other philosophers of education.

In Cooper 1986 Ray Elliott argues that the heart of Richard Peters’s philosophy of education lies not in his use of the analytical method, but

in his reflections on the general nature of education and its relation to very general questions concerning ‘the human condition’, the nature of truth, the meaning of ‘God’, and the nature of the world; and, against this metaphysical background, in his reaffirmation of the Stoic ideal as the most appropriate attitude to life. In short, his work is most memorable and most stimulating in so far as he philosophizes according to the layman’s conception of philosophy, rather than the professional philosopher’s. (p. 42)

[8]

Most of my comments on APE have been about what are seen as its very early years, especially in London. This is because many of the thirteen points refer, directly or indirectly, to that period and location. But, for its contemporary critics, their project is not an antiquarian unpicking of something in vogue forty years ago. As [8] maintains, the

analytical approach is said to live on. The ‘rival conceptions’ in Paul Standish’s title are still, supposedly, battling it out. What, then, is APE today?

Standish sees analytic philosophy in general as having become less narrow and more accommodating in recent years. His Note 3 on p. 170 (a note that refers to the passage quoted from him in [1]) tells us that:-

Analytical philosophy does, of course, remain the dominant form of the subject in Philosophy departments in most English-speaking countries, but its relation to ‘continental’ and other kinds of philosophy has generally become less hostile, and the reference of the term has been broadened. It is surely an error to think of either of these fields as appropriately naming unified traditions.

The view that analytical philosophy still dominates Anglophone work in the subject is at odds with Peter Hacker’s (1996) belief that ‘by the 1970s its earlier revolutionary ‘fervour had dissipated’ (p.266), and that ‘by the last decade of the century, the tradition of connective analytical philosophy had waned’ (p.272), largely owing to the rise since the 1970s of what he sees as a scientific kind of philosophising associated with Quine, Chomsky, Davidson, and their successors.

It must be that Standish is using the term ‘analytical philosophy’ in a different sense from Hacker’s. This seems to be the case from his remark that ‘the reference of the term [‘analytical philosophy’] has been broadened’. What does he have in mind here? It would be good to know, since then, in application to the philosophy of education, the nature of the rivalry he describes might be more apparent. As it is, it is still obscure.

Neither is it helpful to know that analytic philosophy’s ‘relation to ‘continental’ and other kinds of philosophy has generally become less hostile’. Is the implied contrast between ‘analytic’ and ‘continental’ philosophy coherent? Bernard Williams (1995: 66) says of it, in relation to his own debt to Nietzsche:

This classification always involved a quite bizarre conflation of the methodological and the topographical, as though one classified cars into front-wheel drive and Japanese.

Whatever APE might be today – assuming it exists: a topic for another paper? – it does not possess the features picked out by the thirteen points. I cannot think of anyone in our field writing today – or, indeed, at any time in the last fifty years – whose kind of philosophy of education is confined to conceptual analysis, not interested in questions of justification, committed to social atomism, heavily dependent on distinctions made in ordinary language, mainly orientated towards educational concepts, unfriendly to norms and values, practising techniques irrespective of subject matter, or insouciant of the history of philosophy, political philosophy, and aesthetics.

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