

Jim Mackenzie

I began my university studies at Monash in 1964. Robert Menzies was Prime Minister, the White Australia Policy was still in force, Aborigines were not counted in the census, murderers could be executed, and Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War was beginning. Politically and musically, it was a good time to be a student. The philosophical orthodoxy was the "ordinary language" species of analytic philosophy, embodied in Ryle (ed.) (1957) and Flew (ed.) (1951, 1953, 1956). This was the kind of analytic philosophy which R.S. Peters (1966) and Israel Scheffler (1965) were about to apply to education, where it would become known as "Analytic Philosophy of Education". The original was a sort of blend of J.L. Austin and the later Ludwig Wittgenstein. It is this which I automatically think of as philosophical orthodoxy, which means that many confident assertions about "all previous philosophy" drawn from French sources and referring usually to Descartes or at best to Hegel and certainly to systematic metaphysics, sound curiously antiquated to my ears. Austin (who in 1950 had translated Frege's *Grundlagen*, 1884) and Wittgenstein (who had worked with Russell and published the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in 1921) each had a deep understanding of logic, but both also avoided even the appearance of systematic theorising. The analytic tradition was not strong in its understanding of the historical origins of the problems it studied, and in its ordinary language form taken up by Peters had drifted away from its roots in mathematical logic and semantics. Other analytic traditions in philosophy (here the textbook was Feigl & Sellars, 1949), particularly those in contact with philosophy of science and of language, remained closer to logic and slowly broadened their awareness of the history of philosophy.

My graduate work was in logic under Charles Hamblin (author of *Fallacies*, 1970) at UNSW, and his logic seminars engaged not only with the neighbouring disciplines of philosophy, computer science and linguistics, but with the history of logic. The commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias on some of Aristotle's logical doctrines was one seminar topic I remember vividly. Alexander's commentary had not been translated, but I had it in Greek, and I had Aristotle's original with a close translation, a dictionary, a Greek grammar. Happily I got near enough to the gist of what Alexander had said for the focus of discussion to be the logical questions at issue between Alexander and Aristotle, rather than the inadequacies of my translations. Having learnt something is more pleasant than the process by which one reaches that state.

I spent a happy time at UNSW writing an MA and not writing a PhD. I also began teaching in the General Studies program, which provided introductory courses in humanities subjects for Engineering, Science, Commerce, and Medical students. Things that Arts students could do easily, like locating something in a historical context, they found difficult; but at the same time, they sailed through formal manipulations of axiom systems which Arts students struggled with. It was a very different kind of philosophy teaching from that which I had experienced as an Arts

student. I began trying to find a common language with these students by reading some of the textbooks in their major subjects, and then following up into the most referred-to research papers.

Economic realities eventually drove me to take a full-time job and to write up my PhD dissertation. These I did at Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education (now the University of Central Queensland) in Rockhampton as a teacher of philosophy of education, a field of which I knew absolutely nothing when appointed. Once I had my doctorate, I began publishing papers on the logic of dialogue. One in particular, Mackenzie (1979), has received a flattering number of citations, most of them for the general framework of dialogue logic (which was due to Hamblin) rather than for the particular additions I made to it. I also began writing book reviews of science fiction and sometimes of philosophy, for the weekly *Nation Review*, where the reviews editor was George Munster.

I returned to philosophy at the University of Wollongong, and then oscillated for ten years or so between philosophy and education. In philosophy, I spent a year at Pittsburgh studying under Nuel Belnap and Bob Brandom and later I did research on bioethics with Peter Singer at Monash. In education, there was a period evaluating tertiary teaching. Beyond having been a student and a teacher, I had no expertise in this; but in fact the job mainly required not being a member of the Department whose courses were being evaluated: there could be no suspicion that I was trying to increase my own area's share of teaching time. I also began, but did not complete, a course in librarianship during a period of unemployment, and thus began to understand the process of professional research.

I finally settled down in what was then quite a large (five people) philosophy of education group in the Faculty of Education (now, of Education and Social Work) at the University of Sydney. The Faculty always has always professed support for philosophy of education; even so, those who retired were not replaced, and I am the sole remaining practitioner in the Faculty. My publications continued to be mostly on dialogue logic, but gradually I began writing on philosophy of education as well. There was more opportunity to achieve the pleasant state of having learnt something and to notice incongruities than in dialogue logic, where one is tied to the structures of Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory. My papers were all under my own name, J.D., or more recently Jim, Mackenzie, except one which was ascribed through editorial error to a Jim McKenzie (2002). Academic journals have otherwise accepted that whatever my failings, I do at least know how to spell my own name.

Philosophy of education needs to be taught in schools of education because reflective teachers formulate for themselves philosophical questions – about the nature and validity of knowledge, about values, about the purposes of schooling,

about the relation of education to other human enterprises, to justice, to science, to history, to government. If they have studied some philosophy of education courses then they are aware that there are traditions of discussing such questions, and perhaps remember the names of some authors or texts with which to begin researching them. They also have a clearer idea of what is needed to prove or to refute an idea than seems to be conveyed in at least some of the content disciplines they may have studied. (I know it's not entirely their fault; I have continued to look at the textbooks my students are reading for their other subjects.) If they have not studied any philosophy of education, there is a risk that they will imagine themselves to be pioneers in a totally new field of inquiry, with results of mind-jangling naivety. For examples we do not have to look far.

REFERENCES

- Feigl, Herbert, & Wilfrid Sellars 1949: *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (New York; Appleton-Century-Crofts).
- Flew, Antony (ed.). 1951: *Logic and Language*, first series (Oxford; Blackwell).
- Flew, Antony (ed.). 1953: *Logic and Language*, second series (Oxford; Blackwell).
- Flew, Antony (ed.). 1956: *Essays in Conceptual Analysis* (London; Macmillan).
- Frege, Gottlob. 1884: *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik*. Tr. J.L. Austin as *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (Oxford; Blackwell, 1950, 2nd edn 1959).
- Hamblin, C.L. 1970: *Fallacies* (London; Methuen).
- Mackenzie, J.D. 1979: "Question-begging in non-cumulative systems." *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 7, pp. 117-133.
- McKenzie, Jim [Jim Mackenzie]. 2002: "Barbara Thayer-Bacon on knowers and the known." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 34, pp. 301-319.
- Peters, R.S. 1966: *Ethics and Education* (London; George Allen & Unwin, repr. 1968).
- Ryle, Gilbert (ed.). 1957: *The Revolution in Philosophy* (London; Macmillan).
- Scheffler, Israel. 1965: *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman).
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1921: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* with tr. D.F. Pears & B.F. McGuinness (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).