

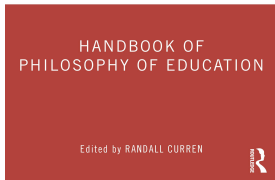
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MIND, REASON, AND KNOWLEDGE

David Bakhurst

In her 1958 article, “Modern Moral Philosophy,” Elizabeth Anscombe argued that moral philosophy stood in urgent need of a viable philosophy of psychology (Anscombe 1958). By this she did not mean that ethicists should heed the empirical findings of psychologists. Rather, Anscombe meant that doing moral philosophy was impossible without an adequate philosophy of human thought and action that could elucidate such themes as agency and intention, practical reasoning and practical knowledge, against the background of human life and language. My view is that philosophy of education is equally dependent on a philosophy of psychology, as Anscombe understood that term. Not that I think that philosophy of education is as dire as Anscombe took the moral philosophy of her day to be. On the contrary, philosophy of education is in many ways a vibrant discipline. But, any attempt to illuminate education must be informed by conceptions of mind, reason, and knowledge, and this is true whether we are discussing general issues about the nature and ends of education or highly specific matters of pedagogical method or curriculum development. This chapter aims to reveal how this is so, and to sketch the outlines of a philosophical psychology that offers a framework that can enhance philosophy of education.

Preliminaries

Let us begin with some preliminary thoughts about the three concepts under scrutiny: mind, reason, and knowledge. A creature with a *mind* is able to do certain things: it is aware of, and can represent, its environment, and it can respond to that environment in action. The cat hears a sound behind the baseboard, understands that a mouse is scampering in a certain direction, and, wanting to catch the mouse, positions itself accordingly. As such, a creature exhibits intelligence to the degree to which it can identify and determine solutions to problems its environment presents: in this case, identifying and predicting the movement of a mouse in order to catch it. Intelligence, of course, is not a single trait. In our example, it involves skills of spatial cognition, object quantification and classification, appreciation of causal relations, and calculative behavior that might be described as *reasoning*. The cat’s behavior certainly evinces *knowledge* – of the layout of the environment, of the position of its prey, of how best to catch it.

A human mind is capable of perceptual awareness mediated by concepts that enable us to articulate thoughts in conceptual form. We see the table – i.e., we bring the experience under the concept *table*, thereby seeing the table as an object of a certain kind. Moreover, we see the table as *needing a wipe* or as *being elegant*, and we can express these ways of seeing in words just as we can

think “Won’t it be wonderful when we’re all around that table again!” By such thoughts, we represent how things are, might be or could have been; we evaluate and imagine, express needs, wants, hopes, and intentions, which we can realize in action (e.g., by wiping the table, setting it, and so on). It is important that human perceptual awareness, thought and action are self-conscious. We are not just aware of the table, but aware that we are aware. In thinking, we know what we think and when we act intentionally there is a description of what we are doing that we know to be true (of course, this does not preclude the possibility of unconscious mental states, any more than it precludes the possibility of unintentional action of which the agent is unaware).

A being that has all this has the power of *reason*. The word “reason” has a variety of meanings, exemplified in the sentence, “A being with reason reasons about reasons.” In its first occurrence, “reason” is, as Hume might have put it, the mind’s capacity to determine how things are, what is true and what is false. To this we might add, with Kant, that reason’s mandate is also to unify our conception of the world, and to understand the principles of its unification, so that it represents a coherent whole of mutually supporting beliefs providing, so far as possible, a complete explanation of how things are. In its second occurrence, to “reason” means to deliberate (e.g., to think, question, argue, infer, conclude, hypothesize, evaluate, etc.) about what to believe or to do. And in its third occurrence, a “reason” is a consideration that favors thinking such-and-such or doing so-and-so. Many animals act for reasons, but only human beings think and act *in light of* a self-conscious appreciation of reasons and engage in what Robert Brandom calls “the game of giving and asking for reasons” (Brandom 2000). Human beings are expected to justify themselves by appeal to their reasons for thinking and acting as they do. We are rational agents, and the rationality of our thoughts and deeds is a measure of the soundness of the strategies by which we determine what we have reason to think or do. A being that exercises reason well has *knowledge* of what to think and do. Human knowledge requires not just that an agent has true beliefs; we have knowledge only if we are able to offer grounds that justify our thoughts and actions. So the power of reason is at once the capacity for knowledge.

The nature of mind, reason, and knowledge has been debated since the dawn of philosophy. However, I would expect most philosophers to agree, albeit cautiously, with these preliminary remarks, though some will complain about what is left out, and controversy is certain to begin as soon as we try to explain and develop the ideas. But before we go further, let us pause to take in the intimate relation between these concepts and questions of education. First, among the aims of education are the following: to equip students with knowledge and understanding, both theoretical (knowledge of fact) and practical (knowledge of what to do and when and how to do it), and to cultivate in them the means to acquire knowledge and understanding, in the forms of skills of inquiry and critical thinking, practical abilities, and good habits of mind (virtues, intellectual and moral), so that they may exercise good judgment, make good choices, and excel in their lives. Our concepts of mind, reason, and knowledge influence how we understand all this. Second, those concepts are equally at play, explicitly or implicitly, in our conceptions of how to assess and evaluate students. Third, they also influence our views of the nature of teaching and learning, of what it is to offer and receive knowledge, to think independently, to have a mind of one’s own. Fourth, they inform our understanding of learning disabilities, of the intellectual, emotional and developmental challenges that many students face. And fifth, they bear on fundamental curricular distinctions, such as the familiar dichotomy between intellectual and applied pursuits.

It is because the concepts of mind, reason, and knowledge enter so deeply into such foundational matters that philosophy of education is beholden to philosophy of psychology in Anscombe’s sense of the term. Of course, we cannot pretend to develop a definitive theory of mind, reason, and knowledge that will settle these matters once and for all. The concepts will remain essentially contestable. But we can aspire to bring to consciousness the conceptions that inform our thinking and interrogate them critically, so that we can appreciate their limitations and ensure that they enrich and enable, rather than thwart or ensnare, the theory and practice of education.

A Familiar Picture

Let us first examine a familiar picture of the mind associated with 17th and 18th century philosophy, especially the work of Descartes and the British empiricists. Very few philosophers would openly embrace this conception today, though many of its tenets continue to influence both theoretical and popular conceptions of mind, reason and knowledge.

According to this picture, my mind is akin to a private theatre of ideas which are disclosed immediately only to me, the being, or self, whose mind it is. I have immediate access only to the contents of my own mind, of which I am directly conscious; my awareness of things beyond my mind is indirect, mediated by mental representations. Moreover, my mental states are immediately given to me alone, others know what I think and feel only by inference from my behavior. The mind is thus akin to a self-contained subjective world with a single inhabitant. The contents of this world are states (perceptions, beliefs, imaginings, ideas) that purport to represent how things are beyond its boundaries, as well as states (emotions, wants, hopes, intentions) that respond to things as they are represented to be, with a view, perhaps, to changing them through action.

On this view, reason is understood primarily as a capacity to operate on mental states. Theoretical reason is concerned to deploy principles of inference to establish the cogency of our thoughts. Its end is knowledge, which thinkers possess when they hold appropriately grounded beliefs that accurately represent how things are. Practical reason, in contrast, is concerned with the determination of action. For some, such as Descartes, Locke, and Rousseau, we can establish substantive truths about how we should live by the exercise of our “natural reason.” Hume, in contrast, vehemently denied that reason can determine the proper ends of action. For him, the purposes with which we act are fixed entirely by our desires and reason’s role is exclusively instrumental, limited to determining the means by which our ends may be realised.

The familiar picture raises familiar puzzles. The first is ontological. Descartes, of course, famously argued that mind is a substance utterly different in kind from matter. Thoughts are not, nor could they be, material because they lack the essential property of material entities, namely, “extension”: they are not in space as material things necessarily are. While some of Descartes’s contemporaries, such as Hobbes, argued that minds are material and aspired to give mechanical explanations of psychological phenomena, it was not until the mid- to late-20th century that philosophers began seriously to attempt to show systematically that mental states are physical phenomena, either by aspiring to identify them with brain states or by arguing that they, while not strictly identical with brain states, were nonetheless instantiated in the brain or realised by brain functioning. Yet such physicalist accounts often preserved the idea of the mind as a private theatre of representations (Dennett [1991: 107] speaks of “Cartesian materialism”) and encountered enormous difficulties explaining the subjective phenomenology (or “felt quality”) and the intentionality (or “aboutness”) of mental phenomena. The intractability of these difficulties led some thinkers to embrace “eliminativism” about the mental, the view that our familiar forms of psychological description and explanation were a “folk theory” of mind that was ultimately destined to be supplanted by rigorous neuroscientific approaches to psychological explanation (see, e.g., Churchland 2013). But eliminativism, by rejecting the very conceptual apparatus in terms of which we understand our mental lives, thereby denied itself the means to identify the phenomena that philosophy and psychology seek to understand, namely, our mental lives as we live them (Bruner 1990; Bakhurst 2005). So an antimony remained: neither dualism nor physicalism and no obvious third way.

The familiar picture also invites a host of epistemological problems. If a mind is acquainted with the world only via the mediation of ideas, how can it ever determine that the world is as its ideas represent it to be? The problem is graphically illustrated by Descartes’s famous evil genius hypothesis, reborn in the 20th century as the brain-in-a-vat thought experiment. Descartes, of course, posed his sceptical problem in order to refute it, but alas the problem proved more enduring than his

solution. And the problem pertains, of course, not just to knowledge of external objects, but also of other minds, knowledge of which, on this picture, is doubly indirect. As one can never “enter” another mind; another person’s perceptions, thoughts and feelings are not possible objects of one’s experience and can only be inferred from the other’s behavior. But such inferences are obviously fragile, and so nothing, apart from its pre-philosophical implausibility, can definitively exclude the possibility of solipsism.

Let us now explore how aspects of the familiar picture can influence our thinking about education. On such a view, what it is for a thinker to know, understand, learn, etc. is cast in terms of transactions within the thinker’s mind: knowledge demands justified belief and that is provided by the apprehension of appropriate relations between mental states. Understanding is, or involves, a lucid apprehension of concepts, ideas, thoughts. Reasoning is inference, movement from one thought to another. These ideas are naturally allied to what we might call “epistemic individualism,” a stance that combines two theses, one descriptive and one normative. The descriptive thesis holds that individual minds are equipped with the wherewithal to acquire knowledge through the exercise of powers of reason with which they are naturally endowed. These powers enable them to deploy concepts – which they possess either innately or acquire from experience – to fashion a conception of the world. The rational capacities employed in developing a scientific conception are merely an extension of those employed in creating our familiar everyday conception of reality. Correspondingly, the normative thesis maintains that each individual is responsible for keeping their own epistemic house in order. No-one should believe anything simply on the say so of another: one can be in good standing, epistemically speaking, only in so far one can produce appropriate reasons for one’s beliefs, and a reason is appropriate only if one can say why it has the epistemic force it does. In this sense, individual minds have both the power, and the obligation, to be self-sufficient.

Such a position is graphically illustrated by Descartes’s philosophy, but it has been widely influential and no more so than in education. It is present in the familiar idea that intelligence is a “natural gift,” as well as the view that education is essentially a process of scaffolding the maturation of children’s natural abilities to learn for themselves, a view found in many traditional conceptions of learning as well as in progressive “child-centred” approaches that emphasize individual invention and discovery. The view therefore sets significant constraints on the extent to which we can think of education as *forming* our powers of reason. In addition, its conception of epistemic independence influences our understanding of successful learning and, correspondingly, of appropriate assessment: the test of students’ abilities is what they can do independently and that defines for us what we mean by someone’s “own work.” To master some subject-matter is to be able to articulate what is true and why, and someone can be said really to *know* only if they can do this unaided.

The familiar picture also brings with it a sharp distinction between intellectual activity and bodily movement. The mind is the domain of intelligence, and the intelligence of thinkers is measured by the quality of their reasoning and judgement. Some judgements issue in intentions or acts of will, but as these occur inside the mind, they are at best the causes of our bodily actions that take place in the external world. It thus becomes difficult to see intelligence as *immanent* in bodily movement, to understand our mindedness as present in what we do. Accordingly, the picture provides a rationale for the distinction between intellectual and applied subjects, mental and manual labour, a distinction that has traditionally borne considerable significance in the construction of curricula and in the privileging of propositional knowledge—that over bodily know-how.

The picture of individual minds as self-contained and self-sufficient makes it hard to see teaching as a process in which minds can meet or be truly open to another. Rather, teaching involves conveying, imparting, or transmitting knowledge, as well as inspiring in others the motivation to learn, though in harmony with the epistemic individualism noted above, the teacher can impart only the shell of knowledge: the student must make it her own. The picture, especially in its dualist versions, might be invoked to plead the importance of mystery and spirituality in education, just as

its physicalist renditions will be prone to entertain ideas about the educational significance of neuroscience. Finally, the picture suggests a certain conception of the ends of education: education primarily aspires to create the conditions in which the powers of mind with which we are naturally endowed can develop and flourish, so that individuals can fruitfully exercise their reasoning skills in the acquisition of knowledge.

Transcending The Familiar Picture

The familiar picture, for all its dominance in the early-modern period and the Enlightenment, and its subsequent influence up to the present, has long been contested by thinkers – such as Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Vygotsky, Dewey, Heidegger, Ryle, Wittgenstein, and McDowell – whose work bears on education in significant ways. The reader will no doubt expect me to maintain that it is fundamentally flawed and its influence on education desultory. And so I will, but with two important qualifications. First, the position I have outlined is a composite of various ideas that naturally consort together, but of course it is possible to embrace some components and not others (indeed, one can interpret some in ways that explicitly rule out others). Now many philosophers will question the value of such a sketch. They are interested in what one *must* believe, not in what people do or might believe, so they would see little point in making a straw man out of views that can be so easily contested and disavowed in whole or part. But since my brief is to explore how philosophical conceptions influence our ideas of education, it helps to step back and reflect on some of the most general conceptions that have informed how we think of mind, reason, and knowledge, particularly since we may not always be aware of their power over us. Second, while I reject the familiar picture, it is important to recognize that its elements would not have endured were there not some truth, even some deep truth, in them. So it is not that I intend simply to erase this picture and replace it with another. Rather, I want to suggest that there are more fruitful ways to do justice to the phenomena the familiar picture tries to capture, while incorporating them into a more satisfying view of the life of the mind better fit to illuminate and inspire educational theory and practice.

First, we must resist the image of the mind as a place occupied by entities directly available only to the self whose mind it is. It is curious that a conception of the mind associated with Descartes – who resolutely denied that mental phenomena are in space – is so quick to deploy spatial metaphors. Let us instead think of a creature's mental powers as informing and enabling its life-activity in ways we may hope to explain and illuminate. Instead of speaking of a creature's mind, as if it were some place within it, let us think of the creature as *minded*, that is, possessing powers of sentience and sapience, the exercise of which enable it to live a certain kind of life. This is not to deny the reality of our "inner lives"; the point is rather to recognize that events in consciousness are events in the life of an embodied being; and the unity and integrity of consciousness cannot be understood without recognizing that conscious life is lived in the world (see McDowell 1996: lecture 5). My inner life is thus an aspect of my being-in-the-world and not something that merely runs in parallel with my life as a bodily being.

In harmony with this, it is important to countenance just how much of the life of the mind is lived in public space. It is simply not true that it is impossible for others to be directly acquainted with our thoughts and feelings. Knowledge of other minds is not always the outcome of inference, for the minds of others can be immediately manifest to us. The most obvious way this is so is that we can literally speak our minds. I can say what I think and you, understanding me, thereby know what I think. It is not that when I say what I think, my words are merely the external manifestation of some hidden process. Rather, my thoughts are present in my words. Of course, I can, deliberately or unintentionally, say the opposite of what I think, or express my thoughts poorly. I may lie, dissemble, or pretend. But it does not follow that, when I speak sincerely and intelligibly, you are aware of anything less than my state of mind. Similarly, my emotions, wants or intentions may be

present in my actions or my demeanor: my grief, dismay, anxiety, or anger may be there in my expression or my behavior. And once again, just because I can feign such emotions, attitudes and feelings does not mean that they are not to be beheld when I am not feigning. This view of the “visibility” of the mental is an important corrective, allowing us to transcend the idea that our knowledge of other minds is always speculative, akin to a theoretical construction, and countenance the idea of a genuine meeting of minds – a sharing of mental states and attitudes where two minded beings can be as one. This is a more favourable context in which to understand the idea of joint, shared, and collective intentionality and grasp the various senses in which we can share commitments, ends, actions and activities, as well as illuminating the second-personal (I–thou) relations that are critical to the interaction of teacher and learner, to the summons to learn and to the yearning to be taught.

Second, it is vital to work with an expansive construal of our rational powers. As we observed above, it is central to human life that we act not just *for* but *in light of* reasons. We apprehend those reasons *as* reasons, make them the object of critical evaluation, and offer them up to others (and to ourselves) to justify our beliefs and our behavior. We can weigh reasons against one another, deliberate, and make up our minds about what to think or do, and we can articulate our self-conscious appreciation of what the balance of reasons favours. However, it is a mistake to construe responsiveness to reasons entirely in terms of overt reasoning or deliberation. Of course, we sometimes work out what to think or do in just that way: we arrive at a judgement in a process akin to formulating an argument, which we can rehearse to justify our thoughts and actions. It is important to note, however, that even then deliberation is not always *prior* to the expression of thought. We sometimes “think on our feet” in public space. Consider a teacher spontaneously responding in a class: here she works out what to say in the course of saying it. And sometimes our spontaneous responsiveness to reasons takes the form of embodied action, issuing not from deliberative judgements, but from an intuitive apprehension of what the situation calls for. Think here of a jazz musician improvising with others: her playing is not the outcome of overt practical reasoning, but it is nonetheless responsive to reasons “in the flow.” Her grounds for playing as she does may be reconstructed after the fact (though this need not involve a verbal articulation of practical reasoning – it could take the form of a demonstration). Similarly with the soccer player who effortlessly reads the game and knows how to find space and perfectly weight passes: this is the activity of a being that is responsive to the normative profile of her circumstances, who knows she ought to move *here* or strike the ball *just so* in response to the reasons before her in the moment. Thus, not all responsiveness to reasons is “in the head.” Our mindedness can reside in how we comport ourselves in the world and, as in our examples, in harmony with the mindedness of others, for among the things the musician and the footballer respond to is the rational responsiveness of others (fellow musicians, teammates, and opponents).

If we embrace an expansive conception of reason and see our mindedness as a dimension of our embodied life-activity, played out in a social world, then we can recognize that there is nothing other-worldly or super-natural about our rational powers. In this way, our position “naturalizes” the mental. At the same time, however, it gives no comfort to the kind of physicalism that would reduce mental life to brain functioning. As John McDowell (1996) has argued, following Wilfrid Sellars (and ultimately Kant), the modes of discourse that render our mental lives intelligible portray us as acting rationally through the apprehension of reasons. This style of explanation is very different from natural-scientific forms of explanation that subsume events under causal laws, and there is no prospect of reducing the former to the latter. It is one thing to explain something by “placing it in the space of reasons” another to represent it as an expression of natural law. But this does not entail an ontological cleavage between mind and body. Rather, there is but one thing, the life-activity of human beings, which is open to more than one mode of explanation. If we see our deeds as issuing from our self-conscious responsiveness to reasons, then we represent ourselves as rational, intelligent, free beings; if we see our behavior, or what happens to us, as merely the result of causal forces, then

we represent ourselves as material beings subject to natural forces. These two ways of seeing are two perspectives on the same thing, but only the first discloses our rational nature. On such a view, mental states and properties should be seen as states and properties of *persons* – that is of a certain kind of natural being – and not as states and properties of some part of a person (e.g., of the brain). It is persons who think and feel and not their brains (though of course much must be going on in their brains for this to be possible).

Lessons for Education

Transcending the familiar picture has many implications for the ways we should think about education. For example, the personalist view just articulated stands as a corrective to scientific programs of “brain-based learning”, which speak as if it is brains which do the learning rather than students (see Bakhurst 2008). Of course, human beings are animals and it is good for our educational practices to be informed by what we know about the conditions in which animals like us flourish and learn – that students are rested and adequately fed, that unreasonable demands are not placed on their powers of attention and concentration, that we do not assume that all students learn in the same way, that learning disabilities are understood and accommodated, and so on – familiar facts that we might look to empirical psychology to illuminate further. But we should see ourselves as educating people, not brains, and should be wary of speculation, sometimes allied to brain-based approaches, about enhancing students’ powers of knowledge by pharmaceutical and technological means.

In my view, such enhancement would not be an educational act at all, for education is, as Michael Oakeshott (1991) famously put it, initiation into the conversation of humanity, and that necessarily involves a sustained and protracted process of formation, or *Bildung*, requiring engagement with multiple disciplinary voices and practices as they are encountered in texts, in culture and social activity, and in the person of one’s teachers. Such a conception, sometimes called “liberal education,” sees education as a relation between a developing person and culture. It is thus profoundly at odds with the idea of “natural reason” and attendant conceptions of epistemic individualism, for the process of initiation is seen as one in which students inherit a conception of the world, together with the concepts and traditions of thought that enable them to articulate and reflect upon it (see Curren 2014). For Oakeshott (2001) – and for such like-minded (though otherwise diverse) thinkers as Vygotsky (1986), Bruner (1997), Peters (2007), and Ilyenkov (2009), children’s rational powers are not simply given parts of their nature so that each child can find the world anew for itself. We become rational beings as our personhood is formed through our initiation into culture, and so to educate is not merely to scaffold the autonomous development of individual learners; it is the process in which rational agents come to be, in which they acquire the “second nature” that fits them for a distinctively human form of life.

If equipped with a suitably expansive conception of mind, reason, and knowledge, such a conception can serve to correct some of the traditional stereotypes of liberal education as bookish and overly intellectual. If we take seriously the idea that we are embodied minds – denying not just that we are “ghosts in the machine” but also that our minds are physical entities within us, like daleks in their “pepperpots” – then we can recognize that our mindedness is the form of our life-activity, to put it in an Aristotelian idiom. Our intelligence does not reside only in mental operations conducted behind the scenes of action; intelligence can be present, not just in words, but in bodily movement, in the immediacy of our responsiveness to reasons in action, the expression of habits or virtues, and the exercise of physical skill.

This adjustment in our thinking should make us wary of embracing a rigid distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge: recognizing the embodied mind speaks against sharp distinctions between intellectual and applied pursuits; mental and manual labor; academic and vocational subjects – dichotomies that have influenced curricular thinking since formal schooling began.

Indeed, we need to rethink the tired distinction between dispassionate reason, purely cognitive in its orientation, and “appetitive” states such as emotion, feeling, attitude, passion, and mood. On the view I propose – which has precedents in Plato’s view of education as the training of desire, as well as in Aristotle – appetitive states can enter into and inform our responsiveness to reasons, helping us discern where reasons lie by directing our attention to normatively significant features of situations. Moreover, such states can also constitute a rational response: our joy can be rationally motivated by our appreciation of reasons to celebrate; our despair warranted by the dismalness of our situation. Thus, if education is the formation of reason, we must seek to educate not just our powers of deliberation and reasoning, but habits, passions, and emotions.

Attunement to such matters is reflected in recent interest in virtue epistemology (see, e.g., Baehr 2011). While it has long been argued that the development of critical thinking is an important educational end, it is becoming widely recognized that critical thinking is typically too narrowly defined in terms of reasoning, conceived as the articulation and evaluation of arguments, at the expense of the cultivation of epistemic virtues, such as curiosity, scepticism, intellectual humility, and creativity, qualities that enhance our ability to discern epistemic relevance, appreciate evidence, and weigh reasons for belief.

Similar lessons apply, I believe, to moral education. Too often, moral education is understood as instruction in how to behave, in moral principles and their application to particular cases. But such an understanding omits something more fundamental. What, we must ask, is a moral reason? In my view, moral reasons are features of situations that have a distinctive normative significance, which we identify with the terms “moral” or “ethical.” So, *that they are going hungry* is a reason to feed them; *that he is embarrassed* is a reason to stop teasing him; *that it is fair* is a reason to pay equally for equal work (see Dancy 1993). But to appreciate such reasons for what they are is to understand not just their general character, but how and in what way they present as morally relevant in particular cases and what consequences this has for how we should act. This requires appropriate concepts, sensibilities, emotions, and routes of feeling. The moral learner must therefore be enabled to discern moral salience, and this is as much, if not more, a matter of cultivating virtues and moral motivation, as it is of training in styles of moral reasoning. It requires an education *in what matters*, and this is a task of education *as a whole* and not something that can be parcelled into a discrete subject called “moral education” (Bakhurst 2020).

It might seem that my emphasis on mind as embodied and enacted slightes the inner, self-conscious character of our mental lives so celebrated in Cartesian, empiricist, and Kantian approaches, and hence the view I recommend suffers from flaws similar to those that beset behaviorism. But this is not so. The point is to understand how our mental powers inform the life-activity of beings like us (and here “inform” is meant to have an Aristotelian resonance). So the intention is not to deny or explain away “the inner,” but to see the life of the mind as a dimension of the life of a certain kind of animal. We need to hear the phrase “rational animal” as referring to something in whom the rational and the animal are a unity, rather than two independently intelligible components somehow yoked together (Bakhurst 2011: ch.3). As I observed above, the life of rational animals is self-conscious life. This is because judgement is essentially self-conscious: when I judge that things are thus and so, either by apprehending them in perception or by reasoning to a conclusion about how the facts lie, I know that I so judge. This self-consciousness is the source of the special relation that a person has to their own mental states. This relation should not be understood on the model of perception, as it so often is on the familiar picture (where only I can look into my mind and see what is there). It derives rather from our agency: I know what I think because I make up my mind what to think in acts of judgement that are necessarily self-conscious (see Moran 2001). Something similar is true of intentional action. As Anscombe (1958) showed, when I act intentionally there is a description of my act under which I know what I am doing, and I know this not because I *observe* what I am doing, but because my self-consciousness determines what it is I am doing intentionally. I cannot be intentionally starting my car

unless I know that that is what I am doing. Of course, in doing this, there may be many things I am doing unintentionally (e.g., annoying my neighbours, startling the cat) and these I may or may not know I am doing. But, self-consciousness necessarily enters into intentional action.

These considerations about the self-conscious character of judgement and intentional action may appear esoteric philosophical theses. But, they are actually of critical significance in the philosophy of education. This is because they suggest that our powers of reason can be brought to actuality through education, for no human being is born knowing what it is thinking or doing (Rödl 2020). The form of our self-consciousness requires the exercise of conceptual powers that are acquired only in a process of formation or *Bildung* – education in the broadest sense. So Anscombian reflections on self-consciousness, when properly developed, strongly favour the idea of education as initiation, where education is understood, not as a merely contingent modification of the human condition, but as central to the very possibility of our form of animal life. Kant remarked that it was a scandal that philosophy had still not yet dispelled the spectre of scepticism about our knowledge of the external world (Kant 1998: 121 [Bxxxix]), but in my view the real scandal of philosophy is that such scant attention has been paid to the place of education in human life, as if our powers of mind, reason, and knowledge could be understood in abstraction from the processes of their actualization.

Conclusion: Knowledge, Reason and The Ends of Education

But let us conclude by reflecting for a moment on Kant’s scandal. Has philosophy succeeded in dispelling the spectre of scepticism so that we may speak with confidence of education as imparting nothing less than knowledge? I think so, for the view I have propounded leaves scant room for philosophical scepticism. For Anscombe, the kind of self-knowledge definitive of intentional action is no self-contained phenomenon of introspective awareness, for in acting intentionally I know what I am doing – not merely what I take myself to be doing or what I am trying to do – and this presupposes knowledge of the world beyond the mind. So if intentional thought and action is possible at all, we must have knowledge of the external world. Indeed, the very idea of an *external* world should be dropped, resting as it does on the contrast, central to the familiar picture, between the external domain of material objects and the “inner” world of the mind. But the more we see our mindedness as embodied and enacted, the easier it becomes to recognize that rational beings are of the world, not set apart from it.

For those who seek a less transcendental and more direct refutation of sceptical anxieties, I believe there is promise in the “disjunctivist” approaches of McDowell (1998), Rödl (2007), Pritchard (2012) and Kern (2017), but as these views do not lend themselves to summary treatment, I will not elaborate (but see Bakhurst 2018 for detailed discussion). Instead, I will simply point to recent developments in epistemology that are important for the philosophy of education. The past three decades have seen increasing recognition of the significance of knowledge as a *social* phenomenon.

In the 1990s, the heyday of postmodernism, it became fashionable to argue that true and real were “social constructions,” fashioned by our discursive practices and modes of conceptualisation and meaning-making. Accordingly, claims to objective knowledge were viewed as suspect – at best they were ungrounded, at worst a vehicle of intellectual authoritarianism. While the ensuing “culture wars” had some salutary effects – e.g. by challenging entrenched historical narratives, welcoming voices and perspectives that had long been marginalized, and bringing into view the social context of the production of scientific knowledge – the simple-minded relativism that became the hallmark of the postmodern condition had a generally desultory influence on educational theory (see Phillips 1995; Hacking 1999; Bakhurst 2011: ch. 2). The late 1990s, however, saw the beginnings of a very different approach to the social dimensions of knowledge with the emergence of the discipline of social epistemology, the advocates of which typically saw no irrevocable conflict

between the sociality of knowledge and its objectivity. Alvin Goldman, in his pathbreaking *Knowledge in a Social World* (1999), was quick to see the bearing of this new approach to questions of education, and the ensuing three decades have seen the production of much work on testimony (knowledge acquired from the word of others), collective epistemic agents, disagreement, misinformation, and epistemic injustice, all of which has significant educational applications (see Goldman & O'Connor 2021). While it is fair to say that dialogue between social epistemologists and philosophers of education remains in its infancy (though see Kotzee 2014; Bakhurst 2020), the prospects for fruitful engagement are bright.

Many social epistemologists hold that the philosophical study of knowledge should be informed by psychology. How does this relate to the claim with which I began this essay, namely that the philosophy of education needs to be complemented by a philosophy of psychology, as Anscombe understood that term? For Anscombe, as we saw, the philosophy of psychology does not mean the philosophical appropriation of the empirical findings of psychologists. It is rather the philosophical exploration of concepts central to understanding thought and action. Not that this exploration is an entirely *a priori* exercise, as Anscombe's method, inspired by Wittgenstein, is to understand those concepts in the context of the role that they, and the phenomena they disclose to us, play in our lives. But this is a very different approach from that taken by much scientific psychology, which tends to take a "sideways-on" stance on human behavior, rather than explicating it, as the philosopher must, from within.

For all that, however, psychology is a very diverse field and, I believe, there is much within it that can illuminate philosophical studies of education. Earlier, I followed McDowell by distinguishing two irreducible styles of explanation we can bring to events in human lives. We can view human beings as rational agents and explain their doings by placing them "in the space of reasons," or we can view human beings as material things and explain the happenings in which they are involved by appeal to natural law. The distinction speaks against forms of reductionism that seek to explain mind, reason, and knowledge exclusively by natural-scientific means. At the same time, however (and as I have stressed throughout this chapter), human beings are part of the order of nature, and so a sound approach will not parcel our lives into two streams of events, the rational and the causal, but seek to embrace the unity of the rational and the animal in our lives. If we focus, not on particular events, but on stretches of human activity, we find the interplay of causal and rational forces, so that some aspects of the activity will be explicable by rational means, others causally, and still others that will require both modes of intelligibility in consort (see Bakhurst 2011: ch. 6). There are styles of psychology – exemplified, for instance, by Vygotsky, Bruner and Tomasello (see, e.g., his 2014, 2019) – that appreciate this well. They offer theories of human development that are genuinely scientific in method and aspiration, yet eschew reductionism, and deploy modes of explanation fit for the elucidation of rational life, in all its depth and complexity. Psychology of such a kind has much to teach us and can rightly inform a philosophy of psychology to enhance philosophy of education.

Let me finish, then, by asking what light the themes of this essay might cast on the vexed question of education's ends. To answer this, we should discriminate two voices in which the question might be asked. If one poses it in pedagogical voice – if one treats it as a question about what teaching should aspire to achieve – then the answer must surely enumerate a considerable number of diverse ends: to impart knowledge; to encourage independence of mind and autonomous decision-making; to build confidence; to inspire and motivate; to develop critical thinking; to cultivate intellectual virtues and other good habits; to awaken moral and aesthetic skills and sensibilities; to promote health and well-being; to prepare students for further education or equip them to enter the job market; and on and on. I do not see how to organize these ends into a hierarchy or the desirability of doing so.

If one poses the question in philosophical voice, the question takes a different form. Now we are looking for something that will enable us to express the unity that inheres in the concept of

education, which will, of course, be a unity in diversity. In this regard, there are various candidates, including: the imparting, sharing, and expansion of knowledge; the formation of reason; the awakening and development of powers of mind; autonomy, conceived as the power to determine for oneself what to think or do. I think, however, that if we heed the position I have sought to develop here, there is no real need to choose between these options, for, once unpacked and developed, they all amount to the same thing. Education is the medium by which a certain kind of life comes to be: the life of reason, life with knowledge, life that is minded in the way that human life is minded. This, we can say, is thinking life, so long as we understand thinking, not as a specific activity (one among a number of “psychological functions”), but as a mode of being that finds expression not just in silent soliloquy, but also in word and deed. This is the very fabric of our lives, a fabric woven by education.

(Related Chapters: 5, 10, 11, 12, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33.)

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