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of it; it also would be enhanced by greater understanding of the similarities and differences between Buyse and Decroly. Of course, explicating this relationship is beyond the scope of this volume. Yet the editors whet the appetite for further work on the relationship between the two men – something that I am sure exists in Belgian historiography but is largely unknown to American scholars, or at least to American scholars like me, who specialise in American educational history.

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The continuing library of educational thought, series edited by Richard Bailey, London and New York, Continuum

This international reference series, providing comprehensive accounts of the work of seminal educational thinkers from a variety of periods, disciplines and traditions, started to appear in 2007. The first 10 volumes were on Thomas Aquinas, Jerome Bruner, Pierre Bourdieu, John Dewey, John Holt, John Locke, Maria Montessori, John Henry Newman, Plato and Lev Vygotskij. The list illustrates yet another variety: that of nationalities or geographical origins of the thinkers, albeit within European and North American regions. There is a forthcoming volume on Paolo Freire (from Brazil), and the series now numbers almost 30, to somewhat extend the area. There is a slight over-representation of Anglo-Saxon as compared to Continental thinkers: John Holt, John Henry Newman, Robert Owen and Mary Wollstonecraft are included, whereas eminent educational thinkers from the German and mid-European scene, such as Friedrich Fröbel, Johann Friedrich Herbart, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius), Theodor Litt, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Schleiermacher are not.

A new series on classics in educational thought is to be welcomed, no matter how many other series of the same kind may have preceded and may still be available – if only in libraries. (The price per hardback in the present series suggests that here too, libraries are the intended purchasers). A new series will not only contain new thinkers, recently added to the list of educational classics, but will also present re-readings of old-time classics within the present context, with its time-bound questions and preoccupations. If this is done convincingly, then a recontextualisation of classical educational thought occurs that may succeed in addressing readers of the present, among them educational professionals and practitioners as much as students in education. This type of objective is indeed suggested by the four-part structure that the volumes in the series generally follow: (1) intellectual biography, (2) critical exposition of the work, (3) reception and influence, and (4) present the relevance of the work. That this format perfectly fits old-time classics is shown convincingly in the rich, excellent book on Aristotle by Alexander Moseley, who had already contributed a previous volume on Locke. It is one of the three (nos. 21, 22 and 23, published in 2010) to be reviewed here.

Aristotle, by Alexander Moseley, 2010, Continuum Library of Educational Thought Vol. 21. 230 pp., £75, ISBN 978-1-8470-6103-4

In this “intellectual biography” of Aristotle, the first chapter draws the social and political context with a special eye to “the educational programs prior and contemporary to his time” (p.4). It takes us through the broad milieu of Hellenic education; the Macedonian kingdom (Aristotle was tutor to Alexander the Great, son of the Macedonian king Philip); the medical *aesclepiad* tradition from which his immediate education was drawn (his parents were of this tradition of early physicians); the role of Athenian art and theatre (the *polis* that offered a lifelong education in the festivities, cult rituals, plays staged in front of thousands of citizens) and the male’s social life, centred on the symposium and the agora, the gatherings and the marketplace, where the art of intellectual conversation was cultivated. In a second chapter, the context of thought and ideas is drawn: from Thales in the seventh and sixth centuries BC, with whom the distinction between mythos and logos is established, and with that the educational idea and ideal of “learning to think critically and deploying observational as well as reasoning skills” (p.31) up to Plato’s Academy in Athens, “founded in 385 BC just prior to Aristotle’s birth” (p.43), where Aristotle “learned the traditional curriculum of mathematics, poetry, rhetoric, dialectic, and of course the philosophy of Plato” (p.44). Aristotle’s development from this point on is sketched skilfully. His empirical biological interests (e.g. his study of animal life on Lesbos) is a decisive factor: “there was a palpable shift toward empiricism with contemplation” (p.51). In the curriculum of Aristotle’s Lyceum, all kinds of scientific issues were added to the philosophical and metaphysical ones.

Part 2 gives an exposition of Aristotle’s works in two chapters: (1) Fundamentals of Philosophy and (2) Theories on Education. The motto taken from Aristotle’s *Poetics* with which it opens, “Learning is the greatest of all pleasures” (p.57), shows that the first chapter is essential for educational thought. Whereas in Plato’s thought, the Timeless and Eternal Forms or Ideas were at the centre, Aristotle wanted to understand and explain the reality of change. He developed the theory of four kinds of causes to that end. Learning is all about change: “when teaching, we presume that the pupil has a potential for change” (p.67). Likewise, other central concepts and issues of Aristotle’s philosophy are shown to be educationally relevant: teleology; sensation and perception; memory, imagination and experience; thinking and wisdom. Although sensation and perception are essential to Aristotle’s theory of knowledge and hence of learning, eventually it is not perception, *aisthesis* and practical wisdom – *phronesis* – but the pursuit of rationality and *theoria*, contemplation aiming at essences and universals, which is the summit: “a nod as it were to the Platonic system in which he was initially immersed” (p.101). Contemplation is the ultimate human activity characteristic of *eudaimonia*, human happiness or the good life. However, this is not the ideal for people when they are still young; Aristotle is rather thinking of middle age. A characterisation of subsequent developmental and educational stages follows in the second chapter of part 2, among other more or less practical educational topics (such as health and music).

Like part 1, part 3 supplies a very rich and interesting sketch of contexts, this time of the reception and influence of Aristotle’s thought in the ancient world (Roman, Hellenic, Byzantine) and in the Middle Ages (in the Catholic church and the universities). The role of Thomas Aquinas is crucial here: “Aquinas’ innovation

was to supplement traditional Augustinian (Platonist-oriented) Christianity with an Aristotelian logic and conceptual framework that Augustine lacked. It had (...) been the goal of several brilliant minds to bring Aristotle into their religion (Maimonides, Avicenna), and Aquinas was particularly taken by the work of Avicenna, whose works had come to Europe by Moorish Spain" (p.184). The fate of Aristotle (and of Aquinas himself for that matter), once incorporated into scholastic orthodoxy, was neglect or even contempt after that medieval heyday. In secularly oriented times it was a disadvantage to be tied to religion. "Aristotle was put away until the twentieth century" (p.190). The fourth part of the book, "The Relevance of Aristotle's Work Today", shows its actual significance. Rather than his ideas on contemplation and *theoria*, Aristotle's theory of virtue ethics and practical wisdom is taken up in present educational thought.

Michel Foucault, by Lynn Fendler, Continuum Library of Educational Thought Vol. 22, 2010, 235 pp., £75, ISBN 978-1-8470-6088-4

That the four-part structure works also quite well for "modern classics" is shown convincingly by this book on Foucault. It is another rich and well-informed, yet very readable and lucidly written, book. As for the contextual parts of the book – the first part, the intellectual biography, and the third part on the reception and influence of Foucault's work – there are remarkable differences in approach when compared with the volume on Aristotle, as is to be expected in the case of a twentieth-century thinker. Whereas the social-historical context and, in the history of reception to the thought, a succession of ages is given in the case of Aristotle, in Foucault's case the context is mainly supplied by distinguishing various schools of thought and various disciplines.

The first chapter sketches the intellectual climate in which Foucault is to be situated, by showing that it is *not* possible to put him fairly and squarely into one of the distinguished niches. First the concepts of criticism, nihilism, skepticism and determinism, then various twentieth-century schools of thought such as Marxism, structuralism/poststructuralism, modernism/postmodernism, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, existentialism and Annales historiography, pass in review. Foucault is shown to have challenged all these philosophical positions. Some philosophers do not consider him to be a philosopher, but rather a historian; historians, however, do not consider him so. The reasons for both are similar: he "challenged the rules of research in both philosophy and history" (p.38). Traditional philosophical conceptions of truth, rationality and the human subject are challenged – "Why is western philosophy so concerned about the truth? (...) the search for truth may (...) be normalizing human thought rather than liberating it" (p.11) – as much as traditional historical conceptions of longitudinal development, change and continuity. "Mainstream historians have been interested in objectivity (...) focused on finding the truth about what happened in the past" (p.41). In contrast, Foucault's work is not about "objective history" but about the "history of the present" – akin to Nietzsche's idea of *Wirkungsgeschichte* or "effective history".

Fendler makes use of an article by DePaepe and Simon published in this journal in 1996, in which the authors introduced a metaphor to elucidate this contrast: "Objective history is meant to function like a *mirror* that provides us with a reflection of the past. In contrast, effective history is meant to function like a *lever* that disrupts our assumptions and understandings about who we think we are. Foucault's

history, with its provocative and ironic stance, conveys the message that mirrors make the best levers” (p.42). The critical political and educational gist of Foucault’s enterprise is to “challenge prevailing assumptions, undermine the status quo, question authority, and provoke us to look with new eyes at ourselves in the world” (p.8). Nietzsche is the philosopher to whom Foucault seems most similar: “Both regard passivity and compliance as morally objectionable [and] both use historical – genealogical – arguments to build their critical philosophies” (p.27).

Part 2, the exposition of Foucault’s work, first explicates major concepts, such as discourse, history/archaeology/genealogy, power, subjectivity and freedom, and then provides subsequent summaries of major works: books (*Birth of the Clinic*, *Madness and Civilization*, and the most directly educationally relevant, *Discipline and Punish*), important essays (such as “What is an author?”, “The subject and power” and “What is Enlightenment?”) and lectures and oral presentations. Part 3, on Foucault’s reception, addresses two questions: (1) How was his work received in various philosophical contexts: French, German and English?, (2) What influence has he had in academic disciplines: history, education, feminism and queer theory? Finally, part 4, on the relevance of Foucault’s work today, lists and elucidates questions for reflection and research as inspired by Foucault, such as “What does Foucault’s critique of the will to truth mean in education today?” (p.189) and “How is Foucault’s theory of power relevant for teachers and students?” (p.194), and points out the direct relevance of his work for the educational areas of curriculum studies and philosophy of education.

Loris Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia experience, by Kathy Hall, Mary Horgan, Anna Ridgway, Rosaleen Murphy, Maura Cunneen and Denise Cunningham, Continuum Library of Educational Thought Vol. 23, 2010, 191 pp., £75, ISBN 978-1-8470-6105-8

The authors of volume 23 have clearly struggled with the format of the series. Instead of the regular four parts, this book consists of three parts. Part 1, entitled “Reggio Emilia and Loris Malaguzzi: Socio-cultural Context and Intellectual Biography”, suggests a duality in topic, but part 2, “Critical Exposition of the Reggio Emilio Experience”, and part 3, “The Relevance of Reggio Emilia”, show that the topic is not the ideas of one thinker – Malaguzzi – but rather early childhood education in Reggio Emilia, the Italian town that he founded, but that many others have since contributed to. It has become so famous as to attract many visitors from around the world looking for inspiration for preschool education, and consequently has been written about by many – participants in Reggio Emilio schools, as well as others. The subject of this volume is therefore quite different from the other volumes in the series.

A second difference is the collective authorship. This probably accounts for the lack of a clear and strong line of exposition and argument throughout the book and for a certain redundancy. There is certainly a lot of interesting information given, but the tone of the writing is generally one of (practical) commitment rather than (philosophical) critical analysis. The exception here is chapter 5, “A Discursive Analysis of Reggio Emilia”, which explicitly aims at the kind of reflective distance and systematic analysis that I often missed in the rest of the book. As a whole, this book does not distinguish itself sufficiently from other books on the “Reggio Emilia experience”, such as *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia*

Approach to Early Childhood Education of 1993, which counts as a classic of this educational movement. In general, I felt that the authors were trying to make the reader share the enthusiasm and inspiration for the Reggio Emilia approach, rather than identifying and clarifying the foundational concepts and arguments. It made me question whether this book belongs in a series on educational thought.

The series editor, Richard Bailey, is quite prepared for such questions. His Preface to the volumes ends with the following apposite observation: “It will always be possible to question the list of key thinkers that are represented in this series. Some may question the inclusion of certain thinkers; some may disagree with the exclusion of others. That is inevitably going to be the case. There is no suggestion that the list of thinkers represented within the *Continuum Library of Educational Thought* is in any way definitive. What is contestable is that these thinkers have fascinating ideas about education, and that taken together, the *Library* can act as a powerful source of information and inspiration for those committed to the study of education”. One can only agree to that.

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L'école en France de 1945 à nos jours, by André Robert, collection “Enseignement et réforme”, Grenoble, PUG, 2010, 312 pp., €19 (hardback), ISBN 978-2-7061-1606-3

Le regain d'intérêt que connaissent les politiques scolaires en histoire de l'éducation a partie liée avec la conjoncture historique qui, en ce début de XXI^e siècle, voit le système d'enseignement être un haut lieu des luttes sociales et politiques, sur fond d'évaluation de ses performances et de crise de la transmission intergénérationnelle.

L'ouvrage d'André Robert est moins une histoire politique de l'enseignement qu'une histoire des politiques scolaires traitant de leurs finalités, de leurs acteurs, de leurs réalités et de leurs effets en France de la Libération à aujourd'hui. Plus précisément, il s'évertue à décrire et à expliciter les relations entre les politiques scolaires et les trois phénomènes dominants de la scolarisation du dernier demi-siècle que sont le rapport toujours plus intime entre formation et emploi, l'expansion scolaire (i.e. l'allongement quasi continu des parcours scolaires) et la conversion des politiques et des autorités scolaires à la doxa néolibérale qui, on le sait, n'est en rien spécifique au champ scolaire.

Les politiques et les autorités scolaires sont assez logiquement les principaux acteurs de cette histoire, auxquels il convient d'ajouter les enseignants, du moins leurs syndicats dont André Robert est un spécialiste. Autrement dit, il s'agit d'une histoire vue “d'en haut” justifiée par la dépendance du scolaire à l'égard du politique et le fait que les politiques scolaires constituent, en France comme ailleurs, une dimension centrale des politiques publiques. C'est pourquoi l'historien donne une grande place aux rapports de forces politiques, ou du moins aux changements de régime (IV^e et V^e républiques) ou de majorité (droite/gauche), tout en