

## REVIEW FEATURE

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### SCOTTISH EDUCATION

T. G. K. Bryce and W. M. Humes (eds) (Edinburgh University Press, 1999). ISBN 0 7486 0980 6 (1040pp., £24.99 paperback).

To mark the publication of this major work we present three reviews, each taking a different broad perspective. The first review by David Hamilton takes a European perspective; the second review by Margaret Sutherland looks at the text from a U.K. perspective; and the third by Ian Morris is a personal perspective from a Scottish context.

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### BRAVE HEARTS AND LEAGUE TABLES

DAVID HAMILTON

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*Scottish Education* is hardly a handbook. It weighs in at 1600 grammes, 1040 pages and 112 chapters. And that is as dispassionate an evaluation that I can muster. Convention suggests, however, that I should go a little further and look between the covers. How?

Do I regard *Scottish Education* as a reference book, or a good read? How can I represent its substance and value in about 2500 words? On this occasion, I have opted to set aside the content of *Scottish Education*. Instead, I have dipped into it. In effect, I have set myself the task of examining it as a book about the educational institutions of Scotland.

'They cannot know Scotland, who only Scotland know' is a sentiment that comes to mind. It appeared, as I recall, as an epigraph to *Scotland: a Half-educated Nation*, both in the quality and quantity of her educational institutions (1834), written by George Lewis, editor of the *Scottish Guardian*. As I ponder that sentiment in the late 1990s, several thoughts come to mind. First, I suspect it is a reworking of a Greek or Latin maxim, a commonplace used to inscribe students within the stoic moral discourse of early nineteenth century Presbyterianism - a framework whose boundaries were biblical and classical rather than temporal and terrestrial. Secondly, it evokes the energetic and painstaking compilation of the Scottish Statistical Accounts at the end of the eighteenth century. Thirdly, it reminds me that such concerns about quality and quantity, widely expressed in the Europe of the 1830s, were indicative of an international commerce in educational 'facts' and descriptive statistics (e.g. school teachers per head of the population). And, not least, the tabloid sensationalism of 'a half-educated nation' brings to mind - at the end of the twentieth century - the close association between moral panic and the creation of league tables. Whatever its merits and demerits, *Scotland: a Half-educated Nation* was a trenchant, colourful and pioneering exercise in comparative education.

What, then, provoked the compilation of *Scottish Education*? Why does it seem important to review *Scottish Education* in the 1990s? Does this review also engage in the measurement of quality and quantity? Is it a brave-hearted search for eternal essences, like the 'democratic intellect' and the 'lad o' pairts'? Is it a begrudging

response to the eternal re-jigging of inter-state league tables assembled by trans-national agencies such as the OECD? Or is it merely the creation of an area study, echoing the Statistical Accounts of the eighteenth century?

Scottish Education is some of these. It is a national study, but not a nationalist study. It is a Statistical Account, but not a statistical analysis. It is a quantitative study because it is full of valuable tabular information. It is a qualitative study because it asks a series of 'what kind of' (Latin: *qualis*) questions. The challenge faced by the editors was to come to terms with Scotland, league tables and all. Somehow, they needed to find a context for their efforts. I can imagine that the editors faced an uphill task. Too many commentators, like myself, are framed by our deadlines. We slip comfortably into clichés that are as kailyard as they are self-confirming. As Jean Brodie might have said of such accounts: 'For those chieils, bigots, male chauvinists and smug bastards who like that kind of thing, it is the kind of thing that they will value'.

Fortunately, *Scottish Education* is more than that. To write about Scottish Education, the editors identify phenomena and, as important, encourage the contributors to contextualise these phenomena. A key context for such accounts is the political question posed in the European Enlightenment. If there is a natural history of humankind, what is an appropriate human response to social change? Is it inevitable? Can it be steered? And who holds the tiller of the ship of state? This question, and its educational implications, is as relevant today as it was around 1800. Moreover, practical questions about upbringing and instruction are as relevant to parents, baby-sitters and child care assistants as they are to head teachers, priests, and politicians of local, national, federal and European allegiance. All of these social positions are associated with steering - or repositioning - responsibilities. What vision might be entailed by these personal and collective responsibilities? What kind of world is possible for the next generation? What ideals, expressed in a shorthand, can mark out the scope of this vision? And how can we prefigure alternative futures in our individual and collective steering practices? Are 'the learning society' and the 'National Grid of Learning' sufficient?

What does it mean to design an upbringing for the twenty-first century, let alone a Scottish upbringing? Should we be swayed by the claims of the digital hordes, themselves ever ready to emigrate at the slightest threat to their personal, short-term gains? Or is there an educational common good, one that stretches beyond national boundaries and codes of practice? In short, is there a 'new' Scotland. Or are such renaissance claims just another top dressing in the kailyard?

Where, then, have the editors focused *Scottish Education* - on 'education' or 'Scottish'? Is it a book about education that uses Scottish examples? Is it a book about Scotland that uses educational examples? Or it is both of these? How are the chapters contextualised? Is the book a celebration of the past or a prospect for the future?

Is it a structuralist text, implying that, since its creation, the education system of Scotland has exploited the malleability and steerability of the human form (or, at least, those reprobates deserving of reformation)? Or should *Scottish Education* be regarded as a post-structuralist text which accepts that, in a representative democracy, all humans have equitable powers of self-formation and self-repositioning? Is Scottish Education a salute to life rather than a monument to the last gasps of a receding past?

These thoughts came to mind as I pondered the lengthy task of reading *Scottish Education*. What can be found in such an impressive work? In what sense is it a positive prospect for Scottish education? And in what sense is that prospect to be engineered at the expense of others, including current and future inhabitants of Scotland? Is *Scottish Education*, therefore, more than a victory narrative, of the kind

voiced by incoming Presidents of the USA?

*Scottish Education* wrestles with the ghosts of the past. It recognises that appeals to tradition are a cultural artefact. They are reconstituted, year by year, in the light of the present. Further, such appeals to tradition may mask power differences that are explained away as the natural order of things. It is good, therefore, that *Scottish Education* is reflexive. The senior editors aimed to provide a 'detailed, informed and critical account ... appropriately contextualised and critically understood' (p.3). Their editorial policy is explicit; and it is forcefully evident in their several contributions. Of course, there are internal differences of interpretation. It would be hard to expect anything else from a multi-author, multi-editor text. Overall, the difficult editorial remit has been successfully surmounted.

Included in the contextualisation of this volume is a strong element of demystification. The revisionism that has engaged Scottish educational history since the 1960s (i.e. after the publication of James Scotland's *The [sic] History of Scottish Education*) is brought to the fore and well-represented in 'The history of Scottish Education, pre-1800' (Robert Anderson), 'The distinctiveness of Scottish Education' (Humes & Bryce), and 'Culture, nationalism and Scottish education: homogeneity and diversity' (David McCrone).

But the ghost of essentialism still haunts *Scottish Education*. Can it ever be laid to rest? Scottish identity clusters around a bricolage of stereotypes that are recycled and repositioned, most recently in defensive claims about the re-opening of the Scottish parliament. In an important sense, these myths have become the Scottish inheritance. They are the platform - conscious or unconscious - mobilised by many Scottish commentators, including some to be found in *Scottish Education*. There is a defensiveness and protectionism to be found in such accounts. I recently suggested that Scotland might be considered a Nordic country and accordingly, have something to learn from the Nordic experience. My suggestion was scorned by a Scottish Professor, even as I recalled the sentiments expressed by my off-shore, off-limit friends from Orkney and Shetland.

Such insecurities are a Scottish cultural malaise against which this volume was, I believe, consciously compiled. It is a malaise that is discussed, for instance in Finn's chapter on 'Sectarianism and [but not in] Scottish Education'. But there is also a sense that, if only through the form of its title, *Scottish Education* still hankers after the real Scotland. Why *Scottish Education*? Why not *Education in Scotland*? That title may have been used already; but there is no copyright in book titles.

There is another noteworthy national feature in *Scottish Education*. McCrone points up the problem. His first premise is that 'Scottish education is central to Scottish national identity'; and his second premise is that the 'movement for statehood in most western countries was about mobilising a strong sense of national identity' (p. 235). His argument slips easily from national identity to statehood. Indeed, in McCrone's case this is reasonable - since his chapter focuses on the puzzle: 'Why has it taken until the closing years of the twentieth century for a Scottish parliament to be established?'

But why 'statehood', rather than 'nationhood'? The quick answer, of course, is that statehood links smoothly to the opening of a parliament. What, however, is the rhetorical significance of this shifting political discourse. Who is the object of such persuasion? And why? To my reading, *Scottish Education* is not a study of, nor even an expression of, nationhood. It is more a border study than an area study (hence the contextualisation). Its publication arises from an emergent crisis of identity, not a parochial affirmation of identity (as had been the case, earlier, with James Scotland's volumes). It links Scotland not only to the Nordic countries - also small and on the fringes of both Europe and Asia; it also links the Scots to the Kurds, Irish, Jews, Romanians and Sámer (Lapps), all of whom (as far as I know) have identities

built around both nationhood and diaspora; and all of whom have faced, and still face, difficulties in confronting the statehood implications of nationhood. What, for instance, are the educational implications of Scotland's association with Westminster, with Brussels, and with the euro? And what are the educational implications of the boundary denial implicit in satellite and internet communication?

A recent investigation within the European Union has suggested that the United Kingdom and Sweden are the most strongly nationalist countries when judged against responses to the question 'have you a national or a European identity?'. Most of the British and Swedish respondents position themselves against rather than within Europe. What does this marginalisation mean? Is it the expression of an essence? Or should it be read as a transient response? My own feeling is that the national question has a limited life in education. It arose in particular political and historical contexts - in Protestant Europe after the Reformation, across Europe after the territorial re-divisions of the Napoleonic wars, in the post-colonial world after liberation, and in Europe and Asia after the break-up of the Soviet Union. The national question is no longer the same as the language-of-instruction question. Nor is it the 'What to teach in history, literature and social studies' question. All of these secondary questions are increasingly decoupled from the national question. They have become the inter-national question in curriculum.

*Scottish Education* does not focus on modulations of such national and international curriculum questions. The senior editors' postscript on 'The future of Scottish education' is geographically and rhetorically constrained. There is no future in prediction seems to be its courageous standpoint and, thankfully, globalisation is not mentioned. Instead, the postscript takes a cool look at the quick-fix politics of auditing, bench-marks and league-tables that not only assure quality but also serve, it is sometimes claimed, as a universal cure for the ills of post-communist modernism. The editors take up a contrary and unfashionable position - that the future of education should be based on a platform of social values, not on a raft of technical solutions.

Through force of circumstance - the imperatives of *Scottish Education's* production schedule - the postscript is light on these social values. Nevertheless, such issues are present or immanent elsewhere in the text. Indeed, the editors may have unwittingly chosen such an unfinished stance for their postscript. In a book that will figure extensively in programmes of teacher training, the extraction and collation of such values would be an excellent group-work exercise.

A further seminar-room or fireside exercise might be to reflect upon the social spaces that are not occupied by the institutions charted in *Scottish Education*. Upbringing is also a form of education; and it owes much to forms of literature and communication that extend beyond the reach of educational institutions. *Scottish Education*, therefore, is silent on the steering influence of childrens' books, television, videos and the internet. Swedish homes, especially newly-built council houses, are gradually becoming linked to internet, telephone and television providers. Such broadband links, which cost about the same as a UK water rate, provide a 24-hour service. Whether such links are a national grid for learning or, alternatively, a national grid for selling remains to be seen.

By design or default, *Scottish Education* relates to a group of indigenes, economic migrants and refugees. They were thrown together, or came together because, in some way or another, they got off the boat from Riga thinking Glasgow was New York. For some of them, Scotland was a safe haven; for others, it was the promised land; and for others still, it remains God's own country. But the last two scenarios are absent from *Scottish Education*. They were neither selected nor contextualised by the editors. *Scottish Education*, therefore, is more of an educational volume than a nation-building volume. It is about a particular geographical setting and about the

social aspirations and problems enjoyed and encountered by its inhabitants. Further, *Scottish Education* is about the ethical and political frames that have been used to realise such aspirations, and to solve such problems.

*Scottish Education* is magnificently modest. It is never oversold. Nor is it the final word on education and its institutions. It is merely a new platform, a new provocation. Others will take up the challenge in their deliberations and their practices. They have much to emulate.

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MARGARET B. SUTHERLAND

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Since 1876, when the first Chairs of Education were established in Scotland, it has been recognised as helpful to Scots to know what is happening in education in England. This book gives educators in England a chance to consider thoughtfully what is going on in Scotland: they will be helped by the fact that many contributors comment on differences between the two systems.

Of course English interest in Scottish education may not be quite as expected. I asked one eminent English Professor of Education what he would like to know about education in Scotland. He replied that the question was typically Scottish, crudely direct: the English mind would prefer a more 'fuzzy' approach. Brooding as one does on such comments, I came to the conclusion that the book is indeed Scottish in being clear, sticking to the point, answering the question set. The contributors have shown remarkable self-discipline in following the guide-lines given for the construction of their chapters.

This is obviously a reference book, not one to be read from cover to cover. But before concentrating on relevant topics, the casual reader may drop into some chapters out of idle curiosity: by such serendipity may be encountered Malcolm Green's magnificent 'political perspective' on Local Governance, with a wide historical survey of the system and a balance of judgement rarely found in political approaches, while for Primary Education comes John Darling's wide-ranging, philosophical chapter, discussing important ideas and producing a splendid counter-blast to recent political denunciations in England of the 'progressive' approach in education; or Brian Boyd's chapter on pupil characteristics may evoke a welcome surge of human interest as school experiences of individuals are portrayed.

But which topics *are* likely to be relevant for readers in other parts of the United Kingdom? Areas of great popular concern and perturbation at present are:

- (a) the prescribed curriculum and associated national tests
- (b) the horrors of Ofsted inspections of schools
- (c) a General Teaching Council south of the Border
- (d) the reconstruction of higher education
- (e) the long-running saga of denominational schools.

- (a) The very different modes of curriculum definition followed in Scotland are admirably set out in Hamish Ross's chapter on the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC), which shows clearly the Scottish curriculum's evolution under this unique body (its English equivalent died some time ago) and deals forthrightly with the problems still to be solved for more efficient working. As to national tests, Willis Pickard's lively history of Scottish education since 1980 is especially helpful, noting the alternative Scottish responses to such testing, as well as other characteristic developments. Useful complementary details of Scottish test procedures - and teachers' reactions - follow in the chapter on National Testing.
- (b) Teachers in England may feel - surprisingly enough - some envy of the stronger survival of traditional HMIs in Scotland, as the development of the relatively civilised Scottish inspection procedures is presented by Nisbet Gallacher and an account given - with typical Inspectorial discretion - of the role of HMIs in the development of educational policies and their professional contribution to many aspects of the system.
- (c) The chapter on the Scottish GTC must be of special interest to those awaiting the birth of its counterpart in England. The process of registration to teach in Scotland - which has often frustrated teachers from outwith Scotland - is succinctly presented and indications given of the Council's wider concern for probationers, its relations with local authorities, with teacher training institutions, with the Scottish Office. The evaluation of teachers' attitudes to the Council is likely to be specially noted: most teachers, it is claimed, are neutral - 'very few teachers are hostile, but by the same token very few teachers are wildly enthusiastic about the Council'; yet readers in England may be reassured by the comment that after some 30 years of life, the Scottish GTC 'is not a lapdog and it is certainly more than a watchdog.'
- (d) While some chapters offer interesting material on the histories of Scottish universities, there seems, alas, to be little distinctive in their present prospects. Teacher educators in England may find much that is depressingly familiar in the outline of recent developments in this area in Scotland and share fraternal horror at the definitions of 'competences' demanded of newly trained teachers. But they, and teachers generally, may also note the distinctiveness of the history of the EIS and Scottish teachers' early and continuing association with research through the Scottish Council for Research in Education. (For those concerned with the results of teacher education, Bill Gatherer's stimulating chapter, recognising that 'there is a sinister aspect to the story of Scottish teachers', does make the assertion that many Scottish teachers - in common with teachers in other countries - possess admirable qualities.)
- (e) Scotland, having enjoyed since the 1920s a 'solution' to the problem of denominational schools, might not be expected to offer material relevant to the continuing controversies in England. But Gerry Finn, tackling the sectarianism question and recognising the allegations of divisiveness, finds the problem complicated by racial tensions, which also affect arguments elsewhere about Islamic schools. And he makes useful reference to the Northern Ireland attempts to solve the 'divided schools' problem in different circumstances. On the other hand, Tom Fitzpatrick contributes an important reaffirmation of the Catholic purpose in education, recalling the values underlying what is sometimes seen as unhelpful separatism.

Of course individual teachers in England will want to concentrate on their own

teaching subjects and will find useful data on these. For readers in Wales where the Welsh language has received such strong governmental support, Boyd Robertson's very informative chapter on Gaelic Education will have special interest, though it might with advantage have discussed reasons for making Gaelic widely available when the percentage of Gaelic speakers is so small - much less than the percentage of Welsh speakers - and considered how, for instance, we should judge between the claims of Gaelic and those of another cherished subject, Classics, which, as Tony Williams points out, has only a precarious existence in Scotland.

But will educators in England find some topics apparently missing from this compendium? At present, schools in England are facing governmental demands for the inclusion of citizenship in their curriculum. Looking at the normally very helpful Index, the reader finds no direct guidance to this aspect of education in Scotland - though relevant and interesting material lurks concealed in the Modern Studies chapter by Henry Maitles, and receives some attention in other chapters on values and Guidance. (The provision of Guidance in Scottish schools is, incidentally, something which readers in other countries may well find novel and interesting.)

Indeed a feature with possible novelty value for readers from beyond the Border - and for many readers in Scotland - is one with clear relevance to citizenship education: it is the study in Scotland of the 'ethos' of schools, an assessment of the whole atmosphere in which future members of society are being educated. Pamela Munn gives useful insights into HMI assistance in developing methods of evaluating a school's ethos, and the creation and activity of the Scottish Schools' Ethos Network.

But comparisons should not be kept within the educational systems of the United Kingdom. This book is treasure trove for those engaged in Comparative Education in any country of the world. Comparativists will profit greatly by its methodical and full information on structures, curriculum content, trends in education. Yet ultimately Comparative Education is much concerned not simply with such facts but also with the 'essence' of a system of education, the overarching principles and practices which give it a distinctive personality. What does the book offer them?

Various contributors deal explicitly with Scottish traits. Granted that it is a Scottish characteristic to ensure that those dear to us do not become puffed up with conceit by entertaining too good an opinion of themselves, what essence is distilled? Recurrently, there is concern with the 'myth' of Scottish education and an uneasy feeling that however good it may or may not have been in the past the system no longer deserves a reputation of excellence. From time to time, there surfaces a kind of collective guilt complex about the corporal punishment which was abolished sufficiently recently to be remembered - mainly with horror. There is some pride in past efforts to develop the abilities of poor but able children (boys) - exemplified even in the original foundations of independent schools which now serve a different population; there is beating of the breast about earlier over-concentration on exam performance and the over-valuing of academic ability (*a mea culpa* in which colleagues in other countries may well be disposed to join). Yet there is also recognition of a traditional belief in democratic values - and in the democratic intellect; there is some confidence in the progress now being made towards achieving that equality of opportunity and of esteem cherished in the past.

In some ways this is a remarkably introspective book; as Robert Anderson remarks 'Scottish education has been characterised by a peculiar awareness of its own history' - but that is not necessarily a fault in an educational system, for such self-analysis helps to develop not only the native educators' understanding but also that of outside observers. It is therefore also of considerable value that comparativists who are not always well aware of the existence of a separate Scottish system of education now have this opportunity to learn all about it.

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IAN MORRIS

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Why? and why now? The editors cite the Millennium, the Scottish Parliament and their funders. They have advised the 120 contributors on the structure without which the work would be unreadable. Even so the writing is dense, not in the pejorative sense, with almost a nugget per line. The reader must have a sound working knowledge of Scottish Education to benefit fully from the book. 'The eye sees what it brings the power to see.' Our MSPs may have difficulty here. Wisely Bryce and Humes take centre stage in the first two sections, providing a good route map through the fourteen sections of the book. They at times appear apologetic, or just careful, writing about Scotland which is a small country with an education community which can be spiteful.

The editors have six chapters individually and severally, including those on Secondary Education: philosophy and practice, Policy in Education, Assessment and the Distinctiveness of Scottish Education, which are key to the book. They provide linkages to other chapters and raise issues of pupil performance related to social class, league tables, subject-centred teaching, knowledge and understanding related to depth and quality of learning and challenge the 'Scottish Education is best in the world' mantra. Who ever said this and when? Humes writing on policy identifies patronage in membership of committees, implementation of decisions by seconded staff, the pluralist as opposed to corporalist interpretation of policy committees, later seen in Forsyth (Education Minister and later Secretary of State) replacing the consensual-professional with the rational-managerial. He agrees that Ministers must carry teachers with them or fail and advocates moral courage. Both editors stress the power of language and the need for communication.

Lindsay Paterson's overview of educational provision using Scottish Office statistics takes 10 and 15 year samples to show trends. These statistics should be on the internet, bi-annually. He identifies the parochial nature of student choice of post school institution. Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities have long been categorised as night schools which met during the day. Darling's chapter on Primary Education is mainly on the Primary Memorandum of 1965. He states that 'child-centred', a term which strangely annoys many people, is not mentioned in the Memorandum. The writing of this document was controlled by an unofficial caucus which met on the evening of the first day of each session to process the findings of the second day. This caucus system was a paradigm for future committees in other areas of Scottish Education. Michael Leech and Ronald Crawford cover Further and Higher Education respectively. Both areas are closed books to much of the education community. Leech bases his analysis on finance, the effects of incorporation and whom the institutions serve. Crawford also identifies money and its apportionment as vital in that growth area, the universities; stresses accountability and shows without rancour the problems from ancient toonie, red brick and white tile and their expectations. Lucky Jim would approve.

Thus the scene is set for the main themes of Scottish Education Department embracing all its acronyms. Higher Education, HMI Inspectorate, Local Government and the various quangos. Sally Brown as an insider/outsider compares the Scottish Education Department with the English Department, showing the pros and cons of

size with closer contacts but less specialisation of function. She is complemented by Dugald Mackie on the funding bodies of the universities where the universities took it as an impertinence to be asked to account for their use of public money. Relations between Local and Central authorities have been in a state of flux for decades and result in indecision about finance and control. Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) has never had a clear role and in origin was too close to SED, but as with any advisory service is expendable when finance is tight. Nigel Paine, former head of Scottish Council for Educational Technology (SCET) explains the dilemma of the hybrid: make a profit but support schools for free.

Nisbet Gallagher describes the inspectorate, its relationships with administrators and its influence on Ministers, calling it a small but influential body. There is a strand of criticism of the inspectorate running through the book partly based on a belief that it is not inspected itself. Gallagher, by contrast, calls it a 'most inspected group'. True, but unlike schools the findings are not published.

The history of parent/school relations shows legislation has had little effect. The main drive is parents and teachers wanting to make a success of relationships. Strathclyde was early in the field of a positive parental role. The history of Scottish Education up to 1979 written by historian Robert Anderson, showing how beliefs create systems, is good for dates and linearity of change. Pickard, a journalist, brings it up to date and avoids teacher union bias. Thatcher and her acolytes relished conflict (perhaps reflecting an inferiority complex?) such as in the 1984-86 teacher dispute giving more power to the centre. The women (parents) who forced the government to quit national testing, are not 'named and praised'. Inadequates in government prefer 'named and shamed'.

McCrone gives a philosophic cum theoretic consideration to the 'lad o- pairs' (a recurrence in the book), classes in society and why Scottish education is Scotland's identity. His group could be 'The Edinburgh Boys' (Anderson, Davie, McCrone, McPherson, Paterson, Raab, Raffe) providing sociological, historical, political and educational insights. His definition of 'myths', so dear to this group, is arresting: '... reservoirs of beliefs and values which allow individuals to interpret the world and their place within it'.

Hartley, on education and the Scottish economy, compares the Far East and higher output, lower labour costs with the Scottish and Korean performance in maths. It is twice as expensive per pupil in Scotland but with poorer results. A market economy creates a quasi market with parental involvement and deregulation (i.e. choice for consumers contrasted with quality control, national curriculum, guidelines, testing, league tables, teacher appraisal, and reform of teacher training. Vocationalisation of education is taking place and behold SQA emphasising the link between education and the economy. Weir continues this theme, not a 'narrow set' for specific jobs but in adaptability for work and life (the 'employability' for employers), though not short term, tracing it through vocational versus academic yet trumpeting the weasel phrase 'parity of esteem'. TVEI and 'the real world' (successor to Atlantis) was just a milch cow. Tight money makes pragmatists of us all. "Higher Still: opportunity for all" meets the Scottish ideal of all being equal and of equal worth.

The section on Pre-school and Primary discusses organisation and management with continuing doubt about what education is trying to achieve, but SOED in 1995 issued "Using Performance Indicators in Nursery Schools, etc." Such language causes an involuntary shudder. Secondary school puts the main emphasis on subject curriculum, but has evolved from a position where the Head was in supreme control in early 1970s to a situation in which the Head has gradually lost control against an issue of directives from the centre. FE is classed as "The Cinderella Sector?" and comparisons on status, class and worth of subjects arise. Higher Education reflects on the effect of expansion on students, staff and research.

Section X, Assessment and Certification, and XI, Scottish Pupils and their Achievements are in their element in weighing pupils in the balance and, according to some of the research evidence, too often finding them wanting. The post 1970s programme had defined criteria and norm or criterion referencing and grade awards were introduced. There are chapters on the Scottish Examination Board, SCOTVEC, the SQA and national and international comparisons are made. Central Government drives all this seeking figures for itself and metamorphosing them into vague adjectives for public and Press consumption guaranteeing misunderstandings, whether by ignorance or malice. The main terminal examination for most pupils over this century has been named “lower”, “ordinary” and “standard”, showing little regard for its recipients. Could you sell a car with these names? Gunning must be congratulated for criticising modules (the Holy Grail) as being atomistic and short term.

“Challenges and Responses. Education for All” is a controversial section. The Education Act (1980) supports Special Educational Needs and appropriate methods and the coverage of this contains some good astringent writing. Society is not made good by Acts of Parliament. They lead to aggression, claims of right and different interpretations of law. “Warnock” came at a time of civil rights agitation and they interacted. Deficit and medical models describe a child by his disabilities. Needs-based models are better, but run into the UN convention on the rights of the child. Educational Psychologists moved from a medical model to a social ecology model. Expectation and interaction of social work with education is too low.

Kirk gives the history of teacher training up to the end of the monotechnics. Shrinkage in numbers of students, need for financial retrenchment, fewer colleges and the phasing out of CNAA in 1992 led to joining up with a university to ensure awards of a degree. Teacher education is tightly controlled by SOEID with specific guidelines and the spread across the colleges is determined by SHEFC. Quality control/assurance and achievement are part of external scrutiny of TEI work in which GTC has a role. Donald Christie builds on Kirk’s six points of professional studies and identifies ill-concealed contempt for a theory and practice dichotomy which causes professional studies to be accepted grudgingly. These now advocate “reflective practice”. GTC and EIS have championed standards for an all-graduate profession. However, the predominant methodology remains behavioural: Specify, Plan, Implement, Evaluate. Constructivists see theory as a process, and semantics has run riot to justify course planning. It is difficult to get good induction courses when newly qualified teachers are only on supply work. From 1986 onwards schemes, committees, acronyms and ideas are all bounced around with SED in the background keeping rigid control. Local Authorities say they are the employers. Teachers say they have neither time nor resources for courses. All argue about what professional development should entail.

Colin Holroyd gives the history of teacher competences as determined by SOEID (1993). There are 132 of them, with 6 or 7 performance indicators per competence. They are reductionist and atomist. Holroyd says the move will be from competences to standards. We now have meta-competence! Teaching is little regarded by officialdom and lashes about trying to be respectable using big words. What is a good teacher? League Tables of schools result in misunderstandings or distortion by the Press. The 1995 “Standards and Quality” report stated that 80% of schools demonstrated effective teaching. The Press wrote that 20% of schools were failing.

In section XIII there is an omnium gatherum on research, its practical value and on organisations such as SERA, SCRE, Scottish educational journals, teachers’ professional organisations and the GTC. These are the people who have developed Scottish education, often in a hostile environment and seldom for profit, the highly

professional amateurs. Finally Bill Gatherer writes a delightful essay on Scottish Teachers. Scottish writers praise their teachers, e.g. Burns, Carlyle. Journalists in broadsheets and the pathetic columnists who interview B and C grade celebrities tend to denigrate their teachers as pompous and petty. Feminisation of the teaching profession is seen in men now making up just a third of teachers. Post 1960 teachers were becoming more professional, but civil servants became less willing to accept the teachers' knowledge. Politicians can prescribe general educational policy but teachers have professional values which they will protect.

Humes and Bryce in their postscript mention Hargreaves seeing experiential learning in varied settings at one end of the system, as opposed to politicians wanting serried rows chanting. Rigidity of subject boundaries as required by GTC inhibits development of new types of schools. Research is needed in legal matters, comparative economics and the rights of minorities.

It is an excellent book covering in a balanced way education as it is now, but to be read selectively. There is a current throughout ranging from annoyance to despair at the ill-thought out requirements imposed by authority. They may be politicians or administrators or HM Inspectors. Only an insider will know. We must use technology rather than just talk about it. Where are the web sites which will enable real and immediate consultation to take place on any educational issue? Teachers and a significant number of pupils can handle this but government may have difficulties. Open government is good - but for others.