

***Philosophy of Lifelong Education*, by Kenneth Wain. Series in International Perspectives on Adult and Continuing Education. (London: Croon Helm, 1987).**

Kenneth Wain's *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* is an attempt to identify a philosophical position which is consistent with the writings of the lifelong education movement. Wain takes the position of that movement to be defined by UNESCO's Faure report (1972), various commentaries and synopses of the report, and the writings of Ettore Gelpi. His conclusion is that Dewey's philosophy is not only consistent with the essential elements of the lifelong education movement, but that it can be used to transform lifelong education from a loosely connected movement into a coherent 'programme.' The scare quotes are to indicate that 'programme' is to be understood in a special sense, that is, as it is employed in Lakatos's theory of methodological falsification.

The conclusion that Dewey's philosophy could be used to inform the work of the lifelong education movement seems sensible enough. Those sections of Wain's book which interpret Dewey and explicate the connections between his work and the fundamental tenets of the lifelong education movement are largely unobjectionable. The same cannot be said for most of the rest of the book in which the work of a wide range of philosophers from Aristotle to Wittgenstein and Peters to Sartre, is distorted and misrepresented. Wain raises many definitional and philosophical issues with which he is unable to deal adequately. A bewildering number of philosophical and theoretical positions are raised for consideration and are summarily divided into the good and the bad. Appearing on the 'good' side are falsificationism, relativism (but not inconsistent forms of relativism), hermeneutics, coherence theories of truth, pragmatism, humanism, and the indistinguishability of ideology from either philosophy or science. Existentialism falls into a grey area and everything else is dismissed as being wrong, if not morally reprehensible.

While little purpose may be served by a comprehensive cataloguing of the ways in which Wain misrepresents the work of various philosophers, a few examples are so extreme as to demand comment. The first and foremost of Wain's targets of criticism are analytic philosophers of education. The extent of his misreading of their work is displayed from the opening pages in which he claims that "the horizons of analytic philosophy had been set by the early Wittgenstein" (p. 2). He goes on to suggest that analytic philosophers are guilty of "scientism," "essentialism," "a kind of atomism," and ignoring questions of context and value. Given that he quotes extensively from R.S. Peters' *Ethics and Education*, this can only be considered as irresponsible. The first footnote in Peters'