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Dubay, T. (2013).

*Philosophy of the State as Educator.*

Milwaukee: Literary Licensing, 237 pp.

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This book was actually the doctoral thesis of the author as he finished his studies at the Catholic University of America in 1957. Two years later, it was published by the Bruce Company but was sold out. Now, more than 50 years later, it is published by Literary. The book is divided in four large parts: philosophy of the State, the State as educator, the State and the primary educators, and educational duties of the State towards itself and the world. Addressing these categories, the book is nicely organized in 13 chapters ending with a chapter of summary and conclusions. This work is a pioneer in treating the role of the State in education from a philosophical perspective. Dubay sets out to discuss the function of the State in education: What exactly is the function of the State in education? What is the foundation of that function, what are its rights, duties and its limitations?

It is clearly evident today that the State has assumed a greater role in education and perhaps taking away from the delegating role of education given by the State to the family; Thus, creating a conflict in the role of the family as the first principle source of education. The State has taken, more and more, a role in education. However, in doing so, it does not explain or substantiates the foundation of this role. It seems, then, that the State is overextending its role in this situation. To support his case, the author devotes a great part of the book explaining the end and purpose of the State as the common good of the citizens.

The author refutes the two extreme arguments about the role of the State in education. The first view asserts that the State has no business in education and the second one sets forth the view that the State is the only competent and has the only authority in education. These views, argues the author, has led to a tragedy in education. The author argues against what he calls “legal positivism” stating that “for if there be no law but State law, if the State is the sole norm of right and wrong, a governmentally originated educational tragedy is of course strictly impossible. Legal positivism stands starkly exposed as inadequate” (p. vi). The author proposes that the only educators by nature are the family, who brings forth life, and the Church by divine authority. It remains, then, that the State’s primary function,

philosophically supported, is the common good and therefore is not a primary educator. Its role in education is indirect and should be in a supporting role to the primary educators. The author illustrates his point by utilizing brilliant analogies: The State, “It is no more such an educator than it is the primary farmer or physician”. He concludes “while the State is an educator neither by definition nor by nature, yet it does have a vital and noble role to play in matters scientific, cultural, and instructional” (p. 222).

The only role of the State in education, therefore, must be based upon the principle of subsidiarity arising from natural law. This principle dictates that the State should aid its citizens by only when they are unable or unwilling in reaching the common good. The State, however, should be vigilant to not become a paternal State. Having this philosophical foundation of the role of the State in education leads to the right answers to more practical questions such as: What is the role of the State in public education? What obligation has the State in supporting private education? And finally, what is the relationship between the family as the primary educator and the State as indirect educator? These questions yield to the much debated question of whether the State should teach morality. Negating this question uplifts amorality and neglects the religious needs of some students in State schools.

The book should be read by all the educators, especially school administrators, and those interested in State affairs. It is written by a great philosopher and a prolific writer who died only recently. The penetrating philosophical insights are accompanied by compelling data and real life situations that further highlight the accuracy of the author’s arguments.

A future book dealing with this same subject should have an amplification of its bibliography and further examples of the decay of education in light of the confusing role that the State is playing in taking more and more control of education. This book is a great contribution to the educational efforts of those who call themselves teachers and educators.

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