

The Visitor

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Vol. LXVII

October 1980

No. 4

PHILOSOPHY - THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS

By

Gordon I. Swanson, Professor
Vocational Technical Education,
University of Minnesota

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is threefold: it is (1) to elevate the state of the reader's consciousness about a dimension of individual and institutional life which is often vague and confusing, namely, its philosophy and its close relative-history; (2) to provide a framework for thinking about philosophy and history and, (3) to offer some perspectives about its importance to individuals, to institutions and to society.

While such purposes are achievable, the purposes served by philosophy itself remain as unfinished business. None of the problems of human existence is more persistent nor more fundamental than the problem of means and ends - of insuring that our methods and techniques are adequate to the ends we seek, that the ends we seek are reasonable and relevant and, most importantly, that our ends are not determined, dominated or supplanted by our chosen means. Constant reminding to insure that the things which matter most are not traded for the things which matter least is a part of the role of philosophy. Its status is always that of unfinished business.

In turn, this essay will address the following: what is philosophy, why a concern for philosophy, how is philosophy recognized, and importance of philosophy to agriculture teachers.*

What Is Philosophy?

There is no widespread agreement on a definition of philosophy. But there is general agreement that it can be viewed, inter alia, as an academic discipline, a subject that can be studied in schools and colleges. As an academic discipline, it is concerned with logical behavior, the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge.

As an academic discipline, philosophy is well-known for having spawned a number of schools of thought. Some of these have won advocates and, indeed, have assumed the status of separately identifiable philosophies such as positivism, idealism, reconstructionism, and existentialism.

A second view of philosophy is that of a set of beliefs or values held by individuals to guide their behavior or that of their institutions. It is the view

often taken by employers who ask prospective employees to "write a statement of your philosophy." Similarly, professors often ask students to write a statement of their philosophy. In such instances, it is assumed that one's set of beliefs and values have certain qualitative characteristics of rightness or wrongness which can be judged, as it were, on a scorecard. A parallel assumption is that everyone has such a philosophy and that there may be a certain catharsis value in writing it.

The **beliefs and values** view of philosophy is undoubtedly the most commonly held view of philosophy in many fields including agricultural education. At the same time, it is also the most easily confused with ideology, a construct which is often inimical to philosophy. An ideology operates under conditions in which a belief or value is held **no matter what!** Once a belief enters the realm of ideology, truth is no longer pursued; it is assumed to have already been found! Under such conditions, the means-end problem diminishes and the ideologically-framed philosophy is no longer unfinished business. While the **beliefs and values** expression of philosophy is vulnerable to expressions of ideology, it need not occur. The test is whether beliefs and values remain open to change and whether the conditions for change are available.

The dangers of ideology need not draw upon examples which are obscure or remote such as Marxism or some distant cult. What is the status, for example, of the Future Farmers of America? Is it a means or an end? Is it a tool in process of being examined, improved or even discarded, if necessary, in order to replace it with a tool more adequate to the ends being sought?

How these questions are answered will determine whether this youth organization is a part of the field's philosophical unfinished business or whether it is some comfortably attached, ideological baggage. Close at hand there are many similar examples.

There is a third view of philosophy, a view which regards it as a set of standards anchored in propositions or premises which are constantly subject to inquiry and to reexamination. It is this inquiry-oriented view which allows graduate schools to grant the Doctor of Philosophy degree to individuals who have never taken a course in philosophy. It is the existence of standards and the interest in applying them which are

important, not the subject matter to which they are applied. If philosophy is not something which drifts with a light anchor and if its reference points are identified with inquiry-related standards, how is the testing done? By empirical verification and by tests to determine consistency with reality, by an unending search for verification and consistency.

Empirical Verification

If a **standards view** of philosophy requires the rigor of empirical verification, what must be tested or verified? Again, it is important to recall that philosophy is a problem of differentiating between ends and means, and to reiterate that it is ends which demand verification. But empirical verification does not consist of merely finding a rationalization or a strong defense of the ends pursued. If the ends of agricultural education include the strengthening of communities, the widening of individual choices and the exercise of freedoms, these ends can be examined and subjected to rigorous empirical tests.

While focusing on ends, one should also attempt to verify, empirically, those means which have come to dominate education and to serve as proxy ends. Education's preoccupation, for example, with cognition and with conceptual-verbal abstractions may be such proxies. As certain means begin to dominate as surrogate ends, they may crowd out the access routes to such alternative choices as the esthetic aspects of life or the values derived from work, values which are easily verified when people are prevented from work or deprived of esthetic experiences.

Empirical verification of the basis for choosing ends for education cannot, however, be approached as if it were invariably a clean, data-centered exercise. The ends of education are intended to create an advantage, and advantages are rarely distributed or accepted equally. The problem is not without its share of politics including, occasionally, some academic imperialism.

Consistency with Reality

If a standards-oriented philosophy involves anchor points which are consistent with reality, what is the test of reality? It is history; all of reality is history. It is the reason why history, particularly educational history, is a close relative of the philosophy of education.

While all of reality is history, all of recorded history may not be a careful interpretation of reality. Indeed, the writing of history is always purposeful, and its purposes can also be to obscure reality or to create perceptions about a reality which never occurred. It is a misuse of history, therefore, to merely assemble the writings of the past and to accept the assertions of the writer at face value. Critical judgment should be applied to all observations, whether made by experimental researchers or by historians.

In this pursuit of history-based reality it is useful, therefore, to take a side trip to discover some of the uses of history and some of the ways of viewing it. History may be seen as:

- * A flow of forces affecting our values, our way of thinking about what is important. These forces influence our way of thinking, for example, about the reformation, civil rights, military conscription and the uses of freedom.
- * A way of looking at the nature of change including the propensity to destroy in order to create as is easily seen in the rhetoric of political conventions and campaigns: The historical nature of change can be seen in many interesting ways. Changes do not always occur as a smooth flow of inertial forces.
- * A way of viewing some drastic change in the direction or flow of events. Such a drastic change occurred, for example, with America's war of independence, with the creation of the land-grant university system, the civil rights movement and with many similarly drastic changes.
- * A way of looking at the arguments or debates of the past which continue to influence the decisions of the present. The best example is the nation's entire system of jurisprudence. It is the debates of the past, won or lost, which influence the arguments of the present.
- * A way of looking at trends in representative governance or, more specifically, in legislation. An historical look at legislation shows, for example, that most educational legislation is retrospective—it is fashioned to solve problems perceived a decade or more in the past. The reason, simply, is that public opinion responds to stimuli; it does not anticipate events. Accordingly, a legislative response to public opinion is a response to needs perceived in retrospect.

In addition to these various ways of viewing history, there are also ways in which history may be used or even exploited although not necessarily with any intention to deceive. Some illustrations of such uses are as:

- * A way of creating selective perceptions of reality. Since all expressions of history are selective, any written history is biased by the nature of the selectivity of the writer. There is no complete record of either the present or the past and memory, like preference, is highly selective.

The writer of history becomes, therefore, a wielder of power, power in the selective perception of events and consequences. Since the winner remains to write the history of the battle, it should never be a surprise to observe the battle being described as good prevailing over evil.

- * A way of exploring the history of the various approaches to educational history. Earlier historical accounts dealt almost exclusively with a record of how education was institutionalized, a record of the origin of schools together with a record of how they were organized and governed. A subsequent approach of the history of education dealt with the influence of education with schools included as merely one of the many influences. A more recent emphasis involves the record of educational imbalance or

inequality, the record of why certain categories of citizens have received much more, or less, education than others.

Such uses of history are closely linked to the value structures imbedded in the framework for thinking employed by the authors.

This side-trip, offering some differing views of history as well as its uses and abuses, should be sufficient to illustrate the unfinished and incomplete nature of the contributions of recorded history to contemporary thinking. It should also illustrate the need for critical judgment of historical evidence if one is to be concerned with rigorous standards for truth-seeking, for relating ends to means and for insuring that history, particularly recorded history, is an accurate picture of reality.

As a part of this side-trip it also is useful to observe that there are no historians of agricultural education, much less of its essential corollary-teacher education. While it is possible to find a record of events, legal authorizations and institutional decisions affecting agricultural education, it is not possible to find individuals who invest significant amounts of time scouring original sources and who synthesize the past in search of hypotheses for instructing the present or the future. The ignorance of history remains, therefore, as the mother of innovation. Success mechanisms of the past are often discarded and then recreated as if they were modern discoveries.

This side-trip also serves as a preface to a brief discussion of the most historically relevant, as well as the most contemporarily vivid, of all of the forces which have shaped the structure of philosophical thinking, namely, the influence of the roots of culture. Often referred to as cultural barriers, confrontations or loyalties, they were first noted by Herodotus, the father of history, when he began to chronicle cultural conflict. Seen historically or as current events, these include, for example, such cleavages as between Persia and the Greeks, between Christianity and Islam, between the haves of the northern hemisphere and the have-nots of the southern and the conflicts between Marxism and Capitalism.

In addition to providing a framework for values, such conflict provided the basis for many important lessons. For example, cultural conflict often produces many victims, the displaced persons who live in poverty because they happen to have had the wrong allegiance at the wrong time and in the wrong place. Other victims include those who have no knowledge of the numbing effect of cultural conflict on human intellect.

Cultural conflict has lessons to teach about arrogance, not the arrogance which is born of confidence with one's own condition, but rather from the assumption of superiority of a chosen loyalty whether it be an ideology, a community, or a race. The great conflicts are not between those who identify themselves as human but between the organizations and the loyalties with which humans identify. A large share of cultural conflict is rooted, for example, in religion.

The existence of cultural conflict teaches how cultures allow the patterns of the past to guide visions of the future. All cultures have elaborate mechanisms for preserving and reconstructing the past. Occasionally, these mechanisms have reconstructed a past which is more appealing than ever existed.

The more interesting lessons occur where there is cultural plurism, where multiple streams of cultural influence join or converge to form a single stream but where the constituent streams are sufficiently incompatible so as to retain their original, value-oriented identity. This is the situation in America. It is a situation which demands a clear view of the way in which the streams of cultural influence tend to effect the philosophic behavior of individuals. To illustrate this phenomenon, three of America's constituent streams will be discussed below—the philosophic, the theistic and the socio-economic.

The Philosophical Stream

The philosophical stream originated in ancient Greece. It may be unwarranted to refer to it here as the philosophic stream since all subsequent streams will be described as having a philosophic influence. Yet this one of Greek origin is so fundamental to the concept of philosophy that it will be distinguished by the generic label. After all, the word **philosophia** is of Greek origin meaning the love or pursuit of wisdom, a clear designation of purpose.

Well-known contributors to the influence of this stream are such individuals as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and their careful biographer, Plutarch. The influence of this stream develops from its powerful concepts, its unswerving commitment to standards and its unfinished pursuit of the truth. Its powerful concepts include those of democracy, freedom and liberty. In early, yet in fundamental forms, these concepts originated and continued as a part of the stream. They have become a part of the fabric of America.

This stream's commitment to standards and to the expression of them has become so completely integrated into western culture that its origin has often been obscured. The standard for architecture in the model of the Acropolis and the Parthenon has been followed in the construction of many government buildings, banks and libraries. The standard format for musical composition as provided in Aristotle's **Da Musica** became the accepted standard for more than twenty centuries.² The accepted format for drama, three act plays, has become so completely accepted that one hears only the references to deviations from the standard, e.g. one-act plays. Much that is standard-related originated within this stream.

There are numerous contemporary examples of the extent to which existing western culture strives to associate itself with elements of prestige, status or standards associated with this stream. Prestigious organizations or associations have, for example, adopted the designation of **academy**, the name of the school created by Plato. All secondary schools in

France are still called lycees, a term taken directly from the word lyceum, the name of the school created by Aristotle. The subject having the most unquestioned presence in secondary schools is the subject which was accorded a lofty position in early Greek culture, namely, physical education.

Yet it is the unending pursuit of the truth which wins this stream its designation as a philosophical stream and which describes philosophy, as in the early paragraphs of this essay, as unfinished business. Plato's Academy offered no claims that it was teaching the truth; it only claimed to be pursuing it. The pursuit was the end and any discovery to truth was regarded as transitory, temporary, or instrumental and thus only means to illuminate a further search.

This philosophical stream while providing strong roots, was only partially compatible with the evolving American culture. Democracy in Greece was not available as a participant activity to all citizens. It was not available to women nor to slaves, the major working classes. Those for whom destiny or duty required physical work or attention to the economic relationship of the community were not accorded the status nor the rewards given to others. Indeed, freedom came to be interpreted as being liberated from the demands of work in order to pursue what was simultaneously interpreted as a higher goal, a dual interpretation which has persistently accompanied this stream in its influence on American culture.

The Theistic Stream

The theistic stream had its origin at the birthplace of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Its influence on American culture is so powerful that it needs very little reemphasis here. From the 16th Century onwards it became the central force for the organization of much of the voluntary behavior at the village or community level, and it became the central feature for expressions of the highest level of the state-of-knowledge in music, sculpture, architecture, art and in much of craftsmanship. It became a dominant force in governance as well as in education.

To the mainstream of American culture, this stream contributed two main influences, an orientation to work and a focus on the individual.

The orientation to work was not originally a part of this stream. In earlier years, work was regarded as punishment for sins and an avenue for its atonement. From the 16th Century onward work, within this stream, began to acquire some intrinsic merit, some value not necessarily identified with prior transgressions. Indeed, it was often regarded as having some of its own soul-redeeming features. It became known as the protestant work ethic, a term which was an encomium, not a description; it was neither mainly protestant nor necessarily ethical.

The other main influence, the focus on the individual, has numerous expressions in

contemporary American culture. It is seen in the emphasis on individualized instruction, counseling and individual career planning. Its roots are deep in the theistic stream where salvation, for example, was always an individual matter. Its contrast may be seen in Marxian theology wherein individual decisions are subsidiary to the decisions of the group and where individual freedom in microcosm, on a grand scale, is regarded as the cult of the personality.

The Socio-Economic Stream

The socio-economic stream which flowed into American culture originated mainly in England. Its impetus was strengthened at an historic time, in 1776, by a strategic volume entitled **The Wealth of Nations** by Adam Smith. It was an explanation of why some nations were more favored than others, and it became a classic of economic literature. It became convenient thereafter for the new nation, the United States, to be under its influence.

The volume was not revolutionary, it merely reflected upon and interpreted the conditions in England. The social conditions in England included a rigid caste system, rigorously defended elitism, and various types of segregation, particularly segregation of the poor. What originated as classical economic literature became, therefore, a classical social theory. It reaffirmed the conventions of English culture and, further, it ascribed these conventions to God's will.

Smith's work provided justification for the wide differences which occurred in British society—the workers, the peasants and the poor at one end of the scale and the industry leaders, the professionals and the politicians on the other. He justified such differences as being expressions of **natural law**, a system of harmonizing the differences which existed among individuals in order to promote the general good through divine sanction. He urged that people be taught to accept their stations in life and not to aspire to higher rungs on the occupational ladder. Since all of this was governed by the "invisible hand," the plight of peasants was asserted to be as divine as the right of kings.

This was the socio-economic stream which flowed into American culture. It was class-oriented; it did not encourage respected institutions to train people for work, and it devalued the role of laborers and farmers. The concept of a gentleman was that of a person with undirty hands who regarded workers as a management problem for the elite and never as a development opportunity for either the workers themselves or for society.

One cannot deny the import of this stream on American history nor on the contemporary scene. Poor farms were established in 19th Century America as a counterpart to the English Poor Laws. Educational institutions were established along hierarchical lines to serve the hierarchical patterns which this stream endorsed. The formation of free trade unions and farmer's organizations came into existence as rebellions against the influence of this stream.

The Confluence of Streams

Earlier it was stated that cultural pluralism in America has historical derivatives, that the derivatives exist as streams of influence forming a mainstream but remaining therein as essentially incompatible. Three have been elaborated, and there are undoubtedly more existing as tributaries originating in Africa and Asia. All contribute to the reality which history informs and to the often incompatible values embraced by the combined streams. The work-oriented values of the theistic stream conflict, for example, with the class-conscious values of the socio-economic stream. The concept of freedom introduced by the philosophical stream is not the freedom which is reflected in other streams. It is now possible to postulate that all or most of America's social problems—affirmative action, civil rights, equality of opportunity, youth unemployment, bilingual education and many more can be traced to the incompatibility of the value orientations imbedded in the separate streams which make up our unique form of cultural pluralism. Only an understanding of history can illuminate and inform this pluralism.

More Specific History

The tracing of the cultural streams which account for a special kind of value-differentiated cultural pluralism is a very general history, albeit, not less relevant to the philosophical roots of agricultural education. But there is a more specific history with accompanying lessons. These will be explored briefly in the following paragraphs.

The first school in America was an agricultural school. The students were a motley group of men, women and children who had survived their first winter after landing at Plymouth. The teacher was an Indian, Squanto, who had agreed to teach them how to plant and to grow an indigenous crop—corn. He taught them how to fertilize each hill with fish caught in a nearby stream.

The elements of piognancy in this summary of Governor Winthrop's diary should not be overlooked. The classroom was an open field. The teacher was illiterate. The method was learning by doing. Because there was neither time nor interest in wasting time on frills, the teacher taught only the basics—survival or, more specifically, food production. All of the students were foreign students and all, or most of them, did well in later life.

Much of the early history of agriculture is the history of fear of food shortages or famine. In many countries of the world, agricultural legislation began with the creation of a famine commission or a plan to eliminate food shortages. The U.S. Congress appropriated funds for the study of agriculture for the first time in 1838 when crop failures effected trade balances and required the importation of massive amounts of food.

But interest in agricultural education occurred long before the 19th Century. In his second presidential message, George Washington pro-

posed that Congress create a National Agricultural University. Early in the 19th Century the existing universities began to teach agriculturally-related subjects. Agricultural societies began to create small and rather isolated secondary schools, most of them influenced by the socio-economic stream of influence from England and thereby intent on improving **but not moving** the student's station in life.

The Land Grant legislation initiated in 1857 became a massive and revolutionary change which began a movement with the promise of changing the character of all of American society. As with most changes, the Morrill Act was a reflection of an ongoing change; it was not its prime mover.

For the first and only time in American history, a multi-level educational reform had rejected the status-oriented elitism of the socio-economic stream of influence inherited from England, embraced the concepts of inquiry and freedom which were a part of the philosophical stream, and chose a focus on individualism as well as on work values which were a part of the theistic stream. The purpose of the legislation was to insure that the best education would be available to all classes, including the sons and daughters of farmers and mechanics.

In retrospect, Morrill legislation did much more than was expected of it. It initiated the creation of professional schools—engineering, education, medicine, pharmacy, law and many others. Professional schools simultaneously became the centers of activity for the professions and stimulated their growth. The professions had fallen into disrepute after the revolution. Most members were linked with professional bodies in Europe and most, accordingly, were suspected of being loyalists.

Judged by almost any standard, the land grant universities were disappointing failures during the first 50 years of their existence. By the well-established private universities, they were criticized for tolerating low standards. The most rigorous critics, however, were farmers and farm organizations. Farmers regarded them as unnecessary and the National Grange actively opposed them for being impractical. The 50 year period from 1857 to 1907 was an uncomfortable period for land grant colleges of agriculture.

By the end of the 50 year period, three developments were well underway in rural America which had begun to create a climate of acceptance for colleges of agriculture. First, there had been a rapid spread of high schools, and many states had already begun the teaching of agriculture in rural schools. To accommodate this development, the Morrill Act was amended in 1907 to authorize the use of federally allocated Morrill funds for the training of teachers of agriculture. Second, colleges of agriculture began programs of agricultural research. Congress had responded in 1887 to requests to authorize federal allocations to agricultural research, and it became clear that agricultural colleges were seriously intent on addressing farmer's problems. Third, and most important to

the acceptance of agricultural colleges, was the development, refinement and implementation of the concept of service. It was this concept which developed and continued as almost an **esprit de corps** among agricultural college faculty and their students. By the time the Congress authorized an Agricultural Extension Service in 1914, the spirit of service was already imbedded in the fabric of the system; it had been a pivotal factor in winning the respect of farmers, farm organizations and the general public. It continues to the present. Agricultural faculty members at all levels are continuously available and responsive to their clients. This spirit of service was summed up by Charles Funk, a Minnesota teacher of agriculture and the State's 1979 Teacher of the Year when he said, "farmers do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."³

Why a Concern for Philosophy

Every society tries to give its members, young and old, a framework for thinking which will further the purposes of the society. Implicitly or explicitly, this framework becomes a part of the system of education. Education is among a nation's most value-oriented activities.

Almost every educational decision is a value decision. There are few exceptions. The subjects to be included in the curriculum, for example, are merely means and never ends. The presence or absence of subjects in the curriculum is the consequence of value-oriented decisions, or it may be a mere accommodation to conventional wisdom, another kind of value choice.

Educational systems are highly preoccupied with organizing various categories of knowledge. There is a tendency to include some information at the expense of other information and to emphasize some forms of instruction at the expense of others. Since schools tend to deal with highly conventionalized approaches to scheduling, instruction and with counting the clients (enrollments), they can be expected to reflect patterns of inclusion and exclusion, emphasis and subordination, which support their conventions. To the extent that such patterns tend to diminish the stature or the scope of such subjects as agriculture or its essential corollary, the spirit of service, it can be expected that schools exercise significant control over the way great numbers of people relate the importance of agriculture to the purposes of society.

A concern for philosophy is a concern for standards along with an interest in the type of inquiry which may be allowed to alter the nature of the standards. The interest in standards is also sufficient to differentiate between ends and means and to be threatening to the various means-related activities which are pursued as if they were ends.

How Is Philosophy Recognized?

A **beliefs and values** view of philosophy in individuals is recognized by expressions or manifestations of cultural norms including

religious behavior, either adherence to them or departures from them. It is further recognized by evidence that choices made are a reflection of beliefs or values held. The beliefs and values view of philosophy is sometimes difficult to distinguish from ideology, the beliefs which are unremoved by any evidence to the contrary.

A **standards view** of philosophy is recognized by expressions and manifestations of an unending search for appropriate relationships between means and ends and by efforts to test whether the standards employed can be adequately verified. Those with a standards view will recognize that their standards are rarely neutral; standards which exert pressures on dogma or on unquestioned traditions will sooner or later have adversaries as well as allies.

Importance for Agricultural Teacher Education

At best, a philosophy for teacher education in agriculture is a framework for thinking about, and acting on, the goals and the ends-means relationships of agricultural education. It is a framework derived from and continuously influenced by standards and values which are informed by inquiry, inquiry which leads to empirical verification and consistency with reality. Philosophy, therefore, is at the heart of the agriculture-teaching enterprise. It requires a consideration of the destiny of individuals, groups and society itself. It is concerned, therefore, with the concept of destinations (ends) and the appropriate choice of routes (means) which may be available or which may be made available.

A way of viewing such a framework is to create categories of goals and purposes. In doing so, it is necessary to label the categories with such identities as ultimate, central, essential, instrumental and many other which could be chosen. It is most important to emphasize here that the choice of categories is itself a value decision, a decision which has led the discipline of philosophy to create its various schools of thought, e.g. essentialism, positivism, pragmatism, etc. It could be interesting, but not otherwise instructive, to see how a philosophy for agricultural education might fit into these categories. But categories are necessary for a framework, and one will be used in the following paragraphs with only an intent to show the utility of structure, not to plead for the one chosen.

In the broadest sense, agricultural education seeks to promote **both** the highest possible levels of individual fulfillment and the best possible use of human resources. On one hand, agricultural education is the ongoing effort to **improve the ability of individuals** to survive, adjust, and advance through multiple relations with a dynamic, agriculturally-related environment. On the other hand, it is an ongoing effort to **improve the capacity of the environment** to use an expanding array of human capabilities for achieving desirable ends.

These seemingly disparate goals need to be brought into balance by constantly testing the

assumption that individual goals and environmental or community goals are essential dimensions of the common goal of human resource development.

With such a dual goal structure it would be possible, and perhaps desirable, to separate individual goals from the goals of environmental or community improvement. Such might seem reasonable if an individual's goal were to escape from the environment or if the goal of improving the environment could not be realized. Historically, such situations have produced refugees, mass migrations and revolutions. The problem has been the lack of proximity of resources to people—physical, intellectual, esthetic, spiritual resources, and the conditions needed for self-determination.

With an unswerving commitment to clients, agriculture teachers might accept the view, therefore, that the important goals are connecting; they involve the achievement of individuals and the capacity of the environment to absorb such achievements.

Perhaps the most important framework for viewing the importance of philosophy is the concept of professionalism as seen in the mutual sharing of standards and values. Ordinarily this concept contains five dimensions including:

- * A commitment to the needs of clients including the full range of clients and client systems served by agricultural education. Not excluded are families, communities, organizations and institutions,
- * A commitment to substance of subject-matter requiring professionals to seek an improvement in the base of knowledge available to clients,
- * A commitment to practice of the procedures for connecting the needs of clients to the base of substantive knowledge for realizing the ends sought by the connection,
- * A commitment to standards for improving the (a) knowledge of clients, (b) the quality and relevance of the knowledge base and (c) for elevating the quality of practice and
- * A code of ethics for publicly declaring the extent to which members of the profession will tend to the interest of clients while offering each other mutual support in accepting professional obligations.

Finally, philosophy is important to agricultural teacher education when it is understood that philosophy is not the substance of armchair speculation nor the activity to be engaged in when there is little else to do. It is central to the decisions which must be made about why agriculture teachers engage in certain activities, promote certain organizations, emphasize certain teaching methods and provide various kinds of service to individuals and communities. Philosophy is important when there is an orderly standards-and-value basis for making the decisions and for reraising the "why" question. Finally, it is important that philosophy continue to be the field's most important unfinished business.

Published quarterly during the calendar year in January, April, July and October by the Division of Agricultural Education University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn. 55108

Second class postage paid at St. Paul, MN.

Publication #661580

THE STAFF

GEORGE COPA	ROLAND L. PETERSON
GORDON SWANSON	W. FORREST BEAR
CURTIS NORENBURG	EDGAR PERSONS
MILO J. PETERSON	GARY W. LESKE
R. PAUL MARVIN, Editor	

¹Adapted from a chapter to appear in a forthcoming **Handbook for Teacher Education in Agriculture** to be published by Interstate Publishers, Danville, Illinois

²The **Unfinished Symphony** by Shubert was, in fact, finished. But it did not measure to the Aristotelean standard. To demonstrate that the composer was not aware of the accepted standard, he merely called it "unfinished."

³Speech given at a Motley, Minnesota Conference on Entrepreneurship on July 19, 1980.

In memory of Mrs. Milo Peterson we are reprinting the following article written by her for the October Visitor in 1974. The article is an example of her ability for clever expression and whole hearted support of Vocational Education.

**A FABLE
(1913-1980)**

**Maxine M. Peterson
Coordinator of Domestic Affairs**

Once upon a time there was a handsome prince, Vocatio Educado (known in the Kingdom of Education as Vo-Ed). He was young, with much promise. He had some younger siblings - there was Vocatio Agricola (known as AgEd) and Helena Ecolo (known as Home Ec) and the twins, Technicus and Indus (known as T & I) and Bernado Indus (Business) and some younger whose names had not been chosen.

Now it so happened there was a wicked witch of Academia in the Kingdom of Education. She had, years ago, given her approval to Elementary Education and Secondary Education, but only as long as they spawned such offspring as Bachelors, Masters and Doctors. But after centuries of such offspring, suddenly Vocatio Educado was begat. The wicked witch was beside herself in rage. What stray had come between Ellie Ed and Secon Ed to produce offspring that were not Bachelors, Masters or Doctors? And it wasn't as though Ellie and Secon were proud of this new addition to the family. In fact, they did their best to hide the little prince, ignoring him, dressing him in leftover garments, not acknowledging him in high places. And then those siblings following! It sent the Kingdom of Education into almost Civil War.

"Ah Ha," said the wicked witch of Academia. "I will return the Kingdom of Education to its rightful pinnacle in the world. I will put my hex on Vocatio Educado, and through him to his siblings and they will all turn into one gigantic Frog." And so she did.

And for some years, Vocatio Educado appeared to many as an ugly frog, quite unappreciated and often unloved. He would hop about from high school to high school, sometimes even venturing to a university. He would be fed a bit, but never nurtured. Always he waited for the day when Princess Public Appreciation might find him - for if she did and she gave him her kiss THEN he would again become a Prince - Prince of the Kingdom of Education.

And do you know what happened? All of a sudden in 1962, Princess Public Appreciation gave him a very light kiss, saying "You really aren't that ugly. You have much to give to the Kingdom of Education. Come, little frog, I can't do it with one Congressional Act, but this will be the start. Now I turn you and your siblings into real people in the Kingdom of Education. But remember, one small kiss from Princess Public Appreciation is not lasting. You will turn back to an ugly frog hopping about from school to school, department to department, commission to commission

until you prove to the wicked witch of Academia that you have as much and more to give to the Kingdom of Education as the Bachelors and the Masters and the Doctors. Each of you have so much and each of you must give so much. For that is the only way Vocatio Educado and his siblings can contribute and compete in the whole wide world."

The fable is, of course, unfinished. Only time can provide the ending.