**Education, Persons and Society:
A Philosophical Enquiry**

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A Philosophical Enquiry

Glenn Langford

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PREFACE

There are many different ways in which a book on philosophy of education might be written, emphasising different aspects of what is at best an ill-defined subject. Here I have taken as my basic theme the view that education is best thought of as a social activity or practice, the overall purpose of which is that of helping others to become persons. As the title of both the book and the final chapter suggest I have tried throughout to explore in different ways the connection between education, persons and society. In developing that theme, I have introduced a contrast in Chapter 2 between what I have called the Lockean and the Gombrich views. The Lockean view is put forward as a reasonable extrapolation of what I take to be Locke's basic position in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, rather than as a faithful exegesis of Locke's expressed views on all of the questions discussed, in the belief that it is the former, or something like it, which provides the philosophical foundations of much recent work in the philosophy of education. What I have described as the Gombrich view is similarly based on remarks made by Sir Ernest Gombrich in *Art and Illusion* but goes beyond anything which he actually says. Although therefore I hope that he will not object to the way in which those remarks have been developed, I would like to make it clear that I cannot claim to be offering an accurate account of his actual views. I remain, of course, indebted to him for the use which I have made of his ideas.