

EDITORIAL

Recently, Dianne Abbott, a Labour MP opposed to private education, nevertheless chose to educate her child in an expensive private school. Many in the media accused Abbott of hypocrisy. Indeed, Abbott made that accusation herself, describing her own actions as indefensible. In this issue, the philosopher Adam Swift argues that Abbott may not be guilty of hypocrisy after all. Certainly, argues Swift, the case against private education in its current form remains powerful indeed.

Having recently read Swift's book, I am inclined to agree with him. On the (possibly questionable) assumption that the lower classes do not have any less native wit and talent than the upper middle class, it is difficult to maintain that our society resembles anything approaching a 'meritocracy'. For it is of course children born of the upper middle class that consistently retain their grip on the levers of power and privilege generation after generation. A brief look around a typical law firm, medical practice or company boardroom reveals that the children of the upper middle class (and especially the mere 7% of children who are educated privately) are vastly over-represented.

Those, like Tony Blair, whose stated political aim is to achieve a 'meritocracy' should either admit that something pretty radical needs to be done to loosen the vice-like grip of the upper middle class on power and privilege (by, for example, removing the charitable status of private schools and/or vastly improving the educational facilities available to the rest), or else they should come clean and admit that they do, after all, believe that upper middle class children more talent than it has the rest. Or perhaps I have misunderstood what they mean by a 'meritocracy'?

Also in this issue, Richard Swinburne returns to deal with criticisms made by Richard Dawkins, Richard Norman, Ted Schick and Nick Bostrom in Issue 4. This ongoing debate on the existence of God provides a fascinating example of how

Think can take the reader to the cutting edge of philosophy while remaining accessible, interesting, relevant and jargon-free. I hope you gain much from it.

Stephen Law, Editor