

SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)

# *The Roundtable, 2007-13*

*A collection of scholarly papers published originally online in  
The Roundtable by the Society for the Philosophical Study of  
Education (SPSE) during 2007-2013*



Authors: Boyd L. Bradbury, Sheron Fraser-Burgess, Joseph Freedman, Charles S. Howell, Liz Jackson, Allan Johnston, Guillemette Johnston, Cheu-jeY Lee, Maya Levanon, Alexander Makedon, David L. Mosley, Marjorie O'Loughlin, Linda O'Neill, Samuel Rocha, Jon Rogers, James E. Roper, Ann Sharp, Ronald Swartz.  
Editorial Committee, The Roundtable, 2007-13: Alexander Makedon, editor in chief; Allan Johnston & Guillemette Johnston, content review and literary editors.

## Introduction

This “master volume” is a printed version of 22 scholarly papers by 18 authors on the philosophical foundations of education published online in *The Roundtable* during 2007-13. Topics covered range from ethics, accreditation and reform in education to logic, equity and authority, to name but a few. For a complete list of conference themes, paper titles, authors’ names & institutional affiliations please see “**Contents**,” below (p. 3). The reader can find paper abstracts for the years 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 in the **Appendix** at the end of this volume (p. 307). Papers presented at conferences were not necessarily published in *The Roundtable*. All papers published in *The Roundtable* during 2007-13 were peer reviewed by *Roundtable*’s editorial committee.

*The Roundtable* ceased to exist in 2013 (please see FAQs section, below, for more information). Most papers published herein were presented during the annual conferences of the American Philosophical Association (APA)-Central Division, SPSE sessions; only a few of the papers so presented were either submitted by their authors to *The Roundtable* for publication; or were approved for publication in the event they were so submitted.

The volume serves as a searchable archive in doc format of all papers that were published online in *The Roundtable*. All such papers were converted from html “online” format to MS Word or doc format. It should be noted that individual authors retain copyright of their respective papers; by submitting them to *The Roundtable* for publication such authors gave the editors of *The Roundtable* and SPSE implied permission to publish their papers.

Conversion of papers from html to doc format & volume design: Alexander Makedon, editor in chief of *The Roundtable*, 2007-13. Volume review: Allan Johnston and Guillemette Johnston, content review and literary editors of *The Roundtable*, 2007-13.

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### FAQs re: *The Roundtable*

**Question: Was *The Roundtable* an official SPSE publication?** Yes. The existence of *The Roundtable* journal was approved by SPSE members during the 2007 and subsequent SPSE Business Meetings during which *The Roundtable* editors gave annual status reports regarding submissions and the like until *The Roundtable* ceased to exist in 2013. First time that *Roundtable* was published was in 2007.

**Question: Why was the journal discontinued?** *The Roundtable* was published on SPSE's website; when the website was taken down in 2013 by the commercial hosting service, so was the journal.

**Question: Did authors who published in *The Roundtable* give permission to such publication to publish their papers?** Yes. Once their paper submissions had been vetted and approved for publication by *Roundtable's* editorial committee, authors of such papers gave *Roundtable* implied permission to publish their papers in the journal or else they would not have submitted them for publication. Due to a crucial data error made by the commercial host of the SPSE website at the time, both the SPSE website and *The Roundtable* ceased to exist in 2013. As a result, papers published in *The Roundtable* during 2007-13 have not been available for viewing in an online format since the journal ceased to exist in 2013. The present "master volume" serves as both an archive of such papers and a way for readers to access them for free by searching for them in this volume online or off.

**Question: What was the purpose of *The Roundtable*?** The purpose of *The Roundtable* was originally to consider for publication papers that were presented by SPSE members or others during the annual conferences of the **American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division**. Such presentations were made during special SPSE sessions within the APA-CD conference. APA-CD conferences hosted many specialized sessions that focused on different areas of philosophy one of which was "philosophy of education" as represented by SPSE. The names of SPSE session presenters as well as their paper titles were included in the APA-CD's conference books that were distributed to APA-CD conference registrants. SPSE sessions at the APA-CD conferences took place separately from the annual SPSE conferences. SPSE sessions at the APA-CD conferences attracted not only SPSE members including education faculty, students, independent scholars or teachers but also APA members including philosophy faculty, students or scholars from philosophy departments from across the United States or abroad who were interested in or presented papers on philosophy of education topics.

**Question: Who served on the journal's editorial committee during the time that the journal was in existence (2007-13)?** *The Roundtable* editorial committee consisted originally of five scholars who were later reduced to the following three: Chief editor: Alexander Makedon, Chicago State University; Content review and literary editors: Allan Johnston, Columbia College & Guillemette Johnston, DePaul University.

**Question: Were papers submitted for publication in *The Roundtable* peer reviewed?** Yes. All papers published herein were subjected to a careful peer review by the aforementioned editorial committee prior to accepting them for publication. Papers that did not meet the committee's editorial standards were returned to their authors for revision. The committee's goal was to assist authors in disseminating their ideas in the most enlightening, academically acceptable and publicly educative manner.

**Question: Is *The Roundtable* still in existence?** No. Last issue was published online in 2013. This master volume is a hard copy of the papers already peer reviewed & published online in *The Roundtable*.

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Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division,  
Sessions of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education, April 2007, Palmer  
House Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, USA

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***Preparing Pre-service Teachers for their Role as Critical Mediators of Knowledge***

Sheron Fraser-Burgess, Ph.D.

Ball State University  
TC, 825  
Muncie, IN 47306

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If teachers are to take an active role in raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach, and the larger goals for which they are striving, it means they must take a more critical and political role in defining the nature of their work, as well as in shaping the conditions which they work. (p. 108) --Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux (1991)

A synthesis of these two roles as mediators of knowledge and as sociocultural critics is what leads us to what I have described as an appropriate role for teachers with respect to knowledge: that of critical mediators. (p. 352) --Mark Mason (2000)

## Introduction

This paper presents a conceptual argument for the inclusion of epistemology in pre-service teacher education and explores its practical significance in teaching. Epistemology narrowly defined is the study of knowledge and justification. It concerns questions such as, what are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are the criteria of justification (Steup, 2005)? In my view, by including epistemology in the teacher education curriculum, colleges and departments of teacher education aid their students in preparing to be the kind of teachers Aronowitz and Giroux describe (1991) above. Such teachers are not only well-qualified in their fields, cognizant of the developmentally relevant learning outcomes for their students and

exhibit the appropriate dispositions, but they also understand the principled constraints on what qualifies as knowledge that epistemological standards imply. They are then better able to align their practice with educational desiderata such as developing critical thinking skills as well as a broad understanding of the implications of social, political, and historical factors for a given discipline.

There are multiple good reasons for prioritizing epistemology in teacher education at this time. One is that the project of evaluating knowledge claims and developing well-based beliefs clearly relate to schooling in the sense that the teacher has to take these standards into account in her daily practice. Another is that imparting knowledge and justification, as candidate aims of education, stand on their own as being worthy of inquiry vis-à-vis their meaning and practical significance for education (Siegel, 2004). However, it is the current nature of the meta-discourse about knowledge in philosophy and related disciplines that, given the relevance of knowledge to schooling, motivates inclusion of epistemological studies in teacher education now.

Beginning with the middle to latter part of the twentieth century, the tone of the meta-discourse about knowledge in the extant literature has been decidedly critical of the previously dominant Enlightenment epistemology. In Enlightenment epistemology the knower reasons as an objective, neutral enquirer from basic beliefs originating from perception, memory or reasoning. Basic beliefs, which can be infallible, certain or self-evident logically support derived beliefs. Paradigmatic of Enlightenment epistemology is Rene Descartes' search for an indubitable foundation for knowledge. Other important thinkers through the seventeenth and eighteenth century were John Locke, David Hume and Immanuel Kant, who took differing positions on whether knowledge was *a priori*, through reasoning alone or *a posteriori*, constituted by experience.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, the period of the Enlightenment elevated the role of reason in the conduct of human affairs and, in terms of the predominance of rational methodology, is associated with the unprecedented increase in human understanding of natural and physical laws. After centuries of scholasticism, which based scholarship upon religious and philosophical authority, and the Renaissance's accelerated creativity in the humanities, Enlightenment epistemology foregrounded a conception of knowledge in which truth and knowledge were desirable goals of inquiry. Because of its radical break with tradition, the Enlightenment period came to be synonymous with "modernism". To modernism's advancement of putatively objective and neutral standards of knowledge is largely attributed the turn of the twentieth century's harnessing of natural resources for scientific and technological progress. Over time, the modernist conception of knowledge came to be viewed as the "traditional epistemology" that is the basis of Western scholarship and scientific

inquiry. Since the 19th century, broader conceptions of modernism have emphasized the warranting of beliefs by sufficient evidence rather than solely that of Cartesian foundationalism.

In the last fifty years, socio-political considerations have been brought to bear on epistemology in critiques of modernity (van Goor, Heyting and Vreeke, 2004). One of the primary sources of this analysis is the work of Jean Francois Lyotard. Lyotard, to who is attributed the term, "postmodernism" is one central figure whose work has challenged the supremacy of the modernist epistemological scheme. Lyotard questions the supremacy of a "metanarrative" of reason and rejects the idea of grounding knowledge in some objective and neutral way. His writings recast the Enlightenment project as one of legitimizing one select cultural framework over others and critiques "knowledge" as those claims designated to be so by the socially and politically powerful. Indeed the very idea that any proposition can be true beyond the particular local context in which it is claimed has been called into question. As the work of Lyotard and others in a similar vein, such as Jacques Derrida, has gained prominence, the modernist epistemology has been undergoing a "deconstruction" that has challenged the foundationalist project.

Given this milieu, it is likely and reasonable that practicing teachers would ask questions such as, which account of knowledge makes sense and why? What is at stake for my discipline in how these questions are answered? Without being conversant in the issues pertaining to the criteria for knowledge, teachers cannot take "the more critical and political role in defining the nature of their work" (p. 108) as defined by Aronowitz and Giroux (1991). Having command of epistemological concepts and questions positions teachers to actively study social factors such as multifarious institutional, ideological and social frameworks that are relevant to their disciplines, and to promote good judgment and broad-based learning.

This paper proposes that the teaching of epistemology be central to pre-service teacher education to prepare practitioners to competently navigate the knowledge landscape in K-12 schooling. My argument is that given the prominence of the postmodernist critique, teachers should be able to weigh the competing accounts of knowledge and make determinations about their significance for schooling. Thus, in my view, pre-service teachers must be provided the kind of education that allows them to become "critical mediators of knowledge" in the terms of Mason (2000). To make the case for preparing teachers to become critical mediators of knowledge, I draw on the principles and practices that Mason (2000) identifies with being a critical mediator. While Mason primarily addresses the pedagogies of such a role and secondarily the related epistemology, my main focus is the epistemological grounding that the

pedagogy demands. I argue that including epistemology in teacher education equips teachers to help their students appropriately navigate curricula knowledge claims in incisive reasoning and being inclusive of a diversity of social and cultural perspectives.

### Conditionally Embracing Mason's Critical Mediator Role

In proposing that teacher education should include epistemology to better prepare pre-service teachers, in my view, an apt description of the teacher's role is Mason's (2001) concept of a critical mediator of knowledge that I explain below.

#### *The Meaning of Critical Mediation*

Mason's account of teachers as critical mediators is a "synthesis" of two roles that nicely characterize the teacher's position with respect to knowledge. The first is that of a mediator of knowledge, in which Mason conceives of teachers as being the intermediary in meta-disputes about knowledge and truth. As Mason views it, "These debates commonly revolve around the question of whether knowledge is fixed and universally true or whether it is provisional and tentative" (p. 351). Arguments about knowledge, ". . . from realist or objectivist through revelational to pragmatist, to social constructivist and to Nietzschean and postmodern perspectives" (p. 348) inform the characterization of the teacher as mediator. Mason maintains that since the "poles" of knowledge as fixed versus being provisional are "continually in tension with one another" and "most debates take place somewhere within this tension (p. 348)," then it is the teacher's lot to participate in these debates. For him, the notion of mediating knowledge is a fitting ascription.

The second part of Mason's critical mediator synthesis is the teacher as "socio-cultural critic." This role reflects a moderate position that Mason carves out in the curriculum debates about whether teaching should be a "conserving" or a "subversive activity" (p. 349). In this middle ground, the teacher is like a theatre or art critic.

The task of the art critic . . . is to make the work more accessible to the viewer . . . In like manner, teachers as socio-cultural critics are responsible for making the culture, worldview, social arrangements and everyday practices of their society more accessible to their students. This would mean raising a lot of what they assume as normal or natural to the level of conscious critical analysis and assessment---by asking questions about how they view the world, about those arrangements and practices that they take for granted. (p. 349)

In this art or theatre critic metaphor the teacher, while increasing her students' broad knowledge of the culture fosters a critical examination of prevailing cultural

beliefs. The amalgam of the teacher as mediator of knowledge and socio-cultural critic is the teacher as critical mediator of knowledge.

### *Critical Mediation and Pedagogies*

As Mason argues, the teacher as critical mediator has a significant pedagogical payoff in critical approaches that are available to him or her. This is the case particularly with respect to the competing pedagogies of education as transmission, outcomes-based education and dispositions that Mason (2000) discusses as presupposing given epistemologies.

Typically used to impart propositional knowledge, education as transmission emphasizes the mastering of content or body of knowledge, pre-determined by the teacher. Problematically, a curriculum that has propositions as its focus, as Mason (2000) observes, can treat knowledge as "fixed or given," "learners as passive or as empty vessels" and rely upon "rote learning" (p.345-346). Functioning as a critical mediator transforms the solely transmissive leanings of imparting propositions to foster an experiential component to learning. In the style of Dewey, Mason (2000) writes, "the teacher is actively involved in getting her hands dirty with the messiness and unfinished business of pragmatic knowledge." (p. 346)

By comparison, outcomes-based education seeks to impart a given skill through providing students the kind of experiences that foster competency. Outcomes-based education (OBE) can typically position teachers in the role of passive "facilitators of the development of skills in their learners, as they focus on the outcomes of learning and the application of knowledge by their learners" (p.344). Mason believes OBE's reliance upon this procedural form of knowledge can treat learners "as little more than functionaries who rather mindlessly execute the tasks required of them" (p.345). Viewed in light of critical mediation, OBE accommodates a more "critical orientation" that "is significantly dependent on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the material, and not just on the skills associated with it" (p. 345).

Education that fosters desirable dispositions is Mason's (2001) third form of pedagogy that critical mediation takes into account. Dispositional knowledge is "knowledge (associated with attitudes, values or moral dispositions, as in 'I know to respect the value of human life') [that] . . . is caught, rather than taught" (Mason 1999, p. 142). Whether the teacher can adequately teach values without indoctrinating students remains a contentious open question. Here the teacher as critical mediator recognizes, that, "It is obviously not the role of teachers simply to reproduce the status quo by transmitting the knowledge and worldview of their culture in an unquestioning



manner" (p. 349). Thus values are critically entertained.

Because it incorporates each of the particular ways of teaching mentioned above, critical mediation is not disjunctively limited to pedagogies that achieve transmission of knowledge, seek given outcomes or foster dispositions. A critical mediator can avail himself or herself of diverse teaching methods to accomplish what Mason views to be important goals: providing access to curricula knowledge claims that may generally reflect the prevailing cultural beliefs, while developing the student's ability to critically assess those beliefs. In my view, the weak epistemological framework that Mason sketches for critical mediation is not adequate to support those learning goals. Below, focusing only on the mediation, I revise Mason's account of the relationship of critical mediation to the epistemological aspects of various pedagogies, and the ways in which it is a middle ground not only pedagogically but also epistemologically. I then argue for modifications in the epistemological presuppositions of critical mediation.

### Critical Mediation, Pedagogies and Epistemology

As I have been discussing, one constituent of Mason's conception of the teacher's role as a critical mediator is the practitioner as a mediator incorporating propositional, procedural and dispositional knowledge and thus remaining neutral about each. Mason relates each kind of pedagogy to epistemological debates writ large, defining critical mediation as involving pedagogy that is epistemologically undetermined. In his view, propositional knowledge is underwritten by clearly modernist presuppositions about the universal nature of knowledge and implies a teacher-centered form of pedagogy. For example, Mason states that teaching is not the passive transmission of representative knowledge that seems "fixed" or "given" (p. 345). Appealing to Freire's banking metaphor Mason decries the reifying of "knowledge into objective permanence" (p. 348) and asserts that doing so treats learners as "passive receptacles" (p. 348).

Postmodernism challenges the nature of truth in a way that is compatible with procedural knowledge where knowledge is subjectively constructed by the learner and serves functional, purposive and pragmatic ends. However, the open-ended learning that practitioners associate with free-play environments is not ideal because of the merely passive, facilitative role of the teacher. Dispositional knowledge can have the unintended outcome of indoctrination of whatever prevailing moral or epistemological view.

Because Mason relates pedagogies to epistemology, striking a compromise among pedagogies in Mason's scheme is akin to compromising among epistemologies. That critical mediation involves a form of epistemological compromise is further supported in



Mason's equivocation in discussing truth and knowledge. Mason claims that the "first and most obvious criterion of knowledge selection for inclusion in the curriculum is its truth status" (p. 348), which is consistent with traditional epistemology. However in a modernist epistemology where truth is a necessary condition of knowledge, it follows that no claim qualifies as knowledge without first being true. Yet, Mason mentions without qualification other "core" epistemological positions, contending, "that the curriculum represents merely the knowledge, worldview and values of powerful groups in society." (p. 348). Further, he attributes the recognition that all claims are "merely local" (p. 349) to postmodernism. In seeming to place competing accounts of knowledge on equal footing as a springboard for compromise, Mason is ambiguous about which epistemological conceptions are sustainable, while attempting to incorporate elements of both.

There are two problems with Mason's views about the relationship between pedagogy and knowledge in general and about their relationship to critical mediation, in particular, that I will address. First, modernity does not necessarily imply transmission as a privileged pedagogy. Therefore the dichotomy between transmission and outcomes based education that Mason rehearses is based upon a false premise of such a dichotomy in principle although it may exist in practices. Second, I would argue that while the critical mediator may incorporate a variety of pedagogies, there are clear ways in which the practitioner cannot be neutral or integrationist vis-à-vis knowledge and its criteria, because postmodernism is not a sustainable epistemological position. To argue even more strongly, to appropriately critically mediate, teachers have to hold modernist presuppositions about knowledge standards.

Below I revise the modern versus postmodernism debate to show both postmodernist critiques and the negative educational implications of fully embracing postmodernism. Lastly, I return to the notion of critical mediator role epistemologically informed and modified by the critical evaluation of postmodernism. I argue that the critical mediator presupposes that there is objective truth, while developing critical, deliberative habits in his or her students as together teacher and student seek to bring to bear a multiplicity of relevant social and political perspectives upon any classroom based inquiry, regardless of the predominant pedagogy. Teacher education should prepare pre-service teachers to function in this way in the classroom.

### The Deconstruction of Modernist Epistemology

Calling into question the very project of seeking a foundation upon which to normatively ground all of one's beliefs according to epistemic standards of truth or good reasons, postmodernism directly challenges the modernist foundationalism.

Postmodernist deconstruction questions the Enlightenment's commitment to objective and universal criteria for knowledge and reason, when viewed as generally resting upon given impartial and universal principles of modernity. Both standards of knowledge and justification have foundationalist criteria. In the two-tiered account of beliefs, the lower-tier beliefs inferentially warrant or justify the higher one, *a priori* or *a posteriori*.

Although not a unified doctrine, as a critique of epistemology, the term postmodernism has generally come to stand for a family of claims that foreground the positionality of all knowing subjects as embedded in relations governed by social factors. In postmodernist scholarship, the work of theorist Jean Francois Lyotard explicitly targets Enlightenment epistemology.

Offering a definitive account of postmodernism as "incredulity" toward all metanarratives, Jean Francois Lyotard's (1984) coined the term "postmodernism" (1984) in his work, *The Postmodern Condition*. The term "modern" is meant to designate "any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse . . . making explicit appeal to some grand narrative" (Lyotard cited in Nuyen, 1995 p. 44). The metanarrative for Lyotard refers to conceptual schemes offering putative criteria by which to evaluate and make sense of reality and experience in terms of constitutive ideals and principles. Bain (1995) notes that "Marxist, liberal-political, capitalist, economic" theories qualify as metanarratives for Lyotard offering "prognostications of the end of history as the general emancipation of something called universal humanity" (p. 4). As "philosophical accounts of the progress of history," metanarratives posit a "hero of knowledge" that "struggles toward a great goal such as freedom, equality, or the creation of wealth" (Nicholson, 1995). These kinds of efforts aim to bring together actions or beliefs within undergirding principles that serve to justify them (Williams, 1998).

Lyotard classifies such aims as relics of modernism that not only a multiplicity of signs refute (Bain, 1995) but also are stories losing their monopoly on the world's stage of ideas. As Lyotard explains:

This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution that relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal." ( Lyotard cited in Bronner, 1995. p. 240-241)

The use of "legitimation" here refers to a process of judging what gets to be

counted as knowledge (Bronner, p. 42). Lyotard identifies "legitimation" as *raison d'être* of the grand narrative and claims that any such "apparatus" is losing its hold.

The appeal to weakening legitimation in Lyotard's heralding of the decline of the metanarrative is particularly deconstructive for modern epistemology in the sense that it draws attention to the limited and socially exclusive origin of the Enlightenment's grand foundationalist project. Voices of the privileged few such as Plato, Descartes and Kant dominate and shape a discussion that makes universal claims about the nature of knowledge. Given how influential modernist epistemology has been, Lyotard argues that a complex institutional machinery must be in place to perpetuate the dominance of this normative conception of knowledge. He offers the university system as one culpable exemplar, in that the import of the education disseminated is contingent upon privileging the Western traditional epistemology.

According to Webster (1997) Lyotard's deconstruction claims that the priority that the Enlightenment gives to reason and universal knowledge is a "subjective, political and cultural phenomenon" (p. 105). The notion of "language games" also serves to support a claim of there being a fundamental incommensurability among social groups that is prohibitive for resolving conflicts. Thus for epistemology, Lyotard's deconstruction questions the very idea that any beliefs meeting the given criteria could transmit justification in universal ways that transcend the local and particular nature of the claim.

Thus far I have been presenting an account of Lyotard's postmodernism and its challenge to modernism. By way of addressing the seeming ambiguity about the teacher's epistemological stance in Mason's account of critical mediation, in the section below, I review the response of prominent educational scholars to postmodern ideas. I argue that while postmodern provokes useful analysis of discourses of dominance it has untenable epistemological implications that undermine substantive principles that education should advocate.

### Educational Implications of Postmodernist Deconstruction

While there have been many positive assessments of the significance of postmodernism for education, now over twenty years after the English publication of the *Postmodern Condition*, some scholars such as Banks and McLaren eschew postmodernism. These critical assessments of postmodernism suggest that the teacher's cannot be neutral towards postmodernism and seek a compromise with its claims. I begin by discussing some of the more positive analyses of postmodernism.

## *Pro-Postmodernism in Education*

In a review of responses to Lyotard in the field of education in particular, Michalinos Zembylas (2000) recounts the views of essays published in the last 10 years. Zembylas cites Micheal Peter's (1995), *Education and the Postmodern Condition* as a seminal work. Henry Giroux (1995) in the foreword of this work, remarks on the pedagogical significance of postmodernism, "Postmodernism as a site of conflicting ideas, practices and tendencies becomes useful pedagogically when it provides elements of an oppositional discourse for understanding and responding to the [current] changing and educational shifts" (p.xi).

Blake, Smeyers, Smith and Standish (1998) comment on postmodernism's rejection of the grand narrative of modernism as also being instructive for the classroom.

If the narrative of enlightenment [sic] which has informed education can no longer function as grand narrative, perhaps nonetheless it still has a place as one small narrative among others. The problem . . . is our 'incredulity toward metanarratives.' Incredulity, as we saw, comes with loss of faith in foundations. A more modest narrative for education would acknowledge the ethical and emotional costs of the enlightenment [sic], no less than the political and social dangers of prejudice and ignorance . . . (p. 108)

The authors claim that one way to concede Lyotard's point about grand narratives is to modify the modernist project. Instead of a pervasive metanarrative we are able to better assess Enlightenment projects and their outcomes against the critique of postmodernism.

One of the strongest endorsements of postmodernism in education comes from Zembylas. According to this view, postmodernism "can be used to create a new pedagogy" that reconfigures the roles of both teacher and learner as well as the curriculum (p. 180). Zembylas makes even stronger claims about the epistemological implications of postmodernism. To consider the value for postmodernism in "science education pedagogy" is to "understand that the foundation of (pedagogical or science content) knowledge presupposes neither *one* pedagogical discourse nor *one* scientific discourse, but only regional epistemologies" (p. 164). Zembylas claims that, "Epistemology is meaningless as long as it remains outside of context, hence all science teaching and learning is conditional and therefore there are no uniform (universal) teaching methods or ways of knowing" (p. 164). This conclusion calls into question the very nature of the scientific enterprise.

Zembylas' strong critique of universal claims is the kind of postmodernism that seems to motivate the epistemological neutrality in the critical mediator; but Zembylas being correct precludes, as Mason (2000) claims, truth being one necessary criterion for curricula claims because truth is not absolute. In my view Zembylas's strong critique is not sustainable as pedagogy nor as epistemology because it is not only relativistically self-refuting but also counter to some educational values that we want to promote in our society. I elaborate below.

### Anti-postmodernism in Education

One primary criticism that major educational theorists level at postmodernism calls into question the view that all claims are merely local. In this section I consider views critical of postmodernism in this way from two prominent scholars in multicultural education, James Banks and Peter McLaren.

In the early stages of James Banks' (1996) work, he appealed to postmodernism as a construct within which he defended multicultural education, as revealed in the rhetoric of his appeals. At this point in Banks writing, the epistemological claims of postmodernism were consonant with what Banks had come to believe about the literary and historical claims that constitute the Western canon in educational textbooks.

Banks defines his multiculturalism in contrast with those seeking to preserve the "canon." The canon, in Bank's view, is "the defense of the existing curriculum and structures in higher education" (Banks, p. 2). Multicultural education not only actively seeks to infuse the curriculum with racially, ethnically and, gender-neutral material, but also to directly counter the subversive effects of a sacrosanct canon on the less dominant groups in society. As Banks explains,

Rather than excluding Western civilization from the curriculum, multiculturalists want a more truthful, complex, and diverse version of the West taught in the schools. They want the curriculum to describe the ways in which African, Asian, and indigenous American cultures have influenced and interacted with Western civilization. They also want schools to discuss not only the diversity and democratic ideals of the Western civilization, but also its failures, tensions, and dilemmas, and the struggles by various groups in Western societies to realize their dreams against great odds. We need to deconstruct the myth that the West is homogenous, that it owes few debts to other world civilizations, and that only privileged, and upper-status Europeans and European American males have been its key actors. (p. 4-5)

Banks' interrogation of the Western narrative, as described above, is consonant

with the postmodernist critique of the metanarrative, which is evident in his use of the term "deconstruct."

Postmodern ideas also play a significant role in Banks' call for a more inclusive education. One aim of James Banks and Cherry Banks (1996) in *Multicultural Education: Transformative Knowledge and Action* is to continue the case for the modification of the curriculum by arguing for the incorporation of sufficiently racially, ethnically and culturally diverse material. The goal of this change would be for each ethnic group to be well informed about its own history and culture as well as that of others. This goal also has an explicit social purpose. As Banks explains:

Within the past two decades, multicultural education has emerged as a vehicle to facilitate the transformation of the nation's educational institutions and the structural inclusion of the nation's diverse groups into U.S. society.  
("Transformative Knowledge" p. 336)

Multicultural education not only has the goal of a more inclusive education but also transformation.

Thomas Powers (2002) identifies as being "uncontroversial" the view that Banks' account of multiculturalism was postmodernist. He quotes Banks' statement that "Multicultural education is . . . postmodern in its assumptions about the relationship between human values, knowledge and actions" (cited in Powers 2002, p. 212). However Powers also argues that Banks gradually distanced himself from postmodernism because its political and moral limitations. As Powers states, "The heart of Banks vision of multiculturalism in American is a specific political and moral outlook, and it is this that determines the limits of his postmodernism . . . precisely because of the political and moral vision animating his broader project, Banks is not ready to dispense with concern for objectivity and truth" (p. 216-217). Banks views multiculturalism as in fact illuminating truth (p. 217).

The limitations of postmodernism are clearly tied to the relativistic implications of the postmodernist claim that no proposition can be true beyond the particular local context in which it is claimed. Powers quotes Banks' claim that "We're committed to democratic values, that one value is not as good as the other." (Banks cited in Powers 2002, p. 17) Banks does not view his multiculturalist views as just one perspective limited to local context incorporating universal democratic principles.

Ambivalence about postmodernism is also evident in Peter McLaren's (1995) work. On one hand, he defines postmodernism in what he takes to be a complimentary



way, "to refer to, among other things, the rupturing of the unitary fixity and homogenizing logic of the grand narratives of Western European thought . . . In a broad sense, it also suggests the rejection of truth claims that have a grounding in a transcendent reality independent of collective human existence" (p. 15). McLaren sympathizes with the critical role that postmodernism has come to play in Western culture.

On the other hand, McLaren (1995) also claims that there are limits to the usefulness of postmodernism in education, he states that, "While we should welcome the breaking down of grand theories informed by Euro-centric and patriarchal assumptions and epistemological certainties, we are aware that questions related to oppression and liberation have a greater propensity to become lost in a new postmodernist relativism" (p. 16). McLaren suggests that the limits of postmodernism obtain where claims are made of injustice or justice. The reduction of human existence to the "disembodied signifiers" in the fashion of texts and diffusion of history into random and unrelated events has led to a noticeable "abandonment of the language of social change, emancipatory practice, and transformative politics" (p. 205). This view suggests that postmodernism taken to its fullest extent undermines efforts at ending oppression.

McLaren (1998) does distinguish among kinds of postmodernism. Some forms of postmodernism, such as "skeptical postmodernism" or "ludic postmodernism" not only produce salient explorations into the nature of identity and the significance of difference but also engage in "an epistemological relativism that calls for a tolerance of range of meanings without advocating any one of them" (p. 208). Epistemological relativism, according to Harvey Siegel (2002),

may be defined as the view that knowledge (and/or truth or justification) is relative-to time, to place, to society, to culture, to historical epoch, to conceptual scheme or framework, or to personal training or conviction-in what counts as knowledge (or as true or justified) depends upon the value of one or more of these variables. Knowledge is relative in this way, according to the relativist, because different cultures, societies, epochs, etc. accept different sets of background principles, criteria, and or/or standards of evaluation for knowledge-claims, and there is no neutral way of choosing between these alternative standards. (p. 747)

For McLaren there are transcultural beliefs or values that unconditionally embracing postmodernism would deny. McLaren (1995) advocates an "organic" or "critical resistance" postmodernism that, "addresses the community of diverse Others under the law with respect to the guiding referents of freedom and liberation" (p. 210).



The legitimate form of postmodernism is one that incorporates norms of fairness and equality. In summary of the view of both Banks and McLaren, they embrace the role of postmodernism as a critique but believe that the stakes of education are too high to unconditionally embrace the epistemological relativism of the postmodernist project.

Thus far, in evaluating the adequacy of postmodernist claims for informing critical mediation, I have identified ways in which postmodernism offers fruitful critiques of modernism. Epistemologically, exclusively White males have crafted modernist metanarratives, with scant attention to the being inclusive of the experiences of others. Neutral and objective evidence too often has often one-sidedly been the experience, beliefs and research of the dominant culture. However thoughtful people remain compelled to only conditionally embrace postmodernism in the strongest sense because doing so places them in a dilemma of giving up moral and theoretical commitments that postmodernism undermines in its relativism. As I argued, consigning inferences to merely local contexts engenders an unsustainable epistemological relativism that logically precludes arguing for the broader relevance of principles of morality and truth.

#### Conclusion: Preparing Pre-service Teachers to be Critical Mediators of Knowledge

At the beginning of the paper, I argued for the inclusion of epistemology in teacher education in order to better prepare teachers to take an active role in defining and shaping their practice. The paper then offered to conditionally embrace Mason's (2000) "critical mediator of knowledge" with modification in the epistemological grounds for "mediation", as an apt description of the progressive role of the teacher at this point in education. This section reviews the paper's arguments for a modernist account of mediation and then argues that, although postmodernist epistemological claims provide useful critique of cultural claims, the notion of criticality entails a modernist epistemology. Finally, the paper provides exemplars of questions that the critical mediator may pose.

Mason's critical mediation synthesizes two accounts of the teacher in the classroom. Coming out of the "contexts of debates about the nature knowledge and truth" in issues related to outcomes-based education, Mason's critical mediation aims to accommodate both modernist and postmodernist accounts of knowledge (p. 352) in its mediational component. The teacher is not constrained either by accounts of knowledge as fixed and universally true or whether it is provisional and tentative (p.352). Mason attaches forms of pedagogies to either end of the epistemologically continua so that transmissive pedagogy imparts the fixed knowledge of modernist epistemology while skills-based instruction implies the tentative view of knowledge

suggested by postmodernism.

The second aspect, the "critical" component conforms to the notion that the teacher should be a cultural agent in the classroom, making "works . . . more accessible" to students while engaging them in an on-going critical examination of the culture. In this sense teachers are both "conservers of the culture and cultural subversives" (p. 352).

Although I acknowledge merit in attending to the postmodernist critique of modernism, I reject critical mediation as integrating epistemological neutrality with respect to the epistemological claims of modernism and postmodernism. Postmodernism does foreground the problem in inquiry of considering not only the given claims but also the positionality of the one who makes the claims. In this sense, postmodernism weakly applied is instructive. However my argument in this paper has been that Mason cannot dictate that truth is a curricula criterion while being open to postmodernist claims such as the tentativeness of all knowledge. Additionally McLaren's argument that there are principles such as justice that everyone should advocate and Bank's stated commitment to there being cultural and historical facts suggest that postmodernist claims about the provisional nature of truth cannot hold for all truth-claims.

The "critical" component provides some direction as to the kind of epistemological support that critical mediation requires in my view. According to Mason, "criticality" draws from the conservative view that the teacher should be a conservator of the culture and also its critic. Mason offers one example from a Confucian culture.

Teaching in the role of a socio-cultural critic means, for example, that a teacher teaching in a strongly communitarian culture, let us say a Confucian culture, who is therefore responsible for steeping her students in the values of filial piety and harmonious relationships, might also encourage her students to consider some of the difficulties potentially consequent on an excessive concern with respect for authority. She might help her students to develop confidence in their own abilities to ask probing questions and to adopt a sceptical [sic] perspective. They might come to accept that asking questions of parents, teachers, political leaders--of any figure in authority--is not necessarily and immediately disrespectful. They might thus develop their own skills of critical thinking, and discover that it is not antithetical to mutually respectful relationships. (p. 350)

In my view, the example suggests not that knowledge is tentative or provisional but rather that beliefs are. Students should become engaged with their cultural claims

by considering them in light of the contrasting beliefs of other cultures. This method of evaluation is consistent with a modernist approach, where for someone to know a proposition it is a necessary criterion that the claim be true. In the modern epistemological framework "criticality" evaluates claims by weighing reasons in its favor according to truth-indicative standards. At issue would be the extent to which students are justified in holding their cultural beliefs. Introducing other cultural beliefs could serve as defeaters, which, incorporated into their web of belief override prior justification.

In contrast, although a weak postmodernism might inform criticality, it should not and logically cannot be integrated into criticality epistemologically. A weak postmodernism highlights the ways in which inquiry is discursive and relatedly can be subject to the social and political vicissitudes that bear on language. Totalizing frameworks are by their nature selective, interpretive and hermeneutic. However, the postmodern critique is limited in scope. For example, the culture under discussion above is an Eastern one which is exempt from the anti-modernist critique of postmodernism in the reference to the Confucianism. More substantively, any critique suggests a hierarchy of reasons, which is in keeping with modernism and involves a weighing of good and better kinds of justifications that we could offer for beliefs, as Siegel (1995, 1998) has extensively argued.

As stated early in the paper, it is likely and reasonable that practicing teachers would ask questions such as, which account of knowledge makes sense and why? What is at stake for my discipline in how this question is answered? In my view the teacher's role of critical mediation demands that they understand the prevailing issues surrounding competing criteria for knowledge and make sense of the postmodernist critique by placing emphasis on developing well-supported beliefs. The critical mediator distinguishes the epistemological process of rigorously seeking truth and well-supported beliefs from the socially informed process of coming to label claims as knowledge. Being competent in the epistemological issues facilitates this role. By presupposing modernism, the practitioner is not epistemologically constrained to a given pedagogy. In this regard, Zembylas' (2000) pronouncements about the end of epistemology are premature. There may not be universal teaching methods but universality is inherent in promoting learning through critical mediation.

Examples of the kinds of epistemological questions that properly appropriate postmodernism and modernism in critical mediation would be:

Problem one: How might the curriculum content reflect appropriate consideration of gender view points and cultural claims, relative to norms of inquiry and knowledge, as

opposed to the privileging of the majority view?

Problem two: How can the curriculum reconcile the subjective and occasionally conflicting beliefs of various groups, including the primary group against which diversity is measured, with the goal of embodying the knowledge that students should learn?

Problem three: How can the curriculum inclusively relate objective/universal norms of knowledge/ justification to the beliefs that students acquire through their culture and or gender?

Problem four: How can education not propagate the view that the mainstream, male, majority culture has privileged access to truth or well-supported beliefs?

In my view, when pre-service teachers have been given the epistemological training that allow them to provide complex answers to these questions in their practice, then they have been given the education needed for them to become critical mediators of knowledge.

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### **Individual Educational Philosophies as Conceptual Framework: One Possible Approach**

Joseph S. Freedman

Alabama State University

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The title of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education's Special Session held at the American Philosophical Association Convention in Chicago on April 20, 2007 -- "Is there a Place for Philosophy in the Accreditation and Certification of Educational Programs for Teachers?" -- could be interpreted as a call for action by all of those university teachers who teach philosophy to prospective K-12 administrators and teachers. [1] This contribution -- which can be understood as a response thereto -- has two component parts. First, it will be suggested that K-12 professional educators who develop a personal conceptual framework -- possibly with the aid of the four steps to be described here -- will be empowered to make philosophy relevant to their professional responsibilities. And second, the role of sports within K-12 education will be mentioned in order to illustrate why a personal conceptual framework might help the individual professional educator to relate to the individual needs of K-12 students.

"Educational philosophy" is commonly associated with viewpoints such as behaviorism, constructivism, essentialism, progressivism, etc. [2] Such viewpoints might be deemed as insufficiently relevant to the highly complex and rapidly evolving environments in which professional educators (and especially educational administrators) work on a daily basis. A "conceptual framework" can be associated with the conceptual framework and/or vision of individual educational institutions at which professional educators are employed. A personal conceptual framework can assist a professional educator (and especially an educational administrator) in aligning his/her vision, goals, ideas, and practices with that of his/her institution. [3] In summary, it can be postulated here that many professional educators -- and especially those with administrative duties -- might find it easier to relate to a personal conceptual framework instead of to a personal educational philosophy.

A personal conceptual framework could be considered as a personal philosophy of education in the broadest possible sense. It can encompass (among other things): 1. a personal vision, a personal set of priorities, and/or an overall framework for performing one's professional duties; 2. a person's fundamental beliefs / tenets, ontological and/or religious; 3. a specific educational philosophy (e.g., behaviorism, constructivism, etc.) and/or some combination thereof. How might one formulate such a personal conceptual framework? There is no single approach that can be mandated.



One might proceed by using the following **four** steps.

In **Step 1**, you can ask yourself -- and answer -- an array of questions pertaining to your own professional position (past and/or present) and professional experience (e.g.): (a) What is the proper classroom role of textbooks, team teaching, field trips / guest presenters, testing, homework, computer-assisted technology, etc. (?) (b) Is the purpose of education to teach students **(i)** to be innovative and/or creative, **(ii)** knowledge and skills needed at higher levels, **(iii)** to be good citizens, **(iv)** to do well on tests, **(v)** [some combination of **i** through **iv**] (?) Your answers to these questions -- which you yourself have posed -- serve as your viewpoints pertaining to a range of educational issues and practices.

In **Step 2**, you can try to determine the following (A.-B.): A. Why does one hold to such viewpoints? B. What are one's fundamental beliefs / tenets that underlie these viewpoints?

In **Step 3**, you can look at your own fundamental beliefs / tenets as a whole; by doing so, you should be able to formulate -- or to begin formulating -- an overall, personal conceptual framework.

In **Step 4**: Refine and/or rethink and/or communicate your personal conceptual framework by looking at other viewpoints; this can include the following:

A. individual educational philosophies (e.g., behaviorism, constructivism, etc.);

B. individual influential educators (e.g., John Dewey); C. individual philosophers: better known ("textbook") philosophers and lesser known philosophers (e.g. teachers who taught philosophy professionally during the medieval and early modern periods).

Textbook philosophers could include occidental authors from the ancient period (e.g., Plato), from the medieval period (e.g., Thomas Aquinas), or post-medieval periods (e.g., John Locke). [4] In addition, one can draw on the thousands of authors who taught philosophy professionally during the late medieval and early modern periods. A substantial number of writings is extant at European and non-European libraries that arose in connection with this philosophy instruction. [5]

The Table accompanying this text presents a classification of philosophical sects given in the year 1612 by Johann Heinrich Alsted. [6] One can note that "philosophers" is conceived rather broadly here, with emphasis on the ancient period. According to Alsted, Adam was the first philosopher; other philosophy teachers active in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries subscribed to this same view. [7]



When teaching philosophy of education, this Table can be used to make the following point. If Adam is considered as the first philosopher, and if we can presuppose a belief in Biblical creation, then it could be concluding that all descendents of Adam -- i.e., all humans -- are philosophers. [8]

In Step 4, one is encouraged (in this approach) to utilize such viewpoints eclectically within the perspective of one's own personal conceptual framework. The manner in which one utilizes these viewpoints can depend on many factors, including the following (1.-4.): **1.** scope and content of one's personal conceptual framework; **2.** audience that one is addressing; **3.** environment in which one is working; **4.** one's own future professional plans.

In Step 1, the questions that one may ask will vary greatly depending on whether one is a teacher or an administrator. While principals and assistant principals clearly fall within the scope of administrators, school counselors and school library media specialists also have substantial administrative responsibilities.

Library media specialists (also referred to as school library media specialists and as school librarians) normally administer a school library media center (also referred to as a school library).

Using the example of the school library media specialist, the following are some questions that might be posed in Step 1: 1. To what extent should a library media center (LMC) be the center / hub of it's school? What does it mean for the LMC to be such a center / hub? [9] 2. To what extent should intellectual freedom be advocated in the LMC when specific materials housed and/or accessible there are challenged? [10]

If Question 1 is to be answered to the affirmative, this answer could follow from the fundamental belief (Step 2) that -- insofar as libraries are gateways to all formats and varieties of knowledge that can serve to support all points of view -- libraries could be regarded as a center in which people with highly diverse points of view could meet and exchange ideas. A personal belief in the importance of harmony and consensus among individuals belonging to a group -- grounded perhaps in part on an ecumenical and/or a pantheistic world view -- could serve as a basis for an affirmative answer to Question 1. [11] This personal belief would serve as a constituent part of one's personal conceptual framework (Step 3). One could also relate such a personal belief (in Step 4) to constructivism, to progressivism, and perhaps to one or more additional educational philosophies. [12]

An affirmative answer to Question 2 is strongly supported by the American Library

Association as well as by many individual professional librarians. [13] Such an answer might be based on the belief that the primary responsibility of libraries is to provide that information to patrons that they request and/or need. A personal belief that information provided to patrons might lead to the betterment of those individual patrons as well as society as a whole (Step 2) -- could serve as a basis for an affirmative answer to Question 2. One might (in Step 4) relate such a belief to reconstructivism. [14]

Many professional librarians -- including academic librarians, public librarians, and school library media specialists -- would support an affirmative answer to Question 1 as well as to Question 2. But if a parent of a student in the school formally challenges some materials owned by the school library media center, then such a challenge could conceivably lead to a polarization that would adversely effect the library media center's ability to serve as a center or hub of its school. [15] At that point, the library media specialist would probably need to make a decision as to whether an affirmative answer to Question 1 is more (or: less) important than an affirmative answer to Question 2.

A library media specialist who has a personal conceptual framework might utilize this framework in order to help arrive at a decision. From that decision might follow a specific course of action. For example, if the library media center's role as a center or hub is to be given priority, then the challenged material might be moved to an area with limited public access but be made available to any K-12 student who provides written permission from a parent or guardian to use this challenged material. [16]

A personal conceptual framework could -- theoretically speaking -- assist library media specialists and other K-12 administrators in making individual administrative decisions. It might also help professional educators to relate to the individual needs of K-12 students. The following observation can be made in this connection.

A panel that focused on the duties of school board members was organized within the context of within Dr. Joseph S. Freedman's course on Contrasting

Philosophies of Education (EDU 554) as taught at Alabama State University during the Spring Semester of 2007. [17] One of the school board members who participated in this panel made the following observation. Generally speaking, a parent might be more likely to complain, for example, that her daughter did not make a cheerleading team rather than that her daughter received poor grades at school. [18]

One of the students in this class, a high school football coach, later commented on that observation as follows: In sports activities, students are able to find their own

identity, while in normal academic courses they usually are not encouraged or able to do so. [19] Here it can be suggested that educators might endeavor to find ways to help students find their own identity beyond the realm of sports. And it can be suggested further that this normally will require that K-12 educators work with students individually, and K-12 educators that have articulated a person (i.e., individual) conceptual framework will -- generically speaking -- be more suited to do so.

## ENDNOTES

[1] Refer to the SPSE (Society for the Philosophical Study of Education) website at <<http://webs.csu.edu/mpes/mpes.html>> .

[2] For example, refer to the following texts: Howard Ozmon and Samuel Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education*, Seventh Edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill, 2003); G. Max Wingo, *Philosophies of Education: An Introduction* (Lexington, MA and Toronto: D. C. Heath and Company, 1974);

[3] This is relatively little published literature that addresses conceptual frameworks for professional education programs in general terms. Jonathan K. Parker, "Conceptual Frameworks for Teacher Education Programs at NCATE Accredited CCCU Institutions," *Research in Christian Higher Education* 4 (1997): 1-11; Gary R. Galluzzo and Roger S. Pankratz, "Five Attributes of a Teacher Education Program Knowledge Base," *Journal of Teacher Education* 41, No. 4 (September-October 1990): 7-14; Henrietta L. Barnes, "The Conceptual Basis for Thematic Teacher Education Programs," *Journal of Teacher Education* 38, no. 4 (July-August 1987): 13-18. The following article uses focuses on conceptual frameworks within context of public school instruction: Robin Smith, "Some Elements in a Conceptual Framework for Teaching Religion in Public Schools," *Religious Education* 73 (March-April 1978): 195-214. The following general discussions of conceptual frameworks can also be mentioned here: Santiago Sia, "Process Thought as Conceptual Framework," *Process Studies* 19 (1990): 248-255; Marion Brady, "Thinking Big: A *Conceptual Framework* for the Study of Everything," *Phi Delta Kappan* 86, no. 4 (December 2004): 276-281.

[4] The following recently published textbook on the philosophy of education not only discusses of a number of authors active in the medieval and Renaissance periods: Shiela G. Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education. Connecting Philosophy to Theory and Practice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ and Columbus, OH: Pearson, Merrill, Prentice Hall, 2005).

[5] Many of these professional philosophers also discusse pedagogical issues within

their writings, including -- from about the year 1550 onwards -- the concept of (teaching) method(s); refer to Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) and Joseph S. Freedman, *Philosophy and the Arts in Central Europe, 1500-1700. Teaching and Texts and Schools and Universities*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS 626 (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate / Variorum, 1999); Index 3 (Concepts/Terms and People/Places), p. 5.

[6] Johannes-Henricus Alstedius, *Philosophia digne restituta* (Herbornae Nassoviorum 1612), p. 93. I have used the copy of this work owned by the Marburg (Germany) University Library having the call number XIV C 136. Discussion of Johann Heinrich Alsted is given in Joseph S. Freedman, *European Academic Philosophy during the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries. The Life, Significance, and Philosophy of Clemens Timpler (1563/4-1624)*, 2 vols., Studien und Materialien zur Geschichte der Philosophie, 27 (Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York, Georg Olms, 1988); refer to the pages listed in the index of persons and places at the end of volume 2. Among Alsted's students was Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670); refer to the following study: Howard Hotson, *Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638): between Renaissance, Reformation, and universal reform*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford et al.: Clarendon Press, 2000).

[7] The view that the biblical Adam was the first philosopher was apparently commonly accepted by philosophy teachers in Europe during late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Refer to the following examples: Joannes Grunius, *Philosophiae origo, progressus, definitio, divisio, dignitas, utilitates* (Vitebergae: Excudebat Matthaëus Welach, 1587), p. 20; I have used the copy of this work owned by the Göttingen (Germany) State and University Library with the call number 80 Philos. I, 19. Clemens Timplerus, *Exercitationes philosophicarum sectiones X* (Hanoviae: Typis Petri Antonii, 1618), Section 2, Question 5 (p. 36); I have used the copy of this work owned by the Trier (Germany) Municipal Library with the call number Ao 80 55 (nr. 2). Grunius states that Adam was the first theologian as well as the first philosopher (page 20) and cites the Old Testament Book of Genesis in support of his position (page 21).

[8] Here the issue is not whether or not we might think -- from a 21st century perspective -- that Adam was a philosopher, but rather that we might (or might not) conclude on the basis of the fact that philosophy teachers from the late 16th and early 17th centuries apparently believed that he was. Philosophy teachers of that period frequently defined or described philosophy in terms of human knowledge and the ability of humans to acquire knowledge; for example, see Alsted, *Philosophia digne restituta* (as cited in footnote 6), page 10. In this period, man (homo: a generic term used to refer to woman as well as man) was normally defined or described by

philosophy teachers as a rational creature and/or as predicated with a rational soul. The following example can be given here: "Homo est animal anima rationali praedita." (Man is an animal who is predicated with a rational soul.), Clemens Timplerus, *Pars tertia & postrema physicae: complectens empsychologiam: hoc est, doctrinam de corporibus naturalibus animatis, libris V. explicatam* (Hanoviae: Apud Guilielmum Antonium, 1607), Liber (Book) 3, Caput (Chapter) 1, Theorem 7 (page 371); I have used the copy owned by the Braunschweig (Germany) Municipal Library with the call number C 1488 (3).

[9] Concerning the role of the school library media center as the center or hub of the school, refer to Linda R. Kaser, "A New Spin on Library Media Centers: The Hub of the School with the Help of Technology," *Library Media Connection*, 24, no. 1 (August/September 2005): 64-6. The American Association of School Librarians (a division of the American Library Association) advocates that the school library media center serve as the hub of its school: American Association of School Librarians, AASL Advocacy Toolkit Partner in Learning: The School Library Media Center; <<http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/toolkits/partnerlearning.cfm>> (retrieved June 2, 2007). Many individual library media centers endeavor to do so; for example, refer to Torrey Pines High School [San Diego, California], Library Media Center. The Academic Hub of the School, <<http://teachers.sduhsd.k12.ca.us/tpmediacenter/>> (retrieved June 2, 2007).

[10] Concerning challenges to library media centers and suggested policies to deal with such challenges, refer to the following literature: Nancy Kravitz, *Censorship and the School Library Media Center*. Greenwood Professional Guides in School Librarianship (Portsmouth, NH: Libraries Unlimited, 2002); Dianne McAfee Hopkins, "Factors Influencing the Outcome of Library Media Center Challenges at the Secondary Level," *School Library Media Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 229-244. A challenged materials policy normally should be included as a component of a library media center policies and procedures manual; for example, refer to: Dutch Fork Elementary School Library Media Center (Irmo, South Carolina), Policy and Procedures Manual, <[http://www.lex5.k12.sc.us/dfes/media\\_PandP.html](http://www.lex5.k12.sc.us/dfes/media_PandP.html)> (retrieved June 2, 2007).

[11] One author that might be referred to in this connection is Johann Amos Comenius; see footnote 6 above as well as the following: Pauline van Vliet and Arjo J. Vanderjagt, *Johannes Amos Comenius (1592-1670). Exponent of European Culture?* Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), *Verhandelingen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe reeks, deel 160* (Proceedings of the colloquium, Amsterdam, 14-15 May 1992) (Amsterdam et al.: North Holland, 1994); Daniel Murphy, *Comenius. A Critical Reassessment of his Life and*



*Work* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995).

[12] The following two textbooks present very useful tabular synopses in which individual educational philosophies (e.g., Classical Realism, Essentialism, Idealism, Perennialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism, are described across the board with respect to specific criteria (e.g. Educational Process, Worth of Subject Matters, Curriculum Content, Excellence vs. Equity; Purpose of Education; Nature of Learning Process; Nature of Teaching Process; Nature and Source of Human Values): Allan C. Ornstein, Edward F. Pajak, and Stacey B. Ornstein, *Contemporary Issues in Curriculum* (Boston et al.: Pearson / Allyn and Bacon, 2007), pp. 8-9; Morris L. Bigge, *Educational Philosophies for Teachers* (Columbus, OH et al.: Charles E. Merrill, 1982), pp. 4-9.

[13] Refer to the website of the American Library Association (<<http://www.ala.org>> --> Professional Tools --> Intellectual Freedom; retrieved on June 2, 2007)

[14] Refer to the very useful summary of Reconstructionism given by Ornstein, Pajak, and Ornstein (see footnote 10), pp. 8-9.

[15] The manner in which a library media specialist will respond to a challenge also will vary from school to school depending on a number of factors, which can include the following: 1. the relationship of the school library media specialist with the school principal; 2. the existennce of (school or school-district) policy with regard to challenged materials; 3. the culture of that given school; 4. the nature of the community in which the school is located. Also important are the reasons given for such a challenge. The person issuing the challenge might consider the information in question to fall into one of more of the following categories: a. pornography; b. unpatriotic material; c. contrary to certain (e.g., religious) values; d. not age appropriate.

[16] More problematic would be a situation, for example, where a parent challenged a multi-volume encyclopedia or other reference work because of a relatively small amount of allegedly objectionable material located therein. But in such a case the school library media specialist would normally have the support of her/his school administration in defusing such a challenge. A challenged material policy normally would require any person who objects to the presence of specific materials in a school library media center to write a letter requesting that those materials be removed and also explaining why those same materials should be considered as objectionable. Most would-be challengers of school library media center materials do not want to spend the time or effort to write such a letter.

[17] This panel -- held at Alabama State University (Montgomery, Alabama) on April 16, 2007 -- was to consist of the following participants:

Marcus Bell (Former School Board Vice President, Fulton County [Georgia] Public Schools), Ann M. Glasscock (Vice President, Chilton County [Alabama] Public Schools), and Sally Howell, J.D. (Assistant Executive Director, Alabama Association of School Boards); Ms. Glasscock and Ms. Howell were in attendance; Mr. Bell was unable to attend to an unforeseen professional obligation.

[18] Ann Glasscock made this observation during this panel session (see footnote 17).

[19] This commentary was made on April 23, 2007 by Kevin LeSueur, Athletic Director and Head Football Coach, Billingsley High School, Autauga Public Schools (Billingsley, Alabama).

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### *Education's Philosophical Aims and the Goals of Teacher Certification*

Liz Jackson

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

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What is the aim of public education? If the aim is to provide students with competency in basic subjects, a facts-based approach to teacher education involving functionally understanding different teaching methods may be justified. Yet if our goal is to also enable students to act autonomously in a diverse liberal democratic society, participating substantively in decision-making processes impacting their lives, more is needed; we must then further equip teachers with the skills to engage young people more philosophically. While it may be worth questioning whether this is a goal pursued by contemporary education, given the current state of our minimally, procedurally democratic republic, I do not expect that anyone would deny that this should be a goal of education in our society, even if it is just one among others. Indeed, even those who view our society as exceptional contend that educators must enable students to think critically, about the media and various viewpoints in society, given its diversity. Even conservative perspectives demand some sort of philosophical component to teacher



education.

This need is supposed to be met by courses in social foundations of education, which generally require pre-service teachers to think about, among other things, multicultural educational philosophies, pedagogy in relation to one's personal "philosophy of education," historical and contemporary debates in American educational policy, and so on. Yet as such courses are often marginalized in colleges of education that treat pre-service teachers more as "doers" than as "thinkers" - requiring of them many more classes in classroom management, educational psychology, professional dispositions, and the like - the teacher's need for more than a minimal grasp on philosophical ideas related to education and teaching should be outlined. Teachers should study philosophy as part of their training not merely to pass on "critical thinking" to their students, or even to reflect on one or more alternatives to traditionalist teaching methods; schoolteachers must study philosophy to develop methods for critically evaluating their own practices, materials, and changing conditions. The social foundations course does not do enough.

This essay considers the implications of these claims, presumably held by many of us teaching social foundations courses today, by exploring what these courses do and do not provide pre-service teachers and potential alternative or supplementary curriculum. I ground this discussion by reference to my own experiences teaching at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, which boasts well-regarded programs in both teacher education and (graduate) philosophy of education. My aim in considering future possibilities is to reconcile the major position of philosophers of education that philosophical thinking in general is devalued in teacher education programs today and that of many of our students and others who call for facts-based, practical (if not pragmatic) teacher training. As a critical philosopher of education and teacher educator, I want to take both groups' claims seriously here, honoring in particular my own students' voices, conditions, and potential interests. I think pre-service teachers need to study philosophy, in some sense of the word, for their vocation yet I see little more value than do most of them in their pursuit of traditional philosophical investigation (say, spending several weeks studying Plato, Rousseau, Heidegger, or Dewey).

What I want to offer here, then, are practical suggestions; regardless of how one might like to restructure pre-service teacher education generally, today the formal study of philosophy is barely relatable to the rest of the material learned in any contemporary program in pre-service teacher education, as previously described. In a sense, philosophy of education must earn its place within a coherent program of study, if we are to work productively with our students and colleagues outside philosophy of education who sense that philosophical material is often ineffectively incorporated in teacher education, despite our best intentions. This view is echoed in the following quotation by Sandra Cisneros, who probably would not identify as a philosopher of education but who is, nonetheless a philosophical educator who doubtlessly values some form of abstract or philosophical inquiry.

Even though I had minored in education and completed my student teaching in a Chicago public school, I wasn't prepared for my young students. After having spent 2 years in Iowa Writer's Workshop listening to my classmates ramble on endlessly about meter and metaphor, it seemed incredible to be dealing daily with students who came to school with a black eye from a boyfriend or the calamity of another unwanted pregnancy. [1]

Not all teachers face circumstances as described by Cisneros. Yet her critique raises a common concern among educators: abstract, philosophical inquiry must be in some sense clearly useful to practice. This is simply necessary for philosophy of education to gain legitimacy within teacher education programs and, in turn, can only improve the quality of the latter. Philosophers of education appreciate philosophy's value, unsurprisingly; yet the burden of proof remains on our shoulders for convincing others that abstract thinking is helpful to classroom teaching.

### Social Foundations

I teach at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Its college of education is relatively reputable, and admission to its teacher education program is quite competitive. The only class in educational policy or philosophy required for teacher certification (in any level/subject) is a sophomore-level course, Social Foundations in American Education. (Students generally apply to the teacher education program during their sophomore year, during or after taking the course, in order to be admitted their junior year.) Social Foundations aims to give students an overview of the history, philosophy, and sociology of (American) education and an outline of contemporary debates. Just over three hundred students attend, with break-out sections of 15-25 students.

Given the wide-ranging goals of the course and the interdisciplinary backgrounds of the instructors (in history, philosophy, or sociology of education), philosophy is generally engaged in Social Foundations in a relatively minimal sense. Students are asked to read and grasp the main ideas of some key excerpts by Horace Mann, Thomas Jefferson, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Gloria Ladson-Billings. Liberalism, progressivism, and essentialism are treated as historical trends; students are asked to contextualize the ideas involved with the concepts and possibly critique or juxtapose these different perspectives, but the philosophies or trends are generally viewed statically: as if liberalism was one thing at one time, for instance. By no means is this minimally philosophical perspective on education the aim of the instructors; there is simply too much to cover to get into nitty-gritty issues. The course is designed, as I understand many are, as an introductory course to educational policy studies.

Yet I am not sure that extensive analyses of liberalism or progressivism, of Dewey or Freire, for instance, would be particularly useful to many of our students, even if it were possible. While I have written and thought much about both liberalism and Freire, I am not personally motivated to challenge my future music educators to critique *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* or ensure that my pre-service science teachers understand nuances of Enlightenment liberal thought. While these philosophical views might doubtlessly help them think more reflexively and critically about their vocation and knowledges implicit therein, of various academic discourses, it is abundantly clear in working with undergraduate students their focused interest on their future practice. My education students do not want to be philosophers of education, by and large, and a systematic education in educational philosophy does not mirror what teachers need to know.

Ironically, given what my students often state (the common critique previously discussed), teaching students more or less against their explicit interests Freire's banking concept of education would be to deposit my superior knowledge in Freire's sense, while "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other." [2] Perhaps such knowledge is more useful than my students realize — yet here Freire emphasizes hope and faith, not traditional, banking education, and so discussing Freire with my students meaningfully might involve modeling rather than instructing, [3] preparing my class as an open-ended process, and allowing their personal concerns with good and bad music education, or dogmatic or experimental science education (just to follow up with the two previous examples) to guide us and serve as content knowledge in educational philosophy. [4]

Others may disagree with my assessment of Freire's theory and its implications for practice, and this raises an additional concern: the diversity within philosophy of education and among various Foundations thinkers and educators precludes easy establishment of who, among educational theorists, is important and why, of who must be included and to what extent. How can I compel my students to value systematic examinations of Plato or Dewey, as many of my colleagues do, when as an academic my *own* experience with these thinkers is relatively minimal? How can I expect analytical philosophers of education to teach Freire or Ladson-Billings in a compelling manner? That there is no Foundations canon seems to attest to the likelihood that there is little foundation or base to what we do in our field, be it philosophy of education, educational policy analysis, or social foundations of education. I have a hard time compelling my students to constructively explore that which my own colleagues are free to "take or leave." We are not in agreement about what constitutes philosophy of education, and our field is not a transferable monolith.

Even if, in my particular situation, we could choose one educational philosophy or aspect of philosophy of education as exemplary for encouraging teachers to think philosophically, justifying its benefit to pre-service teachers in various domains, from early childhood education to higher level English and math education, is impossible. While many (on our teaching team) feel that Dewey's ideas are useful to our students, I tend to regret that inevitable, hasty comparison with Thomas Jefferson or even E.D. Hirsch; these sorts of basic comprehension exercises strike me as seriously anti-intellectual and unproductive, and I fear their likelihood in any Social Foundations context undermines what we want to do and strengthens the case for teaching "facts" over "abstract theories." In sum, the teaching conditions in traditionally conceived Social Foundations courses do not favor a philosophical approach that provides clear intellectual benefits to our students. We can hardly expect students (or others) to see the benefits of philosophy to their work in such an overly broad context.

What I would like to suggest here instead is that pre-service teachers would benefit from coursework further along in their programs that specifically considers philosophical perspectives on educational research and educational reform. The topics of these courses, as I will outline below, currently serve educators pursuing further education through the college at Illinois in practical and meaningful ways, while also providing clear and productive connections between theory and practice, philosophy and education. While perhaps regrettable, philosophy should be clearly applicable to educational practice if it is to be valued by our students and colleagues in education; hopefully thinking through present conditions, I mean to consider possibilities for philosophical study in pre-service teacher education that are explicitly relevant to the vocation of education. [5]

### Philosophical Perspectives on Educational Research and Reform

I have in mind two courses currently offered in educational policy at Illinois that exemplify what I view as beneficial philosophical coursework for pre-service teachers. The first is a graduate-level course on philosophical perspectives on educational research that boasts one of the highest cross-department attendance rates at the college; students in educational psychology, music education, curriculum and instruction, human resources education, and outside the college often attend this seminar course. "Ed Res" is taught by professors involved with debates in educational research surrounding scientific educational research, epistemology and critical theories of education, social scientific methodology and hermeneutics, and so on. Advanced readings in these areas are continuously connected through class discussion to actual classroom practices, lest students taking the course for research methodology credit who are not familiar with philosophy participate at a disadvantage.

While not all aspects of this course would complement a traditional teacher education — much of the coursework on methodology would be reasonably viewed by teacher educators as irrelevant — the important lesson for teachers from a course along these lines would involve learning to scrutinize contemporary educational research in various fields against the backdrop of the philosophical questioning of empiricism, the sociology of knowledge, and the politics of educational research. Is this asking too much? I think not; pre-service teachers have little need to consider Charles Taylor on hermeneutics [6] or D.C. Phillips on philosophers of education and empirical educational research [7] to develop perspectives substantively cognizant of the challenges in theorizing and relating theory to practice.

My students in Social Foundations often highlight as particularly useful occasions where we juxtapose, for instance, our (practical and theoretical) emphasis on praxis (say, with reference to Freire) with the research methods assumed and pedagogical practices employed in the educational psychology and methods courses that are also part of their teacher education programs. However, providing a contrast in teaching and research methods is a side effect of a social foundations course, rather than its aim; students are not provided with a great deal of space in traditional teacher education programs to consider the contrasting claims, research methods, and pedagogies they are exposed to, when this is rich ground for philosophical inquiry.

For instance, multicultural educational approaches are considered with relative thoroughness in Social Foundations; we read W.E.B. Dubois and Ladson-Billings questioning the effectiveness of white teachers for increasing educational opportunity and juxtapose their arguments with Greg Mitchie's stories of teaching in Chicago public schools, to predominantly minority students. Implicitly we ask students by requiring these readings to question what they think they know about racial equality and inequality, what they know about cultural and racial difference, and so on. Yet as our students will probably be taught lessons at odds with seriously asking these questions in their required classes in other departments, I fear that this knowledge might ultimately become departmentalized in their minds as they lack the resources to — or opportunities for — critically analyzing competing knowledge claims in the various fields of educational inquiry. Teachers today often learn about “diversity” from us, and “how to handle it” from others, whose implicit understandings of diversity might diverge substantially from ours. In such a situation our students must be philosophical capable in ways that Social Foundations traditionally conceived does not afford.

A more detailed example might be helpful here, in the same vein. Ladson-Billings discusses the “culture of poverty” pre-service teachers learn to attribute to their minority students. [8] Basically, pre-service and practicing teachers are quick to



identify as cultural any number of phenomena in a simplistic and reductive, nonanthropological way, unwittingly as a euphemism for various minority experiences in the United States. Ladson-Billings cites incidents where pre-service teachers attribute everything from speaking loudly in class to not bringing in show-and-tell items to culture with little to no serious consideration of race and class. She sees part of the problem as one of teacher education lacking any theoretical exploration of culture beyond the simplest sort of training for cultural sensitivity or diversity. This results, she argues, in a blindness to one's own culture, in line with contemporary white understandings of American culture as simply "free and equal."

I would extend her argument to observe that teacher education programs' common reliance on the field of educational psychology muddles the understanding of cultural context even further, substituting methodological assumptions for serious considerations of educational research methodology or different conceptualizations of multicultural education. Take, for instance, a more or less typical article read in an educational psychology class on sociocultural development and children's narrative skills. The report juxtaposes the language and practices of families and students of "Maintown, [a] mainstream, middle-class school-oriented culture" and "Trackton...a black mill community of recent rural origin." [9] It argues, essentially, that the different cultures of these different towns enable different sorts of communicative development, centering around the generality that in Maintown bedtime stories are the norm while in Trackton conversations usually relate to real life events rather than fiction. This difference is causally related in the article to the first group being more apt at abstract question-and-answer classroom activities than the second and leads the author to conclude that rather than emphasizing student "differences in class, amount of education, and level of civilization among groups having different literacy characteristics," we need to do more "ethnography." That class might have something to do with whether or not one even has stories to read at home — which the author mentions as a matter of fact — is dismissed as irrelevant to the discussion.

While this may seem to be an unfair example to use, as educational psychologists are increasingly aware of critical methodologies, hermeneutical ethnography, and the like today, my point here is that students attending survey courses lacking interdisciplinary understandings have little opportunity to critically reflect on the methods of the research they read about and are expected to learn from. They learn a little educational psychology from educational psychologists, educational philosophy from educational philosophers, practices from teachers, and so on, without any sort of critical synthesis of how, for instance, education and educational opportunity for minorities can be enhanced.



My point, then, is not that teachers should learn what Ladson-Billings writes rather than what, for instance, Hirsch writes; [10] rather, it is that teachers should gain experience in critically evaluating the different focuses of different thinkers concerned with the same sorts of general issues, with how diversity is conceived in multifarious ways, if they are to intentionally and productively make use of either Ladson-Billings' or Hirsch's research, or take on a different approach entirely. [11] Should teachers learn to appreciate cultural difference in such a way as to view themselves as the exclusive means of educational change — in line with recent educational policies holding teachers accountable — or should they view structural factors as crucial barriers to their goal of enabling more equal educational opportunities? How do the various conditions of their trade (their educations, pay, unionization, and so on) relate to thinking through these issues? While I do not doubt that pre-service and practicing teachers weigh in on these matters, individually and in collectivities, they are given no training to do so methodically by teacher education programs that dabble in different fields, with little to no regard for the essentially philosophical aspects of educational all inquiry.

To suggest a course that helps teachers think through these vital issues around theory and practice in educational research today is, perhaps, idealistic. Yet such a requirement seems grounded by the National Research Council (NRC) report on scientific standards in education, which emphasizes in key places the changing nature of theoretical work, given the challenges to social scientific educational research. [12] Ladson-Billings's critique of educational psychology seems relevant in this context. Many educational theorists feel the NRC report does not go far enough in critically questioning traditional methods in educational research, yet teacher education programs generally lead their students, pre-service teachers, to take in what they learn in their classes as valid despite the inconsistencies of message and focus therein. In this context teachers need to learn to constructively question research methods and their philosophical assumptions to function intentionally. Learning about progressivism and Dewey, essentialism and Hirsch, and even of multiculturalism and Ladson-Billings, as if discrete from the rest, will hardly equip them to make the most of the diverse resources they are given to do their work. A focus on research methods is warranted by the conditions in which pre-service teachers study.

Changes in educational policy are also continuous and often far-reaching. They present challenges to teachers and also, at least occasionally, opportunities. A second course I would add to engage pre-service teachers in worthwhile, meaningful philosophical inquiry regards educational reform (such a course could be an extension of the one previously described). I instruct this sort of course during the summer for returning teachers; the course has become popular enough in recent years that we

have added sections to it for not just returning teachers but also for students studying educational administration, human resources education, global studies in education, and more. We teach this course online and encourage students to view the mode of education as part of the course content, critically responding to the challenges and opportunities the increased and intensified common use of technology and “distance learning” present. We ask students to consider how communication, ethics, knowledge, and community are being changed by the widespread use of the internet (and digital divides), the increasing role of corporations in public schools, and other globalizing forces.

This course is popular because teachers (as well as administrators, librarians, and others) view the content — which is generally philosophical — as helpful for practice, and because these matters are, by and large, only discussed casually in traditional teacher education programs. The success of the class speaks directly to the question of if and why teachers should study philosophy: Teaching is not a static activity. In fact most teachers go into the vocation not to give out some facts, at any level, but to make change, one individual at a time. Teacher education programs give teachers the best, most recent knowledge in the various fields related to educational practice, as they should. Yet education, like scholarship, changes continuously in its conditions and direction. We are not preparing dynamic guides and mentors for our society by giving them a little psychology and a little philosophy, alongside a little practice. Nor are we responding as best we can to their needs as a crucial part of a changing mass enterprise. While I do not expect my ideas to raise eyebrows here or garner a high level of support in colleges of education facing continuous budget cuts, I hope my experiences shed light on some possibilities and justifications for increasing a certain sort of philosophical inquiry in teacher education.

### Conclusion

The only case in which teaching would not be aided by some sort of philosophical experience would be one where perfect information could be perfectly transmitted as dictated by some authority. This is not often the case, however, and this transmission, this education, has troubled so many of us for so long that there has emerged multiple disciplines dedicated to sorting out how to help different sorts of learners and grapple with other conditions related to education. Yet we do not normally expose teachers directly to the debates these disciplinary understandings bring forth. Instead they are expected to learn a survey of contemporary knowledge about educational policy, educational psychology, practice, and so on, perhaps putting one or more of them to some sort of intra-disciplinary methodological test, if any. This neither enables teachers in developing critical views on the best knowledge available, nor takes advantage of

teachers' naturally philosophical dispositions toward education. [13]

While social foundations courses aim to provide pre-service teachers space to debate ideas of philosophical and political import, it is but one goal among others, and students are given little chance to reflect on the other theories they are exposed to in the course of their teacher education, as they are often required early in their programs. While I do not doubt that cross-disciplinary analyses and critical theories are emphasized at times to balance out knowledge in other fields, students are not given by the departmentalized structure of their education an opportunity to consider critically the whole of what they learn. Philosophy of education quickly is replaced by educational psychology, as if neither had anything to say to the other since essentialism undercut progressivism.

In this situation two additional courses discussed here would complement teacher education as it is practiced today. The first would enable the sort of interdisciplinary criticality emphasized here, allowing teachers space to reflect on the changing nature of the educational research that constitutes so much of their education to be teachers. Experience relating contemporary debates in the field to philosophical ideas can prepare pre-service teachers to critically analyze practices and methods encouraged and put forward in the future. While such might not hold immediate value, it is foolish to see educational research as static and deny the need for criticality about the contemporary field.

A course highlighting the changing nature of educational policy and its conditions, given technology and globalization, would also aid pre-service teachers who would otherwise learn about technology from one scholar, cultural diversity from another, and philosophy and ethics from yet another. Crucially both classes could enable teachers to effectively link theory to practice as neither classroom practice nor scholarship is emphasized above the other. Education is a process of change and changing conditions mark educational practice and philosophy; to think teachers need not be bothered to develop skill and experience with considering competing academic and popular discourses in such a dynamic environment is to ignore the philosophical nature of education. Furthermore, it undermines the role of educators, as well as our own place in colleges of education and in a society where education remains subject to intense debate.

## ENDNOTES

[1] Sandra Cisneros, "Foreword," in Gregory Mitchie, *Holler if You Hear Me: The Education of a Teacher and His Students* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), ix.

[2] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1982), 58 (gender use in original).

[3] See Mordechai Gordon, "Engaging Student Disengagement," in *Philosophy of Education Yearbook 2007*, ed. Barbara S. Stengel (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 2007).

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[8] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "It's Not a Cultural of Poverty, It's the Poverty of Culture: The Problem with Teacher Education," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2006).

[9] Sarah Michaels, "'Sharing Time': Children's Narrative Styles and Differential Access to Literacy," *Language Socialization* 10 (1981).

[10] See, for instance, E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

[11] I am currently working through various multicultural approaches to education; for two additional positions on diversity and education, see James A. and Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds., *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2004) and Ram Mahalingam and Cameron McCarthy, eds., *Multicultural Curriculum: New Directions for Social Theory, Practice and Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

[12] Richard J. Shavelson and Lisa Towne, eds., *Scientific Research in Education* (Washington, D.C. : National Research Council, 2002)

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**Post Post-Modern Paradigm in Educational Knowledge:  
A Self-Ethnography Teaching Narrative**

Maya Levanon  
Montclair State University

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A careful observation of the surrounding social ambience, on its increasing numbers of spiritual and philosophical manuals, magazines & newspaper articles, films, festivals, retreats, and conferences (Forman, 2004; Heelas, 1996; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Wexler, 2000), has brought me to believe that there is a need for a new model for a meaningful inquiry. The sound of an ancient discourse that has been brought back to life in the academic corridors, including those of the education departments (e.g. Bailin, 2004; Love, 2001; Riley-Taylor, 2002; Stokley, 2002), has motivated me to focus my endeavor on creating a new epistemological paradigm that will provide a crystallized outlook on life's most profound, yet perplexing questions by stabilizing some of our experiences. Subsequently, this paradigm strives to transcend our binary disposition and the seemingly schisms and contradictions it entails. Instead, this paradigm examines ways to access wholeness by developing a synthesis toward meaningful knowledge, i.e. knowledge that stems from and relates to our carefully examined experiences, and when implemented appropriately, can improve and even enlighten future conduct. I call this new paradigm "philosophical-spirituality," where we approach spirituality philosophically and, philosophy spiritually.

First, it is important to clarify that I approach both philosophy and spirituality not as subject matters, but as two complementary modules in a meaningful whole inquiry. A rough distinction, though may appear quite artificial, may in fact make this idea more accessible, hence I suggest that while philosophy identifies itself as a rational enterprise, concerned with finding the Absolute (and consequently objective) Truth, spirituality (within the context of my educational work), acknowledges the relevancy of the subjective self who construes truths while participating in a larger community; in other words, I believe that an Absolute Truth may exist, but we come to meet it through our subjective (individual and collective) experiences and interpretations. Additionally, my account of the spiritual suggests that our work, alone and with others, is eventually in the service of something larger than our personal immediate experience and gratification; consequently, in the life of spiritually developed agents, we find certain virtues and dispositions (e.g.: trust, compassion); in that sense, spirituality blueprints



our performances similarly to how ancient philosophy as the art of living did (Hadot, 1995; Nehamas, 1998). After clarifying these ideas, as part of the constructivist ambience I strive to create with students, it is absolutely essential to illustrate how we are all engaged with philosophy and spirituality, when asking existential, ethical or theological questions, which are fundamental aspect in the human experience.

Continuing this line of thought, I concluded that theories alone are not enough, and this applies to me and to my students (in the teacher education program). This is especially true when we are playing in the educational arena, where in order to advance a change we have to examine theories in the light of pragmatic experience and vice versa: examine our actual service while employing critical reflection and theories. Hence, when I began working on "Philosophical-Spirituality," I knew I had to ground it in practice and coming full circle by examining this practice critically.

In this paper then, I trace my ideas regarding the pedagogy I employ and how does it echo what I teach, as an attempt to mesh it with lived experiences. A critical examination concerns with how I handle dilemmas raised by real-life situations, will not only give me a better understanding of my theory, but also of the different roles I play. Consequently, in this paper I use a research method that allows a validation of claims that are a-priori subjective (Carspecken, 1996; Carter & Doyle, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Ellis, 1997; Schon, 1983, 1987), since the voice who speaks reveals the author's identity, state of mind, goals and beliefs that stem and entail one's personal and professional experiences.

As a form of a constructivist educational research, this type of reflective self-study presupposes that personal lived experiences are inescapably synergized into the different facets construing knowledge, identity, and the relations between the two. One critique argues that as a subjective research it is contextual (Cochran-Smith, 2005), thus missing what traditionally associated with valid research: The attempt to transcend concrete case and findings. Nevertheless, in a way, I believe that often, what we believe to be an objective inquiry is - unintentionally perhaps - a response to personal experiences and social encounters, as these are the lenses through which we examine the phenomenon at hand. In other words, applying external imperatives and criteria, is not a sufficient condition to guarantee objectivity, since these too are a filtered product of our subjective conduct. So in a way, approaching inquiry with an authentic voice facilitates authentic findings and consequently, authentic practice. Furthermore, self-narrative attempts to understand thy self as an active participant in the process of creating one's surroundings, and here the inductive potential can be found. The Platonic recollection suggests that the answers are within us, yet, in order to assure our intuitive ideas, Socrates calls us to ground these eureka-like moments by using critical questioning and reflection, accentuating the connections between life's different dimensions. A reflective aftermath is a form of research then because it explores new epistemological relationships with data; in fact, it even reconstructs the meaning of "data" by referring to accumulative experiences and the researcher's life-story as one. Hence, reflective self-narrative suits individuals who tend to observe and absorb everything they come across: journals, notes, poems, newspapers cuts,



postcards, conversations, etc.

The critique goes further by portraying an alleged paradoxical concept "teacher-researcher:" while it is common to understand the researcher's role as contributing to a particular body of knowledge, the teacher's traditional role is delivering what those researchers have construed. But it is high times we re-think this schism: a philosophical (in the sense of "the love of wisdom") approach toward "research," "knowledge," and "education" may suggest that one way of contributing to present body of knowledge, is by reconstructing it with those for whom it will mean something, which is precisely what a progressive educator does. Within the constructivist educational tradition, both teachers and students are active agents in the revitalizing process of deconstructing the existing knowledge structure, and then reconstructing it together. In order to do so, teachers have to develop certain skills, e.g. reflectivity, creativity, critical thinking, curiosity and diligence, and when they do that, they operate as researchers; through actions such as questioning, reflecting and constructing, the "teacher" and the "researcher" infuse into one complemented self.

Another methodological justification for using the critical self-narrative method is that it echoes Philosophical-Spirituality perfectly: The reflective practitioner takes risks twice; first, as a teacher, when exposing herself in the practice when sharing dilemmas and feelings and thereby modeling self-awareness and subsequently self-knowledge and growth. Later, as a researcher, the self-narrator goes against socially discriminating structures and conventions regarding the nature of research and knowledge. These attributes: valor, sharing, critical reflection, tying ideas with life itself, are all traditional characteristic of The Art of Living and the different philosophers and spiritual teachers who mastered it.

Aiming at bringing about this organic knowledge, this paper communicates in two voices: I first conceptually analyze what I believe to be foundational for understanding its principle narrative: transformation, spiritual leadership, and authentic empowerment. Using a more personal voice, I will then reflect on one of my professional development courses I conduct twice a year with teachers, in a way that corresponds to these concepts.

### Reflection as key for transformation

The poor image of the teaching profession (McPherson, 1981; Zeichner, 1988) can be correlated with the low expectations, trust, responsibilities, and the material reward educators are known to have. Empowered teachers who have ownership of the knowledge they work with and whose voiced opinions matter, is the key for an educational reform that will turn the profession more attractive for more talented individuals and larger budgets to reward them.

Regaining one's voice though requires a safe-space, where sharing experiences and narratives, is encouraged. A few years ago, while writing a teaching journal, I realized how often I was confused simply because I had no one to share and compare

my experiences and dilemmas with, without being worried of how it sounds and perceived. We find support groups everywhere, yet professional educators seem to fall between the teacher's-lounge chairs, remaining anonymous behind the closed doors of their classrooms. Gathering with peers on a regular basis, allows us to develop a wider range of references and perspectives, i.e. safe-space isn't exclusively for professional dilemmas; rather it's where individuals are invited to bring their soul and its reflective philosophical-spiritual quest.

Genuine reflective moments enable us to digest what we have experienced, and thereby allowing us to make the quantum leap towards the next phase in life's journey. It allows us to synthesize our inner and outer experiences into an organic unit that enables us to make sense of the world of which we are an integral part. In order for that to happen, we have to conceive "in" and "out" dialectically: one cycle has to end in order for the next to begin, and the meeting points are the reflective moments, the spring-boards from where we are now toward actualizing our full potential.

Transformation and growth are immanently dialectical by acknowledging our past while envisioning a future. Yet, as creatures of habit we usually try to avoid changes, even good one we approach auspiciously, which is why the prisoners in the cave will inevitably scold the enlightened one who offers them an epistemological transformation. Indeed I often hear about the critical responsibility progressive educators have in transforming students' minds. If this is true, then teacher education has to include means to acquire tools necessary for critical reflexivity. Our society needs courageous individuals who are ready to be set free, so they can later do the same for their students, because it is only through personal transformation that they can later lead others through the same challenging process, after all, leaders are those who advance a reform while holding the others together throughout the different challenging shifting points.

### Spiritual Leadership

As courageous individuals, good leaders are ongoing learners, and good listeners, the same characteristics we traditionally find in philosophical and spiritual inquiries, hence, Philosophical-Spirituality can awaken teachers' inner hero, turning them into spiritual leaders.

While the post-modern "tradition" suggests we can do everything, including achieving transformation, by ourselves, this position goes against some of the central tenets of what spirituality and ancient philosophy stands for: The importance of working with a teacher (or a Master, Guru, Rabbi, etc.) while establishing I-Thou relationships that are based on interconnectedness and trust with oneself, others, and eventually with one's teacher.

In addition to the traditional role of spiritual leaders as stewards who work with meanings and values, there is a renewed need for educational spiritual leadership that concentrates on showing students some alternative epistemologies that can facilitate

their innate knowledge, i.e. their different skills, talents, and strengths; in other words, a healthy sense of self.

When speaking of leadership in terms of Philosophical-Spirituality, a preparation for teachers must assume teachers' intuition, creativity, and intellectual rigor. Creativity and being in-tuned to intuition implies open-mindedness, flexibility and adaptation. Characterizing the philosophical and spiritual modes of being, these qualities are also necessary for good teaching, because they nourish our souls while connecting with others'. To put it simply, creating something requires an active engagement in contributing something to what already exists (which is by being a philosophical teacher strongly relates to being a researcher, as earlier discussed). Thus when we are engaged in a creative activity, we are naturally empowered since it gives us confidence and self-value, making us feel useful and alive.

Respecting teachers' creativity and intellectual rigor encourages them to become active producers of knowledge; by first being personally transformed, transformative educators have the power and the ethical-political responsibility to challenge the intellectual and political hegemonic status-quo by exposing students to alternative narratives and epistemologies. Understand how we know ourselves and how we relate to the world is one step toward finding our voice.

An educational model that invites teachers to participate in social mechanisms that create what we later refer to as "reality," empowers them by giving them a great ethical/political responsibility to actively participate in this form of community service. Such model celebrates teachers' innate talents, and thereby invites them to be part of improving the educational practices.

Generally, in all the courses I teach, whether academically or in the context of professional development, I strive to instill the importance of reflective and creative activities, as these can be a powerful apparatus to facilitate an educational reform toward better, more responsive practice and conduct. Philosophical education facilitates critical thinking, approaches learning as an ongoing process and perhaps equally important, invites people to consider change as a possibility. When it comes to spiritual education, neglecting it means ignoring a fundamental aspect of the human experience; most of our students will, at some point in their lives, look for answers, and we are obliged to equip them with tools to cope with this search for meaning. In other words, by the same token that we help students develop their cognitive and social skills, we have to find means to develop students' spiritual skills. In order to do that, teachers have to first find/develop their own spiritual voice (Kozik-Rosabal, 2001).

Earlier I mentioned the growing interest in spiritual and philosophical practices, as these can be implemented in education. Yet, it seems that what is still missing is an attention to teacher education. Addressing these issues in teacher education is important for several reasons. In conversations with teachers who survived the first few years where the major drop-out from this profession takes place (Capuzzi-Simon, 2005) I realized that often the reasons that made them want to become teachers are reasons

that I identify as spiritual (e.g.: "to give back," "to make the world a better place," "children are pure"). Once entering the professional reality, educators face complex dilemmas that I identify as intrinsically philosophical (e.g. ethical and existential ones). A well-developed sense of whole-self can facilitate a healthy negotiation between these dilemmas, and remembering the initial motivations to teach. I will now examine the role and place of "set" (i.e. context, ambience) and "setting" (i.e. method, content) in transformative education. I bring this case-study since it brings a close look of whether and why Philosophical-Spirituality, as a pedagogical paradigm, fits in with the ideas of developing skills necessary for allocating meaning.

## Background

The New Jersey Network for Educational Renewal (now the Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal) is part of the national network whose goal is to provide teachers with professional development credits in a welcoming setting. Working with the Network provided me with an opportunity to examine how a semi-casual context enables me to reach teachers' hearts and minds, impact their personal and professional lives by showing them how to reclaim their authentic self who speaks with its own voice, and do all that while keeping high professional standards.

The general aim of this particular course I was giving, titled "Philosophical-Spirituality," was working with teachers on ways to practice philosophy in order to enhance spirituality as an attitude, and ways to practice spirituality in a philosophical fashion, in order to grow as spiritual leaders in their profession. The experience I record here was an early attempt to reinforce integral education.

Basically the method that I work with for some time now, is a modification of the Philosophy for Children model (Lipman, 2003), reconstructed by my understanding and experiences that brought me to pick up from where I believe Lipman stopped - the spiritual dimension of human conduct.

The first time I was about to give "Philosophical-Spirituality" professional development course, mother-nature didn't allow it. For 3 weeks we were postponed thanks to the heavy blizzards. I will always remember coming to work that day, after a 2 hours wait for the bus. A 30 minute trip became a 90 minutes expedition, so I treated it as such. I literalized the idea I was then writing about: the path is more important than the destination when we allow ourselves to learn valuable things while taking it; as Jefferson implied, it is through the pursuit itself that we grow as individuals and as a species. The bus was suddenly a vehicle of my life's journey.

In the bus, while listening to my I-Pod, I was given an opportunity to apply what I was planning to teach that day: presence, patient, acceptance, surrender, symbolism, and of course, humility and awe in front of the Greater Unknown that wishes to be discovered through nature grandeur and what seems as coincidences.

Observing life in a white slow motion, gave everything a meta-linguistic meaning,

where the content we pour into the linguistic vessels, depends on our state of consciousness. This feeling, that everything continues to unfold like a grandma's candies purse, was fun. I felt exceptionally relaxed, realizing that peacefulness occurs when I allow things, including myself, to BE, when doing isn't an option. I had no control over the meteorological weather, but over my own weather I did, and I decided to let my sun rise.

Leaving behind the utilitarian-pragmatic demons, allowed me to recall how to transcend immediate connotation, while identifying metaphysical connections and thereby bringing back magical thinking into my life, probably the first thinking we developed as a species. I returned to my deep sources, where even urban New Jersey seemed as a primordial prairie.

When the course finally began, it was already a week before Easter, and many participants had to withdraw. While initially 13 teachers were registered, by now only 3 were left. I wasn't sure what to do: the activities assumed at least 10 participants; moreover, anyone who facilitated a Community of Inquiry (henceforth CI) with less than 5 people knows how hard it is to keep the discussion going and vibrant with such a small number. I then recalled that spiritual leadership stands for positive contextual flexibility while keeping one's core and that philosophical pedagogy is about dynamic adaptation while keeping the (course, subject)'s essence. The session turned out to be a lesson in determination, teaching me to do my best in every situation. Eventually, the discussion was so invigorating that we stayed 40 minutes overtime.

Earlier I elaborated on the role of reflection in advancing change, growth and improvement. Reflecting on my experience with this course, taught me two important things:

- (1) A humble and honest sharing of my personal confusion and uncertainty models that it's all right to be unsure; that this is why we come to the CI.
- (2) Opening a course with an intellectually challenging, even intimidating activity ("write down what spirituality means for you") is not a good idea.

In the following year the format has changed: less, but longer, sessions. I was a bit anxious: could I possibly hold a productive tension for 3 hours, with adults who come after a hard day at work? But first comes first; one thing I did learn from my previous experience, and so this time I came up with new opening activities that were more playful and thereby allowed participants to open up toward a genuine, I-Thou learning environment. One activity I found participants absolutely love was asking them to choose an object from those I have earlier placed on a table, one that says something about their spiritual self. Interestingly enough, this activity - indirectly - lays out the terrain for what we are about to learn. I too, always pick up an object since creating a genuine peer atmosphere is central for a learning experience of the kind that encourages learners to conduct a fearless inner search. Furthermore, activities that advance self-knowledge serve my journey as well, forcing me to find myself each time



anew.

Earlier I was talking about the importance of creativity in the process of empowerment; as adults, we often work with theories and ideas, forgetting how to read and work with artifacts. But creative engagement is an emancipatory ritual that while taking us back to our inner archetypes, sets our true self free. The second introductory activity invites participants to create a collage, where the "self" is understood as an unfinished creation. I bring a variety of craft materials as well as guiding questions they could ask themselves throughout the activity [list 1].

The collage is in fact an ad-hoc journal that later stands as the CI's initial stimulating narrative. I find this activity to be a great hearts opener and connector: The discussion about our collages was vibrant, flowing at a most intimate level, where we were all inter-related, living the leading idea standing behind spiritual curriculum according to which knowledge is about construing meanings while creating personal narratives that are all interwoven. Self-narrative that invites us to reflect on our lives is a vehicle transporting our voice, turning us to spiritual leaders of our lives, and subsequently of our students and peers.

In order not to damage learners' creative thinking, I try to limit my teaching of the history of ideas. Yet, during the sharing time, I show learners how their ideas are not only interconnected to each other's, but also to some of the greatest minds in history. Locating their thoughts in a larger context is an empowering act by illustrating how we are all active participants in the eternal universal dialogue. Moreover, becoming familiar with cultural is not only socially-politically important, but knowing them allows us to pick up from wherever the historical investigation stopped. I find that defending the relevancy of the "Great Ideas" is the greatest challenge post-modern, progressive education meets.

Since I believe that learning is mutual, and participants do ask me for my definition of spirituality, I hand out a suggested list of what I find as the characteristics of spiritual thinking [list 2], illustrating how most of it was brought up throughout our discussion. Similarly, since the course' titled is "Philosophical-Spirituality," I bring an additional hand-out of the characteristics of philosophical thinking [list 3], when I ask them to examine whether they find certain similarities, as well as critical differences. Seeing both as thinking modules, invites us to learn how to apply both in our daily life.

The Cartesian essence of the philosophical project indicates that in transformative education learners think critically, while giving good reasons and paying attention to their choice of words, dispositions that advance the reflective, fully aware mind of the master in the art of living. Spiritually and philosophically responsive teacher encourages active exploration, hence, these lists, submitted throughout my different courses, are never presented as absolute criteria; rather they serve as a stimulating invitation for a questioning discussion.

So instead of going through each of the listed items, I ask them to browse the list



and let me know whether there is a particular item they find especially interesting or unclear. Even here, where it is my role to elaborate and clarify, I refrain of taking on the "knowing-all" position; instead I first invite them to explain the items, using their discourses and experiences.

Spiritual leadership in education speaks about flexibility and adaptation to context, and translating the subject-at-hand to our pragmatic circumstances, and by that clarifying what may often appear as abstract Ivory Tower theory. So when I realize our time for today is almost over, I mention that I would have to change the pre-planned agenda, and humorously relate it to one of the listed items previously discussed: "comfort with chaos."

I end the session by asking everyone to take the coming week as an opportunity to pay attention to another issue earlier discussed: "magical moments." It is a simple invitation to try something different as a powerful exercise in awareness. On that same note I suggested using the few first and last minutes of each day for reflection. I reminded them what one of the speaker said earlier about getting older and learning how to pay attention to the beauty around, something we did as kids and neglected during our long adulthood. This is a chance, I said, to be adults who look at life with children's eyes, look at everything with wonder. Just for a week.

Before leaving it seemed we all feel relaxed, connected and content; after all, throughout the session, we shared some burdens, some even shed a tear, people sighed while creating their collage and murmured "this is so much fun." When at the end of the course, people came to thank me and said how much they needed something like this I knew I was right at least about one thing: teachers need a safe-space to explore their spirituality as professionals. We all do. We need it to relax, to let go, to reconnect. We live in such an alienated society; some of us live as strangers in our own homes, others literally live alone. In such reality, we often find it easier to open up in a more seemingly neutral environment where the people around us are complete strangers, supportive and non judgmental peers.

To sum up the pragmatic aspect of the model, I can say that most of our time is dedicated to dialogue, assuming that it is through this practice that we construe our authentic voice, values, meaning and beliefs (Greene, 1979). Additionally, I always engage the participants in individual activities that allow them to reflect. Understanding that the initial and ultimate dialogues we are immersed in are those we conduct with ourselves, transformative education requires solitary work and cooperative learning.

## Conclusion

Naturally, conducting a self-study brings conclusions regarding the way I operate as an educator, a philosopher, a spiritual person, a writer, a scholar, a narrator or as a woman, and consequently utilizes my own empowerment as a whole person, by enabling me to experience how my different selves co-exist. As I stated earlier, this

paper is a systematic inquiry into my teaching, where I examine my moves, role and attitudes, while trying to verify how my theory matches my practice. Aiming at gaining a better understanding of the ways I make professional decisions meant a constant reflection, throughout the engagement itself and the writing that followed. Reflective self-narrative corresponds with the importance of self-knowledge as an essential feature not only ancient spiritual and philosophical wisdom, but also for good teaching, since understanding oneself is the key to understanding the other, which in turn, facilitates I-Thou educational relationships.

Allowing us to develop our creativity and passions, and pushing us to be fully aware and present, critical reflection is indeed necessary for a genuine transformation. I understood the importance of this kind of writing both for my academic career, but mainly for my teaching, in that it enabled me to clearly recognize and re-adjust my goals and expectations, from myself, my students and peers, while remembering the primary creed that guides me throughout the different educational contexts I participate in.

This creed speaks about my responsibility in creating an invigorating learning environment that instills an initially positive learning experience. For that to happen, we need a safe-space that allows and even encourage us to reflect and question, a place that brings us back to life, paraphrasing on the Socratic axiom, we have to always remember that the unexamined lives aren't really living, but merely zombie-like survival.

Furthermore, it was important for my personal journey of growth and healing. And so while writing brings joy it mostly raises negative feelings of despair and insecurities, which we have to confront, and never give up. Each paragraph I wrote, each page I edited, made me feel stronger. It was my yet another step in the path of the warrior, in that it was a living exercise in authenticity, empowerment and transformation, felt almost at the physical level. Noticing how my ends and means slowly synergize, reminded me of the importance of being passionate about what we do. In my case, I remembered how much I love doing philosophy and spirituality with people, reminding them their passions, and in this case, their reasons to become teachers.

When this happens, a magical circle occurs: we grow a better knowledge of our selves, which in turn provides us with insight about what we research and so on and so forth (Kincheloe, 2003). Self examination then is a step towards self-knowledge, where one examines the different stages and levels of consciousness so she can synergize them.

Additionally, I discussed earlier how a spiritual leader models authentic wholeness by revealing her dilemmas, inspiring others to discover their inner hero, bring out from students their innate potential and consequently perceiving as possible what they initially assumed to be impossible. By being authentic and honest, I tried to demonstrate something that transcends the ethical by going toward the existential

itself.

I also learnt that though transformation has to begin with the individual, one doesn't operate in a vacuum. Thus, I came to the conclusion that there are certain steps that can and should be taken in the process toward better education and living in general:

- (1) We should move existing pedagogies towards dialogical ones, where participants internalize the idea that we are all relevant parts in the jigsaw-puzzle of the social matrix
- (2) Establishing safe-spaces for learning that enable the above
- (3) Stressing supervisors' support and trust in teachers' capacities and ideas, or else teacher become silence and paralyzed, and as such, they cannot serve as active agents for transforming learning, knowledge and educational structures.
- (4) Finding ways that allow mutual and cooperative learning and working, yet, leaves time for solitary reflection.

And perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind, when speaking of transformation and/or growth, as one high school student from Newark so eloquently put it, "change is a process, not an event," and as such, it is slow, gradual and ongoing.

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Lists

Spiritual Thinking

- \* Addressing (and solving?) problems of meaning
- \* respecting all
- \* having a sense of being part of whole - seeing connections between things - holistic
- \* seeking of being 'in tune' with nature and the universe
- \* being comfortable with being alone without feeling lonely
- \* endowing everyday activity with a sense of the sacred
- \* using spiritual resources on practical, mundane problems
- \* Virtuous behavior (empathy, forgiveness, gratitude, humility, compassion, wisdom).
- \* Flexibility, spontaneous adaptation.
- \* Awareness for self and others
- \* Being inspired by visions and values.
- \* Ask 'Why?' and 'What if?' regarding fundamental questions

- \* Being here now, while seeing beyond it...(feeling content)
- \* comfort with chaos seeing the order behind it
- \* recognizing dichotomy and overcome it looking for the unity behind the plurality
- \* faith and hope - sense of positive mind set
- \* awe in-front of the unknown
- \* ability to listen FOR

#### Philosophical Thinking:

- \* Begins with wonder about the world
- \* Reasoning; e.g.: give examples and counter examples, making analogies
- \* Ongoing open-ended questioning; Open to reinvestigation and interpretations
- \* Critically constructive
- \* Emphasizes process over outcome
- \* Questioning the conventions, Doubting the undoubted
- \* Concerns with fundamental concepts
- \* Clarifying ideas
- \* Encourages independent thinking (critical thinking)
- \* Holistic - seeing the whole picture, recognizing all perspectives
- \* Recognizes a paradox, dilemmas and problems
- \* Reflective
- \* Active listening
- \* Self expressive
- \* Ability and courage to express oneself clearly and accurately
- \* Recognizing assumption and suspending them



*Reading Between the Lines:*

*How Ethically Desirable are NCATE's Accreditation Ethics?*

Alexander Makedon

Chicago State University

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division, Session of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education, April 21, 2007, Palmer House Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, USA

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Introduction

The author published a long essay a few years ago criticizing the National Council for the Advancement of Teacher Education, or NCATE, for its moralistic return to unverifiable psychological states, such as dispositions; its relative lack of emphasis on critical thinking; and its unrealistic expectation of evaluating education students and faculty on the basis of their presumably measurable “dispositions.” [1] The author’s earlier essay on NCATE was a broadside critique that covered several aspects of NCATE’s Standards [2]. In this essay, the author focuses more narrowly on NCATE’s ethical assumptions.

NCATE's Definition

There are two passages on ethics in the NCATE Standards, one of which is quoted below, and clearly linked to dispositions; and the other inside a footnote on page 19 (see endnote #4, below). According to NCATE, dispositions include values and commitments. As NCATE put it, dispositions include ...

The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. (NCATE 2002 *Standards*, p. 53)

The question may be raised, what if someone is committed to teaching effectively

but exhibits the wrong values? What if, in other words, one is professionally a good teacher, however one may wish to qualify being “good,” but personally holds certain presumably undesirable values? For example, what if one is critical of the emphasis on dispositions in teacher evaluation discourse? Should one evaluate a teacher or student on the basis mainly of performance, or on the basis of inner psychological states or “dispositions?” Where does one draw the line between one’s personal life, and his or her professional career? Which of these approaches is ethically more desirable? Are some values more abstractly non-dispositional, meaning, driven by principle, rather than by states of like or dislike, or “dispositions?” If by “commitment” in the statement quoted, above, NCATE meant having certain values, then why mention both terms in the definition? Are there levels of ethical desirability, as in distinguishing between how one is disposed toward effective teaching, and whether he or she is in fact teaching effectively? Should one reward effective teachers even if some such teachers are ill-disposed toward effective teaching? Finally, are “ethics” in the above definition the same as either values or commitments? If they are different, how so, and how should one resolve a possible conflict between commitments and values, as when a certain commitment may be in conflict with one's values; or between ethics and values, as when one's philosophy of right and wrong, which is what is usually associated with the term “ethics,” dictates that one does not hold certain values, possibly even not those which NCATE considers desirable?

The rest of the definition offered by NCATE is as follows:

Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment. (NCATE 2002 *Standards*, p. 53)

The above paragraph is laden with sufficient clouded fodder to make it more provocative than promotional, its authors’ probable intent notwithstanding. NCATE fails to not only distinguish between ethics and attitudes, but also between ethics and a number of other concepts, including belief, behavior, learning, motivation, development, vision, and commitment. It also fails to distinguish between ethics and such presumed “values” as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. They are all indiscriminately lumped together under the broad category of “dispositions,” as if we suddenly lost our speech or ran out of terms with which to delineate the differences among a variety of evaluative concepts. Such concepts are shoved indiscriminately together inside the same philosophical “prison cell.”

## Ethics

One could have all the right dispositions, which may or may not be in harmony with his or her values, but still act unethically. For example one may believe that rewarding friends is a desirable disposition, but act unethically by distributing rewards on the basis of friendship, as opposed to job-related skills. The point here is not whether any one ethical theory supports or does not support a particular disposition, but that dispositions are distinct from ethics. As discussed in the author's longer paper on NCATE and dispositions, a blindly dispositional approach risks becoming unethical, particularly in an educational context, where we presumably teach students to think, rather than have mere "dispositions." This is so because dispositions lack the intellectual basis for distinguishing right from wrong acts. Furthermore, replacing reflection with disposition is from a variety of ethical perspectives undesirable, or "unethical," because it treats humans as objects or means, rather than as ends-in-themselves capable of making their own decisions about what is right or wrong. For example, such approach may be interpreted to be unethical from Aristotelian and Kantian perspectives: Aristotelian, because a dispositional approach denies humans their potential for development as thinking beings, rather than as dispositional "objects" (as further developed in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics) ; Kantian, because a dispositional approach treats humans as means to dispositional ends imposed from outside (Metaphysics of Morals). Likewise with existentialist interpretations of ethics, several of which may be interpreted to undermine a dispositional emphasis in educational evaluation discourse, such as, Martin Buber's respect for students as subjects (I-Thou); and phenomenological interpretations of ethics, such as, Paulo Freire's pedagogy of liberating humans through critical demystification of reality, including the "reality" of their present dispositions (Pedagogy of the Oppressed).

### Dispositional Commitment versus Thinking Independently

If NCATE in its infinite wisdom had suggested that dispositions refer mainly to professional ethics, but said nothing about commitment, then perhaps NCATE could justify demanding that education colleges offer courses in ethics where students are asked to discuss a variety of ethical theories. But to also ask, as does NCATE, that education students develop a commitment to certain dispositional states, may make some students feel as though they are being asked to conform "emotionally" to NCATE's views, which has a totalitarian tinge about it. They may feel that if their emotions are being monitored, how much more so their ideas, and therefore their freedom to engage in open-ended discussions. A dispositional approach to assessment may lead some students to impose a form of cognitive self-censorship to make sure they are not perceived as having undesirable "dispositions." Should educators be in the business of

promulgating the pre-established dispositions of the status quo, as contrasted to developing their students' ability to think? Isn't it more ethically desirable that schools treat students as ends, for example, by preparing them to think independently, than to conform to a preordained list of dispositional states?

### Independence Training

To add insult to injury, research has shown that there exists a direct link between “independence training” and learning in school [3] If that is the case, then isn't it more ethically desirable, because less inconsistent with our presumed educational goals, that in evaluating school or educational performance, NCATE should stay away from adopting measures, such as, dispositional criteria, that may have the opposite effect? Research on independent thinking seems to indicate the need for the development of independent thinkers, rather than dispositionally conforming or “correct” ones. Thinking independently is primarily a cognitive process, not a dispositional one. Ironically, one may have the right disposition toward even "independence training," but neither have learned how to learn independently, nor how to teach others how to do so. This shows that having an “appropriate” disposition is neither a guarantee of one actually becoming well educated; nor that such person will not rate the disposition to do something as more important than actually doing it. For example, a teacher may reward a student for his disposition toward homework more highly than someone who hates doing it, but is more successful in completing it. In the context of a school's reward system, a dispositional approach seems unfair, because it treats subjective states more favorably than the achievement of a measurable academic standard. Unless explicitly stated by school authorities that academics rate lower than teacher or administrator evaluations of desirable dispositions, a student who met an academic standard about which he had expressed certain doubts should nevertheless not be made to feel that he is being “penalized” on the basis of his or her personality characteristics, for example, regarding his or her attitude toward the stated goal, but evaluated mainly on the basis of his or her success or failure in meeting such goal. It seems unfair, and therefore possibly unethical, that students should be told one thing regarding, say, the completion of homework, but when evaluated, receive punishment in the form of a bad evaluation simply because of how they felt about such homework.

### Conclusion

NCATE's Standards are embarrassingly confusing, including the Standards' authors' view of ethics, to the point of possibly being accused of being unethical precisely because of their pretentiousness, presumptuousness, and lack of critical examination of ethical issues. By now it has become a historical cliché that in the field

of education our lips, as in “lip service,” are often ahead of our wisdom, as in... “an unexamined life is not worth living.” NCATE defined dispositions in broad strokes that included ethics, as if by spreading its epistemological net widely enough to include ethics it would play it safe, and avoid being accused of mere emotionalism. Regarding knowledge, again it included ethics as part of the knowledge base teachers must be aware of [4], but left it to others to figure out the possible contradiction between its own ethical agenda, on the one hand; and an ethically aware membership that may become troubled by NCATE’s emphasis on an uncritical, because dispositional, acceptance of the status quo, on the other.

## ENDNOTES

[1] A. Makedon, “Personality Alchemists and NCATE: The Re-Emergence of ‘Dispositions’ in Educational Evaluation Discourse.” In *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society Annual Conferences, 2001-2003*, ed. O. Jagusah, D. Smith and A. Makedon. Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2005, pp. 345-96.

[2] The 2002 NCATE *Standards* may be found on line at <http://www.NCATE.org>

[3] J. L. Epstein and J. M. McPartland, “Family and School Interactions and Main Effects on Affective Outcomes,” John Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Report No. 235; Sarane S. Boocock, *Sociology of Education*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980, pp. 74-9.

[4] According to NCATE, “Codes of ethics may be helpful in thinking about dispositions and are available from a number of professional associations, including the National Education Association (NEA).” *Standards*, p. 19, footnote #14.

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### **An Australian Perspective: Aboriginal Teacher Education and Philosophy**

Marjorie O’Loughlin

The Koori Centre (Aboriginal Education)  
University of Sydney, Australia

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division, Session of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education, April 21, 2007, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, Illinois, USA

## 1. Philosophy in 'mainstream' Teacher Education

Without doubt, academic work in Faculties and Schools of Education in Australian Universities has altered dramatically over the past five decades, but perhaps no more so than in the past twenty years. This change coincided with a major institutional movement of teacher education in the late 1980's from Teachers' Colleges and Colleges of Advanced Education controlled by state education departments, to universities. It occurred against a backdrop of rapidly changing social and economic policies of government most of which demanded greater accountability and 'value for money' from higher education. Simultaneously public funding began its long decline to the point that many now see the sector in a perilous position. Teacher education curricula were not immune from the effects of these changes. Having completed the move into the university sector by the early 1990's teacher education very quickly found itself pressured to respond to new imperatives. These included the demand that it produce beginning teachers who could deal with increasing school retention rates in innovative ways, assume hugely expanding custodial and welfare roles, and simultaneously come to re-define its own positioning under the new managerialism. Dealing with expanding knowledge and the complexities of translating this into curricula was only one aspect of the transformation undergone by teacher education over the last two decades. A significant feature of the so-called reform of teacher education has been the demise of what was known as Foundations, of which philosophy was the longest established. The disciplines which included history, sociology, psychology and (sometimes) anthropology have of course undergone internal transformation of several kinds in recent times. But there have also been wider alterations to the curriculum as 'older' subjects have been replaced by 'new' and others have undergone major paradigm shifts leading to their incorporation into other fields. Interdisciplinarity and the adoption of thematic and problems - based approaches have also had a major impact. 'Re-branding' has proceeded apace with the result that it is hard to know whether or not a particular course (or a program) is substantially or minimally philosophical in character. The move away from studies positioned within a specific discipline has given way to theme and issues based courses. Varieties of 'hybrid' courses now constitute much of the teacher education programs around the country. These have blurred the boundaries to the point that it is almost impossible to identify what content or method might be regarded as specifically philosophical in a particular course. Unfortunately, to point this out to colleagues is to risk being labelled hopelessly out of date, or politically reactionary, or both.

At the same time as these changes occurred, there was a continuous de-



emphasising of the disciplines with regard to writing and reporting research in education. The research climate for universities had become much more competitive by the 1990s. Within teacher education, the curriculum is now full almost to bursting point (as it is in schools) but academic staff numbers have fallen significantly. In the age of performativity, philosophers in Education Faculties have been hard hit, not least because of the undervaluing of their research contribution. Philosophy has also suffered through being amalgamated in the national basic category of subjects with 'policy or 'educational development'. In the annual count of research contributions policy is the dominant partner, growing markedly after the mid-1990s. The philosophy component within education is much less in evidence in the overall pattern of educational research.

But there are also difficulties arising from the negative image philosophy seems to evoke amongst many teacher educators themselves – that philosophy's contribution to education is remote from the world of the school classroom. In terms of its position within Schools or Faculties of Education, philosophy is often thought of as purely contemplative in its approach to the study of education – a mere emollient addition to more practical and therefore 'relevant' core courses. Although there has been a renewed interest over the past few years in the area of ethics in relation to both public and personal life in the wider community, philosophy is not necessarily seen as having a particular contribution to make in the preparation of teachers.

If this sounds pessimistic, I think it is, nonetheless, a realistic assessment. The situation is further exacerbated by major changes to hiring and tenure. Most recently there has been a move to employ on short-term contracts people who have worked within a state (as distinct from Federal) Education apparatus in curriculum design and administration, the cultures of which are very different from those of University Schools of Education in that they draw upon their own stock of knowledge about what works and what will be acceptable to various constituencies. There is often a tendency to be impatient with what is perceived to be the preserve of a certain kind of liberal intellectual (such as philosophers) whose pre-occupations seem to be removed from the daily business of classrooms, school curricula and education management.

Yet the idea that philosophy is important in educating and perhaps also in accrediting teachers does seem to surface from time to time. For example in the course of being interviewed by employing authorities graduates are sometimes asked to expound on their own 'personal philosophy' of education (it is hard to see how they could have acquired this if their academic program has been conspicuously lacking in anything remotely qualifying as 'philosophical'). On certain formal occasions Deans of Education might go so far as to wax lyrical about the 'absolutely indispensable' role of philosophy in teacher education. Or they or their representatives may extol the virtues

of teaching philosophy when for example they are invited to address a Philosophy of Education conference! For the most part, however, there is little attempt to elaborate on what valuing philosophy within and teacher education program might actually encompass.

In light of what I have written above, it needs to be emphasised that at present philosophers who still work within teacher education in Australia adopt a wide variety of methods and approaches in exploring educational issues and problems, most being aware of the reality that philosophy can no longer be positioned within teacher education as somehow purely contemplative, standing outside the specificities of history. For some the prime purpose is to continue posing philosophical arguments about methodological questions and in some cases proceeding with the business of making knowledge claims that are neo-pragmatist and non-foundational. Education in Australia has been subjected to extensive critique by post-structuralism and critical theory. Post-colonial and feminist critiques have made major contributions to understanding educational disadvantage, though I would argue that feminism aroused hostility among some Australian philosophers of education, thus foreclosing on its usefulness. The wide diversity of themes and issues addressed by philosophy of education across the country can be seen in the variety of journal articles and books that continue to be published. However I would argue that this is no indication of the place that philosophy of education holds in the accreditation and certification of teachers. On the contrary it reinforces my argument that there is an ever-widening gulf between the those who presently design and implement programs of teacher education in Australia - for whom the inclusion of philosophy is at best a peripheral consideration - and philosophers of education whose numbers are decreasing quite rapidly but whose conversations are conducted with others of their ilk, by means of Journal articles and to a lesser extent through books.

In considering the problems described above I could not help but be struck by an interesting contrast of the situation with the 'mainstream' (as outlined above) and the role of philosophy in the development of aspects of Aboriginal education. In what follows I briefly touch upon some of the issues arising out of my own attempts over a number of years to establish an interface between aboriginal and non-aboriginal understanding of the concepts of 'being' and 'knowing'.

## 2. Philosophy in Indigenous Teacher Education

Programs of Aboriginal Studies are part of the school curriculum as well as that of the Higher Education sector. Here I will confine myself to a discussion of the latter as

it has relevance for the discussion of philosophy in teacher education programs.

To talk about philosophy having a role in Aboriginal education at the tertiary level is not to say that bringing in 'the philosophical' has been simple or straightforward. Its inclusion within Aboriginal units was not based initially on the view that it was an essential, 'foundational' discipline. Rather, the early Aboriginal studies programs drew significantly upon Anthropology, with Religious Studies somewhat later providing analyses of beliefs about creation, ancestral beings and what became known in the literature as Aboriginal religions. History was, and is still regarded as a central discipline in telling the story of indigenous people's dispossession and maltreatment. Not surprisingly it has given rise to fierce arguments (for example the so-called 'black armband' theory of history vs history of invasion and its legacy). It was relatively recently therefore that philosophy has actually entered the field, contributing to contemporary debates over land rights and associated issues. Since then it has taken up themes more easily recognised by philosophers in the mainstream. So while Aboriginal studies as it exists at present focuses particularly on of the realities of invasion, historical disadvantage and the resulting contemporary problems faced by indigenous people, notably those of health and education, it also offers the possibility of deeper discussions about the complexities of relationship to land, the meaning of 'spirituality' in a cosmology that does not admit of first case or moment of origin, and systems of belief that are grounded in ontologies of space, not those of time.

In my view issues raised in connection with the political and social status of indigenous populations within liberal democracies -rights to land, political representation, citizenship and contemporary theories of minority cultural rights and human rights - must remain key themes for philosophers. But I think there are more ways that philosophy can contribute to an ongoing cross-cultural discussion from an Aboriginal perspective rather than endlessly framing Aboriginal issues in terms of contemporary liberal political theory. It can for example draw upon phenomenologies of 'place', using the work of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Edward Casey to explore the manner in which human and other animals make the world into things and objects through their activities and the processes by which technologies (and organisations) also shape and modify people so that they are said to be 'implaced' (Casey's term).

Obviously a cautionary note must be sounded in considering this enterprise: there are many versions of Aboriginal cultures that must be critically assessed and dismantled. As I have noted in previous work, certain mainstream versions of Aboriginal cultures have depicted the people as drifting above the landscape in a realm of pure spirituality, separated from the physical world but in an original innocent state of harmony with nature. In my view this caricatures the beliefs and ways of Aboriginal people, inscribing them in what is an essentially Western dualistic discourse based in a

spirit/matter distinction. Subject /object distinctions and a Western style man /nature separation do not seem to me to have been part of traditional aboriginal thinking. On the contrary, non-human and human seem to have been indivisible for the purpose of practical living.

In making this statement I am not suggesting a simple animistic underpinning to Aboriginal belief and practice. If I have understood correctly, the material world provides the individual with images of himself or herself, but that world is not 'outside' the person. Rather it is experienced as inextricably bound up in a quite concrete sense with the embodied subject (the 'enfleshed' subject as described by Merleau-Ponty). This is so because the subject is always 'land-construed', as Tony Swain the Religious Studies analyst reminds us, in the same way that all knowledge and everything in the world are so construed. All existence arises from the being of place and all things have people who are related to them. Life for Aboriginal people has been represented as a billowing of the awareness of place, a description which I have argued elsewhere connects in interesting ways with Merleau-Ponty's account of the 'primordial generality' in which self, others and world are together constituted. It is the simultaneous nature of constitution of sensible and visible that it seems to me is central to Aboriginal conceptions of existence.

There are other aspects of Merleau-Ponty's work which seem to connect with Aboriginal understandings of being and of place. In traditional Aboriginal ways of thinking there were no ontological 'crevices' between persons and nature, the self and world and language. Here we can draw upon Merleau-Ponty's account of that visibility which is transmitted from the tangible world and body, and the abandonment of the 'flesh' of the body for the 'flesh' of language. Aboriginal makers of knowledge see meaning as having no origins except in the complex of unbounded metaphors that the land, the animals and bodies yield. Aboriginal ontology therefore posits a materiality that has no opposite as in 'spirit' or 'mind', but which I believe is reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's 'material freedom' by which bodies continually compose and decompose whatever forms culture has given them.

Aboriginal knowledge, as I am beginning to understand it, is about the construction of webs of metaphors whose function is to allow each individual to share, and to effect through the bringing together of necessarily partial perspectives, a 'ground' or social co-operation for all of being. Aboriginal concepts of groups and tribes and the relations amongst groups and land arise out of metaphors drawn not merely from the human body, but from plants and from animals as well as from ancestral journeys and traces. But they are never drawn from boundaries. Connections among groups are not those of enclosing sets, but are instead 'extendable webs of connectedness', Aboriginal languages reflecting this arrangement of reality. As Michael

Christie, noted analyst and member of the Yolngu people argues, there are very few words that divide the world up into macro categories or into 'subject' and 'object'. Indeed the whole system of naming suggests a reality in which there are no compartmentalisations between human being and the being of everything else.

It seems clear then that definition of things, discontinuities and the habit of referring to borders, which demarcate one from other existents, is just one way of talking about experience. Realities alter dramatically when different aspects of human existence are foregrounded, for example the aspect of place rather than that of time. In Aboriginal world-views it is not so much that every 'reality' has an inherent structure, but rather that structure can be seen to inhere in a whole range of 'realities'. What such views seem to contain within them is a conception of the material as an inherent intertwining of subject and world, one which bypasses separations between animate and non-animate, between humans and animals, seer and seen. This it seems to me is a conceptualisation of materiality, which does not demand a split between human corporeality and 'nature'. As in Merleau-Ponty's 'primordial connivance' of flesh as constitutive, neither self nor world is privileged in the phenomenalisation of phenomena.

In writing about Aboriginal 'religions', Tony Swain notes that place and not time has primacy in traditional aboriginal thinking. As he argues, ontologies of time such as in the Western tradition have specific sorts of limitation: they must begin and end. Space ontologies on the other hand are primarily geographical. For Aboriginal people there is a metaphysical emphasis on 'abidingness,' that is, the sense of enduring space. In the familiar Euclidean conception of homogeneous abstracted space there is in Merleau-Ponty's view that kind of 'space' - an example of a 'bad' form of abstraction - which isolates and segments. In the Aboriginal conception there is the structured world, unmeasured and unnumbered, a world free of what Swain alludes to as the 'capriciousness of time.' Place, like all existents is conscious: all life is conscious precisely because it is the consciousness of place. The aboriginal concept of space has its anchoring in the mind-matter of Ancestral beings. Like Merleau-Ponty's cosmological conception of materiality, this includes everything in and of the world.

As Foucault and others have shown all cultures are selective in drawing a picture of reality. That is, they include some aspects of human experience and omit others. Western societies have been clear in their insistence both on the ontological and epistemological autonomy of the subject and on their construction of an objective world. Our reality has been structured along atomistic lines, such that there are objects (including 'selves') to be counted, accumulated, sequestered and assigned a specific sort of value. Our conception of historical consciousness is grounded in a conception of time as linear, measurable by numbered intervals. Hence we speak of

past, present and future, usually with a view to 'progress'. This account of the world supports an atomistic theory of being and vice versa. Our 'reality' promotes in us the sense of independence, of the individual's radical differentiation from the stuff of which the world consists and of his/her control over it. Theories about cognitive, social and moral development in the field of education are in one way or another based on an atomised notion of subjecthood, which befits our particular kinds of educational, economic, political and social arrangements.

But Aboriginal thinking, as I understand it, demands a different way of seeing. Indigenous peoples' perspectives deserve to be explored, I believe, by non-aboriginal people because they may help to generate new ways of comprehending relationships amongst all existents, but notably those of the human to non-human environment. In particular it could help future generations more clearly understand the nature of their world, their affinity with it rather than antagonism towards it. New meaning could be given to the notion of having a place in the world. The Western way of thinking and acting has been advantageous for some in the last two hundred years, but at an enormous cost to that world in which it has flourished. Explorations of new ways of being and knowing can enlarge our store of solutions to major problems. But we need to listen carefully and respectfully to those voices that speak of different realities. It seems to me that education has a crucial role to play in this process of listening and learning.

In concluding this short discussion then my suggestion is that those of us who continue to struggle with the problems of straddling the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal philosophical turf extend our horizons within philosophy itself to search out those traditions that seem to offer the best prospect for exploring notions of being and knowing as they are to be found in the work for example of the phenomenologists Merleau-Ponty and Edward Casey. This will no doubt be a difficult and risky enterprise but one which I think in the long run will bear fruit in that it may open up the possibility for enriching the understanding of all students in teacher education programs. For this to occur, however, philosophers of education, at least in Australia, will need to pay more attention to the task of 'selling' their subject to a wider audience of not only colleagues but also education bureaucrats, curriculum designers and ultimately parents.

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*The Roundtable, Vol. 1, Fall 2007*

***The Importance of Courses in "Education Ethics" in Assessing the Accreditation and Certification of Educational Programs for Teachers***

James E. Roper

Michigan State University  
Department of Philosophy

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In the early '80's, I helped pioneer courses in "business ethics" at Michigan State University. I have also taught courses in "medical ethics." What is interesting about these two major professional areas is that organizations that control the accreditation of programs in medicine and business are now requiring that such programs include courses in ethics in their programs. In addition, for six years, I have been teaching a course called "Ethical Issues in Government Decision Making."

Education is one of the most important institutions of our society. If business and medical people are required to have ethics training, it is clear that K-12 educators should also have such training. There are many reasons for this. Educators are role models for our children. Once they start school, children are exposed to their teachers almost as much as, and perhaps more than, they are exposed to their parents. Many suggest that teachers should go beyond being role models and actually instruct their students in ethics. In addition, there are specific ethical issues pertaining to K-12 education that arise both in the classroom and in the broader social context. In is, therefore, imperative that teachers have a serious understanding of ethics.

There are several ways to structure a course such as I propose. The typical practical ethics course in a special area such as business or medicine—or, in this case, education—typically begins with an explanation of the rationale for such a course. This explanation includes specific examples of some of the ethical issues that can arise for a teacher—including both cases that might arise in the classroom and broader issues an educator might be expected to understand.[1] Next, students examine brief treatments of the major types of ethical theory—including theories that have broader implications for society, such as theories of distributive justice. Students then proceed to examine in detail a number of specific ethical topics in education—both classroom concerns such as allocation of time among different groups of students and broader societal concerns such as the way educational benefits are distributed in our society. We should not expect the relation between ethical theory and education to be simple; rather, it is likely to involve an interaction in which both disciplines benefit. Below I specify a partial syllabus for such a course.

Before I consider possible objections to my proposal, I will give just one example of how an ethical issue might be approached in a class that would meet my criterion for an "education ethics" course. The example I examine can be found on the syllabus in the Appendix below described as "Debate Case 2: Teaching to the Test." As I say on

the syllabus, “This case will deal with the problem, aggravated by “No Child Left Behind,” of teachers being forced to *teach to* various tests that their students must do well on for their schools to continue to receive federal money.”

There are various approaches an instructor could take to this topic. My own approach, alluded to in the sample syllabus, involves assigning four students the task of “debating” this topic in front of the class. After their debate, both the other students and the instructor join into the discussion which the debate is crafted to facilitate. I am designing a website to assist students and instructors in developing positions in such a debate. I have also published a paper about such “debating” (“Debate as Informal Logic in Democratic Education”), which recently appeared in the *Proceedings of the 2004-2005 Midwest Philosophy of Education Society*, AuthorHouse, Bloomington, pp. 277-302. For a full treatment of this issue, I refer readers to either of these sources; but I will provide a brief account here of the essentials of my approach. I emphasize that other approaches are possible. I believe my approach has some important advantages, but I also teach ethics in larger classes where such a strategy is impractical.

“Debating” a case that directly involves ethical issues involves doing the following:

1. Selecting a group of four students who have expressed some interest in the issue being considered. I usually ask students to rank-order different possible topics, beginning with the ones they would most prefer to debate.
2. I next meet with these students. Our first task is to determine how to fashion the topic into a “resolution” that frames the issue in a way that allows students to debate it on reasonably even terms, and in a way that highlights the major ethical ramifications of the topic. Two two-person teams are selected from the initial group of four students, and the chosen resolution must offer each of these teams “ground” to develop their arguments. For the “Teaching to the Test” debate, a possible resolution would be: Resolved that a government policy that makes it essential that teachers spend a great deal of time preparing students for specific national tests is on-balance harmful to students. A team of two of the four students, hereafter called “Affirmative,” would volunteer to “affirm” this position, and the other group of two students (called “Negative”) would argue against (or “negate”) it. In my paper, referenced above, I explain why asking students to defend views that they may not hold presents no problem; but this matter is complex and cannot be adequately addressed here.

3. Usually the next task is to determine the ethical standards the two teams will use to defend their positions. It is typical that the two competing ethical standards in the debate reflect some variants of utilitarianism and deontology—that is, ethical principles that emphasize the importance of enhancing the common good (utilitarianism) and ethical standards that stress the importance of rights and/or duties. Sometimes one or both sides might utilize ethical standards embodying *both* utilitarian and deontological aspects. In this case, I believe Negative might adopt such a dual standard, while Affirmative might embrace a utilitarian ethical principle.
4. After selecting the ethical standards to be used by the two teams, I work with the groups to determine what their *specific substantive* arguments will be and how the ethical standards they have chosen will be marshaled to support these arguments. In this case, Affirmative might look toward making the substantive argument that the standardized tests promoted by “No Child...” provide a means of measuring the progress of students, teachers, and schools—thus assuring an overall *utilitarian* benefit for the whole society. Negative might utilize an ethical standard embracing BOTH utilitarian and deontological aspects to argue that “no child...” leads to an educational environment in which rote memorization replaces creative teaching and learning. From a utilitarian standpoint, society suffers because creativity is stifled. The result is a society of people who have lost the ability to think critically about the “facts” they have memorized. Such a society, as Thomas Jefferson said, is incompatible with democracy. Individual teachers’ and students’ autonomy—and hence their moral rights—are abridged because they are all forced into a system that emphasizes memorization over rational enquiry. Hence, Negative might argue, the “progress” that Affirmative says “No Child...” promotes is a crude measure of memorization—not an indicator of a healthy teaching and learning environment. Obviously, the actual debate would be more complex; I am only trying to provide a brief indication of the general direction this case might take in the course I am proposing. The thing to notice is the differentiation of ethical standards from the specific substantive arguments these standards qualify. Getting students to understand this distinction is crucial to any practical ethics course.
5. I next help the students “map” the debate into a “flow.” Each of the two groups will have two “speeches,” one for each student in the debate. The first speech, the affirmative constructive, will present the “case” supporting the resolution. The second, the negative constructive, will attempt to answer the affirmative case; and then to present negative’s own “offensive” positions. Both affirmative and negative debaters will “filter” every specific substantive argument they make

through the ethical standards they are using in the debate. Laying out the details of how this debate would proceed, emphasizing the clash of different positions and the development of arguments throughout the debate, is a rather complex matter. I hope I have said enough to show the general direction my course would take regarding this “No Child ...” case. When my website is available, it will provide detailed flows of debates about practical ethical issues.

6. Finally, I work with those who will present the final two speeches—the affirmative rebuttal and the negative rebuttal. Each speaker will begin by “crystallizing” his or her views and then proceeding to answer various arguments still remaining in the debate.
7. After the debate is finished, I bring the whole class into the discussion of the issue as framed by the resolution and debated by the four students. To motivate the other students in the class, I ask that they “flow” each debate and hand in both their flows and one-page analyses of each debate. Then, I include an essay question on the midterm and the final examination that asks students to analyze one of the debates that has occurred. I usually give students some choice in selecting the debate they will write about.

This procedure is relatively complicated. That is why I am developing the website and why I have written several articles explaining this approach, the latest of which is referenced above. This is how I would teach such a class, assuming it was reasonably small (35-40), but the method described suggests the elements that any approach to teaching education ethics should utilize. Students should be taught to “frame” ethical issues in ways that facilitate the best arguments regarding the matter being considered. They should learn to utilize ethical theories to support their conclusions. Finally they should subject the various views that emerge during the initial consideration of the topic to searching criticisms—seeking both “clash” (students should “directly respond” to arguments, not simply change the subject) and “argument development” (assuring that students “sustain” their arguments throughout the discussion). The implementation of these ideas in the case of “Teaching to the Test” is suggested by the preceding discussion of my debate approach; but, as I said, there are many other viable approaches.

Those who might oppose such a course may point out that being a professional philosopher does not make someone a “better person” than someone who lacks such training. Therefore, they will argue, formal training in ethics is unnecessary, perhaps harmful for teachers. This line of argument represents a confusion that runs very deep. I am not arguing that it is not possible to be a good person without having formal ethics training, and we should be thankful for that. It is a fundamental

confusion, however, to identify “being a good person” with “being someone who understands the intricacies of ethical theory.” If this is the case, our opponent may intone, why should we care whether someone understands ethical theory? The answer is that being a good person usually signals the ability to make “ethical” decisions when faced with fairly straightforward everyday problems—the kinds of problems we encounter in *non-institutional* contexts. When we shift our focus to ethical evaluations in institutional settings—like that of a business person, a doctor, or a teacher in his or her professional milieu—things typically become much more difficult. In such situations, understanding ethical theory is often crucial to making a decision that comports with one's basic ethical intuitions. This is especially true if the question is one that has broad implications for public policy. The examples I cite in the partial syllabus at the end of this presentation illustrate my position on this matter. In addition, examples can be produced from other professional areas such as business and medicine that support my point. Even if those opposed to my suggestion accept the argument I make in the preceding paragraph—and they should—they may introduce another argument against requiring students to take the sort of ethics course I propose here. Specifically, they might argue that such a course is unnecessary because it already exists. There is already a strong emphasis on ethics in many education programs. I cite below a course drawn from the Michigan State University College of Education web site which might be taken to support such an argument. [2]

TE 801 - Professional Role & Teaching Practice I (3 Credits)	Teachers' professional and ethical responsibilities. Connections of schools to other social agencies. Relations of teachers to colleagues, families, other social service providers, and community leaders. Roles in school governance.
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This course description refers to “teachers’ professional and ethical responsibilities”; but notice what else is included in this course description. If “connections of schools to other social agencies” and so on signals *ethical* evaluations, then we are clearly in the institutional realm I discussed above—territory where I have argued that understanding the complexities of the discipline of ethics *definitely does* offer illumination. If it is replied that, after all, this course is telling the student all he or she needs to know about the ethics of such relations, then I have another problem—a very serious one. Do we want our teachers to accept the ethical views of the “authorities” who teach such courses? In my view, and this position is well supported in both common sense and professional philosophy, the last thing we want to do is to suggest that ethics is simply a matter of accepting what some authority says without



critically examining it. [3]

Yet, this is exactly what the “Code of Ethics for Michigan Educators” appears to reinforce. This code can be found at the web site of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the State of Michigan. [4] Sadly, it is very similar to many “ethics codes” I have found on corporation web sites. It utilizes what I have called the “Ten Commandments” model of ethics. [5] In short, it is essentially a discrete check list—not an invitation critically to examine ethical issues in education. [6] I argue that a very different model should be used to articulate codes of professional ethics—the “Wide Reflective Equilibrium” model. [7] This view enjoys broad support in philosophical ethics, but even if one does not accept *this* (highly regarded) philosophical view, there are others that could be utilized. The one approach that does not have support among professional (philosophical) ethicists is the “Ten Commandments” model, which reduces ethical judgment to obeying some authority.

In conclusion, this paper is intended to open a discussion—not to conclude one. It is my view that K-12 education should follow the lead of other professions and require a course in ethics. There are various ways to satisfy such a requirement. Since ‘ethics’ is the *noun*, such a course should, at the very least, involve a professional philosopher with expertise in the discipline of ethics. It would be a course in *educational* ethics; therefore, having someone from education co-teach it would be optimal. It is not appropriate, however, for this course to be taught *only by an education person*—unless that person has extensive training in philosophical ethics and general philosophy.

There are issues in ethics that cannot be adequately addressed without reference to *other* areas of philosophy—any more than someone can study the mathematical discipline of “analysis” without some understanding of “general topology” and other related areas. An example of such an issue is the claim by Princeton philosopher Gilbert Harmon that “virtue ethics” is a bankrupt notion—a product of a discipline (personality theory) that Harmon claims is no longer viable as a discipline. [8] Whether we agree with Harmon or not, no one can contest the fact that he is a very serious philosopher. Since that is the case, his claims have to be critically evaluated. Such assessment will require expertise in the philosophy of mind, epistemology, the philosophy of science, and perhaps other areas of professional philosophy—as well as some knowledge of psychology.

In summary, I suggest that colleges and universities that educate those who aspire to teach in K-12 grades (and future administrators in such venues) should require their charges to take a course that might be called “Ethical Issues in K-12 Education.” I explain why such a course should, ideally, be co-taught by a professional

philosopher (or someone with comparable training) and an education professor. I also provide (in the Appendix) a possible syllabus for such a course and include an example of how I might implement my “debate” approach to analyzing education cases with ethical ramifications. Finally, I defend my proposal against both the claim that such a course is not needed and the view that courses like this are already included in standard education curriculums.

APPENDIX: Example Of Partial Syllabus for a Course in Education Ethics

PHL/EDU 000: Ethical Issues in K-12 Education

Time/Place

Prof. YYYYY YYYYYYY (Philosophy)

Office Hours:

Philosophy Professor’s Office

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Prof. XXXXX XXXXXXXX (Education)

Office Hours:

Education Prof’s Office

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

TEXT: To Be Announced (or Written)

DESCRIPTION: This course is intended for juniors and seniors in education or related programs, but others may find it useful and even important. (See below.) There are four broad educational objectives. First, we will learn to identify the ethical dimensions of K-12 educational practice. Second, we will learn enough about ethical theory to conduct an ethical inquiry into a problem in order to reach an ethically acceptable resolution. Third, we will combine theory and practice by studying the ethical dimensions of K-12 education’s relationships with students, parents, citizens, the government, and society as a whole. Fourth, special emphasis will be placed on learning to express one’s thoughts on these matters in a clear and well-argued manner.

A SPECIAL FEATURE of the course is a novel approach to case studies. The class will be divided into two-person teams. These teams will debate each other about selected cases in a way that parallels intercollegiate “values” debate. The class will include sufficient instruction in this approach to cases to enable students to engage in this educationally valuable exercise. Students will, for example, learn a special form of note taking called “flowing” to keep track of the arguments presented in the debates. (Because we will not involve ourselves in debate theory except in the most minimal sense, the time spent learning to “debate” will not be greater than the time usually required to learn any worthwhile approach to doing case studies.)

NOTE: I am currently funded to develop a website to help students and instructors utilize this “debate

*method” of case presentations. It should be up and running by fall 2007.*

**PREREQUISITES:** The only prerequisite for PHL/EDU 000 is that students have achieved at least junior standing. I believe that upper level students in education and related programs will find a course which focuses specifically on the ethical aspects of educational practice to be of obvious relevance in today's increasingly complex education environment. Because of the socially pervasive nature of many of the topics covered, the course should also be of interest to some students who are not in education. Students used to a “social science” approach to “ethics” should find this normative/philosophical approach an essential complement to the empirical study of “values.” Indeed, any student who expects to participate in the decision making processes of this country must have an understanding of the elements of this course because of the enormous role education plays in our political life. *NOTE: Students with some experience in the classroom, for example, through student teaching, will definitely be assets in this course.*

**GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:** A case presentation in the form of a debate in front of the class. This will involve writing a short position paper and doing some research. Two in class examinations, which include both essay and multiple choice/true-false questions. There will also be 8 to 12 "pop" quizzes on the reading assignment for the day. Any student who carefully reads the assignments should do well on these quizzes. (I will collect most "flows," on a random basis, which will count as pop quizzes.) The lowest quiz grade (including flow grades) will be dropped in computing the student's quiz average. This average will count 25% of the final grade. The two examinations will count 25% each, and the debate will count 25% of the final grade. Where a student's final average falls between two grades, I look at class participation, progress, etc. to determine the grade. I use the following scale for calculating grades: 90-100 (4), 85-89 (3.5), 80-84 (3), 75-79 (2.5), 70-74 (2), 65-69 (1.5), 60-64 (1), below 60 (0). I round off to the tenth place and round up grades, so an 84.45 rounds to 84.5 which rounds to 85. In the debates, 4.0 is a 95 on the scale. 4.0- is a 90. 3.5+ is an 89. And so on. (4.0+ is 100.) *I follow University guidelines regarding academic dishonesty. See the appropriate URL.* Students who miss exams or quizzes may be excused for University sponsored activities, religious holidays, and illness. Appropriate documentation is required beforehand, except in the case of illness, where documentation may be provided (soon) after the event. Students who miss the final exam because of illness must inform the instructor of this immediately.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL:** I designed this course so that students need to attend class and do assignments regularly to perform satisfactorily. Classes consist of (usually short) lectures, student debates, and/or class discussion. There may be videos. Late assignments will be accepted only in unusual circumstances. Most class time is spent learning to *apply* the material in the text and lectures through debates and discussions, which will also be covered on the exams.

**PRELIMINARY PARTIAL SYLLABUS:** For *convenience, the Michigan State University Fall Semester dating is used for this syllabus.*

Aug. 28	Introduction to the Course. Discussion of “class debates” and cases.
30	The Ethics of Education: A General Introduction to the Subject.
Sept. 4	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS

6 Justifying Ethical Statements: Wide Reflective Equilibrium (WRE); Comments on “The ‘Public Philosophy’ of Education.” [9]

11 Lecture on Class Debates. Read Roper Article and Explain Debate Web Resources. Turn in Debate Preferences.

12 Review Roper & Sommers Article on classroom debate, Web Material. Make Preliminary Debate Assignments.

18 Responsibility: Various Ramifications of this Concept, Including Examples Drawn from K-12 Education. Begin Group Meetings in Class. Plan Meetings Outside of Class (Usually at Main Library). 20 Utilitarianism, Including Examples from K-12 Education.

25 Deontological Ethical Theories; Discussion of Rights & Duties, with Examples Drawn from K-12 Education.

27 Distributive Justice and its Relation to Fairness; K-12 Examples.

Oct. 2 “Ethic of Care”; Integration of Ethical Theories; WRE, again. K-12 Examples

4 Extended Discussion of Virtue Ethics. Is Such a Theory Possible? Illustrate Discussion with K-12 examples.i[10]

9 Justifications of the State; Role of Major Publicly Traded Corporations. Relate to K-12 Education. *This Topic Could Extend to Two Sessions.*

10 Debate Case 1: Teaching Math in the Early Grades. This case will deal with the idea that students have to be about 14 in order to engage in abstract thinking, so things like algebra and geometry must not be presented before that time.ii[11]

16 Debate Case 2: Teaching to the Test. This case will deal with the

problem, aggravated by “No Child Left Behind,” of teachers being forced to teach to various tests that their students must do well on for their schools to continue to receive federal money. Handout on First Examination.

18 Film: Many possibilities.

23 Review for First Examination

25 FIRST EXAMINATION

30 Debate Case 4: Teacher Compensation. We pay teachers very poorly given what we expect of them—especially compared to other industrialized nations. This raises the issue of distributive justice as well as other ethical

considerations.

Nov. 1 Debate Case 5: The Ethics of Electronic Citation and the Use of Computers in Research.iii[12]

6. Debate Case 6: The Ethics of Mainstreaming.

8. Debate Case 7: The Ethical Issues Surrounding Protecting Students in the Classroom (and in Transit). A lot of material is emerging in light of the Virginia Tech Case. Various approaches to security are being considered. All this raises very serious issues about such matters as student privacy and access. These are issues we will need to address as a society.

13 Debate Case 8: Ethics of “Social Advancement (Promotion).”

15 Debate Case 9: “Schools of Choice” Versus Public Schools: Ethical Considerations. This is a problem for the larger society but teachers should be able to speak to it.

> 20Debate Case 10: Conflicts of Interest: Financial and Other. This is a very broad and complex issue. Teachers and administrators should be familiar with it in its various ramifications.

22 FILM: Again, many possibilities.

27Debate Case 11: Ethical Issues in Teaching Science. I have written two papers for this group addressing this matter. (My original training, and much of my current teaching, is in philosophy of science.) Obviously, one issue here is the “creationism issue.” But there are others. Handout on Second Examination.

29 Debate Case 12: The Ethics of Testing. This is also a “philosophy of science” issue. What can tests measure and how can they accomplish such “measurement”? This is a very large topic that might be broken down. Should anybody, or any group, be in a position to dictate what is taught in K-12? Put this way, the relevance of this topic to the issue of “No Child Left Behind” is apparent.iv[13]

Dec. 4 Course Summary, Review for Second Examination, and Evaluation.

6 SECOND EXAMINATION

Dec. 15 (Fri.) (10 a.m.-12 noon) No Final Exam, but I will be in the regular classroom to discuss your grade, course issues, the course itself, etc. I will also return and discuss the 2nd Exam. *This meeting is optional.*

## ENDNOTES

[1] Note that I refer to ethical issues that are important to teachers throughout this paper, but I believe that many of these same matters are important to various

educational administrators—especially some of the more general issues.

[2] See [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).

[3] Note that this is a major reason why I utilize what I call my “debate approach” to teaching applied ethics. Reference to this can be found in the partial syllabus in the Appendix.

[4] [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde). See, especially, page 6, which includes the ethics code.

[5] James Roper, “A Philosophical Perspective on Corporate Codes of Ethics.” *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, Volume 6*. Edited by Moses L. Pava and Patrick Primeau. November 2005, Reed Elsevier, London. Pp. 195-206 (Chapter 11).

[6] The Michigan Code of Ethics for Teachers makes things worse by incorporating ethical positions that are both vague and ambiguous. Space does not permit a more detailed examination here. I leave that for another day.

[7] Roper, op. cit.

[8] "No Character or Personality" (a response to an article by Robert Solomon), *Business Ethics Quarterly* 13 (2003), pp. 87-94.

[9] See endnote 5 above.

[10] Note: This subject matter will get us into a discussion of “dispositions.”

[11] My sister, Mrs. Sandy Kerr, was initially trained in philosophy at a major graduate department (Pittsburgh). Her undergraduate degree is in mathematics. She recently returned to college at George Mason University to obtain her teaching certificate. I have great confidence in her judgment about this matter. Mrs. Kerr:

The teachers are being enabled by the system in place and it would, I have been told, take a generation to change the system. Yet no attempts to make this change are in the works as far as I know. The elementary teachers basic education to teach K-5th grade does not really include much you could call math, and most elementary teachers are math phobic. To change this you would have to make current teachers go back and get math training and put the training into the new student teacher's curriculum. The problem is most of the current teachers just would not be able to learn what they need and if they are in good standing you can't just fire them all. So this is a case where the system has



failed both the teachers and the students.

First, I suggest students research this statement to determine whether and to what extent it is true. Next, I would encourage students to provide ethical appraisals of their findings regarding Mrs. Kerr's statement.

[12] Grazette, Jacqueline Hicks. "Wikiality in My Classroom."  
www.washingtonpost.com. Sunday, March 25, 2007; B01

[13] A topic that is clearly related to "No Child Left Behind" is the question whether education is a benefit or a right. Theories about distributive justice, which are surely broadly ethical in their ramifications, are especially relevant here.

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Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division,  
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THEME:

Logic, Method and Critical Thinking

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## **Logic and Ethics in Socratic Seminars: Epistemic Injustice in the Classroom**

Linda O'Neill  
Northern Illinois University

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division, Session of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education, April 18, 2008, Palmer House Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, USA

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### Introduction

At the beginning of each semester, undergraduates in Philosophical Foundations of Education attempt to connect philosophical ideas such as being, truth, beauty, goodness, and value to their personal experiences. Students respond to excerpts from Plato's Republic as if they were having a conversation with Socrates. These short conversation papers often contain vivid stories, descriptions, and personal concerns as students relate their own lives to Socratic ideas, metaphors, and questions. They also contain unexamined presuppositions, generalizations and inferences that are not critiqued in the early days of the semester. Instead, we revisit these conversation papers when we discuss logical fallacies in a later class session. Then we begin to use logical fallacies as tools to identify specific errors in our own and others' reasoning. Some students, especially those who have been exposed to the legal form of Socratic questioning, with sustained interrogations designed to reveal the responder's ignorance of legal precedence, take great delight in spotting logical errors. This attention to argumentation seems an improvement over untheorized personal anecdotes and undisciplined battles of opinion; it also presents a new problematic for us.

The strong tactics of sophistic, eristic practices can lead to increased skill in asserting and defending views, and the competitive energies these tactics generate seem "natural" to many of us. But such tactics can also overwhelm the goals of mutual understanding and ethical justification that characterize the Socratic elenchus. The intention to pursue greater insight by seeking "truths" beyond and between those involved in a given philosophical conversation (elenchus) can get lost in the search for logical errors and contradictions that clearly allow one person or group to "win" the argument (eristic). According to Jurgen Mittelstrass, "Dialectics in the Socratic-Platonic sense is not just a form of argumentation but also essentially a (philosophical) form of

life (Lebensform).” [1] In this same collection of essays, Hans-Georg Gadamer identifies the “glittering illusions” and “idle talk of the sophists” as a threat to “our thinking as human beings.” In the “back and forth” of dialogue leading to insight, what we need, according to Gadamer, is “benevolent argumentation” in a life of dialogue – along with “all other factors of language and intuition,” not simply skill in spotting logical errors or scoring rhetorical points. [2]

More recently, philosopher Miranda Fricker has argued that we should pay more attention to “epistemic injustice,” the ways persons and groups can be wronged “as knowers.” Fricker views “knowing” as a human capacity that encompasses both ethical and epistemological virtues. How can we be wronged as “knowers”? Fricker identifies two kinds of epistemic injustice, both of them relevant to classroom discussions: testimonial injustice and hermeneutic injustice. In this exploration, eristic, elenchus, epistemic injustice and hermeneutical virtues are considered within the context of an undergraduate Socratic Seminar. The ethical dimensions of Fricker’s “gaining knowledge by being told and making sense of our social experiences” [3] entail “ethical-intellectual” virtues that can be compared with virtues required in the Socratic elenchus as described by Mittelstrass and Gadamer. Fricker’s ideas about epistemic and hermeneutical virtues lead to possibilities and problems for classroom discussions. Before looking at a specific example, relevant aspects of Miranda Fricker’s epistemic injustice (testimonial injustice, hermeneutical injustice, and hermeneutical virtues) will be summarized.

### Fricker’s Testimonial Injustice

Fricker defines testimonial injustice as an “identity prejudicial credibility deficit” that can be based on personal, interpersonal, and/or social associations. [4] One of the first examples she provides is from Patricia Highsmith’s *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, the first of a series of five novels featuring the charming sociopath Tom Ripley, the title character who secures a lavish lifestyle by capitalizing on a case of mistaken identity, then committing murder, identity theft, and forgery to retain his new identity and solidify his assets. In a conversation between two characters early in the novel, female intuition is compared with male logic based on facts. [5] Female intuition is found wanting in a conversation between these two characters, even though “intuition” might have been helpful in avoiding great future harm had it been heeded. In this example, the “agential power” of the female speaker, who does not trust Tom, is under valued and her “testimony” is not considered seriously because of a prejudice associated with female identity attributions. The credibility deficit results not from individual untrustworthiness, but from the association of female with the absence of valid justification. When an association that leads to an automatic credibility deficit is stable or unchanging, despite evidence to the contrary, its power can become structural. Such

power can undermine the “speaker as knower” and can impede the processes of giving evidence and passing on knowledge. In such instances the knower is sometimes constituted by a stereotype and sometimes caused or prompted to act as a stereotype might dictate (self-fulfilling prophecy). Fricker defines systematic testimonial injustice as “a widely held disparaging association between a social group and one or more attributes, where this association embodies a generalization that displays some...resistance to counter-evidence owing to an ethically bad affective investment.” [6]

To help us consider the impact of systematic testimonial injustice, Fricker describes an avowed feminist who still does not trust female politicians, not because they have proven themselves to be untrustworthy, but because of gender association. [7] Such unwarranted general reactions diminish speakers who are not granted the baseline credibility needed for giving and receiving information. While it seems self evident that such credibility deficits can lead to lost information when a hearer remains “deaf” to an important message, the deficit can also lead to the speaker’s “loss of knowledge.” According to Fricker, knowledge can be “washed away” as a speaker’s confidence in personal competence and insight is eroded. [8] Fricker uses the words of Simone de Beauvoir to illustrate such loss. In light of her lover Jean-Paul Sartre’s relentless criticism, de Beauvoir writes, “I’m no longer sure what I think or even if I think at all.” [9] Thus, testimonial injustice can exclude a speaking subject from “trustful conversation,” the baseline for much common discourse. [10] Following Hume, Fricker argues that discourse, when it does not begin with formalized sequences or definitions, begins with “Faith” in the speaker. [11] Epistemic trustworthiness, which depends upon and grants a measure of competence and sincerity, may be unreflective at its conversational beginning, but it is not thereby uncritical. This conversational trust or faith presumes a willingness on the part of the listener to begin receiving the giving of evidence or passing on of knowledge with a measure of interest, acknowledgment, responsiveness, openness, and faith in the integrity of the speaker. Fricker summarizes,

An appropriately trained testimonial sensibility enables the hearer to respond to the word of another with the sort of critical openness that is required for a thoroughly effortless sharing of knowledge. [12]

When the receiver of testimony is both trusting and potentially critical, when the speaker is sincere and competent, testimonial injustice can be minimized. Under such circumstances, the virtues of testimonial justice (responsiveness, openness) can correct for prejudice and raise the listener’s awareness of historical contingency. Seeing a fellow speaker in a trusting and critical light is an ethical stance, calling for not only active listening, but for “practical responses from relevant parties.” [13] This stance or

orientation to entering a conversation with enough motivation to hear the speaker as trustworthy and to give the speaker's justification a "fair hearing" is not a formulaic sequence or set of behaviors that can be predicted and prescribed irrespective of shifting contexts. It is rather an orientation based upon largely uncodifiable "ethical knowledge" characterized by flexibility, responsiveness, openness, and sensitivity to moral saliences. [14]

But how does such knowledge arise? If it cannot be easily or completely codified, how is it to be developed? In Fricker's genealogy, ethical knowledge can be developed as passive inheritances from communities of birth, and received practices of testimonial exchange interact from generation to generation with individual personal experiences. In the exchange between tradition and present experience, individuals come to recognize tensions that lead them to question received traditions. As maturity and experience bring critical mental mechanisms to bear on tradition, individuals adjust their perspectives, realigning them imperceptibly and easily or with significant effort and deliberate use of critical thought in the service of corrective action.

#### Fricker's Hermeneutical Injustice

Sometimes tensions between individual experiences and received traditions are sensed but cannot be communicated. When an important area of social experience is "obscured from collective understanding owing to a structural identity prejudice in the collective hermeneutical resource," speakers cannot share their knowledge because they cannot make it intelligible. [15] Fricker calls this type of lacuna "hermeneutical injustice." Hermeneutical injustice may be either systemic or incidental. Systemic injustice relates to a structural identity prejudice of some kind (often related to categories of power and structural inequality such as race, gender, or social class). Fricker provides examples of post partum depression, sexual harassment, and homosexual identity formation as hermeneutical injustices arising when group members cannot find the meaning-making categories that apply most directly to their lives within the cultural repertoire. Once such groups find ways to make sense of their experiences by conversing with fellow group members, they can sometimes succeed in expanding the social range of understanding. Until they can find the words they need to convey their thoughts and feelings to one another, they are at a loss to make an authentic contribution to "the collective hermeneutical resource" that constitutes shared social meanings.

Hermeneutical losses may be personally significant even if they are not related to categories associated with structural identity prejudice. Incidental injustice can occur when an important patch of experience cannot be made comprehensible despite the absence of a structural identity prejudice. Fricker offers an example of incidental

hermeneutical injustice from Ian McEwan's novel, *Enduring Love*. The protagonist Joe is stalked by another man who wishes to convert him. When he attempts to communicate the threat he feels to both the police and his partner, Clarissa, his concerns are trivialized. Joe attempts to transmit knowledge and evidence, but this information is interpreted as an exaggeration or as a situation calling for humor, not fear. In both cases, Joe's sense of threat is not acknowledged. His claim as a knower is not validated. [16] Even without structural identity prejudice, a speaker like Joe may feel diminished when a significant aspect of experience is not acknowledged as meaningful. Fricker concludes her analysis of hermeneutical injustice with a discussion of the very real consequences of hermeneutical lacunae including physical symptoms, emotional distress, professional and material decline, and the loss of identity coherence.

### Hermeneutical Virtues

To combat hermeneutical injustice, Fricker identifies virtues of hermeneutical justice entailing a reflexive awareness of how social identities impact intelligibility. Hermeneutical virtues can help guard against identity prejudice. Such virtues lead to the creation of more inclusive "micro climates" of interpretation. [17] Critical judgments may still be applied, but not before interpreters listen for what is not said, suspend initial, reactionary judgments, and consider what meaning might be made within a different sort of hermeneutical frame. For Fricker, the goal of hermeneutical virtue is "to neutralize the impact of structural identity prejudice on one's credibility judgment." [18]

Fricker's treatment of prejudice in her concept of hermeneutical virtue is consistent with Hans-Georg Gadamer's warning that deeply rooted prejudices can preclude the "good will" that is "requisite for insight." [19] According to Gadamer, when initial judgments or prejudices are not put "into play" in a given conversation, knowledge can be "prematurely taken over by that which it seems to be." [20] Unlike the gods, "we humans need benevolent argumentation...carried on in the long communal life of dialogue..." [21] Gadamer concludes:

The empirical sciences...have their own different forms of verification...or falsification. Pure thought....too needs verification. It constructs itself, under considerable jeopardy, in the mutual give-and-take of dialogue and, finally, in the continuity of a never-ending dialogue. To know means to become a part of this discourse. [22]

What kind of dialogue allows for "benevolent argumentation" within a Socratic dialectic? Jurgen Mittelstrass compares the sophistic form of conducting dialogue with what he calls the Socratic form of asking and answering questions. The sophistic,



eristic dialogue relies upon proofs, logic, the art of contradiction or deduction of contradiction, the artful use of various types of speech, and an emphasis on “being right” (correct or victorious) rather than intending or doing right (ethical). The Socratic elenchus relies upon renunciation of deception, justified agreement rather than assertion of position, and veracity reached in a combination of practical intention (mutual understanding) and theoretical intention (mutual justification). [23] Socratic elenchus, as characterized by both Mittelstrass and Gadamer, seems particularly promising as a dialogic activity capable of fostering some of the virtues required in the practice of testimonial and hermeneutical justice. The following classroom example from my own practice suggests both possibilities and limitations.

### An Incomplete Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction, undergraduate students in Philosophical Foundations of Education write conversation papers, identifying quotes from each text and raising questions related to those quotes to prepare for Socratic Seminar participation and seminar facilitation. These Socratic Seminars are variations of a Socratic Method outlined by Political Science Professor Rob Reich, recipient of the 2001 Walter J. Gores Award for Teaching Excellence. [24] Reich notes that since Socratic Method uses questions to explore the beliefs and values of participants, “it is nothing less than the coherence of the lives of the people that is at stake.” [25] While the professor’s role is clearly delineated in Reich’s version of Socratic Method, in my variation, students often take on the role of seminar facilitator. While there are significant advantages to student-led seminars, there are also concerns, as the following example demonstrates.

After discussing excerpts from Plato and Aristotle, the class holds a Socratic Seminar based on the short story “Love is a Fallacy” by American humorist Max Shulman (1919-1988). This spoof describes the antics of an eighteen-year-old aspiring law student who trades a raccoon coat to his friend Petey in return for a chance to win over Petey’s “girl” Polly. While Polly is beautiful and gracious in the author’s mind, she is not intelligent enough to be his wife. In order to groom her for this role, the author tutors her in logic. The story is replete with examples of logical fallacies and humorous turnabouts as the author teaches Polly enough logic to address all his objections when she rejects him for Petey and his raccoon coat.

In conversation papers and in the subsequent seminar, some students take eristic delight in the deduction of contradiction embedded in analyses of logical fallacies – dicto simpliciter, hasty generalization, hypothesis contrary to the fact, poisoning the well, false analogy, and ad miseracordiam. Some take pleasure in comparing the various definitions of love in Shulman’s short story with Aristotle’s views on friendship.

Some relate the story to their own lives, their own delusions, or their own hopes and fears regarding the mystery of love. These seminar conversations, supported by student papers and quotes from the text, seem to arise from motivations related to the felt need for eristic clarity and certainty as well as the quest for mutual understanding and justification that characterizes elenchus. Enlarging the point/counterpoint debates that arise from texts like the Taking Sides series, these Socratic Seminars encourage people to take up others' comments and perspectives before putting their own personal views into play. [26] Class members sometimes follow arguments to new "positions" as the conversation continues. The quest for certainty is balanced by the responsiveness and flexibility Fricker identifies as aspects of hermeneutical virtue. As Rob Reich describes the shift that occurs as people participate in his version of the Socratic Method, interlocutors come to experience "articulate hesitation" in place of "inarticulate certainty." [27]

Reich contends that the Socratic Method "necessarily proceeds in an ad hominem style" since the focus of inquiry is what each person thinks or says along with the underlying values these thoughts reflect. But ad hominem moves, so effective in quintessential eristic quests to "be right," can be used to deflect as well as deepen testimony and interpretation. Since I began using "Love is a Fallacy" three years ago to bring logic to the fore, only one person has questioned the structural inequality that frames the story. We all have great fun with the gender stereotypes and often treat them like the dated phrases in the story – keen, terrific, marvy, delish, and wow-dow. But last semester, Athena (pseudonym), a senior elementary education major, expressed a more serious concern. She asked, "Is anyone else bothered by the sexism here? I had a hard time getting past it even though the story is so funny." The discussion had been moving with what Fricker might describe as "a thoroughly effortless sharing of knowledge" suggesting an "appropriately trained testimonial sensibility." [28] But Athena's comment was met with silence followed by this question from one of her colleagues in the class: "Are you a feminist?"

I must confess I did not take over at this point (another student had the facilitator role for the discussion); nor did I point out the possibility that rather than responding respectfully to Athena's "testimony" we had just used a question she might view as ad hominem to deflect her insight. In fact, Athena was indeed deflected as she quickly back peddled, exclaiming, "No, I'm not a feminist; I just think the story is a little creepy." Did we, as Socratic partners, "do right" by this young interlocutor?

Fricker's concepts are helpful in considering this question. Fricker's testimonial injustice is characterized by an undervaluing of the "agential power" of a speaker. On the basis of a general prejudice against a particular identity formation, the speaker is not afforded the credibility usually allowed to a speaker. It is possible that Athena

interpreted the question (Are you a feminist?) as an attack on her credibility as well as a sign of both ontological and epistemological deficits. In this interpretation, we were potentially questioning who she was as a being, intimating that there are important virtues absent in beings who are feminists. We were also questioning her as a knower if feminists are not rational, balanced, flexible, or broad minded enough to be believable in making knowledge claims. Rather than taking seriously the possibility that Athena knew there were significant virtues missing from this humorous story (“the story is a little creepy”) the question (Are you a feminist?) seemed to suggest that Athena herself lacked important virtues, a credibility deficit related to her association with feminism. In this view, Athena’s defensive response was an attempt to restore her credibility as a speaker and to reassert her identity as a knower, fully capable of sharing trustworthy testimony. Like the female character who suggested that Tom Ripley was a person who lacked essential human virtues, Athena suggested that something vital was missing from Shulman’s spoof. Rather than following her insight with benevolent argumentation, the class effectively dismissed her as a knower on the grounds of her presumed association with feminism. As a feminist, her testimony was not to be trusted and we missed the opportunity to pursue a more expansive understanding.

If this interpretation is apt, the implied ad hominem cut ontologically (As a feminist, who are you?) and epistemologically (As a feminist, with predilections to see gender discrimination everywhere, what can you know?) with great efficiency. In this case, the ad hominem was supported by the unskillful ways in which we so often talk about gender and caricature feminism. Given our limited hermeneutic resources, we have difficulties addressing “structural identity prejudice” in private and public conversations. Like those who dismissed Joe’s discomfort at finding himself the target of harassment in *Enduring Love*, we were unable to find Athena’s testimonial discomfort intelligible. We did not employ our hermeneutical resources to integrate Athena’s testimony into the class discourse in a way that honored her as a knower; therefore, we were not able to add her insights about the ethical salience of gender roles or the uses and abuses of sexism in humor to our shared meaning-making capacities. [29]

Applying Fricker’s concept of hermeneutical injustice, we lacked the resources in our social traditions or shared experiences necessary to explore knowledge of this kind in our classroom. Since structural identity prejudices such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and others are sources of guilt and defensiveness as well as insight, perhaps as a group we did not possess the repertoire of dialectical skills (eristic or elenchus) needed to respond. Thus, testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice were mutually reinforcing.

Another interpretive possibility is that the questioner in our class example was

simply curious. In this view, the question was a good faith attempt to continue the dialogue in search of mutual understanding and justification. It is possible that the questioner wished to invite Athena and the rest of the class into eristic competition in pursuit of clarity and precision. Perhaps playful ad hominem exchanges – Are you a feminist? Are you intimidated by feminists? – might eventually have led to a thoughtful exchange. Perhaps Athena reacted to protect her credibility as a speaker and her identity as a knower with unnecessary defensiveness. Unfortunately, in this situation, the net result was to redirect the conversation away from Athena’s testimony. The opportunity to view Shulman’s story as Athena viewed it was lost.

As the instructor of the class, I did not guide the class from an initial reaction to a careful consideration of Athena’s perspective. It is possible that her views might have led to a deeper discussion of structural identity prejudice grounded in historic and institutionalized gender bias. It is also possible that her discomfort might have led to other kinds of connections to our course content. We might have explored the strictly utilitarian nature of all the relationships in this story since we had just discussed Aristotle on friendship. We might have examined the characters’ lack of personal growth and their inability or unwillingness to struggle toward greater self understanding. We might have questioned the series of decisions based on status within a materialistic hierarchy. We might even have considered the uses of logic in eristic exchanges. We will never know, since we did not fold Athena’s testimony into our class discourse. An instructor in full possession of Fricker’s hermeneutical virtues might have been able to integrate Athena’s insight into the class conversation in a way that demonstrated and fostered benevolent argumentation, good will, suspension of judgment, perspective taking, testimonial trustworthiness, and critical judgment. In light of Fricker’s hermeneutical virtues, I wish I had responded to Athena’s “call” in a way that affirmed: “You are a trustworthy knower whose testimony is worth hearing.”

## Conclusion

While the study of logical fallacies and the art of assertion so central to eristic practices can indeed lead to increased skill in defending positions, logic alone is insufficient in a quest for self knowledge, mutual understanding, and ethical justification. While class discussions can gain valuable precision in the competitive energies of eristic challenges, the intent to foster benevolent argumentation characteristic of the elenchus may be essential when we approach our own individual and shared hermeneutical lacunae. An ethics of dialogue and dialectic invites us to enter the hermeneutic circle with an intent to foster benevolent argumentation even as we employ our powers of critical deduction and error identification.

Fricker warns us that humans can be wronged “as knowers.” Fricker’s epistemic

injustice is a concept that Gadamer might describe as a problem of the good that “poses questions over and beyond all knowledge of reality.” [30] As we confront the possibilities (more likely, the probabilities) of epistemic injustice in our own classroom discussions, we can draw upon the ethical, intellectual, and hermeneutical virtues leading to that “new knowledgeable ignorance” accessible through judicious use of both eristic and elenchus. [31] Cognizant of the dangers inherent in our ongoing human conversation, we can openly and critically attempt to address epistemic injustice within the context of our own classrooms.

*Many thanks to James E. Roper, Michigan State University, for his insightful critique of this paper.*

## Endnotes

[1] Jurgen Mittelstrass, “On Socratic Dialogue” in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 126-142, 131.

[2] Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Reply to Nicholas P. White” in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 258-266, 259, 262.

[3] Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[4] *Ibid.*, 28.

[5] Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955/1992).

[6] *Ibid.*, 351 [7] *Ibid.*, 372 [8] *Ibid.*, 49.

[9] *Ibid.*, 50.

[10] *Ibid.*, 53.

[12] *Ibid.*, 84.

[13] *Ibid.*, 77.

[14] Ibid., 75.

[15] Ibid., 165.

[16] Ibid., 157.

[17] Ibid., 170.

[18] Ibid., 173.

[19] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reply to Nicholas P. White" in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 258-266, 261.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reply to Nicholas P. White" in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 258-266, 262.

[22] Ibid., 263

[23] Jurgen Mittelstrass, "On Socratic Dialogue" in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 126-142, 130.

[24] Rob Reich, "The Socratic Method: What it is and How to Use it in the Classroom," *Speaking of Teaching*, 13, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 1-5. Available at <https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/tomorrows-professor>.

[25] Ibid., 3.

[26] See, for example, James Wm. Noll, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues*, 14<sup>th</sup> edition (Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill Contemporary Learning Series, 2007).

[27] Reich, 3.

[28] Fricker, 84.

[30] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reply to Nicholas P. White" in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 258-266, 259.



## **Ethical Perspectivism and Practical Perspectives in the Classroom**

Alexander Makedon  
Chicago State University

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## I. Ethical Theory of Radical Perspectivism

### A. Introduction

In the paper, the author explains some of his latest thinking on the ethical theory of radical perspectivism, including a discussion of the relationship between everythingness and nothingness, or their corresponding ethical implications.[1] He draws six ethical principles of radical perspectivism, and discusses their educational significance. He raises several objections to the ethical theory of radical perspectivism, which he subsequently attempts to answer. It may be worth noting in this regard that the author raised several objections to his theory of radical perspectivism 17 years ago, when he first wrote about such theory.[2] In this paper, he concentrates on raising objections to his latest interpretation of the ethical significance of such theory.

### B. Ethical Theorizing

There can be no ethical theory without certain fundamental principles regarding conduct. For example, certain types of conduct may be seen as desirable, good, or appropriate, depending on (a) which principles are used for analyzing it; and (b) whether there is a being reasonable or intelligent enough to engage in such analysis. Such principles may be seen as the result of certain thoughtful processes, or "assumptions," that humans make about the good, for example, of what counts as good.[3] Since humans are the end product of an evolutionary process, their theoretical abilities are presumably based on conditions that allowed them (humans) to become who they are; it follows that under similar conditions there is the "potential" for similar beings with similar thinking abilities to rise or "evolve." Humans are the "end product" of a universe in whose context they find themselves behaving, thinking, or feeling as they do, albeit by no means the only or even main reason why the universe exists. It is in this sense that, as the author has written elsewhere,[4] the universe thinks through humans, as in a "world-human" that "human-thinks." [5]

### C. On the Meaning of the term "Universe"

By "universe" the author means not only the corporeal universe, but also the incorporeal universe which such universe represents, such as, the laws embedded in its organization which hold it together (gravity, curvature, repulsion, electromagnetic fields, and so on); or the ideas that its parts, such as, humans, generate. The two "faces" of the universe, the corporeal and incorporeal, are but two sides of the same

ontological coin. This is easily shown by our daily encounters as humans with both, the physical world (including so-called “inanimate” objects), on the one hand; and ideas, such as those expressed in this paper, on the other. Either one of these sides of the universe (corporeal/incorporeal) is but a “representation” of the other, depending on which “perspective” one examines the universe from. Thus if one takes an “idealistic” stand, the physical universe is but a representation, and, according to some, such as, Plato,[6] “bad copy,” of the incorporeal one. If, alternatively, one takes a materialistic stand, then, as Marx proposed,[7] the incorporeal universe is but a reflection of material conditions. According to radical perspectivism, neither stand by itself accurately represents the universe, since the universe is both corporeal and incorporeal, with one or the other of its “sides” being constantly “rediscovered” by humans in their daily encounters with the world.

#### D. Evolution as a Precursor to a Universal Ethics

One may surmise that since evolution takes place everywhere in the universe, in the sense not only of biological evolution on planet earth,[8] but of gradual changes in “organic” and “inorganic” matter, the potential for the development of intelligence is probably everywhere present in the universe. This is particularly the case given the “genetic” overlap between organic and inorganic matter, such as, the evolutionary potential inherent in matter.[9] A good example of such potential is the original singularity of the Big Bang, according to which before the evolution of life, there was “matter” (or, more correctly, energy-matter, as explained, below). In other words, life didn’t suddenly “drop from the sky,” as it were, but evolved from what people commonly refer to as “matter.” Drawn to its logical conclusion, this means that matter itself is but a primeval “form” of life, and therefore also of intelligence.[10] Regarding the universality of material conditions, witness the similarity in laws governing the whole universe, such as, quantum physics; or the existence in microscopic form of matter-energy, such as, atoms, out of which form molecules, which in turn combine to form cells, which in turn are the fundamental units of life.[11] As unbelievable as it may sound to humans who are accustomed to human-time, a “material potentiality” can be, and has been, transformed over evolutionary time to become the corporeal and incorporeal “universe” of the type known to humans. Given this potential in matter-energy for the development of “everything,” including intelligence, one may further surmise that ethical theories should not be exclusively about humans, *but about everything*. This is so not only because humans are the end product of an evolutionary process, but also because as part of “everything,” humans could not possibly “ethicize” (think ethically) only about themselves without reverting to solipsism.

If we posit existence as good, and non-existence as “bad,” then one is led to conclude that everything that exists is good, while nothing is not. A corollary of such a principle is that one behaves in ethically desirable ways if she acts selflessly to maintain “world possibilities.” By “world possibilities” the author means the totality of existence, including those possibilities which collectively make the world: past, present and future possibilities that make the world what it is now, has been in the past, or is likely to become in the future.[12] Without such world, nothing would exist.



By contrast to total nothingness, existence is possible, and therefore evolvable, diversifiable, “thinkable” and good. Simply put, by virtue of its coming to be, existence, or “somethingness,” posits itself as different from total nothingness. Such distinction becomes apparent to existence through surrogate forms of self-evaluation, such as, the human ability to think or represent the “other.” Humans are but a part of a larger existential whole that thinks-through-humans. Somethingness is not only prerequisite to thinking, as when a line is drawn between what is and is not; but also to ethics, in the broader sense of “ethics” as a theoretical enterprise. For example, as a result of comparing being with non-being, one may end up formulating an ethic of self-preservation.

Everything depends on the survival of conditions that sustain it. Assuming that humans find existence desirable, as all evidence so far seems to indicate that they do (or else they would not wish to survive), then one may surmise that we behave “badly” if our actions result in the eradication of being,[13] including our own. Humans occasionally desire non-existence, as their suicidal attempts seem to indicate. Their unyielding militarism may also be seen as suicidal, especially given the availability of weapons of mass destruction. If as a result of their nuclear capabilities humans cause themselves to disappear (for example, during a nuclear holocaust), it is not impossible that human-like beings may again evolve, depending on existing conditions in the aftermath of such a holocaust.[14] Of course at this stage of the evolution of the universe, such a possibility for the “resurrection” of a presumably “similar” (human-like) species seems unlikely. In any event, the overwhelming majority of humans profess a love for life, rather than death, their often inarticulate or short-sighted belligerence notwithstanding. Unless one can successfully argue that humans have historically been wrong in desiring their self-preservation, *one must posit the preservation of human existence, as well as of everything that has contributed to its sustenance, as a fundamental good. Such good may be used as a “building block” in the design of a theory of ethics.*

#### E. Between Good and Evil

For those who “exist” (live, reside) inside being, there seems to exist a line that clearly separates everything from nothing. Radically perspectivistic ethics mirrors universal realities, such as, the distinction between good (being) and evil (nothingness). This is so partly as a result of, to paraphrase Nietzsche,[15] the “will to survive:” separating one’s own existence, which one desperately clings to, from the nothingness of his (her, its) disappearance. From a universal perspective we (humans) are but the embodiment, but by no means the starting point, of a larger truth regarding being: while our own existence is inter-dependent, the whole is largely independent of any one world part, including humans. World events so far have probably made most of us humans aware of the precarious nature of our existence.

#### F. Inclusiveness

All beings, including non-human "world parts," have worthwhile, albeit imaginable, perspectives. Such perspectives may be characterized as "ethical" to the extent that they represent different points of view. World parts being the parts that they speak volumes about what non-human world parts might consider desirable, such as, "existing" the world according to their own ontological categories.[16] For example, as much as some humans would like to think that other animals would rather be human or, worse, that only humans are privileged with "perspective," it seems safe to assume that from their own perspective, other animals would rather live the world differently than humans. My cat is by far happier if she can be a cat, than if I try to change her behavior to act like a human (walk on its hind legs, obey human commands, or make human-like sounds). If my cat could express to me her perspective, including her cat-like ethical imperatives, she might see the world with different "eyes," than I or other humans prefer to see it. If all animals preferred to be human, then they would have had a natural admiration for humans, something which so far there is no evidence for, certain domesticated pets' love for their owners notwithstanding. In fact, other animals may see humans as encroaching on their habitats, and therefore more like a foe, rather than a friendly role-model (with the possible exception, as mentioned previously, of some household pets). If other animals did consider humans to be superior, then why don't they show an inclination to court humans' favor? Unfortunately, as people correctly noticed ever since they kept records on the behavior of other animals, most animals avoid humans. After all, other animals rarely learn anything useful from humans they don't already know or learn from their parents. [17] In fact, if the proliferation of the meat industry is any indication of the extent to which humans see non-humans as a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself, an argument could be made that humans are probably more harmful to other animals, than animals have ever been, or are likely to become, to humans. Most animals would rather emulate each other, as do the young who learn from their parents, or from their peers in a pack.[18] Most animals have a preference for their own kind over humans, and therefore are showing a certain desire for a non-human-centered "ethic" that most humans who take their hegemony over other animals for granted may consider offensive. If nothing else can convince humans of their non-exalted status in the eyes of other animals, or, for that matter, the rest of the universe, perhaps the fact that other animals prefer being with their own kind around mating season speaks volumes regarding what type of lifestyle they prefer for themselves, their families or their progeny. Even my dog, Goofy, who I think really loves me, would rather run after, or play with, another dog, than stay put beside me when another dog happens to pass by. Finally, simply because non-human world parts are non-logocentric does not mean that they don't have particular perspectives of their own, or that they are not entitled to being treated as ends-in-themselves. Such theories as can be designed around such teleological "non-human endedness" might be described as "ethical" in their own right. We can begin to imagine such ethics, such as, the ethical perspectives of non-humans, by using our cognitive abilities selflessly to represent other animals, or, for that matter, anything else organic or inorganic in the universe. Such "ethical perspectivism" is aligned with any number of existing theories, from old-Platonic-idealist, to utilitarian and Kantian-neo-idealist; unfortunately, such theories

are premised mainly around humans, and therefore are self-contradictory, as would be any syllogism that fails to abide by its own conclusion. For example, if one were to abide by the Golden Rule, then such rule should not be selectively applied when it seems convenient to humans to do so, in which case it is no longer “golden” (in the sense of being fair). Furthermore, reciprocity requires that humans reciprocate a favor done by the world in helping them evolve, with one of their own, such as, using their skills selflessly to represent the world.

The litmus test of whether humans could have become what they have become without the world’s assistance might be to imagine what might have happened to humans without such world. Obviously, humans would have never “become.” Since humans “evolved” as a result of the “assistance” they received from their surrounding world, it seems reasonable to conclude, as the author did, above, that on the basis of an ethics of reciprocity they should assist and represent it, in return. Likewise with the Kantian categorical imperative,[19] which, if limited only to humans, as Kant intended to be, becomes self-defeating: it then becomes *prima facie* an anti-universalistic principle (since it excludes non-humans). The fact that Kant would limit the categorical imperative to rational beings further exacerbates the degree of exclusiveness that defeats it: since there is no evidence that rationality is an exclusively human trait, particularly given not only the abundance of intelligence in the universe, such as, the intricate design of molecular structures, but also our own emergence from presumably “irrational” forces, it seems reasonable to expect that the categorical imperative should be applied to “everything.”

If anything, evolution shows that humans are possibly less rational (intelligent, reasonable) than the conditions that allowed them to evolve their intelligence, since between the two, the former (universe) stands as a cause to the latter (humans), and therefore from a universal perspective, by far more “intelligent” than humans.[20] Anything less than a universal embracing of everything in the design of an ethical theory becomes the equivalent of a truncated “ethics” that represents only part of the world, such as, humans, and therefore incomplete; or, if seen from a world perspective, ethically undesirable, as it would be neither reciprocal, nor fair, that a world part, humans, should be given preference over non-humans, although all parts have equally contributed to the maintenance, evolution, or occasional transformation of the whole.

## G. Otherness

Under radical perspectivism, “otherness” ceases to be limited to humans, since anything can be the “other:” otherness includes “everything,” human or not, real or unreal. A human-only otherness is not really about the other, but only about other human beings; as such, it is ontologically “myopic,” since it is limited only to humans, albeit often in the form of language that sounds altruistic. By contrast to the type of otherness which is not really other, a universal otherness includes “everything,” meaning, not only humans, but also non-human parts of the universe. The former type of otherness is narcissistic, its occasionally multicultural camouflage notwithstanding;

while the latter, or universal otherness, is all-inclusive, including the selfless representation of everything. By “everything” the author means everything real or imaginable, such as, other animals, nature, or parts-of-the-future that humans may encounter at some point in space-time. Radical perspectivism embraces “everything;” hence its universal approach to ethics.

Otherness brings about “intelligence:” without the diversity others generate, there would exist nothing other than oneself with which to compare oneself to. As a result one may be unaware of one’s existence, let alone begin to develop one’s intelligence through comparison, analysis, categorization, and so on, since there would be nothing else with which to compare a with b, analyze x, or put c, d, and e in separate categories. The world becomes gradually more intelligent, the more “differentiated” it becomes, or, to use the same language as the author did elsewhere,[21] the more “possible” it becomes. One such possibility has apparently been the emergence of humans. Given (a) the existential imperative (that one must assist existence); and (b) the existential dependence on difference, it follows that one should (a) appreciate difference, as it is what makes existence itself possible; and (b) strive to become ever more intelligent, as doing so “fulfills” world possibilities (in the sense of intelligence evolving as a result of differences, and possibly even saving the world from itself[22]).

#### H. Assumptions

To be able to understand the perspective of the “other” (another human, or other world-part[23]), one needs to find out her (his, its) most fundamental assumptions.[24] Ethical agents are occasionally unaware of their personal perspective for any number of reasons, some of which have been explored by psychoanalysts and social psychologists.[25] For example, a person may be unaware of his values because of the gradual internalization of social norms. One may internalize a set of values as a result of growing up in a certain culture, but fail to see his values from a distance as only one of many possible sets of values which he could possibly have grown up with. Likewise with painful experiences, or perceived threats to one's survival, which people may wish to avoid thinking about, or “suppress” to their subconscious, but which may have caused them to have certain assumptions about the world; or, in cases of neurotic behavior, react in certain seemingly uncontrollable ways.[26] Of course at the other extreme are people who think critically about their values. In either case, people act on the basis of assumptions they have about the world, whether such assumptions are held critically or subconsciously. For example, even in situations where one barely examines or understands the reasons for one’s own behavior, one is not acting without assumptions because without such assumptions, one would not be “acting” on his or her own behalf, but would be acting because compelled by others to do so. Since in most cases in a “free society” people act as they do because they want to, it seems reasonable to conclude that they do so on the basis of certain assumptions that they hold, rather than because of a set of rules or values imposed on them from outside.

Even in cases where one is compelled to act by another agent outside oneself, he or she can resist or refuse to act for any number of reasons, as, indeed, is often the case in everyday life (or else humans would have never known political or interpersonal conflict, as they would have never been able to distinguish their own from other people's values). Any one or all of the reasons people give for acting or believing as they do may be seen as their underlying assumptions of what constitutes "right," proper, agreeable or worth pursuing. To the extent that we begin to recognize (unearth, discover, confront) our assumptions, as might happen, say, in a classroom that employs the Socratic approach to learning,[27] to that extent they begin to become aware of their "values" (or of themselves as beings capable of acting on the basis of values).

## I. Ethical Divide

A world part's ways of "existing the world," as contrasted to merely existing *in* the world, constitute such world part's "perspectivism." [28] Given the fact that the term "value" is infused with cognitive attributes, the author prefers to use the term "perspective" to represent world parts in order to avoid arguing in a circle in favor of only human values: by predefining value to apply only to humans, we end up excluding from ethical consideration non-human world parts. Values seem to be more human-centered than "perspectives," mainly because of the cognitive attributes that are usually associated with values: humans often reflect on their values, and therefore such values have come to be associated with reflection (and by association, with beings capable of being reflective, such as, humans). Likewise with processes which represent so-called "instinctively driven" points of view, which may be seen as representing certain perspectives, but not necessarily "values." [29] Having a perspective does not require that one necessarily articulate such perspective in human-like language, or use known tools of logical analysis to examine it. For example, a flying bird has a perspective of the world below, which may not have the same cognitive content as a reflected-upon "human" value.

If values are associated only with human beings, there is the risk that we end up thinking that non-humans have no "values." We may thus fail to overcome what the author refers to as the "ethical divide" that separates humans from their environment. Such "divide" unfortunately misrepresents the condition in which non-human world parts find themselves; furthermore, a human-centered definition of value, or, by extension, ethics, fails to enlighten humans about their own condition in an interdependent world. By using a less human-centered term, such as, "perspective," which is more inclusive of non-human "values," it may be easier for humans to appreciate non-human "perspectives," for example, avoid confusing values held by



humans, with the particular class of “values” or perspectives held by their non-human counterparts.

## J. Ethics and Difference

The world’s “differences,” or diversity, make the world what it is, including its possibilities. Had the world not been differentiated, it would not be worldly, but more like an absolute oneness, as humans often imagine an all-powerful deity to be. Such oneness would have nothing to distinguish itself from itself, and therefore impossible for itself to distinguish itself from something else (since there would be nothing else to distinguish itself from). On the other hand, differences within being make it possible for humans to communicate with other humans, interact with non-humans, or, for that matter, with ourselves. For example, we often discuss or communicate with each other our understanding of ourselves. To be able to understand ourselves, we must necessarily distinguish ourselves from others, or else we would not know whether we are examining ourselves or something else. Had there been no such differentiation, we would have been unable to understand anything. It is precisely because other world parts are so different that we are able to develop what the author refers to as “ontological demarcation boundaries:” we become capable of understanding ourselves as beings different from others. Were they (other world parts) the same as ourselves, as they must be in an absolute oneness, we would have had nothing other than ourselves to compare ourselves to, and thus almost nothing to distinguish ourselves from.[30] It follows that all ethics is but a symptom of a larger ontological paradigm of becoming that transcends narrow definitions of good or evil: *everything is good, since “everythingness” has been necessary for any-one-thing to be, such as, humans, let alone become better.*

## K. Radically Perspectivist Ethics

The term “ethics” refers to the “ethos,” or moral conduct of a group.[31] According to radical perspectivism, a theory of ethics must include radically diverse perspectives in order to arise as “ethical.”[32] This is so because the world is more than just one of its parts, and certainly more than just humans, and therefore must be included in every ethical decision that humans make. Without such representation, ethics becomes the self fulfilling prophecy of humans who self-servingly define ethics as a human-centered activity. As a result, humans end up excluding the world with which they are by nature “interlocked,” and therefore, in addition to excluding the world, they also exclude that part of themselves which is other-dependent. A truncated ethics of this sort seems to be not only incomplete, but also unfair: humans do not extend to non-humans the same courtesy of perspectival analysis, or “empathy,” they seem to readily favor for themselves.

Abstracting from all perspectives which radical perspectivism embraces is an overarching principle of all-inclusiveness. Such principle may be seen as the *first ethical principle of radical perspectivism* (please see ethical principles, below). *Such*



*inclusiveness eventually embraces the world, or more broadly, everything that is (as contrasted to “nothing” that isn’t).*

Radically perspectivist ethics does not “reject” other theories as “untrue:” such theories express certain “truths” about those who proposed them, the people who adopted them, or the social or environmental conditions in whose context such theories make or made sense at the time. If re-examined from a historical perspective, such theories are not totally “false,” but to a certain extent also “true.” In other words, human theories, whether of ethics or something else, reflect the “truth” about humans’ view of any number of issues at the time. For example, what humans often characterize as our human failures of the past, such as, our “failure” to understand the earth, ourselves, or other animals, may be seen from the perspective of those humans before our time who held such outdated theories as being “true,” except only in the context of what they knew at the time. Even “failures” of a less theoretical kind, such as, failure to succeed or attain a certain end in any number of routine endeavors, from sports to business to personal relationships, may be seen from any number of different perspectives as containing in them the seeds of success. Witness, for instance, the proverbial self-made human whose early failures steeled his will to succeed, which implies that without such failures to start with, he may have never been challenged enough to succeed.

## II. Principles of Radically Perspectivistic Ethics

### A. First Ethical Principle: Everything is Good

Radically perspectivist ethics considers a world-part "good" if, as a result of its actions, the universe is "aided" in the preservation of its possibilities. Since everything is interdependent, it is in a small way contributing to everything else, and is therefore good (even if at some point or in some way it becomes destructive). Whatever partakes of everythingness is good, including imagination. Hence the most fundamental principle in radically perspectivistic ethics is that everything is good. This is so even if something at some point is not, which is why, as explained, below, eventually becomes either nothing or something else. The author refers to such principle as the *First Ethical Principle of Radical Perspectivism*. He further explores this view of the goodness of everything, below. Suffice it here to mention that there are degrees of ethical desirability, depending on the degree to which one's actions promote the fulfillment of universal possibilities, for example, the preservation and further evolution of any number of animal species; or, within the human sphere, the preservation of other cultures.

### B. Second Ethical Principle: Meta-ethical Considerations

A radically perspectivistic ethic requires that we not only welcome the dialectics of our ethical opponents, but help them co-exist peacefully with our own. This is so partly because an “ethos” can rise to the level of "ethically desirable" only in the context of those ethical theories that oppose it. Just as opponents in a game need each other to

play the game, so are ethical opposites inter-dependent in order to become ethically delineated and ontologically situated, and thus "recognizable." A radically perspectivistic ethic may be seen as the universal meta-ethics of all ethical beliefs equally considered, role-played or imagined (*Second Ethical Principle of Radical Perspectivism*).

#### C. Third Ethical Principle: Assistance and Representation

Humans should use their thinking and imagination to represent and assist everything (*Third Ethical Principle*).

#### D. Fourth Ethical Principle: Human Survival

Humans are as much a world part, as any other, and therefore just as deserving of their own survival, both presently in a non-destructive form; or in the future as humans whose possibilities of becoming are intertwined with the world parts they assist (*Fourth Ethical Principle*).

#### E. Fifth Ethical Principle: Non-eliminative acts

Humans should act "non-eliminatively" to promote their survival, as when appropriating others for their food, shelter, and so on, but without causing a "non-destructive" world part category to be destroyed (*Fifth Ethical Principle*). For example, humans should use trees for their survival but without destroying the regenerative capacity of the forest to recreate itself.

#### F. Sixth Ethical Principle: Environmental Self

Humans must learn to identify with the world at large, as in an expanded form of an environmental sense of self (*Sixth Ethical Principle*).

### III. Discussion and Educational Applications of the Six Ethical Principles

In the section that follows, the author further amplifies some aspects of radical perspectivist ethics. Next, he draws the educational significance of such ethics. He raises a few objections that he imagines could reasonably be argued against radically perspectivistic ethics, which subsequently he attempts to address. Finally, in the last section of his paper, the author examines a number of issues from a radically perspectivistic "perspective." Some such issues include intelligence, "badness," being and nothingness, cooperation, desirability of human existence, humility, imagination, instincts, intuition, deification, and "first cause." An attempt is made to link all such concepts to both, ethics and education.

#### a. Discussion of First Ethical Principle ("Everything is Good")

Some corollaries of the idea that everything is good include the following:

1. Since everything is good, *everything good exists*. If we know that something is good, it exists. Nothingness, on the other hand, does not exist, which is why it is, from the standpoint of being, its complete opposite. Although “badness” is aligned with nothingness, the distinction between goodness and badness is not as clear cut as the proverbial distinction between “black” and “white:” badness doesn’t suddenly join nothingness, since much of it exists in our midst, and is therefore still part of being (such as, human acts of selfishness, lack of empathy, destructiveness, and the like).

2. *Humans should avoid bringing about nothingness*. This type of nothingness is different from the type of imaginative “nothingness” discussed by Sartre.[33] Sartre’s nothingness assumes the preexistence of something. This “something” is the contextual somethingness about which humans imagine certain realistic or unrealistic “nothingness-es,”[34] and is therefore necessarily aligned with, or, more correctly, rooted within, something (rather than being identical with total nothingness that has nothing, not even imagination).

#### b. Discussion of Second Ethical Principle (Meta-ethical considerations)

What makes radical perspectivism ethically desirable is its diversity. Since the world is no more one part than another, it behooves humans to equally represent in ethics all of its parts. Without such ethical inclusiveness, we risk falling into solipsistic prophecies that pre-define the desirable only in our own image: we may so anthropomorphize the world that even when attempting to understand it from its own perspective we may be accused of ... anthropomorphic bias. Diversity acts as a daily reminder that we are not alone in this world, and therefore cannot hope to “save” ourselves, let alone save others, without taking into account those conditions which contribute to our survival.

#### c. Discussion of Third Ethical Principle (Assistance and Representation)

It makes no sense that a human-centered ethics should be imposed on non-humans, any more than, say, a non-human animal has the right to dictate a non-human-centered ethic on humans. To understand this “*reversal of fortune*,” let us take the example of a stray dog. From the perspective of such a dog, my existence may be seen as irrelevant to its “dogness.” I am for all practical purposes neither necessary, nor ethically important to such dog. It seems fair that humans as a whole apply the same standards of irrelevance to themselves that they do to non-humans. In our example, the focus of ethical relevance shifts to a dog-based imperative, while humans become irrelevant. Under the same principles of exclusion that humans apply to non-humans, likewise humans become the “excluded unfavorable” that have no inherent right to existence.[35] Humans can’t have their ethical cake and eat it, too, by staking possession of ethics only or mainly for themselves, but complain or feel maltreated if non-human others do the same to humans.

Instead of the “truncated” ethics of our insecure past or present, such as, aggressively drawing a line between the I of our growing self, and the “it” of the presumably unworthy other, the author submits that humans use their skills to assist and represent the other. Philosophically, it seems highly presumptuous for humans to invest their own existence with “ethics,” but deny a similar logic to the rest of nature, for the reasons outline above: they would then become “unethical.” In other words, they would fail to apply the same principles of fairness or justice to others.

#### d. Discussion of Fourth Ethical Principle (Human Survival)

Humans have been “cursed” by the “power paradox:” they have become more powerful as a result of their superior intelligence, but are at greater risk today of disappearing partly because of the technological “progress” that their intelligence made possible. For example, humans are now capable of destroying themselves through nuclear war. Paradoxically, then, by courting dominance, or the “control of nature,” we court the nothingness of our extinction: our destructibility as a species has become imminently realizable. Historically there have been times that humans acted “suicidally,” partly through war, and partly for any number of other reasons (love, religion, ambition, self-hate, and the like), but never before was the possibility so total, or so realistic.

From the perspective of being as something that spans the spectrum of evolutionary change, and therefore of all-time, humans are not just the humans that have-been, but also the humans that can-become. Human history is nothing but the footprints of human possibilities in the past, their reaffirmation in the present, or their projection into the future. Our history is dotted with “risks,” including the risk we take each time we become destructive, such as destroy each other or the environment. Hence the importance of a human ethic that realigns itself with universal possibilities so that humans also help themselves survive.

#### e. Discussion of Fifth Ethical Principle (Non-eliminative acts)

One of the major characteristics of being is interdependency: the universe is “designed” in such a way that everything is interdependent. The physical universe seems to have mechanisms through its particular laws of physics for maintaining itself against unbridled selfishness: a world part that becomes “selfish” (such as humans) is inevitably bound to cause itself to suffer.[36] This is so because by destroying those possibilities which sustain it in existence, a destructive world part destroys itself.[37] Selflessness is rewarded with survival, selfishness “punished” with extinction.[38] The author refers to this type of “self-correcting” realignment of possibilities as “*universal justice*.” In the long run, universal conditions allow for the evolution of non-destructive forms of intelligence. Such conditions, then, are instrumental in the evolution of more cooperative world parts that become by virtue of their interdependency “accustomed” to acting cooperatively. If true, and there is little reason to see why it might not be, such a principle holds tremendous promise for the future “evolution” of a more cooperative

human, if not by the force of circumstances, at least through a conscious effort by humans to realign their ethos along more cooperative lines of living. The author examines the role that educational institutions can play in such “realignment,” below.[39] Suffice it here to mention that we improve our chances for survival if we employ our intelligence to better assist, represent, and harmoniously “adapt” to our world.

#### f. Discussion of Sixth Ethical Principle (Environmental Self)

What the world has been spans a continuum of being going at least back to its beginning point, such as, the singularity of the Big Bang (or what might be later discovered preceded it).[40] According to what seems to be a general consensus within the scientific community, following the Big Bang there was a series of material “actualizations,” such as, the formation of galactic clusters; and finally the “evolution” of life, some extinct forms of which we have “uncovered” through our Paleolithic and archaeological discoveries. What the world becomes or can become includes its future-possibilities, for example, those of its present conditions which have the potential of evolving into a multiplicity of “futuristic” worlds.[41]

As more people world-wide enroll in formal learning institutions, partly as a result of new economic conditions that offer greater rewards to those with more formal schooling, more of us are inevitably introduced to biological concepts that widen our “cognitive familiarities:” we become ever more aware of other forms of life, of the multiplicity, interdependence, intelligence (in the broader sense of the term) and potential for development over evolutionary time of the non-human “other.” Thus even as we struggle to make our knowledge useful to our often selfish wants, we are pulled away from ourselves by becoming more appreciative of everything outside of ourselves. In other words, we lay the foundations for realigning ourselves with a universal ethic of coexistence.

#### g. Ethical Corollaries

In this section, the author discusses four corollaries of the aforementioned ethical principles of radical perspectivism, which include the following:

1. *One cannot understand the world’s being by limiting oneself to logocentric values.*
2. *What exists, or, in a more generalized sense, “being,” deserves its own ethical treatment as an end-in-itself.*
3. *Being is good because (a) it makes everything possible, including humans; and (b) from the individual perspectives of the world parts that collectively constitute being, it should be so (or else their own existence comes into question).*
4. *Finally, just as one cannot assume that a human-centered view is ethically desirable simply because of its human-centeredness, likewise one cannot assume*



*that being is good simply because of its “beingness.”* The author discusses the possibility of the “badness” of being, below. Suffice it here to mention that without being, there would be nothing that one could be ethical about, and therefore make it impossible to evaluate something as either good or bad, as there would be nothing to evaluate.

#### h. Discussion of First Ethical Corollary (Logocentricity)

The fact that the rest of being is not logocentric, or as logocentric as humans (=having a human-like means of communication) does not mean that one should therefore ignore the particular ways that such being “communicates” its desire to be. A non-logocentric way of communicating can be just as effective, in the sense of getting things done, as a logocentric one is for humans. For example, atoms communicate through their particular laws of quantum physics. Everything is composed of constituent parts which are organized in particular ways that help anything within everything “survive.”[42]

#### B. Educational Applications

There are several applications in school settings of the ethics of radical perspectivism that one could think of. Students should be taught the value of everything, even loving one’s enemy. By “everything” the author means all things and creatures. Hence the importance of engaging in daily acts of altruism, so students become empathic. Students should learn how to guard against “exclusivist” lifestyles that expect them to pledge blind allegiance to this or that tribe, country or ideology; they should learn, instead, to identify with the world as a whole, and even transcend themselves as humans in order to represent the imaginable perspectives of non-humans. To minimize the risk of becoming indoctrinated through a state-designed curriculum, students should be taught on the basis of dialogue, personal involvement, critical thinking, reason and explanation. The goal should not be merely the development of emotion or faith, both of which are more the product, rather than cause, of socialization, but concurrently the development of reason. By such “development” the author means gaining not only, to paraphrase Plato, “right opinion,” but also “knowledge” of their place in the universe. Such knowledge, as Plato correctly suspected,[43] is the basis of ethical living, as it represents a realignment with things outside one’s narrow sense of self.

Under radically perspectivist ethics, humans ascent the ladder of their intellectualization, whether by means of some Hegelian dialectic[44], Platonic dialogue or Marxist “revolution,” or any one of numerous other ways that help them think about what they do, but without denigrating those non-human world parts that are less intellectualized than they. In the past humans have often mistaken their self-awareness as “smart” beings as giving them license to see, or use, everything else as if it were a mere means to human ends. Students learn through environmental projects to become humble “servants” of being;[45] they see themselves as “sister-beings” that happen to possess intelligence, rather than self-righteous masters of the universe.[46]



As has been mentioned several times in the paper, we owe our intelligence partly to our evolutionary “comrades in arms” in the environment without whose “assistance” we would have never become.

Evolution so far has clearly shown the “ability” that matter has toward intellectualization. Witness the evolution of humans toward a more intelligent state of being, the end result of which so far has been the genus “Homo Sapiens.” Hence the central role that education can play in assisting humans toward increased levels of “intellectualization.” Unfortunately, as the author discusses in the section on Intelligence, below, *physis*[47] is presently unable by itself alone to save itself from itself, although it holds within itself the answer to its existential limitations.[48] Such a process of “unfolding” of its possibilities allows world-parts the freedom to “choose” to become destructive (=one such possibility), in which case, as mentioned earlier, to cause themselves to self-destruct.[49] Such holding within oneself of the potential for something “better” or “worse” than oneself is everywhere common, including any number of human institutions (education being one such institution). This is not surprising, given that humans are the result of universal processes, and therefore likely to reflect such processes within their microcosmic circle of being.

More commonly, such a transformative process toward intellectualization is similar to the experience humans have in raising children: our post-natal experience with our young, whose lives we can influence through “*paideia*,”[50] illustrates the possibility of humans becoming something different. Parents, educators, significant others and other members of society play the role of guardians capable of guiding children’s development even to the point where the new generation sometimes rejects many of the belief systems and values of the older generation. Such “changeovers” also happen at the national or international levels, in popular beliefs or culture, as they often did in the past, for example, during the emergence of the Renaissance out of the “older” culture of Medieval Europe. Likewise in “birthing” spiritual states from corporeal ones: evolution has shown that humans are capable of becoming ever less instinct-driven by developing their minds, thus becoming able to gradually experience an “intellectual shift” away from merely instinct or emotion-driven behavior.[51] As a result of our intellectualization, we have not only changed physically (for example, certain parts of our anatomy have atrophied, such as, our tail bone, while others grew, such as, our brains), but have also created conditions that make education almost a prerequisite to survival. Our survival, including our economy, has become increasingly “education-dependent.” Students are now “pressured” to obtain ever more years of formal schooling, including college, to be able to get a job that pays enough to survive. Gradually, our education may lead us over evolutionary time to gaining more control not only over ourselves, in the sense of acting, as Kant might have wanted us to, on the basis of universal rules, but also assume the role of “heroic savior” for all of being.[52]

#### a. Method in Schools

In applying radically perspectivistic ethics to schools, teachers have a number of ways they can help their students become “ethical.” For example, students question

the validity of a cultural trend, such as, our perennially relegating non-humans to an ethically “unrepresentable” status. They question such well established assumptions as our modern appreciation for science, presumed democratic aspirations, or so-called “multicultural” values. For example, they question the degree to which our scientific paradigm may have contributed to a non-perspectival or “incomplete” understanding of the world. By drawing up a line between “us” and “them,” we reduce nature to a silent, speechless, and dumb “other,” with nothing ethical to say. By privileging humans, we make it almost impossible to draw any ethical imperative from the state of nature. Regarding democratic values, students discuss the degree to which humans may have engaged in acts of cruelty in the name of “democracy,” just as they often did in the name of religious righteousness in the past. This doesn’t mean that non-democratic forms of government are or aren’t “better” than democracy, but only that students are given the opportunity to examine the extent to which humans often take the high moral ground without thoroughly questioning their underlying assumptions, one of which is their self-centeredness (and therefore the presumed superiority of their values). Finally, regarding multiculturalism, students question the extent to which humans limit the underlying “logic of otherness” in multiculturalism only to humans, thus betraying not only the contradiction in their theoretical applications, but anti-perspectival approach to the rest of the universe.

Humans sensed their intimate connection to nature, and made attempts, however sporadically or inconsistently, to “perspectivize” their educational institutions. For example, in cultivating the moral sensibilities of our youth we have learned to learn from non-humans, as in the moral lessons that one can draw from the animal-based fables of Aesop.[53] Such isolated attempts at “other-orientedness” notwithstanding, our ethics has remained human-centered, the more so, the more technologically advanced, and therefore presumably able to “control” nature, we have become. We raised Moore’s “naturalistic fallacy” to the status of gatekeeper of acceptability:[54] if it comes from nature, it cannot possibly be “ethical.” In a radically perspectivistic classroom, nature is seen as being replete with ethical paradigms. Students attempt to design more inclusive linguistic, logical and legal systems that embrace nature, or, more broadly, “being”. They are asked to draw conclusions from what they know about nature. They discuss ethical imperatives that could be derived from nature.

#### b. Method of Perspectival Analysis

The accumulation of right opinions is not tantamount to gaining more “knowledge,” as in memorizing legal decrees without knowing why such decrees became legally binding in the first place. Such distinction between right opinion and understanding is similar to that drawn by Plato.[55] Hence the importance in education of emphasizing “understanding.” The author submits that even at an early age students should be encouraged not only to role-play their own and others’ “possibilities,” but also analyze everything for meaning.[56] The more philosophical students become at an early age, the less likely it is that they will feel intellectually “imprisoned” within any one “doctrine” which others ask them to “believe” in.[57] A philosophical examination of the world is relatively easy to do, but unfortunately rarely engaged in. Even “well

educated” people often fail to engage in such examination, possibly because of the “mental closure” that sometimes training within a specific professional field may cause. As Kuhn noted regarding science, there is the risk of wearing mental blinders to possibilities that lie “outside the box” of one’s professional training.[58] Take, for instance, physics. One could argue, quite simply, that a metaphysical analysis reveals truths that escape a mere “physical” analysis.[59] One can read the “language” of the universe if one were to abstract from what the universe is like, certain “messages” regarding its organization. Such messages take the form of a “universal ethos” that humans should become aware of, or else risk building castles of desirability on the shifting sand of a misunderstood reality. For example, by obeying the laws of physics, our universe projects an ethos of what is required for being to continue to be, and therefore of what humans can do to help it (and themselves) survive.

### c. Knowledge and Ethics

If, as Plato hesitantly suggested, goodness is the outcome of knowledge,[60] then knowledge of everything should lead humans to act well. Since according to radical perspectivism everything is good, for the reasons explained earlier in the paper, it follows that the more of everything one knows, or as much of everything as is humanely possible at the time, the more he or she knows of the good. *Hence the important role that education plays in ethics: the more students learn about everything,[61] the more they learn about the good.* That people act on the basis of what they know, rather than of what they don’t, is shown from what they choose to do, which is usually grounded in what they know. Of course whether they act “well” on the basis of what they know to be good is debatable.

Humans have attempted to improve their education by founding colleges and universities world-wide. Since their early beginning in the Middle Ages such institutions seek to cultivate, promote or disseminate universal or well-rounded knowledge,[62] albeit not always or necessarily as perspectivistic, as the author has suggested such learning should be.[63] Under a radically perspectivistic curriculum, humans are moved off center stage, allowing the world to replace them in an evolving drama of world progress toward intellectualization. In such a drama, or perhaps “divine comedy,” given the insignificant role humans play in the larger scheme of things, even in spite of our own often grandiloquent thinking otherwise, humans act as catalysts for the emergence of “world-human.”[64]

### d. World’s Self-Awareness-through-Humans

Humans make it possible for the universe to become self-aware-through-humans, in the broader sense of a “world-human,” one part of which, humans, has the ability for “cognitive” self-awareness. Just as self-awareness helps humans avoid catastrophic events, for example, by knowing one’s place in relation to an approaching vehicle; or the effect that medical treatment can have on illness, or numerous other such cases of “self-awaring” help, where such awareness helps humans survive, likewise non-humans can benefit from a selfless employment by humans of human

thinking skills to help the universe as a whole assess and assist itself. For example, humans could use their knowledge of matter and energy, from its subatomic structures to its biggest galaxies, to begin to build a livable future for everything that exists. Knowing “why” (having an understanding of the world) may gradually lead humans to act altruistically irrespective of whether they believe they should do so on the basis of some altruistic theory of ethics: they do so partly motivated by their own self-centered interest in survival, except their scientific “discoveries” now force them to have to include the “other” in calculating their own chances for survival. In a typically cyclical mode characteristic of universal design, humans become other-directed even as they remain mainly selfish. In the long run, their “forced” altruism may rub on their personalities: they end up becoming altruistic in order to survive. Knowledge has its own inner dynamic of other-directedness. How so? It is directed outside one’s present-knowledge toward the possibly-knowable, and therefore toward the other-unknown.

As mentioned earlier, an agent may not have reflected upon his or her (or its) fundamental assumptions, hence the need for an education that helps people “discover” themselves.[65] There are many methods that have been used since ancient times toward self-discovery, from direct instruction, dialogue, and “Socratic” method (maieutic), to logotherapy, dramatizations and role play. Occasionally some people choose to consult or solicit the views of third parties, from friends and relatives to teachers and therapists; read books; go on mountain or forest retreats; or travel to far away places where they can see a “different” world, and therefore also themselves from a “third” perspective. Some people may believe they have a good understanding of their core values which they do not feel compelled to “rediscover.” Such understanding presumably helps them understand why they act, feel, or communicate as they do. In either case, whether people seek to find out about their core beliefs, or think they already know them, fundamental assumptions they do have, or else they would have been incapable of communication, introspection, thoughtful action, or interpretation.[66] Hence the importance of helping students become reflective in order to help them become fully aware of themselves as ethical subjects capable of choosing to do evil, as well as, good. Perspectival reflection helps students take a “peek” behind the “mirror wall” that separates them, or their culture, from those of others. The author refers to such wall as a “mirror” because of the tendency humans have of becoming self-absorbed and see only their own values or their projection on others, as if watching themselves in a mirror, as contrasted to going around their cultural mirror-walls to see what’s lurking behind. Our constitution as beings with a more evolved thinking capacity than any other known living organism on planet earth means that we cannot hope to instill in our young “dispositions” *ex cathedra* by treating them as mere means to an end[67] but as ends-in-themselves capable of making up their own minds.[68]

#### e. Meta-ethical Education[69]

Students practice reinterpreting the ethical desirability of any number of social, educational or personal events from a variety of morally “established,” alternative or even politically “subversive” perspectives. Students think outside not just this or that, but any number of “boxes:” from those that limit thinking to present-time perspectives

(hence the importance of exercising students' historical imagination); to overcoming human-centeredness (hence the importance of representing the imaginable perspectives of non-human world parts, including other animals and "inanimate" parts of nature); to reexamining reality-centeredness (hence the importance of thinking of imaginable moral realities that escape our daily "pragmatism"). Such an extension of the sense of self beyond narrow "moralistic" constraints helps build in students the prerequisite foundation for the development of an ethically universal character.

#### f. Imagination in Education[70]

Within school settings, it shouldn't be difficult for educators in K-12 environments to enlist their students' imagination in representing the other.[71] Students are known to employ their imagination in often unsolicited "flights," as in "flights of imagination," particularly if they find the lesson at hand, teacher, or classroom, boring or uninspiring. Imagination helps break the umbilical cord between self and a sedated status quo: it can catapult students to a new sense of openness toward everything, as in generating a sense of "world self." Education under radical perspectivism retains some of John Dewey's student-centeredness,[72] but without either the presumptuous attitude toward human hegemony that any type of human-centeredness risks promoting; or the instrumental role that science can play in promoting "control" rather than harmony.[73] By contrast to such "control" of nature, a perspectivistic ethic promotes cooperation, "mutual respect" and harmony.

Under a radically perspectivistic ethic, humans become more accepting of presumably unscientific, impractical, or non-self-centered realities. In education, students practice designing parallel universes using alternative physics; create new "vocabularies of being;" or design ethical imperatives for the survival of everything, even as they relate everything they learn, as Dewey recommended, back to their personal experiences. By exercising their imagination, students escape the human-centeredness of their language, such as, the narcissism that often results from too much emphasis on logocentrism;[74] or scientific contexts of control, as in the aforementioned example regarding the "control" of nature.

#### g. Freedom

Humans have understood the "freedom" that knowledge allows them to have, such as, freedom from ignorance of why things happen as they do. Hence the importance of obtaining an education not simply for its economic value, but more teleologically its contribution to an idealized, and possibly one day realizable, intellectualized end. Gradually, humans may become their own ongoing phenomenological experiment of self-recognition, power and understanding, eventually incorporating the representation of everything within their transformative albeit transparent self. Hence the importance of developing a universal ethic of representation that identifies "human" with the world, as in "human-world," and world with human, as in "world-human." Such a new human has learned to transcend the boundaries of our often destructive past, or suspiciously self-adulating logic.



#### h. Non-eliminative Acts[75]

Students engage in ecological projects within and without the classroom. The interpretation, design and articulation of specific teaching techniques depend on the particular make-up of different learning ecologies (to account for the variety of ecological perspectives). Such techniques may range from the design of educational simulation exercises and games, where students role-play the other; to rewriting the dialogue in children's plays from the perspective of the other; to participating in environmental projects where students learn to facilitate co-dependence and cohabitation; to the discussion of the ethical significance, simulation or "assimilation" of natural processes within the school itself (from growing food in a student-maintained farm or garden; to designing codes of ethics on the basis of lessons learned from nature; to redesigning the architecture of our learning centers so they can be "environmentally friendly").

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#### IV. Postulates Regarding Being

Given the fact that what exists, is, one can draw three "supplementary" postulates regarding "being" that logically follow from that simple fact. The author analyzes ontological issues in more depth in a forthcoming paper on being and nothingness. Suffice it here to mention that by discussing ontological issues here, including what he refers to as the "ontological imperative" (see below), the author adds both, ontological and psychological depth to the ethical theory of radical perspectivism: ontological, because he describes certain existential conditions that make radically perspectivistic ethics possible; and psychological, because he briefly mentions the role that "desire" plays in "being" becoming itself.

##### A. First Ontological Postulate:

*All world parts "desire" to be.* This tendency to be, rather than not-be, may be seen as the "desire" of being to-be-itself. The term "desire" is used here in a teleological sense as the tendency toward an end, in this case, the end being "being."

##### B. Second Ontological Postulate

*Everything desires to be, nothing does not.* One could hardly imagine world parts "desiring" to not-be, except those which occasionally find being as either "unbearable;" or harboring agents for the perpetuation of itself such as related being parts (such as certain being parts "dying" in order to feed a new generation of being parts with their remains). The universe itself is based on such a "desire."

##### C. Third Ontological Postulate:

*By "being" being what it is, rather than not-being, it is its own proof of its desire to be.*



#### D. Discussion of the Third Ontological Postulate

It is obvious from the fact that being is, that it “desires” to be something rather than nothing. Hence the importance of developing an ethical theory that expects humans to assist the universe in its desire to avoid total nothingness. On its face, it seems that what the author is saying here is that being is “good” simply because it is (or desires to be). Well, yes and no, depending on how one defines “being,” namely, the extent to which one includes all or only part of “being.” There is little doubt that one should not carelessly derive “ought” from “is” statements.[76] This is so obvious, it barely needs mentioning. For example, one cannot justifiably make the claim that something “ought” to be what it is (say, x) from the fact that it is in fact x. If that were the case (demand that x remain x, or what the author refers to as the “*argument from sameness*”) then (a) the status quo would be justified no matter how cruel, destructive or unfair, since there would be no room for change; and (b) the demand itself collapses under the weight of its own logic. The reason for b, above, is because it would make no sense that one demand that someone or something remain the same since such something could never be shown to have always been the same, and therefore good or worth preserving. This is so because we know that the world has evolved, and therefore changed or become “different;” hence on the basis of the view that difference is bad, the world is bad (and therefore what is presumably its present form is bad to start with, since it has already become “differentiated”). This leads us to conclude that if nothing different is better, then sameness such as the present status quo remaining the same, is by definition also “bad” since it was earlier differentiated. Thus no matter how desperately one attempts to preserve something, it will never be good, but at best, represent the preservation of something bad.

Even beyond this apparent paradox regarding change and preservation, if it were true that something must always be what it is, then it would become ethically impossible to justify becoming such as becoming something other than what it has become or is presently. Yet experience shows that often things get better when we change them, rather than if we always choose to maintain the status quo. What is logically important here regarding the ethics of radical perspectivism is to notice the fact that even if something (say, x) becomes something else (say, y) *its derivative y remains within the realm of being*; in other words, even when x becomes y, such y is by definition something, rather than nothing, and therefore does not exist outside being. No matter how radically something may change from x to y, both x and y are states of being,[77] rather than of non-being: they never become totally nothing, or else they would not be. If that were not the case, meaning if y in our example above were to become completely nothing, then no ethical judgments could ever make any sense since they would describe situations that could not possibly exist.

Unless one can show that total nothingness is preferable to being,[78] all ethical judgments imply the possibility of change within the realm of being (such as, changing from x to y). Since we know from experience that changes such as those that are the result of ethical judgments are still part of being, rather than non-being, it follows that

being as a whole is more desirable to being rather than non-being irrespective of such changes, their being-internal “differences” notwithstanding. Hence the original postulate, above, of being “being” its own proof of its desire to be.

Finally, if what is ethical is what is desirable, then what is ethically desirable from the perspective of being is that it should be rather than not be. Of course from the perspective of the parts that constitute being, such as, humans, it may seem as though one cannot presume that something should always remain the same, since there have in fact been changes that seem to those parts within being to constitute “real” changes. Yet from the perspective of being as a whole, such being remains the same, in the sense of “being” being not just this or that part of being, but the whole of being as represented by its past, present or future possibilities.[79]

Humans often build systems of ethics that are founded largely on *apriori* grounds that have little or nothing to do with being as a whole, including the world around them, our scientific observations notwithstanding. For example, our western systems of logic have so far been mainly anthropocentric, beginning with Aristotle’s.[80] We built epistemological walls around our ethical views that separate our human ethics, on the one hand, from a more inclusive ethics that represents everything, on the other. To reassure ourselves of our righteousness, we have conveniently used the “naturalistic fallacy” to exclude non-human others from human concerns.[81] It seems as though we want to make sure that we do not allow nature to upset the self-fulfilling prophecy of our circular reasoning (=only humans are capable of thinking, and therefore only they deserve to be treated ethically).[82] The author refers to such separation as our “*human vs. nature apartheid*,” humans as the ethical elite, or “end-in-itself,” on one side of the tracks; non-humans as the subservient “means,” on the other.

Humans have often sensed their “connection” to nature, some more philosophically so than others, [83] and designed rituals, myths and religious practices around such view.[84] Unfortunately, in the field of ethics, particularly western ethics, we have yet to overcome our narcissistic admiration of ourselves as a thinking world-part, or *Homo sapiens*, and therefore deserving of special treatment. Perhaps our ethical systems so far have been symptomatic of a deeper psychological insecurity about who we are as humans: to make us feel “special” we designed systems of ethical exclusion or “ethics of exclusion” that largely exclude non-humans as ends in themselves.[85] Such ethics may make us feel as if our species is the only world-part that deserves a categorical imperative, something which radically perspectivistic ethics attempts to rectify.

## E. The Ontological Imperative

From a universal perspective, the survival of the “whole” is more important than the survival of any of its parts, including humans. Logically, it makes sense that the survival of the whole would take precedence over any of its parts, as the parts depend on the survival of the whole for their survival, than the whole depends for its survival on the survival of any one world part. The author refers to such ontological precedence

of the whole over its parts as the “Ontological Imperative.” Of course there may be cases where the whole is unworthy of survival, a point which the author discusses when addressing the ethical desirability of the survival of “everything,” in the section on “Objections,” below.

The whole is not necessarily coextensive with all of its parts or any of their interactions with other parts. This is shown from the fact that there are wholes that survive the destruction or “death” of any one or more of their parts; for example, humans often survive the destruction of one of their constituent parts, such as, a limb. Some wholes may depend on a cyclical death and replacement of some of their parts, such as, the replacement over time by the human body of its skin. On the other hand, a part, including its network of interactions with other parts, is necessarily part of some whole. For example a limb is not properly a “limb” but just a “lifeless” piece of flesh and bone without a body to which it is attached and actively interacts with. If a part becomes destructive of the whole without an alternative “whole” in whose context to continue to survive, the such part is condemned to self-destruct. For example, a tumor that causes the body to which it is attached to “die” also dies as a result. Of course, in the larger scheme of things, such part has not necessarily destroyed the whole, if by “whole” one means a set of ontological possibilities only one of which was destroyed. This larger “actualizable set of whole-possibilities” is flexible enough to avoid disappearing completely even if one of its possibilities is destroyed. For example, even if a tumor causes an individual to die, others who are not stricken by such tumor or found ways with which to overcome it continue to live.

## V. Ethics of the Survival Imperative (ESI)

Given the preeminent place that wholes play in the survival of being, the survival of any one whole often depends on the elimination of its destructive parts. For example, the survival of an individual who is stricken by a deadly disease often depends on the elimination of the virus that causes such disease to thrive. From the perspective of the survival of being as a whole, a “destructive” part “ought” to be dispensed with in order to prevent the whole from disintegrating. In other words, inherent in the logical structure of complicated systems that desire to maintain themselves is an ethic of reciprocal benefit: parts benefit from the survival of the whole they are a part of, while the whole benefits from the survival of the parts that constitute it.[86] The author refers to such an ethic as the *Ethics of the Survival Imperative*, or ESI for short. *Given that just about everything known to humans is to a certain extent a “collection” of parts, it follows that ESI permeates everything, from the smallest to the largest being.* Applied to humans, ESI means that while the whole is necessary for the survival of humans, humans are not necessary for the survival of the whole. It is this precarious “dispensability” of the human condition that adds urgency to human-centered ethics, namely, either for humans to change it in order to help themselves survive; or remain selfishly unconcerned with the whole and risk disappearing.

### A. Corollaries of the Ethics of the Survival Imperative

There are three corollaries of ESI:

a. Principle of Integrity

The whole could not possibly be sacrificed at the altar of the survival of any one of its parts without being destroyed, including the destruction of the part on whose account such whole was destroyed.

b. Principle of Whole-Dependency

None of the parts can survive outside the “mother” whole they are parts of.

c. Principle of Whole-Primacy

A whole is less dependent on its parts, than any one or more of its parts or their interactions with other parts is/are dependent on the whole.

d. Reciprocity, Empathy, Selflessness, Understanding

Reciprocity, empathy, selflessness, and understanding may be derived from ESI for the following reasons: reciprocity, because everything in the universe is dependent on everything else; fair-mindedness, because of the mathematical justice of interdependence, such as, the give-and-take of equal returns embedded in universal “ontological harmony;” empathy, because what being parts receive is usually what they seek, and therefore are treated by other world parts in whose context they survive with an “understanding” of their “needs.” For example, humans seek oxygen, which the universe provides, which therefore may be said to have shown selflessness, empathy and understanding for human survival. Finally, selflessness, because by definition to co-exist with others, one must learn to accommodate someone (or something) else’s “goals.” Given the universal ontology of interdependence, radically perspectivistic ethics, including its first ethical principle regarding the goodness of everything, does not only make sense on the basis of logic, but also born out of universal “ontological necessity.”

## VI. Objections

There are several objections that one could raise against the ethical theory of radical perspectivism.[87] The author attempts to answer each one, below.

### A. Is the Universe Good?

The principle of universal desirability is premised on the idea that the universe as a whole is good. The question may be raised, is the universe good? Without the universe, it seems impossible for humans to have ever existed or evolved as they did. Hence on the basis of the assumption that it is good that humans exist, or have the

potential of becoming, it follows that everything in whose context it was possible for them to have been, or become, such as, the universe, is equally good.

## B. Should Humans Have Ever Existed?

A possible criticism against the above syllogism might be that it is not good that humans ever came to be, especially given our well documented selfishness, belligerence, destructiveness or possessiveness. In response, it should be noted that (a) in the past humans have not been sufficiently destructive to cause themselves to cease to exist through “universal justice”[88]; presumably they have so far shown they have “earned” their right to exist; (b) it seems irrational that one postulate that something should not exist merely because of the *possibility* of its becoming increasingly destructive, as might become humans, since it could just as possibly become non-destructive: humans may gradually overcome their destructive tendencies; (c) as implied in a, above, the universe is designed in such an interdependent manner that not only does it allow for evolution, but also the elimination of destructive world parts; hence there is nothing wrong with providing an opportunity for the evolutionary development of world parts, their destructibility notwithstanding. Not unlike the logic utilized by humans to justify equal opportunity for doing or not doing a, or doing the opposite of a, so is the universe an “equal opportunity survivor.”

In the case of “universal justice,” instead of the universe acting as an anthropomorphized deity, or some such other “first cause,” it is organizationally designed through its inter-dependency to maximize its own survival through cooperation: uncooperative world parts or those which are destructive of the world’s possibilities may eventually cause themselves to disappear by “burning their bridges” to their survival. Finally, (e) just as something nondestructive could evolve from the original “singularity” of the Big Bang, likewise something destructive is also possible, or else it wouldn’t make sense that anything could ever be destroyed. *We conclude that one could not have wished for humans never to have existed without at the same time wishing for nothing else to have existed.* This is so because everything else has the same evolutionary source of being, in the broader sense of “evolution” as the process of how everything evolved from a singularity. But to have wished for nothing to have existed, is to wish that both nondestructive and destructive world parts become impossible, meaning, condemned to always not-be. Such wish seems unfair because their proponents “punish” both destructive and non-destructive being parts the same: being parts that have not been, or intend or are potentially designed to be destructive are equally “punished” with non-existence as those which are or have been or can be “destructive.” Given his analysis, above, the author submits that destructive world parts are the chance outcome of a world possible enough to evolve them, but also cooperative and interdependent enough to overcome them.

## C. Is existence desirable?

Another objection against the desirability of being might be the following: since humans posit existence as a choice, such existence is not desirable in itself; for



example, one may argue that humans may be making a mistake to choose existence over non-existence.

In response, it may be said that it seems almost incredulous that humans would posit their death as a choice preferable to survival. Experience shows that humans usually value survival, hence the almost universal prohibition against murder. Thus from a more limited human-centered perspective, being seems preferable to non-being.[89]

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#### D. Ethics as a Human-specific characteristic

One may argue *contra* radically perspectivistic ethics that only humans are intelligent enough to have the prerequisite self-awareness for ethical thinking. Let us refer to such an argument, as the “*argument from intelligence*.” The argument from intelligence is based on the assumption that only a human-centered ethic, or one developed by world-parts with a similar level of cognitive skills, is worth considering as being “ethical.” In response, one should consider the relationship between humans and their non-human environment, including the role that the environment plays in the development of human intelligence. The argument from intelligence flies in the face of evolutionary and scientific evidence regarding our “materialistic” origins, and therefore natural connectedness to our environment. If one draws such evolution to its logical conclusion, one is led to posit “conditions of intelligence” not only in humans but everywhere in the universe. It follows that if a necessary prerequisite for the development of ethics is intelligence, then since there is intelligence in everything, non-human being parts, too, have the capacity of developin an ethic of their own.

#### E. Bad World-parts

The question may be raised, are all parts of the universe good? What if some parts of the universe are “bad”? For example, if left to their own devices, there are “forces of nature” that can destroy humans, such as, forest fires, arctic coldness, wild beasts, earthquakes, tsunamis, toxic bacteria, and the like. The author refers to such an argument as the “argument from catastrophe.” Based on the idea that what helps preserve humans is good, it could be argued, *contra* radically perspectivistic ethics, that not “everything” is good, but only certain aspects of everything such as those that help humans survive. If this objection holds, then humans should limit their assistive acts to helping only those aspects of everything survive that help promote human survival, while ignoring, minimizing, controlling or even destroying others.

There are several possible responses to such an objection.

##### a. First Response

If one argues that some parts of the universe are good, but others not, then one would have to defend his theory of a superior good on the basis of which to judge the



universe or else one could not possibly distinguish good from bad. On what grounds might such theory be defended?

Perhaps one way to defend the idea that some parts in our universe are not as “good” as they could have been, might be to argue that our universe, or some of its parts, is “bad” (for example, undesirable, deficient, insufficient) by comparison to an alternative universe which is better. The author refers to this argument as the “alternative universe utopia theory,” or AUUT for short.

Unfortunately, several problems arise from AUUT: (a) where is the evidence that such universe exists; ( b ) how do we know how such universe looks like, its inner composition or structure, so we could make a judgment regarding its desirability? No one so far seems to have ever been inside such an alternative universe to describe it, let alone evaluate its desirability. (c) How can we show that such universe is “better,” even assuming it could be shown to exist or all of its organizational details became known to us? So far it seems that none have been found, speculations regarding the existence of parallel universes notwithstanding.[90] Finally (d) even if such alternative universe could be shown to exist, we would still need to show why it is better than our own universe. Hence we may have to come back full circle to abstracting from experience, to a theory of ethics which makes sense, or, more correctly, a theory which has “super-universal” applicability no matter which universe we have in mind. Such theory could serve as a "supertheory" of ethics that is equally applicable to all universes irrespective of their individual circumstances.

#### b. Second Response

Even if we could show that an alternative universe is better than ours, we would not have shown that “everything” is not good: this other universe is in existence as much as our own is, thus showing that on the basis of such an argument what exists can’t possibly be all-bad. Just as our universe consists of stars, planets, black holes, dark matter, anti-matter, and so on, so would a superset of universes constitutes part of what exists rather than of what doesn’t. Furthermore, this alternative universe could not arise as “better” than ours without ours to compare it to, and thus needs our universe as the worse alternative by comparison to which can be “self-actualized” as such. From the perspective of the “universal superset,” even a “bad” universe is not really undesirable, or at any rate any worse than any other universe in the superset, any more than the superset consists of one universe more than another.

If, on the other hand, it is argued that this other universe is so different than ours, that it is impossible to apply ethical principles derived from such universe to our own, then a comparison between the two universes on the basis of which one is more desirable than the other becomes irrelevant or inapplicable. Thus even if this other universe could be shown to exist, it is not necessarily either better or worse than our own, but possibly “different.”

#### c. Third Response

Even if it could be shown that certain aspects of nature cause some short term “harm” to humans, such as the examples mentioned in the “argument from catastrophe,” above, in the long run they may be shown to have certain beneficial effects on human survival: they may “increase” human resistance to future adversity, such as, build up their immunologic defense against toxic microorganisms as a result of experiencing a devastating epidemic; or inspire them to invent new technical or social “tools” with which to defend themselves against natural or “social” catastrophes.[91] Such “self-improvement” is common among people who participate in games of skill who improve their skills in order to win; it is in that sense that members of both teams in a contest of skill, whether such contest is purely harmless or deadly, owe their self-improvement not only to themselves, such as their own efforts at becoming more skilled so they can win, but also the “resistance” offered by the opposing team that motivates them to so improve.

Such adversity as humans experience in nature, including their own mortality, may be compared to the “difficulty” experienced by players in a game, except the ones humans participate in so they can survive often have “deadly” consequences. The author submits that adversity in the universe help humans improve their survivability.[93] The type of “survival” the author has in mind here is not a mere projection in the future of our physical presence as a species, but the realization of our potential including, to paraphrase Aristotle, the actualization of our intellectual potential.[94] More universally, this interplay among world parts, one of which happens to be human, helps being parts cling to existence. Such interplay helps them “evolve” their possibilities: obstacles presented by one world part, help another become ever more resilient, or in the long run “intelligent,” and therefore, as indicated, above, survival-worthy.

One wonders the extent to which world parts sense their contribution to the “common good” even when threatened with death. Although difficult for humans to know exactly how other animals feel when caught by a predator, a prey’s occasional resignation to its fate may be due to a faint realization of the cyclical nature of universal interdependence, and therefore also of its contribution to the survival of the whole through the survival of the predator.[95] The fact that such animals could have put up a fight to survive if they wanted to, but didn’t, is shown from how valiantly others of the same kind fight to escape from their predator. Native Americans seem to have correctly sensed the contribution of other animals to their own survival. Instead of treating them commercially as a mere means to their survival, designed whole rituals of “thanksgiving” to such animals for their contributions, even adopting animal names and characteristics for themselves.[96]

#### d. Corporeality

A second major objection to the goodness of everything might be that there exists an incorporeal reality, as argued Plato, which is by far superior to the corporeal one to which humans are accustomed. It may be argued that nothing corporeal can ever be as

good as this other incorporeal existence. In other words, everything, or at least the physical world, could not possibly be good because it is not incorporeal, but at best, as Plato suggested, only an imperfect copy of its “ideal” form.[97] Perhaps, then, there is an ideal but incorporeal reality (or what the author refers to as the “Incorporeal Universe”) of the type that Plato argued exists, or some religions such as Christianity have promulgated is real.

#### e. Response

Several questions may be raised regarding the relationship between the corporeal and incorporeal which may help us assess the merits of each type of existence. There is the question of whether the corporeal and incorporeal are well known enough to be able to draw comparisons between them. Are they mutually exclusive? Or are they two sides of the same ontological coin, in which case whatever happens to one is likely to have an effect on the other? Ethical theories of whatever ilk are themselves “proof” of at least the possibility of using one, incorporeal theories or “ideas,” to discuss the other, corporeal things or “bodies.” It is in this sense that since life evolved out of apparently “material” conditions, it may be argued intelligence is but another “face” of a thinking universe, such as, universe thinking through humans.

Plato’s argument regarding the existence of an incorporeal reality was examined, and seemingly refuted by his student, Aristotle.[98] According to Aristotle, form exists in the context of matter, while matter must have form (or, as Stephen Hawking put it using the language of modern physics, matter must occupy a multidimensional space[99]). According to such view, form could not possibly “exist” without matter. For example, a chair’s shape is what it is because of the way the material it is made from is shaped. Without such material, or the form that such material takes, a chair is impossible to exist (at least not as the chair that we know, but at best only as a drawing or image of the chair). The fact that our eyes often deceive us does not necessarily mean that everything that our eyes (or any of the other senses) perceive is therefore a “false reality.”[100] Finally, there is the possibility that there is no clear demarcation line between the two, corporeal and incorporeal: they are not different in kind, but only in degree. Similar to the relationship between matter and energy, as in Einstein’s classic “formulization” of the relationship as  $E=mc^2$ , so are thoughts “related” to matter as both the cause of certain material conditions, the effect of such conditions on our thoughts.

The relationship between the corporeal and incorporeal is shown partly by the evolutionary development of intelligence from presumably materialistic conditions. Our recent scientific “discoveries” regarding the fluidity of matter and energy may represent a further refinement of Aristotelian logic: what seems utterly materialistic from the “worm’s” point of view of the individual engaged in routine activities with his five senses, seems upon closer examination to be driven by an immaterial design. Based on the findings of quantum physics, matter has been shown to be energy masquerading as “matter.”[101]

Matter is composed of fundamental units of energy, such as, subatomic particles, that collectively constitute the material world. Hence the vast amounts of energy hidden within what seems “dead matter,” which recent discoveries in nuclear physics, if not in our nuclear arsenal, have shown. By capitalizing on such relationship between matter and energy we were able to develop nuclear-generated power plants. Unfortunately, we were also capable of developing weapons of mass destruction. Such development in our ability to destroy, rather than assist the other, may be symptomatic of our so far self-centered ethics. Had empathy and universal inclusiveness become the basis of our ethical, political or legal institutions, we may have been better able to “get along” even with our presumed enemies: we would be better able to coexist with everyone or everything, as we would seek not only to understand, but embrace their particular perspectives. The author refers to such “embrace” as “Universal Empathy for Being,” or UEB. Such empathy helps all of us survive in the context of a “universal village” where no world-part is an island.

Abstracting from our discoveries, including our earlier discoveries in biology, which, along with our discoveries in astronomy, strongly suggest a common ancestry for everything, one is led to an appreciation of everything as part of the same family of being that humans belong to. Ironically, although science was originally seen as a countervailing influence on myth, it seems that in some ways we have returned full circle to our mythological (pre-scientific) patterns of thought and ritual, including the “re-awakening” of our connectedness with everything, not unlike people in so-called “primitive societies” who “read” deities and spirits in nature.

## VII. Related Topics

### A. Saving the Universe: Universal Transformation as a “Human Heroic Act”

As the author discusses in another paper-in-progress on everythingness and nothingness, there is the possibility of a part “outliving” the whole, in the sense of transforming it (as in metamorphosis). Such part, possibly humans, might become capable of replacing being with another, for example, through an evolutionary process of transformation, wherein a certain part, say, humans, evolves to an incorporeal but “generative” state as a “first cause” (creator). Such part then assumes some of the characteristics that have been traditionally associated in popular culture and religion with first causes, such as, gods or deities (or God in monotheism). For example, it is not totally inconceivable that humans in their future-evolved form become the new “creator” of another “everythingness.” Hence the importance of an ethic of constant “self-improvement,” including progress toward complete “mindfulness” of human existence, which in the end may not only “save” humans from themselves, but being from non-being.[102] This is line with the progress imagined by philosophers and religious leaders at least since Aristotle who charted such a course in his Metaphysics. Once sufficiently spiritualized (intelligent, mindful, informed) humans might have the knowledge, or “Logos,” to reorganize being around either a different physics, or a presently unimaginable, but not necessarily for that reason alone unrealizable,

“incorporeal” existence. As the author indicates in his forthcoming paper on everythingness and nothingness, by doing so (recreating reality) humans-of-the-future may “save” the universe from itself, such as, from its “self-condemned” physical dynamics. For example, if, as some physicists claim, the universe is bound to collapse under its own weight back upon itself and become compressed inside the singularity of its original subatomic state,[103] then humans might be able to recreate it in a form that follows a different ontological path (with possibly totally different laws of “physics,” or of such “physics” as an incorporeal existence may require). The author refers to such path as a heroic act that would require that humans transform themselves according to universally deontological ethics: they become the best that Nietzsche’s “superman”[104] may have to offer not only to our species, but to all of being. There are evolutionary reasons that make the human-as-savior possibility at least debatable. For example, if one projects the same path of evolutionary change from molecular “soups” to amphibians to apes to human,[105] to the emergence of future-humans, then such human-of-the-future might become the all-intelligible being that many humans presently imagine only God to be. Such a future-human may come to possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills required for the “recreation” of being.

#### B. Resurrection, Intellectualization, Martyrdom, Play, Generosity

In symbolic terms, the re-emergence of universal reality beyond its physical limitations resembles the resurrection from the “dead” of certain deities in popular religion (for example, Jesus in Christianity). Such resurrection represents the possibility that matter holds within itself toward intellectualization (spiritualization, “incorporeal-ness”). Such self-transcendence of the physical has the elements of martyrdom, play, and generosity: martyrdom, because the physical gives itself up to the spiritual for the benefit of saving being from nothingness; make-believe play, because being is shown to wear any number of masks spanning the spectrum of corporeal to incorporeal states with which to evade nothingness; and generosity, because it is designed mainly to give rather than receive, as in giving humans by far more of what they need to survive, from food to “physics,” than what humans could possibly do to return such favor in their present state. What is proposed here is that humans begin the long process of transforming their ego so that in the distant future they could have the skills and attitude to assist their aging universe from disintegrating.

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#### C. The Improbable Oneness: Diversity as a Prerequisite

to Being Intelligent

Can something exist all by itself as a single, indivisible unit (as humans sometimes imagine God to be)? If there is something that is indivisible, as might be a “super-atom” (in the Democritean sense of the ultimately indivisible), then it could not possibly exist, and therefore must be nothing. Any-one-thing that exists must be something, meaning, it is what it is precisely because of its recognizable existence as



different from either nothing, or from something else. If that were not so, it would be impossible to recognize it for what it is, as it would have nothing different from anything else on the basis of which to distinguish it from something other than itself. What “allows” something to be different from other world-parts is its particular constitution or “interactivity,” meaning, ways of interacting with other parts. Hence difference, or “diversity,” is not only a prerequisite for, but logically coextensive with existence.

For the sake of argument, let us suppose that all existence were but a single mathematical digit (meaning, something tautologically identical to itself, and nothing else but itself). If that were the case, then it would be impossible for it to exist either independently, or in someone else’s mind.[106] We have already given the reason why it could not possibly exist independently, above. The reason it could not exist in any mind, for example, as an idea, is because (a) it would require a mind to do so, hence what exists or “is” would not be one, but at least two; and (b) for any mind to be able to draw distinctions between itself and the other (or non-self) it would require that it is cognizant of itself as “different” from everything else, which presumes difference. Furthermore, it would be “inconceivable” for any such being as this hypothetical “one” to evolve intellectually; or, to put it less abstractly, for a mind to develop. This is so because there would be nothing for a mind to wrap itself around other than itself, such as, compare x with y (self with non-self) so it can cognitively learn something new, see itself from a distance as something with a separate identity, become self-aware or “grow.” This is the point that Descartes failed to address, namely, how could any mind become self-aware if the only thing that exists is itself, and therefore impossible to separate or distinguish itself from itself. If there is no other, there is no mind, in the sense of being something different from non-mind.[107] Hence for anything mindful to exist, there must also exist either a non-mindful reality, one populated by different minds, or both. Some such “minds” may be seen by humans operating within human-time as relatively mindless, such as, the material conditions which over evolutionary time gave rise to intelligence. Being needs difference even if such difference is not really different [108] as in a play where actors assume different roles without really changing themselves-as-the-actors-who-role-play. Such “playful” or make-believe constructs allow for the perception of differences, which in turn allows world parts to enjoy at least a temporary respite from the possibility of nothingness.

The world’s diversity makes it almost inevitable that one become reciprocal, fair-minded, empathic and selfless, or else the world could not possibly “survive.” The world’s diversity also makes it necessary that one become intelligent: one could not be without “being” *other* than oneself, otherwise there would be no-thing. This is so because, as indicated, above, there is nothing outside an indefinable oneness[109] thus forcing it (oneness) to never become. Otherness brings about an awareness that is both an effect of difference, as in becoming aware of oneself through the other (the other’s reaction to our ego or particular organization or “identity”); and its cause, as when one begins to coalesce around identities of difference to form separate “beings,” as when a species evolves differently from another.[110] Through “self-aware” cooperation of different parts, new identities are formed which seem to draw ontological lines around



this versus that “system” of existence (for example, between humans and other apes).

Such “circling of the wagons” around a shared core within each ontological system contributes to the world’s changing diversity, except increasingly more intelligently organized. For example, within the animal kingdom, the evolution of humans serves as a microcosmic example of the evolutionary potential toward intellectualization of the cosmos as a whole: humans evolved from pre-humanoid species through the systematization of world possibilities around an ever more intelligent human. Likewise with everything else that “evolved,” from the fusing of gases following the Big Bang, to diversification and intellectualization. Such intellectualization was noted long before Darwin, from Hinduism’s Karma-related spiritualization,[111] to Georg Hegel’s philosophical phenomenology of spiritual progress.[112] The stretching of our imagination to its limits has also become part of our children’s subculture, from children’s stories that transcend the laws of physics, such as seemingly immortal protagonists in popular children’s cartoons who never die, to unrealistic expectations regarding what is or is not possible.[113]

The importance of creating conditions for the development of intelligence cannot be overstated. For example, there are documented cases of stunted intellectual growth due to isolation, such as, “wild children” that were abandoned within “sterile” environments at an early age. Children who never encountered other human beings lose their capacity for language.[114] Along with their inability to acquire language, such children also lack the cognitive processes associated with human language, such as, in-depth analysis, critical thinking or the ability to generalize or “abstract.” It seems that the more isolated one becomes, the less likely it is that his or her mind is “challenged” to learn something new, or understand “events” that he or she never saw or heard, or given an opportunity to examine. Likewise in laboratory experiments with mice, it has been shown that the more complicated the maze a group of mice is placed in, the more likely it is that they will surpass in problem-solving ability those among their peers who were not placed in such a maze.[115] Such studies seem to indicate the importance to the development of intelligence of an “enriched” environment, meaning, one which is highly differentiated.

This apparent correlation between “difference” and “intelligence” may be represented mathematically, for example, through the language of calculus: the closer one approaches the upper limit of isolation, as in the type of existence which humans may encounter in a sterile environment, the less likely it is that such being develops its mind or have an understanding of things outside of its own experience. Without such difference even the mind of an imaginable “God” seems logically impossible to develop.[116]

#### D. Intelligence

As human beings, we have accentuated our differences with the rest of the world by emphasizing those aspects of our existence which seem particularly human, such as, thinking (as in “Homo sapiens”). The question may be raised, is thinking done only

by humans? Does only human thinking count as “thinking?” Is what humans do, namely, think, a gift known only to humans, or is it simply symptomatic of universal conditions that found expression in humans, symptomatically as it were, rather than idiosyncratically?

Concurrently with the emergence of our self-awareness, including the rise of philosophical thought, “thinkingness” became the basis for the development of ethical theories that emphasize the “idea” of the good. Hence the central role that we assigned to ourselves in ethical deliberation, while deemphasizing the natural processes which contributed to our evolution. We began to see ourselves as the rightful “owners” of thinking, and therefore also of “theories” of ethics. Metaphorically speaking, if there is a lesson to be learned from the “Fall on Man,” it might be not that Adam and Eve should not have eaten from the tree of knowledge, an act for which in the author’s view should be admired rather than condemned, but the extent to which our newly found ability as “knowledgeable beings” served in recent times to undermine, paradoxically enough, our understanding of being as a whole.

Alongside our growing pride in ourselves as the dominant species, we lost a large measure of our humility. We began to play a God-like role, not unlike the newly liberated oppressed who internalize the values of their previous authority figures and start behaving like them:[117] we internalized the values of God, including treating others as a means-to-our-end, rather than as ends-in-themselves. We started treating non-humans as if they were meant to serve humans, just as some religious doctrines expect humans to serve God. We became our own newly crowned “secular God” on earth, but lost in the process our innocent interplay with everything. The author submits that in order to re-establish our natural connectedness, we should (a) respect others as ends-in-themselves; and (b) use our thinking abilities to represent their imaginable perspectives.

While a misunderstanding of the development of thinking may seem harmless if considered as a thing apart from human conduct, it gains larger significance if seen as the driving force behind much of what humans value, and therefore choose to do. Hence the importance of “closing the circle” of ethical understanding by returning the Cartesian cogito back to its universal “home,” rather than myopically “owned” only by humans.[118] Such a cogito is as capable of representing non-humans, as it has traditionally been in representing others. If seen from the perspective of the survival of everything, such a cogito is “morally” obligated to represent everything (as in morality of everythingness). The author submits that education should help liberate ethics from human hegemony, morality from narrow-mindedness, politics from tribalism or thinking from human centeredness. By “liberation from human centeredness” the author means living naturally without denying or denigrating either our non-thinking self, or what elsewhere he refers to as our “stupidity;”[119] or the presumably non-thinking world of non-humans.

## E. Thinking and the Naturalistic Fallacy

Since material facts are “in fact” factual, they are already given. They are not ideas, but a pre-existent that ideas can describe. To put it in a way that humans can understand, facts are by simply being there: they bridge the naturalistic fallacy through their being what they are, as it were, as in “I am because I exist.” Occasionally humans become so entangled in their own self-doubts, as was Descartes,[120] that they end up projecting their rejection of their corporeal self not only for themselves, as in “I think therefore I am,” but also for all corporeal others, as in “If you can’t think, you are not.” The glorification of what humans perceived to be an exclusively human privilege, namely, thinking, intensified our psychological distance from anything incapable of thinking about itself in human-like ways (other animals, parts of nature, and so on).

By “being there,” world parts speak louder through the weight of their being than we could ever express with words regarding our existence. Applied to education, such a principle implies that students engage in discussions of whether human-centeredness, or the hegemony of humans over non-humans, should be seen as ethically necessary. Is it impossible to imagine of others that do not consider humans to be necessary? Do non-humans possess a degree of ethical autonomy similar to the type that humans reserve for themselves? Should non-humans be seen for what they are apart from how humans define them?

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#### F. What is Badness?[121]

Nothing is bad.

The author defines “badness” as the lack of possibilities.[122] According to radically perspectivistic ethics, the badness that we are aware of is not pure badness until it joins total nothingness. In other words, no badness is really bad or “evil,” but merely another mask that being wears in the process of evolving; some such masked realities may appear to humans as being bad.

When something becomes “bad” it doesn’t suddenly disappear, but enters a sphere of anti-everythingness gradually, until finally it joins total nothingness. To put it bluntly, badness gradually becomes more bad than good, until eventually through its own acts of badness becomes “extinct.” 123]

From the perspective of nothingness, being may be seen as “bad,” as it represents an alternative to nothingness that “nothing” can be done to replace it other than destroy it. Hence the importance for humans to do their part to hold everything together within a holistic reality that resists nothingness from taking over. Nothingness “eats away” at the world’s possibilities from inside out, as it were, as if the world hangs precariously in the balance between being and non-being. Given the world’s potential for disintegration, it behooves humans to act altruistically in order to help prevent being or any of its constituent being-parts from lapsing into nothingness.

#### G. Humility

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In order to become selfless, one may have to learn to be humble. Unfortunately, not all humility is necessarily motivated by altruism. Under an aggressive form of humility, there is the risk of becoming righteous or even “destructive.” For example, instead of using one’s skills selflessly in the service of the other, as one might expect someone humble to do, one may transfer his or her righteousness to doctrinaire loyalty to a higher cause, such as a certain religious belief, rather than accept non-destructive otherness on its own terms; such one may become overbearing even in spite of his or her alleged humility, or, depending on the circumstances, patronizing, proselytizing or even aggressive toward “non-believers” (as were presumably certain religious missionaries). Witness the number of conquests that were perpetrated in the name of this or that God, King or Queen, ideology, religion, or cause, many of which were carried out by people who exhibited humility in front of their own authorities (real or imagined) but cruelty toward others, such as the “cruelty” exhibited by some of the priests and “conquistadores” toward native peoples in the Americas[124]). The author refers to the background script of such humility as the “*ethics of camouflaged egoism.*”[125]

It is for this reason that an ethical theory, whether perspectival or not, can be better understood if examined in the context of its fundamental or “first” assumptions[126] rather than narrowly on the basis merely of what is publicly announced, written in a book or privately communicated in an educational or other setting. For example, underlying claims of salvation may lurk an intense egocentrism that returns with a vengeance to re-establish the superiority not only of humans over non-humans (as in the admission of only human souls in certain types of the afterlife such as the proverbial Christian paradise); but also of a particular group of presumably “blessed” humans over the rest of humanity.[127] Underlying all related concepts of service, salvation or “morality” in such an ethic of camouflaged egoism often lurks a degree of self-righteousness that uses God as an alter ego in whose name to act self-centeredly, the more so, the more presumably unselfish the “blessed” may claim to be.

## H. Altruism

Given the ontological supremacy of the whole over the parts, humans occupy a relatively insignificant place in being, albeit fecund with possibilities for a future “heroic” act of selflessness, such as, “saving” the whole from itself. [128] Humans have sensed the existential imperative of altruism, as they are themselves the end-product of such altruism, in the broader sense of world-parts “coordinating” human evolution through a process of interdependence.

Humans engage in numerous acts of altruism, philanthropy and selfless assistance. We have woven altruism in our laws, folkloric traditions, and mythical, moral and religious paradigms. What we have failed to do is to fully realize the boundaries of our abilities, the interdependency of our evolutionary development, instrumentality of our thinking, or risk to our survival of our “hubris.” Not unlike the ancient Greeks who cautioned against such “hubris,”[129] the author submits that we should design a universal theory of ethics that humbly assists and represents

“everything.”

## I. Interdependency

Not only do humans live in the world, but they are within themselves also a microcosm of the world they live in. We are symptomatic of larger “forces” that brought us about. For example, our own interdependency at the human level reminds one of universal interdependencies. Our growth, learning, socialization rituals, values and personalities revolve around interdependency, from the obvious dependency of our young on their adult guardians, to our dependence on the “welfare society” for meeting our social, material, psychological and intellectual needs. The ethical dilemma facing humans in the twenty first century, then, seems to be how to rein in our intelligence to servicing the other in an interdependent world, rather than use it destructively or unwittingly in favor of “total nothingness.” Under radically perspectivistic ethics, humans realign their inner and outer identities along universal parameters of being, reorient their purpose toward world peace and harmony, and use their skills constructively to help themselves and non-humans survive.

## J. Cooperation

“Being” speaks louder about itself through the numerous examples of its existence that it provides, for example, about what humans can or should become, than some of our most eloquent ethical descriptions of the world are capable of describing.[130] One of the “virtues” that one can learn from studying the universe is “rebirth” even in the midst of apparent destruction: our planetary system stays in place through the balance of different forces, such as, the simultaneous attraction and repulsion caused, respectively, by gravity and the internal combustion of energy that keep stars and planets from exploding; or, alternatively, being “pulled in” by gravity and reduced to infinitesimally small “black holes” which engulf other stars or planets.[131] If our sun were to become blindly “egocentric” such as use its gravitational power to “enlarge” itself, then under an “alternate” system of physics that allowed it to do so, our planetary system would collapse thus causing not only the other heavenly bodies within its orbit of influence to “dissolve,” but also itself to lose the balance that keeps it “alive.” The sun’s “altruism” allows it to maintain itself in its place a lot longer, than if it were, to put it in terms that humans can understand, “selfish.”

## K. Romanticism

In spite of the common appreciation for nature in both romanticism and radical perspectivism, radically perspectivist ethics does not assume, as does romanticism, that humans are “born” good or that nature is good, but that everything is good, including the “society” that Rousseau rejected.[132] Furthermore, such “innate” goodness as one can show humans possess is not ascribed to them merely because they happen to be human, as in “I am human, therefore I am good;” but to “natural”



causes that collectively constitute being, as in “I exist, therefore I am good.” In other words, humans are good because they are, meaning they are part of everything, rather than simply because they are particularly human. Rousseau came close to describing a similar philosophy, but never posited the goodness of everythingness as categorically as the author does here.

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#### L. Being, Imagination and Nothingness

There are two types of nothingness, total and “enclosed.” An “enclosed” nothingness is surrounded by being: it depends on being in whose context it creates non-being to arise as “nothing.” One such example is imagination: its existence depends on “being” rather than non-being except imagination, or those who imagine, can create in the midst of being a temporary nothingness such a certain unreality. Without being, there can be no such contextualized imagination, let alone humans who imagine. By contrast to such “contextualized” nothingness, total nothingness is nothing with nothing around it. While the former is anchored inside being, the latter is the absolute absence of all being.[133] Total nothingness is the non-existence even of the imaginable nothingness that arises from our imagination: it is a type of nothingness where even imagination is impossible.[134]

If matter is counter-balanced by anti-matter,[135] everything that exists is precariously balanced against total nothingness; such nothingness is logically coextensive with “anti-everythingness.” In a state of total nothingness there are no beings that can imagine, or who can potentially evolve out of “imagination-enabling” conditions, meaning, conditions which can lead to the gradual “genesis” of beings that can imagine such as humans. Unlike the existential ethics of imagination which allows at least something to surround the nothingness of our imagination, and therefore to center it, and subsequently project inside being our possibilities, total nothingness is unimaginable because even surrounding its own nothingness is nothing.

#### M. Synthesis

It may be said that if nothingness is aligned with disintegration, somethingness is aligned with synthesis. And just as a certain degree of “contextualized” nothingness is necessary for being to evolve, as, for example, is the nothingness of human imagination that allows humans to “invent” new projects, so is a certain degree of “desynthesizing”[136] necessary for the realignment of our understanding. There is abundant evidence everywhere of ontological “syntheses” of world parts, in the broadest possible sense of the term synthesis as “coordination,” that prevent being from disappearing. For example, within the field of biology, there are numerous examples of gradual synthesis of parts into “organic” wholes, from molecular structures, to specialization within complex “multicellularities.”[137] Even outside formal fields of study, such syntheses are evident in everyday life: witness the synthesizing effects of units of grammar on language, software commands on computer programming or the building of interlocking residential and commercial interests within a metropolis.



## N. Arguing Without Prejudice: Humans as Undesirable

Humans often assume that what is good is defined by, applies to, or is only for the benefit of humans. Unfortunately, to simply assume that something is good simply because humans defined it, desire it or use it, is to beg the question. What is ethical should not be tied to politics or popularity or else risks becoming politicized rather than logically justifiable.[138] Those who adopt a theory of ethics should defend it on the basis of ideas rather than either support from political elites or populism. Of course one could design a theory of ethics which argues convincingly in favor of such politicization or popularity in which case such theory is no longer based on crude populism or political power play but on justifiable ideas; thus any way one looks at it, a theory of ethics requires that one has a set of ideas with which to justify it even if on application its effects may seem to a third observer who doesn't know of such theory as if such effects lack the aforementioned theoretical background. Seen from that perspective, or through the lenses of an "unbiased" critique, it doesn't sound illogical that one may consider human existence itself as possibly undesirable. As disagreeable as such a hypothetical may sound, one cannot reject it merely because one doesn't like to discuss, think about, or consider such a possibility.

Let us call this hypothetical exercise in the metaphysics of ethical justification "arguing without prejudice;" by such a phrase the author means justifying an ethical theory without being biased in favor of human-centered views to the exclusion of non-human others. In fact, from a universal perspective, or the "perspectives" of other world-parts that may have experienced humans as "destructive," one could imagine a theory of ethics that considers the elimination of humans.

The author sometimes jokes in class with his students that the day we humans self-destruct as a result of, say, a nuclear holocaust, assuming that such a disaster actually happens, certain species that survive it may celebrate each in their own way our disappearance! For example, cockroaches which it has been shown can survive such a holocaust will no longer have humans to step on them or exterminate.[139]

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## O. Instincts

In assessing ethical decision making, the question may be raised, to what extent are ethical agents responsible for acts generated by events over whose course they have no control over? For example, if it could be shown that humans have little or no control over certain instinctual "impulses," then they may be "excused" for their instinctively-driven acts: since they were not responsible for designing themselves as biologically-instinctively driven beings, they should not be held accountable for acts that are pre-determined by such "design." [140] When people meet a biologically-driven need, they usually do so not because of a premeditated rule that such and so "need" should be met, such as, fulfill their hunger (as in "I decided to eat, therefore I will"); engage in sex, or fall asleep, but more often than not because of the discomfort associated with not

fulfilling such need; or, alternatively, as Sigmund Freud argued, the often intense and therefore to a certain extent uncontrollable pleasure associated with such fulfillment.[141] It seems unreasonable, then, as Aristotle noted,[142] to ask that humans are required to satisfy such needs, as they are pre-designed to want to do so.

An idealized view of humans as purely rational beings is bound to fail to represent humans as they are. Some philosophers built ethical systems that fail to address how to deal with psychological and biological needs or drives. What such philosophers failed to address, several psychologists did, such as, address emotional and biological aspects of our personalities. A typical example of such “philosophical omission” may be seen in Immanuel Kant’s view of the nature of humans as rational beings capable of controlling their “desires” through the formulation of categorical imperatives.[143]

It seems unreasonable that one formulate a “categorical imperative” (or rule of ethics) regarding the satisfaction of biological needs: if such needs are pre-designed, then aside from the fact that it sounds oxymoronic to expect humans to fulfill their needs (since humans are “driven” to do so, anyway) the only purpose such an “imperative” could fulfill is to encourage humans to act contrary to the fulfillment of their innate “needs” or instinctive drives. If asked to act contrary to such needs without taking into account the role that instincts play in maintaining us in existence, we may be condemning ourselves to constantly fighting against ourselves, as in a perennial state of presumably “civilized” discontent.[144]

As an alternative, the author suggests that we adopt the method of perspectival analysis to understanding ourselves such as understanding our instinctive “perspectives.” If blame must be had for how humans are constituted, it seems more reasonable that one place it on those conditions which helped “evolve” humans rather than squarely on humans themselves. Of course from a universal perspective, the author submits that humans are symptomatic of a larger ontological agenda against total nothingness. This means that as humans we should rejoice in being alive, including being given a chance to experience life intelligently, our occasional struggles with our dualistic nature as both corporeal and incorporeal beings notwithstanding.[145]

## P. Intuition

People have often sensed what is right even though they may be occasionally unable to articulate why.[146] Under radical perspectivism, ethics gains universal significance through a “detached” identification with perspectives, and therefore primarily through thinking and imagination. One is not asked to “internalize” the other,

as in a spiritual reinvention of the self, or mythical reincarnation of the other (as in “primitive” rituals), but empathize with it without losing one’s self-awareness as a separate albeit ethically autonomous self. Such an “even-handed” self-awareness is similar to that experienced by actors who are at all times aware of the fact that they are role-laying the other, except make it seem to their audience as if they are not. This type of “controlled mimicry” seems different from the ecstatic rituals of identification with the other in certain rituals whether such rituals are so-called “primitive,” ancient or modern. In some such rituals, people seem to have an intuitive appreciation of the other they embody through the wearing, say, of masks, but are often unable to clearly articulate the difference between oneself and the “embodied” other.[147]

#### Q. Deification of Human

Interestingly, the only “others” which humans usually consider throughout their known history as superior to themselves, and therefore presumably in possession of “superior” codes of ethics, are deities. Such deities do not represent an immediate threat to human hegemony, as they are nowhere to be found in modern life. Furthermore, as if to undermine their god’s authority in the same breadth that they exalt such god’s superiority, in certain religious traditions humans imagine some or all of their deities to be in their own (human) image. By doing so, they seem to usurp such gods’ power to a certain extent by denying the possibility of anything non-human-like (such as, a non-human-like god) ever becoming superior to humans.

As mentioned earlier, humans often engage in word play that “covers up” their self-centeredness with language that sounds altruistic. For example, in the Bible we read that humans are made in the image of God, as if humans are aware of “another” being who happens to be human-like, except more fundamentally so than humans could ever hope to become. Such a reversal of the divine image to reflect the superiority of the human form, even as humans claim to be inferior to their gods, betrays once more the inescapably human-centered nature of some of our moral and religious claims.

#### R. First Cause

If there is a “first cause” (first agent, “God,” “Unmoved Mover [148]”), such a cause may have been unable to become without engaging in the act of creation. In other words, *by creating the other, such cause also “created” itself*. This is so because by creating something other than itself, it has given itself a recognizable, because separate identity. Such a process of “becoming” is somewhat similar, logically, to the Aristotelian conception of the “final cause” or “purpose:” without defining the purpose that something, say x, has, then x is not, since there is any number of identities that x could assume that may or may not be what its creator intended for x to be. Of course from a universal perspective, such identities as world parts assume, say, x, y, z, and so have more the character of make-believe or actors in a play, since they merely “assume” their identities.

Given the evolution of intelligence, the precognitive stages of being may remain forever unknown: as mentioned earlier, without difference, there can be no intelligence, and therefore no knowledge. The first cause wears an ontological “mask” without which it cannot be seen or see itself. Ethics is thus game-like: what is right is ultimately traced to being theatrical, assumptive or perspectival.

The author develops in another paper the theological implications of the concept of “limitedness.”[149] Suffice it here to mention that if we draw our earlier analysis regarding the development of intelligence (or, more broadly, “mindfulness”) to its logical conclusion, one is led to postulate the possible “stupidity” of oneness, as contrasted to the self-aware intelligence of “difference.”[150] If by “God” one means an indivisible deity, as humans often imagine God must be like, then one is inevitably led to the conclusion that such God must be stupid.[151] Alternatively, as one approaches the upper limit of diversity, one approaches the upper limit of intelligence (in the sense of a progressively perspectival understanding of self or others). If such a postulate makes sense then it follows that anything that is infinitely intelligent, as God is often said to be, such God must also be infinitely diverse or “differentiated.”

Applied to human existence, the above analysis shows that because the world is so “different,” we are able as humans to distinguish us from the “other,” a process which in turn helps us to better understand ourselves. It further follows from such a syllogism that, if there is a First Cause (FC) that created everything,[152] whether one wishes to call such FC “God” or something else, then given our evolutionary record one may assume that such FC created “conditions for differentiation;” such conditions presumably led to the evolution of everything, including sentient intelligence. One example of such intelligence is the type possessed by humans. We conclude that by being so colorfully diverse, the world we have shaped by has helped us develop our thinking [153] including our thinking about ethics. Whether such world was designed purposefully for such end is something which the author examines in another essay on “teleological ethics” which is still work-in-progress.

## S. Youthful Rebellion

A universal theory of ethics becomes truly universal when it treats even first causes as the effects of being rather than non-being: if one wills to be, perhaps not as aggressively as the Nietzschean will,[154] but still willfully enough, then one must first establish one’s identity in order to have something to “fight” for. The author submits that the reason some “unconventional” ethical systems, such as, existential ethics,[155] are popular among the young, is because before one can begin to do good, one must first differentiate oneself from others. Younger people sometimes rebel against the status quo in order to differentiate themselves from what their parents, or the “older” generation, may represent versus who they think they would like to be. Hence, also, the proverbial “generation gap” which exists not so much because the two generations disagree on values, but because before one can even begin to consider such values one must first, as Sartre put it,[156] “exist:” we first exist, meaning, become self-aware of

ourselves as distinct beings, then begin to sculpt our identities. Educators are often faced with students with “emerging” identities. A radically perspectivistic education would help students become self-aware by delineating their own versus others’ perspectives on any number of issues which they role-play, interpret or represent.

#### ENDNOTES

[1] The author introduces the ethics of everythingness and nothingness for the first time in this paper. He expanded his original paper significantly since he first presented it in April of 2008. He appreciates the comments and questions that were raised during the discussion period; such comments helped him streamline some of his ideas here.

[2] See “Objections to Radical Perspectivism,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Objections.html> (posted 2/24/01, written originally in 1992). See also the section on “Objections” in “Morality,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Morality.html> (posted 2/25/01, written originally in 1992).

[3] See “Assumptions,” below. See also “Method in Schools” in the section on “Educational Applications.” For a more in-depth, logical analysis, see A. Makedon, “First Assumptions,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/FirstAssumptions.html> (1992).

[4] “Humans and the World,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/HumansWorld.html> (posted 2/3/2001, written originally in 1992).

[5] The author refers to the universe, rather than “world,” by far more often in this paper. This represents the author’s “evolution” in his use of terms. He uses the two, “world” and “universe,” interchangeably, although by “world” he has in mind our more immediate environment, except sometimes also used to include all of being, as in the figurative use of the term; while by “universe” he refers more inclusively to the whole universe or by extension or “allegorically” to all of being.

[6] See, for example, Plato’s allegory of the cave in the Republic; or his examination of “forms” in the *Sophist*, *Statesman* and *Parmenides*. Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 575-844, 920-1085.

[7] See, for instance, Marx’s discussion of social and cultural life in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (Prometheus Books, 1998).

[8] See Charles Darwin’s classic introduction to the “theory” of biological evolution in *The Origin of Species* (Signet Classics, 2003). The author uses the term “theory” in this footnote in the scientific sense of the term as something backed up by evidence. Such use is different from the use of the term in the social and human sciences, where the term “theory” applies to ideas that are not necessarily based on scientific observations.



[9] By “evolution” in this paper, the author means not only biological evolution, but the gradual emergence of something from something else (for example, of the physical universe from its original singularity). See Stephen W. Hawking, *The Theory of Everything: The Origin and Fate of the Universe*, Phoenix Books, 2007. Regarding the evolution of intelligence, see discussions in subtopics “Intelligence,” “Saving the Universe: Universal Transformation as a “Human Heroic Act,” “Resurrection, Intellectualization, Martyrdom, Play, Generosity,” and “The Improbable Oneness: Diversity as a Prerequisite to Being Intelligent,” in section on “Related Topics.”

[10] In the Aristotelian sense of something existing as a potentiality, such as, potential intelligence, rather than in forms which humans today recognize as being “intelligent.” See Aristotle’s works *Metaphysics* and *On Interpretation* in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (Modern Library, 2001), pp. 40-64, 689-934.

[11] By “combining” within a collective “whole,” cells give rise to multi-cellular organisms, including humans. Such process is described in any number of biology textbooks. For example, see James M. Barrett, Peter Abramoff, A. Krishna Kumaran, and William F. Millington, *Biology* (Prentice Hall, 1986). See esp. Ch. 27 “Organic Evolution: Theories and Mechanisms,” pp. 745-83; see also all of the chapters in Unit VI “Life’s Diversity: The Products of Evolution,” pp. 785-931.

[12] Regarding the definition of “possibility,” see A. Makedon, “Possibility,” in “Humans in the World,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/HumansWorld.html>

[13] By “being” the author means “everything.”

[14] Such conditions, one may assume, would be similar to the conditions that made human evolution possible.

[15] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. W. Kaufmann, tr. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (Vintage Press, 1968).

[16] By “existing the world” the author refers to particular ways that world parts have for maintaining their existence. For example, an inanimate object “exists the world” through its particular physical configuration, electromagnetic and other fields, internal molecular dynamics, quantum physics, and organization, “presentation,” and interaction with its environment.

[17] By the term “useful” the author means useful to their particular survival and existential needs, rather than what humans may consider “useful” for themselves or other animals. Of course an important skill that domesticated animals learn from humans is how to get along with humans, and thus reap at least some benefits of such cohabitation (as is also the case with similar symbiotic relationships among other animals that depend on each other for food, shelter, protection and the like).

[18] See studies in ethology, or the field that examines animal behavior, including Konrad



Lorenz's classic work *The Foundations of Ethology*, tr. R. W. Kickert (Springer, 2004). See, also, studies in sociobiology, including some interesting "reverse" applications of animal behavioral patterns to human ethics, such as, those made popular by Edward O. Wilson in his classic book *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition (Belknap Press, 2000); and *On Human Nature*, Revised Edition (Harvard University Press, 2004).

[19] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[20] By the term "intelligence" the author has in mind not only the narrow definition of intelligence within human-time (days, years, centuries), but more broadly "intelligence" as measured by universal time such as millions or billions of years.

[21] A. Makedon, "Humans and the World," <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/HumansWorld.html#Possibility> (1992)

[22] See subtopic "Saving the Universe: Universal Transformation as a "Human Heroic Act"" in section on "Related Topics."

[23] By "world part" the author means any part of the universe.

[24] The author has included the third person possessive pronoun "its" to underline the importance of including non-human others, from other animals to inanimate world-parts.

[25] For example, see Kenneth C. Wallis, *Internalization* (Open University Press, 2001); or Freud's view of the internalization of social and family values, in Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (W. W. Norton, 2001); for a discussion of the internalization of "universalistic" values as a result of school attendance, see Robert C. Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School* (Addison Wesley, 1968).

[26] S. Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (W. W. Norton, 1990).

[27] As illustrated in Plato's dialogues. *Plato, Collected Dialogues*, op. cit.

[28] The author considers "perspectives" to be ontologically more inclusive than "values." Perspectives have the connotation of less thoughtfully or introspectively held preferences. The term "value" in its non-economic usage is often associated with beliefs which have been somewhat thought about; or come to be understood by ethical agents as "valuable." *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, electronic edition, (Franklin Electronic Publishers, 2003).

[29] At least not so until the reader redefines "value" to include non-human perspectives.

[30] See A. Makedon, "Everythingness and Nothingness," work-in-progress (draft available upon request).

[31] Etymologically, ethics is derived from the ancient Greek term “ethos,” which means custom, habit, group mores, attitude or inclination, mannerisms; also related to place of residence, ownership. Ioannis Stamatakos [John Stamatakos], *Leksikon Arxaias Ellinikis Glossis* [*Dictionary of Ancient Greek Language*], (Athens: Greece, Bibliopromitheftiki Publisher, 1999), pp. 303, 431.

[32] See author’s earlier publications on radically perspectivist ethics and morality, both on and off the Internet, including: A. Makedon, “Ethics,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Ethics.html> (1992); “Morality,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Morality.html> (1992); “Academic Morality as Universal Reciprocity: A Radically Perspectivistic Approach to Educational Ethics.” *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 2001-2003*, ed. Olivet Jagusah, Donald Smith and Alexander Makedon, AuthorHouse Publishers, 2005, pp. 397-408; also available on the Internet at: <http://webs.csu.edu/~amakedon/RadicalPerspectivism/AcademicMorality.html> (2003).

[33] Jean Paul Sartre, *The Psychology of Imagination* (Carol Publishing, 1991).

[34] Nothingnesses are multiple events that don’t “exist.”

[35] See “Arguing without Prejudice: Humans as Undesirable,” under section on “Related Topics.”

[36] Such a boomerang effect on destructive world parts is captured by the popular expression regarding the harm done to agents of harmful acts as having “a taste of their own medicine.”

[37] This doesn’t mean that some parts disappear only because of their own selfishness, as some may fall victim to an imperfect physics (sometimes referred to by humans as “bad luck”).

[38] By “punishment” the author means the type of punishment which is ultimately self-inflicted as a result of the dynamic of interdependence, such as, destroying conditions that one depends on for his or her sustenance. See A. Makedon, “Punishment,” in “Ethics,” <http://webs.csu.edu/~amakedon/RadicalPerspectivism/Ethics.html#Punishment>

[39] See section on “Educational Applications.”

[40] Terry Sissons, *The Big Bang to Now*. BookSurge Publishing, 2006.

[41] Michio Kaku, *Beyond Einstein: The Cosmic Quest for the Theory of the Universe*. Anchor Books, 1995.

[42] To paraphrase Democritus, the universe is but a collection of all of its parts. As simple as this proposition may sound, it has enormous significance in designing a theory of ethics that acknowledges the non-logocentric “language” of others. Jonathan Barnes, “Democritus,” *Early Greek Philosophers* (Penguin Classics, 2002), pp. 203-253.

- [43] Plato, *Meno*, op. cit.
- [44] Georg Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind* tr. J. B. Baillie. Harper & Row, 1967.
- [45] See discussion on “Humility” in section on “Related Topics.”
- [46] See related discussion on “Freedom” in section on “Educational Applications.”
- [47] In the original Greek sense of *physis* as “nature.”
- [48] See discussion regarding “intellectualization” in the following sections: “Saving the Universe: Universal Transformation as a “Human Heroic Act,”” and “Resurrection, Intellectualization, Martyrdom, Play, Generosity.”
- [49] The same holds true of being as a whole as it does for its constituent parts: it has the “choice” of becoming destructive, in which case it risks becoming nothing.
- [50] In the classical sense of “paideia” as a well rounded upbringing of children in all aspects of civic life. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 3 vols. Oxford University Press, 1944.
- [51] Makedon, “On the Nature of Stupidity,” op. cit.
- [52] See “Saving the Universe: Universal Transformation as a “Human Heroic Act”” in section on “Related Topics.”
- [53] Aesop may be seen as one of the first perspectival ethicists in education. His stories are replete with what humans can learn from the state of nature, including other animals (fox, crow, lion, antelope, and so on). Aesop, *Aesop’s Fables*, tr. V. S. Vernon Jones. Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003.
- [54] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, op. cit.
- [55] See Plato’s *Meno* in Plato, *Collected Works*, pp. 353-84.
- [56] A. Makedon, "Humans in the World: Introduction to the Educational Theory of Radical Perspectivism," op. cit.
- [57] David A. White, *The Examined Life: Advanced Philosophy for Kids*. Prufrock Press, 2005.
- [58] Thomas S. Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- [59] In the sense of the term “meta-physics” as taking a step back and abstracting some of the world’s most key principles from its scientific description.

[60] Plato, *Meno*, op. cit.

[61] Similar to the well-rounded “liberal arts” curriculum popular in colleges and universities ever since their medieval founders incorporated the Aristotelian notion of a well educated human in college studies. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in McKeon, ed. *Basic Works*, pp. 689-934.

[62] Regarding the history of the medieval (first) universities, see Hastings Rashdall’s work on the establishment of universities in the Middle Ages *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols, Oxford University Press, 1936. Also Nathan Schachner, *The Medieval Universities*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1938

[63] A. Makedon, "The Universe and the University: What Do They Have in Common?" (posted 2003) <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/UniverseandUniversity.html>

[64] World that thinks through humans.

[65] See author’s paper on the educational theory of radical perspectivism in A. Makedon, "Humans in the World: Introduction to the Educational Theory of Radical Perspectivism." *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 1991 and 1992*. Ed. David B. Owen and Ronald M. Swartz. Oakland, Michigan: College of Education, Oakland University, 1993, pp. 297-310. Also published as an ERIC document No. ED 368-628. May be seen on line at: [http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/15/71/a3.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/15/71/a3.pdf)

[66] A. Makedon, “First Assumptions,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/FirstAssumptions.html> (1992)

[67] Or, to paraphrase Freire’s analogy, drill a hole in their heads and pour desirable dispositions inside. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Seabury Press, 1970.

[68] See the author’s criticism of NCATE’s top-down approach to “dispositions,” in Makedon, "Personality Alchemists and NCATE: The Re-Emergence of Dispositions in Educational Evaluation Discourse." *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 2001-2003*, ed. Olivet Jagusah, Donald Smith and Alexander Makedon, AuthorHouse Publishers, 2005, pp. 345-96. Article also available on line at: <http://webs.csu.edu/articles/PersonalityAlchemistsNCATE.html>

[69] See Second Ethical Principle regarding meta-ethical considerations.

[70] See Third Ethical Principle regarding thinking and imagination.

[71] A. Makedon, “Imagination,” <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Imagination.html>

[72] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (NuVision Publications, 2007); *The School and Society & The Child and the Curriculum* (Phoenix

Books, 1960); *Experience and Education* (Collier Books, 1966).

[73] See author's discussion of Dewey's view of science in A. Makedon, "Reinterpreting Dewey: Some Thoughts on His Views of Play and Science in Education." *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society 1991 and 1992*. Ed. David B. Owen and Ronald M. Swartz. Oakland, Michigan: College of Education, Oakland University, 1993, pp. 93-102. Published in ERIC Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education, February 1994. ERIC Document No. ED 361 214 Also available on the Internet at: <http://webs.csu.edu/articles/JohnDewey.html>

[74] See Jean Jacques Rousseau's view of the risks associated with an early logocentric education. *Rousseau, Emile*, tr. William H. Payne. Prometheus Books, 2003.

[75] See Fifth Ethical Principle regarding non-eliminative acts, above.

[76] There have been a large number of debates regarding the underlying logic or "correctness" of the naturalistic fallacy, some more "pedantic" than others. See, for instance, this article on the controversy surrounding Moore's naturalistic fallacy in the on-line Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: "Moral Non-Naturalism," [2003; rev. 2008] <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-non-naturalism/#1> Regarding G. E. Moore's original formulation, see G. E. (George Edward) Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge University Press, 1903).

[77] Unless, of course, y stands for total nothingness, in which case x has not changed to something else, but to nothing at all.

[78] See discussion of this point in section on "Objections."

[79] Regarding objections to the desirability of being, as contrasted to non-being, please see discussion in the section on "Objections."

[80] Aristotle's logic applies mainly to "rational" beings, such as, humans, rather than more inclusively to all world parts. Aristotle, *Organon* (Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics, Topics, On Sophistical Refutations), in *The Basic Works of Aristotle* ed. Richard McKeon (Modern Library, 2001), pp. 3-217.

[81] See earlier footnote regarding the naturalistic fallacy. See, also, section on "Ethical Divide," above.

[82] For further comments, see "Thinking and the Naturalistic Fallacy" in section on "Related Topics."

[83] By "philosophically" here the author means more explicitly stated or thoughtfully examined.

[84] Roger Gottlieb, ed. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment* (Routledge, 2003), including the following selections: M. K. Dudley, "Traditional Native Hawaiian Environmental Philosophy," pp. 124-29; O. P. Dwivedi, "Satyagraha for Conservation: Awakening the Spirit of Hinduism," pp. 145-57; R. B. Peterson, "Central African Voices on the Human-Environment Relationship," pp. 168-74; P. Segundad, "Biodiversity and Tradition in Malaysia," pp. 180-85.

[85] An "ethics of exclusion" may have a similar effect on human relations, as the social distance created by racism: just as the ethics of exclusion may make humans feel "superior" to non-humans, so does racism makes a certain group, such as, the "oppressor," feel superior to another group, such as, the "oppressed." See Albert Memmi, *Dominated Man* (Beacon Press, 1979). See also Jean Paul Sartre's analysis of racism in his book *Existentialism is a Humanism*, tr. Carol Macomber (Yale University Press, 2007).

[86] A. Makedon, "Morality of Reciprocity," in "Morality," <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Morality.html> See also A. Makedon, "Academic Morality as Reciprocity: A Radically Perspectivistic Approach to Educational Ethics," *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 2001-2003*, ed. Olivet Jagusah, Donald Smith and Alexander Makedon, AuthorHouse Publishers, 2005, pp. 397-408. Also available on the Internet at: <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/AcademicMorality.html>

[87] Such objections are raised by the author against his own theory. See A. Makedon, "Objections to Radical Perspectivism," <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Objections.html> (1992). See also the section on "Objections" in "Morality," <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/Morality.html> (1992).

[88] See discussion of "universal justice" in "Discussion of Fifth Ethical Principle," above.

[89] It may be interesting to investigate whether among those with incurable physical pain the number of those who prefer death, as in doctor-assisted suicide, is larger, equal to or smaller than among those who choose death for any number of other reasons (ideology, emotional distress, etc.).

[90] Michio Kaku, *Parallel Worlds: A Journey Through Creation, Higher Dimensions, and the Future of the Cosmos*. Anchor Books, 2006.

[91] This is similar to the observation made by Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Emile*, where he argued in favor of an "education in nature" so that children gain a strong constitution, rather than pamper them or overprotect them; in Rousseau's view, the latter approach to child rearing may have the effect of rendering children unable later in life to overcome adversity. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, op. cit.

[92] Regarding the beneficial effects on the immunological system of early exposure to "dirt," see this article on health by Dan Ullrich: "Hygiene Hypothesis: Are We Too "Clean" for our Own



Good?” *HealthLink* (Medical College of Wisconsin, 2004), posted at <http://healthlink.mcw.edu/article/1031002421.html>; also this post in Knol-beta regarding protection against asthma through exposure to a farm environment at an early age; such view seems to support Rousseau’s theory of child development: <http://knol.google.com/k/brian-holt/hygiene-hypothesis/1akar146q48bh/2#>

[93] According to Johan Huizinga in his seminal work on play, *Homo Ludens*, competitive play (or “agon”) has been the main driving force behind cultural progress. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Beacon Press, 1966); see also author’s examination of Huizinga’s and others’ theories of play and culture in A. Makedon, “Theories of Play,” Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Michigan Library, 1981).

[94] Such actualization is similar to the self-actualization in Maslow’s proverbial “hierarchy of needs.” Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being: Self-Actualization and the Hierarchy of Human Needs* (John Wiley and Sons, 1991).

[95] Klaus Nielsen, *Animal Evolution: Interrelationships of the Living Phyla*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

[96] For an excellent bibliography on the Native Americans’ view of the environment, see Nathan Sherrer, “Probing the Relationship Between Native Americans and Ecology,” University of Alabama, n.d., <http://bama.ua.edu/~joshua/archive/aug06/Nathan%20Sherrer.pdf>

[97] Plato, *Republic, Sophist, Statesman, Parmenides*, in *Collected Works*, op. cit.

[98] Plato, *Republic*, esp. Plato’s allegory of the cave, in *Collected Works*, op. cit; Aristotle, *Physics*, esp. ch. 3 in Book II; in *Basic Works of Aristotle*, op. cit.

[99] Stephen Hawking. *A Brief History of Time*. Bantam, 1998.

[100] Hence Plato’s error in the *Phaedo* regarding the validity of scientific observation. Plato, *Phaedo*, *Collected Works*, op. cit.

[101] Alan Durrant, *The Quantum Physics of Matter*. Taylor and Francis, 2000.

[102] Such a progress toward mindfulness reminds one of similar theories in religion and philosophy, such as the Hegelian dialectic of reason; or the Hindu attainment of nirvana. Georg Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind* tr. J. B. Baillie (Harper & Row, 1967); Pratima Bowles, *The Hindu Religious Tradition: A Philosophical Approach*, (Allied Publications, 1976).

[103] Michio Kaku, *Parallel Worlds: A Journey Through Creation, Higher Dimensions, and the Future of the Cosmos* (Anchor Books, 2006), esp. “The Future of the Universe,” pp. 40-4; “Escaping the Universe,” pp. 304-42.

- [104] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. CreateSpace Publishers, 2009.
- [105] For a discussion of Stanley L. Miller's laboratory experiments with molecular "soups" that gave rise to life on planet earth, see "Chemical Evolution in a Reaction Flask," in Barrett, et. al, *Biology, op. cit.*, p.6; also "Organisms as Products of Evolution," pp. 4-7.
- [106] See discussion of deity in "Deification of Human" in this paper under section "Related Topics."
- [107] See Rene Descartes' discussion of the cogito, including his famous dictum "cogito ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am") in Descartes, *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings*, ed. Desmond M. Clarke (Penguin Classics, 1999).
- [108] At least from the perspective of being as a whole, since in the end all such differences are parts-depedent and therefore also "parts" of being.
- [109] For defense of the view that being is One, see Parmenides' theory; Parmenides was a pre-Socratic philosopher who maintained that being is One. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Routledge, 1983), pp. 122-38.
- [110] Barrett, *Biology*, op.cit.
- [111] A. L. Basham, *The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism*. Oxford University Press, 1991.
- [112] Georg Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, op. cit.
- [113] Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- [114] The on line encyclopedia Wikipedia includes an informative bibliography on the loss of linguistic ability by wild children; also includes an article on this topic; see such article's links to web sites on wild children: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feral\\_child](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feral_child); see also: <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/index.php>
- [115] Sarane S. Boocook, *Sociology of Education* (Houghton Mifflin, 1980), esp. "'Origin of Intelligence," pp. 108-12.
- [116] According to Heraclitus, Logos or Reason is the universal order that determines all; by contrast to such view, our analysis so far seems to indicate that first was Difference rather than Logos. Regarding Heraclitus, see the chapter on Heraclitus in Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Routledge, 1983), pp. 43-62.
- [117] Memmi, *Dominated Man*, op. cit.

[118] Regarding such cogito, see Descartes' view in his seminal work *Meditations*, op. cit.

[119] A. Makedon, "On the Nature of Stupidity," *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, Annual Conferences, 2004-2005*, ed. C. Blatz and J. Helfer (AuthorHouse Publishers, 2007), pp. 209-41. Also available on the Internet at <http://webs.csu.edu/articles/NatureofStupidity2.html>

[120] Descartes, *Meditations*, op. cit.

[121] The author chose the term "badness," as opposed to "evil," to emphasize the linguistic opposite of "goodness;" badness is to goodness what nothingness is to everythingness.

[122] Regarding the definition of "possibility," see A. Makedon, "Possibility," in "Humans in the World," <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/HumansWorld.html>

[123] A. Makedon, "Everythingness and Nothingness," forthcoming. The author discusses in the present paper only those aspects from his larger work on the ontology of radical perspectivism that are significant to ethics and education.

[124] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, tr. Richard Howard. University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.

[125] "Camouflaged egoism" is egoism camouflaged as something else, usually the opposite of egoism, such as, humility, philanthropy or martyrdom.

[126] A. Makedon, "First Assumptions," <http://webs.csu.edu/RadicalPerspectivism/FirstAssumptions.html> (1992).

[127] Hence the belief by some ethnic groups of their innate superiority over others; or intense or "pathological" forms of nationalism bordering on jingoism, such as claiming without expounding why that one's country is the best in the world; extreme forms of such jingoism may lead to conquest of others who are considered inferior, racism or imperialism.

[128] "Saving the Universe: Universal Transformation as a "Human Heroic Act"" in section on "Related Topics."

[129] For a brief discussion of "hubris," see Douglas L. Cairns, "Hybris, Dishonour, and Thinking Big," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 (1996), pp. 1-32.

[130] Rousseau's analysis of the nonsense promulgated by some of our descriptions of nature comes to mind; hence his recommending that his student, Emile, become educated about nature through nature, rather than through books whose text a child who has never been educated in nature can barely understand. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, tr. William H. Payne (Prometheus Books, 2003).

[131] Hawking, *Theory of Everything*, *op. cit.*

[132] J. J. Rousseau, *Emile*, *op. cit.*

[133] Compare with Jean Paul Sartre's analysis of the relationship between imagination, nothingness and freedom in his works *The Psychology of Imagination* (Carol Publishing, 1991), esp. "Consciousness and Imagination," pp. 259-82; and *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel E. Barnes (Washington Square Press, 1966).

[134] The nothingness of a non-world is not like the nothingness in the midst of being in Sartre's psychology, but *total nothingness in the midst of nothingness*.

[135] Adam G. Freeman, *Anti-Matter and Black Holes*. iUniverse Publications, 2007.

[136] By the term "desynthesizing" the author means breaking down of complexities to their "simpler" components.

[137] Regarding the evolution of "multicellularity," see Barrett, *Biology*, pp. 877-81.

[138] See Plato's classic description of Socrates' trial in Plato's *Apology*. Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*, ed. Albert A. Anderson, tr. B. Jowett (Agora Publications, 2005).

[139] Bill Robinson, "Cockroaches and the Bomb," Urban Pest Control Research Center Newsletter (April 8, 1996). Cited in Horticulture and Home Pest News, Dec. 13, 1996, p. 176; posted on line at: <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1996/12-13-1996/bomb.html>

[140] Hence the existence of ethical theories that span the spectrum of possibilities from Sartrean existentialism that rejects biological determinism; to Marxist critiques of a non-materialistic ethos. See Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (Routledge Classics, 2003), esp. Part IV, "Having, Doing and Being," pp. 453-636; Karl Marx, *Capital: Critique of Political Economy*, 2 vols (Penguin Classics, 1992), vol. 1.

[141] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (Vintage, 2001), vol. 18.

[142] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Penguin Classics, 2003), particularly books II-IV, pp. 31-111; and book VII, "Continence and Incontinence: The Nature of Pleasure," pp. 167-99.

[143] I. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[144] According to Freud, the suppression of instincts may be necessary for the rise of civilization; unfortunately such suppression may have caused "collateral" psychological damage: according to Freud, such suppression made people who became "civilized" feel

unhappy or “discontented.” Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*. W. W. Norton, 1961.

[145] A. Makedon, "On the Nature of Stupidity," *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, Annual Conferences, 2004-2005*, ed. C. Blatz and J. Helfer (AuthorHouse Publishers, 2007), pp. 209-41. Also available on the Internet at <http://webs.csu.edu/articles/NatureofStupidity2.html>

[145] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, tr. Richard Howard. University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.

[146] See the example of the uneducated but “ethical” farmer in Makedon, “Personality Alchemists and NCATE,” op. cit. See also A. Makedon, “Reading Between the Lines: How Ethically Desirable are NCATE’s Accreditation Ethics?” *The Roundtable* [official publication of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education], Vol. 1 (Fall 2007) <http://webs.csu.edu/mpes/ROUNDTABLE/Vol1No2Fall2007AlexanderMakedon.html>

[147] Judy Slattum, *Balinese Masks: Spirits of an Ancient Drama*. Periplus Editions, 2003).

[148] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, tr. W. D. Ross (NuVision Publications, 2009), Book XII; and *Physics*, ed. D. Bostock, tr. R. Waterfield (Oxford University Press, 2008), Book VIII.

[149] “Theological Implications of the Limits of Being,” work-in-progress.

[150] See A. Makedon, “On the Nature of Stupidity,” op. cit.

[151] Such a theological concept may be contrasted to the rich multiplicity of the ancient Greek pantheon, or similar polytheistic religions where the overriding paradigm remains “variegation.”

[152] See Aristotle’s discussion of the “first cause” in *Metaphysics* and *Physics*, op. cit.

[153] Under “thinking” the author includes various mental processes such as cognition, imagination, abstraction, recreation of reality in hypotheticals and self-awareness.

[154] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. Vintage, 1968.

[155] There are numerous “anecdotal” accounts of the influence that existentialism exercises on young people. See, for example, <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Philosophy-Existentialism.htm>

[156] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit.

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## **The Need for a Global Perspective in the Ethics Curriculum**

Jon Rogers and Ann Sharp

Montclair State University

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The demographics of the American classroom are becoming significantly more heterogeneous and diverse and have been so for the past few generations. The ethical curriculum, however, has by and large retained its traditional roots in spite of these shifts. Specifically, what currently passes for educating students in moral and ethical matters is too entrenched in the Western analytic tradition to meet the demands of a multicultural classroom. I will argue that schools fail to meet the needs of their students by not updating and adapting the ways in which they educate them in ethical and moral matters. When an educator is not sensitive to the variety of contexts from which her students come, then she cannot teach ethics in a truly representative and inclusive fashion. If what we want is for students to think on a global scale when considering questions of right and wrong, then we need to make a concerted effort toward the teaching of ethics on a similar scale, as well. I do not propose to give any kind of exhaustive account of what such an effort would entail, as it lies outside the scope of this paper. My offerings here are limited to posing some thoughts about why some features are necessary for ethics education, and why some of the features found in at least one of the current models are detrimental and should not be included.

While the Western perspective is certainly a very important and influential one in ethical theory, it is also just that- a single perspective; by definition too narrow and negligent to pay satisfactory attention to perspectives which lie outside of its own set of customary practices. Among those being all too commonly excluded from the curriculum design process include the Asian philosophies from the likes of India and China, feminist ethics, ethics of care, the practices of empathy and mindfulness, and other post-modern European theories which do not see ethics as a necessarily rational study. I believe that these glaring absences may be spoken to by presenting ethical matters in a more cosmopolitan manner, one which is sensitive to the variety of contexts the students bring with them into the classroom. An awareness of the global



dimensions can play a significant role in shaping not just the content of the course material, but even more importantly the procedural thinking skills which are necessary for any meaningful understanding or application of the content at hand. If we are at all concerned with developing a framework for ethical and moral education which is both relevant and useful to as many students as possible, then we also ought to be concerned with how representative our approach is. This means we can no longer afford to remain decidedly unilateral in either our pedagogy or curriculum content; they must both become more global.

The demand for greater attention to be paid to moral and ethical education has gained some momentum in recent years due in part to a variety of high profile case studies which have captured the public's attention. Corporate business scandals, a person's right to die, same-sex marriage laws both for and against, and the ongoing war against terrorism have all sparked national debates which in turn have given each of us reason to pause and contemplate our own thought on such matters. The result has been an increasingly loud call for the community at large to pay greater attention to how students' ethical sense is developed during their formative years and to facilitate in its process. As philosophy is recognized as the most relevant academic discipline to the study of ethics, it is thus beginning to spread its influence beyond the universities and make its way into the pre-college levels of education. This growth has not been without its growing pains, however. Philosophy lends itself well to an environment which is accepting of diverse pedagogies and content matter- an environment which many colleges and universities are known for. But when crossing the line into the realm of schools under the jurisdiction of No Child Left Behind, the likes of guidelines, mandates, standards, goals, evaluations, and proficiency testing all begin to affect what is taught and how. The pressure put on America's public schools to conform ethics education to a normative set of objectives has only made it all the more difficult to implement. As Tim Sprod notes[1], it is notoriously difficult- especially in the heavily pluralistic society of America- to reach any kind of meaningful consensus about just what exactly it means to be moral or ethical, much less how to effectively teach for it. Most elementary and secondary school teachers do not have any specialized training in ethics or philosophy, which further complicates the problem. One of the more popular ideas to solve this has been to equate moral and ethical education with "character education" (Ellenwood, 2007; Britzman, 2005; Zara III, 2000). Models of character education vary widely in their respective structuring and methodologies, but they all build upon a similar foundation: a selected list of character traits serving as the teleological focus for which the students are taught to direct their actions. Starnes (2006) comments that most programs typically cite lists of traits which are to be taken as the central "pillars" supporting character development. The lists themselves also vary to some degree, but the extent of overlap between most of the character education

models is such that many of the same words like “responsibility,” “pride,” “fairness,” and “citizenship” consistently appear.

The idea of using character education-based models to pass for students’ ethical curricula is, I believe, a fundamentally flawed one. Any attempt to facilitate ethical and moral understanding by focusing on how best to adhere to a prescribed norm is destined to fail at achieving the overarching directive of ethics- applying theoretical principles to real-world situations. Mastering the “who, what, when, and where” of ethical theory amounts to nothing if a student cannot understand the “how”- how to apply what she knows whenever and wherever the situation demands. The “how” is a thinking skill to be developed, not learned, and it cannot be treated as if it were like any other course content. Therefore, a curriculum which prioritizes content knowledge over procedural skills is undermining what ethics is all about: considered action. Due to the objective nature of character education models, I believe they are deficient at developing the thinking skills necessary for considered action. The reason why is that character education presents ethics as something that is capable of being concrete, straightforward, and commonly understood between people. Even in the unlikely event that an entire classroom of character education students could agree on the types and degrees of actions deemed to be ethical, it would not change the fact that they are learning about ethical acts, not how to be ethical. It bears an explicit mentioning that, when it comes to ethics, the difference between knowledge and understanding is a crucial one; to be well versed in ethical knowledge is nothing more than pure academics without also possessing an understanding of how that knowledge connects with one’s lived experiences.

Teaching for adherence to any one characteristic- let alone a list of them- does not seem to be any more of a tangible endeavor than teaching to develop one’s ethical sensibilities. In a recent clearinghouse report published by the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), a collection of 93 studies conducted on 41 different character education programs were examined. The report described character education programs as “... encompass[ing] such moral and ethical values as respect, fairness, and caring- as well as responsibility, trustworthiness, and citizenship. And it can refer to the demonstration of these values in behavior, reasoning, and emotions.” (*WWC Topic Report, 2007*). Out of all the 41 programs, 13 were qualified by the DOE and IES standards for review. Programs were reviewed based on the effectiveness of each in educating three different domains: Behavior; Knowledge, Attitude, and Values; Academic Achievement. None of the reviewed programs demonstrated a “strong positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence” in all three of the domains, and only one program demonstrated this distinction in two out of three domains. Six out of the thirteen programs had no discernable effect of any

kind. It may well be debatable as to which particular domains of a student's abilities moral and ethical values speak to, but it seems reasonable to assume that, at the least, the concept of morality involves contemplation on eudemonistic values ("the right thing to believe") and ethical concepts involve discerning how we ought to go about realizing such values ("the right thing to do"). Put more succinctly, morality involves beliefs and ethics involves actions. These concepts correlate very closely with the domains of Behavior and Knowledge, Attitudes, and Values. If character education is being used as the means of covering the bases for moral and ethical education, so to speak, then it appears that something is getting lost in the translation. I do not wish to say that character education lacks any educational value or is detrimental to a school's curriculum (the same problems and questions faced here will also exist trying to subsume moral and ethical education into any other context, whether it be education for principles, standards, manners, conduct, goals, etc.). I am only pointing out that it appears character education is being used to fulfill a role different than what it was designed for. If we are to take the education of morals and ethics seriously, it is clear we must treat them as the distinct areas of academic and practical discipline that they are.

My belief as to why all of these substitution methods will come up short in their effectiveness lies not in how they are trying to teach moral and ethical development, but rather what it is they are trying to teach. More specifically, the aims of such programs invariably target the teaching of content, not procedural skills. Since nailing down just what constitutes moral thinking has been demonstrated to be a notoriously difficult thing to do (Goodman, 2006; Tappan, 2006; Beck and Murphey, 1994; Davis, 1993; Giroux, 1993), it should not be much of a surprise that the efforts made at trying to pick out and develop any certain set of characteristics will necessarily be to some degree arbitrary and biased toward the personal and professional views of the educator. Perhaps a better means of approaching the problem is to instead develop a pedagogy which concentrates on how the students develop the skills associated with making moral judgments and taking ethical actions. One of the primary advantages to this approach is that the thinking skills involved in the formation of moral judgments enjoy a greater amount of consensus (though by no means unanimous) than any particular skill or skill set does. In fact, the main points of contention surrounding procedural thinking skills-based approaches to moral and ethical education is not so much over what the necessary skills are, but whether those skills are transferrable across the curriculum.

Teaching for moral and ethical development will, at best, be of limited value if what is being taught cannot be employed within a variety of different contexts. We need to know how to make judgments as they relate to the natural sciences, the social

sciences, the arts and humanities, various historical backgrounds, within literary works, conceptualizing mathematical problems, and so on. The question for those advocating the thinking skills approach thus becomes: is there such a thing as generic, transferrable thinking skills, or are thinking skills something which is inherently relative to the context of the discipline in which they are used? The debate over this question has been illustrated in the form of an on-going debate about the transferability of critical thinking skills which began in the 1980s between the likes of John MacPeck and Mathew Lipman. Though the specific criteria for what constitutes critical thinking has and still does vary to some degree (Lipman, 2003; Lewis & Smith, 1993; Ennis, 1991), there remains a general acknowledgment as to the importance of its inclusion into the curriculum. On one side of the debate MacPeck argues that the term “critical thinking” is an empty concept in and of itself. It only has meaning insofar as it applies to the specific context in which it is taught. Thus there is no such thing as generic “critical thinking”- there is only the practice of critical thinking in some larger discipline. The ability to think critically in biology, for example, is different from the ability to think critically in history, which is also different from such ability in art, reading, language, math, etc. All an educator can hope to do is teach her students how to think critically within her own particular discipline area of specialty. On the other side of the debate Lipman responds to MacPeck’s claims by agreeing with him that critical thinking does indeed have an element of relative-to-context to it. However, there does happen to be one distinct discipline which is uniquely well suited to its development. That discipline happens to be philosophy, and the special connection he saw between the two contributed to his designing of the Philosophy for Children curriculum, which proposes to facilitate the development of student’s thinking and reasoning skills through philosophical inquiry and dialogue. Lipman defines critical thinking as “... thinking that (1) facilitates judgment because it (2) relies on criteria, (3) is self-correcting, and (4) is sensitive to context” (Lipman, 116). There are a large variety of topical discussions which fall under the general umbrella of “Philosophy” (aesthetic, social and political, metaphysical, phenomenological, moral, and ethical). Most, if not all, of the sub-topics of philosophy are related to other disciplines already in place in the general school curriculum- there is philosophy of science and art; social and political philosophy tie in very closely with the subjects of civics and social studies, and many of the primary texts from the history of philosophy such as Plato’s *Republic* and Camus’ *The Stranger* have a place in any upper level English literature or language arts class. It should therefore be possible for teachers to engage with their students in discussions of a philosophical nature which also have direct implications for issues occurring in other courses. The underlying assumption here is that the philosophy card is already in the curriculum deck, so to speak, and it just needs to be drawn out and played. The connections between disciplines are natural ones and they are already in place; it becomes the teacher’s job to draw out those connections and make them

accessible to the students.

It makes sense to talk about philosophy as part of a school's curriculum when considering ethical education because if it is true that communal philosophical inquiry and dialogue can be used as a forum for developing and practicing the skills which students can in turn transfer and apply to the rest of the curriculum, then there may be some hope for the justification of moral and ethical education as a discrete curriculum. It seems readily apparent that at least some aspects of philosophy make their way into other disciplines, much in the same manner as mathematics shares a relationship with music, health and physical education, history and political science, etc. What is less clear is whether every part of philosophy can be transferred over and applied to every other subject area. It is possible that only some philosophical concepts have relevancy outside of their own discipline, while others do not. How can we know whether morals and ethics are something that can be transferrable, or, if they cannot, does this hurt the argument for including them in the school curriculum? It is my belief that this question misperceives the nature of moral and especially ethical education (to the latter of which I will hereafter give special consideration), and as such the question of transferability is ultimately an irrelevant one.

As I stated earlier, ethics involves the study of actions. Deliberating upon the appropriate course of action to take is an unavoidable part of daily life, one which has become entrenched into a person's automatic functions similar to other perceptual and cognitive faculties like associating names with faces. If one has ever been at all concerned about his or her decision making enough to stop and reflect upon the deliberating process and what goes into it, then one is displaying an interest in ethical matters. No matter what the issue at hand happens to be, if it involves taking action it includes an ethical component. It is difficult to think of any part of the educational process which does not aim toward, and culminate in, action. It would be nothing short of a non-starter for a teacher to say she was educating her students without having an interest in or a concern for how they act upon the knowledge they acquire and the understanding they gain. Therefore I believe it is reasonable to assert that whether or not ethics possesses transferability across the curriculum should not be a question of concern for educators because we can show that ethics is already an integrated component of curriculum. The manner in which it manifests itself will indeed vary depending upon the larger context (i.e. – the nature of ethical discourse will look different when the ethical considerations are brought up in a civics class or science lab, or during a history lesson, etc), but no matter what the context, the nature of the discourse will always retain the same basic qualities: conceptual, normative thinking about the reasonableness of the implications and consequences resulting from a proposed course of action. Because ethics possesses the characteristics of context



specificity as well while still retaining a substantive body of disciplinary skill specific unto itself, it deserves the same special consideration afforded to the other academic disciplines within a school's curriculum. The pluralist nature of ethical thought also requires that educators who are teaching for the development of thinking skills take advantage of the value it can add to a discussion by supplementing the content material with ideas for further investigation and imperatives for taking the discussion beyond the classroom. The expectation is that when a student learns not just the "how" of an issue, but also the "why," and the "ought" of it as well, a meaningful understanding with deeply personal significance to the student can finally begin to take place.

I will close with a comment and suggestion for the new direction we should be looking in for helping to make ethical education an even more viable component of the curriculum. The entire enterprise of ethical education will be lost if we fail to be sufficiently cosmopolitan in our teachings. The demographics of the classroom are changing (and have been so for awhile) - if ethics education is to be taken seriously it must also adapt itself to the changing educational landscape. This means updating its own curriculum to include new developments in conceptual theories, new perspective on the old ones, and learning how to apply them to examples which are contemporary and relevant. The content materials used in social studies, history, and science are in a continual state of revision- indeed, if they were not they would cease to remain worthwhile academic pursuits. Ethics education has remained relatively stagnant in its development, and it does so at its own peril of obsolescence. Dr. Ann Sharp, one of the primary contributors to the Philosophy for Children curriculum and a close associate of Mathew Lipman, acknowledges this lack of perspective within the ethical curriculum as well as within other areas of philosophical pedagogy: "Back [in the 1970s] when we were writing the 'Lisa' novel [a narrative text designed for presenting ethical ideas and problems for middle-school aged students] we knew that we were neglecting the Eastern perspectives and the feminist perspectives and the more modern ones. We just didn't know them. And we didn't know of anyone who could do them for us" (Sharp, 2005). Neither the Lisa novel nor the Philosophy for Children curriculum as a whole should be taken as entirely representative of the current state of ethical education, but this comment does serve to acknowledge what is widely known as a steep bias toward the analytical traditional of philosophy, which has always been synonymous with "Western" philosophy. Analytic philosophy is known for placing a high value upon logical thinking and rationality, as well as insisting upon definitions, criteria, and distinctions for analyzing concepts, ideas, and theories. Alternative ethical conceptualizations which place importance on empathy, emotion, nature, harmony, meditative thinking, and mindfulness are to greater and lesser degrees ignored, dismissed, and minimalized in traditional Western thought. The Western tradition



most certainly has a place in the study of ethics; the error comes in assuming that they make for the entirety of it. Unfortunately for the western schools, this is precisely what the common (implicit) assumption is for ethical education. If we are concerned with teaching for ethical action and the responsible initiation of social change, if we are interested in making ethical education more holistic and sensitive toward the different backgrounds of those who engage with it, then we need to begin thinking about how to change our understanding of what ethical educational consists of and what it can contribute to the larger curriculum in school. Otherwise, the stigmatized reputation ethics, and philosophy in general, have come to be known for will continue to stay: an isolated, ivory-tower intellectual indulgence of interest only to some.

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[1] See the Introductory page of *Philosophical Discussion in Moral Education* for a more complete explanation of the problem with teaching for moral education.

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## Teaching Students How Not To Reason: A New Approach to Teaching Informal Fallacies

James E. Roper

Michigan State University

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### Section 1: Introduction

There is wide agreement that students need to be taught to reason critically. The low level of most U.S. political debate as well as the fact that many American students tend to do poorly in mathematics, which exemplifies critical reasoning, support the claim that critical thinking should be part of a K-12 education. A whole paper might be devoted to defending the importance of incorporating material on critical reasoning into the K-12 curriculum. [1] The focus of this paper is different: to present one viable way to integrate critical reasoning into K-12 education.

Many so-called “critical thinking” courses are really nothing more than watered down courses in formal logic. The title of this paper reflects the fact that the approach it recommends is not such a course. While it is no doubt possible to teach some elementary aspects of formal logic in a semester course, training K-12 teachers to teach such material is both arduous and, more importantly, less productive than preparing them to teach courses in “informal logic” of the sort proposed here. [2] Indeed, when I began teaching at Michigan State University I was asked to teach a beginning formal logic course which was required for students in K-12 teaching majors. My remarks about the difficulty of teaching formal logic to these individuals is not intended to suggest that such students are in any way inferior to other students. I have continued to teach variants of this course for many years, and I have found that formal logic is a difficult subject for the majority of undergraduates. Since the goal here is to suggest a way of approaching logical reasoning that all K-12 teachers can not only learn themselves but also be prepared to teach to their future students, my suggestion that preparing them in formal logic is less productive than training them in the informal approach I propose here seems warranted. I stress, though, that the value of the approach recommended in this paper is not dependent on my strong belief that formal logic represents a less productive approach to teaching K-12 educators how to teach logical reasoning to their students. Indeed, if the K-12 curriculum can accommodate it, a beginning course in formal logic may well be helpful to K-12 teachers who will train to teach the kind of informal logic course I propose. Finally, I want to end this introduction by stressing the fact that I am talking about two groups of individuals in this paper: K-12 teachers and their students. I understand that there is another group who may read this paper, and it is in many ways the most important group: education professors who teach K-12 teachers. I address this paper to that group with the understanding that I am not suggesting what they might or might not learn about logical reasoning. I do hope, though, to persuade this group of education professionals of the viability of my suggestion about how K-12 teachers ought to be prepared to present logical reasoning to their students.

## Section 2: Contextual Issues

Teaching logical reasoning usually focuses on teaching students how to analyze an ‘argument’—understood as a series of statements (the premises) which are supposed to support another statement (the conclusion). Application of any techniques of logical reasoning—formal or informal—presupposes that the “argument” being evaluated has been properly understood. When I teach the informal aspects of logical reasoning—the subject of this paper—I always ask students to distinguish between what I call the “original argument” and the “completed intended argument.” The “original argument” is simply the “argument” as it first appears. I place the word ‘argument’ in scare

quotes to indicate that the “original argument” may not be an argument at all. For example, “I watched the moon rise over a restless ocean” is not an argument; it is just a description. If a student judges that what is presented is, in fact, an argument, then he or she should follow a sequence of steps to transform this “original argument” into what I call “the completed intended argument”—that is, the argument after it has been recast as the student thinks a proponent would want it to be (assuming such a proponent knew as much about logical reasoning as the student). This will usually entail eliminating extraneous verbiage, supplying missing premises (and conclusion, if necessary), and generally making every effort to understand what the proponent of the argument intends. Typically, doing this entails taking such a proponent very seriously. That means the student must eliminate any obvious biases she or he may have about the proponent of the argument or the argument itself. Doing these things is not only ethically sound; it helps avoid the charge that the student has intentionally mischaracterized the argument in order to make it easier to criticize. Should that happen, the argument’s proponent(s) would be in a very good position to discredit the student’s analysis.

One aspect of the move from “original argument” to “completed intended argument” bears special mention: what George Lakoff calls “framing”—that is, specifying the appropriate context in which to evaluate an issue. [3] This is especially important in political argument because the usual way politicians seek to avoid answering questions is to “reframe” them—that is, basically, to change the subject. For example, in discussing the issue of placing a gas pipeline in South Lansing (MI), politicians dismissed the very legitimate safety and property value concerns of the lower middle class homeowners living along the proposed route of the pipeline by saying that the issue of where to place the pipeline was “not about” safety or property values but was rather about bringing more jobs to Michigan. Again, those who argued that Iraq was going to be way too expensive to justify were told that the decision to go to war was “not about” money but about “defending the American people.” And so on. These argumentative moves might fit under what I would call the “Fallacy of False Framing”—namely, dismissing legitimate concerns by changing the frame without adequate justification.

While it is the case that, in moving from the “original argument” to the “completed intended argument,” one must take the argument and its proponent(s) very seriously, sometimes it is necessary to question the intentions of those who present a given argument. Sometimes they intend to frame the issue in a way that is not warranted. In the pipeline example just cited, for example, the argument for the pipeline might be presented as a way to increase employment in Michigan. Such increased employment would be offered as justification for building the pipeline along

the proposed route. That way of casting the argument, as indicated, runs afoul of the argument that so constructing the pipeline would abridge the rights of the homeowners along the projected course. Setting up the “completed intended argument” without taking this into account would constitute an example of the fallacy of false framing. It is important that students be taught to detect such argumentative strategies and “disarm” them. [4] One aspect of this issue requires special emphasis: in moving from the “original argument” to the “completed intended argument,” one should pay special attention to issues of race, gender, and religion. [5] If the “completed intended argument” reflects biases in these areas, it may commit the fallacy of false framing. [6] I refer to this fallacy briefly at the end of Section 4 below.

### Section 3: Formal and Informal Logic

Formal logic is so called because it includes the study of methods for determining which structural forms of argument exhibit a connection between the premises and conclusion that guarantees that, if the premises of an argument with that form are all true, then the conclusion of such an argument will also be true. In other words, formal logic studies methods for differentiating argumentative forms into those which are valid and those which are not. Whether we are focusing on the logic of whole sentences, the logic of syllogisms, or so-called quantificational logic, such a study requires technical knowledge no less than the study of the calculus (in mathematics) requires such knowledge. The elaboration of examples that support this claim would take us far afield from the topic of this article. [7] My point here is that any attempt to teach K-12 students critical thinking that focuses on formal logic requires that prospective K-12 teachers undergo extensive training in the complex discipline called symbolic or mathematical logic—especially if these methods are to be applied to actual, real life arguments. Even if this can be done (and I would argue it would require no less than four one semester courses be inserted into the college curriculum for K-12 teachers), I believe there is a better way to structure material on logical reasoning for presentation to K-12 students—one that does not demand nearly as extensive preparation for their teachers—and, hence, constitutes a much more realistic alternative.

Logic is often divided into formal and informal logic. We have very briefly discussed the former, but it is the latter that is our focus in this paper—especially the part of informal logic that concerns analyzing arguments to determine whether or not they exhibit various “informal fallacies.” Presenting this work to students is what I mean by “teaching students how not to reason.” It involves explaining to students what an informal fallacy is and providing examples of different types of such fallacies. The goal is to help students avoid fallacies—to show them how not to reason. In the process, of course, students will learn how to construct their arguments in ways that avoid fallacious reasoning. In short, I propose an approach to teaching K-12 students

about critical thinking in a way that requires less educational preparation by teachers but has the potential to improve students' critical thinking skills dramatically—especially, the ability to analyze actual, real life arguments in their “natural settings”—the media, newspapers, books, and so on.

Unfortunately, there are many presentations of informal fallacies that strike me as logically incoherent. If one considers an informal fallacy like *argumentum ad hominem* (attack on the person—instead of on his or her argument), one aspect of this problem emerges quickly. An example of this fallacy is the argument that we should reject a mathematician's proof of an important theorem because he is a criminal. We might check his proof especially carefully if he or she has indeed been convicted of committing a crime, but if the proof stands up to examination we certainly would not reject it because of the crimes of the person who proved it. That would be deemed irrelevant. Most such personal attacks are clearly examples of fallacious reasoning. These attacks are irrelevant to the viability of the argument in question; but there are other cases that do not represent fallacious arguments at all—cases in which the attack on the person rather than his or her argument is not irrelevant at all. Consider, for example, the following argument:

Richard Nixon said (initially) that he did not know about the Watergate break-in.

Richard Nixon lied about a great many things.

Therefore, Richard Nixon was probably lying when he claimed not to have known about the Watergate break-in.

Regardless of your views about the truth or falsity of the claim that Nixon had repeatedly lied, the argument that he was probably lying about his role in the Watergate scandal because he had repeatedly lied is certainly not a fallacy. The claim that he had repeatedly lied before is not irrelevant to the issue of whether or not he lied about his role in Watergate. Indeed, it is what would usually be called a strong inductive argument. Even if its premise (about Nixon being a liar) were false, the connection between that premise and the conclusion that he was probably lying about Watergate seems inductively warranted. On its face, this argument looks like an *ad hominem* fallacy but, on closer examination, it is not a fallacy at all. I can produce similar examples for every known informal fallacy—i.e., cases where the fallacy appears to be present but more careful analysis shows it is not. This situation has led some to reject the teaching of fallacies as itself somehow “fallacious.” [8]

#### Section 4: A Theory of Fallacies



I have developed a “theory of fallacies” that avoids the above difficulties. I begin by explaining the three ways arguments can fail. These ways correspond to three groups of informal fallacies: Fallacies of Logical Incorrectness, Fallacies of False Premise, and Methodological Fallacies. [9] I go on to redefine each of the most common fallacies to show how it fits into one of these three categories. [10] Next, I provide guidance on how any proposed (individual) fallacy can be so categorized. Finally, in Section 5, I suggest how this work can constitute the core of a mini-course on critical thinking—a course I believe most K-12 teachers can learn to present without radical alterations in their curricula. [11] If there is interest, it would be straightforward to produce both training materials for teachers and materials for K-12 students studying such an approach. This paper is, in part, an investigation of possible interest in such work.

Unlike some traditional approaches to the study of informal fallacies, I define a fallacy simply as a bad argument—that is, an argument that exhibits one or another problem that compromises its ability to support its conclusion. There are three classes of such errors. [12]

First, there are arguments that are fallacious because they are “logically incorrect.” By this I mean that the connection between premises and conclusion in these arguments is weak or non-existent. For example, the following (Viet Nam War era) argument is fallacious in this sense:

All communists believe in a classless society.

All civil rights workers are communists.

Therefore, all civil rights workers believe in a classless society.

We notice that the term ‘communists’ is actually being used in two different ways in this argument. In order for the first premise to be true, the term must refer to those who believe in some version of Marxist/Leninist “communism”; but for the second premise to be true, the term must mean something like ‘people disliked by opponents of civil rights workers.’ Since many civil rights workers were not Marxist/Leninist communists, I assume here that these two meanings are not reducible to one. To the extent that the term means the same thing in both of its occurrences in the premises, the argument would be valid: it would be impossible for the premises both to be true and the conclusion false. If all civil rights workers are communists and all communists believe in a classless society, then the conclusion that all such workers believe in a classless society is guaranteed to be true if the premises are both true. But in this case, at least one of the premises must be false. If both premises are true, the term ‘communist’ must mean something different in each premise, and in that case the

connection between premises and conclusion fails to guarantee the truth of the conclusion; hence, the argument is invalid. From the premises that all communists believe in the principles of Marxist/Leninist communism and that all civil rights workers are people disliked by opponents of civil rights workers it does not follow that all civil rights workers believe in a classless society.

This argument is an example of a fallacy of ambiguity: an argument which is logically incorrect—neither valid nor inductively strong—in virtue of the fact that it contains a term that must mean different things in different premises in order for those premises to be true. More generally, it is also an example of a fallacy of logical incorrectness—an argument where the connection between premises and conclusion is weak or non-existent. In this case, the connection is non-existent.

The second class of fallacies is comprised by arguments that have one or more false premises. An example of such a fallacy is the following argument:

Barack Obama is a practicing Muslim.

The United States should not elect a practicing Muslim to be President.

Therefore, the U.S. should not elect Barack Obama President.

There is a lot to challenge in this argument, but if the premises were both true the conclusion would have to be true as well. In other words, the argument is valid. The second premise is certainly open to challenge, but the argument is intended for those who accept the second premise. (I do not.) The first premise is, however, not controversial in any way. Aside from Obama's own denial that he is a practicing Muslim, there is a wealth of widely available evidence that the first premise is false. Therefore, even if one were to accept the second premise, this argument clearly exhibits a fallacy of false premise: one of its premises is clearly false. It cannot, therefore, justify its conclusion—even though it is valid.

The final category of fallacies consists of what I call “methodological fallacies.” [13] These arguments exhibit problems that are independent of whether or not they are logically correct or have false premises. These are fallacies that are based on method—that is, on the way (including the context in which) certain arguments are used. For example, consider the following argument:

Snow is white.

Therefore, snow is white.

If I were to use this as an example of the logical principle that any sentence logically

(deductively) implies itself, there would be no problem. The principle of “self-implication” is well established in formal logic and the argument simply illustrates this principle. Using this argument to establish that snow is white, however, constitutes a fallacy—specifically, the fallacy of arguing in a circle (or begging the question). This fallacy is also called *petitio principii*. This is Latin for “petitioning the principle (or conclusion).” In short, the argument attempts to prove its conclusion by assuming its conclusion to be true, and this “bootstraps” approach to establishing the truth of a claim is clearly fallacious, even in cases where the premises are true and the argument is logically correct.

The “snow” example is very simple. Without reference to the notion of “begging the question” most people will see that a statement does not prove itself. The following is a slightly more complex example:

Jones is a bachelor.

Therefore, Jones is an unmarried man.

The term ‘bachelor’ means ‘unmarried man’; therefore, the premise is synonymous with the conclusion, so this argument begs the question. More complex examples often involve chains of arguments in which the argument at the beginning of the chain assumes as a premise what the final argument purports to prove, but we have said enough to illustrate the point.

A more challenging example of a methodological fallacy—this time of what I call “the fallacy of suppressed evidence”—is the following:

Drug X has generally been found to be safe when appropriately administered at prescribed dosages.

Drug X effectively alleviates pain for most people when administered in prescribed dosages.

Therefore, Drug X is a safe pain medication for most people.

I assume, as background information, available to those who check on the matter, that Drug X is not a pain reliever; it just happens to relieve pain, as well as doing what it is intended to do—which is to treat a psychotic disorder. Unfortunately, though the drug is generally safe for those with this disorder (i.e., when administered “appropriately”) it is not safe for the general population. Therefore, it is not a suitable pain reliever for anyone who does not have the psychotic disorder for which it is intended. If this information were added to the above argument—instead of being suppressed, as it is in the statement of the argument—the argument would definitely

not support its conclusion. This is an example of the fallacy of suppressed evidence—an argument which is logically correct and has true premises as it stands but that fails to take into account available evidence that, were it added to the argument in the form of premises, would render the argument logically incorrect. A special case of the fallacy of suppressed evidence is the fallacy of false framing, which I defined and illustrated at the end of Section 2 above.

## Section 5: (Deductive) Validity and Inductive Strength

The careful reader has no doubt noticed that I have used two complex logical concepts that I have only briefly characterized: (deductive) validity and inductive strength of arguments. A presentation of the theory of fallacies—with manifold examples—clearly depends on providing students and their teachers with more than the succinct definitions of these concepts presented so far. Indeed, my course on critical thinking at Michigan State University does include, in addition to work in formal logic, informal tests for these conditions. This is why my paper’s title is a slight overstatement. [14] It highlights the focus of the course, but among the tools I use are concepts that are at the very core of logic.

Regarding ‘validity,’ I provide students with what I call “The Counter-Example Test for (Deductive) Validity.” Formal procedures for testing the validity of argument forms often have the advantage of involving structured “turn the crank” methods for determining whether such forms are valid, but learning such methods and, especially, how to apply them to real world arguments can be very daunting. [15] The “Counter-Example Test for (Deductive) Validity” is not a formal “turn the crank” method, but it has the advantage that it applies directly to arguments so it does not require students to master and learn to apply complex quasi-mathematical logical theories. A disadvantage of this method is that it usually relies on the creative imagination of the analyst, but this problem is easily surmounted in most cases.

First, to illustrate how this method can be used to show an argument is invalid, consider the following example:

Socrates is human.

All mortals are human.

Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Showing that this argument is invalid via the counter-example test would consist in describing a possible “world”—that is, a way the world might be, even though it may not, in fact, be that way—in which the premises are all true and the conclusion false. Imagine a world in which there are humans who are immortal, and Socrates is one of

them. Yet, in our imagined world, all mortals are human. For example, there are no mortal non-human animals. This imagined world clearly seems “logically possible,” that is, there is no apparent logical contradiction in the assumptions we have made—even though it does not describe our world. In this case, then, the premises of the above argument would both be true and the conclusion false. Hence, the counter-example test shows that the argument is invalid because it shows that it is possible for both premises to be true and the conclusion false. [16]

Contrast the above example with the following argument that is valid.

Socrates is human.

All humans are mortal.

Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Every attempt to construct a possible world in which the premises are both true and the conclusion is false will fail. It follows that the argument is valid. If Socrates is human and all humans are mortal, there is no possible way that Socrates could fail to be mortal.

My informal test for an argument being inductively strong is a bit more involved and I will simply sketch its main points. I stress, though, that it is not something that should be beyond the ability of non-specialists to understand and present or of K-12 students to grasp.

The leading idea of the method turns on the definition of ‘inductively strong argument’ as an argument in which it is improbable (though not impossible) for the premises all to be true and the conclusion false. [17] I imagine a gambling game in which a rational participant starts with a given amount of money and then makes a lengthy series of bets, which are strictly limited in size. The bets are structured as follows: the individual is presented with a series of (invalid) arguments and told to imagine that the premises of each argument are all true and then to bet or not bet on the truth of the conclusion based on whether or not he or she thinks the conclusion is probably true relative to the premises. Since the bets are strictly limited and there is a long series of bets, it is reasonable to assume a rational individual would only bet on those sentences which he or she found to be “more probable than not” relative to the premises.

I understand that this sounds difficult, but in practice it can be accomplished using the artifice of a game with actual examples. Space does not permit such an articulation of this approach, which I call “The Betting Test for an Inductively Strong Argument”; but I hope this more theoretical account will be intelligible to professionals.

[18]

The main point here is that it is possible to present the ideas of validity and inductive strength (of arguments) in informal ways that avoid the technical complexities of formal methods. Some will say that what I am discussing here still involves complexities—even if they are informal. I do not deny that. Critical thinking does involve abstract thinking even in the absence of formal, mathematical procedures, and that is something many American students may find difficult. [19] In a book length presentation, I can make these ideas much more perspicuous. As I have explained, my goal here is to provide the general outlines of my approach.

## Section 6: Conclusion

There is really no obvious place to end this discussion of the approach to critical thinking I call “Teaching Students How Not to Reason.” There are many other topics that might be included in such a course, and certainly the topics I have presented might be further elaborated; but I have briefly explained all of the major things such a course must include: a theory of fallacies that is the core of the approach, informal tests for (deductive) validity and inductive strength of arguments, and an outline of a procedure for getting from the initial presentations of “arguments” to versions of these arguments that are appropriate for analysis. In this connection, I discussed the very important concept of “framing” and its relation to argumentative context. Each of these aspects of the course will require substantial development, but there is nothing here that is so technical (like mathematical logic) that it is inaccessible to either teachers (in the limited time they have after they have taken the other required courses) or students (who also face many other curricular demands). I would be glad to provide material for such a course if there is interest, including a large number of examples to help K-12 students hone their critical thinking skills. [20]

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#### ENDNOTES

[1] James Roper, "Every Child Left Behind: The Impact of Standardized Testing on Democratic Civic Education," Delivered at the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society's annual meeting held at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois, November 10-11, 2006. While this paper does not directly address the issue of teaching logical reasoning in K-12 education, it does defend the importance for democratic education of instilling in students a "critical perspective."

[2] Elementary formal logic can certainly be taught at a theoretical level, just as elementary mathematics can. Teachers know, however, that being able to do multiplication and division of numerically presented problems is definitely not the same as knowing how to apply these tools to real world problems. The same is true for formal logic. Unfortunately, training people to apply the tools of formal logic is very demanding. Most of my students in elementary formal logic never really reach the point where they can reliably make such applications. Recall, of course, that I spoke of *elementary* formal logic and *elementary* mathematics. Once we progress to more advanced topics in these subject areas, matters become even more difficult—whether for K-12 teachers or for their students. I could say much more but a full proof of my point about "difficulty" would take at least another paper as long as this one.

[3] George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant*, White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004.

[4] In section 4 below, I will characterize several general categories of fallacies. The fallacy of false framing will fit into the category of what I call methodological fallacies. I regard it as a special case of the fallacy of suppressed evidence as I will briefly explain in that section.

[5] James Roper, “Should We Teach Both Evolution and ‘Creationism’ in Science Classes?” *Midwest Philosophy of Education Society*. Editorial Committee: Olivet Jagusah, Chair; Donald Smith, Alexander Makedon, September 2005, AuthorHouse, Bloomington, Indiana. Pp. 485-504. This paper argues that the “theory” of intelligent design is used by its proponents to frame the evolution debate in an inappropriate way. This paper is useful here because it illustrates the complexities that are often involved in showing that a way of framing an issue is fallacious.

[6] James Roper, “Values as a Political Metaframe,” *The Florida Philosophical Review*, Vol. VII, Issue 1 (Summer 2007), pp. 52-79.

<http://www.cah.ucf.edu/philosophy/fpr/highend/issues.php>. In this paper, I extend Lakoff’s ideas to include what I call “metaframes.” I distinguish a metaframe of values from one of principles. This distinction is useful in moving from the original presentation of an argument to an appropriate “completed intended argument” in cases where such an argument presupposes underlying principles that contradict other principles that are either widely held or held by the proponent of the argument. This is a complicated matter that requires careful treatment.

[7] It is critically important to understand that a course in “syllogistic logic,” which typically does *not* involve anything remotely like complicated mathematics, covers only a tiny portion of what is now understood as formal logic. Even adding truth functional logic, which is clearly crucial to dealing with many very simple arguments, dramatically increases the complexity of the overall subject. When the logic of quantifiers is also included—and this is now considered part of formal logic because of the large number of commonplace arguments it encompasses—the parallels with mathematics are even more apparent.

[8] My former colleague and friend Gerald J. Massey (University of Pittsburgh) has made such an argument. (“Are There Any Good Arguments that Bad Arguments Are Bad,” *Argumentation*, Volume 1, Number 3 / September, 1987, Springer Netherlands: 351-353).

[9] Note that this categorization of fallacies differs significantly from standard

classifications. The explanation of this would both take us far from our topic—both practically and theoretically.

[10] It is important to note, though I will not go into this in this short paper, that individual examples of traditional fallacies may not *all* fall into the same one of these three categories.

[11] As is apparent in the remainder of this paper, the work on fallacies is not the only thing such a course will include, but it does constitute the heart of such a course.

[12] Note that a single argument may exhibit different fallacies falling in two, or even all three, of these categories.

[13] I have adapted this term from Rudolf Carnap's use of it in his well-known book *The Logical Foundations of Probability* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950). Carnap uses the term to refer to cases where available evidence has been suppressed. There is a version of this "Fallacy of Suppressed Evidence" that I include in my classroom presentation on fallacies. (See below for an example.) My use of the term 'methodological fallacy' is intended to be a generalization of Carnap's idea since it encompasses a number of other fallacies that do not exhibit either false premises or logical incorrectness.

[14] Note that although my college course includes formal logic, the course I propose here does not.

[15] I leave aside the very complex story of why such methods are inherently incapable of determining whether actual arguments are *invalid*—though they can be used to determine validity. My inclination is to leave this material out of the course for K-12 students, but I would like to explain it to teachers.

[16] Clearly, more needs to be said about this method—especially to those who will present it. For example, I usually explore different notions of "possibility" with my students at Michigan State University and emphasize that this method depends on "logical possibility," which I explain more fully. What is said to K-12 students about this issue will depend on their level. I have chosen here to provide a very brief introduction, as I have with the other aspects of my proposed mini-course in "How *Not* to Reason."

[17] I include the words "though not impossible" to eliminate any temptation to conflate deductive validity with inductive strength. This seems inappropriate since validity is so much better understood than inductive strength.

[18] I do not provide examples and further elaboration here because, though such work is clearly accessible, it requires a rather lengthy departure from the central focus of this paper. My special training in philosophy of science is in “probability and induction” so I am well prepared to present and defend this method.

[19] Scott S. Greenberger, “A Russian Solution to U.S. Problem: Emigres' Formula for Math Success Pays Off in Newton.” *Boston Globe* (5/7/2001): A01. Russians living in this country often do not depend on American schools to teach their children mathematics. They understand that the view held by many American educators that children must be at least fourteen in order to understand abstract material is simply and dangerously wrong. Many Russians in this country send their children to special “Russian” schools where their children learn abstract mathematical concepts at an early age. A quotation from the above article highlights this point: “Khavinson [a teacher at a Russian school] says there's nothing wrong with teaching young children advanced mathematical concepts such as algebra—In fact, she says, it's essential. Khavinson says American schools ask too little of younger children, then dump trigonometry on them in high school. ... Russian parents who remember their own schooling agree.” Also: “Betty Kantowitz, a Newton South math teacher, agreed that students who are exposed to advanced concepts at an early age do well later on.”

[20] Since completing this paper, I have written and published a book which could constitute material for “such a course.” It is called *Dimensions of Informal Logic* (Kendall/Hunt, 2009), and it appeared in late October of 2009. I am currently using it in the last part of my beginning logic course at Michigan State University.

\*Contact Information: Prof. James E. Roper

Home Address: I will receive mail at this address more quickly and securely than at my philosophy department address.

James E. Roper, 2705 Sorority Lane, Holt, Michigan 48842

Home Phone: 517-699-5141 (Home: Leave messages here)

517-927-2408 (Cell)

E-mail: roper@msu.edu (also thesophist@comcast.net; but I prefer my MSU e-mail address)

University Address: As I said above, I prefer to receive mail at my home address.

Prof. James E. Roper, Philosophy Department, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

Office Phone: 517-353-9388 (Do not leave messages; use home number)

517-355-4490 (Philosophy Office)

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: JAMES E. ROPER

After his graduate work at Princeton University, Prof. Roper joined the Philosophy Department at Michigan State University. He teaches business ethics, a course he designed and placed in the curriculum. He also teaches courses in philosophy of science, logic, medical ethics, and social and political philosophy. Prof. Roper founded and, until July, 2000, directed Michigan State University's National Champion Debate Team and the annual Spartan (summer high school) Debate Institutes. In the spring of 2005, the Cross Examination Debate Association honored the MSU Debate Team as the most successful CEDA debate program over the last fifteen years. Prof. Roper directed and coached the Team for the first ten of those years. He has published in *Philosophy of Science*, *Synthese*, *The Journal of Business Ethics*, *The American Philosophical Association Teaching Philosophy Newsletter*, *Florida Philosophical Review*, *Essays in Philosophy*, *The International Journal of Ethics*, *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations*, Vols. 5 and 6 (Moses L. Pava and Patrick Primeaux, Eds.), In the *Socratic Tradition* (Tziporah Kasachkoff, Ed.), *Proceedings of The Midwest Society for Philosophy of Education Society, 2001-2003* (Alexander Makedon, Managing Ed.) and 2004-2005 (Jason Helfer, Ed.), *Organizational Ethics: Healthcare, Business, and Policy*, *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society* (Editor: Robert W. Kolb), and *Cross Examination Debate Association 1991: 20th Anniversary Conference Proceedings* (D. Thomas & S. Woods, Eds.). He edited a volume of *Essays in Philosophy* on business ethics, which was published in June 2005. Prof. Roper has developed, and published accounts of, an approach to teaching business ethics based on student classroom debates. He is developing a website to help other others utilize this "debate" teaching method. He is also writing a book entitled *The Covenant of Democracy*.

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*The Roundtable, Vol. 2, Spring 2008*

## Locating Leadership: Rethinking Educational Leadership

Sam Rocha

Ohio State University

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### 1. Opening Questions

Something about leadership fascinates us. As early as kindergarten, children express desire to be the leader as they make their way to a water fountain. That childish understanding and desire for the first spot in the order of moving from one place to another is not simply a matter of practical order or biological necessity. It seems to illustrate an ongoing concern in human experience that begs two elementary questions, namely: Where is leadership? and Where are leaders?[1]

Of the two questions asked, I consider the first most important in order to arrive at a conceptual location. It seems, however, that a thoughtful treatment will require an organic flux from leadership to leader[2], and vice-versa. In that dialogue it should become clear that the leader is simultaneously concealed and revealed within leadership semantically, theoretically, and in praxis. The concept and the agent cannot be at odds with each other.[3] But, in order to engage the unified experience of leadership, we must attempt to find it. Before we can study or practice educational leadership — or any other kind of leadership for that matter — we need to know where it could be.

## 2. Purpose & Method

Universities that lack a philosophy section in their education department, or an education section in their philosophy department, frequently find educational leadership as an appropriate institutional place for philosophy of education. I am not sure whether this relationship is voluntary or arranged, as it often lacks reciprocity. Nonetheless, it seems that the philosopher can become a vital part of the study and practice of educational leadership. One of the things that philosophy seems well suited to do is to ask simple, basic questions about the thing in question. These questions tend to be questions of ontology. Questions of what the thing is. From a phenomenological perspective, we might put that question rather differently. Instead of asking “what” something is we might ask “where” it is. There has been sparse academic work addressing these ontological questions in the fields of business, psychology, communication, and others, but, despite these rare efforts in other fields, educational leadership is mostly lost — without a conceptual location.

In the paper, I intend to aim my efforts at speculating over this phenomenological line of questioning the locus of leadership. It should be clear that I am not seeking a “definition,” in the traditional, metaphysical sense of word. To define and to locate are not the same thing. To locate reveals something about the thing in question, without the imperative of a definition. In practice, I believe it is possible to seek out conceptual locations — that avoid the danger and arrogance of metaphysical definitions — with a dialectic that seeks out a synthesis from two valid theses, instead of the opposing or competing ones.[4] Using a synthetic, phenomenological approach, we can avoid the assumptions of naming or normalizing; especially that odd belief in the incompatibility of objective and subjective phenomena present to a lived experience.

I will proceed in five sections that I will describe here briefly. First, I will address the phenomenological notion of “place,” especially as it points to the general relativity (and I do mean to use the term in its Einsteinian sense) of time and space. Secondly, I will discuss subjectivity as it relates to the self — the subject — and the relativity of her



experience. Thirdly, I will point to the objective dimension of leadership manifest in a common experience of power, which will lead to the my fourth point where I begin to conceptualize power in terms of freedom. Here I make an important distinction between leadership and management or administration. Finally, I conclude by commenting on the need for courage in order to lead.

### 3. Preliminary Locations

If you were to ask the question: “What time is it?” I would refer you to a reliable clock. You might challenge me by replying that it is a different time in Russia, so my answer is insufficient, it is not the same time. I would then reply by saying that if you were to call your friend in Russia and speak to her, the common moment of encounter, the experience of offering or receiving a cordial “hello,” would be the time it is. More than the time it is, it would be the place time is in. Although atomic calculation would make that place difficult to describe in language, it highlights the poverty of an instrumental — clockish — sense of time.

If leadership is entirely like time, we could reject its subjectivity, as clocks, time zones, and leaders appear too unstable for an identifiable location. It seems, at this point, that the leader is unnecessary to locate leadership. But, in this respect, leadership is not at all like time. There is no ontological comparison between clocks, time zones, and human persons. The leader is not the mere instrument of leadership. Leadership is necessarily intertwined with the leader as personal agent. This necessary relation of the leader to leadership demands that the subjective, personal dimension be a vital consideration in seeking its location.

So, perhaps, we can refer to the leader. Maybe subjectivity has no ill effect on leadership’s location. This too cannot be true. Although the leader is a vital part of leadership, it, like clocks, is not stable enough to provide a perceivable place. In this respect, locating leadership is radically similar to locating time. Just as the common hello experience in a shared moment can clarify the place of a worldwide time contained in an encounter between two persons, so too there can be a common, locating, moment of leadership. Time, in clockish form, is insufficient to explain the common hello moment between persons in Minnesota and Moscow. Likewise, the leader form of leadership is also insufficient to make leadership visible. It may account for the undeniable dignity of the leader, but it does not account for the common moment when leadership occurs.

### 4. Subjectivity & Selfhood[5]

In most schools of educational leadership, leadership is considered subjective because of external choices or situations. One leader may choose to lead with a certain

style[6] or within a certain frame[7] and another may make a completely different choice. Leadership does not occur in vacuum, the many contexts[8] of leadership are frequently said to be another source of this subjective dimension. This multiplicity of choices and situations is undeniably very real, but situations do not necessarily make leadership subjective.

From this situational understanding of subjectivity, if one can find the same leader with the same choices to be made in the same environment – leadership loses its subjective dimension. This is highly unlikely, but the lack of realistic probability is not because of a necessary relationship between choices, situations, and leadership. Leadership is not simply diverse in the numeric sense of variety. It is necessarily subjective in an ontological sense.

For example, if eating ice cream is a subjective experience simply because of the variety of flavors available at an ice cream parlor, then, if choices are reduced to a selection of only one flavor, ice cream would become monolithic. There is only one choice to be made. But if eating ice cream is about more than accidental variety, if there is any culinary quality to it, then regardless of flavors and choices, eating ice cream remains deeply subjective. The key factor in ice cream eating's subjectivity is the human palate. It is this dimension of ice cream eating that necessarily remains unrepeatable regardless of variety or numeric diversity. Ten people can eat from the same bucket of vanilla ice cream yet their experience belongs exclusively to their individual sense perception.

Another example. Appreciation of Pablo Picasso's art is not a subjective aesthetic experience simply because he had many colors of paint to choose from in order to create many different paintings. Picasso, and any artist for that matter, created art with something much more subjective than a color spectrum or a variety of brushes and techniques. His selfhood makes his art forever his own, as an artist unrepeatable from other artists and a person unrepeatable from other persons. From my view, to appreciate the beautiful or the ugly is much more than a survey of many galleries. It is an experience that is always subject to the encounter of self to other things.

Difference is very common – especially in education – one can say that there are many different apples, horses, trees, and so on. But to mistake subjectivity with simple difference, in this case, would lead to an artificial location of leadership. The most subjective something can be is when it is entirely unrepeatable. The seriousness of a person's selfhood, the reality that my self can never belong to nor be your self, structures this deep and subjective dimension of leadership. One leader cannot be another, not simply due to external situations or organic circumstances, but, instead, due to the impenetrable identity of the human self. This impenetrable identity refers to

the ownership or belonging of the self. No matter how social norms and behavior may influence the person's creativity, those norms and behavior do not change the reality that my self belongs to me — myself — and no one else.

A location of leadership that lacks this appreciation for selfhood as the necessary center of subjectivity would be insufficient. In this sense, leadership reveals more than where it is, from a distance, it tells us who it is, in person. But it does not do so from a scientifically or metaphysically predetermined place. It does so from the phenomenon of self. It assigns more than an external concept to leadership – it adds a human face.

You may wonder: Is there anything else other than selfhood that we can count on? Is leadership just another word for some general sense of existentialism or humanism? These and similar questions make a compelling argument. Unless there is something more characteristic than selfhood, leadership is just too subjective to be anything in particular. It needs something more. To locate it well, we must find a common and accessible place — an object — that everyone can perceive and understand. Otherwise we are left with a radically private sense of leadership, a bit reminiscent of Kierkegaard, that is of little, to no use for groups of people.

## 5. Objectivity & Power

While selfhood focuses on inward personal existence, it should not do so at the expense of outward social interaction. There must be a common experience that takes my self and makes it collectively perceptible to you, the other. Something common to subjects must remain mutually available in a consistent, even objective, way. Otherwise, we may struggle to understand the difference between leading, telling time, eating ice cream, and painting. This may sound extreme, but without a common, perceptible experience leadership and all other human activities become nothing more than a spectrum of impenetrably subjective actions. This kind of relativity annihilates more than leadership, it turns existence and reality into a personal and socially disconnected state of nothingness.

The extension of the inner self towards the outer other creates a distinctly objective experience in time and space that locates a perceptible place. In all cases of leadership both the leader and those who are led identify this encounter in a moment that is both expressed and experienced. This is more than a vague mutual interaction. It is something very perceptible. It is power. Power is what most objectively locates the moment and place — the where and when — leadership occurs and where leaders are identified. Leadership's objective dimension is found in a moment of power.

The effect of this power can be many things, e.g. war, peace, success, failure... as we have seen in leaders throughout history, but in every instance of leadership power

is present. True moments of power are not when one feels powerful in a purely subjective and personal sense; they are when objective power is manifest in the real actions of the subjective leader and the experience of those around her.

Many times power is considered synonymous with oppression or a nebulous sense of negativity. Likewise, leadership is also frequently considered to be ethically qualified in conceptual form.[9] This is a misunderstanding of both power and leadership. Leadership and power can be oppressive, liberating, or ethically mediocre, but in conceptual form they remain amoral. Despite the moral neutrality of power, it cannot be artificial. It must be verified in freedom.

## 8. Authentic Power as Freedom

A moment of power is an exercise of inward and outward personhood. It is a person acting freely from her self and towards the other. A leader who leads from an order or a draconian curriculum is not truly leading. She is following. While being led by the person who gave the order or wrote the curriculum, she is not acting freely. Non-free action may lead to better moral action or more effective outcome than her free act of leadership, but unless she is free her leadership does not belong to her self or offer anything from her self to those she attempts to lead.

We find the objective dimension of leadership in the moment in which a person exercises power that is centered in the subjectivity of his or her own self and is made visible by freely moving outside of the self toward the other in a perceptible encounter to those who participate and observe. In historical, national, domestic, and even fictional characters leadership is not verified unless there is a free, and thus authentic, moment of power. This need for freedom may look to make leadership unattainable, but free moments of power are prolific in everyday experience — leadership is everywhere. Moments of power are unavoidable. Leadership is unavoidable.

This says more about leadership than moments of power in general. It further establishes that insofar as we are “social animals” we create moments of power[10] by leading or being led. Leadership is not an exclusive commodity of educational institutions, governments, and organizations; it is common and necessary to our everyday personal and social life.[11] When leadership is professionalized and limited to formal places and interactions we mistake leadership for management or administration.

A misidentification of management for leadership could be why authentic leaders seem so sparse[12] in formal, especially educational, settings. Many people make decisions and express power, but the power is not their own, it belongs to someone or something else. Where there is a free moment of power, leadership is, leaders are.

Inasmuch as we want to know what is objective to leadership, we can say that leadership can be universally located in free moments of power.

The kind or sort of power refers back to the leader — the person— and that reminds us of the subjective realities of leadership. This begs the question: “How can we reconcile something as necessarily subjective as selfhood with the objectivity of a moment of power, and arrive at an adequate location?” This brings us to our final task, namely, the courage to locate leadership in the sum of those parts as both seriously subjective in selfhood and gravely objective in moments of power.

## 9. Synthesis & Courage

It takes courage to appreciate a deeper dimension of subjectivity than the popular sense of numeric diversity. It takes courage to ask current or aspiring leaders to critically examine themselves and discover that, perhaps, their moment of power is not free, that their leadership is management. It takes courage to avoid oversimplification. The urge to annihilate the objective in favor of the subjective, or vice-versa, is all too common.

To seek the fullest answer to the questions of leadership is neither common nor easy. It requires a deep sense of courage and authenticity to embrace the sources of both subjectivity and objectivity found in the self, other(s), and authentic moments of power that create leadership’s place. In practice, when we skip these locating steps as noble and progressive, open questions, we literally use language we do not know. While seeking to study leadership progressively, we can easily fall into dangerous degrees of mis-educative and illiberal reactions described by Dewey in *Experience and Education*. When we avoid locating leadership — we are lost. This limits dialogue instead of liberating it because there is very little to talk about with any sense of seriousness or, frankly, intelligence.

It is no wonder why supposed leaders look alike so often. It is no shock why misnomered leadership is mostly professional, managerial, and businesslike. It is not surprising that truly creative leaders seem to be so scarce in public life and why the multitude of everyday leaders go unnoticed. It is less astonishing that so many universities cater to that sensibility with programs of study that offer administrative mis-identities of educational leadership. Instead of educating leaders, they too often train managers or resources as a key factor in the capitalistic exchange of a certification, a district pay raise, or a professional promotion via an academic—or not so academic—degree. Can we really be shocked that we find ourselves in a leadership and educational crisis in the country that is supposedly leading the world? We lack courage.

But what is courage in this situation? Courage, facing these questions and others, is to ask difficult questions and struggle with complex answers. It is to locate things to the best of our ability instead of in the en vogue mode of thinking, and, simultaneously, be open to being proven wrong. Courage for educational leadership is to authentically seek understanding regardless of politics or the current educational aversion to intellectual and philosophical rigor. This is especially true regarding a concept that so strongly affects public policy, law, economics, and of course, education.

Courage does not mean that leadership, the human self, or power will be good necessarily. Courage is not good in itself or by itself. I do believe, however, that with courage we can do more that offer phenomenological dialectics of leadership. We can lead. I only hope that we lead well.

*\* Many thanks to Phil Smith, Bryan Warnick, Tom Fish, Alex Makedon, and Guillemette and Allan Johnson for their insightful critiques of earlier drafts of this paper.*

## ENDNOTES

[1] These questions are much more elementary than the question of who should rule? found as early as Plato's "philosopher king" and as recent as Hogan and Kaiser's treatment in their What We Know about Leadership (*American Psychologist* 49, no. 6 (1994): 493).

[2] This synthetic view of the relationship of leader and leadership differs from the similarly preoccupied distinction made by James Burns on his opening page of *Leadership*: "If we know all too much about our leaders, we know all too little about leadership." (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 1.

[3] Max Scheler makes this same point regarding person in his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1980) according to Peter Spader in his *Scheler's Ethical Personalism: Its Logic, Development, and Promise* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002). I do not refer to it directly in my treatment of leadership, but in my discussion of subjectivity and selfhood, the same emphasis could be made.

[4] In case the principle of contradiction seems to limit my dialectic, one should be reminded of the metaphysical weakness of this principle laid bare in analytic philosophy in the problem of negative existentials most notably by Bertrand Russell. This is the dilemma of seeming non-existence of the "present king of France" and, at the same time, the clear existence of it as the subject of a true proposition (e.g. The present king of France does not exist.).

[5] This idea of selfhood draws heavily from phenomenological realism and



existentialism, specifically in the work of John Crosby, Max Scheler, and Martin Buber.

[6] This refers to Frank and David Johnson's three leadership styles, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, in *Joining Together* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2005).

[7] This refers to Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's frames of leadership, structural, human resource, political, and symbolic, in *Reframing Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

[8] Such as the argument made by Maurice Hall in "Communicating Subjectivity: Leadership as Social Construction" (*Atlantic Journal of Communication* 15, no. 3 (2007): 194).

[9] John Wabush and Christine Clemens make this point in "The Two Faces of Leadership: considering the dark side of leader-follower dynamics" (*Journal of Workplace Living* 11, no. 5 (1999): 70). They also cite the danger of this moral assumption regarding the nature of leadership.

[10] Johnson and Johnson make a somewhat similar point in *Joining Together* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2005) although they do not stipulate an objective moment of power, i.e. a place where leadership or power can be identified universally.

[11] Similar to Dewey's point of the essentially social nature of education.

[12] While authentic leaders may be scarce in public leadership, I think that we encounter authentic leadership in our everyday experience far more than what is modeled by "formal" leaders.

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*The Roundtable, Vol. 2, Spring 2008*

## **Some Possible Educational Implications from the Dewey, Russell, and Popper Dialogue on Learning from Induction**

Ronald Swartz

Oakland University

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-

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The central problem of this paper can be formulated by the following question: Are inductive procedures a significant part of the method that is or should be used by scientists? Throughout this essay I will refer to this question as the problem of induction.

In order to have a preliminary understanding about how one might solve the problem of induction I would now like to provide three brief comments on induction that appear in the works of John Dewey, Bertrand Russell, and Karl Popper. The quotes which I wish to incorporate into this paper are the following:

(1) Dewey on Induction:

“Induction” is a name for the complex of methods by which a given case is determined to be representative, a function that is expressed in its being a specimen or sample case. The problem of inductive inquiry, and the precautions that have to be observed in conducting it, all have to do with ascertaining that the given case is representative, or is a sample or specimen. There is no doubt that some case, several or many, have to be examined in the course of inquiry: this is necessarily involved in the function of comparison-contrast within inquiry. But the validity of the inferred conclusion does not depend upon their number. On the contrary, the survey and operational comparison of several cases is strictly instrumental to determination of what actually takes place in any one case. The moment any one case is determined to be such that it is an exemplary representative, the problem in hand is solved.[1]

(2) Russell on Induction:

Hume’s skepticism rests entirely upon his rejection of the principle of induction. . . . If this principle is not true, every attempt to arrive at general scientific laws from particular observations is fallacious. . . . Hume has proved that pure empiricism is not a sufficient basis for science. But if this one principle [i.e., the principle of induction] is admitted, everything else can proceed in accordance with the theory that all our knowledge is based on experience. It must be granted that this is a serious departure from pure empiricism, and that those who are not empiricists may ask why, if one departure is allowed, others are to be forbidden. These, however, are questions not directly raised by Hume’s arguments. What these arguments prove - and I do not think the proof can be controverted - is that induction is an independent logical principle, incapable of being inferred either from experience or from other logical principles and

that without this principle science is impossible.[2]

### (3) Popper on Induction:

According to a widely accepted view---to be opposed in this book---the empirical sciences can be characterized by the fact that they use 'inductive methods', as they are called. According to this view, the logic of scientific discovery would be identical with inductive logic, i.e. with the logical analysis of these inductive methods.

It is usual to call an inference 'inductive' if it passes from singular statements (sometimes also called 'particular' statements), such as accounts of the results of observations or experiments, to universal statements, such as hypotheses or theories.

Now it is far from obvious, from a logical point of view, that we are justified in inferring universal statements from singular ones, no matter how numerous; for any conclusion drawn in this way may always turn out to be false: no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white...

My own view is that the various difficulties of inductive logic here sketched are insurmountable. So also, I fear, are those inherent in the doctrine, so widely current today, that inductive inference, although not 'strictly valid', can attain some degree of 'reliability' or of 'probability'.[3]

Although the above comments on induction may appear to be a bit lengthy, in reality these three quotes are just a few brief isolated comments from a vast literature that includes works that go back thousands of years to at least the time of Aristotle. Moreover, in the twentieth century, Dewey, Russell, and Popper each created a mountain of written work that most normal human beings would find it difficult to master in a lifetime. Dewey, Russell, and Popper all lived to be over ninety years old. And each of these men had the good fortune to remain intellectually active and productive almost to the last days of their lives. Also, Dewey, Russell, and Popper belong to that small group of scholars whose work has been noticed by other scholars. Thus, in the twenty-first century the writings of Dewey, Russell, and Popper continue to attract some attention in the first decade of this century; at this time it is unclear how present and future scholars will eventually evaluate and value the insights found in the mammoth amount of written work devoted to the problems studied by Dewey, Russell, and Popper.

In this paper I do not wish to suggest that I or anyone else has indeed been able to explain what is the best or true solution to the problem of induction (i.e. Are inductive procedures a significant part of the method that is or should be used by

scientists?). This problem which has only two solutions clearly is answered differently by Dewey, Russell, and Popper. Specifically, from the quotes in the above Dewey and Russell can be seen as providing an affirmative answer to the problem of induction. On the other hand, Popper can be seen as offering a negative solution to this problem.

Rather than attempt to identify the best or true answer to the problem of induction, I merely wish to note here that at least since the publication of the German version of the *Logic of Scientific Discovery* in 1935 there has been, and to some extent continues to be, a controversy or dialogue about a question such as the one I have called the problem of induction. Furthermore, within this dialogue questions such as the following become somewhat significant and relevant: 1) Does the validity of an inferred conclusion depend on ascertaining that one given case is representative, or is a sample or specimen? 2) Is it possible for science to exist without the use of some version of the principle of induction? 3) Are the difficulties suggested by inductive logic insurmountable? And, 4) If inductive procedures are not used in science can experiences or observations be used in some noninductive ways? Questions such as the above can be seen as an outgrowth of the Dewey, Russell, and Popper dialogue about the problem of induction. And in this paper all I wish to suggest is that teaching and learning related to the natural and social sciences might benefit from some discussion about how educational programs might be impacted by the dialogue over induction and some possible questions that are an outgrowth of this dialogue.

#### ENDNOTES

[1] John Dewey, *Logic: The Study of Inquiry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 436-437

[2] Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), pp. 673-674.

[3] Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 27

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THEME:

Paternalism and Teachers' Authority

PAPERS:

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*The Roundtable, Vol. 3, Fall 2009*

### School Rules, Paternalism and Support for Authority

Charles Howell

Northern Illinois University

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division, Session of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education, February 19, 2009, Palmer House Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, USA

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#### I. Introduction: Challenges to the authority of public schools

To paraphrase Gerald Dworkin, the paternalist restricts the freedom of another for the other's own good, when the other is not fully capable of recognizing and pursuing her own good without that restriction. Compulsory education is one common expression of paternalism. We assume that in sending children to school, we prepare them to exercise the rights and duties of citizenship, to lead good lives, and to take advantage of the economic opportunities that society offers.

Compulsory education is by now so familiar that it is widely assumed to be justified. Yet the authority of teachers in public schools in the United States is routinely challenged, and this suggests that the public consensus in support of

mandatory schooling may be weakening. Surveys of teachers, parents, and the general public reveal a widespread perception that contemporary classroom management strategies don't work, that student misbehavior frequently disrupts learning, and that schools are unwilling to hold students responsible for compliance and effort (Public Agenda 2004; Johnson & Immerwahr 1994). What has gone wrong here? Why is the legitimacy of the school's authority under assault? Can or should it be defended, and if so, how?

This paper explores ethical issues raised by these questions. Skepticism about the authority of school implies resistance to restrictions on the child's freedom-i.e., paternalistic restrictions. To restore authority, paternalistic controls must be legitimized. The restrictions must not only be justified. They must be seen to be justified. The paper explores aspects of contemporary public schooling that undercut these conditions, and proposes several corrective measures. Part II proposes requirements for the justification of paternalistic control and outlines the various types of control exercised by contemporary public schools that require justification. Part III explores some reasons that students, parents, and citizens might doubt that these restrictions are justified. Part IV suggests some adjustments which would help to restore confidence.

## II. Restriction and justification

For Dworkin, a restriction counts as paternalistic only if it is for the person's own good, and only in the case of diminished capacity. The person restricted must be better off as a result of the restriction than she would be without it. And she must lack the ability either to see or to pursue her own good for herself, without intervention. Only restrictions that meet these two tests qualify as paternalistic control and hence are eligible for the proposed justification. Restrictions can be justified on other grounds-for example, limiting one person's freedom to protect the rights of another. Paternalistic restrictions, however, require a higher standard of justification, and hence they are the focus of attention in this paper.

Where the "better-off" and "diminished-capacity" conditions are satisfied, Dworkin contends that paternalistic restriction is justified only if the person restricted, in full possession of her rational faculties, does or would endorse the restriction. Call this the paternalism principle.

Dworkin's is not the only account of paternalistic justification, but it is the best suited to a fine-grained analysis of the actual practices of schools. Others are more general, and hence more difficult to apply. Callan (1997), for example, argues that



restriction of options is permissible if it enlarges options later on. Levinson contends that paternalistic control of children is acceptable if it "gives children the capacity for choice-the capacity to overcome the bounds of coerciveness-later in life" (1999, p. 48).

Dworkin's account generates more specific evaluative criteria than either of these alternatives. But are they the right criteria? In some respects, the account might be regarded as weak, for it implies that controls are legitimate if children accept them. One way to achieve legitimacy is simply to make activities palatable. If someone enjoys an activity, then doing it now makes him or her either want to continue doing it or want to do it again in the future.

Enjoyment is useful from a motivational standpoint, but it is not very convenient as a rationale for the restrictions of schooling. Very few activities are enjoyed by all students, or even by any given student all of the time, and even when students do enjoy an activity, that does not justify requiring that activity instead of one they would enjoy more. More important, enjoyment in itself does not justify paternalistic restrictions; rather, it removes the need for restriction and hence also the requirement of justification.

Dworkin's account appears stronger when we focus on hypothetical endorsement. Unlike actual endorsement, this condition actually justifies requiring students to do what they don't want to do. But is it expansive enough to cover all of the restrictions a society would want to place on its young people? "Full possession of rational faculties" implies that capacity for reason, not knowledge, would be sufficient to ensure endorsement of any legitimate restriction on freedom. Yet we restrict children's options not just because of their limited reasoning power, but also because they lack information. If one is uninformed about consequences, it is rational not to do unpleasant things that lead to long-term benefits. So it would appear that "relevant knowledge" should be included as a condition for the hypothetical endorsement test. Knowledge would include the benefits from and detriments of the restriction proposed, so that the agent could judge whether the sacrifice of present desires was worthwhile in the long run.

What kinds of restrictions in schools require justification?

Many of the rules and penalties prescribed by school discipline programs involve the rights of others, not just the agent's own good. These do not require either hypothetical endorsement or a benefit to the person restricted. Restrictions on disruptive behavior, harassment of teachers or other students, or behavior endangering others are not subject to this type of justification. All of the regulations and controls

related to academic achievement, however, are subject to it. Rules related to class participation, homework completion, subjects that must be studied, and performance standards met must all be justified in this way.

More broadly, the paternalism principle implies that compulsory education itself requires justification. School must actually benefit students. It must do more than just keep them off the street. Adolescents in particular must benefit more from school than they would from having a job, assuming they weren't prevented by age restrictions from holding a job. Truancy laws work in tandem with child labor laws; the benefits of schooling to students are the justification for both of them.

Socialization-by peers, procedures, and the school as an institution-must be factored into this cost-benefit calculation. There are benefits and harms to be considered. On the one hand, students make friends, gain emotional support, and learn about society's expectations. On the other, they may encounter low expectations, curtail aspirations, experience emotional trauma, or receive encouragement to act in ways harmful to themselves or others. All of these elements affect the overall justification of compulsory schooling, as well as the legitimacy of specific procedures in the schools.

### III. Reasons for skepticism about paternalistic control

In general, students learn at school, and ordinarily we assume this learning justifies restrictions imposed by the school. There are, however, two further questions to be considered. First, is what they learn of sufficient benefit to justify the restrictions of school? Second, does what they learn justify all the restrictions of school?

The rise of the standards movement addresses the first question. State legislatures in the United States have established academic standards that guide instruction in all public schools. The standards reflect both expert opinion about what children need to function as workers and citizens and wide agreement among citizens about what it is important for students to learn (Romer, 1995). The process of developing standards maximizes relevant knowledge about students' future well-being within a rational framework, and is consequently aligned with Dworkin's justificatory conditions. If students learn from a standards-based activity, then requiring participation would appear to be justified.

But what if they don't learn? Consider two students. Jill has already mastered the skill that an activity is designed to teach or reinforce. Michael is confused, unable to complete the task, and gives up in frustration. Can the teacher legitimately compel

either or both of them to participate? Evidently not based on Dworkin's account. Neither learns from the activity: Jill because of her prior mastery, Michael because of his inability to complete the task. Neither would be better off as a result of participating. Paternalistic control is therefore not justified.

The teacher can use differentiated instruction to deal with this problem. Michael's skills can be strengthened through a series of simpler tasks, and Jill can be given options of more challenging activities. Note that allowing options makes the teacher's task easier. To the extent that Jill participates willingly, the immediate burden of justification is removed, unless she undercuts the overall legitimacy of compulsory schooling by consistently choosing tasks that are too easy. Other types of motivational strategy, such as rewards or negative "consequences" like losing recess, neither justify the activity nor eliminate the need for justification. Jill may "choose" to complete an assignment she doesn't learn from to avoid a teacher-prescribed penalty, but contrary to the advocates of Assertive Discipline (Canter & Canter, 1992), coerced choice does not imply willingness, and the burden of justification remains.

Are Dworkin's criteria satisfied by a collective activity from which most students learn, even if a few do not? Assume that the few who do not would prefer not to participate. The teacher can require that they not disrupt the activity, but not, according to Dworkin, that they take part in it. This constraint has the unwelcome result that the teacher can legitimately compel participation from some students but not from others. Fortunately, the teacher can eliminate this complication by designing open-ended activities that allow participation at different levels depending on the student's ability. When all students gain, all students can be compelled to participate.

A similar problem arises with heterogeneous grouping. Students at different levels of academic ability are assigned to work together on a common task. The assumption is that the less advanced students find the task challenging and learn as they interact with their more advanced peers in completing it. Research shows that lower-ability students achieve more in this context than they do either in homogeneous groups or from whole-class instruction (Abrami et al., 2000). Medium-ability students, by contrast, tend to learn less in heterogeneous groups than in homogeneous groups. For all students, there is considerable variation in results. Approximately one-fourth of the studies reviewed by Abrami et al. showed less learning in small groups than from whole-class instruction. Small group instruction works best for primary grade children, and its advantages were magnified by specialized teacher training, use of cooperative learning methods, and use of local tests rather than of standardized tests to measure progress.

From these mixed results, we should not conclude that the use of heterogeneous grouping isn't legitimate. Skillfully implemented, it can produce good results. But if it is not managed well and in consequence some students don't learn, then compelling their participation is unjustified. Requiring participation for someone else's sake rather than for the benefit of the person restricted doesn't count as an instance of paternalistic control that hypothetical endorsement could justify.

Some may argue that this approach is too narrow and that focusing exclusively on academic achievement ignores other possible benefits, especially those related to socialization. If some students in heterogeneous groups don't progress academically, they may still learn through peer interaction, engagement in group processes, exposure to different perspectives, or refinement of social skills. If socialization goals are embedded in standards, then activities can be justified by this type of learning. If not, then students and others are bound to be skeptical. The justificatory claim, even if true, may be perceived as an ad-hoc attempt to preserve legitimacy in order to avoid redesigning the activity. Perception aside, such claims are most likely to be true for activities that are well-planned and skillfully executed, and these are not the cases in which teachers are most likely to be challenged.

Broader concerns about socialization arise from the "hidden curriculum"-learning outside the official curriculum that occurs as a result of school rules and procedures, peer influences, and the cumulative social interaction that the school generates (Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Jackson, 1990). Rules and procedures are justified insofar as they are necessary for student learning, and they do not require justification if they are needed to prevent disruption or harm. Would this permit different discipline approaches for different schools, based on the expected future occupation of the students they serve (Anyon, 1983)? Suppose students are learning, but as they learn they internalize low expectations. The benefit of learning would be offset by a much greater harm, and consequently the school's efforts to restrict students' freedom would not be justified. In such cases, where grave and far-reaching harms outweigh limited learning, the legitimacy of compulsory education itself is called into question.

Similar reasoning applies in the case of peer influence. Compulsory schooling entails compelled association with a group of students designated by school authority. If the school can avoid negative consequences, such as teasing or bullying, it should do so. If it doesn't or can't, then these negative consequences are weighed against benefits to the student to evaluate the legitimacy of compelled attendance. So, for example, strong academic progress would outweigh mildly harmful consequences of peer influence-moderate drinking or eating junk food, for example. But peer influence leading to more significant harm-drunk driving, early or promiscuous sexual activity,

or narcotics use-would override modest academic achievement. Results for intermediate cases would be less obvious. In some cases, it might not even be possible to decide whether or not benefits outweigh harms with any degree of confidence. Uncertainty in these cases, however, does not invalidate the underlying principle that unfavorable consequences must be taken into account when assessing the legitimacy of paternalistic control.

#### IV. Strategies for legitimation

One common strategy for avoiding problems of justifying control is to provide for choice. Students, for example, can be allowed to choose more challenging activities or enroll in more stimulating courses.

Providing a set of choices is still a form of paternalistic control. For this control to be justified, the choice set as a whole must be significantly more advantageous to the child than any uncoerced alternative. If, as Holt (1981) and other homeschooling advocates claim, children can learn more through self-directed activity than they can at school, then no matter how attractive the options at school there, they ought not to be required to go there.

Even if the school does offer advantageous choices, moreover, if students ignore them, then the arrangement is delegitimized. So, for example, differentiated instruction fails Dworkin's test of legitimacy if students consistently choose unchallenging options so that little learning takes place.

To avoid this result, the school or parents can go further by actively supporting beneficial choices and discouraging harmful ones. Just providing guidance makes the restricted choice set more acceptable. The further step of actively supporting a worthwhile activity chosen by the child makes the choice set even more favorable. Parental autonomy support, defined as acceptance of perceptions and feelings and "facilitation of self-initiated expression and action," is strongly correlated with academic achievement and general well-being (Soenens et al., 2007, p. 635; Grolnick, 2003). Autonomy support by teachers is associated with both academic achievement and increased school persistence (Reeve, 2002). These favorable outcomes make the combination of guided choice and support a strong candidate for justification along the lines suggested by Dworkin.

What about choices for parents? How does this shift of perspective affect the application of Dworkin's principle? If families can opt out of a school, either through a school choice arrangement, by paying for private school, or by educating children at

home, then "compulsory education" is not truly compulsory. Is the problem of justifying paternalism thereby avoided?

Like choices for students, the choice set for families must have at least one advantageous option; if not, then Dworkin's "better-off" condition cannot be satisfied. Assuming there is such an option, parents have a duty to choose it. If they don't, they restrict the child's freedom for some reason other than the child's own well-being. According to Dworkin, they can't impose an arrangement disadvantageous to the child to save money or for the sake of their own convenience. This does not mean, however, that they are obligated to choose the best option—just one that compensates for restriction of freedom by leaving the child better off.

Suppose a middle-class family has to decide between urban and suburban schools, or between an urban school and home-schooling. Suppose, too, that the claim that the flight of middle-class families immiserates urban education is true. If they stay, the schools and most of the children in them will be better off, even though their own child is worse off. How do parents balance Dworkin's requirements with the demands of justice?

Dworkin does not require that those whose freedom is restricted be made as well off as possible. He does require that they be better off with the restriction than without it. It would appear, then, that if children make academic progress in urban schools without unduly harmful socialization effects, parents can respond to the demands of justice by keeping them there rather than moving to a suburban district. Indeed, they must do so if they think it would make a real difference. This requirement is strengthened if children benefit from learning in a more rather than less diverse setting. The same reasoning applies if an excellent but expensive private school is added to the choice set. If one of the public schools is at least adequate, then Dworkin's requirements will be satisfied by sending children there, even if parents do so to save money rather than out of a concern for justice.

In these cases, the choice sets consists entirely of schools. What if the choice set is expanded to include a version of homeschooling where children enjoy a great deal more freedom? Within reasonable bounds, they set their own schedules, select subjects for study, and choose which peers they want to associate with. In the first case, parents choose between relatively restrictive alternatives. Now they choose between more and less restrictive alternatives. To justify the former, schools must either be clearly advantageous to the child or be preferred by the child. If, as the analysis of test scores by Rudner (1999) suggests, they would make more progress if they were home-schooled, then Dworkin's requirement is clear. If parents are financially and



emotionally capable of educating the child at home, they should do so.

In all of these choice situations, actual benefit to the child is essential to justifying paternalistic control. But perception is important as well. Schools must be able to justify their restrictions to parents and children, and parents to children. Reasons for the restrictions must be understood by the parties. Communication can present challenges.

The most obvious way of meeting this challenge is simply for teachers, school administrators, and parents to explain why they do what they do. Children need to be told why restrictions work to their benefit.

Just being told, however, may not be enough. Even when a rationale is provided for a decision by the school or the teacher, parents and students may be skeptical. To help overcome this skepticism, schools encourage parental involvement. Parents' interaction with the school gives teachers opportunities to outline goals for students, clarify behavioral and academic expectations, and explain why rules and procedures are important. If parents see that teachers' actions are connected to ends they themselves value, they will be more likely to support restrictions imposed by the school and explain to their children why the restrictions are necessary.

One major obstacle to this type of communication is cultural difference. Teachers tend to project their own value system through their teaching. Their interpretation of what benefits children may not match that of families. To avoid conflict in expectations, teachers need to adjust their explanations so that students and parents can see the benefits of schooling through their own cultural lens. If teachers are unsuccessful in this effort, they lose legitimacy: their requirements appear arbitrary, and students feel justified in resisting them. This loss of legitimacy contributes to tensions in diverse urban schools and other educational settings where teachers and students' cultural backgrounds differ. Tensions can be reduced when schools have strong connections to the community and cultivate teachers' cultural awareness.

Value conflicts can also be reduced when parents have an opportunity to choose schools for their children rather than have them assigned by school district officials. Charter, magnet, and private schools tend to attract families who understand the school's priorities and share its expectations of students. Communication problems are reduced, and the effort the school must expend to explain its requirements is decreased accordingly. Successful efforts to cultivate shared values and a strong connection between schools and families can be seen in the experience of Central Park East

elementary and secondary schools during the mid-nineties under the leadership of Deborah Meier (1995; see also Wiseman, 1994 and Bensman, 2000).

#### V. Conclusion: Some reasonable short cuts in Dworkin's algorithm of legitimacy

Dworkin's principle can be thought of as an algorithm which could be used in evaluating the legitimacy of restrictions on children. In each case, we weigh the sacrifice of freedom against the future benefits to the child, and then try to assess whether the child would endorse the restriction, given full information about consequences and full use of reason. Obviously, such calculations far exceed the analytical ability of the teacher who will need to collect a hundred math assignments on Thursday or the parent who sets a Friday night curfew for teenaged children. Are short cuts available that can bring legitimacy within reach of those charged with the care of children?

The preceding discussion suggests some strategies that can simplify calculations:

- (a) Explain restrictions.
- (b) Allow choices when possible.
- (c) Support positive choices.
- (d) Try to align the goals of the restriction with what the child understands is important.

Consistent use of these strategies considerably improves the odds that any particular restriction will be justified and will be seen as such by the child.

Beyond these broad guidelines, it is helpful to recognize that legitimacy may not require an exhaustive case-by-case evaluation of the distinct benefits of every restriction. Children and families don't need a full explanation every time a teacher gives a directive or plans an activity. When students evaluate whether they are being treated fairly, and parents whether children are benefiting from school, a global assessment is likely to be more helpful. Legitimacy functions as a background condition rather than a minute-by-minute series of calculations, like a barometer used by a weather forecaster. When legitimacy conditions are generally met, the mood lightens, students comply willingly, and parents are satisfied. When they're not, tensions rise, students resist, and parents complain. The overall assessment is what makes the difference.

What if a global assessment shows that legitimacy conditions are not met? In this case, schools have failed in their moral responsibility toward children. Teachers are complicit. They have an obligation to work to improve conditions in their classroom and school or move to a different school. If they can't improve conditions and they can't move, they should leave the profession. Parents, too, may be complicit, to the extent that they have the option of moving, choosing a different school, or educating children at home. They are not relieved of responsibility either by the school's shortcomings or by their own ignorance. Willing the children to attend school, they will be the consequences. Their consent to the school's paternalistic control of the child obligates them to know what the consequences are, and to weigh the benefits to the child against the cost of restriction of freedom.

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## Paternalism and the Moral Right to an Education

James E. Roper

Michigan State University

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## INTRODUCTION

At the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education's fall conference, I argued that education is a positive moral right—an ethical claim a right holder has on the government to be provided an education. [1] There is also a *prima facie* negative moral right adults have not to be treated “paternalistically” (defined below). While this might be viewed as an ethical claim children have on the government (teachers) not to be so treated, regarding it that way seems questionable. After all, we do not generally treat children as adults. Indeed, if we restrict ourselves to young children (elementary school age), it is questionable whether they have even a *prima facie* right not to be treated paternalistically.

One way to approach this issue is to consider the medical treatment of young children. They are generally not afforded even a *prima facie* right not to be treated paternalistically, but there is a complicating factor in the medical case. Parents typically have the right to assent or refuse to assent to proposed medical treatment for their young children. This can be overridden when the state deems it is in the best interests of the child to do so, but that still leaves the sticky question of what constitutes “the best interests of the child.” There is case law on this matter but this paper is not about legal rights; it is concerned with the morality of these issues.

We are faced with an ethical dilemma. On the one hand, a child does appear to have a right to an education—even in cases where the child does not want the education. On the other hand, the child's parents seem to have a *prima facie* right to assent or dissent to the child's receiving an education. This follows from the fact that parents are responsible for rearing their children, and that such responsibility entails that they can act paternalistically in the child's behalf—including assenting or dissenting both to proposed medical treatment and to proposed educational protocols.

In this paper, I will propose and defend a resolution to this dilemma—both preserving the moral right to an education and dealing appropriately with the *prima facie* moral right not to be treated paternalistically, which, in the case of young children, I interpret as parents' *prima facie* right to assent.

## MORAL RIGHTS

Consequentialist (goal based) ethical theories take the results or consequences of our actions to be what is primarily important in evaluating whether or not those actions are morally correct. Rights and duties are derivative in such systems. This means that rights, for instance, are morally justified only if they lead to morally desirable goals. Deontological ethical theories, on the other hand, stress the importance of rights (or duties) in evaluating actions. Such theories take the consequences of actions to be of secondary importance to whether or not rights have been respected. Even if respecting such rights might lead to seriously bad consequences, deontologists insist that these rights (or duties) be honored.

A right is a person's entitlement to something. The basis of the entitlement may be legal or moral, deriving (for example) from some ethical standard or rule. Our focus here is on moral rights, which are sometimes called "human rights," indicating that they are rights we have simply because we are human beings. Rights protect our abilities to choose freely whether to pursue particular interests or activities. In one sense, our moral rights, taken together, constitute a protective shell which allows us to pursue our version of the good life without the interference of others, even though the majority of members of our society may not like our doing so. [2] Rights accomplish this because they impose prohibitions and requirements on others. Philosophers represent this fact by saying, "Rights imply duties." This means that, if you have a right, someone—possibly a whole society—has a correlative duty to honor that right.

While most of the rights we are familiar with are "negative" rights which prohibit others from interfering with us—for example, with the expression of our views—there are also positive rights, which require others (perhaps a whole society) to provide us with something deemed necessary for the pursuit of our interests. Education is often considered a positive right. Recently, many have suggested we should consider a "decent minimum" of health care a positive right.

The eminent German philosopher Immanuel Kant's profoundly influential ethical theory takes rights to be primary. Kant's is a "rights based," as opposed to a "goal (or consequence) based," theory. This means that Kant would not allow the violation of rights to achieve a greater good. Kant's fundamental principle, the Categorical Imperative, says that each individual is to be treated always as an end in him/herself, never as a mere means. The italicized portion shows Kant's disdain for sacrificing someone's rights for the greater social good (using them as a mere means to the greater good). [3] What protects an individual, of course, is the system of moral rights which (metaphorically speaking) surrounds and protects his or her ability to pursue his or her idea of the good life (as long as it does not violate the rights of others).



## RIGHTS AND AUTONOMY

The term 'liberal' is used here to signify a form of democratic society closely linked with a class of individual human rights which protect, especially, the ability of each individual to pursue his or her idea of a good life. The U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights includes many of these rights. Constitutional rights are mostly negative—rights of noninterference—rather than positive—rights to be provided with something deemed necessary for realizing one's interests in pursuing one's notion of the good life. The virtual exclusion of positive rights from classical statements of liberalism is very important because many believe that the rights to such things as food, education, medical care, etc. are more fundamental than the largely political and procedural rights associated with the liberal democracies. Classical liberalism (as opposed to the use that some politicians and media people make of 'liberal') is at the very foundation of this country's founding ideals.

That means this country is, at the very least, ambivalent about positive rights such as the right to an education. In fact, many defenses of mandatory education in the United States focus more on the benefits of such mandated education for society as a whole rather than on the rights of individuals to such instruction. These defenses are not "rights based"; they are utilitarian defenses—arguments rooted in the consequences of a policy of mandatory education rather than in the rights of all to be educated.

Ultimately, rights are grounded in interests—the interests each of us have in pursuing our idea of the good life. The reason consequentialist theories like utilitarianism cannot support such pursuits is that such goal based ethical theories must always focus on the common good at the expense of the interests of individuals—at the expense of the "autonomy" of each individual.

On the other hand, autonomy is at the heart of deontological ethical theories. Such theories focus on both shielding the individual from those who would prevent the pursuit of personal interests and providing the individual with those things he or she needs to live in accordance with his or her vision of the good life. But what is it to act autonomously? I suggest four criteria for such an action.

First, the act must be uncoerced, in a fairly broad sense. Coercion is not limited to what might be called "gun to the head" coercion, which will probably not be directly affected by education; it also includes psychological manipulation. The ability of various manipulative techniques to determine action will usually vary with an individual's understanding of the techniques being employed—in short, with the

person's educational background.

Second, an autonomous action must be intentional. Something that an individual does not intend to do cannot count as his or her action. If I am trying to kill you but inadvertently knock you down just in time to save you from being decapitated in an industrial accident, saving you was not an autonomous action, even though it may have been the result of an act that was autonomous. Ultimately, intentionality is a complex concept, but the idea that autonomous actions must be intentional seems relatively straightforward.

Third, an autonomous action must be based on criteria for rational behavior. On the surface, we judge a person's action rational if it appears to that individual to represent the best way to achieve his or her desired objective. In this case, we might focus on maximizing the fulfillment of the person's interests. Many complexities are masked by this characterization. For example, it is notorious that people make systematic errors in judging what choice is most likely to lead to their objectives. Studies have demonstrated that people typically overvalue their likely losses and undervalue their likely gains. [4] More generally, people appear to be ill-equipped to judge risks and the probabilities associated with them. Studies have shown that people will often change their choices when shown that these choices are less likely than others to lead to their desired outcomes. [5]

Fourth, the desired outcomes themselves raise problems. These outcomes are independent of the "criteria for rational behavior" referred to in the previous (third) point. Those "criteria" tell us how to reach our objectives once those objectives have been determined. What is at issue here is the rationality of the objectives themselves. These "outcomes," or "objectives," are also relevant to whether or not an action is rational, but their determination requires a separate standard for rationality—and, hence, for autonomy. Therefore, our fourth criterion for an autonomous action is that the "outcome" that action seeks to achieve must be based on principles that have been subjected to careful and sustained analysis and critique. Some questions raised by this standard are, 'Should we focus on short-term benefits or longer term ones? Should we just consider outcomes that are narrowly concerned with our own special needs, or should we focus on broader concerns that affect the society in which we live? Should our selection of goals be determined simply by financial calculations, by political/legal realities, by ethical standards, or by some combination of these, and perhaps of other, criteria?'

In the remainder of this paper, I will not be able to resolve these intricate problems; but a clear case for the education case does exist, and that is all we need for

our purposes. I will focus on early (elementary school) age children and the education they typically receive, and this will significantly decrease the complications associated with autonomy, and with education—our next topic. [6]

## EDUCATION AND AUTONOMY

Elementary school curricula must, of necessity, focus on certain basics—especially learning to read, write, and compute. [7] Educators have significant disagreements about the means to achieve these things, but there is broad agreement about the ends that should be achieved. As students advance in the grades, they encounter subjects that are significantly more controversial—history, biology, various social studies, and so on. Our focus on early childhood education allows us to avoid these difficulties.

Derek Bok, a former president of Harvard University, once said that “civic education” is the most important thing every college students should achieve. [8] I strongly agree with this; and, as a college instructor, I teach courses which include civic education as either a primary or a secondary focus. There is, of course, another thing we expect students to accomplish through their education: we expect them to become competent enough in some area or areas to be able to work productively and support themselves and their families. The great majority of jobs require basic reading, writing, and computing, and rudimentary critical thinking—central foci of typical elementary school curricula. It follows that, by narrowing this topic to cover just elementary school children, we are also in a position to focus on the “job competency” aspects of education—and that is what we do in this paper. [9]

If a young, elementary-age child is deprived of the ability to learn reading, writing, computing, and basic critical thinking, it will severely limit the job prospects of the adult that child will likely become. In this sense, denying that young child such an education will limit his or her autonomy as an adult—the child’s future autonomy. To justify this claim, we will examine the four standards for an autonomous action discussed above.

First, such actions must be uncoerced. If coercion is limited to what I called “gun to the head” cases—actual physical coercion—it is difficult to see how being well educated will help an individual deal with such overt physical force. If we recall my earlier remarks that coercion is not so limited, however, the case is easier to make. Recall that I said:

[Coercion] also includes psychological manipulation. The ability of various

manipulative techniques to determine action will vary with an individual's understanding of the techniques being employed—in short, with the person's educational background.

One of the reasons advertising directed toward children is such an inflammatory topic is that businesses know how vulnerable children are to suggestion—how ill-equipped they are to dissect the messages of the advertisers. Indeed, it is often pointed out that young children usually do not understand the difference between objectively presented facts and the “spin” of an advertisement. The enormous importance of “critical thinking” in educational curricula is often tied to its vital role in enabling a person to separate fact from fancy. Obviously, someone who is unable to read or write or do basic computations will be ill equipped to understand advertising “messages.” However we ultimately construe coercion (in the broad sense) and autonomy, as long as we do not depart drastically from what is commonly understood about these notions, the idea that what we normally think of as elementary school education enhances future autonomy seems well warranted.

Second, we recall that an autonomous action must be intentional. Young children are certainly capable of acting intentionally, but what they intend often does not meet the other criteria for an action's being autonomous. Arguably, then, young children often act in ways that are not fully autonomous. The purpose of early education is to enhance the ability of the adult a child will likely become to intentionally act in ways that satisfy the other three criteria and, hence, qualify as fully autonomous.

Moving to the third criterion for an action's being autonomous, we find that it, too, supports the importance of education. Recall that we said above: [W]e judge a person's action rational if it appears to that individual to represent the best way to achieve his or her desired objective—in this case, we might focus on maximizing the fulfillment of the person's interests.

We added, though, that there are complexities—especially those associated with the probability that our actions will lead to our intended results. Education does help people become better at making such assessments—even though most are not completely proficient at it. Studies in very basic mathematics, including statistical concepts, as well as instruction in reading and writing, are clearly helpful in enabling someone to determine whether choosing a particular course of action is more or less likely to lead to the intended result.

Finally, the fourth standard for an autonomous action focuses on the desired

outcomes of our actions. Here the complex issues of long term versus short term outcomes, legal versus moral results, and so on rear their heads. There is no easy way to resolve these issues, but someone who is competent to calculate and read is surely better able to understand the implications of his or her actions in the complex cases that arise in today's society. This is the first step to properly evaluating the outcomes of one's actions. An uneducated person may well acquit him or herself well in making very simple assessments, but when matters are more complicated, someone who lacks even basic reading and computing skills is surely at a disadvantage.

I conclude, then, that at the theoretical level, the child's future autonomy will definitely be enhanced by receiving at least the basics of early education. Adults with at least the basics of elementary education—reading, writing, computing, and basic critical thinking—are definitely better served in the quest for gainful employment. Those without even these basic skills will be severely limited in their range of potential employment—thus limiting their autonomy.

#### CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION VS PARENT'S RIGHT TO ASSENT

My focus in this paper is on young (elementary school age) children. For this demographic, though arguably not for older children, the issue of their prima facie right not to be treated paternalistically morphs into their parents' right of assent because we do not generally afford young children the right not to be treated paternalistically. Indeed, the very term 'paternalism' derives from the fact that young children are regarded as charges of their parents, who may make decisions for them—even when the children do not agree with these decisions. With this in view, my general answer to the dilemma posed in this paper is that there is a moral imperative to preserve children's long term potential for autonomous action—that is, their potential for autonomous action as adults, and that this mandate overrides parents' "right of assent" where it can be demonstrated that honoring that right would probably restrict the child's future autonomy.

In cases of medical treatment, the state often treats children paternalistically—even when their parents oppose treatment (perhaps for religious reasons). In such cases, the ethical issue of paternalism toward children is usually transformed into a concern about whether a child's parents have a right to refuse medical treatment that fits the medically accepted standard of care for the child's condition. This is especially important where the result of not following the usual medical procedures will likely result in death or serious long-term disability for the child.

There are similar concerns regarding education. Do parents have a moral right

to refuse to allow the state (through its teachers) to educate their young, elementary school age child in reading, writing, computing, and rudimentary critical thinking, even though it can be demonstrated that depriving the child of this opportunity will likely damage his or her prospects for future employment? If parents do have such a moral right, what happens to the moral right of the children to an education?

One standard answer to the issue of whether parents have a moral right of assent to the medical treatment of young children focuses on the critical importance of preserving the autonomy of the adult that the child will likely become. This obligation recognizes the right of parents to assent to treatment where such agreement does not jeopardize the child's future choices. It is a central thesis of this paper that this medical standard for dealing with treatment issues with which parents may disagree is a useful analogue for the case that confronts us here: the education of young children in cases where their parents are loath to assent to that education. If it can be demonstrated that the proposed education of the child is likely to preserve the child's prospects for autonomous action in the future, the state has a moral mandate to require that education.

How is such a case to be made, especially in light of the many complexities associated with the notion of autonomy mentioned above? I have focused on young, elementary-school-age children in part because I believe the issues associated with the impact of elementary school education in reading, writing, computing, and rudimentary critical thinking are far less complex than those that arise for older children and the more elaborate curricular choices they face. As I demonstrated in the previous section, a strong case can be made that teaching children the basics of the elementary school curriculum does seem likely to provide some measure of protection of the future autonomy of the adults that young children become—particularly in regard to their prospects for the gainful employment that is usually a requirement for autonomous action as an adult.

## CONCLUSION

Autonomy is a complex and difficult concept, as I argued earlier; nevertheless, I think there are clear cases where the complexities can be discounted. One of these is the dilemma this paper addresses: how can we resolve the apparent conflict between a child's right to an education (argued for in my fall 2008 SPSE paper, using Rawls' theory of justice) and that child's parents' *prima facie* right of assent to what is taught to their child? The answer presented in this paper is that there is a moral imperative to preserve the long term possibility of a child's autonomous action—that is, the possibility of his or her autonomous action as an adult; moreover, this mandate



overrides the child's parents' right of assent where it can be demonstrated that honoring that right would restrict the child's future autonomy. If we restrict ourselves to young children of elementary school age, the issue of paternalism is fairly clear: we do, indeed, recognize that paternalism directed toward such young children is morally legitimate. This is, in fact, the paradigm case of paternalism. In addition, the things taught in the basic elementary school curriculum are widely regarded as critical to the future ability of the child to earn a living—a central aspect of his or her future autonomy. Our results are somewhat limited but I believe this paper provides us with a focus for extending our study to older children in K-12—and even to college and university systems.

## Endnotes

[1] James Roper, "Do American Children Have a Moral Right to an Education: A Rawlsian Perspective?" Presented on November 8 for the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education 2008 Fall Conference at National Louis University, Chicago.

[2] Note that when moral rights conflict, one or both may be at least somewhat compromised. Deontologists insist, though, that rights may not be compromised for consequentialist reasons.

[3] Kant's ethical theory, like the rest of his philosophy, is very complex. I am just focusing on one aspect of it.

[4] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," *Science, New Series*, Vol. 211, No. 4481 (Jan. 30, 1981), pp. 453-458.

[5] Savage, Leonard J. *The Foundations of Statistics*, Revised Edition. Dover Publications, 1972.

[6] I am assuming that my focus on young children and the typical elementary school curriculum allows me to ignore these complications without distorting my results.

[7] Many argue that the emphasis on teaching elementary school students arithmetic is wrong headed—that they should be taught mathematics—as is the case in many other advanced countries. This dispute is not directly relevant to our concerns here, however, and we will ignore it in this paper. The issue of computer literacy is a relatively new concern and will not be a factor here, even though there is evidence that such literacy is essential to finding gainful employment, as well as civic competency.

[8] Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press:

2006.

[9] It is important to note that I am not ignoring the critical importance of “civic education,” even in elementary school; rather, I am choosing to focus on job competency since it is a more transparent, and less controversial, issue.

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CONTACT INFORMATION: PROF. JAMES E. ROPER

Home Address: I will receive mail at this address more quickly and securely than at my philosophy department address.

James E. Roper  
2705 Sorority Lane  
Holt, Michigan 48842

Phones: 517-699-5141 (Home: Leave messages here.) 517-927-2408 (Cell)

E-mail: [roper@msu.edu](mailto:roper@msu.edu) (also [thesophist@comcast.net](mailto:thesophist@comcast.net); but I prefer my MSU e-mail address.)

University Address: As noted, I prefer to receive mail at my home address.

Prof. James E. Roper  
Philosophy Department  
503 South Kedzie Hall  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824

Office Phone: 517-355-4490 (Philosophy Office)

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: JAMES E. ROPER

After his graduate work at Princeton University, Prof. Roper joined the Philosophy Department at Michigan State University. In October 2009, Kendall Hunt published his book *Dimensions of Informal Logic*. Prof. Roper teaches business ethics, a course he designed and placed in the curriculum. He also teaches courses in philosophy of science, logic, medical ethics, and social and political philosophy. Prof. Roper founded and, until July, 2000, directed Michigan State University's National Champion Debate Team and the annual Spartan (summer high school) Debate Institutes. In the spring of 2005, the Cross Examination Debate Association honored the MSU Debate Team as the most successful CEDA debate program over the last fifteen years. Prof. Roper directed and coached the Team for the first ten of those years. He has published in *Philosophy of Science*, *Synthese*, *The Journal of Business Ethics*, *The American Philosophical Association Teaching Philosophy Newsletter*, *Florida Philosophical Review*, *Essays in Philosophy*, *The International Journal of Ethics*, and *Organizational Ethics: Healthcare, Business, and Policy*; and has had book chapters appear in *Trends in Contemporary Ethical Issues* (Aidan E. Wurtzel, Ed.), *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations*, Vols. 5 and 6 (Moses L. Pava and Patrick Primeaux, Eds.), *In the Socratic Tradition* (Tziporah Kasachkoff, Ed.), *Proceedings of The Midwest Society for Philosophy of Education Society, 2001-2003* (Alexander Makedon, Managing Ed.) and 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 (Jason Helfer, Ed.), *Cross Examination Debate Association 1991: 20th Anniversary Conference Proceedings* (D. Thomas & S. Woods, Eds.), and the *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society* (Editor: Robert W. Kolb), which received both the RUSA and Choice Awards. He edited a volume of *Essays in Philosophy* on business ethics, published in June 2005. Prof. Roper has developed, and published accounts of, an approach to teaching business ethics based on student classroom debates. In addition to developing a website to help others utilize this "debate" teaching method, he is writing a book entitled *The Covenant of Democracy* and working on several articles for an encyclopedia on global justice to be published by Springer.

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### Discovering the Child's Mind:

#### Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Contribution to Education

Guillemette Johnston

DePaul University-Chicago

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Early in his *Confessions* [1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau recounts an incident from his childhood that was to remain with him for the rest of his life. Reading it, one can

see why Rousseau is credited with being one of the first philosophers to understand the world of children. When Rousseau writes about being wrongly accused of breaking a comb, he confronts his audience with a cunning strategy that leads readers to overlook the remarkable literary craft he employs. In recreating this crucial incident, Rousseau takes the reader into the very intricate labyrinth that separates the adult's mind from the mind of the child.

Though Rousseau's *Confessions* is autobiographical, and so by logic limits its perspective to that of its first-person narrator, Rousseau's recounting of the incident juxtaposes not only his childhood memories with the intellectual perspective he brings in as an adult—the perspective one would expect—but also his memory of how the experience felt for the child with how it feels for the adult, thereby adding complex dimensions to the reader's perception of the event. We read about Rousseau the child and Rousseau the adult writer remembering the child, but we also read about how a situation can be interpreted differently by an adult and by a child. The account is strategically presented, in that instead of giving it synoptically, Rousseau recreates the drama through the voice of a detached narrator, his adult "I" looking back. Thus, though he reports the incident as if it were a straightforward retelling of facts, he also makes us see it through the lens of an adult who wants to reason sensibly and reach a logical conclusion, without malice. Here is how Rousseau starts his account of the incident:

One day I was studying my lesson alone in the room next to the kitchen. The maid had put Mlle Lambercier's combs in the chimney niche to dry. When she came back to get them, one was found in which a whole row of teeth was broken. Who was to blame for this damage? No one but myself had entered the room. I was interrogated; I denied that I had touched the comb. M. and Mlle Lambercier combined: exhorted me, pressed me, threatened me: I stubbornly persisted; but the proof was too strong, outweighed all my protestations, even though this was the first time I was found to have much audacity in lying....

They could not extract the admission they demanded from me. Reprimanded several times, and reduced to the most frightful condition, I was unshakable. I would have suffered death and I was resolved to do so. Even force had to give way before the diabolical willfulness of a child; for they did not call my constancy anything else. Finally I emerged from this cruel test in pieces, but triumphant....  
(*Confessions* 16)

In the description Rousseau gives us of this inquisition, nowhere does he indicate whether he is guilty or not. Instead, events seem to be reported objectively, and everything seems to lead us to believe that he is guilty, since the presentation of the

circumstances prompts us to draw this logical conclusion. Rousseau was alone with the combs in the room. Who else could have done it? Thus carried by the rhetoric, the reader becomes inclined, like the adults in the scene, to condemn Rousseau, and to think of him as diabolical in his denial of his guilt. But of course, the reader soon discovers the manipulation that has led him to fall into the same trap as Rousseau's guardians did, for Rousseau asserts in the following paragraph, "It has now been more than fifty years since this adventure, and today I have no fear of being punished a second time for the same deed.... I state before heaven that I was innocent" (16).

Thanks to this very cunning and strategically written anecdote, the thoughtful reader is led to ponder the discrepancies between the ways that adults and children communicate, and even more between the ways they perceive and interpret the world and the situations they get involved in. Rousseau's next reflective passage underlines this gap that exists between childhood and adulthood, as he is prompting us to use our imagination to attempt to understand what it means to be a child at the mercy of adults:

Imagine a character that is timid and docile in ordinary life, but ardent, proud, indomitable when in a passion: a child always governed by the voice of reason, always treated with gentleness, equity, kindness: who did not even have the idea of injustice, and who suffers such a terrible one for the first time from precisely the people he loves and respects the most. What a reversal of ideas! What a disorder of feelings! What an upheaval in his heart, in his brain, in all his little intellectual and moral being! I say imagine all that if it is possible to do so: because as for me, I do not feel myself capable of unraveling, of following, the smallest trace of what happened in me at that time. (17)

If the famous Rousseau critic Jean Starobinski interpreted this passage as presenting the loss of paradise for the child, "for paradise was a reciprocal transparency between consciousnesses, as well as a total and trusting communication," [2] we can also definitely see articulated in this passage the preoccupations of empirical psychology in the age of Enlightenment, in that Rousseau raises the question not only of how one uses one's faculties, but also of what the roles of imagination and memory are, and above all what role memory plays in the child. In his article "When I Imagine a Child" Larry Wolff justifiably writes about the philosophical values of the Enlightenment and the impact they had on the conception of childhood's significance:

[T]he empirical psychology pioneered by John Locke, and developed by David Hume and the abbé de Condillac in the eighteenth century, produced a radical reevaluation of memory, in its relation to perception and experience. On the



other hand, the revolutionary modern art of autobiography, as inaugurated in Rousseau's *Confessions*, authorized an altogether new deployment of the art of memory in the service of literary self-fashioning. Taken together, the evolving perspectives of the Enlightenment on memory and on memoirs also exercised a profound effect on the cultural conception of childhood. That effect was summed up in Rousseau's conviction that the child was always the object, never the subject, of memory, that children could not consciously remember anything of consequence, and yet childhood itself was recognized essentially in remembrance. [3]

Looking closely at the account in *The Confessions* one can see the author of *Emile* [4] at work in Rousseau's autobiography. Indeed, Rousseau speaks of the child that he was at the time of the incident with the combs as having no idea what injustice meant, yet as having felt the upheaval that that incident was to create in his heart, his brain, his intellect, and his moral being, not to speak of the disorder of feelings that the situation would generate. The child that Rousseau was was not affected by reason, but by the more primordial "voice of reason." Rousseau adds as an explanation of this baffling experience, "I did not yet have enough reason to feel how much appearances condemned me, and to put myself in the place of the others. I kept to my own place" (17).

Rousseau's own place, at the time, was the egocentric world of the child who mostly lives life in the moment, in the concrete, through the senses in relation to circumstances. In this very short passage, one can see as a subtext the delineation of Rousseau's philosophy regarding the proper way to educate a child. Far from characterizing himself as a fully developed human being at the time of the incident, Rousseau portrays himself as being at an early stage of childhood development, dealing not with abstractions but with a concrete world, and thus as a child who instinctively rather than intellectually understands the notions of justice and integrity.

But keep in mind how Rousseau describes himself early in his *Confessions*: "I felt before thinking; this is the common fate of humanity. I experienced it more than others. I am not aware of what I did up to the age of five or six: I do not know how I learned to read; I remember only my first readings and their effect on me. This is the time from which I date the uninterrupted consciousness of myself" (7). Despite the fact that he was remarkably gifted in his reading abilities, Rousseau makes it clear that, as a child, for him sensing was the predominant means of understanding the world, factual memory was irrelevant, and impressions generated from such causes as the effects of reading played an important part in his becoming conscious, though what constitutes the earlier core is more the result of operations from the level of the body than from the level of the mind. The "uninterrupted consciousness of myself" of which

Rousseau speaks could be more the beginning of the teasings of the mind, the compilation of those moments of elucidation that perhaps bear similarity to what William Wordsworth would have called the “spots of time” that help one construct personhood. [5] Rousseau’s vision of himself at an early age emphasizes how children, including himself despite his precociousness, do not juggle with ideas, but remain in the domain of impressions, feelings, emotions and sensations: “I had no idea whatsoever about matters whose feelings were known to me already. I had conceived nothing; I had felt everything. These confused emotions which I experienced one after the other did not at all impair my reason which I did not have...” (8).

Rousseau is definitely far from considering the child’s mind close to the mind of an adult. One of the most crucial aspects of Rousseau’s insight into the child’s mind—one that would profoundly affect his vision of how to teach a child and that therefore lies at the core of his philosophy of education—concerns his realization that even if children can reason, their way of reasoning stems more from instinct and its application in light of context rather than from the processing of series of definite ideas in logical order. In other words, it is essential according to Rousseau not to reason with a child, since using abstractions would most likely confuse the child. This consideration regarding the non-utility of abstractions is central to Rousseau’s controversial views on the role of reading. Regarding his own case, Rousseau speaks of not having had his reason impaired by early readings, but as we know, Emile does not read any book until he reaches adolescence, except Robinson Crusoe if absolutely necessary. Thus Rousseau states in *Emile*,

To reason with children was Locke’s great maxim.... I see nothing more stupid than these children who have been reasoned with so much. Of all the faculties of man, reason, which is, so to speak, only a composite of all the others, is the one that develops with the most difficulty and latest. And it is this one which they want to use in order to develop the first faculties! The masterpiece of a good education is to make a reasonable man, and they claim they raise a child by reason! This is to begin with the end, to want to make the product the instrument. (*Emile* 89)

One could wonder about the intensity of Rousseau’s convictions regarding reasoning with children, given that apparently self-introspection alone led him to reach such conclusions. Yet Rousseau’s experience was not limited only to his self-insight, since in Book VI of *The Confessions*, he gives a humorous account of his experience as a tutor, and of the frustrations he encountered while he was in charge of educating M. de Mably’s children: “when my students did not understand me I raved, and when they showed mischievousness I would have killed them: this was not the way to make them learned and well behaved” (*Confessions* 223). Rousseau describes dealing with two

children in the Mably family, one around the age of eight who was called Ste. Marie, and the other, younger, called Condillac:

With them [Rousseau tells us] I knew how to use only three instruments that are always useless and often pernicious with children, feeling, reasoning, anger.... Sometimes I wore myself out speaking reason to [Ste. Marie] as if he could understand me, and since he sometimes made me very subtle arguments, I took him as entirely reasonable, because he was a reasoner. Little Condillac was even more vexing; because—understanding nothing, answering nothing, moved by nothing, and of an unwearied obstinacy—he never triumphed over me better than when he had put me in a rage: then it was he who was the wise man and it was I who was the child. I saw all my faults, I felt them; I studied the mind of my students, I entered into them very well, and I do not believe that I was ever the dupe of their ruses a single time: but what good did it do to see the evil, without knowing how to apply the remedy? While seeing through everything, I prevented nothing, I succeeded in nothing, and all I did was precisely what it was necessary not to do. (*Confessions* 224)

From first-hand experience Rousseau recalls the paradoxical exchanges that took place between him and his students, how he got trapped into believing that one at least could reason because he could somehow make subtle arguments and appear reasonable—“because he was a reasoner.” For Rousseau, it became obvious after the fact that the ability a child could have to repeat a series of steps in the process of thinking did not mean he or she had the maturity to assimilate the implications of statements, thereby proving that he or she was reasonable and not simply capable of appearing to reason, or in Rousseau’s words of being a reasoner. Thus Rousseau concluded that many levels of development manifest within the actual process of understanding that occurs in the child. A crucial one, which involves learning the use of reason, has to involve not only the mind as a recording and regurgitating apparatus, but also other integrating functions.

When in *The Confessions* Rousseau talks about “the voice of reason” in his account of the broken comb, one must understand that he is referring to the dictates of instinct in light of the environment operating at the survival level. Rousseau does not exclude completely the presence of reasoning in a child; rather, he indicates that we must shift the means by which we develop this faculty, which resides originally in the functions of the body. Says Rousseau in *Emile*, “Since everything which enters into the human understanding comes there through the senses, man’s first reason is a reason of the senses [la raison sensitive]; this sensual reason serves as the basis of intellectual reason. Our first masters of philosophy are our feet, our hands, our eyes. To substitute books for all that is not to teach us to reason. It is to teach us to use the

reason of others. It is to teach us to believe much and never to know anything” (125).

If trying to determine how to teach children to reason made Rousseau a revolutionary educator of the child, his highlighting of how children remember also contributed to making adults understand that children do not have the same sense of identity as do adults, nor could they use memory in the same fashion as adults do. Rousseau’s recollections of his early readings as more resembling spots of time linked to early impressions and sensations, or his memories of those traumatic encounters with adults whose reactions he could not unravel, follow, or even explain, stem directly from his insights into the child’s consciousness that come from his own experience, and help us to understand that he as a child did not have the capacity to “conceive anything.” Thus Rousseau’s accounts of how children’s intellectual faculties operate marked an important cornerstone in pedagogy. In Book II of *Emile*, while reminding us to respect childhood, Rousseau explains to us that the two essential faculties of memory and reason, although different, cannot develop without each other:

Although memory and reasoning are two essentially different faculties, nevertheless the one develops truly only with the other. Before the age of reason the child receives not ideas but images; and the difference between the two is that images are only absolute depictions of sensible objects, while ideas are notions of objects determined by relations. An image can stand all alone in the mind which represents it, but every idea supposes other ideas. When one imagines, one does nothing but see, when one conceives, one is comparing. Our sensations are purely passive, while all our perceptions or ideas are born out of an active principle which judges.... Therefore I say that children, not being capable of judgment, do not have true memory. They retain sounds, figures, sensations, ideas rarely, the connections between ideas more rarely.... (*Emile* 107)

Rousseau’s account of how he faced his first injustice demonstrates the difficulty he had in putting two and two together as a child. To understand that there was actually a logical reason why the adults judged him so unfairly, he would have had to be able to put himself not only in the place of the adults, but also to analyze the situation as a whole, and from his deductions draw a conclusion that the adults that took care of him were honestly mistaken, and were not practicing an act of gratuitous cruelty or injustice. Rousseau the adult and the writer could certainly connect the dots that Rousseau as the child before the age of reason who was incapable of “conceiving” a thought from a series of definite premises could not.

Perhaps even more remarkably, the scene of the broken comb illustrates another pertinent aspect: the child’s capacity to respond to situations from a moral point of

view, thus illustrating the need to control the child's exposure to corrupting influences. The child that Rousseau describes himself as being, although amoral, is not im-moral, and already displays in essence the seed of moral understanding. Because Rousseau believed that children do not respond to reasoning but to what they instinctively experience, he concluded that children should never be given lectures on proper behavior. In the incident of the broken comb, Rousseau the child is presented as having an all but overpowering sense of justice: "what an upheaval in his heart, in his brain, in all his little intellectual and moral being!" Rousseau does not worry that at core children are driven by a source of evil passions that needs to be tamed. On the contrary, he believes that nature must follow its path while each faculty takes its course in developing. Hence, instead of filling the mind of the child with principles that cannot be understood, Rousseau proposes to let the child be and not try to teach him virtue by putting ideas of virtue in his mind that may in fact teach him more about vice:

Think through all the rules of your education; you will find them misconceived, especially those that concern virtues and morals. The only lesson of morality appropriate to childhood, and the most important for every age, is never to harm anyone. The very precept of doing good, if it is not subordinated to this one, is dangerous, false, and contradictory. Who does not do good? Everybody does it—the wicked man as well as others. He makes one man happy at the expense of making a hundred men miserable; and this is the source of all our calamities. The most sublime virtues are negative. (*Emile* 104-105)

It may be useful here to mention that with the realization that children were not actually young adults, there came at end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century the first deliberate attempts in Europe at civilizing and socializing children through children's literature, as for instance through fairy tales. Indeed, as this new form of literature aimed at grooming children to fit in to society, many story writers, such as Perrault for instance, interwove moral codes of conduct within the plots of traditional folk tales in order to control or repress children's natural drives. [6] Conversely to the common trend of his time, then, Rousseau suggested that the child be socialized by respecting the workings of nature as well as by respecting the child's inner nature. Rousseau's process of socialization looks at the problem not in light of the result, but more in light of an ongoing process which, should it be respected, would ensure the integrity of the child's nature as well as that of human nature at large.

Thus, according to Rousseau, it is useless to train children to fit into society before they are even mature. The best way of preparing them for the world of adulthood is to allow them to develop without burdening their minds and souls with

misconceptions and prejudices in an attempt to open them up to reason and wisdom. Rousseau calls this type of education negative education:

If children jumped all at once from the breast to the age of reason, the education they are given might be suitable for them. But, according to the natural progress, they need an entirely contrary one. They ought to do nothing with their soul until all of its faculties have developed, because while the soul is yet blind, it cannot perceive the torch you are presenting to it or follow the path reason maps out across the vast plain of ideas, a path which is so faint even to the best of eyes. Thus, the first education ought to be purely negative. It consists not at all in teaching virtue or truth, but in securing the heart from vice and the mind from error. If you could do nothing and let nothing be done ... at your first lessons the eyes of his understanding would open up to reason. Without prejudice, without habit, he would have nothing in him which could hinder the effect of your care.... By doing nothing, you would have worked an educational marvel. (*Emile* 93-94)

As a man of his time, Rousseau questioned the use of faculties and reflected on childhood. His originality stems more from the fact that unlike the empiricist philosophers, who while addressing childhood would analyze the workings of the mind from an adult point of view—or from a static point of view, as was the case for the statue that suddenly comes to its senses in Condillac’s writings—Rousseau entered the universe of the child by penetrating it in light of the child’s inner and outer relations. Rousseau’s intuitive quest enabled him to unlock the hidden world of childhood through his introspection of his own childhood and through his observations on childhood at large.

We may wonder now how Rousseau’s legacy pertains to education as a whole, and above all ask whether his legacy has even been understood. Certainly we do owe a debt to him in terms of his isolating of children’s psychological stages of development, as well as in light of the shifting of priorities in early education from a concentration on abstractions distilled from book knowledge to a practical world of concrete experiences that foster understanding. But what about the use of negative education translated in terms of not sanctioning the child who has not yet reached the age of reason and cannot therefore deal with abstract moral principles?

Not to betray the spirit of Rousseau’s philosophy, it may be wise to remember that Rousseau’s vision of a child’s education in *Emile* was not meant to serve as a formula, but was to be understood in a context that allowed the grounding and the integrity of the individual. Thus negative education and the “system” developed by Rousseau should not be understood as an idealized type of education by non-education, with no reading, no sanctions, and total anarchy, as some have thought;



nor should it be seen as involving complete control, an authoritarian manipulation by an overarching master, as others have suggested. Either approach generates a formulaic statement regarding Rousseau's decidedly artistic presentation of education, and by invoking a formula, each opens up the possibility of introducing the misconceptions and prejudices Rousseau fought against. More than giving us a literal itinerary, a recipe for education, Rousseau meant to make us reflect about human nature and what it could be like when, having progressed harmoniously through its phases of development, it managed to reach a state of natural balance.

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## Endnotes

[1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Confessions." *The Confessions and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes*, trans. C. Kelly, ed. C. Kelly, R. D. Masters, and P. J. Stillman. *Collected Writings of Rousseau* 5 (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College/University Press of New England, 1995), 1-550. Orig. « Les Confessions », ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond. *Les Confessions. Autres textes autobiographiques*, ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond. *Œuvres complètes de Rousseau I* (Paris, NRF/Gallimard, 1959), 1-656.

[2] Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris, Gallimard, 1971), 19. « ... car le paradis, c'était la transparence réciproque des consciences, la communication totale et confiante... ». My translation.

[3] Larry Wolff, "When I Imagine a Child: The Idea of Childhood and the Philosophy of Memory in the Enlightenment," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.4 (Summer 1998), 378-379.

[4] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or, On Education*, tr. Allan Bloom ([n.p.]: Basic Books, 1979).

[5] "There are in our existence spots of time / Which with distinct preeminence retain / A fructifying virtue, whence, depressed / By trivial occupations and the round / Of ordinary intercourse, our minds— / Especially the imaginative power— / Are nourished...." William Wordsworth, "The Prelude [1799 version]," *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: Norton, 1979), 8.

[6] This perspective on the role of the fairy tale in socialization is explored by Jack Zipes in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6-11 and 29-57.

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## **The Marxist Contribution to the Philosophy of Education**

Allan Johnston

Columbia College-Chicago and DePaul University-Chicago

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In her study of the various theories of aesthetics that Marxist thought has produced, Pauline Johnson describes the “problematic of Marxist theories of aesthetics” as follows:

The form of the aesthetic problem is, in the first place, characterized by the constitution of a particular relationship between the truth of the art work and the falsity of everyday thinking. The process of enlightenment cannot be explained merely in terms of a cognitive distinction between art and everyday life. The work of art presents not merely an alternative standpoint but specifically acts to effect a change in the recipient’s consciousness. It seems that, in order to account for the emancipatory impact of the art work, an aesthetic theory is required to establish the basis upon which the recipient is able to recognize that the art work provides a better and a more convincing representation of reality than the perspective he/she has acquired from daily life. In so far as Marxist theories of aesthetics attempt to explain the emancipatory impact of the work of art upon the recipient, they need to specify the practical basis within immediate experience for a changed consciousness.... (1-2)

If one substitutes the words “educative” or even “pedagogical” for “aesthetic” within this passage, one might achieve a fairly accurate description of the educational problematic underlying Marxist thought, or at least the problematic underlying the confrontation with the forming or already formed consciousness. This problematic, “characterized by the constitution of a particular relationship between the truth ... and the falsity of everyday thinking,” would seek to “effect a change in the recipient’s consciousness” through the “emancipatory impact” of an pedagogical practice that “provides a better and a more convincing representation of reality than the perspective”

that the student “has acquired in everyday life.” Put another way, through confronting the dominant ideological constructs of a given society, a Marxist education would seek to illuminate the contradictions, misrepresentations, or hidden agendas at work in it in order to direct consciousness toward a fuller and freer understanding of the forces at work in that society.

Louis Althusser defines ideology as “a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (qtd. in Selden 40). This definition shows one of the major contributions of Marxist thought to the philosophy of education, as well as one of the difficulties confronting a Marxist pedagogical practice and educational philosophy. Ideology, as a concept, derives from the French Enlightenment. According to Jorge Larrain the word first appears in the works of Destutt de Tracy, who wished to systematize a science of ideas and establish their origin in sensations, on the impetus of the theories of Locke and especially of Condillac. According to Larrain, de Tracy thought of ideology “a part of zoology” and linked thinking to feeling, viewed memory as “a particular kind of sensation which re-enacts a past sensation,” and defined judgment as “a kind of sensation in so far as it is the faculty of feeling the relationship between perceptions” (Larrain 27). De Stutt’s positive or perhaps neutral spin on ideological constructs shifted, however, as the concept of “ideology” became associated with the prejudices and misperceptions perpetuated by the dominant society, or in other words by those beliefs and convictions that so much of the French Enlightenment sought to oppose. From there Napoleon became “the first to use the term ideology in a negative sense,” after the ideologues, with whom he largely sided, rejected his “despotic excesses” (Larrain 28).

Marx’s contribution to the understanding of ideology involves his linkage of ideological constructs to the historical subject, or in other words his view that individual perceptions and so the individual’s “representation of [an] imaginary relationship ... to ... real conditions of existence” are reflections of historically determined conditions. The subject (who in the modern world is identifiable as a “bourgeois” ego consciousness that in some Marxist perspectives is itself an ideological construct) comes to see the world in terms of his or her position in a hegemonic social order that determines the ideological construct. Depending on the intelligence, intuitiveness, experience, and education of the individual, this constructed aspect of this perspective generally is unconscious or at least unquestioned. It represents the “natural order of things” or just “the way things are.” To the extent that it is seen in this way it can be considered to be “successful” from the dominant societal position (which itself may be so overdetermined by the hegemonic structures of society as to not be called into question or even consciously considered as a construct). The existent social order by necessity strives to preserve itself by resisting all forces of change from

inside or outside the system, and it does so by the mechanisms of “false consciousness, of class bias and ideological programming” that Marx illuminated, making him, in Frederick Jameson’s words, “one of the great negative diagnosticians of contemporary culture and social life” (281).

As *The Communist Manifesto* makes clear, the Marxist enterprise is not only analytical, but also utopian; it holds as its intention alteration and improvement of the social order. In this enterprise the role of education is key; as Marx wrote, “No great acumen is required to see the necessary connection of materialism with communism and socialism from the doctrine of materialism concerning the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of man, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education...” (Marx 394). In educational terms, then, the Marxist enterprise becomes twofold: 1) critical analysis and exposure of the dominant order, with the aim of altering consciousness so as to expose it to hegemony and ideological contradiction; 2) forming or directing consciousness toward acceptance of a reconceived, better possible social order, with the added recognition of the human power to shape events and society through social reorganization. The first purpose, which we may call after Jameson “negative diagnostics,” is central in bourgeois society in that the hegemonic ideological structures in place directly oppose, or lie in antithetical relation to, the second purpose. Michael Apple emphasizes the first aspect when he points out that “education acts in the economic sector of a society to reproduce important aspects of inequality.... [N]ot only is there economic property, there also seems to be symbolic property—cultural capital—which schools preserve and distribute.... Schools create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination” (3). Citing Raymond Williams, Apple points out how these functions of education support cultural hegemony, which “suppose the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such a depth ... that it corresponds the reality of social experience” (Williams, qtd. in Apple 4-5):

[E]ducational institutions are usually the main agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic as well as cultural activity.... [A]t the true level of theory and at the level of the history of various practices, there is a process which I call the selective tradition: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as ‘the tradition,’ the significant past.... The process of education; the process of a much wider social training within institutions like the family; the practical definitions and organizations of work; the selective tradition at an intellectual and theoretical level: all these forces are involved in a continual making and

remaking of an effective dominant culture.... (Williams, qtd. in Apple 6)

Critical consciousness of the hegemonic function of education permits reconsideration of the extent to which the system perpetrates inequality, unequally distributes cultural capital, favors traditions (vide the culture wars, which have involved the increasingly widespread introduction of multicultural perspectives into education, with the purported and laudable aim of increasing minority representation within the culture, but also with the agenda of perpetuating the dominant social order by hedging it against overthrow by dissatisfied excluded minorities), and perpetrates the status quo. From a pedagogical perspective, we can see how the effort to develop critical consciousness would lead to efforts to change the status quo, to encourage student engagement in efforts to rethink societal options through involvement. We see an example of this approach to pedagogy in the thinking of Paolo Freire. Freire famously characterizes normal pedagogical relationships as fitting into what he calls “the banking theory of education,” where content is deposited into passively receptive students. This approach is contrasted with “critical pedagogy,” in which students actively seek their own relevance through social engagement. A similar model appears in Susan Wells’ application of Frankfurt School analysis (particularly the theories of Jürgen Habermas) to the generally dry field of technical writing. Examining the hypothetical creation of an instruction manual for “computer-assisted redesign of an auto-body section” (Wells 252), Wells posits bringing students (and potentially assembly line personnel) into dialogue with the discourse of instruction by “identifying the instrumental level of this discourse with what is said ... and the strategic level with what is unsaid, with information withheld for purposes of social control” (Wells 259). This analysis would lead students to the “contradiction” that “[w]hat is absent in the text controls what is present” (259), the absent being the statement “I am telling you to do something” (260). Stating this claim openly allows readers to address claims of authority, assumptions of clarity (“I can’t really follow these direction”[260]), and other dialogic possibilities hidden within the text, resulting in the resolution of concerns or expansions into discursive areas involving authority, clarity, appropriateness and other issues. Beneath this approach would lie the goal “not to teach students how to ‘write for success,’ although it would be irresponsible and futile to ignore the problems students face as writers on the job,” but “to work with the structures of technical discourse so that students can negotiate their demands but also be aware of the limited real possibilities of moving beyond them. Even in the highly conventional and restricted boundaries of technical discourse, an impulse for communicative action emerges; we can identify the relations of power that block that desire and offer strategies for subverting that power, for betraying it into communicative action” (Wells 264).



Portrayed in this model and in Freire's critical pedagogy is the Marxian ideal of praxis; practice combined with theoretical awareness of its significance, work fused with a fullness of understanding of the systems and forces that lie behind the work. Such critical consciousness, geared toward meaningful social interaction, gears work toward the revolutionary purpose of social interaction. But if we can see this dialectic structure at work in existent pedagogical acts that try to transform the social order, what do we see in those utopian realizations (or imagined realizations) of the achieved socialist state? Marxist theory moves in many directions, from Trotskyite "permanent revolution" to the "achieved" socialist state of Marxist-Leninist Russia (the now-defunct Soviet Union) and the questionably Maoist world of modern China. If we hold Marxism as both analytical ("negative diagnostics") and utopian (potentially realizable in "the withering away of the state"), we also have to consider education in the achieved socialist society. How would this appear, and what philosophy of education does it express?

This question is important, for the induction of children into the social order, from a Marxist perspective, assumes a pre-critical orientation away from a dominant ideology or hegemony into one geared toward the desired structure of the socialist state. Yet here we face a conundrum. Marx himself was not an educational theorist, and left little to indicate his theories regarding education, although he seems to have favored local as opposed to state control of education, at least insofar as education transcended the basic or "non-ideological" phase of primary work in spelling, reading, and calculating. In philosophical perspectives derived from Marxist thought, however, the state often plays a significant role in controlling education, even if this role is seen as transitory in the global movement toward a more egalitarian society. This is why Althusser saw education as part of the bourgeois state, and felt it was no different from other forms of social control. If in Marxist-Leninism the state is "a structure of coercion" that the revolution inverts upon itself through the dictatorship of the proletariat (Ricoeur 132), for Althusser the state bears both repressive and reproductive systems, with the educative system operating as a means of ideological reproduction in both private and public spheres—a division that Althusser defines as a bourgeois distinction, since "[f]or Marxist theory these two spheres represent aspects of the same function" (Ricoeur 133). Insofar as the socialist state, then, is paradoxically "using the bourgeois structure of the state against its enemies" until "the day these enemies disappear," when "there will no longer be need for the state" (Ricoeur, 132)—a claim attributed to Stalin—education then is effectively used as an anti-ideological but state-run, state-oriented system that presumably directs or "corrects" thinking.

We see this model espoused by Marcuse, at least as his work is described by Alain Martineau. Martineau writes,

Julien Freund was right in remarking that the phrase “educational dictatorship” did not slip into Marcuse’s writing by accident, but appeared in most of his work. Actually, Marcuse claimed that “the answer to Plato’s educational dictatorship is the democratic educational dictatorship of free men.” He put the following question: “Is there any alternative other than the dictatorship of an ‘elite’ over the people?” He subsequently answered it, asserting that “The alternative to the established semi-democratic process is not a dictatorship or elite, no matter how intellectual and intelligent, but the struggle for a real democracy.... Marcuse ... placed himself in the long tradition of revolutionary dictatorship. Instead of dictatorship of the proletariat, he spoke of “educational dictatorship,” but this only differed from the former in terms of its justification.... Marcuse suggested educating “liberation specialists” to implement educational dictatorship. During a 1968 debate on ethics in politics, he replied ... “There is a technique of liberation, a technology of liberation which must be learned. It is our duty to contribute to augmenting the number of these specialists and reinforcing their position.” This “moral obligation” connected with the “idea of a preparatory educational dictatorship.... His principle was to grant freedom of thought to all who agreed with him, and deny it to others on the grounds that they used bad violence, whereas he proposed good violence—violence that would lead to man’s liberation. (Martineau 31-32)

In the war for cultural dominance, indeed in the war to create or reach the utopian state, be it communistic or capitalized, hegemony, dominance, and violence, either direct or encoded, come to the fore. Perhaps the difference is in the bluntness of Marcuse’s—or of Stalin’s—enforcement. Or perhaps it is the unenforceable or unachievable nature of that finalized condition that states so often strive for. As Paul Ricoeur, in speaking of Karl Mannheim, puts it, “If we call ideology false consciousness of our real situation, we can imagine a society without ideology. We cannot imagine, however, a society without utopia, because this would be a society without goals” (283), be it Jean Baudrillard’s sardonic Reagan-Republican “Utopia Achieved” or the Soviet-style dream state. After all, the Red Star now flies over Macy’s, and now it is the Republicans who most often call for the withering away of the state. Given this perspective, and the ongoing, perhaps unmanageable course of social evolution, and given the fact that “ideology is by definition not declared. It is always the other who says that we are victims of ideology” (Ricoeur 269), perhaps it is safest to see the Marxist contribution to educational philosophy in terms of the “negative diagnostics” that Jameson credits Marx with offering. Let Marx offer us a cooled-down Trotskyite “permanent revolution” in which the social order is always called into question, and the students are encouraged to do the questioning. Let the analysis of cultural capital call that capital into question. Let critical pedagogy draw students out of the “banking

system” of education into discovery of their own relevance through critical analysis and social action. Let the school and the university, which Paul Ricoeur calls a “liberal-humanitarian” utopia since it “denies, and sometimes very naively, the real sources of power in property, money, violence, and all kinds of nonintellectual forces” (277), become the model of the higher ideal of intellectual solidarity that lets the free flow of ideas undermine the ideological structure it has come to embody.

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## Nietzsche's Acoustic Philosophy of Education and the Designation of Genius

David L. Mosley, Ph.D.

Bellarmino University

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Actually I'd much rather have

been a Basel Professor than God [...].

*Friedrich Nietzsche to Jacob Burckhardt*

*06 January 1889, Turin*

That Friedrich Nietzsche was deeply concerned with the formation of genius is, of course, a commonplace of today's Nietzsche scholarship.[1] One finds this concern in his *Untimely Meditations* on Schopenhauer and Wagner, his treatment of the free spirits in the *Gay Science*, and, ultimately, in his discussion of the so-called over-man in the notes published as *Will to Power*. Thus it is not surprising that the matter is at the center of the philosopher's five lectures *On the Future of our Educational Institutions* of 1873. In what follows I will 1. Summarize Nietzsche's general concerns about education, 2. Discuss the designation, *Bestimmung*, of genius as conceived by Nietzsche at the time of the lectures, and 3. Suggest that without an understanding of temperament and resonance – only two of the many meanings of the German word *Stimmung* – one cannot fully grasp Nietzsche's attitude toward genius and, by extension, what may be thought of as a Nietzschean philosophy of education.

Friedrich Nietzsche received his appointment as professor extraordinarius to the

faculty of philology at the University of Basel in 1869. His teaching load, to put it anachronistically, included courses in philology as well as language instruction at the gymnasium associated with the University. As Carl Schorske has explained, the degree of cooperation between the town council and the University's administration was exceptional in the middle of the 19th Century, thus Basel retained much of the character of the Renaissance free cities and was, in many ways, an ideal situation for the young philologist and his somewhat reactionary ideas about education (56-70). Still, there were difficulties, not the least of which was Nietzsche's outsider status, given that a high percentage of his colleagues were natives of Basel and graduates of its University. Nietzsche did, however, find a friend and mentor in the art historian Jacob Burkhardt, who attended all five of the lectures. Likewise, his relative isolation was relieved by frequent weekends and holidays with Richard and Cosima Wagner, who took up residence in Tribschen, not far from Basel, at the same time Nietzsche assumed his teaching duties.

Nietzsche's 1869 inaugural address on "Homer's Personality" was well received, as were the professorial lectures on "The Greek Musical Drama" in 1870 and "Socrates on Tragedy" in 1871. During the two and a half years prior to the public lectures on education Nietzsche became a popular teacher and, as the enrollment in his university courses increased, he was able to make a convincing case that his responsibilities at the gymnasium be reduced. These more or less commodious circumstances were, however, soon to change. In a letter to Erwin Rhode, written on 15 February 1870, Nietzsche gives a most prescient description of the life and work awaiting him: "Knowledge, art, and philosophy are now growing together so much in me that I shall in any case give birth to the centaur one day" (*Selected Letters*, 63). The image of Nietzsche's subsequent work as half man and half animal is both provocative and not a little haunting; however, the designation of knowledge, art, and philosophy as constituent elements in his thinking is especially to the point in the lectures on education. [2]

When Nietzsche took the podium on 16 January 1872 to deliver the opening lecture, sponsored by Basel's Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft, a sort of 'town and gown' organization meant to facilitate the presentation of current scholarship to lay audiences, his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, had just been published. By the final lecture, some 6 weeks later, word had spread of the devastating review of the admittedly unconventional work by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, a leading philologist of the day. One can only imagine what it was like for the young professor – not yet the philosophical iconoclast who would one day declare himself dynamite – to face an audience familiar with the reception of his first book. Moreover, at the same time he had sent the manuscript of his orchestral composition *Manfred* to

the noted conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow, whose response, while shorter than von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's review, was no less harsh. In von Bülow's letter to the would-be composer he described the work as "the rape of Euterpe" (*Notzucht an Euterpe*). [3] By the next term enrollment in Nietzsche's seminars fell to single digits, his health – always precarious – began a precipitous decline, and an early end to what was not so long before a promising academic career was in sight. [4]

In the opening lecture's introduction Nietzsche explains that, strictly speaking, his words are not his own, but an account of a conversation to which he was an 'ear-witness', *Ohrenzeuge*, several years earlier. The protagonist in the dialogue is a hermit, a loner and prophet not unlike Zarathustra but whose aloof temperament and dismissive attitude resemble that of Heraclitus. [5] The interlocutor is a young professor of philosophy, a former student of the hermit, who has arranged to meet with his mentor at dusk on a mountainside overlooking the Rhine. With this conceit Nietzsche distances himself from the often pointed criticisms of education that will follow and, at the same time, places himself in the same position occupied by Plato *vis a vis* Socrates.

The dialogue focuses on the young professor's complaints about the sad state of philosophy as an academic discipline and the enterprise of education more generally. For his part, the hermit is impatient with his former student, reminding him of the competing tendencies at work in education that militate against the coming into being of genius. These are: (1) the *tendency to extension* (*Erweiterung*), i.e. ever more schools to educate an ever greater number of the populous, and (2) the *tendency to diminution* (*Verringerung*), or disciplinary specialization. [6]

The *tendency to extension* is epitomized by the schools of Prussia meant, as Nietzsche frames it, to prepare students to find the proper place in society where they will be of the greatest usefulness to the state. He caricatures this stance as "the apotheosis of the state in all things [...] a practical and useable heirloom of the Hegelian philosophy" (76). [7] In passages from notebooks contemporaneous with the lectures, many of which find their way, verbatim, into the lectures, Nietzsche describes the motive force behind the *tendency of diminution* as the scholarly creed of knowledge for knowledge's sake and labels its product "Desperate Knowledge". The *tendency of extension*, on the other hand, produces "Tragic Knowledge" which, the hermit explains, is based on the "cardinal principle" of education, namely disproportion. [8]

'I remember,' answered the scolded student; 'You were accustomed to say there would be no human being striving after education if he knew how unbelievably small the number of really educated ones finally is and can be in general. And in spite of that, even this small number of truly educated ones would not for once



be possible if a great mass, fundamentally against their nature and only directed by a tempting deception, did not involve itself with education. One should therefore reveal nothing publically of the laughable disproportion, between the number of truly educated ones and the monstrously great educational apparatus. Here is hidden the authentic secret of education; that, namely, countless human beings are struggling after education, apparently for themselves, but fundamentally only in order to make possible some few human beings'. (34-35) [9]

The cardinal principle of disproportion is tragic inasmuch as it accepts that philosophy, in the form of metaphysics, is moribund, and knowledge is a mere byproduct of specialization, i.e. two of the three constituent elements of education as it was once construed no longer exercise the authority they once did, and that the “illusions of art” are the only recourse remaining.

The sort of education with the potential to produce genius, or at least to create the conditions in which genius might be born, consists of three areas of study: Self-education, *Selbsterziehung*, in one's mother tongue; followed by a thorough grounding in the German Classics – namely Goethe and Schiller – whose spirit or essence is necessarily bound to Greek and Roman Antiquity; after which the student will be prepared for the awakening of a feeling for the perennial wisdom of the ancient world. Aided by this course of instruction the student's disposition, *Stimmung*, cannot help but recognize the barbarity of his own day, its cult of free personality, and the leveling nature of *Kultur*. As for the teachers, of which there are too many due to the *tendency of extension* and who know too little, due to the *tendency of diminution*, they lack the resonance, *Stimmung*, to respond sympathetically to any legitimate call for educational reform.

The greatest number [of teachers], from their university time onward, wander about so self-satisfied and without shame in the astonishing dreams of the world; a powerful voice should sound out in opposition genuinely from every corner: 'Away from here, you uninitiated, you who will never be initiated, flee silently from this holy place, silently and ashamed!' Oh, this voice sounds out in vain: for one must already be something of a Greek type, in order even merely to understand a Greek curse and formula of banishment. (69) [10]

These teachers are unaware of the majestic voice of antiquity. The philologist is especially culpable in this regard. Because of his dullness “antiquity says nothing to him, and as a result he has nothing to say about antiquity” (72).[11] True teachers, according to Nietzsche, are those who, in addition to possessing a body of knowledge, resonate in the present with the timeless wisdom of the past. Such teachers transmit

the fundamental tone of Culture, *Bildung*, to their students. [12] As a consequences students are tempered in such a way that they, too, will resonate with the music of *Bildung*. [13]

Nietzsche's conception of education as the imprinting of the teacher's temperament, his *Stimmung*, on the student seems to derive from Aristotle's discussion of education in *De anima*, in which, to quote Jonathan Lear, "Teaching is very much the creation of an artifact, though the matter on which the teacher imposes his form is the student's soul [...]" (34-35). Nietzsche's contribution to the discussion of the topic is his, more or less musical, conception of the teacher as artist, of teaching as an artistic activity, and of the student as a work of art. It is important to note that Nietzsche's teacher, like Socrates, imparts neither knowledge nor wisdom; instead, his task is to create in the student conditions amenable to the re-sounding or re-articulation of timeless truths. A similar, Aristotelian idea is at work in the following passage from the *Unpublished Writings* of 1872-73. "Cultivation is not necessarily a matter of *conceptualizing*, but rather of *perceiving* and making correct choices: just as the musician is able to play the correct notes in the dark. The *education* of a people to *cultivation* is essentially habituation to good models and cultivation of noble ends" (emphasis in the original, 91). Such a frame protects both teacher and student from the collapse of metaphysics and the torrents of useless knowledge.

But why this metaphor? Why *Stimmung* and its many acoustical and musical meanings? My attention was first drawn to the status of the metaphor in these lectures after a close reading of the second *Untimely Meditation* on history in which it plays a similar role. While his musical compositions may be derivative, Nietzsche was a trained pianist of more than average technique who also had extensive experience as a chorister. He participated in multiple performances of concerted works with the excellent orchestra in Leipzig, led by some of the most exceptional conductors of the day. Likewise, in the notebooks from this time Nietzsche frequently discusses culture in musical terms, e.g. "Redefinition of Culture: A single temperament and key composed of many originally hostile forces, which now enable a melody to be played" (*Philosophy and Truth*, 109). Finally, records from Basel's library show that while working on the lectures Nietzsche borrowed *On the Sensation of Tone* (1863) by Hermann von Helmholtz, a highly influential treatise which includes extensive discussions of sound production, acoustic perception, and sympathetic vibration.

In true Socratic fashion the hermit concedes that despite his many ideas about education and the designation of genius, the best he can offer his student is an allegory. He asks the young professor to imagine an orchestral rehearsal as if he were deaf and had never before "dreamed even of the existence of tones and music [...]. You would be unmoved by the idealizing effects of tone and not able to look at all with any

satisfaction” (118-19). Secondly, with the sense of hearing restored, the young philosopher is to imagine the orchestra led by a mere timekeeper, or *Taktschläger*, whose wooden gestures turn the music into tedium. Finally, the young philosopher is instructed to imagine a conductor of “real genius” who,

[...] as if in a lightening transmigration of souls traveled into all the bodies of the players [...] Sense the nimble eagerness in every muscle and the rhythmic necessity in every gesture, then you will feel [...] how in the order of spirits everything presses toward the construction of such an organization [...] This is how I understand a true educational institution. (119) [14]

Thus only when education becomes an artistic activity, when the gestures of the teacher-as-conductor give form, *Bildung*, to the score’s silent music, can the student-as-musician realize the music’s form, its *Bildung*, by means of analogous but equally appropriate gestures on his or her instrument. By doing so, the student-as-artwork achieves *Bildung*, her character and temperament are prepared to resonate, *Stimmung*, with the timeless voices of wisdom, and may one day be equipped for such a destiny, *Bestimmung*.

#### Endnotes

[1] One of the most comprehensive discussions of Nietzsche and the idea of Genius can be found in Carl Pletsch’s *Young Nietzsche* (1991).

[2] A similar perspective is found in a passage from the notebooks of 1872 in which Nietzsche also addresses the relationship between philosophy and art. “The problem of *culture* has seldom been grasped correctly. The goal of culture is not the highest possible happiness of a people, nor is it the unhindered development of all the talents; instead culture shows itself to be the correct proportion of these developments. Its aim points beyond earthly happiness: the production of great works is the aim of culture [...]. The culture of a people is manifest in the unifying mastery of their drives: philosophy masters the knowledge drive; art masters ecstasy and the formal drive [...]. The contents are the same in art and in ancient philosophy” (*Philosophy and Truth*, 16).

[3] von Bülow’s estimation also included the following: “Your Manfred-Meditation is the most extreme piece of fantastic extravagance, the most undelightful and the most anti-musical drafts on musical paper that I have faced in a long time. Frequently I had to ask myself: is the whole thing a joke, perhaps you intended a parody of the so-called music of the future?” (von Bülow, 220-22).

[4] By the time Nietzsche left Basel he seems resigned to the shortcomings of higher education yet remains committed to the task of education and continues to identify himself as a teacher. For example, in a letter to Carl von Gersdorff, he states, “[I]n the

long run, I also realize what Schopenhauer's doctrine of university wisdom is all about. A completely radical institution for truth is not possible here. Above all, from here nothing really revolutionary can come. Afterward we can become real teachers by levering ourselves with all possible means out of the atmosphere of these times and by becoming not only wiser but also better human beings. Here too I feel the need to be true. And that is another reason why I cannot go on breathing the academic atmosphere much longer. So one day we shall cast off this yoke – for me that is certain. And then we shall create a new Greek academy" (*Selected Letters*, 74).

[5] Another model for Nietzsche's hermit, one closer to Nietzsche's own educational experience, is Ernst Ortlepp (1800-64), erstwhile revolutionary and poet, whose cyclical poem *Germania* became popular during the revolutionary year of 1848. Ortlepp was a graduate of Schulpforta, he counted Goethe and Richard Wagner among his acquaintances, and was author of an early biography of Byron. Beginning in 1853 Ortlepp returned to his alma mater where he tutored students and, according to some, may have written papers for them as well (Walther). A musician, who "often sang dynamic songs to himself to his own piano accompaniment", Ortlepp also taught organ lessons (Schmidt qtd. in Walther). Nietzsche's first documented contact with Ortlepp was in 1854, when the 14 year old credits his newfound enthusiasm for Byron to Ortlepp's translation of the English poet's complete works into German (Walter).

[6] All references to Nietzsche's lectures are from Michael Grenke's translation of *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* (2004).

[7] "Das letzte Phänomen nun sollte zwar sie stutzig machen, es sollte sie zum Beispiel an jene verwandte, allmählich begriffne Tendenz einer ehemals von Staatswegen geförderten und auf Staatszwecke es absehenden Philosophie erinnern, an die Tendenz der Hegelschen Philosophie: ja, es wäre vielleicht nicht übertrieben, zu behaupten, daß in der Unterordnung aller Bildungsbestrebungen unter Staatszwecke Preußen das praktisch verwertbare Erbstück der Hegelschen Philosophie sich mit Erfolg angeeignet habe: deren Apotheose des Staats allerdings in dieser Unterordnung ihren Gipfel erreicht". (Lecture Three)

[8] See note 2 above where Nietzsche identifies proportion as the goal of culture.

[9] "Ich erinnere mich,' antwortete der gescholtene Schüler; 'Sie pflegten zu sagen, es würde kein Mensch nach Bildung streben, wenn er wüßte, wie unglaublich klein die Zahl der wirklich Gebildeten zuletzt ist und überhaupt sein kann. Und trotzdem sei auch diese kleine Anzahl von wahrhaft Gebildeten nicht einmal möglich, wenn nicht

eine große Masse, im Grunde gegen ihre Natur, und nur durch eine verlockende Täuschung bestimmt, sich mit der Bildung einließe. Man dürfe deshalb von jener lächerlichen Improportionalität zwischen der Zahl der wahrhaft Gebildeten und dem ungeheuer großen Bildungsapparat nichts öffentlich verraten; hier stecke das eigentliche Bildungsgeheimnis: daß nämlich zahllose Menschen scheinbar für sich, im Grunde nur, um einige wenige Menschen möglich zu machen, nach Bildung ringen, für die Bildung arbeiten”’. (Lecture One)

[10] “Den allermeisten von denen, welche von ihrer Universitätszeit an so selbstgefällig und ohne Scheu in den erstaunlichen Trümmern jener Welt herumwandern, sollte eigentlich aus jedem Winkel eine mächtige Stimme entgegentönen: ‘Weg von hier, ihr Uneingeweihten, ihr niemals Einzuweihenden, flüchtet schweigend aus diesem Heiligtum, schweigend und beschämt!’ Ach, diese Stimme tönt vergebens: denn man muß schon etwas von griechischer Art sein, um auch nur eine griechische Verwünschung und Bannformel zu verstehen”’. (Lecture Three)

[11] “Das Altertum sagt ihm nichts, und folglich hat er nichts über das Altertum zu sagen”. (Lecture Three)

[12] Throughout the lectures Nietzsche uses *Kultur* to refer to the shallow and timely pseudo-culture of his day and *Bildung* for the timeless culture of the Greeks and its perennial wisdom.

[13] Taken as a whole the lectures are quite a noisy affair, filled with the crack of pistol fire, snatches of music from a passing barge that interrupt and irritate the Hermit, and multiple examples of *Naturlauten* that, as dusk becomes darkness, contribute an other-worldly quality to the scene. At various times the speech of the Hermit is described as musical and voices of the past are constantly resounding in the present.

[14] The entire paragraph, the last of the lecture, in German reads, “Endlich aber setzt mit beflügelter Phantasie einmal ein Genie, ein wirkliches Genie mitten in diese Masse hinein – sofort merkt ihr etwas Unglaubliches. Es ist, als ob dieses Genie in blitzartiger Seelenwanderung in alle diese halben Tierleiber gefahren sei, und als ob jetzt aus ihnen allen wiederum nur das eine dämonische Auge herauschaue. Nun aber hört und seht – ihr werdet nie genug hören können! Wenn ihr jetzt wieder das erhaben stürmende oder innig klagende Orchester betrachtet, wenn ihr behende Spannung in jeder Muskel und rhythmische Notwendigkeit in jeder Gebärde ahnt, dann werdet ihr mitfühlen, was eine prästabilisierte Harmonie zwischen Führer und Geführten ist, und wie in der Ordnung der Geister alles auf eine derartig aufzubauende Organisation hindrängt. An meinem Gleichnisse aber deutet euch, was ich wohl unter einer wahren Bildungsanstalt verstanden haben möchte und weshalb ich auch in der Universität eine solche nicht im entferntesten wiedererkenne”’. (Lecture Five)

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**On the Problematic of Emancipation**

Cheu-jey Lee



Assistant Professor  
Department of Educational Studies  
School of Education  
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne  
Fort Wayne, IN

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## Abstract

This paper begins with a presentation of the dialectic on the problematic of emancipation between critical literacy/pedagogy and critical white studies. It shows that these two perspectives each have a different focus on who (whether the oppressed or the dominant) should play a central role in the project of emancipation. Yet their focus prevents us from viewing the issue of emancipation from a broader spectrum. To supplement what is lacking in the existing literature, Habermas's analysis of emancipation, which does not preclude the oppressed or the dominant in its presupposition, is argued to provide new insights by redirecting our attention from the question of "who" to the issue of emancipation itself.

## Introduction

Emancipation or liberation in general is a recurring theme in education. Yet there are differing views on who should play a major role in it. In critical literacy/pedagogy, emancipation is concerned primarily with delivering the oppressed from oppression through literacy education. In fact, critical literacy/pedagogy is a broad discipline that has interacted with and been influenced by such philosophical systems as Marxism, critical theory, and postmodernism, to name a few. Nevertheless, if we want to link it to a certain person, Paulo Freire is most likely to be the choice. To avoid confusion, I will limit my discussion of emancipation in critical literacy/pedagogy to the strain in line with Freire's pedagogy. Freire (1984) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, one of the most important works in critical literacy/pedagogy, contrasts the role of the oppressed and that of the oppressors in relation to emancipation in the following manner:

It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves. *The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves.* It is therefore essential that *the oppressed* wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught; and the contradiction will be resolved by

the appearance of the new man: neither oppressor nor oppressed, but man in the process of liberation. (p. 42, italics added)

For Freire, it is not only the oppressed but also the oppressors who need to be emancipated. However, he seems to disagree with the participation of the oppressors in emancipation because “[p]edagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) and makes of the oppressed the objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression” (Freire, 1984, p. 39). It seems that the oppressed need to take the initiative in, and assume the responsibility for, their (and even the oppressors’) emancipation while the oppressors appear to have little to contribute. This perspective on emancipation can be misinterpreted to lay blame on the victims (the oppressed) if the project of emancipation fails. Yet is it true that the oppressors play a negligible part in emancipation? Freire would say yes unless they experience “a profound rebirth” and become comrades of the oppressed (Freire, 1984, p. 47). This again puts the role of the oppressed in relief, as opposed to that of the oppressors.

The advocates of critical white studies, in contrast, foreground the responsibility of the dominant compared to that of the oppressed in the project of emancipation. They call for active participation of the dominant and invite them to confront the issue critically. In their edited book, *Critical White Studies: Looking behind the Mirror*, Delgado and Stefancic (1997) along with other contributors put whiteness under scrutiny and examine it carefully from racial, historical, legal, cultural, social, and biological slants. They find that whiteness is an elusive term to pin down – it is freighted with various interpretations, depending on, for example, who defines it and in what context it is defined.<sup>1</sup> Their book concludes with a section (i.e., Part XI) of 15 articles devoted exclusively to a discussion of what whites should do to deal with whiteness and to end racial inequalities. Delgado and Stefancic suggest that whites, who are usually in a dominant position, are responsible for, and should play a pivotal role in, the emancipation of the marginalized. In parallel, McIntyre (1997) and Sleeter (2000, 2001) have worked with pre-service teachers in investigating their whiteness and its impact on their teaching. They argue that the issue of whiteness is usually considered of little importance and thus overlooked in the teacher education program. Yet it is imperative to confront such an issue in that the majority of the pre-service teachers are whites and usually have little experience working with people or students of other races.

While critical literacy/pedagogy and critical white studies each foreground what the oppressed as well as the dominant should do in the project of emancipation respectively, they run the risk of presenting a slanted picture of the issue due to their focus on who (whether the oppressed or the dominant) should assume the main responsibility for emancipation. To broaden our view on emancipation, the issue should

be investigated within a framework where both the oppressed and the dominant are taken into consideration. This paper argues that Jurgen Habermas's view on emancipation, adumbrated in his theory of communicative action, can be appropriated to shed light on the existing literature by redirecting our attention from the question of "who" to the issue of emancipation itself. Habermas does not exclude the oppressed or the dominant in his thesis, but includes both of them in his presupposition and focuses on an analysis of the nature of emancipation and the obstacles that keep us from being emancipated. This paper is concerned mainly with the following two questions from the Habermasian perspective: (a) what is emancipation? and (b) from what are we emancipated?

### What Is Emancipation?

Though Habermas has not theorized explicitly about the emancipatory interest since *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971), the problematic of emancipation still plays an important role in his social theory. For example, in his *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume II*, Habermas (1987), borrowing from Emile Durkheim, argues:

To be a person is to be an autonomous source of action.... This autonomy is more than a capacity for arbitrary free choice within an expanded and variable range of alternatives. It does not consist in the abstract power of choice between two opposites, but rather in what we have called reflective self-understanding. (p. 84)

Habermas believes that autonomy is a unique quality of being for an individual. And to be an autonomous individual depends on "reflective self-understanding," i.e., the ability to perform self-reflection. This notion is consistent with what Habermas (1971) said back in *Knowledge and Human Interests*:

*Self-reflection* is at once intuition and *emancipation*, comprehension and liberation from dogmatic dependence. The dogmatism that reason undoes both analytically and practically is false consciousness: error and unfree existence in particular. Only the ego that apprehends itself in intellectual intuition as the self-positing subject obtains *autonomy*. The dogmatist, on the contrary, because he cannot summon up the force to carry out self-reflection, lives in dispersal as a dependent subject that is not only determined by objects but is itself made into a thing. He leads an unfree existence, because he does not become conscious of his self-reflecting self-activity. (p. 208, italics added)

Consequently, Habermas's interest in emancipation has been sustained throughout his works. In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas suggests that the way to

emancipation is through self-reflection. But how is self-reflection related to emancipation? To answer this question, we need to relocate the concept of self-reflection in a dialogical paradigm that becomes the core of Habermas's later work, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volumes I & II* (1984, 1987). In what follows, I will first discuss the concepts of "self" and "reflection" separately and then "self-reflection" as a whole relocated in a dialogical paradigm. Finally, I will tie "self-reflection" to emancipation.

## Self

Informed by Mead (1967), Habermas (1987, chap. 5) suggests that the search for the self is a process of identity formation, i.e., a dialectic between the "I" and the "me." The "I" is an autonomous self, who seeks its identity through a "me," an objectified self. The more the "I" is differentiated from the "me," the more autonomy the former attains. This is where the identity formation of the self has a relevance to emancipation. Specifically, the more autonomous one becomes, the more emancipated one is. However, the "I" can never know itself through a "me" because the latter is socially and culturally mediated and can never be the pure subjectivity, i.e., the "I." Therefore, the search for the self and thus the emancipatory process as well are a never-ending dialectic. Emancipation in this sense is an ongoing process in search of the self.

## Reflection

During reflection, we have to take a new position in order to represent an older position. We take a third person position, objectify a former state, and represent it to an audience. Therefore, reflection is equivalent to internalized position-taking or an internal shift of position. A "state" can be understood as the generalization of role sets from particular persons to generalized contexts. For example, on the way to your office this morning, you saw me (your colleague) and said, "Good morning!" In a situation like this, you (as well as others) would expect me to greet you back. This is the state you had in mind and expected everyone, including me, to recognize and act upon accordingly. You assumed that anyone in such a situation could understand and take your position, or grasp the role sets you had in mind. To acquire a state is thus to position-take, and reflection is involved in acquiring a state.

## Self-reflection in a Dialogical Paradigm

Habermas's dialogical paradigm plays a vital role in his theory of communicative action. It steps beyond the scene of a lone, passive observer and replaces it with that of two or more actors engaging in communicative action oriented toward understanding. The being of the actor presupposes other actors and the internalization of other actors' positions. This is why Habermas's theory is also called an "intersubjectivist paradigm of

communicative action” (McCarthy, 1987, p. x).

Now what does self-reflection look like in a dialogical paradigm? In a dialogical paradigm, self-reflection assumes a broader meaning. It is no longer set in a monological context where the self thinks in a lonely way about itself. Instead, self-reflection is an internalized dialogical act that presupposes and embodies all the features of communicative action discussed previously. Recall that the search for the self is an ongoing dialectic between the “I” and the “me” and that reflection is related to position-taking. Consequently, self-reflection recast in a dialogical paradigm can be interpreted as a process of understanding oneself through continuous dialogical position-taking in collaboration with an equal other who is fully empowered to agree or disagree. However, despite the drive for recognition from an equal other, intersubjective recognition is never fully achieved due to the principle of privileged access. That is, one cannot know for certain what others think of oneself except through the external manifestations of their subjective states, which are no longer purely subjective, but socially and culturally mediated.

### Emancipation

It seems that the afore-mentioned process of self-reflection ends on a negative note as it can never be accomplished. Interestingly, it is also this never-ending process that is characteristic of the project of emancipation. Specifically, to be emancipated is to seek intersubjective recognition through dialogical communication oriented toward understanding. As intersubjective recognition is never reached, so is emancipation never achieved. Yet the never-ending characteristic should be considered a positive thing to have. It acknowledges the pursuit of emancipation as an ongoing critique to become a more rationalized individual free from dogmatism. It also reminds us of pragmatists’ “emphasis on inquiry as a self-corrective rational process, their insistence on fallibilism, and their general suspicion of ontological, epistemological, and even linguistic dichotomies” (Bernstein, 1971, p. 298).

### From What Are We Emancipated?

Recall that Habermas proposes that we should be emancipated from dogmatism. But what is dogmatism? It can be inferred from Habermas’s theory of communicative action that dogmatism includes at least truncated rationality, systemic colonization, and coercive power. It is important to note that these forms of dogmatism have an impact on all human agents, including the oppressed as well as the dominant, who wish to be emancipated.

### Truncated Rationality

According to Habermas (1984), there are two types of rationality, i.e., cognitive-instrumental rationality and communicative rationality:

If we start from the noncommunicative employment of knowledge in teleological action, we make a prior decision for the concept of *cognitive-instrumental rationality* that has, through empiricism, deeply marked the self-understanding of the modern era.... On the other hand, if we start from the communicative employment of propositional knowledge in assertions, we make a prior decision for a wider concept of rationality connected with ancient conceptions of *logos*. This concept of *communicative rationality* carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld. (p. 10, italics in original)

Cognitive-instrumental rationality is characteristic of a monological paradigm where knowledge is sought by a lone individual through observation. In contrast, communicative rationality is employed in a dialogical paradigm where more than one individual participates in communicative action orientated toward understanding. Habermas (1984) goes on to argue, “The concept of cognitive-instrumental rationality that emerges from the realist approach can be fit into this more comprehensive concept of communicative rationality developed from the phenomenological approach” (p. 14). Therefore, rationality is truncated or lopsided when communicative rationality is relativized or even subsumed by cognitive-instrumental rationality which is actually narrower in scope. A case in point is the privileging of experimental designs, which are aligned with a monological paradigm, over other forms of research and scholarship (e.g., see Delandshere, 2004; Schwandt, 2005). Specifically, experimental designs focus on the investigation of possible cause-and-effect relationships by exposing one or more experimental groups to one or more treatment conditions and comparing the results to one or more control groups not receiving the treatment. However, in social science, especially in education, experimental designs are difficult, if not impossible, to implement because of logistical or ethical problems. Nevertheless, educational studies using experimental designs are still considered more “scientific” and have a better chance to receive funding. Therefore, to be emancipated from truncated rationality, we should differentiate these two types of rationality. The domination of cognitive-instrumental rationality over communicative rationality subjugates human agents into mere objects and thus deprives them of autonomy.

Systemic Colonization



Systemic colonization is closely tied to truncated rationality. Before we can understand systemic colonization, the concepts of “lifeworld” and “system” have to be clarified. A lifeworld is like a culture. It is a shared world which consists of the background knowledge of social groups within the culture. It plays a central role in communicative action in that reasons given to support claims made by actors during communicative contestation are drawn from the lifeworld. By relating communicative action to the lifeworld, the former is projected in a cultural context rather than considered in isolation.

Systems work functionally as if to have their own dynamics to maintain, adapt, and regulate themselves. These dynamics are called system imperatives. System imperatives are a result of a rationalized lifeworld and needed in a complex society as they help take the communicative burden off society. However, system imperatives can have a dire effect on the lifeworld. It is called colonization:

Rationalization of the lifeworld makes it possible to convert societal integration over to language-independent steering media and thus to separate off formally organized domains of action. As objectified realities, the latter can then work back upon contexts of communicative action and set their own imperatives against the marginalized lifeworld. (Habermas, 1987, p. 318)

Societal integration relies on communicative consensus whereas system imperatives work by linking action consequences to conditions of continued action via feedback mechanisms that are outside of human consciousness. Habermas argues that as the lifeworld becomes more rationalized, steering media (i.e., system imperatives) develop to alleviate the burden of societal integration. And gradually systems become separated or uncoupled from the lifeworld as independent forces. Colonization arises when system imperatives, based on cognitive-instrumental rationality, surge beyond the domain of systems into the communicatively coordinated lifeworld and dominate it at the expense of communicative rationality.

Academic standards, for example, should be regarded as validity claims which are fallible and open to correction when new evidence is found. A validity claim is embedded in each speech act in communicative action. It is a claim to the validity, i.e., truth, truthfulness, and rightness, of the utterance and should be redeemed with reasons (Habermas, 1998). Standards in this sense are claimed to be a benchmark for which standard implementers such as school districts, schools, educators, and students are held accountable. They are a claim made by standards makers to standards implementers. Whether the claim is valid is subject to contestation between both parties in the educational lifeworld where communicative rationality is operative. Since validity claims are fallible, standards as validity claims should not be taken for

granted but questioned and supported with reasons. Standards makers and standards implementers should deem each other as equal peers. The former do not play the role of an absolute authority while the latter should not be threatened by high-stakes punitive consequences. Yet in reality (at least among most of the pre-service and in-service teachers I have been working with), standards have become the main, if not only, criterion for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. In this sense, they have surged beyond the educational lifeworld, in which they serve as a validity claim that is subject to communicative reasoning, and become reified and naturalized as a matter of fact, i.e., a system which, in turn, has come back to encroach upon and colonize the lifeworld with its cognitive-instrumental rationality. This is a case where systemic colonization can blind both parties, i.e., standards makers and implementers, to the role standards should play.

### Coercive Power

Coercive power should be neutralized for emancipation to occur. Emancipation is the search for a valid self through recognition from an equal other in communicative action. To have an equal other means to have an autonomous agent who is free from coercive power and free to affirm or negate. The power relations between the actor and the one he/she interacts with have to be equalized. This coercion-free presupposition resembles the conditions of Habermas's ideal speech situation where "participants are motivated only by the force of the better argument, all competent parties are entitled to participate on equal terms in discussion, no relevant argument is suppressed or excluded, and so on" (Cooke, 1998, p. 14). These conditions serve as criteria for identifying communicative distortions such as coercive power.

In illustration, suppose you and I are colleagues at a university. You began your career as an assistant professor two years ago while I have been tenured as a full professor for years. I approach you with a proposal of coauthoring a paper in the area of your expertise which is, however, remotely related to my research interest. I also suggest that you will have to do most of the work, yet I want to be the first author. In our conversation, I constantly remind you that it is very likely I will be on your promotion and tenure (P&T) committee in the future and that coauthoring this paper will certainly help with your P&T case. Though reluctant, you do what I have suggested. In this example, I use coercive power to force compliance from you. It is obvious that you are directly impacted by, and become a victim of, the coercive power and should be emancipated from it. But what about me? In appearance, I seem to take advantage of you, and yes, this is true. Yet a closer look reveals that I am also at the mercy of coercive power because I need it to give me what I want – your compliance. Therefore, the more I need and resort to coercive power, the more I rely on and become subordinate to it. What I need, instead, is intersubjective recognition from you as an

equal peer, but I secure it through coercive power. This kind of recognition is, of course, distorted, and both you and I know it. Yet without acknowledging you and other colleagues as equal peers, I have to use coercive power continuously to obtain what I desire. In this way, I am not only a user of the power but also become a slave to it and thus should be emancipated from it, too.

## Conclusion

Both critical literacy/pedagogy and critical white studies have made a significant contribution to the project of emancipation. They focus on emancipation from the perspective of the oppressed and that of the dominant respectively. They foreground what each group can do for the project of emancipation. However, viewing emancipation from either the lens of the oppressed or that of the dominant prevents us from attaining an overall picture of the issue. In addition, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish one group from the other because a seemingly homogenous group is subject to further differentiation. As I mention in another article (Lee, 2009), we live in a complex society where we can be dominating in one occasion and oppressed in another. Also, we can be oppressors, or otherwise victims, in multiple occasions. This is why Richard Rorty (1965) says every difference in kind “is always capable of being softened into a difference of degree by further empirical inquiry” (p. 51).

Habermas’s framework, which redirects our attention from the question of “who” to the issue itself, allows us to circumvent the dualism of putting people into a dichotomy and to rethink the emancipatory interest in a new light. It is also worth noting that it is not only the oppressed but the dominant that need to be emancipated. Both of them are subject to, for example, truncated rationality, systemic colonization, and coercive power, and need to be free from these types of dogmatism. Though Habermas broadens our view on the issue of emancipation, he does not resolve the issue for us. We need to engage in emancipation ourselves. Just as the search for the self is an ongoing dialectic, so does emancipation require concerted effort of those who believe in the potentiality of every individual in the pursuit of full humanity.

## Note

1. Citing Ian F. Haney-Lopez (1996), who examines the legal and social origins of white racial identity in early Supreme Court cases having to do with naturalization, Delgado and Stefancic (1997) argue that courts equivocated about what whiteness really is and its relationship to cultural superiority at a time when whiteness was a condition of becoming a U.S. citizen. During later periods of relaxed restrictions on immigration, courts switched to a firm embrace of color blindness, in sharp contrast to their former intense preoccupation with skin tone and whiteness.

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Cheu-jeY Lee is Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. He is also Co-editor of the Scholarlypartnersedu journal. His primary teaching responsibilities include methods courses in language arts and critical reading. His research focuses on literacy education, philosophy of educational research, and educational inquiry methodology. Email: leecg@ipfw.edu

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PAPER:

Guillemette Johnston [DePaul University] Descartes, Hume, and the Acquisition of  
Consciousness in Light of the Notion of Contemplation, in *Yogic Philosophy*.... **p. 251**

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**Descartes, Hume, and the Acquisition of Consciousness in Light of the Notion of  
Contemplation, in Yogic Philosophy**

Guillemette Johnston

DePaul University

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-  
Central Division, Session of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education,  
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Since the age of Aristotle, Western philosophy has been organized as a series of categories dividing the diverse questions it means to ask and attempts to answer. Thus, we all think of metaphysics as focusing on questions about what constitutes reality beyond physical appearance, which could be construed as transitory and an illusion, whereas we think of epistemology as a branch of philosophy that questions knowledge and what constitutes it. “The theory of knowledge or epistemology asks: What is mere opinion and what is truth? Does true knowledge have its source in observation by the senses or in human reason or in supernatural being? Is truth fixed, eternal, absolute, or is truth changing or relative? Are there limits to what we can know?” (Lavine 2). Ethics is a branch that focuses on the many consequences and



demands our actions imply when evaluated in the light of established values representing what is right and what is wrong. "Ethics asks: Is there a highest good for human beings, an absolute good? What is the meaning of right and wrong in human action? What are our obligations? And why should we be moral?" (Lavine 3).

Working from another tack, science and religion seem, if not to ask the same questions as traditional philosophy, at least to try to provide answers founded either on repeated observations of the outside world and the phenomena that seem to be built on objective facts, or on absolute truths derived from faith and revelation. But if it is clear nowadays that philosophy is meant to offer general considerations through critical reflections regarding both knowledge and action, in the more distant past, as for example in the days of Descartes, philosophy involved two main categories. "*La philosophie première*" or primary philosophy focused mainly on the first principles or the original/primary causes such as whatever dealt with immortality, the soul, and God, or in other words with metaphysics, and "*la philosophie seconde ou la philosophie naturelle*," secondary philosophy or natural philosophy, focused on the knowledge of nature, or on what is today known as the realm of the sciences. Yet Descartes himself, in writing the *Discours de la méthode*, found a way of establishing a method for acquiring knowledge using a very unique faculty, which belongs to the workings of the abstract qualities of the intellect, that he associated with "*l'entendement*," or the very faculty that contributes the ability to understand knowledge or seizing it mentally, utilizing the power to conceive ideas or that most important faculty in the process of knowledge acquisition and evaluation: i.e., Reason. Reason alone can conquer nature in a lucid fashion, as it is opposed to the senses of the body, that are likely most of the time to be deceptive if taken as a source of accurate knowledge acquisition.

If now we turn ourselves towards one of Descartes's contemporaries, Hobbes, we start to understand the very basic differences between Anglophone and continental philosophy that led to a rift between these branches which in many ways continues today. In fact, senses and language are for the British empiricists the main tools of knowledge acquisition, as opposed to rational and elaborate innate intellectual systems. "There is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense," Hobbes claims (qtd. in Kenny 221). "Thus for Hobbes and others there are two kinds of knowledge, knowledge of fact and knowledge of consequence. Knowledge of consequence is the knowledge of what follows from what: it is given by sense or memory: it is the knowledge required of witness. Knowledge of consequence is the knowledge required of a philosopher. In our minds there is a constant succession or train of thoughts, which constitutes mental discourse; in the philosopher this train is governed by the search for causes. These causes will be expressed in language by conditional laws, of the form 'If A, then B'"

(Kenny 221).

Having exposed these two perspectives in European philosophy that seem to be contradictory, and that express in regional or national terms the general tendency of philosophy for divisions according to directions of inquiry, overall approaches, and basic assumptions, I would like to look at one influential philosopher in the domain of rationalism and metaphysics, René Descartes. I will compare his unifying theory based on reason to the perspectives of two philosophers from the eighteenth century, Rousseau and Hume. The intent is on the one hand to compare Rousseau's and Descartes's ideas on reason, to see how the two theories differ and yet belong to a continuing tradition, and on the other to demonstrate how Hume's theory of knowledge, while trying to question superstition, limits itself to a narrow domain of the mind, overlooking many other dimensions involved in the thinking process that leads to consciousness. On the other hand, I will clarify each philosophy in light of a discipline that far from establishing categories around the very crucial philosophical questions asked by the West, encompasses in its system the branches dealing with metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics as parts of a connected whole that teaches integration to man on his/her existential path. I am talking here of the very ancient discipline of yoga as it is presented in the *Yoga Sutra*, the bible of yoga. My purpose for choosing this model is to be able to use a framework that will enable me to highlight reasons why continental and British philosophy rely on incomplete representations of what is in operation when we think and try to define knowledge and consciousness. Thus this framework will lead us to put into question contemporary understandings of Descartes, who is not only identified as a precursor to the realization or recognition of the individual as a separate, thinking being, an ego guided by its subjectivity, but is also seen essentially as someone whose philosophy presents a source of objections, since his critics choose to focus mostly "on the tensions within his dualism, and on the relationship, in his system, between mind, body, and God" (Kenny 238). We will try to show how Descartes's system, whether presented with lucidity or blindness, offers a different interpretation of these three components. Hence with the help of the yogic system, we mean to demonstrate how Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* intuitively reunites these concepts. Moreover, trying to situate in both the mental and intellectual bodies as they are recognized in the yogic tradition the concepts of empiricist philosophy at work, we will try to clarify the empiricist position in light of the elements that are brought together in the discipline of yoga as constituting an integrated mechanism going beyond oppositions of mind and matter and contributing to integration via wholeness, knowledge and consequently consciousness. I will start with the analysis of Descartes's system, since his work represents a stepping stone in Western and continental philosophy, and will then move on to Rousseau and Hume.

On 10 November 1619, René Descartes had a visionary dream that enabled him to discover the foundation of a new science, more specifically “a unified science in which philosophy and all the sciences would be interconnected in one systematic totality. [According to his new method] all qualitative differences of things would be treated as quantitative differences, and mathematics would be the key to all the problems of the universe” (Heffernan 87). If Plato had based the unity of all sciences in the mystical Idea of the Good, Descartes felt that the unity of science “was a rationalistic and mathematical unity based upon mathematical axioms.” Moreover, conversely to “medieval Aristotelianism, [which explained] change teleologically as the movement of matter toward the actualization of form,” “Descartes [explained all change] mechanically, as the movement of bodies according to the laws of physics” (Heffernan 87).

Descartes’s careful introspective and systematic method led him to think that man’s whole essence was mind, and that mind and matter were ultimately separate from each other. Indeed, in his six-part treatise *Le Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences*, Descartes lays out a strategy to lead all men to a mode of knowledge that relies essentially on the principle of reason, which takes on multidimensional attributes in light of his new ways of using it. Because it was aimed at all men, Descartes’s *Discours* was not addressed to the scholar, but to the commoner, and to that end was written in French and not Latin, so as to be accessible to all.

Descartes’s method famously became pivotal in the establishment of the modern world, and gave rise to much of the rationalistic processing of the world that has allowed the advancements of knowledge we know as science. Given this fact, it is surprising to many that Descartes reached the conclusions that he did regarding the separation of body from mind and the absolute distinction of the mental from the physical world. Descartes’s intense dualism needs to be explained, and one way to do so is to examine it in light of yogic beliefs about the nature of mind. I will look at Descartes’s theories on mind and matter through the lens of yoga as it presented in the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali and applied in yogic philosophy by B. K. S. Iyengar in *Light on Life*. This approach should help clarify some of Descartes’s philosophical assertions.

The famous opening statement of Descartes’s *Discourse* reads as follows: “Common [or 'good'] sense is the most equally spread thing in the world ... that which one calls 'good sense' or 'reason,' is naturally equal in all men; and thus ... the diversity of our opinions comes not therefrom that some are more reasonable than others, but solely therefrom that we conduct our thoughts on diverse paths and do not consider the same things. For it is not enough to have good sense, but the principal is to apply it well” (Descartes 27; my translation). Though some read this statement as ironic,

Descartes in many ways here demystifies the belief that the faculty of reason is a function pertaining to a select, intellectual few. Along with stating that reason is equal in all, Descartes puts into question his studies, yet he does not present himself as a pessimistic skeptic, since he announces that he has found a resourceful method to guide his, and our, knowledge towards truths and certainties. Then in the second section of the discourse he puts forward the idea that in order to rebuild knowledge, reason must free itself from all received ideas. For it to do so, Descartes proposes four essential rules for reaching clarity and certitude. The first is the rule of evidence, i.e. things must be clear and distinct, and one must put into question all of one's perceptions. The second demands that we analyze all givens by reducing them to elementary questions. The third imposes order, meaning that one must organize one's thoughts from the simplest to the most complex, as one does when applying deduction from one statement to the next. The fourth and last rule is the rule of enumeration, which demands that we find all the necessary elements to solve a question to achieve clarity and completion, and "everywhere ... make enumerations so complete and reviews so general [as to be sure] of omitting nothing" (Heffernan 34-35).

Descartes's discourse moves on in the third part to draw a distinction between morals and knowledge, demanding that we act without having completely reflected on the world, and that we follow rules, as stated in three maxims that advise us to conform to the laws of one's country and to be firm and moderate in actions. This is followed by a section that introduces the method of doubting as a way of being absolutely sure of one's findings. Thanks to doubting, Descartes says, I can put my experience of existing into consideration, since I do so via thinking, and while being aware of my thoughts and their objects, I become conscious of the fact that I exist. "*Je pense donc je suis.*" But this very faculty that activates my mind can only occur because of a force beyond me that gives me the capacity to operate with all the different attributes of my mind: God. Thus, paradoxically, Descartes's investigation finds its answer in metaphysics, since he discovers himself as limited yet capable of using his mind to reveal some absolute truths.

This realization of one's consciousness is at the core of Descartes's understanding of mind, reason, and God, which can be seen as inferences if one follows the steps of the method, but can be seen as intuitions if one considers that Descartes's assertion leads him to evidence for and recognition of a divine certitude in the proper use of the mind. Thus, the fifth part of the *Discours* states that nature can be known by man, and that knowing god and following our reason, we can have an intellectual understanding of the world. This is where Descartes draws a distinction between the body, which he presents as a machine, and the mind, which is activated by reason and thus proves that man has a soul. Finally, the sixth part tells us that philosophy must

be practical and allow man to master nature through the combination of theories led by reason and experimental observations.

Descartes's demonstration, though thought provoking and *a priori* clear, can leave the reader confused because of some of its paradoxes. His statement that mind and matter are separate, and his assertion that only man has a soul, may seem one-dimensional and exclusive. How could someone so bright come across with so little nuance as regards the connection of mind and body? How can mind, an organ of perception and conception, be only related to spirit?

These questions can largely be answered by understanding the relation of mind and body as it is posited in the yogic tradition. In his book *Light on Life*, B. K. S. Iyengar, a committed practitioner well versed in yogic scriptures and traditions, presents his observations on a system of self-realization not based on ideology, but on practice, while presenting a road map to the complex interactions of mind and matter. Most particularly, Iyengar's description of what yoga calls the intellectual body sheds light on Descartes's dream that led to his writing of the discourse, as do certain sutras from the *Yoga Sutra*.

Conversely to Descartes's conviction that mind and matter are separate, yoga sees mind and matter as evolutes of each other. However, the discipline of yoga aims at helping us transcend the body in its basic functions in order to bring lucidity to our perceptions--in other words, to succeed in not being blinded by our senses, sensations, prejudices, and distorted memories. Four practices recognized by the *Yoga Sutra* (see Sutra II.29 and Sutras II.46-II.55; Miller 50; 56-59) as key to starting on the path of lucidity and discovery of true knowledge are the discovery of the use of the anatomical body, as illustrated in the practice of *hatha yoga*; the discovery of the physiological and energetic body that is rooted in the power of the breath, as is seen in the practice of *pranayama*; the withdrawal of the senses or *pratyahara*, so as to make sure of not being deceived by our sensations, which cannot be other than subjective unless they are submitted to a rigorous practice of doubt and evaluation; and the practice of concentration or *dharana* as a way of reducing our field of thinking to a focused point in order to be able to reach accuracy of thoughts without unnecessary interferences. Only if these four stages are attained can the adept yogi hope to reach a fifth state of meditation or *dhyana*, which eventually provides the bridge to wisdom and bliss.

Besides trying to make sure that we do not get trapped in the deceiving senses of the body, yoga addresses also the complexity of the human thought process. The total thought process, called *citta*, consciousness, is a composite of mind/*manas*, intelligence/*buddhi*, and ego/*ahamkar*, the three mental evolutes of material nature/*prakriti*. If the yogi wants to be an accurate observer of the world, he must learn



to use his faculties properly, and understand how each part of his being interacts or interferes with his or her quest for lucidity. For this reason, “[t]he yogi makes a distinction between the mental body (*manomaya kosa*), where the incessant thoughts of human life occur, and the intellectual body (*vijnamaya kosa*), where intelligence and discernment can be found” (Iyengar 108).

Thus, far from separating mind and matter, as Descartes does, yoga aims at integrating all the parts of the human being, which are identified via a hierarchy of different bodies interacting with each other, yet needing so to speak to be tuned up in order to achieve true knowledge, integration, and integrity. In the inward journey, the yogi must learn stability by controlling the physical body (via *asana*), the energy body via control of *prana*, the mental body or *manas*, the intellectual body or *vijnana*, and the divine body of *ananda*.

In his chapter on “Clarity” in *Light on Life*, Iyengar concentrates on the workings of the mental body and tells us that “[b]y understanding how our thinking works, we discover nothing less than the very secrets of human psychology. With this right perception and understanding of our minds, the door opens to our liberation, as we go through the veil of illusion into the bright day of clarity and wisdom. The study of mind and consciousness, therefore, lies at the heart of yoga” (107). If Descartes’s original purpose was to find a way to guide knowledge towards truth, his method paradoxically led him to an undeniable conclusion regarding awareness and consciousness, since he understood that it is thanks to the fact that we can think clearly and evidently that we cannot deny our senses of being, identity, and consciousness, which are all reflections of the intervention of the divine. When Descartes comes to the conclusion “I think therefore I am,” one cannot see the “I” as a restricted ego, a limited identity, since the I that thinks is not only the person of Descartes thinking, but also the very thing that can initiate thinking clearly, soundly, and methodically. Above all, this “I” that practices doubt in order to evaluate its thoughts and their objects is endowed with qualities of discernment and distance that in yogic language would be identified with attributes of the intellectual body rather than the mental body, which is considered the outer layer of consciousness, since it is limited by indiscriminate memories, perceptions, and sensations.

The yogic distinction between operations of the mental body and operations of the intellectual body shed light on Descartes’s method regarding the steps to follow to reach true, accurate knowledge. Intuitively, by using definite rules and principles, Descartes managed to assure that the intellectual body and the mental body do not promote inaccuracy in knowledge.

The *Discours de la méthode* makes it clear that Descartes sees the precariousness



of acquired knowledge. After many reflections on this point, he opts to rely solely on himself and not on the opinions of others: “My plan has never gone beyond trying to reform my own thoughts and building on a foundation that is totally my own” (Heffernan 31). Therefore, even though Descartes tries to rely on universal rules and principles, his main source of knowledge is methodic introspection which enables him to use his faculties properly, and thus to place himself in a context where his senses will not be over-stimulated by the outside world. This approach parallels a similar method of introspection advocated in sutra II.54, which addresses reaching an intrinsic mode of thinking. Like a practitioner of withdrawal of the senses, Descartes states, “I remained the whole day shut up alone in a stove-heated room, where I had total leisure to converse with myself about my own thoughts” (Heffernan 27).

From the start, Descartes’s understanding of how one should use reason as the main mode of guiding knowledge, and above all his way of defining it, parallels the yogic understanding of intelligence and how it works to the profit of the intellectual body, as opposed to what mind does or does not do to the benefit of the mental body. According to yogic views, how mind functions can affect our consciousness positively or negatively, for mind is considered both physical and subtle. Thus, Iyengar tells us, “[M]ind is said to be the eleventh sense. Mind is both perceptive and active. The mind is a computer and information storer.... The mind faces out to the external world.... What mind is and does dies with us. Through mind we engage with, experience, perceive, and interpret the world. Senses perceive, and mind conceives.... Mind is above all clever ... as a barrel of monkeys ... the mind flickers from objects to object and thought to thought ... the mind is good at sifting and sorting, it is not good at making choices” (Iyengar 113-114).

As opposed to mind, Intelligence in the yogic tradition is “reflexive; it can stand outside the self and perceive objectively, not just subjectively.... Intelligence does not chat. It is the quiet, determined, clear-eyed revolutionary of our consciousness ... the role of intelligence ... [is] to stop, to discern, to discriminate, to intervene. Intelligence performs its tasks firstly by its ability to freeze-frame the flow of thought. This is what we call cognition. Cognition is the process of knowing and includes both awareness and judgment. Cognition allows us to perceive in the present moment that at the heart of a situation is a choice” (Iyengar 123-126).

When Descartes proposes to establish a unifying science, a mode of knowledge relying solely on the principle of reason and taking on multiple attributes, he proposes to put this faculty to the test by freeing it from its preconceived ideas. Above all, besides looking for a method that will enable him to make the complex faculty of reason reliable, he also identifies reason as a very basic, universal quality common to all humans, known as common sense: “that which one calls 'good sense' or 'reason,' is

naturally equal in all men; and thus ... the diversity of our opinions comes not therefrom that some are more reasonable than others, but solely therefrom that we conduct our thoughts on diverse paths and do not consider the same things. For it is not enough to have good sense, but the principal is to apply it well” (Heffernan 15).

It is interesting to note that this common sense is in fact a basic quality for Descartes, and that it is only because of different ways of conducting our thoughts that we reach different opinions. Descartes’s way of finding a method to avoid these deviations can be seen in the application of the four rules he proposes to free reason from prejudices. In this context, what Descartes would call reason, the yogi would call intelligence or *buddhi*, the faculty isolated by yoga in the intellectual body.

In the first rule of evidence, the one that requires that we put into question all perception, we see how Descartes applies yogic principles, in that the perceptions of the mind are seen as just random data, not absolute knowledge, since the rule demands that gathered information be questioned, thus applying the qualities of discerning and evaluating proper to yogic Intelligence or Cartesian reason. The second rule demands that all givens be analyzed by reducing them to elementary questions, making sure that all data that comes to mind be sorted out by intelligence. The third rule of order demands that one go from simplest to more complex thoughts, again putting intelligence to work so that the data of mind is not sheer clutter. The rule of enumeration falls also in this category since it requires an inventory of the objects of thought. Finally, applying the notion of doubt adds distance and awareness to the process, establishing reliable knowledge.

Comparing Descartes’s method to the yogic system thus enables us to highlight how Descartes had intuitively found a way of making man’s judgment more accurate by applying rigorous rules to the reasoning process and the organization of our thoughts, thus developing an introverted approach to the quest for knowledge. Yet while applying this method purely from an intellectual point of view clearly brought Descartes insight, it also generated some blindness. Indeed, the realm of the mind is not only subtle, but also physical, in that it operates through perception, an extension of the function of the senses, as yoga shows. Thus to separate mind and body so drastically, and to define the soul as analogous to that which enables us to think in abstraction and put distance between thinker and thought, seems to demonstrate that the very intellectual qualities Descartes employed trapped him in a prison house of mind. On the one hand, his brilliant demonstration establishes a mode of knowledge that relies on the principle of reason, taking on a new, objective light thanks to his scientific approach. On the other hand, his total separation of mind and body and his conclusion that only man has a soul shows how he overlooked the importance of the physical and the biological.

If one reflects back on Descartes's initial description of reason as *le bon sens*, one wonders how it could not occur to him that this quality has to reside originally in the body, which provides intelligent feedback under the form of instinct before our intellect is completely formed. Even in his lifetime this problem caused difficulties in Descartes's system. We can find a partial answer to this problematic by looking at the take on Cartesianism provided in the ideas of Rousseau, who like Descartes had an illuminating vision, though his was a waking visionary experience that struck him while he was on his way to visit his friend Diderot in Vincennes. Rousseau maintained that reason is the last faculty to form in the child because it entails the use of other faculties and also requires having learnt to think in abstractions. He recognized that what he called sensitive reason, or the reason of the senses and the body, was a foundation that was not to be overlooked in the basic learning process. In fact, what makes Rousseau's method of education relevant in forming the mind and clear judgment is his teaching of the child through physical experiences and definite contexts that channel the child's energy and senses adequately so he will not be betrayed by his senses, and will learn to think properly. *Feeling* properly, rather than thought, becomes for Rousseau an essential tool for gaining knowledge of the self and the other. As he has the Savoyard Vicar state in *Emile*, in a direct reflection of Descartes's famous *cogito*, "*Je sens, donc je suis.*" Thinking accurately can only occur if the child develops harmoniously with his environment in emotional health. Thus in recognizing development from the material through the energetic and mental, Rousseau postulates a system that is closer to the yogic system of interacting bodies or *kosas*, in which mind and matter, body and spirit, are evolutes of each other rather than distinct existants.

Through visionary experiences, Descartes and Rousseau both were prompted to share their revelations and wisdom. Descartes, a conventional scholar whose education at the College of La Flèche was overseen by Jesuits, rejected traditional methods of passing on knowledge and used his inspiration, his intellectual talent, and his experience as a mathematician to give us a method that would bring accuracy and unity to the exposition and pursuit of knowledge. Rousseau, an autodidact, had a revelation that touched him to the core, prompting him to write a series of works, theoretical and fictional, that at heart give the same message and provide the same solutions. For Rousseau man is born with an innate and instinctive sense *amour de soi*, and it is his exposure to society that made him proud, full of *amour-propre*. Depraved in other words because he no longer can feel or sense who he truly is, he gets taken over by games of his mind that are part of the legacy of society. For Rousseau, the sense of pity or compassion linked to the feeling of *amour de soi* becomes a given that must be respected and emphasized as the foundation of a good education. Thus, for instance, teachings in *Emile* aim at preventing the corruption of the senses and the

mind by using a method that grounds the child through direct experiences while leading him to knowledge that is the direct result of practical lessons that engage his body, i.e. his senses, his feelings, and ultimately his mind, though here mind is assisted by his compassionate heart. For instance, in the incident of the garden in *Emile*, the pupil Emile finds out that he has been careless and destroyed the gardener's crop, and thus learns that by identifying with the gardener through his own predicament, he can feel sympathy. Can the fact of Descartes's education, and his subsequent rejection of it, be read as a movement of *amour-propre*, even if it gives valuable insights into the operations of the mind? In yoga, one of the traps of *vijnana*, intellect, is pride.

If Descartes's method offers a yogic component in the quest for intellectual accuracy and mental clarity, his contribution remains limited to the workings of the head. On the other hand, because Rousseau tries to educate a child through *all* aspects of his being—physical, emotional, mental and intellectual—we can draw a closer parallel between Rousseau's approach and the yogic agenda, which aims at integrating body, mind, and spirit while ensuring that the mind does not take over but still keeps its lucidity and clarity, so as to reflect the self, or what Rousseau would call *amour de soi*.

Regardless of their differences in approach, we certainly can say that both Descartes and Rousseau understood the double-edged aspect of the mind. We can here quote the beginning of the Yoga Sutra as support to the convictions these philosophers raise regarding the risks of the clutter of the mind:

*Yoga is the cessation of the turning of thought. When thought ceases, the spirit stands in its true identity as observer to the world. Otherwise, the observer identifies with the turning of thoughts.* (Sutras I.2-4; Miller 29)

If Rousseau can be seen as an answer to Descartes's overlooking of the importance of the body in the process of teaching the art of thinking articulately by introducing the notion of sensitive reason, David Hume's theory of knowledge based on sense impression surprisingly comes to a dead end as far as knowledge is concerned. It seems strange that while starting on premises that involve the putting into question of our perceptions, Hume ends up trapped in what the yogic system would identify as the aspect of the mind that deals solely with collecting data. Too intent perhaps on rehabilitating the importance of the senses in our interpretation of the world and the building up of knowledge as a series of subjective experiences, Hume's views, though accurate when seen from the context he chooses, i.e. seeing us as gathering a bundle of different perceptions that end up as sensory impressions in constant flux, lead to a very nihilistic outcome. If one cannot deny that our perceptions may sometimes be

skewed, and that our mind by its very fickle nature may create illusions, one wonders why Hume's interpretation does not go over the use of many faculties in the process of studying knowledge acquisition. Determined to undermine sciences as a subjective branch, and metaphysics as a form of superstition and sham, Hume chooses psychological explanations for the functioning of the mind, such as the recognition of laws of contiguity, resemblance, and associations as elements that influence how the mind processes knowledge, and in so doing becomes determined to prove that we cannot conceive of and grasp physically the connections between two objects of any cause and effect. Thus, starting from a philosophy that involves instinct by the very recognition of the use of the senses as sole means to apprehend the world, Hume ends up overlooking the importance of the physical aspect of nature and centers on a limited use of mental faculty, our seeing of cause and effect, as just mental operations in the mind that have nothing to do with the objects and events that may occur around them. Paradoxically, through beginning from a point of view that may have included an objective study of facts, Hume more than Descartes relies on the function of the mind rather than on questioning how the mind can use its data in conjunction with other faculties. Even memory and imagination end up being defined in a matter-of-fact way: "[t]hese faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment" (Hume, *Enquiries* 17) without getting into the complexities that these faculties involve: "we scarcely ever hear a short memory given as a reason for a man's failure in any undertaking" (*Enquiries* 241).

We cannot help but here see a very extraverted theory, though one based on introspective enquiries. If Descartes wants to find a unifying theory of knowledge, his method leads not to defining knowledge as a quantitative experience, but to a qualitative experience relying essentially on intuition and instinct by its very nature of defining one of the many properties of reason as the practice of common sense. But from the start, Hume sees knowledge as something cumulative. In yoga, knowing is knowing that you have to learn to be lucid by seeing clearly through yourself, while ignorance is equated with not seeing but perceiving. Above all, yoga is about seeing the self, the clear eyed observer in us, as opposed to *ahamkara*, the subjective, little self or ego whose identity is just the reflection of past and present perceptions and experiences attached to the person who accumulated a series of data that contributed in creating a transient and illusory identity linked to the interaction of the body with the outside world. Mind by definition in yoga represents the outer layer of consciousness that often fluctuates and is incapable of making reflective, productive choices, since it is basically an indiscriminate data collector and is not a part of the mental body that can operate alone as a self sufficient faculty. Hume himself, when talking about people's personal identity, having chosen sense perception and the mind



as the sole elements involved in the notion of the self, sees mankind only as “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement” (*Treatise* 193). He also adds that “the mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations” (*Treatise* 194). Intelligence being the inner layer of consciousness, and operating with perspective and discernment, gives the ability to reflect, to sort out ideas and choose. Hume’s theory does not involve the operation of free will, since the mind remains a passive collecting system.

Using the yogic model of the mental and intellectual bodies, which involves the interactions of the mind, the ego, and sensory perception in the case of dealing with outer consciousness, and which adds intelligence as the layer that represents inner consciousness and relies on discernment and the use of a well-informed will, one can understand better why Descartes’s system and his realization “I think therefore I am” that results from his methodic introspective quest could be misconstrued as a highly subjective conclusion based on metaphysical assumptions, if one chooses to look at man’s ability to know as solely relying on sense perception and on the acquisitive qualities of the mind. Moreover, if one limits the act of thinking to just a series of random recollections of impressions that turn into ideas which themselves are supposed to be copies of those impressions that are organized only through contiguity or associations, one comes to deal with a linear process solely involving the mind, and a very random and subjective method. This narrowed down analysis of man’s way of thinking relies on a subjective psychological perspective and not on a system that hinges on a very methodic way of identifying clear thinking. Thus Hume’s perception of Descartes’s conclusions could only strike him as subjective.

We do know that Descartes’s method relied heavily not only on not letting the transitory perceptions of the mind affect him—he left out the senses in his desire to get to the core of what knowledge meant—but also that his adoption of mathematical strategies to reach an accurate demonstration enabled him to realize, if not totally consciously at least intuitively, that the thinking I was not solely his subjective self, but this marvelous and complex functioning of the mind in a thinking endeavor that involved the abilities of the faculty of reasoning once it was stripped of all its prejudices via the four steps of the method. It is obvious that by attributing the faculty of thinking articulately to god, Descartes realized that there was more to thinking than the involvement of the ego, or the subjective self, but also insightful faculties that enabled him to step aside and draw detached conclusions aside from what the mind could contribute in terms of acquisitive knowledge.

This is why, I tend to think, Rousseau brings a synthesis between Descartes and



Hume; his system combines the positive touch of his century by adding in sensual reason, obviously an instinctive form of the body that helps to process and understand a situation which later will become more sophisticated when the child will learn not only to put his ideas clearly and simply, but to assist his intellectual reason with the use of three other well-trained faculties, memory and imagination and language trained to be very clear and organized with the assistance of reflection. In conclusion, the first part of the sutra, *Yoga is the cessation of the turning of thought. When thought ceases, the spirit stands in its true identity as observer to the world*, represents a more accurate understanding of continental philosophy, whereas the second part that concentrates on the propensity of the mind to constantly be active would be closer to an empiricist perspective such as is represented by Hume, in which *the observer identifies with the turning of thoughts*.

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**The Mirage of Educational Equity among Involuntary Minorities and an Involuntary Majority: A Comparison of Public Educational Systems Serving Indigenous Populations in the United States and South Africa**

Boyd L. Bradbury

Minnesota State University, Moorhead

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Abstract

The history of educational opportunity for both American Indians in the United States and Black Africans in South Africa is fraught with White governmental and Church intervention. An examination of both histories explains current educational inequities as the result of White domination of involuntary minorities in the United States and an involuntary majority in South Africa. This paper provides a brief history of postcolonial education of Africans and American Indians through comparison and contrast. Moreover, this paper seeks to explain why educational equity for both American Indians and Africans is little more than a mirage, and whether educational equity is possible in a post-Apartheid South African and a 21st century United States.

Main body of Paper

Whether in the majority or minority, dominant cultures drive the destiny of subservient cultures. A comparison of South African (African) and North American (American Indian) indigenous public educational systems from both historical and current perspectives makes it clear that educational policies and practices governing non-dominant cultures have been driven by calculated dominant culture motives. Although on opposite sides of the world, White political control has produced similar results for both African and American Indian populations in regard to education; that

is, a lack of educational equity through systems that have stranded an involuntary majority of Africans and an involuntary minority of American Indians in both literal and figurative “no man’s land.”

In both cases, African and American Indian, an historical overview of non-dominant culture education makes it clear that aspects of both cultural separation and assimilation were attempted. Murphy (1973) made the following observation.

In 1948, a new White government, reflecting mounting White concern over the threat of African competition for a larger share of the country’s wealth and power, came to power and launched the policy of Apartheid. Apartheid, although this first objective was to stiffen the lines of segregation among the country’s several racial groups, was soon translated into the policy of “separate development,” which stated that Africans would be separated from Whites in every possible sphere of life, but would then be assisted to develop, “along their own lines,” toward ultimate self-management and possibly full independence. (pp. 5-6)

Whites who possessed political power and influence had varied approaches toward American Indians. One approach was to segregate, as evidenced by the presence of reservations. In addition, Glenn (2011) noted,

Two courses of action toward Indians were considered at different times, and then combined uneasily. One was to educate Indians as rapidly as possible to fit into white society. Others took an even bloomier view that the North American indigenous peoples were fated to vanish, unable to compete in the struggle for survival in competition with white American. Richard Pratt, who has been referred to as the “red man’s Moses,” offered Indians assimilation or extinction. His choice was assimilation through education (Utley, 2004). The White purpose, for those Whites who held political power and influence, in educating American Indians, however, was hardly laudable. In the case of Pratt and those supportive of his thinking, it was viewed as cheaper to educate an American Indian than to kill one.

Under the cloak of religion, governmental policies toward non-dominant cultures were promulgated and justified. Educational approaches, which were driven by questionable motives, resulted in both assumptions about inherent qualities of subservient populations and changes in educational policies and practices. For Africans, segregated educational policy was justified as God’s will (Murphy, 1973). In the United States, it was argued that it was less expensive to educate American Indians than to kill them, and mission schools, with an army of Christian educators, was the answer (Glenn, 2011). To understand fully, however, the current state of educational policies and practices for both Africans and American Indians, one must examine the historical contexts within which these non-dominant cultures existed.

## Historical Context

In the case of both Africans and American Indians, those in power within the dominant White culture were faced with the issue of what to do with the subservient majority and minority populations, respectively. In both cases, a major influence on the treatment of the subservient populations was the result of viewpoints. In regard to American Indians, Glenn (2011) wrote,

The prevailing assumption—at least at the level at which policies are debated and government programs determined and implemented—tended to be that Indians were not by nature inferior to whites but that they were many centuries behind Europeans in cultural development, and, unless somehow they could be helped to overcome that lag, they were fated to disappear through an unequal competition. (p. 12)

In South Africa, a somewhat similar line of thought regarding culture was taken by Whites, but the purported belief was one of potential through cultural, linguistic, and physical separation as opposed to overcoming a cultural lag. In referencing The Eiselen Commission's report on Bantu education, Murphy (1973) noted,

...it acknowledges the genetic equality of African and White and argues for a different type of education because of deep cultural differences. It is thus consistent with the conception of ideal Apartheid, which argues that the several racial groups are different, but not necessarily unequal in either intelligence or potential. (p. 115)

Prior to the nineteenth century, there was little governmental focus on the education of the involuntary majority in South Africa and the involuntary minority in the United States. As noted by Murphy (1973, p. 58), "Prior to 1800 there was no effort to provide Western education for African youth, and contacts between Bantu-speaking Africans and White settlers were so rare and superficial that there was little concern on either side about African Schooling."

Horrel (1953) added,

In the closing decades of the 18th century missionary initiative had resulted in the expansion of schools toward the boundary between White and African settlement in the eastern Cape, but these schools were founded primarily for emancipated slaves, Khoisan speakers, and Coloureds; in many cases White children attended them as well, since there were no schools for the Whites. (p. 1)

Prior to the early part of the nineteenth century in the United States, American Indian education was minimal from a formalized standpoint. Glenn (2011) noted that

traditional education for American Indians was to serve the practical needs of the people (life skills) and enhance the soul (grow spiritually).

Governments in South Africa and the United States took up the issue of American Indian education, respectively, in the 19th century. However, a formalized approach to the education of American Indians began during the first part of the nineteenth century, whereas African education did not become a governmental focus until the latter part of the century.

### American Indians

As with African education, the official approach toward American Indian education in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century was that of separation. Smith (1997) noted that American Indians were viewed as separate from other Americans. For the most part, American Indians were treated as foreigners. In the United States, the federal role in Indian education grew with the Indian Civilization Act of 1824, which provided federal funding for the formal schooling of Indians. Mission schools were soon complemented by federal manual trade and boarding schools. The Act's main purpose was "...for introducing among them [Indians] the habits and arts of civilization" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 43). Bowden (1981, p. 168) noted that one missionary stated that the purpose of his school was to teach "those habits of sobriety, cleanliness, economy, and industry, so essential to civilized life."

In the 19th century, government agents offered a solution regarding Indians and language; that is, schools should be established, which children should be required to attend, and their barbarous dialect should be blotted out and the English language substituted (Reyhner and & Eder, 2004). This would make it possible, it was believed, to break down the tribal identities based on distinct languages and cultures, and so to fuse them into one homogeneous mass (Prucha, 1976). Government agents on reservations often criticized the use of native languages in mission schools. In the United States, the Indian Bureau required, in 1880, that "all instruction must be in English" both in its own schools and also in mission schools operated with public funding (Glenn, 2011, p. 131). Bowden (1981) noted,

Nineteenth-century missionaries all used similar methods to achieve their goals; they cut the children's hair, replaced native clothing with trousers, shirts, and dresses, and introduced soap, water, and combs. They gave the children new English names and taught them to eat with forks, sit in chairs, and perform household chores. They sought to change cultural concepts related to time, work ethic, and sex roles. Perhaps most life-changing was the replacement of the children's native language with English and the introduction of the idea of private property. (p. 169)



According to Glenn (2011, p. 11), “In general it was the white majority, or its policy-makers, who determined until recent decades that Indian children would be schooled separately.”

By the end of the nineteenth century, the military might of the United States had successfully overwhelmed the American Indian population. Snipp (2002) noted that with military containment achieved, the United States Government faced the task of assimilating American Indians into mainstream culture. An attempt was made to indoctrinate Indian children with Anglo-American cultural ideals while at the same time teaching basic academic skills. In many cases, the education included boarding schools far from their home. Beaulieu (2000, p. 37) noted that “the avowed purpose of schooling was to eliminate the distinctive cultural and linguistic traditions of American Indian people.” Glenn, (2011) concurred as follows.

Probably the most controversial act of Indian education in North America has been the role of boarding schools that took Indian youth, sometimes as young as seven or eight, away from their families for most or all of the year, often for a number of years, in order to provide them with education in a “total institution” designed, in the words of its most influential proponent, to “kill the Indian in him to save the man.” (p. 77)

One particularly poignant account of American Indian boarding school education at the turn of the twentieth century is put forth by Ah-nen-la-di-ni (1903) and reads as follows:

There were four Indian day schools on the reservation, all taught by young white women. I sometimes went to one of these, but learned practically nothing. The teachers did not understand our language, and we knew nothing of theirs so much progress was not possible. The Indian parents were disgusted with the schools, and did not urge their children to attend. When I was thirteen a great change occurred, for the honey-tongued agent of a new Government contract school appeared on the reservation, drumming up boys and girls for his institution. All that a wild Indian boy had to do, according to the agent, was to attend this school for a year or two, and he was sure to emerge therefrom with all the knowledge and skill of the white man. My father was away from the reservation at the time of the agent’s arrival, but mother and grandmother heard him with growing wonder and interest, as I did myself, and we all finally decided that I ought to go to this wonderful school and become a great man. Until I arrived at the school I had never heard that there were any other Indians in the country. My surprise, therefore, was great when I found myself surrounded in the school yard by strange Indian boys belonging to tribes of which I had never

heard. I had left home for the school with a great deal of hope, having said to my mother: 'Do not worry. I shall soon return to you a better boy and with a good education!' Little did I dream that that was the last time I would ever see her kind face. She died two years later, and I was not allowed to go to her funeral. (pp. 1781-1787)

The idea of assimilation was a widely held belief for a much of the history of the United States changed during the middle decades of the twentieth century. According to Snipp (2002), the assimilationist policies were replaced with new self-determination policies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and these policies acknowledged the rights of American Indians to decide their own future and to have the principal responsibility for overseeing their own affairs. The self-determination approach can be traced to policy debates that began in the 1920s. There was growing support for preservation of Indian language and cultures. In the general culture as well, there was less concern for assimilating Indians as a popular view developed which wished Indians to remain as they were...at least until they vanished entirely (Glenn, 2011, pp. 135-136). The Director of Indian Education wrote in 1932 that “[we] do not attempt to use the local language as the medium of instruction” since “the practical difficulties are probably insurmountable.” Many of the roughly 230 Indian languages at use in the United States at that time had never been given a written form suitable for instruction (Glenn, 2011, p. 136).

In the new jargon about pedagogy, Glenn (2011, p. 138) cast educational efforts of this era in a somewhat positive light by noting, “The BIA began to encourage its Indian schools to cultivate native arts and crafts—sometimes on the grounds of economic utility—and to use Indian legends and traditions as instructional material.” Giago (2006), however, provided a different viewpoint in noting,

The BIA schools were often poorly staffed and the teachers were more interested in bringing assimilation ideologies to the Indian students than educating them. On the other hand, the church-controlled schools were not only teaching assimilation but actively indoctrinating the students into a religious order. (p. 145)

Since of course there was no single culture common to the different tribes, the effort to base curriculum on Indian traditions had an undermining effect on the very premise of a Uniform Course of Study that could be provided to Indian youth from various tribes in off-reservation boarding schools. (Glenn, 2011, p. 138). At least it was possible to remove subject matter that, from a Progressive point of view, was alien to the experience of Indian youth, such as “English classics, algebra, geometry, and ancient history” (Szasz, 1999, p. 32). Inevitably, though, this effort to be “relevant”

widened the gap between children of the white majority, thus potentially deepening the isolation of Indians and limiting their access to higher education and to jobs in the national economy (Glenn, 2011, p. 138). Stout (2012) noted,

The American Indians themselves reacted differently to the formal European-style education; some welcomed it and encouraged it, while others went to lengths to avoid this education. Early on, a division was created in many Native American societies; those who supported white education were “progressives,” while those who opposed it were deemed “traditionals.” This dichotomy continued throughout history. (p. 16)

Between 1930 and 1970, the proportion of Indian children attending local public schools in the United States—with the costs of this schooling subsidized by the federal government—increased from 53% to 65%, with the intention that the proportion would continue to increase as integration took hold and the isolation of reservation life was broken down. By 1970, 129,000 Indian pupils were attending local public schools at partial federal expense, while only 51,000 attended schools operated by the federal government. The process continued: by 2007, 88-89 percent of Indian pupils in the United States were attending local public schools, 6-7 percent were attending Bureau of Indian Education schools, and the remainder were in private and religious schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008b, p. 22).

The failure of integration of Indian children into local school systems in the United States was asserted powerfully in 1969 by a Special Subcommittee on Indian Education of congress, the so-called “Kennedy report,” which concluded that the “dominant policy of the Federal Government towards the American Indian had been one of coercive assimilation,” and that this policy “has had disastrous effects on the education of Indian children.... Schools attended by Indian children have become a kind of battleground where the Indian child attempts to protect his integrity and identity as an individual by defeating the purposes of the school”; these schools have failed to “understand or adapt to, and in fact often denigrate, cultural differences”; the schools have blamed “their own failures on the Indian student,” which reinforces his “defensiveness”; the schools have failed “to recognize the importance and vitality of the Indian community”; and the community and child have retaliated “by treating the schools as an alien institution” (Szasz, 1999, pp. 150-151).

## Africans

Although formalized education was minimal for African until the later part of the nineteenth century, there was a marked increase in the number of missionaries working in South Africa after 1820. As with the American Indian population, the influence of religion on African education is indisputable. According to Murphy (1972),

The major objectives of the missionaries were evangelization and teaching African converts to read the bible, but underlying these was a deeper philosophy, growing out of abolitionist sentiment, that Western, Christian enlightenment, inculcated only through education, would free Africans from “barbarism” and assist them to enter into a relationship with the civilized world. Concomitantly, there was also the belief that education would enable the African people to better themselves economically by both self-improvement and participation in the Western economic system. Curriculum, therefore, often included manual arts training as well as reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. (pp. 321-322)

Although there was evidence of some separation between White and African education in South Africa during the nineteenth century, it was less evident than that which was found between Whites and American Indians in the United States. Murphy (1973) noted,

During much of the 19th century the curriculum for African schools differed little from that in White schools, and children of different races frequently studied together in the same schools. White students, particularly, frequently attended mission schools for Africans, where they paid far smaller fees than were charged at secular schools. In 1863, for instance, Lovedale (which had already begun to assume prominence as a leading center of education in the Cape) had 42 African and 45 White students in its academic department. These students attended the same classes, ate in the same dining room (though at separate tables), had different food, and slept in different dormitories. Although many schools continued throughout the period to offer manual and industrial training for both boys and girls the more important thrust was academic; Africans themselves increasingly voiced requests that they be provided with the same standard and type of education as Europeans. (pp. 63-64)

The truth of the matter, however, is that very few African students advanced beyond third grade in the nineteenth century. Neither the academic standard nor the curriculum was of more than abstract concern (Murphy, 1973). During the first part of the twentieth century, state control of education grew, including a push for complete segregation in schools. However, the central role of the missions in establishing, managing, financing and staffing schools continued (Murphy, 1973).

Since governmental concern was primarily financial, by the middle of the twentieth century, there were only three significant developments with African education in the area of curriculum; that is, vernacular language; more rapid growth of academic education than vocational; and the gradual expansion of secondary, teacher

training, and higher education. As financial support for African education improved, so did the growth of African education. This growth, which occurred between 1945 and 1953, is described by Murphy (1973) as follows:

The growth of African education in 1945-53 represented a movement to modernize, improve, and expand the educational system, consistent with the great surge of the South African economy during and after World War II. For the first time in South African history it seemed possible that real progress might be made toward closing the enormous gap between Africans and Whites which, in education, tended to favor Whites in every respect. (pp. 71-72)

According to Murphy (1973), there are five educational effects on African education that can be isolated from 1799 to 1953. They are: a creation of a westernized elite; an expansion of literacy and western values; an expansion of Christianity; a provision of skills; and expanded pressure for more education.

Although far from being on par with White education in South Africa, African education evidenced Africans entering the professions as early as the 1850s, and two percent of Africans were classified as professionals by 1951. Beyond a small percentage of Africans classified as elite, 2,250,000 literate Africans existed in South Africa in 1953. Although the total population of Africans was estimated at 9,000,000, there was modest educational success. In all likelihood, by 1953, education was responsible for bringing at least half the total African population into or close to the modernizing forces of the larger South African society (Murphy, 1973).

There is likely a large overlap between the literate African population and the Christian population. Due to the long and close association between evangelization and education, a 1960 census revealed nearly 6 in 10 Africans self-identified as Christian. T, the result was a replacement of many traditional values, attitudes, and behaviors (Murphy, 1973). As Murphy (1973) noted, however,

Beyond the undeniable modernizing, Christianizing impact of education it has provided a least some tens of thousands of Africans with specific skills which are viable tools in both occupational performance and social change in the modernizing social trend. Thus education has directly produced a substantial cadre of skilled Africans, mainly in the clerical-professional fields. But a large number of Africans have acquired industrial and vocational skills outside of the schools, as the growing demands of industry have forced limited upward mobility of African workers despite legal and trade union bars. (p. 76)

While literacy rates offer one tangible piece of evidence that Christianity and its associated schooling provided some benefit to Africans, the downside appears

significant. (Horsthemke and Enslin (2009) noted,

The effects of colonialism and enforced segregation on education in particular have been and continue to be profoundly disturbing. As German journalist Bartholomaeus Grill puts it: “Negro children who had the privilege of attending a mission school had the respective norms of civilization drilled into their heads: individualism, work discipline, rationality and responsibility, bodily hygiene, linear perception of time, literacy. They learned that their parents’ religion is mere idolatry, that the transmitted norms and values are primitive, that African culture prevents progress. (p. 211)

Although African education was destined to change during the last half of the twentieth century under what was termed “Bantu education,” pressure for more African education had been building for a century. In certain respects, it would seem that African education was more successful than American Indian education until the middle of the twentieth century. However, any modest success was challenged with the onset of Apartheid, which has its beginning in 1948.

Apartheid is generally said to have started after the 1948 election victory of the National Party. Apartheid is characterized by its central policy of “divide and rule,” which was aimed at dividing the nonwhite population along racial and even ethnic lines. This created a host of minority groups, which could no longer pose a threat to the white minority. In that way, Apartheid can also be described as a scheme to disempower the nonwhite population (Henrard, 2003, p. 37). Kymlicka (2004) added,

Prior to 1994, the undemocratic and authoritarian Apartheid system classified the population into four main racial groups, namely white, black or African, Indian or Asiatic, and coloured. The black racial grouping in turn was subdivided into ethnic groups like the Zulu, Xhosa, and Venda. Apartheid, mainly supported by the white population, became the official racial ideology and practice in South Africa and divided the society along racial and ethnic lines. The Apartheid regime privileged the white racial group over the others in terms of education, job creation, housing and other human rights. Land reform acts divided the different population groups according to geographical areas. Urban black, Indian and coloured people were forced to live on the outskirts of cities in so-called townships, while white people generally lived in their own suburbs in the cities. (p. 157)

According to Murphy (1973),

The main plank of the National Party’s platform, when it campaigned during the 1948 elections, was Apartheid, and it was presented to the White electorate as a



new, more effective way of preserving the White way of life from the feared competition and demands of an aspiring, ever more vocal Black population. As a result of its victory in the elections, the Party set to work energetically drafting legislation and undertaking formal studies in order to implement Apartheid without delay. Between 1949 and 1968 a complex pattern of legislation was enacted, and basic laws were frequently amended as experience disclosed flaws and loopholes. The Apartheid legislation tended to fall into three broad categories: laws that expanded the Government's control over citizen behavior and permitted it to act more easily against dissent; laws that expanded and particularized segregation in every area of national life; and laws that enabled the government to add a more dynamic, forward appearing program of separate development of the several racial groups. (pp. 88-90)

It was during the post-1948 period that what is known as Bantu education took shape. Bantu education was the term used to refer to education for Africans. As Henrad (2003, p. 38) noted, "Segregation was supported through acts such as the 1953 Bantu Education Act, and the 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, which laid down the basis for the policy of independent homelands or Grand Apartheid." The segregation was justified by the National Party on the basis of separate development. Although the National Party contended that policies regarding homelands and education were aimed at self-development, it is apparent that the policies governing Africans were clearly motivated by racist attitudes and a desire to keep resources and associated power with Whites.

As with the pre-Apartheid era, religion continued to impact Africans in significant ways. The National Party subscribed to the idea of Christian National Education (C. N. E.), which Murphy (1973) described as "a distinctively Afrikaner view of education's character and purpose, which had a definite influence on the conceptualization and implementation of Bantu Education." Henrard (2003) added,

During Apartheid, education was the only sector in which a distinction was made between Afrikaners and English-speaking people. Christian National Education required schools to educate their students about and in line with the spirit of Christian values. The official Apartheid policy wanted to give a Christian character to state schools and gave state funding preferentially to private schools with such a character and furthermore, the courses that were part of the public curriculum, namely "religious studies" or "biblical studies," had an essentially reformed and very conservative theological perspective in the sense that the focus was on Christian essentials, while hardly anything was said about the other world religions. (p. 39)

Afrikaners are Whites of Dutch ancestry, and they insisted on the preservation of their own language, Afrikaans, in racially separated schools for their own children. According to Murphy (1973, p. 107), “C. N. E. advocates the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, especially in primary schools. It stresses the divinely created character of nations and races, and teaches that mixing of different languages, cultures, religions, and races is contrary to God’s law.”

In referencing the Eiselen Commission, which was appointed by the National Party, Murphy (1973) noted two aims of Bantu education.

(a) From the viewpoint of the whole society the aim of Bantu education is the development of a modern progressive culture, with social institutions which will be in harmony with one another and with the evolving conditions of life to be met in South Africa, and with the schools which must serve as effective agents in the process of development.

(b) From the viewpoint of the individual the aims of Bantu education are the development of character and intellect, and the equipping of the child for his future work and surroundings. (p. 112)

It is evident that Bantu education served as one of the vehicles for perpetuating separation between Africans and Whites. Although the National Party purported that the separation, including Bantu education, was a means by which culture, language, and homelands could be preserved, the real intent of the separation was the preservation of White control of resources and power.

Those who established Bantu education believed that the African child was different from a the White child. Murphy (1973, p. 114) noted that the Eiselen Commission reported, “The Bantu child comes to school with a basic physical and psychological endowment that differs....” As a result, those on the Eiselen Commission argued for a different type of education for Bantu children based on deep cultural differences. As a result, Bantu education had the net effect of widening the gap between Africans and Whites. By the late 1950s, with the establishment of a Minister of Native Affairs and a separate Department of Bantu Education, the government wrested control of African education from the churches, but the influence of Christian education on Africans did not disappear. According to Murphy (1973, p. 235) this control resulted in both curriculum curricula and syllabi that were designed “to prepare young Africans to work subordinately in the White socio-economic system.” Henrard (2003, pp. 38-39) concurred by noting, “The system of education was segregated. Bantu Education, or the system for the African population, prepared students for a subordinated position in the workplace via a focus on practical subjects and an inferior curriculum.”

The official end of Apartheid in 1994 marked a transition for Africans. South Africa held its first democratic national elections. In the process all South Africans became citizens with the same, constitutionally protected rights. However, the change in official policy did not necessarily result in comprehensive change for Africans. Henrard (2003, p. 42) noted, “Despite the 1993 constitution’s insistence that the state was required to promote the equal use and enjoyment of all eleven official languages, there was and is an undeniable shift toward monolingualism in the public sphere, with English increasingly emerging as the lingua franca.” Henrard (2003) added,

The idea behind the medium of instruction is this. Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or language of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account (a) equity, (b) practicability and (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices. (p. 44)

Although educational change was one aspect of the end of Apartheid, the approach toward an African philosophy of education from Fundamental Pedagogics continued to define itself. According to Horsthemke and Enslin (2009),

The ‘old’ segregated, unequal and authoritarian Apartheid education system based on the ideology of Christian National Education and exemplified most starkly in Bantu Education received its philosophical and general theoretical justification in so-called ‘Fundamental Pedagogics.’ With the advent of post-Apartheid education there was a call for a different philosophy of education that would reflect this renewal, a focus on Africa and its cultures, identities and values, and the new imperatives for education in a postcolonial and post-Apartheid era. Thus emerged the idea of an African Philosophy of Education. (p. 210)

In the May 1996 constitution, there was a shift away from state-funded schools that promoted “educational interests based on a common language, culture or religion,” but the possibility remained that funding could flow to those (e.g. Afrikaners) who chose this (Henrad, 2003, p. 44). From the change there emerged an African Philosophy of Education, which is commonly seen to have its roots in an oral tradition, relying substantially either on myths, legends and traditions, or on the spoken communications of so-called “philosophical sages,” or on postcolonial ideologies of certain African leaders (Horsthemke and & Enslin (2009, p. 210). While there are those who would like to believe that the African Philosophy of Education is a sharp departure from Fundamental Pedagogics, which was associated with Christian National

Education, not everyone is convinced that this is the case. According to Horsthemke and Enslin (2009),

African Philosophy of Education would seek to address pressing practical issues and problems. These include democratization of the classroom, establishing relevance and sensitivity to social and cultural context within curricula and syllabi, issues around HIV/AIDS, educational redress and transformation. Unlike Fundamental Pedagogics, education policy since 1994 emphasizes redress and equal access in a democratic system committed to human rights. While Fundamental Pedagogics has supposedly been abandoned in South African education since 1994, some of its features are echoed in the turn to African Philosophy of Education. The most obvious of these lies in the apparently common assumption that society consists of a defined set of distinct groups each with its own culture or life—and worldview. Correspondingly, there is a theoretical orientation appropriate to each group. Postmodern theory has effectively revealed how cultural difference is no longer signified by “unitary or individual forms of identity because their continual implication in other symbolic systems always leaves them ‘incomplete’ or open to cultural translation. (pp. 212-213)

The African Philosophy of Education appears to contain an inherent conundrum of sorts. To fully understand and embrace the its principles, one must have been part of the oppressed, involuntary majority. If one fails to do so, then one’s worldview has been tainted by educational influences at the hands of the oppressors. However, those (Whites) from the outside (Whites) cannot criticize the African Philosophy of Education as they did not experience the oppression. To give carte blanche to this philosophy, especially given the complexity of cultural and linguistic issues that are present, sparks not only criticism, but corresponding questions about its legitimacy as to and whether the philosophy can accomplish its set principles in practice. The complexities of this issue are described by (Grill, 2003, p. 91), ); “Those who are ‘indigenous,’ ‘African’ in an ethnic sense, and/or who have experienced the brutality and oppressiveness of colonialism and Apartheid cannot but embrace African Philosophy of Education. If they do not, this is because their ‘senses, thinking and desires’ have been colonized, whereas Van Wyk (2005) would indicate that those who are not African cannot coherently criticize African Philosophy of Education, because they are not on the inside, as it were, not part of the African lifeworld. Other experts have added comments like the following:

Given, for example, the experience of ‘indigenous’ Africans of physical and mental colonization and oppression, it stands to reason that African Philosophy of Education would have as priorities matters of transformation and redress in

education. This cannot mean, however, that particular historical and socio-political circumstances yield or bestow automatic validation of justification of the content and objectives of African Philosophy of Education, in the sense of rendering it immune to criticism from without. (Horsthemke and & Enslin, 2009, p. 219)

...just as Fundamental Pedagogics was inclined to project a view of the child as helpless and in need of being led to adulthood within a restricted definition of an 'own culture,' so African Philosophy of Education is open to an insistence on educational aims that have to reflect correct interpretations of this 'own,' African culture. (Adeyemi and & Adeyinka 2003; Horsthemke and & Enslin 2005, pp. 60-61)

### Comparative Analysis

While there are some obvious differences between the African and American Indian populations, such as locality, one difference that merits consideration is that of minority and majority status. Unlike voluntary minorities, who immigrate to the United States voluntarily in search of a better life, involuntary minorities are those who did not choose emigration from their homelands or who experienced domination through conquest. Ogbu, who coined the term "involuntary minority" (1990, p. 46) explained that involuntary or caste-like minorities were brought into that society through slavery, conquest, or colonization (e.g. American Indians). Ogbu (1990) explains this attitude among involuntary minorities (e.g. American Indians) as a folk theory by noting,

In their folk theories of getting ahead, America's involuntary minorities often express the desire to succeed through education just like White Americans. However, because many generations of them have faced barriers to the opportunity structure as well as severe employment ceilings, American involuntary minorities have come to believe that more than education, individual effort, and hard work are required for them to overcome those obstacles. Consequently, the involuntary minorities' folk theories of how to get ahead differ in some significant ways from White middle-class American folk theory as well as from that of immigrant minorities. For example, involuntary minorities stress collective effort as the best means of achieving upward mobility. Since America's involuntary minorities do not really believe that the societal rules for self-advancement work for them as they do for White Americans, their folk theories exhort them to try to change the rules. Thus, rather than accept inferior educational standards and facilities or inequitable job conditions, American involuntary minorities may try to affect changes in the criteria for school credentialing and for employment. This stands in marked contrast to that of

immigrant minorities, who emphasize following the rules of the dominant culture. (p. 49)

Unlike voluntary minorities, who are willing to follow the rules of dominant culture and view cultural differences as barriers to be overcome, involuntary minorities see differences as markers of group identity to be maintained. Ogbu (1990) explained,

Cultural and language differences become boundary-maintaining mechanisms between themselves and the dominant group. Unlike members of immigrant groups, America's involuntary minorities, perhaps unconsciously, may perceive learning or speaking Standard English and practicing other aspects of White middle-class culture as threatening to their own minority cultures, languages, and identities. Consequently, those members of involuntary minority groups who try to cross cultural boundaries may experience social or psychological pressures from other members of their group not to do so. (p. 48)

If Ogbu's theory is correct, nothing short of systemic educational change would be needed to significantly increase student achievement among the American Indian population since a "buy" into the dominant culture's system would not happen. Ogbu (1990, p. 52) believed that "the relational factor that promotes school success among immigrant minorities involves their degree of acquiescence and trust in the schools and school personnel." American Indians tend to distrust institutions that have been established by and are controlled by Caucasians. Ogbu (1990) explained,

The relationship between involuntary minorities and the public schools (and, subsequently, those who control the schools) does not help to promote academic success among involuntary minorities. Generally, involuntary minorities have acquired a basic distrust for the public schools and for school personnel, and they believe that they are provided inferior education for no other reason than because they belong to involuntary minority groups. (p. 54)

If Ogbu's theory of involuntary minorities is correct, American Indians are stranded in what could be termed "no man's land." In light of a political system that is dominated by Whites, all aspects of American Indians' lives, including education, are controlled by those who possess power and wealth. To succeed within the system, American Indians would need to forsake their cultural heritage, language, and social mores by embracing the established norms of the dominant culture. Leveque (1994) conducted qualitative research with a fully assimilated American Indian population in California, and she suggested that,

The first variable, the change from castelike to immigrant status via choice, suggests that Ogbu's categories of immigrant and non-immigrant minorities are



not static: castelike minorities in the U.S. may not be bound to their castelike status. The key element for Native Americans in Barstow was choice. This group chose to leave their reservations and to live in the majority society. They have thus become immigrants by Ogbu's definition. Immigrant minorities usually assimilate by the third generation; these Native Americans had assimilated by the third generation. (p. 30)

Apparently the assimilation has yielded great educational dividends, and the study has "set the table" for future studies that would be similar in nature. Leveque (1994) noted,

This single case study opens questions for further study. The findings have indicated that a small group of Native Americans who came to Barstow from three major tribal reservations located in the Southwestern U.S. have assimilated into the majority culture within three generations. As a result, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these immigrants have exhibited academic achievement levels comparable to those of their peers in the setting. The major reason that assimilation was successful for this group was that they chose a particular way of life in a particular setting. They have chosen to become a part of the majority culture in Barstow. (p. 33)

Leveque's (1994) case study is indeed fascinating in that it raises the question as to whether minorities should forsake cultural identity in order to experience educational and socioeconomic success. Moreover, the study provides an impetus for similar research projects. Leveque (1994) is clearly provocative in noting,

Several concerns arise as a result of the findings and conclusions of this study. The academic success of the Native students in Barstow was related to the fact that they lived one cultural life: the life of the majority culture. Their Native ways were virtually lost. Must loss of culture be the price paid for academic success for Native Americans or any minority? Replication of this study in other settings, including reservation settings, would further clarify, support, or refute issues raised in this single study. (p. 34)

If Leveque (1994) is correct, then those American Indians who do not choose to assimilate are destined for a substandard existence, at least socioeconomically. An involuntary minority member would need to become an immigrant, who would then embrace the educational, political, and social structures of the dominant society and work within established norms. While this assimilation would not guarantee success, the odds of success would be greatly increased. This conundrum is faced by American

Indians, and internal strife results. To succeed educationally and socioeconomically, most American Indians would need to be competitive, get an education as prescribed by the dominant culture, and move away from family. In most cases, these actions would result in little more than a rear view mirror glimpse of one's culture, language, and social practices through the process of assimilation.

For Africans, the issue has not been one of involuntary minority status, but rather one of involuntary majority status. Africans comprise 79.2% of the South African population, while Whites make up 8.9% of the population (SouthAfrica.info, 2012). This is in sharp contrast to American Indians/Alaska Natives, who make up 1.7% of the population in the United States (US Census Bureau, 2010). With Africans, however, the vast majority of wealth still remains in the hands of Whites, even though the end of Apartheid in 1994 resulted in the transition of political power to Africans. Leibbrandt, et al. (2010) illustrated this point as follows:

Chapter 1 began by gathering the evidence to show that the long-run development trajectory in South Africa has been one that has generated a very high-inequality society with a strong racial component to this inequality. The bottom half of the income distribution was reserved for black South Africans and, at any of a wide range of poverty lines, poverty was dominated by black South Africans. Historically, this was the result of active racial privileging and discrimination in state policy. Even without the direct racial interventions in the labour market such as the reservation of jobs that took place under Apartheid, the racial biases in determining where people were allowed to live and in the education, health and social services policy matrix would have created a workforce with racially skewed human capital and spatial characteristics. Such spatial and human capital legacies leave a very long-run footprint and these processes are hard to reverse. They should not have been expected to disappear at the dawning of democratic government in South Africa. It is not just the case that the 15 years since the democratic transition is not enough time for these factors to work their ways out of South African society: it is a much more dynamic and daunting process than this. (p. 182)

As Leibbrandt, et al. (2010, p. 182) noted, "...the racial biases in determining where people were allowed to live and in the education, health and social services policy matrix..." would have impacted the Africans negatively. During the Apartheid era, Africans were forced to live in designated areas, known as townships, and access to education, healthcare, and social services were not on par with that which was afforded the Whites. Just as with the American Indian population, which was relegated to reservations with substandard healthcare, social services, and questionable education, so were the Africans subjected to small, worthless territories with minimal

governmental services. In both cases, governmental attempts to rectify an historical past fraught with systematic governmental disregard for equity cannot ameliorate conditions for either Africans or American Indians in an expedited way. Both Africans and American Indians were subjected to generations of “involuntary” status, and rectification, if even possible, would presumably take decades.

### Concluding Remarks

In reviewing both Africans and American Indians, the undeniable influence of government is evident, but the influence of the religion is equally apparent. In both cases, the Christian church and government worked hand-in-hand to either separate or assimilate the involuntary populations. Separation of Africans and Whites, while though purportedly done to assist the Africans in a separate development that would allow preservation of linguistic and cultural ways, while providing territorial and economic opportunity, was little more than window dressing for orchestrated racism that held preservation of White wealth and power as its central tenets. With American Indians, reservations were meant to separate populations so that wealth could be realized by the Whites. Reservation boundaries were changed, and laws such as the Dawes Act were designed to swindle reservation land. A blood quantum was established with the idea that American Indians would ultimately cease to exist. Mission schools separated American Indian children from their parents so that assimilation could occur, just as mission schools for Africans provided a curriculum that would help preserve the status quo. The systematic efforts of the government and the Christian church to mold the involuntary populations for the preservation of a White system of power and wealth, often in the name of God, are shameless at best. Much of molding occurred via education as determined by government policy, and it is evident through an historical analysis that educational equity has been little more than a mirage for both the involuntary minority of American Indians and the involuntary majority of Africans. While one could see the potential for fair and equal access to education and the benefits associated with education, governmental systems precluded the possibility that an equitable education could exist.

The real question that remains is whether the mirage of educational equity will continue. Whether the involuntary populations can rise from the ashes of generations of inequality through governmental policies that encourage equitable access to education and corresponding socioeconomic improvement remains to be seen. As Leibbrandt, et al. (, 2007) noted,

The first [issue] is whether the evolving character of the post-Apartheid economy and the policy efforts of the post-Apartheid government have been able to start to lower these very high aggregate levels of inequality. Then, there is the related

question of the composition of this inequality; specifically, whether the blunt racial footprint undergirding this inequality would start to grey and be replaced by new social strata and more subtle socio-economic dynamics. (p. 1)

Even if equality improves in South Africa, and there is some evidence that Africans are making gains in terms of access to educational opportunities, there must be rewards associated with increased education. Keswell (2010) provided data that even though there have been improvements in African access to educational opportunities, the overall political and social structures have not changed enough to provide incentives. While equality in the acquisition of education has seen modest improvements, the translation of educational opportunities into labor-market gains has diverged for Africans and Whites over the last decade. Unlike the case during apartheid, the direct effect of race on earnings is no longer as strong a factor in generating wage differentials between individuals. Rather, race now plays a strong role in determining how educational attainment comes to be valued in the labor market. The potential economic consequences of such a dramatic divergence in opportunities available to Whites and Africans are likely far-reaching. (p. 102)

This phenomenon could lead to an incentive structure for Africans that runs contrary to more schooling. Keswell (2010) noted,

This may impede or possibly even reverse gains made over the past decade in the equalization of schooling attainment, and could have the potential to further entrench racial inequalities as the old forms of (taste-based) labor-market discrimination that characterized the height of apartheid become displaced by statistical discrimination on the basis of schooling. (p. 103)

For American Indians, equitable access to educational opportunity and subsequent improvement in socioeconomic status would appear attainable, but remains elusive for most. Educational and income levels remain far below the national averages for the overall population with a median income of \$35,062 compared with \$50,046 (US Bureau of the Census, 2011). High unemployment, lower educational levels, and ills associated with poverty contribute to current state of American Indians. One is left to wonder whether the current situation is the result of a hangover effect from generations of governmental and Church involvement in the lives of the involuntary minority population. Giago (2006) wrote,

It has only been since the 1970s that the Indian people have had an opportunity to create an educational system on the reservations that is compatible with their culture, traditions and spirituality. Left to their own devices, the Indian people

have struggled mightily to put behind them a system that was intended to destroy rather than build. It has not been an easy challenge. Often it is easier to start from scratch rather than to attend, change, or restructure an educational system already in place. And this is what the Indian teachers and administrators face today (p. 159).

Whether education equity will continue to be little more than a mirage for the involuntary majority of South Africa and the American Indian involuntary minority in the United States remains to be seen. What is known at present, however, is that generations of political and religious intervention at the hands of dominant White cultures have resulted in disparate levels of education, employment, and socioeconomic status. In alluding to American Indian education, Bradbury (2009) commented,

The characteristics of and challenges faced by American Indians are unique in large part due to the historical treatment of this population by the government. In many respects, no other minority population faces issues such as a lack of academic achievement to the extent of those experienced by American Indians. While the road to closing the achievement gap may be slow to be realized, the journey can only begin with several steps in the right direction. (p. 100)

With both American Indians and Africans, it would seem that the journey has begun, with several steps (e.g. the end of Apartheid) in the right direction. What remains to be seen is whether those steps will lead to more than a mirage.

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**Reinventing Philosophy of Education through Physics: Deconstructing our Didactic,  
Deflating our Deontology, Derailing our Determinism**

Alexander Makedon

Arellano University, Manila, Philippines

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Abstract

The author uses our new understanding of the universe to deconstruct our positivistic dependence on traditional “science,” historical positivism or unrefined pragmatism. The Promethean physics of space-time introduces humans to a new era of return to idealism including its radical perspectivism of mindful representation of Logos (or any of its playful varieties). The irony of this philosophical itinerary going back to its almost theological roots is unmistakable, albeit done through the experimental wormhole of applied mathematics. As the ultimate border guards of curricular innovation, schools from kindergarten to college may sooner or later tilt the balance of learning in favor of expanded humanities and liberal arts programs, in the broader sense of liberating the mind. Ironically, the new physics seem to corroborate the metaphysics of such philosophers as Plato and Aristotle (each in a different way), who were the first to espouse such studies. Instead of relying merely on common sense, including relying singularly on empirical observation, humans must learn to learn “uncommonly” about the newly discoverable reality (such as learning mathematically through the “looking glass” of logic). Imagination, empathy, selflessness and representation become the new skills of the coming “age of space-time.” Through this paper the author builds a bridge with which to connect the landscape of humanities, including philosophy, which has been sometimes maligned or misunderstood in an age of science, with a new physics turned inward toward its own astronomical meta-physics. The significance of such new “discoveries” to understanding humans, including the design of a “universal” curriculum, is cataclysmic: from utilitarian and “economistic” (in the narrow sense of serving myopic social needs) we must become perspectival or altruistic. Our philosophy of education is turned inside out as a result of having to wear a new epistemological attire, albeit in the context of age-old problems.

Main Body of Paper

Ever since humans started thinking about who they are, they have been self aware and therefore by definition dualistic: they are no longer simply led or driven by their instincts to do what they do, as might be say a dog or a cat, but more philosophically have wanted to know why they do what they do. Such thinking often led them to have inner conflicts between, on the one hand, what they wanted to do because they were driven by instinct to do it, and on the other what their minds or conscience told them they ought to do because it is presumably the good or right thing to do. Such conflicts often led to the development of theories of ethics and morality, and by extension to laws and theology which erected deontological fences around human instincts, feelings and emotions. Unlike other animals which possess intelligence and imagination to a lesser degree than humans, and which therefore are less likely to become self-aware or philosophical, let alone conflictive, humans are inevitably condemned to think analytically, imagine unrealistically, exhort moralistically or speculate deeply. No other known animal has that kind of ability, or the resulting problems in self-awareness—or, alternatively, the knowledge or enlightenment that such ability entails.

### Return of Forms

Humans often attempt to overcome their materialism and become spiritualized, Karl Marx's theory of the dialectic of materialism notwithstanding.[1] We don't just crawl on our stomachs, but are often also driven by ideas. As corporeal beings wrapped around our instincts, emotions and desires, we hope that one day we can climb high up on the knowledge totem pole to where we can be free. Ironically, by keeping their noses to the ground, scientists, particularly physicists, have led us to conclusions that are anything but "grounded": underlying physical reality exists a world of principles or "ideas" which "drive" everything else.[2] What was earlier rejected as "the impossible dream," namely the unlikely metaphysics of an incorporeal reality described by Plato in his theory of Forms,[3] is now re-established, after a long hiatus during the so-called "scientific revolution," as the rightful epistemological queen of "true" being.[4]

### Spiritualization

There is seemingly nothing we can do to change the past, or the past of what we have been, except perhaps imagine a universe where there is no past, present or future, and where therefore we have complete freedom to be anywhere at any time we choose. Believe it or not, such is the universe which Albert Einstein described in his Theory of General Relativity.[5] Such a universe places a high premium on spirituality, including, as the author attempts to demonstrate, humans' own possible evolution toward a God-like state of existence.[6] This is so because in a universe where you can choose your place or time, as presumably you can in an Einsteinian universe, you are

no longer tied down by your corporeality to this or that time or place. Perhaps, then, if there is a grain of truth in the belief that behind everything lurks a Grand Design with a Grand Designer who designed it,[7] such as “God,” then in an Einsteinian universe humans may fulfill a teleological end embedded in how the universe is designed to become God-like themselves. In fact, if it is true that if left to its own devices the universe may finally collapse upon itself due to the pull of gravity, then designing the universe the way it is designed may have been God’s (or to paraphrase Aristotle, “Unmoved Mover’s”[8]) way of saving the universe from itself; or, for that matter, assuming the universe is one with God, of saving God from Himself.[9] The author has examined the role that humans may play in saving God in another paper;[10] suffice it here to focus our analysis on the philosophical aspects of modern physics, namely the return to logic and spiritualization which empirical science seems ironically to lead us to. The author has summarized some of the findings of modern physics in the section titled “Findings in Modern Physics and Some Implications for Education” below.

To all appearances, we are all already condemned to a life troubled by our thoughts: torn between what our minds dictate, on the one hand, and what our instincts constantly drive us toward, on the other, we end up living in a cauldron full of intellectual, social and emotional turmoil. What should we do, then, to save ourselves from ourselves? Should we believe Socrates, a Greek philosopher who is known to have said that an unexamined life is not worth living (in Attic Greek: “ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ”)?[11] Or should we follow the Tao of Lao Tzu, who presumably preached that humans should empty their minds of all thought?[12] Perhaps either alternative of living completely spiritualized or completely physically might be worse if one is to be used to the exclusion of the other, rather than our living as we do now as both physical and intellectual beings. Either alternative of complete thoughtfulness or complete "instinctiveness" might be too much to bear for the reasons I explain below, including the possible loneliness of living without feelings; or, in the event we lack an intellect, without even knowing what our lives are like. If we compare what humans can do because they are presumably mindful to what a dog or a cat can do because these animals are not, then we can begin to understand what it’s like living day to day without even knowing it, in the broader sense of understanding and being able to explain to oneself or others why we live as we do. Alternatively, if we were to live at the other extreme of the ontological spectrum as completely spiritualized or intellectualized beings,[13] then by definition we could not feel anything via our senses, since we would have none with which to interact with our physical or human environment, but at best would be capable of only imagining what feelings, perceptions or observable phenomena are like.

Immortality

Now let me ask you, our guests in the audience, if you had a choice whether to live as you do now, namely as dualistic beings with all of the associated inner and outer conflicts that such dualism may entail, but also with all of the associated earthy pleasures, versus living as completely spiritualized beings without a body, as some religious leaders claim we will live after our physical death, and therefore without any physical pain or desires (no hunger, no illness, no fatigue), then what would you choose: life as a dualistic being of the type known to us now? Or would you choose to live as an incorporeal being without a body? Please indicate your preference by simply raising your hand: How many of you in the audience would choose to live as a corporeal or embodied being, with both mind and body? Okay, thank you. And how many of you would rather live as completely spiritualized beings, as pure intellect with possibly vast amounts of knowledge, but without a body, and therefore without having to worry when the next meal will come from, or whether your body hurts or is ill or feels sleepy? Okay, thank you, no harm done, I will not tell God what you voted for. Now what if I throw in an extra bonus for those who chose to live incorporeally as pure intellect[14] or spirit, and tell you that spiritualized humans will live forever? [15] What if, in other words, I also offer those who choose to live as spirits guaranteed immortality? Those of you who chose to live as spirits need not fear death any longer because you will never have to die. Now how would you vote? Did any of you who earlier voted for a corporeal or physical existence change your mind (no pun intended)? Thanks again, I appreciate your input.

Let's re-examine our choices. Imagine for a second what it might be like living as a completely spiritualized being without a body. First of all, you would have none of the immediate pains or pleasures of the flesh, but at best only a memory of such pleasures from your past existence as a dualistic being. Your physical existence would presumably end today, in this room, because after listening to me you chose to become spirit. As spirit you also have a mind; you are capable of imagining what feelings and emotions are like, even if as spirit you have none of your own. As spirit you will be unable to represent feelings through language, such as singing, since you have no vocal chords or mouth with which to sing, but at best would represent them mathematically through mental acts, such as in abstract blueprints of the type Plato imagined the Forms are made of. Such forms by definition lack the rich quality of colorful sounds produced by their corresponding sound-waves. Since you lack hands and head and ears and other bodily parts you will be unable to experience "first hand," for lack of better term, any feelings or their associated emotions.

As the well known astrophysicists Stephen Hawking[16] and Michio Kaku[17] have pointed out, time itself is based on the pre-existence of three dimensional matter. Hence the universe as a whole is four-dimensional: three dimensions of matter, in the

broader sense of “matter” as that which includes subatomic particles, plus a fourth dimension for time. There may even exist additional dimensions which might be difficult for humans to “understand” through their senses, but which they can understand mathematically. In fact, if the string theory of elementary particles in quantum physics is correct, which recently many physicists believe it is, there may be a total of 11 dimensions which can only be represented mathematically since it is virtually impossible for humans to imagine what they might look like due to the physical limitations of our evolved senses.[18] Choosing to live outside your body is equal to timelessness; this is so because existence of that type is independent of physical reality, and therefore, as Thomas Aquinas correctly observed,[19] independent of the physics of deterioration. As spirit, you become immortal by default rather than by design. My earlier promise of immortality, it turns out, wasn't even necessary, since immortality is something you get for free, as it were, as it is logically intertwined, based on the findings of modern physics, with the idea of being incorporeal.

Many of the deities of the world's religions are presumably capable of choosing at will either corporeal or incorporeal forms, as did Zeus, Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* or Jesus in the New Testament of the Christian *Bible*. [20] If the findings of modern physics are to be taken at face value, humans might one day become capable of entering and exiting the passing of time at will. It would have been interesting to know what Stephen Hawking, the renown British astrophysicist, might have said about the matter, particularly since he has himself unfortunately lost most of his physical senses, moving around in a wheelchair and communicating with his students through a computer connected with wires to his brain.[21] Given his condition, Hawking might be in a better position than most of us to describe what it feels like having no senses or sensual feelings, yet still being capable as a corporeal being to describe for us the passing of time.

#### Incorporeal-Corporeal

As an incorporeal spirit you can't choose to be like an avatar, choosing between corporeal or incorporeal existence at will, sometimes assuming human form, as did presumably the Greek God Zeus who tricked the ladies, or God Krishna in the Hindu epic *Bhagavad Gita*. Ironically, there is now evidence as a result of recent findings in physics that humans may indeed have the possibility of behaving in God-like fashion at least in regard to their choice of place and time. As I insinuated earlier, one way of entering immortality without abandoning completely one's own mortal characteristics might be to learn how to travel in space-time.[22] I would like to call this revolving ontological door between relative timelessness and time-limitations the Pendulum of Immortality or PI (my term). If it is not yet possible to experience PI today, it remains at least imaginable as a future possibility given the new findings in general and special



theories of relativity, such as the curvature of gravity, time-travel and the behavior of subatomic quarks.[23]

The creator of everything must have pre-existed outside that which he/she created, such as the universe, as Aristotle reasoned regarding the Unmoved Mover: such a creator couldn't possibly create something which already existed. It follows that if time is wrapped up as one with the universe, which physicists describe as the fourth dimension, then since one can't have one without the other, the creator must necessarily have the ability to exist outside time, or in other words be "timeless." The creator couldn't possibly be part of that which he/she created, or else he/she would not only be incapable of creating it, since then he/she would also have to recreate himself or herself; but also could not possibly claim to have created something which already exists. Furthermore, if such a creator is capable of visiting the earth at any time, as presumably did a variety of deities in a number of religious traditions, then by doing so he or she has shown the ontological possibility of existing god-like as an immortal being. Without sounding hubristic, it seems on logical grounds that if, say, God can do it, then why not humans, as well? In fact, if we are made in the image of God, as we are told we are in any number of religious beliefs, including Christianity,[24] then why shouldn't we also be capable of doing what God can do, such as choosing at will to live as immortal beings; or, assuming God's abilities to assume corporeal and incorporeal forms at will, do likewise as humans? These are some of the questions that can be asked even if one were never to refer to the "avataristic" tendencies of deities, but simply point to the new findings in astrophysics. Such findings offer the possibility of a blueprint for a world more akin to Alice's Wonderland[25] than the traditional world we were taught in high school physics classes to believe in.

The fact that humans often bewail their state of mortality implies that they enjoy being alive and would prefer they remain that way, rather than have to die. As some observers of the human condition claim, as did Sigmund Freud in his book *The Future of an Illusion* (referring to religious beliefs in immortality[26]), humans often invent ways with which to imagine themselves being immortal. Ironically, the new findings in physics enhance the possibilities of a human whose physical limitations are radically redefined, including breaking down time and space barriers, and therefore by extension possibly also the barriers of mortality. Such a universe turns perceived reality on its head by having life imitate physics, rather than the other way around. What so far social psychologists describe as projections of guilt, including the invention of an afterlife or the creation of imaginable "comfort zones" in a context that assuages their insecurities, may turn out after all to have some basis in fact. The world may turn out to be so "weird"[27] that it seems as if humans evolved their imagination not vainly to

simply imagine unreality, but instead for a more tangible purpose, such as intuitively understanding through imagination the true reality of the world.

Quantum physics is gradually turning the scientific age back to its pre-scientific attitudes, albeit this time on the basis of the evidence itself. Repressed beliefs which were earlier associated with superstition return with empirical vengeance toward a more knowledgeable future. We are entering a new age of radical perspectivism where what you see is less real than what you think or imagine. Plato's idealism, which espoused the theory of ethereal Forms or Ideas as being the only true reality (while the world we see is but an illusion) re-emerges victorious, with all the dust that traditional science heaped on its principles being blown away by modern science herself even in spite of Plato's own rejection of crude scientific experimentalism.[28] Witness the seeming "awareness" of quark pairs that communicate with each other even at a great distance;[29] Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which wreaks havoc to predictability;[30] or the intricate design of string theory which has none of the characteristics of three or four dimensional space associated with traditional science.[31] It is as if science had within its cocoon of experimentalism its own surprisingly ethereal chrysalis waiting for the right time and age to transform itself into idea. Ideas, such as the willfulness of a teleological imagination, regain their long lost crown at the expense of crude positivism. The phenomenology of traditional science is overturned by none other than science herself, albeit in her latest transformation in the form of quantum physics. The scientific method has now become the method of deconstructing traditional science down to its incorporeal, seemingly anti-scientific ideas. Two hundred years worth of the so-called scientific revolution ended with an anti-positivistic thump, its earlier rejection of metaphysics notwithstanding.

Gone are the days of almost worshipping the school laboratory. It seems that now we must begin to balance our experimentalism with wider applications of critical thinking, philosophical dialectics, debates and imagination, or more broadly the "language" of the liberal arts (as we did, for that matter, under scholasticism). Given the critical role that science herself played in deconstructing her own particular brand of doctrinaire extremism, we must bring a better balance in the classroom between the dialectic of abstract reason and so-called empirical evidence, rather than allow the pendulum of our pedagogy to swing all the way to the other extreme of polemic anti-experimentalism envisioned by Plato in his dialogues, such as *The Republic*. Plato's radical idealism suddenly gleams brighter again, not because its epistemology is balanced, which it is not, but because in recent times it was unjustifiably buried under the weight of a presumptuously anti-metaphysical brand of positivism. With the coming of the age of modern science, some of Plato's ideas are "rediscovered" with a vengeance (hence Plato's apparent renewed popularity as a topic of study as seen from browsing

the number of new web sites and conference papers written about his ideas).

To return to our earlier hypothetical ideas regarding our spiritualized existence, if such an existence is bad, so much more so will be living in such a condition forever. Having too much of a possibly bad thing doesn't necessarily make it any better. If living without a body is not a good thing, having more of the same, as when one is forced to live without a body forever, makes it infinitely worse! Of course we won't really know until we have tried it, something which I don't think anyone of us in this room so far has ever attempted and lived to tell (with the possible exception of people who went through near-death experiences).

As I wrote in another paper regarding God's possible loneliness,[32] imagine how lonely you might feel without a body, or more abstractly without the earth or universe with which to surround yourself, or the colors and sounds, sensations and sensualities, fruits and flowers and smells and sights of the world. A world without the physical world might be desperately lonely, quiet and desolate, its promise of possibly unparalleled knowledge in the form of an all-knowing intellect notwithstanding. Such is the world, incidentally, in Platonic eschatology, particularly his ideal world of forms. As we often say in plain English, beware what you wish for because if you get it you may not only regret it, but possibly be too late to do anything about it to change it.

If I ask you again an open-ended question on the type of existence you would prefer, some of you may choose to live like a God. What do I mean by that? You may choose to have both your corporeal cake and your incorporeal immortality—as, indeed, many people do by imagining their souls to be immortal. Such a choice is not impossible to imagine, but may actually be a goal which humans ultimately may be able to achieve. As I argue in another paper on the ethics of radical perspectivism,[33] a new philosophy that I wrote about over twenty years ago,[34] we might be able as humans to learn, over the millennia or the millions or billions of years ahead of us, so much about who we really are through our cultural and scientific studies, and what the universe and all of existence is really all about, that we will gain the ability to not only save the universe from collapsing upon itself, as some physicists predict it might, but also recreate it or even a better one, as indeed a Creator God might have done. It is as if we were created not merely to populate the earth, or other planets, but also possibly as a last gesture of desperation by a dying god who placed the key of His own salvation in our minds. We might, in other words, become precisely the God we imagine is all powerful and immortal, as if to prove finally through a roundabout way of saving everything from nothing that knowledge is indeed power.

#### Findings in Modern Physics and Some Implications for Education

I mentioned in the paper some of the new findings in physics. I am not a

physicist, so please do not ask me to prove to you Einstein's theory of either general or special relativity. I am only going to repeat here in a nutshell form what I recently read in books written by professors of astrophysics who wrote books for the lay public; some such books have already been referred to in the endnotes, above. The findings of physics that I am about to describe are apparently accepted by almost all members of the scientific community, their almost unbelievable nature notwithstanding. In fact some seem so outlandish that even the most creative science fiction writer would have a hard time imagining them. Included in the references is a book by two professors of astrophysics at the University of Athens in Greece, professors Danezis and Theodosiou, *The Future of our Past*.<sup>[35]</sup> I should mention here that this book was the straw that broke the back of my hesitation and finally motivated me to write this paper.

The findings in modern physics may be summarized for our purposes here as follows:

1) Time is not an independent constant.

The length of each time unit is based on the mass of the context in which it takes place. If you thought you knew what time is, check again, because at some other place your time may be different. For example, if you ask someone to wait a second, as people often do in call centers, in another space time dimension it may actually take hours or years for them to return, as unfortunately is sometimes the case even today when placed on hold (but of course I am joking regarding call centers). A second a million years ago may not have had the same duration as a second today because the mass of the universe at that time or place was different. The higher the mass, the slower the time goes by. If mass increases exponentially, so does the slowing down of time. The passing of time in so-called black holes slows down to almost zero, as those who take a final examination for which they have not prepared may know only too well (joke). The chameleon of time change implies that humans, too, have learned to adopt to change to survive.

2) Outside such mass or space, there is no time.

Whatever exists outside the Universe is thus by definition timeless or "immortal". Such a finding seems to provide scientific evidence that Plato's immaterial forms are at least possible, if not reassure those who worry about dying that there may indeed exist a place where it is possible to live forever.

3) The material world that humans see and experience is not really real.

The world that humans experience with their senses is not really "real" but at best

how humans are capable of experiencing the world through their senses. According to physicists, what actually exists is not the objects themselves, but the fields of energy behind such presumably concrete phenomena. Like Plato's Allegory of the Cave in the *Republic* [36] where people are only capable of seeing shadows, so the universe we see only a reflection of the truth, rather than truth itself. The physicists' findings seem to corroborate many an ancient philosophers' suspicion that the material world is illusory or transitory, with a deeper reality behind such appearances holding a higher but invisible truth. Plato proposed that philosophers use dialectic to see the reality behind the material façade.[37] Physicists use mathematics with which to read the language of the universe. Mathematics, too, play an important part in Plato's *Republic*, as do the humanities and music.[38] Witness also another Greek philosopher's views, Aristotle's; Aristotle's emphasis on a well rounded "liberal" curriculum ironically seems more relevant now than ever given the seemingly aesthetic nature of reality. Aristotle's own example of having written widely on matters ethical, artistic, biological, medical, logical and mathematical served as a role model for his students of the true nature of being human: humans are investigative beings that represent reality in their writings and research, rather than mere biological organisms whose main goal is physical survival.[39]

#### Significance for our schools

There is a new urgency placed on schools today, as a result of our new understanding of the universe, to abandon our ethnocentric provincialism or narrow-minded "scientism" in favor of universalism, philosophy, critical thinking, imagination and radical perspectivism. By "radical perspectivism" here the author means understanding the variety of perspectives embedded in the universe by assuming the perspective of not only human but also non-human others; by doing so we begin to see the whole rather than simply see only what humans would like to see (meaning, avoid projecting on the world our personal beliefs or biases before actually finding out about the world).[40]

#### 4) Uselessness of our senses

Within the infinitesimally small section of the universe which we occupy, our senses have helped us survive; unfortunately, as a result of our evolution within such an environment our senses have become useless in helping us "sense" true reality outside our particular evolutionary "habitat". We can no longer rely on our senses as the ultimate arbiter of truth, as modern physics has clearly demonstrated; for example, we cannot imagine what the world according to string theory looks like because our senses are too limited to allow us to imagine it. We must rely on our ability to think abstractly, such as by using mathematics, or, more broadly, by developing our ability to see reality

with our logical minds.

Significance for Education:

A renewed emphasis must be placed in schools on developing our students' intellectual abilities, including our ability to think critically or abstractly; or to understand realities which stand outside the immediate environment of our evolutionary development.

#### 5) Space in the universe is curved

The universe is curved in such strange ways that one day we may be able to travel through "wormholes" back and forth in time. As humans approach the limits of timelessness, they become ever more god-like, and therefore even more capable of using their minds to benefit the universe as a whole.

Significance for education:

By creating the potential for overcoming our corporeal selves, as in a Hegelian metamorphosis of our mental and biological antitheses toward spiritualization,[41] we can prove to god, if such a God exists, that we are worthy of our salvation. How do we accomplish this? The evidence so far in physics seems to indicate that we can accomplish this by putting ever more emphasis on university education of the highest possible quality and degree, with all of the prerequisite intellectualization that must precede it at the elementary and secondary school levels. Time is of the essence, no pun intended. Our brains are way too big (populated by approximately 80 to 200 billion neurons, or about half as many, or perhaps just as many, neurons as the stars and planets in our Milky Way galaxy[42])to waste by watching soap operas, engaging in worthless gossip, or pursuing, to paraphrase William Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, unedifying love relationships. As we embrace the universe within our sense of self we transcend our hatreds and begin, instead, as Jesus taught, to love even our perceived enemies. Such intellectualization is driven not only by our immediate survival as corporeal beings, such as through offering vocational courses that allow our graduates to earn a living, but also, and more importantly, by education in the liberal arts as an almost divinely inspired end.

#### 6) Network of subatomic particles

Pairs of subatomic particles, such as quarks, seem to be able to communicate with each other even when separated by large distances in the universe. Such a phenomenon leads one to theorize that the universe might be similar in design to our brains with their complicated networks of neurons: what at first may seem to be



unrelated phenomena taking place in the universe may turn out upon closer examination to be related. Such a view seems to highlight the well-known fact that “we are not alone in the universe.” By analogy to our brain’s capacity to store data, one may surmise that such a communication network may have storage capacities, albeit at an almost infinitely larger capacity than our brains. It may be worth investigating the possibility of the existence of a super-memory that remembers everything that happened in the universe since the “beginning of time.” Such a hypothesis may not be as far-fetched as it may seem: given our modern advances in super-computing, with its vast capabilities for the storage of data, having the ability to store historical data on a universal scale, including, as certain religions have proclaimed, God’s ability to “remember” the individual actions of humans, may seem ever more “doable,” and therefore worthy of re-considering or at least re-examining.

Significance for education:

As humans become increasingly better educated they may gradually represent in their thinking and actions universal realities whose magnitude of complexity is many times greater than their present ability in representing the world. In other words, as humans become better educated they come closer to representing, for lack of better all-inclusive term, the Mind of God, if not becoming god-like themselves. Humans may end up recreating the universe in their newly found role in the future as almost all-knowing divine beings divested of their corporeal past, albeit with strong memory of their history.

Conclusion

The new findings in physics regarding the unreal reality of the unseen laws that stand behind phenomena seem to reinforce the idea that the world is a playful stage of corporeal appearances where life often imitates art. The similarity of such findings to the tenets of idealism, such as Plato’s, is astounding. The author submits that we must not abandon one, such as the humanities, in favor of the other, such as “science,” as we did when we seemed to have abandoned some of our humanities in an Age of Science; but more fruitfully and beneficially, we should create a new balance between the new and the old, between philosophy and experimentalism; or more broadly, between pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, on the one hand, and serving our basic needs through our vocational curriculum, on the other. As the theory of general relativity has shown, time may be running backward from the future to the past, depending on the curvature of our universe, which might not only be a reason to rejoice that one day we may transcend our forward linearity, and therefore become able to travel in the past, but more importantly perhaps begin to value the freedom which our imagination allows, which may be seen as the corporeal-age “consolation prize” of a

mentally free time machine. What better way to help cultivate our students' imagination than through the arts, literature and theater, poetry and philosophy, and the rest of the humanities?

I would like to end by asking the audience to imagine what it might be like to have to create a new universe, or a new species, as did presumably God. Would you want the humans that you are about to create to be happy or not? How can you help them achieve the maximum amount of happiness? How can you help them avoid pain given your own inability as an incorporeal being to feel pain or pleasure? Is being well intended, as you probably will be, good enough to help you make humans happy? Could it be that if you can't feel human feelings directly you must rely on the next best thing, your intuition? Or perhaps your god-like imagination? Should humans blame you, their creator in this hypothetical universe, for doing the best you can even if it is apparently not good enough to help them avoid pain? Many people choose to blame God for all of the bad things that happen, from wars and death and epidemics to political and personal corruption and natural catastrophes. If god is Good or Perfect, they argue, then why did He allow so much pain and suffering to take place? The only way to find out is if we think empathically, as in the educational method of radical perspectivism: let's try to see what it might feel like being in God's shoes. What is the kind of universe you could create to offer maximum degree of happiness to your creation, even such happiness as yourself, as a spiritualized, and therefore "sense-less" being, may be incapable of enjoying? If as Pythagoras mentioned the universe is decipherable through mathematics;<sup>[43]</sup> or if as Einstein claimed God doesn't play dice with the fate of the universe,<sup>[44]</sup> then how much better would you expect any creator to do, given his incomplete nature ("incomplete" in the sense of lacking a corporeal body)? For all of our corporeal faults and failures, ask yourself whether you would rather live without body and senses. Would you be happier as a result? If you think deeply enough about your alternatives, such as living as a spirit, with its associated sanitized Puritanism, then some of you may emerge happier for knowing that it is better to have both mind and body, even at the cost of causing you conflict or even death. Ironically, as we gradually evolve to higher stages of intellectualization, we may eventually end up tilting the balance in favor of being spiritual at the expense of our "animalistic" past, which over time we may romanticize, but nevertheless keep safely at a distance in order to avoid relapsing into dualism. To paraphrase from John Milton's epic poem by the same name, we may reminisce but rarely regret having left behind our long-lost "*Paradise Lost*."

## Endnotes

[1] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Frederick Engels. New York: Modern Library, 1906.

[2] Manos Danezis and Stratos Theodosiou, *The Future of our Past: Science and the New Civilization*. Athens, Greece: Diavlos Publishers, 2005. Published in Greek as follows: Μάνος Δανέζης και Στράτος Θεοδοσίου. *Το Μέλλον του Παρελθόντος μας: Επιστήμη και Νέος Πολιτισμός*. Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Δίαυλος, 2005. [www.diavlosbooks.gr](http://www.diavlosbooks.gr)

[3] Plato's discussion of the incorporeal world of forms or ideas, and similar discussions of the concept of "soul," occurs in several of his Dialogues, including *Parmenides* paragraphs 129-35; *Cratylus* paragraphs 389-90 & 439-40; *Timaeus* paragraphs 27-52; *Meno* paragraphs 71-81 & 85-6; *Republic* Book III paragraphs 402-03, Book V paragraphs 472-83, Books VI-VII paragraphs 500-17, and Books IX-X paragraphs 589-99; *Symposium* paragraphs 210-11; *Theaetetus* paragraphs 184-6; *Phaedrus* paragraphs 248-50 & 265-6; *Philebus* paragraphs 14-8; *Phaedo* paragraphs 73-80 & 109-11; *Sophist* 246-8 & 251-9. See *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, tr. Lane Cooper et. al. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989 (15<sup>th</sup> printing 1994).

[4] Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2007.

[5] Richard Wolfson, *Simply Einstein: Relativity Demystified*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003; for those who prefer an audio format, see the acclaimed audio-set by the Teaching Company of Prof. Wolfson's lectures, Richard Wolfson, *Einstein's Relativity and the Quantum Revolution: Modern Physics for Non-Scientists (24 lectures)*. The Teaching Company Great Courses Series CD Collection, 2000. <http://www.thegreatcourses.com/> See also Michio Kaku, *Einstein's Cosmos: How Albert Einstein's Vision Transformed Our Understanding of Space and Time*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2005

[6] A characteristic quote in Professors Danezis' and Theodosiou's book regarding the trend in modern physics toward the re-establishment of idealism is as follows (translated from the Greek by the author): "As we can understand on the basis of what has already been said, Modern Physics also accepts that in theory there is a metaphysical universalistic, realistic space which is also accepted by theological thinking." The passage in the original Greek: «Όπως αντιλαμβανόμαστε από τα προηγούμενα, και η Σύγχρονη Φυσική αποδέχεται θεωρητικά την ύπαρξη ενός υπεραισθητού συμπαντικού, πραγματικού χώρου, τον οποίο δέχεται και η θεολογική σκέψη». Danezis and Theodosiou, *The Future...*, p. 157. Professors Danezis and Theodosiou are professors of astrophysics at the University of Athens in Athens, Greece.

[7] Similar to the theory of "Intelligent Design," such a view may be used for better or for worse for any number of purposes, one of which is to prove the theory of crude creationism. See P. R. Gross and B. Forrest, *Creationism's Trojan Horse: The Wedge of*

*Intelligent Design*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[8] See Aristotle's book *Physics*, particularly books I and VII. In Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. and Tr. Richard McKeon, intro. C. D. C. Reeve. New York, NY: The Modern Library, 2001.

[9] For lack of a better term, the author borrowed the grammar of a male-gendered personification of God, namely that of God as a masculine-gender deity in western popular Christianity.

[10] Alexander Makedon, "On the Nature of Stupidity," particularly the sections on "God's Envy" and "God's Regret," in *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, Annual Conferences, 2004-2006*. Ed. C. Blatz and J. Helfer. Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse Publishers, pp. 209-41. Published also on line at <http://alexandermakedon.com/articles/NatureofStupidity.html>. See also A. Makedon, "Ethical Perpectivism and Practical Perspectives in the Classroom," *The Roundtable* Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2009, <http://spse.us/spse/ROUNDTABLE/Vol2No1Spring2009AlexanderMakedon.html>

[11] In Plato's *Apology*, paragraph 38a. In Plato, *The Collected Dialogues*, op. cit.

[12] Max Kaltenmark, *Lao Tzu and Taoism*. Tr. Roger Greaves. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1969.

[13] By "spiritualized being" the author means an incorporeal being that may have all of the mental capacities a human has, including imagination and memory, except lacks a physical body. The argument that such a being could not possibly exist because it lacks a body is arguing in a circle that proves nothing. That doesn't mean that there are or aren't such beings; the idea of their existence is used here as a hypothetical, rather than religious doctrine, to shed light on the findings of modern physics regarding the "incorporeal" nature of reality.

[14] For the purpose of this hypothetical, by "intellect" the author means the intellectual capacities that humans have in both their corporeal and incorporeal forms. Conceivably one could weave a whole theory in the form either of a philosophical treatise or science fiction of any number of possible varieties of spirits with more or less intellectual capacities, or none at all; such distinctions do not concern us here, as it is not the purpose of the paper to discuss alternative spiritual possibilities, but merely to address something widely familiar regarding the spiritual or incorporeal nature of the afterlife and findings in physics.

[15] By "spiritualized human" the author means in the hypothetical an independently self-aware intellectual entity. Whether such intellectual ontological autonomy is or is not necessarily linked to a larger Nous, or Mind, such as the Nous of God, is irrelevant for our purposes here (examination of the relationship between physics and

philosophy). The problem of spiritualization of human existence started in the west with the pre-Socratics, including Heraclitus, Anaxagoras and Parmenides, whose concept of nous underlined the dual nature of human existence, through the rest of western philosophers starting with Socrates and Plato and continuing today. Some examples may suffice to illustrate the extent to which the problems of spiritualization and immortality have been part of philosophical discourse: Augustine showed the necessity of memory as a prerequisite to incorporeal existence; Spinoza read intellect in everything; Descartes' mechanistic dualism may be seen as the outcome of centuries of discussion in philosophical circles of mind versus body, including discussion of the awareness of one's own thinking. See Heraclitus, *Fragments*, ed. & tr. Brooks Haxton, Penguin Classics, 2003; Parmenides, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, ed. and tr. A. H. Coxon, Parmenides Publishing, 2009; Anaxagoras, *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae: Fragments*, ed. & tr. Patricia Curd, University of Toronto Press, 2010; Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, Penguin Classics, 2003; Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, Penguin Classics 2005; Rene Descartes, *Metaphysics*, tr. Desmond Clarke, Penguin Classics, 1999.

[16] Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1998.

[17] Michio Kaku, *Physics of the Impossible: A Scientific Exploration into the World of Phasers, Force Fields, Teleportation, and Time Travel*. New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2009.

[18] Brian Greene, *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup>ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

[19] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, particularly his discussion of the immortality of the soul in paragraphs Ia.76.1 & Ia.76.3–4. In T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Complete Set*. Tr. and published by The Aquinas Institute, 2012.

[20] Winthrop Sargeant, *The Bhagavad Gītā: Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009.

[21] Kristin Larsen, *Stephen Hawking: A Biography*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2007.

[22] Michio Kaku, *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps and the Tenth Dimension*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995.

[23] Of particular interest in Prof. Wolfson's Lecture Series *Einstein's Relativity*, op. cit., are Lecture 14 "Curved Space-Time;" Lecture #17 "Enter the Quantum;" Lecture #19 "Quantum Uncertainty: Farewell to Determinism;" Lecture #22 "The Particle Zoo;" Lecture #24 "Toward a Theory of Everything."



[24] *Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 1:26-27 and 9:6.

[25] Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland: The Complete Collection*. New York, NY: Maplewood Books, 2013.

[26] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*. Ed. Todd Dufresne, tr. Gregory C. Richter. New York: Broadview Press, 2012.

[27] See Lecture #21 "Quantum Weirdness and Schrodinger's Cat" in Wolfson, *Einstein's Relativity*, op. cit.

[28] Plato, *Republic*, Book X, particularly Plato's example of the stick in water, paragraphs 602c-603a. In Plato, *The Collected Dialogues*, op.cit.

[29] Lecture #23 "Cosmic Connections" in Wolfson, *Einstein's Relativity*, op. cit.

[30] Lecture #19 "Quantum Uncertainty: Farewell to Determinism" in Wolfson, *Einstein's Relativity*, op. cit.

[31] Andrew Zimmerman Jones and Daniel Robbins, *String Theory for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Dummies Publishers, 2009.

[32] See footnote #10.

[33] A. Makedon, "Ethical Perpectivism and Practical Perspectives in the Classroom," *The Roundtable* Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2009  
<http://spse.us/spse/ROUNDTABLE/Vol2No1Spring2009AlexanderMakedon.html>

[34] Here is a list of some articles written by the author on radical perspectivism (the author is editing a relatively vast body of work on this topic which he plans to publish as soon he is done editing it): First Assumptions  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/FirstAssumptions.html>; Culture  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Culture.html>; Truth  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Truth.html>; Humans in the World  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/HumansWorld.html>; Language  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Language.html>; Morality  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Morality.html>; Mastery  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Mastery.html>; Ethics  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Ethics.html>; Imagination  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Imagination.html>; Science  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/Science.html>; Types of Human  
<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/TypesHuman.html>. See also the following articles published by the author in refereed publications: "Academic Morality as Universal Reciprocity: A Radically Perspectivistic Approach to Educational Ethics." *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 2001-2003*, ed.



Olivet Jagusah, Donald Smith and Alexander Makedon, AuthorHouse Publishers, 2005, pp. 397-408.

<http://alexandermakedon.com/RadicalPerspectivism/AcademicMorality.html>;

"Humans in the World: Introduction to the Educational Theory of Radical Perspectivism." *Proceedings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, 1991 and 1992*. Ed. David B. Owen and Ronald M. Swartz. Oakland, Michigan: College of Education, Oakland University, 1993, pp. 297-310. Also published in ERIC, Document No. ED 368-628

[35] See endnote #2.

[36] Book VII paragraphs 514a2 to 517a7. In *The Collected Dialogues*, op. cit.

[37] *Laws* Book X paragraph 892; *Republic* Book VII paragraphs 532-8; *Phaedrus* paragraphs 265-6, 270, 277b; *Phaedo* paragraphs 75-9; *Parmenides* paragraph 135; *Statesman* paragraphs 258, 261-8, 286-7; *Philebus* paragraphs 16-7, 57e, 59a; *Meno* paragraph 81e; *Sophist* paragraphs 240a, 227a; *Theaetetus* paragraph 161. In *The Collected Dialogues*, op. cit.

[38] Regarding mathematics see *Republic* Book VII paragraphs 510, 521-31. Plato discussed mathematics also in other works, such as *Greater Hippias* paragraph 303b; *Lesser Hippias* paragraph 366; *Laws* Book VII paragraphs 818-9; *Theaetetus* paragraphs 147, 162; *Phaedo* paragraph 92d; *Statesman* 266a. Regarding Plato's discussion of music in the *Republic*, see Book II paragraph 376, Book III paragraphs 397-9, 401-3, 410, 522, Book IV paragraph 424. Regarding other "humanities" subjects, such as the arts, philosophy, etc. see *Republic* Book I paragraph 330, Book III paragraphs 400-1, Book IV paragraph 421, Book VI paragraphs 487, 490, 495-8, Book VII paragraphs 522, 539, Book X paragraphs 601, 618. In *The Collected Dialogues*, op. cit.

[39] Aristotle's wide-ranging scholarship and academic interests may be seen by simply gleaming over some of the titles of his works, including: *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Politics*, *Ethics (Nicomachean Ethics)*, *History of Animals*, *On Memory and Reminiscence*, *On the Heavens*, *On Sophistical Refutations*, *Poetics* to name but a few. In *The Basic Works*, op. cit.

[40] A. Makedon, "Humans in the World: Introduction to the Educational Theory of Radical Perspectivism." Op. cit.

[41] Georg G. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Tr. J. B. Baillie. New York, NY: Dover Publications, 2003.

[42] A controversial comparison which nevertheless shows the vastness of our brain's capacity. See <http://www.omg-facts.com/Animals/By-Some-Estimates-There-As-Many-Neurons/27904>

[43] Mark Cohen, *Readings In Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales To Aristotle*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005.

[44] Albert Einstein wrote the following regarding this controversial topic: “But that He plays dice and uses ‘telepathic’ methods... is something that I cannot believe for a single moment.” Letter to Cornel Lanczos, March 21, 1942. In [wikiquote](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein)[http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert\\_Einstein](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein)

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## Appendix:

Paper abstracts, announcements, programs

Paper abstracts are available for the following years: 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

### Contents of Appendix by year and page number:

2007: p. 307.

2008: p. 318.

2009: p. 319.

2010: p. 321.

2011: p. 325.

2012: p. 334.

2013: p. 341.

### 2007 (vol. 1):

*SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)*  
Previously "*Midwest Philosophy of Education Society*"

*ABSTRACTS*

*OF*

*PRESENTATIONS*

*SPECIAL SPSE SESSIONS, ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION-CENTRAL DIVISION*

*CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, APRIL 20-21, 2007 (SPSE DATES)  
PALMER HOUSE HILTON HOTEL*

Abstracts are listed alphabetically according to their authors' last name.

1. Dhillon, Pradeep , University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, "Kant, Disciplinary Content, and Critical Thinking"

Email: dhillon@uiuc.edu

Abstract:

Roughly, I first propose to point to the enduring legacy of Kant's call for independent thinking in his essay "What is Enlightenment?" Drawing a distinction between formal and transcendental logic, thus focusing on discipline-specific content, I will argue that Kantian Logic provides a useful approach to teaching critical thinking. I will oppose Kant to both a general deductive approach typically taken in the teaching of critical thinking to teachers, and more recent approaches which seek to introduce a relational approach. I will argue that the Kantian approach offers us the most relevant way of preparing teachers for teaching critical thinking within the secondary and higher education.

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2. Eckrich, Lucille L. T., Illinois State University, "The Value of Philosophy and a Philosophy of Value in Teacher Education"

Email: lteckri@ilstu.edu

Abstract:

I will make two points in my presentation. First is the practical value of conceptual analysis for preservice teachers. In particular, drawing on my own teaching, I will suggest that preservice teachers can find rich and necessary pedagogical resource for their own teaching in coming to both distinguish and relate the concepts of socialization, education, and indoctrination. My second point will address the need for axiology in the study and practice of public education and schooling. In particular, I will suggest that understanding the nature of economic value, and its biased institutionalization in our existing monetary system, can have practical import both for explaining the achievement gap of poor and minority students and, more importantly, for designing and implementing new and sustainable approaches to school funding that can help.

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3. Fraser-Burgess, Sheron, Ball State University, "The Place of Reconstructed Philosophy in Pre-service Teacher Education "

Email: sfraserburge@bsu.edu

Abstract:

Now more than ever philosophy has a place in pre-service teacher education. For the past two decades, philosophy has steadily been the subject of postmodernist and critical theorists' critique and deconstruction. In a social milieu

of cultural broadmindedness, that only a euro-centric, normative version of the discipline has been historically legitimate in Western society was an object of ongoing derision by education radicals. Gradually an already fragile relationship, in the extant literature, between the more analytic methods of philosophy and the practices of schooling completely fragmented. Philosophy seemed to go one way and education the next. The revival of the place of philosophy comes, in my view, because of four developments.

One form of analytic philosophy, epistemology, has been duly chastised by feminist and social epistemology, which have argued cogently for normative but inclusive pathways to knowledge. Interesting questions are being raised about the significance of feminist and social constructs for education.

The trajectory of multicultural initiatives now places different social groups in competition with each other. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) write of the growing "tensions" that exist between various groups that gather under the umbrella of multiculturalism" (p. 61). For example, the term "culture" is highly contested as a label that applies to both ethnic groups and gays. At issue is the meaning and significance of pluralism. The analytic method of philosophy can clarify the terms of the debate and logically propose the parameters of social and political deliberation that could be acceptable to all.

The popularity of constructivist pedagogy has created an opportunity to revisit Dewey's pragmatist epistemology. Dewey's individualistic, subjective view of learning is partnered with a strong scientific leaning that presupposes the regularity of natural laws without holding with certainty to a knowable reality outside of ourselves. Education seems to have embraced the subjectivity and is confusedly dismissing and minimizing the regularity, creating false dilemmas for the teaching of math and science. Philosophy's concern with the criteria for knowledge and justification can provide a clarification of the problem. The demographic changes in American society means that schools will continue to be places of growing social conflict. The arguments of moral philosophy offer some promise for being a vehicle by which this kind of conflict can be addressed.

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4. Freedman, Joseph S., Alabama State University, Presenter, "Educational Philosophy as a Conceptual Framework"

Email:joseph-freedman@usa.net

Abstract:

Three reasons are given here in support of a "yes" answer. First, candidates for positions as teachers are often asked to present -- orally and/or in writing -- a personal philosophy of education. And candidates for K-12 administrative positions -- for example, for positions as principal, assistant principal, library media specialist, etc. -- also may be asked to formulate and present a "vision" pertaining to their administrative unit (e.g., a school, a library media center) that is in harmony with a broader institutional mission. A well articulated educational philosophy and/or vision can communicate the ability and willingness to make positive contributions within a K-12 educational setting.

Second, students normally are required to digest a very considerable amount of information -- much of which is mandated by individual states and/or NCATE --in the course of initial and advanced certification programs. Students can utilize a personal educational philosophy as a conceptual framework to help them organize and apply what they have studied. And third, while K-12 educational professionals all have guidelines, they also -- be they K-12 administrators or teachers -- have varying degrees of autonomy as to how they carry out their professional responsibilities. A personal educational philosophy can assist the education professional to develop a flexible overall framework within which he/she manages the autonomous as well as the mandated components of his/her professional position; such an overall framework can be used to help place one's own personal educational philosophy and vision into the context of and educational institution's mission and goals.

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5. Goddard, Connie, Education Writer / Independent Scholar, Evanston, Illinois "Ella Flagg Young and Dewey on Growth and Change in Teacher Education"

Email: [conniegoddard@comcast.net](mailto:conniegoddard@comcast.net)

Abstract:

In response to the question "Is there a place for philosophy in the certification of teachers?" I offer an emphatic yes! Notably absent from the current national debate on this subject are questions of a philosophic nature: are teachers to make citizens or workers? Is the process most in need of purpose or methods at this point in time? Can quantitative studies address qualitative questions? Does privatizing the education process inevitably demean the schools' democratic function, and if so, how so? And, how much of the teachers' role and preparation for it was determined by the sex and social class of those who occupied it when these determinations were made?

To address these questions I would rely on insights from the collaboration between John Dewey and Ella Flagg Young of a century ago. Specifically, his 1904 article "The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education," an article that addresses the education of teachers "and in doing so raises essential questions largely missing from current criticisms of teacher education. Like Dewey, Young wrote a great deal on these issues, but comments I would contribute to this discussion would be based largely on her experience as principal of the Chicago Normal School, a post she held from 1904 until 1909. Her comments in particular echo in the criticisms of teacher education made by Arthur Levine in his recent report (Educating School Teachers, 2006).

Young argued, for example (in a talk she gave in 1903) that domination kills individuality and thus destroys the possibility of true growth in both teacher and pupil. The ethical law that she claimed must underlie all vital change is the growth of the individual on the basis of his own ideals, thus, standardization and dictation of method deny true growth or the possibility of real change.

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6. Helfer, Jason , Knox College, "The Deleterious Effects of Dispositions Upon the Act of Instruction: How to Ensure Impotent Teachers"

Email: [jhelfer@knox.edu](mailto:jhelfer@knox.edu)

Abstract:

I shall consider the problematic nature of dispositions and how the sorts of evaluation schemes used by NCATE have deleterious effects on the intended result of teacher education programs. That is, rather than preparing effective teachers, NCATE program evaluation policies actually demand that teacher candidates are trained to be reactive and, ultimately, pedagogically impotent.

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7. Hufford, Don, Newman University, "Philosophy of Education and the Prophetic Voice"

Email: [HuffordD@newmanu.edu](mailto:HuffordD@newmanu.edu)

Abstract:

The thesis of the paper relates to the importance of helping teachers-to-be develop (in John Dewey's words) "a philosophic disposition." This way of thinking is intimately related to theologian Abraham Heschel's definition of a prophet as "one who asks the challenging questions" about present and past conditions. By asking the challenging questions, and open-mindedly pursuing divergent answers the teacher confronts the educational what is, and looks toward the what should be. Philosophical thinking with its prophetic implications, generates the transformative power to provide a counterpoint to the technocratic, behaviorist, entrepreneurial models that so dominate the content of educational discourse; and that permeate the demands of the teacher education accreditation process. Prospective teachers should be given opportunities to try on the prophet's robe. With alterations made by a philosophical understanding, it might just fit.

To be certified as an educational professional should signify more than the possession of a piece of paper verifying the successful absorption of testable knowledge and officially sanctioned technical expertise. It is important to wrestle with a metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological understanding of the whys, whats, and hows of the profession "to be exposed to the philosophical study of education. There is an often overlooked teacher responsibility. This is to question and challenge the answers that are given by an educational orthodoxy, and that are assumed to be adequate. Adequate is not enough. It is at this point that philosophy fits into the continually evolving equation of educational reform. The structured discussion will focus on why an accreditation review of a teacher education program should recognize the need for a "philosophic disposition" to be part of a teacher's professional possibilities.

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8. Jackson, Liz, University of Illinois-Champaign, "Education's Philosophical Aims and the Goals of Teacher Certification"

Email: [ejackso4@uiuc.edu](mailto:ejackso4@uiuc.edu)

Abstract:

What is the aim of public education? If the aim is to provide students with competency in basic subjects, a facts-based approach to teacher education involving functionally understanding different teaching methods may be justified. Yet if our goal is to also enable students to act autonomously in a diverse liberal democratic society, then we must equip teachers with the skills to engage young people more philosophically. In any case, as the aims and conditions of education change, teachers must be able to critically evaluate their practices with philosophical methods. This essay examines how education requires philosophy and how teaching depends upon philosophical thinking with reference to the author's experiences teaching pre-service and practicing teachers about the various theories underpinning education. Ultimately, the question as to whether teachers should study some philosophy as part of their training is answered affirmatively here.

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9. Jagusah, Olivet, Walden University, "Is there a Place for Philosophy in the Accreditation and Certification of Educational Programs for Teachers-An examination of the Implicit Assumptions in the Question!"

Email: [ojagusah@hotmail.com](mailto:ojagusah@hotmail.com)

Abstract:

Anywhere in the world, this question might sound odd, in that education is generally assumed to be about the examination of life and that teacher education ought to be at the heart of that examination praxis. However, in the culture of amusement, the examination of the lived experience is question, silent ideologies hold sway, and therefore



the over all future is compromised. Accrediting bodies will therefore do society some good, if educational experience is predicated on something more than the banality of Hakuuna Ma Tata or simply 'amusing ourselves to death'.

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10. Keegan, Chris, SUNY--Oneonta, "The Philosophy of Race and Teacher Preparation"

Email: keeganc@oneonta.edu

Abstract:

While many states now require as part of their teacher preparation programs/certification processes a course or course work in issues of diversity and multiculturalism, the training in this area is woefully inadequate and often approaches the absurd. It is safe to assume that most teachers (like most Americans) could not explain to a classroom of students the difference between the social construction of race and the biologically specious claim that race is a natural kind; nor could most teachers discuss, with any academic authority, issues such as racial essentialism, the history of racial laws and discrimination policies and the plasticity of such policies over time, the use of science to justify racial discrimination, the complications of identity, and the difference between ethnicity and race. This is a safe assumption to make because most intellectuals cannot provide a clear analysis of these issues. As a consequence, most teachers, and thus most public and private schools, continue to deal with problems of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism from a uninformed standpoint. The result is that in their most formative years, students are allowed to socially construct race under the assumption that it is natural, which by the way leads to all the other issues articulated above. As Anthony Appiah has noted, it is the duty of academics, teachers, and policy makers to correct such distorted views, because ultimately they not only result in bad public policy, but also interfere with the "soul making" of our students, and as Dewey made clear, education should enhance our capacities for flourishing, not diminish them. As such, philosophers (as well as sociologists, biologists, and anthropologists) need to work with teacher training programs to develop courses that address the philosophical examination of race and ethnicity.

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11. Konkol, Pamela J., Concordia University, "The Quandary of a Professional Ethos for Educators: Professional Ethics or Disposition Development?"

Email:pamela.konkol@cuchicago.edu

Abstract:

To date, efforts toward articulating the ethical core of the teaching practice have resulted in a variety of organizationally developed statements of professional conduct, behavior, and ethics. Beyond a superficial definition of what it means to act in the capacity of "teacher" in terms of professional credentials, methodology, and content knowledge, educators are without an easily identifiable, explicit, and shared notion of who it is they are, what it is they do, and why it is they do it; there is no identifiable creed, oath or articulated belief that all teachers share. The current debate regarding NCATE and the move toward conceptualizing teacher preparation to include assessing individuals for particular "dispositions" toward teaching, in addition to pedagogical knowledge and practical competence, provides us with another opportunity to consider the impact and import of a creed, oath or belief on the profession and practice of teaching. Insofar as the devices that do exist merely proscribe behavior and ultimately fall short of the philosophical (and political) tool the profession seems to be invoking, is the formulation of "dispositions" for teachers a postive move toward cultivating a shared philosophical base and professional identity? Or does this

move lead us farther down the slippery slope of behavior codification?

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12. Levanon, Maya , Montclair State University, "Philosophical-Spirituality: New Paradigm in Educational Knowledge and Pedagogy"

Email: mayalevanon@gmail.com

Abstract:

In my work, I examine dialectical processes through which "educational knowledge" occurs. My proposal for a coherent synthesis for our era offers educational knowledge that integrates the rational with the intuitive. Its methodological symbiosis facilitates our I-Thou relationship with knowledge, in terms of meaning, values and virtues. I call my synthesis Philosophy-Spirituality, where philosophy stands for a model of inquiry and spirituality for a disposition. After an ontological examination, I offer a model of dialogical pedagogy as a vehicle to facilitate Philosophical-Spiritual knowledge. Throughout the presentation/discussion there will be handouts from the professional development course I conduct with educators. By doing that I invite participants to explore, criticize and suggest insights regarding both theory and practice.

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13. Makedon, Alexander , Chicago State University, "Reading Between the Lines: How ethically desirable are NCATE's accreditation ethics?"

Email: MakedonA@aol.com

Abstract:

Author will examine the ethical desirability of the presumed righteousness of several of NCATE's accreditation standards, including its own ethics standards. Other standards examined include critical thinking, content knowledge, and dispositions. Author will attempt to turn inside out the underlying assumptions of what is being claimed, or the hidden curriculum of an often unethical agenda.

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14. McCarthy, Christine, University of Iowa, "The Value of Philosophy in the Education of Teachers: Instrumental, Constitutive, or Both?"

Email: christine-mccarthy@uiowa.edu

Abstract:

In this short paper I will argue, first, that there is an instrumental value to philosophical reflection in teaching practice, and hence in teacher education. Development of the intellectual virtues of critical thinking in general is of value instrumentally; in this category I include development of skills of logical reasoning, conceptual analysis, and

policy evaluation. Reflection on normative ethical theories can also lead to more insightful and laudable practices in the classroom, and to more effective leadership in policy evaluation, and hence is a requisite in teacher education programs.

I will also argue, thought, that there is a deeper and more important justification for the inclusion of philosophy of education in teacher education programs. It is that the development of a reflective stance toward the broadest questions of human well-being and social affairs is constitutive of the process of "education." It is, then, the proper role of teachers in their professional lives to encourage the development of the reflective stance in their pupils. Yet to do so effectively, teachers themselves must be educated. And this requires the development of philosophical insights and dispositions.

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15. Murphy, Madonna, University of St. Francis, "Role of Philosophy in Helping to Meet the ITASC Standards"

Email: mmurphy@stfrancis.edu

Abstract:

I would like to present a paper on the important role of philosophy in helping to meet the ITASC Standards for beginning teachers and the knowledge indicators for principals the 23 IL Administrative Code, Section 29.120. In particular, philosophy is necessary in order to help these candidates for certification to: manifest a professional code of ethics (5F); base decisions on the moral and ethical implications of policy options and political strategies (5G); to treat people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect and protect the rights and confidentiality of others (5J); and to demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior (5K) basing decisions on the moral and ethical implications of policy options and political strategies (6P). In this paper, I will show how philosophy can be integrated into a History & Philosophy of Education course to help develop these ethical and philosophic skills necessary to have ethical teachers who are role models for their students and to have ethical principals who uphold the highest professional and moral standards.

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16. O'Loughlin, Marjorie, University of Sydney, Australia, "An Australian Perspective"

Email: marjorieoloughlin@mac.com

Abstract:

While teacher educators, education bureaucrats, curriculum directors and others working in the Australian states occasionally pay lip service to the notion of drawing upon philosophy in some fashion, in the actual accreditation and certification process there is little evidence that philosophy has had a significant role. Bodies set up to exercise oversight of teacher education, in particular to determine basic requirements for acceptable courses within teacher preparation programs do not make explicit the philosophical. Courses in philosophy and education within long-established programs have in many cases disappeared altogether or have been 're-branded' in a variety of ways.

This is not to say that philosophers of education are no longer working in the field (though the numbers are declining), merely that the task of making the philosophical dimension visible has become much more difficult. It is ironic therefore that many involved in Indigenous education in the country, are facing a demand for philosophy to take a prominent role in educational programs designed for Aboriginal students pursuing a career in teaching. I will give a brief account of the thinking that underlies such developments and comment critically on what ramifications this might have for programs aiming for accreditation in the 'mainstream'. My main example will focus on a program

17. O'Neill, Linda, Northern Illinois University, "Dangerous Liaisons: Foucault and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)"

Email: ljoneill@sbcglobal.net

Abstract:

Upon my departure from a private teacher training institution five years ago, the Dean bade me farewell with a warning, "You're making a mistake; within the next five years, philosophy of education will be history." I hear the echo of that prediction as I respond to the all-too-vital question, "Is There a Place for Philosophy in the Accreditation and Certification of Education Programs for Teachers?" While the differences between education programs for teachers and training programs for teachers are deeply philosophical, much of the policy language associated with accreditation of educational programs for teachers reflects a "conventional wisdom" that does not explicitly acknowledge its philosophical justification.

In *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship, and Democracy* (2004), Mark Olssen, Anne-Marie O'Neill, and John A. Codd employ Foucault's post structuralism to explore philosophical and ideological antecedents to neo-liberalism's ascendance in the educational policy arena. In a more modest application of Foucault, this paper examines one public institution's response to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requirements as they relate to the discourse(s) of educational philosophy. Policy questions drawn from Foucault's archaeology/genealogy pairing guide this analysis of (ir)regularities in claims of truth, falsehood, relevancy, and legitimacy. Interruptions in policy continuity and conflicts in institutional discourses provide direct challenges to professors of philosophy and philosophy of education who suspect that a stronger philosophical presence may be crucial in the formulation of accreditation policy.

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18. Perry-Polise, Alexandra, Montclair State University, "The Role Of Logic in Teacher Education: Changing Dynamics of the Classroom"

Email: polisea1@mail.montclair.edu

Abstract:

In response to the theme of this session, "Is there a place for philosophy in the accreditation and certification of educational programs for teachers?" I would like to speak about the importance of teaching logic to prospective teachers in educational certification programs. Logic is an important discipline in improving not only writing and argumentative skills, but reasoning skills as well, and in this paper I argue that our society would greatly benefit from educators with strong reasoning skills.

Educators in contemporary society are teaching to students from varying backgrounds including a lot of differentiation of culture, family structure, and parental education, and I would argue that teachers who have studied logic will be better prepared to meet these changing demands. In improving how teachers think, through logic, it will also improve what they think and thus, how they act and teach in response to the changing dynamics and demographics in the classroom.

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19. Roper, James E., Michigan State University, "The Importance of Courses in "Education Ethics" in Assessing the Accreditation and Certification of Educational Programs for Teachers"

Email: roper@msu.edu

Abstract:

In the early 80's, I helped pioneer courses in "business ethics" at Michigan State University. I have also taught courses in "medical ethics." What is interesting about these two major professional areas is that organizations that control the accreditation of programs in medicine and business are now requiring that such programs include courses in ethics in their programs. In addition, for six years, I have been teaching a course called "Ethical Issues in Government Decision Making."

Education is one of the most important institutions of our society. If business and medical people are required to have ethics training, it is clear that K-12 educators should also have such training. There are many reasons for this. Educators are role models for our children. Once they start school, children are exposed to their teachers almost as much as, perhaps more than, they are exposed to their parents. In addition, there are specific ethical issues pertaining to K-12 education that arise both in the classroom and in the broader social context. In is, therefore, imperative that teachers have a serious understanding of ethics.

There are several ways to structure a course such as I propose. The typical practical ethics course in a special area such as business or medicine (or, in this case, education) would begin with a chapter explaining the rationale for such a course. This chapter should include specific examples of some of the ethical issues that can arise for a teacher, including both cases that might arise in the classroom and broader issues an educator might be expected to understand. Next, we could expose students to brief treatments of the major types of ethical theory, including theories that have broader implications for society, such as theories of distributive justice. We would then proceed to a series of chapters examining in detail the ethical issues pertaining to specific ethical issues in education, both classroom concerns such as allocation of time among different groups of students and broader societal concerns such as the way educational benefits are distributed in our society. We should not expect the relation between ethical theory and education to be simple; rather, it is likely to involve an interaction in which both disciplines benefit. I will specify a complete syllabus for such a course as part of my presentation; here I just have space for the basics.

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20. Sanger, Matthew, Idaho State University, "The Place of Theorizing in Programs of Teacher Education"

Email: sangmatt@isu.edu

Abstract:

This paper outlines the concept of theorizing practice, and argues that developing teacher candidates' abilities to theorize practice well is a critical part of becoming a professional educator, and thus a critical part of programs of teacher education. Using the general idea of theorizing as providing an explanation, theorizing practice in the context of teaching is viewed as a process of explaining practice in terms of what it is (i.e. how to characterize practice, selecting and describing its salient or critical elements), and also why it is (i.e. the causal and normative reasons that ground it), based upon sound interpretation, reasoning, and evidence. In this way, theorizing practice involves both philosophical and empirical explanations that serve to guide the reflection upon, and the planning and enactment of, teaching practice. Having elaborated the concept, the paper goes on to argue that theorizing practice can and should serve as a central educational aim for programs of teacher education, providing a framework for identifying knowledge and skills that are critical to the everyday work of professional educators, along with methods

for teaching those constituents of professional practice to candidates.

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21. Smith, Philip L., Ohio State University, "On the Tension Between Professional Education and Academic Study"

Email: smith.133@osu.edu

Abstract:

Most Colleges of Education try to provide practical training for those who hope to work in the field and to understand the field in an intellectual manner. The hope is that one will enrich the other. However, what usually happens is that one function comes to dominate the other and neither is adequately expressed. Accreditation and certification standards over the last 50 years have become superficially clinical. They not only fail to consider philosophical analysis, but discourage vital professional practice. I plan to tie this claim to the contemporary trend to render subjective important cultural and civic values in the name of democracy and personal liberation. Instead of resisting this trend--or "educating" it--our educational leadership has succumbed to it. The challenge of philosophy of education is to present a vision of teacher education that will integrate the educational practice with thoughtful consideration of the human condition as both a practical and moral imperative.

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22. Stillwaggon, James, Iona College, "NCATE Standards as a Form of Techne"

Email: jstillwaggon@iona.edu

Abstract:

NCATE standards as a form of techne and the degree to which these both limit and inspire philosophical critique

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23. Swartz, Ron, Oakland University, "The Possible Impact of Democracy on the Certification of Programs to Educate Educators."

Email: swartz@oakland.edu

Abstract:

This presentation will attempt to begin a dialogue about the question "How might the demands of living in a liberal democratic society have an impact on the way teachers are educated?" I plan to elaborate on some of the issues discussed in my paper "Searching for Teacher Education Programs that are Consistent with Democratic Ideals--A Response to Professor Fenstermacher" ( see MPES Proceedings--1997-1998, pp. 23-26). In particular, my plan is to explain how Bertrand Russell's views about those who are "fit to educate" (see Ibid. p. 25 and Bertrand Russell, Sceptical Essays. p. 152) provide a beginning place to understand that teachers in liberal democratic societies have to be educated differently than teachers who work in illiberal nondemocratic societies.

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24. Watras, Joseph , University of Dayton, "The Philosophy of Education, Teacher Tests, and NCATE"



Email: Joseph.Watras@notes.udayton.edu

Abstract:

In this paper, my aim is to argue that the future of philosophy of education depends on the ways accrediting organizations and teacher tests require schools and colleges of education to attend to the foundations of education. At the present, foundations scholars have no connections with Praxis, NCATE, or TEAC. Worse, none of these organizations requires that prospective teachers study foundations of education with scholars trained in foundations. The result is that programs of teacher preparation can present the history of education, the philosophy of education, or social foundations in inadequate ways. For example, these subjects could appear in modules in courses carrying names such as introduction to teaching taught by professors whose special interests may be in social studies, curriculum, or secondary education.

To explain my points, I will present a brief history of the relationship of the Council of Social Foundations in Education (CSFE) with NCATE and the development of Praxis tests. In December 2005, I published an article with Erskine Dottin, Alan Jones, and Doug Simpson in *Educational Studies* to explain the twenty-five year connection that had existed with CSFE and NCATE. The officers of CSFE recently severed this connection. I was a representative to CSFE for fifteen years and I completed recently a three year term as a CSFE representative to NCATE. In April 2006, I published in *Educational Studies* an article about the development of teacher tests.

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2008 (vol. 2):

*SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)*  
Formerly "*Midwest Philosophy of Education Society*"

*SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS, SPECIAL SPSE SESSIONS, ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN  
PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION-CENTRAL DIVISION*

*CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, APRIL 17-18, 2008*  
*PALMER HOUSE HILTON HOTEL*  
*FORMAT: ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION*

*SPSE Session Themes:*

Thursday, April 17, 2008 – 5:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. – Ethics in and Beyond the Classroom  
Room: GII-4

Friday, April 18, 2008 – 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – Logic, Method, and Critical Thinking  
Room: GIV-5

Thursday, April 17 – 5:15 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.  
Ethics in and Beyond the Classroom  
Room GII-4

Presenters:

*Globalization and Identity*  
Jon Rogers  
Montclair State University

*Ethical Perspectivism and Practical Perspectives in the Classroom*

Alexander Makedon  
Chicago State University

Friday, April 18 – 7:00 p.m. -10:00 p.m.  
Logic, Method, and Critical Thinking  
Room GIV-5

Presenters:

*Some Possible Educational Implications from the Dewey, Russell, and Popper Dialogue on Learning from Induction*

Ron Swartz  
Oakland University

*What Logic Can Teach us that Hasn't Already Been Tried: Metaphysics Writ Small*

Phillip Smith  
The Ohio State University

*Phenomenological and Pragmatic Methodology: Remarks on the Convergence of Existence and Experience in Education*

Sam Rocha  
The Ohio State University

*Re-thinking the Epistemological Foundations of Critical Thinking for Inclusion*

Sheron Fraser-Burgess  
Ball State University

*Logic and Ethics in Socratic Seminars: Sophistry and Injustice in Class Discussions*

Linda O'Neill  
Northern Illinois University

*Teaching Students How Not to Reason: A New Approach to Teaching Informal Fallacies*

James Roper  
Michigan State University

**2009 (vol. 3):**

*SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)*

*Formerly "Midwest Philosophy of Education Society"*

*SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS, SPECIAL SPSE SESSIONS, ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN  
PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION-CENTRAL DIVISION*

*CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, FEBRUARY 19-20, 2009*

*PALMER HOUSE HILTON HOTEL*

*FORMAT: ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION*

*SPSE Session Themes:*

Session I. Paternalism and Teachers' Authority

*Thursday, February 19, 9:00am-Noon*

*Room GI-4*

CHAIR: Charles Howell, Northern Illinois University ([chowell@niu.edu](mailto:chowell@niu.edu))

COMMENTATOR: Sam Rocha, Ohio State University ([rocha.8@osu.edu](mailto:rocha.8@osu.edu))

1. "Teacher as Fallible Educational Authority: Consequences for School Curriculum and Teacher Education." Ronald Swartz and Richard Pipan, Oakland University ([rpipan@comcast.net](mailto:rpipan@comcast.net)) ([swartz@oakland.edu](mailto:swartz@oakland.edu))
2. "Paternalism in K-12 Schools: Dissecting the Dichotomy of Our Duplicity." Alexander Makedon, Chicago State University ([makedona@aol.com](mailto:makedona@aol.com))
3. "School Rules, Paternalism, and Support for Authority." Charles Howell, Northern Illinois University ([chowell@niu.edu](mailto:chowell@niu.edu))
4. "Paternalism and the Right to an Education." James E. Roper, Michigan State University ([roper@msu.edu](mailto:roper@msu.edu))
5. "Bridging Cultures with Character Education." Charles Veldre, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse ([veldre.char@students.uwlax.edu](mailto:veldre.char@students.uwlax.edu))
6. "Ethics, Class, and Socratic Questions about the Teaching of Virtue." C. D. Herrera, Montclair State University ([herrerach@montclair.edu](mailto:herrerach@montclair.edu))

Session II: Critical Thinking and Curriculum

*Friday, February 20, 7:00-10:00 PM*

*Room GIV-4*

CHAIR: G. D. Albear, Eastern Illinois University ([gdealbear@eiu.edu](mailto:gdealbear@eiu.edu))

COMMENTATOR: Bettina Becker, Eastern Illinois University

7. "Demythologizing the Curriculum." Alan G. Phillips, Jr., Millikin University ([aphillips@mail.millikin.edu](mailto:aphillips@mail.millikin.edu))
8. "Apple, Gramsci, and Williams on the Temporality of 'Good Sense' in Curricular Discourses." Josh Shepperd, University of Wisconsin, Madison ([shepperd@wisc.edu](mailto:shepperd@wisc.edu))
9. "A Curricular Interpretation of Michel Foucault and William James." Sam Rocha, Ohio State University ([rocha.8@osu.edu](mailto:rocha.8@osu.edu))
10. "A Mixed Approach to the Science Curriculum." Todd P. Loftin, University of Oklahoma ([plongez@ou.edu](mailto:plongez@ou.edu))
11. "How Can White Pre-Service Teachers Experience the Oppressive Power of Literacy?" Cheu-jey Lee, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne ([leecj@ipfw.edu](mailto:leecj@ipfw.edu))
12. "The Role of Critical Thinking in Ethical Decision Making by School Leaders" Fotini Bakopoulos, Chicago State University ([Fotini.Bakopoulos@chsd128.org](mailto:Fotini.Bakopoulos@chsd128.org))

2010 (vol. 4):

SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)  
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SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS & PAPER ABSTRACTS, SPECIAL SPSE SESSIONS, ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION-CENTRAL DIVISION

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, FEBRUARY 18-19, 2010  
PALMER HOUSE HILTON HOTEL  
FORMAT: ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Thursday, February 18, 7:15-10:15 pm

Thursday's program may also be seen at the official APA-Central web site at:  
<http://www.apaonline.org/divisions/central/2010groupprogram.aspx#thursday>

Session I.

*European Contributions to the Philosophy of Education: Part I (Through the Enlightenment)*

*Group Meeting Program GIII-6*

Session Chair: Alexander Makedon, Chicago State University

1) Anja-Silvia Goeing, Pädagogisches Institut, Universität Zürich: "Visual Perception and Academic Learning Strategies: Early Continental European Approaches"

Abstract: From treatises about geography and astronomy to the history of plants and animals, early modern natural philosophy provided an astonishingly broad background of research agendas. A growing field of research today is focusing on the variety of manners and tools necessary to carry out observations and on ways of including evidence into reports, lectures and books. This paper reaches for the beginnings and provides a new reading of Kepler's *Astronomia Nova* in terms of learning natural philosophy in the European university setting. It draws on the necessary sensory foundations of the new astronomy that combines mathematical and physical research approaches with the application of new technology. Its outcome will shed light on the knowledge a student is supposed to gain concerning the reliability of his or her senses in order to follow Kepler's rationing.

2) Joseph S. Freedman, Alabama State University: "Disciplinarity vs. Interdisciplinarity in Education: Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1650) and his Contemporaries"

Abstract: It can be argued that the early seventeenth-century witnessed a substantial amount of educational innovation. Among these innovators were Bartholomew Keckermann (d. 1609), Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638), and Alsted's most famous student, Johannes Amos Comenius (1592-1670). All three of these authors promoted the use of a broad range of instructional writings that emphasized practice as well as theory. This paper will focus on one important point of contention among educators during the early seventeenth century: whether or not all philosophical inquiry needs to take place within specific philosophical disciplines and sub-disciplines. Comenius appears to have been one of the very few advocates of an interdisciplinary perspective during this period. Defenses of disciplinarity by Keckermann and other early seventeenth century authors will be discussed. And one general question will be raised: to what extent have views concerning (inter)disciplinarity affected our thinking concerning education up to the present day?

3) Emery J. Hyslop-Margison, University of New Brunswick: "The Legacy of Cartesian Dualism in

## Educational Thought"

Abstract: Descartes's psychophysical dualism is considered the primary source of the mind/body problem in philosophy. Following Cartesian metaphysics, education discourse typically conceptualizes the mind as a separate sphere of human experience and commits a series of related category mistakes that impact deleteriously on classroom practice. In this paper, I argue that Cartesian dualism has generated two major errors in educational thought: 1) By extending the guidelines of physical development into the realm of the mind, Piaget and others misconstrued epistemological and cultural influences on learning as cognitive developmental stages. Consequently, public education expectations for student achievement are guided by a faulty theory of human learning; 2) Academic abilities such as critical thinking and problem solving are considered generic "mental processes" that, in a manner similar to physical activities, are perfected through generic practice. Once again, this approach undermines the importance of epistemic and dispositional factors that enhance informed, reflective and contextualized thinking.

4) Guillemette Johnston, DePaul University: "Rousseau's Emile and the Development of the Self: Has the Message of Emile been Misappropriated by Psychology or Education?"

Abstract: This paper analyzes how Rousseau's Emile methodically explores the role of each of the different faculties involved in intellectual evolution and maturation. Rousseau describes the intricacies of interactions between the senses, the body, and the mind, showing the steps in the development of physical and intellectual faculties. The goal in Emile is to go over the stages involved in the evolution of a functional, grounded individual who relates adequately to everyone. Rousseau follows the growth of the child step by step, trying to show how the interactions of the physical and mental faculties either lead the individual into relation with his core self, a relation expressed as "amour de soi," or lead him away from the self into "amour-propre."

By describing a system that trains the child to relate to the world through integrating the physical and the mental, Rousseau highlights a base for the development of simple, secondary, or complex faculties such as the aptitudes to see, memorize, perceive and reason for the optimal functioning of intelligence. Rousseau's description of the teachings of the master and of Emile's growth allows him to outline the progression from relating to one's tangible world to the abstract world, from reality to simple images and from simple ideas to complex ideas. Underlying this description is the insight that there are no innate ideas, but only capacities to be formed or shaped at the service of the total ecology of the individual that can function as and maintain its original, integrated self. Contemporary child psychology and psychology at large owe a tremendous debt to Rousseau for this fundamental insight. The question one must ask is whether these insights have contributed to contemporary education—that is, whether the "laissez-faire" aspect of certain educational experiments reflects Rousseau's original intention of creating a "well-regulated freedom" through "negative education."

5) James E. Roper, Michigan State University: "Kant's 'Cosmopolitanism' Versus Rawls' 'Liberalism' in Education"

Abstract: Immanuel Kant and John Rawls (considered to be heavily influenced by Kant) both wrote extensively on ethics and social philosophy from within the deontological tradition, which privileges ethical justification via moral principles over utilitarian warrants that rely on "maximizing the good." These thinkers differ regarding education. Kant's views are complex, but he is clear that education should be "cosmopolitan"; students' educations should ultimately focus on "moralizing" them from the perspective of the long term perfection of their species. This is Kant's "cosmopolitanism." For Rawls, education should prepare young people for civil lives in their societies. This paper focuses on the contrast between Kant's more "global"-species centric-approach and Rawls' more circumscribed philosophy.

6) Sam Rocha, Ohio State University: "Reading Like a Cow: Nietzsche on Reading and Constitution"

Abstract: In the preface to Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche writes that, in order to read his books, we must re-learn how to read like a cow. In this paper I will describe some of the aspects of this approach to reading as it plays into the Nietzschean theme of self-mastery. I will then contrast that view from the current way in which literacy is approached in educational discourse. At the heart of this study will be the thesis that education is not primarily a matter of learning, but, instead, is a matter of constitution.

Re-learning how to read in this manner—a manner not original to Nietzsche—would be a great benefit to the educational process of becoming.

*Friday, February 19, 7:15-10:15 pm*

Friday's program may also be seen at the official APA-Central web site at:  
<http://www.apaonline.org/divisions/central/2010groupprogram.aspx#friday>

*Session II.*

*European Contributions to the Philosophy of Education: Part II (Post-Enlightenment)*

*Group Meeting Program GIV-6*

Session Chair: Jason Helfer, Knox College

1) Allan Johnston, Columbia College and DePaul University: "The Marxist Legacy in Philosophy of Education"

Abstract: This paper studies the impact of Marxist thought on educational philosophy. As Nigel Tubbs points out, "Marxism has had a dramatic and powerful influence over all aspects of education, not only in the West but across the world." In eastern bloc, communist, and former communist countries, this influence was or is often expressed in state-run educational programs geared to transform or maintain the social order. In developing countries Marxist thought has provided educational tools designed to promote or stabilize revolution, while in the west Marxist approaches are often introduced to criticize dominant ideology. Some clear examples of Marxist influence on educational theory and pedagogy are the critiques of curriculum as strategies to maintain the dominant ideological order, the theorizing of cultural capital as an commodity within the cultural superstructure, and the radicalized view of dominant educational strategies as "banking" modes of education meant to oppress inquiry and maintain bourgeois ideology. The paper will consider works by Michael Apple, Pierre Bourdieu, Paolo Freire, and the Frankfurt School, along with other perspectives.

2) David L. Mosley, Bellarmine University: "Nietzsche's Acoustic Philosophy of Education and the Designation of Genius"

Abstract: During the winter term of 1872 Friedrich Nietzsche, the 28-year-old Professor Extraordinarius of Classical Philology, delivered a series of public lectures sponsored by the University of Basel, titled The Future of Our Educational Institutions. Presented in the form of an extended Platonic Dialogue, Nietzsche's observations are often dismissed because of their reactionary and elitist critique of institutional education; however they constitute an indispensable link between the portrait of Socrates found in The Birth of Tragedy and the Republic of Genius described in the second Untimely Meditation. Moreover, as this presentation will show, Nietzsche outlines in these lectures an acoustic philosophy of education based upon a pedagogy in which the teacher's voice (Stimme) and the student's temperament (Stimmung) participate in the designation (Bestimmung) of genius.

3) Philip Smith, The Ohio State University: "Does Nietzsche Make Sense as a Philosopher of Education?"

Abstract: Education, as a deliberate act for the enhancement of human life, virtually always reduces to the transmission of culture. This is because human beings have evolved as social, rather than as solitary, animals, whose survival as a species presumes functional social networks, or "practices". Culture, as the source of meaning and value within group life, is the linguistic expression of customs, habits, and tradition that define and justify these practices. The purpose of this paper is twofold: First, to consider the extent to which Nietzsche may have wanted to limit his critique of culture to its modern enlightenment forms. Second, whether there were aspects of modern enlightenment culture that he actually intended to



celebrate.

4) Josh Shepperd, University of Wisconsin-Madison: "De-Distancing and the Sphere of Relevant Context in Heidegger's Theory of Spatiality"

Abstract: This presentation conducts a close reading of Heidegger's 'tool analysis' for assessing spatial classroom dynamics. For Heidegger, being-in-the-world is characterized by 'dispersed and definite ways of being-in'. The act of learning illuminates 'references' into paths of 'heedful association' that have determinant effects upon what relations Dasein will consequently cognate and 'take care' of. While there are always multiple available meanings to be found in phenomena, education thus contributes to the constitution of a sphere of 'relevant context' for thought and circumspection in two ways: 1) actual classroom space and practices must be looked at for their inculcating influence upon acceptable modes of movement, engagement, and behavior, 2) the act of learning is simultaneously the development of epistemological 'de-distancing', which Heidegger describes as 'bringing near' a 'totality of useful things' in reflection and everyday activities. In other words, Heidegger can be utilized to assess school space in terms of how 'references' are inculcated by available classroom contexts, and in turn how learning activities set crucial cognitive parameters for ensuing engagements with phenomena. Such a study is useful for looking at how recent reductionistic movements exemplified by standardized testing and the removal of art and recess from national curricula are inhibiting cognitive development.

5) Jon Fennell, Hillsdale College: "The Character and Ground of Polanyi's "Educated Mind"

Abstract: In *Personal Knowledge*, Michael Polanyi, through an intriguing sketch of "the educated mind," establishes connections between several of the concepts central to his revolutionary reformulation of epistemology and philosophy of science. These concepts include "truth," "reality," and "subsidiary" or "tacit" awareness. The educated mind is an introduction to Polanyi's thinking as a whole.

Insofar as the educated mind represents a critical human ideal, we are compelled to inquire into the conditions that make it possible. What must young people know and do, if they are to develop such a mind? Since the educated mind embodies the powers through which the lives of individual persons are enriched and by which they, and those they touch, discern meaning in the world, such elucidation is important indeed. Consistent with Polanyi's repeated assertion of the self-referential character of his argument, we will see that a growing understanding of the educated mind is an indispensable component of possessing it.

6) Antonina Lukenchuk, National-Louis University: "Semiotic Approaches to Meaning Construction of Kristeva's Female Subject"

Abstract: This study is guided by Peirce's assertion that we have no power of thinking without signs. All thought must address itself to some other. Like the process of formation of Peircean universes that goes through the tripartite of "mere ideas," "brute actuality," and "sign," the process of construction of Kristeva's "speaking subject" involves the semiotic stage. In this paper, I juxtapose Peirce's theory of signs, his notions of "thirdness" (symbol), "secondness" (index), and "firstness" (icon), and Kristeva's semiotic as psychoanalytic theory. I use literature as the privileged space for both the sublime and "abject" (Kristeva) to explore the ways of constructing different levels of meaning. The formation of female literary images ("the work in progress") resembles the process of the tripartition between the sign, object, and interpretant (Peirce), and the movement between chora and sign (Kristeva). I draw the implications of the theories of signs by Peirce and Kristeva for the gendered curricular.

7) Charles Howell, Northern Illinois University: "Does Contemporary Psychological Research Support Progressive Pedagogy?"

Abstract: The proposed paper will briefly outline progressive pedagogical principles and then proceed to review contemporary psychological research on children's and adolescent development in several areas related to motivation and development. Chief among these are internalization, basic needs research, autonomy support, and flow.

Internalization refers to the process by which children and youth come to recognize, act on, and assimilate the values, rules, and expectations of adults in the society. Progressive educational principles are examined in light of Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) model of the internalization process. Certain aspects of the research represented in the model (e.g. inductive reasoning and bidirectional influence) are highly compatible with the progressive educational program. Others, such as attachment and power assertion, receive little attention and in some cases may conflict with progressive principles; approaches emphasizing direction instruction (e.g. Hunter, 1994) may be more compatible.

Analysis of research results suggests that the basic needs framework, encompassing autonomy, competence, and relatedness, is generally compatible with progressive educational ideas, but that some versions of the progressive program underestimate the impact of autonomy as a developmental need during adolescence (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Progressive principles may be more conducive to promotion of independence than to autonomy support; research has shown that the latter is more strongly associated with positive adolescent outcomes (Soenens et al., 2007).

The concept of flow (Csikszentmihályi, 1990) accentuates the divergence between the progressive program and contemporary educational research. The completed paper will outline flow principles, briefly review supporting research, and attempt to explain why progressive principles are not conducive to the type of motivation found in this research.

The paper concludes by acknowledging limitations of this analysis. First, progressive educational principles have evolved over the past century and thus present a moving target, making evaluation in terms of contemporary research more difficult. Second, a distinction should be drawn between the principles and their application in specific projects, such as Dewey's laboratory school or more recently the Coalition for Essential Schools. Practical applications tend to be more amorphous than principles; exemplary schools may accommodate research findings in ways that the principles guiding them do not lead us to expect. Finally, the cultural context of "contemporary" psychological research, spanning roughly the last four decades, differs significantly from the cultural context in which progressive principles were first articulated; hence apparent divergence or conflict between the two may reflect differences in language, social conditions, or even young people's actual developmental trajectories. Once these potential confounding factors are taken into account, however, viewing progressive principles through the lens of developmental research is a useful exercise and sheds light on a number of aspects of our contemporary educational practice.

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HILTON MINNEAPOLIS HOTEL  
FORMAT: ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION*

*Session I.*

*Critical Thinking and Curriculum: History, Uses, Relevance, Meaning*

1) "Critical Thinking, Creativity, and the Curriculum: A Preliminary Pre-History and Some Ramifications Thereof for Contemporary Academic Instruction"

Joseph S. Freedman, Alabama State University (joseph-freedman@usa.net)

The evolution of critical thinking into an important component of educational theory and practice is a relatively recent development -- roughly spanning the past quarter century. In this proposed paper, some historical precedents of critical thinking in curricular context (and the historical role of creativity in that same context) will be examined with an eye to providing insights on the scope and applications of critical thinking in 21st century curricula.

From the late 12th century until the late 19th century, (critical) thinking was taught -- and discussed by educators -- mainly with the domain of logic. By no later than the 16th century, thinking (or "reasoning") was commonly regarded as a three-step process. The first step of this process -- often referred to as "simple apprehension" (apprehensio simplex) -- serves in part as the origin of Descartes's "I think, therefore I am." (Cogito, ergo sum.)

During the course of 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, the roles of induction, observation, and experimentation in the (critical) thinking process were gradually given increasing emphasis within instruction on logic (and on other subject matters as well). It was school and university educators who authored virtually all extant texts on logic from the late 12th through the late 19th centuries. And logic served an integral part of the curriculum in Europe as well as in the Americas into the late 19th century.

Creativity and creative thinking, on the other hand, was not directly taught during this period. During the early modern period, academic exercises -- and especially writing exercises, public speaking exercises, drama productions, and academic debating -- frequently provided contexts for creativity / creative thinking. With the introduction of visual art instruction into academic curricula during the late 18th century, a subject-matter was created in which creativity clearly had a role therein. And courses on Creative Writing have been offered within the context of English instruction at American academic institutions.

With these historical precedents in mind, the following questions will be raised. First, in what ways has critical thinking been understood (and/or defined and/or described) during the past quarter century, and can historical precedents for these diverse views concerning critical thinking be identified? Second, to what extent does and/or should logic have a role in critical thinking, and what should "logic" be considered to consist of in this context? And third, what role does (and/or should) creativity/creative thinking have within the contemporary curricula, and to what extent is this (and/or should this be) placed within the scope of critical thinking?

2) "Of Scholarly Writing and Creative Writing (A Satirical Approach)"

Dibakar Pal, Independent Scholar, Kolkata (dibakar1956@gmail.com)

Who is a scholar? A widely read person is a scholar. But a creative writer (creator hereinafter) may not have such extensive study. Even without so-called formal education, an individual may be a creator. A scholar makes brilliant results in examination. In other words, score is the yardstick of a scholar. The more marks, the more of a scholar an individual is. On the other hand, a creator, generally, cannot make good result and even sometimes fails to qualify in the examination. Perhaps, failure renders an individual into a creative writer. Thus, disqualification is his qualification.

Everybody cares for and respects a scholar. But a creator is ignored. He has innovative power. The imaginative faculty of mind agitates him much. So he is compelled to forget his mundane existence. Thus wild flights of fancy chase him from one galaxy to another. As a result, a creator fails everywhere in this world and becomes a laughing stock, because he has business, having no return.

This world is for the scholar, of the scholar, by the scholar. Everywhere we see the infrastructure for manufacturing scholars. Creators are not wanted. That's why only scholars get scholarships; scholars build nations. If this is so, however, another school of thought would argue that creators are the ornament of the nation. Thus the scholars are the builders of the building and creators are its decorators. So a scholar is a civil engineer, but a creator is an architect.

Scholars are a must for the nation, but creators are optional, because without architectural or aesthetic beauties, a building can stand erect. So scholars are rewarded and creators die unfed. Thus to give a scholarship to a creator is nothing but a waste of money. This is why society spends on scholars only. Scholars need dollars. Seen the other way, dollars makes scholars. If a scholar is a national scholar, a creator is a rational scholar.

### 3) "Critical Thinking in the Language and Culture Classroom: Opening the Global Portal"

Nesreen Akhtarkhavari, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Director of Arabic Studies Program, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois (nakhtark@depaul.edu)

This presentation addresses using technology in teaching language and culture to activate critical thinking skills and provide opportunity to explore new culture and language through a rich and authentic environment. Participants' feedback to using technology for developing critical thinking skills and improving language and culture knowledge, technical skills, and collaboration will be presented. The impact of using technology will be examined in light of participants' reflections and feedback.

Using PowerPoint, the presenter will provide a framework for applying critical thinking theories to the creation of an interactive language and culture classroom using technology to engage students with authentic material and encounters beyond the familiar. Furthermore, framework, strategies, techniques, and samples used to engage students with culturally rich curriculum and meaningful reflective assessment will be shared.

The effectiveness of using technology including social networks, and open sources for the development of critical thinking skills through reflections, discussions with peers, sharing resources, and interaction with experts will be illustrated. Participants' reactions, level of satisfaction, interaction with the course material, and perception of the impact of the courses on their critical thinking skills, language and cultural knowledge, technical skills, and engagement in learning beyond the course duration will be presented. Lessons learned including the strengths and challenges of using technology for developing critical thinking skills in the language and culture classroom, and recommendations for future applications will also be presented.

In addition to the presentation, time will be allocated to sharing information and answering questions related to the design, implementation, and teaching of language and culture courses that foster critical thinking skills and engage students globally through using technology to create life-long impact and collaboration beyond the boundaries of the classroom and the duration of the course.

### 4) "Desire, Critical Thinking, and Research Writing in the Sciences"

Alan Clinton, University of Miami (reconstruction.submissions@gmail.com)

In this paper I would like to construct an argument for asking the fundamental question, "What does science desire?" in teaching scientific research writing to composition students at the university level. A research course centered around this question starts from the premise that all scientific endeavors, while they may use means that are more or less "objective," are motivated by desire and that we disregard this fact to the detriment of science. This premise is not meant to undermine science as a set of disciplines, but to affirm it as a human endeavor. We need to know what we desire in order to decide where and how we apply our knowledge. Nevertheless, scientific discourses are ripe for this sort of investigation precisely because they tend to ignore, repress, or even suppress their relationship to desire-oftentimes as a means of avoiding criticism by suggesting that they operate from a disinterested, transcendent position. But if science was truly disinterested, no one would be interested in it. Such a course, then, would explore the question of what and how science desires in order to achieve two main objectives: 1) to learn a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that will allow students to uncover the ulterior (though not necessarily nefarious) motives underlying scientific claims and activities; 2) to practice a "hermeneutics of desire" that will allow students to explore their emotional relationships to individual scientific endeavors and to science in general. While the first objective could be described as analytical in nature, on the side of critique, the latter objective is perhaps

the most important for students' future careers as it activates the side of scientific creativity and invention.

In order to achieve these objectives, there are three main assignments. First, students study desire in the abstract, using psychoanalytic theory, and then apply this theory to data drawn from everyday life-project 1. Second, students learn the history and methods of the "hermeneutics of suspicion" which, in short, always distrusts what a speaker affirms and looks for hidden motivations that are often (though not always) unknown to him or her. After learning these methods, students apply them to a social/scientific issue of their own choosing-project 2. Finally, students will explore the desires and fears surrounding this issue by constructing an electronic totem composed of images and accompanying text-project 3. Both psychoanalysis and new media theory suggest that this latter approach will provide students a greater range of intuitive and analytic knowledge of their particular creative potential with respect to the issues they have chosen.

In order to properly form an understanding of what science desires in the abstract and in the particular cases of students' chosen projects, they must come to terms not only with psychoanalysis, but with Lacanian psychoanalysis since its approach more than any other (including Freud's) understands desire as a set of forces that, while having certain common elements in almost all humans, forms a structure that is unique to each individual. As Gregory Ulmer reminds us, with respect to Lacanian psychoanalysis, "[A] human being circulates around a 'hole'" (Electronic Monuments 16), an unconscious symptom which Lacan calls the "sinthome."<sup>1</sup> This unconscious, individualized symptom, developed early in life, structures one's desires like a sort of magnet, making the outer reality one encounters take on a certain appearance and one's responses to it take on particular structurations that mediate the individual and the external environment. Nevertheless, although the sinthome is always present, Lacan's use of Joyce as his model for the "patron saint" of this structuration suggests that, in its most successful form, the sinthome is to some extent a product of deliberate creative effort or attunement, resulting in a "synth-homme" or synthetic subject forming itself in the absence of external guarantees of coherent subjectivity.

##### 5) "Critical Thinking and the Way History is Taught"

Sven Mueller, Indiana University (svmueller@indiana.edu)

If the assumption still is that the U.S. is a free nation, consisting of free people, who are able and willing to govern themselves-and if the goal of public (and private) education is to form citizens with this same aim-one has to wonder from time to time why the teaching of history is done the way it is in the U.S. Only one year of World History and one more in U.S. history (in some cases) do not seem to be enough to cover such a vast and important subject or to instill in students at least a rudimentary idea of the workings of history. Second, the insistence on 'facts', on being able to list the presidents, and on trivial little stories-such as the one of Washington and the cherry tree-doesn't seem to contribute to a mind set which would view history as something valuable, perhaps indispensable or, as William Appleman Williams put it, a "way of learning."

Issues to address are, first, developing a consensus in regards to the question of how history is, on the whole, being taught in the U.S. Questions necessarily included here are: What is left out of the text books, and what is left out (largely) of the class room, even though it is included in the text books (the Vietnam War seems to be the prime example here; most people I have talked with about this subject recalled that the Vietnam War was always close to being covered during the last week of May but, alas, since the summer vacation was so close, the class never ended up talking about it).

Further questions could include considerations on why teachers and schools seem to be so timid to address controversial topics and-if we can agree that they should not be excluded from the curriculum-what could be done to change that, particularly by philosophers of education. Could text book publishers, text book authors, school boards (in TX and elsewhere) be somehow convinced that history is in many ways more intricate than they learned in school, that-yes-it is a political issue but that if one wants to live in a free nation with free people, it is vital to have a populace who is active and skeptical in a healthy way?

These and other questions could lead to a third set of questions on the role of the U.S. in the world and how a free nation could consent (if it ever has) to wars with foreign nations and what the responsibilities of citizens are in such cases. The protagonist of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* was proud that he was from a country where people governed themselves and where they could shake of the chains of tyranny whenever they wanted. Shouldn't schools funded by tax money foster this spirit?

6) "Why Does This Pertain to Me? The Importance of Criticism and Theory in a High School English Classroom"

Alison Spacciapolli, SUNY Fredonia and Pine Valley High School (ASpacciapolli@PVAL.ORG)

No matter what age students are, a general question they ask is, "Why does this pertain to me?" The question could be in reference to a text they have been asked to read, an assignment they must complete, or even a course they must take. Relevance is important, and this is why it is necessary at times for people to guide their own inquiry to find the answers to their "burning questions." There are countless issues that an educator must address in order to identify what literature should be taught in a classroom, and more importantly, why it should be taught. Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to provide answers to why it is crucial for high school English teachers to be educated in the studies of criticism and theory, and how this knowledge aids in the integration of literature in the class, specifically regarding the incorporation of Electra.

7) "Looking At Dewey's Philosophy Education As A Theory of Curriculum Rather Than As a Model For Teaching"

Philip Smith, The Ohio State University (smith.133@osu.edu)

John Dewey's philosophy of education has often been reduced to a theory of instruction whereby what is taught becomes a function of how students learn, or what students need to know in particular practical circumstances. Another way to view Dewey's philosophy of education is to see it as a theory of curriculum with prescribed outcomes that will enable human beings to live as healthy social animals with a morally sensitive culture that respects all forms of life. My paper will defend this second interpretation of Dewey's philosophy of education and try to show that it provides a better account of his theory of democracy and conception of intelligence than do standard explanations that are based on the first interpretation. I will utilize ideas from the work of Richard Rorty and Diana Ravitch to help develop my argument.

## *Session II.*

### *Non-Western Contributions to the Philosophy of Education and Other Concerns*

1) "Connecting a Confucian Sensibility to a Philosophy of Education"

Don Hufford, Newman University (HuffordD@newmanu.edu)

A personal interpretation of Confucian thought - including its subtle nuances, and even paradoxes - may encourage a teacher to rethink a personal philosophy of education. An investigation of the Confucian way reveals reflective opportunities that intensify the process of personal growth. Such an exploration inspires, motivates, and encourages a continuing learner to find intellectual adventure in new ways of philosophical thinking.

Confucian thought provides a way of philosophical investigation for the teacher who continues on a journey of intellectual and moral growth. It becomes a motivational impetus for both the person of ideas and the person of action. It encourages - even demands - the wedding of intellectual attainment with social responsibility; of thinking with doing. "The superior man is ashamed that his words exceed his deeds (Analects),"

For a teacher, reflecting upon the meaning of a Confucian sensitivity can impact a personal philosophy of education



- and a teaching style. Creative activity is predicated on reflective self-examination. There is a relationship here to the phrase so often used in teacher education programs, "the reflective practitioner." In Confucian thought, the doing-achieving person is an extension of the thinking-knowing person. The goal of thoughtful, philosophically perceptive self-transforming action becomes a life-affirming value that speaks to those who have been "called" to teach. It is a goal that motivates a personal quest, a philosophical becoming.

Confucian thought finds resonance with the Socratic premise that "the unexamined life is not worth living." There is a relationship here to the emphasis which, in teacher education programs, is placed upon encouraging the future teacher to become a reflective practitioner. Teachers must learn not only the practical intricacies of the "what" and "how" of teaching, but also to reflect upon the philosophical "why." The unreflective teacher is the one who acts "without understanding . . . following certain courses without knowing the principles behind them (Book of Mencius)."

This paper will discuss the meaning of "a Confucian sensibility," and infuse Confucian thought into a philosophy of education. It will be inferred that - if inspired by a Confucian sensibility - the teacher will be not just a knowledgeable, skilled technician; he/she will also be a model of moral integrity and social responsibility. The paper will not be read, but will provide background thoughts for interpreting the meaning of a Confucian sensibility in relationship to a personal philosophy of education.

## 2) "The Legacy of Cartesian Dualism in Educational Thought"

Emery J. Hyslop-Margison, University of New Brunswick (ehyslop@unb.ca)

Descartes's psychophysical dualism is considered the primary source of the mind/body problem in philosophy. Following Cartesian metaphysics, education discourse typically conceptualizes the mind as a separate sphere of human experience and commits a series of related category mistakes that impact deleteriously on classroom practice. In this paper, I argue that Cartesian dualism has generated two major errors in educational thought: 1) By extending the guidelines of physical development into the realm of the mind, Piaget and others misconstrued epistemological and cultural influences on learning as cognitive developmental stages. Consequently, public education expectations for student achievement are guided by a faulty theory of human learning; 2) Academic abilities such as critical thinking and problem solving are considered generic "mental processes" that, in a manner similar to physical activities, are perfected through generic practice. Once again, this approach undermines the importance of epistemic and dispositional factors that enhance informed, reflective and contextualized thinking.

## 3) "Madame Blavatsky re-visited: Interlinking the Orient and the Occident"

Antonina Lukenchuk, National-Louis University, Chicago (Antonina.Lukenchuk@nl.edu)

In the West, contemporary educational paradigms of chaos and complexity theories consistently challenge the linear, deterministic, mechanist, or so-called closed systems of inquiry. Chaos and complexity theories suggest that phenomena must be looked at holistically and that conventional units of analysis (e.g., individuals, institutions, communities) should merge and be analyzed as a web of relations existing within multiple realities (Cohen, 2008).

If we are to assume that the symbiosis of the East-West scholarly partnership is both a possibility and a fruitful endeavor, then perhaps the theosophical legacy of Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), also known as Madame Blavatsky, a Russian-born thinker and writer, might be of particular interest. Blavatsky's biographer Kingsland (1985) considers her one of the most remarkable women and the female 'Sphinx' of the 19th century. Still controversial and enigmatic, Blavatsky's name continues to draw the readership interested in theosophy and its relation to the world's wisdom traditions. Within a relatively short span of time, Blavatsky traversed the lands of Egypt, France, Canada, England, Germany, Mexico, India, Greece, Tibet, and a few others, studying, writing, and attracting adepts. Her extensive travels and studies resulted in the emergence of the Theosophical Society which she co-founded with Henry S. Olcott (1832-1907) in 1875 in New York. Blavatsky contributed a great deal to bridging the Orient and the

Occident in her works.

While a detailed analysis of Blavatsky's theosophy is beyond the scope of this paper, I draw from her two main works, *Isis Unveiled* and *the Secret Doctrine*, to develop a comparative analysis of Blavatsky's notion of the monad and its counterparts in Hinduism and in Leibniz's (1646-1716) philosophy.

Like Indra's net (a Hindu image of interlinked jewels), 'monad' symbolizes myriads of internal and external connections within animate and inanimate objects. Monad is a soul-like entity (Leibniz), an indivisible divine life-atom, a unitary consciousness-center (Blavatsky). It signifies the mystery of our transformation as each of us becomes connected with all other beings. Blavatsky offers the model of the world that parallels modern chaos theory, which posits that tiny initial changes can have unprecedented and unexpected outcomes (a butterfly in Brazil might cause a tornado in Texas).

Scholars and practitioners of education can benefit from both eastern and western esoteric traditions, which still remain peripheral to the analytical philosophical discourse. Blavatsky strongly believed that there is 'no religion higher than the truth' and that one can choose her own path towards its discovery. In search for 'truths' in a highly contested philosophical and ideological climate, educators might as well see their world through Indra's net-unitary and interlinked.

#### 4) "The Ambiguity of 'Spanish'"

Sam Rocha, Wabash College (rochas@wabash.edu)

In this paper, I will discuss the ambiguous identity of Spanish language and history in relation to philosophy and education. In relation to philosophy, the status of the Spanish language is clearly not the same as its European counter parts: German, English, and French. This might be for good reason, since Latin Americans-not Spaniards-are easily the largest group of Spanish speakers today. What is more interesting is the extent to which this obfuscates the contributions of Spaniards to educational discourse. In other words, the ambiguity of Spanish language and history has not only had limiting effects in Latin America. In many ways, it has made native Spaniards ambiguously European. We can find this on grand display in the all too ignored work of Miguel de Unamuno. In *Amor y Pedagogía* (1902) and *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida en los Hombres y en los Pueblos* (1913) Unamuno presents a pedagogic and philosophical vision that not only directly treats the subject of education, it also has a tragic aesthetic that shares company with many cultural sensibilities of Latin America. This might serve to complicate the very notion of "culture" as a thing-in-itself and lead to a more ambiguous and tragic consideration of human forms of life.

#### 5) "The Roles of the Media and Educators: A Critical Analysis of Food Education in Japan"

Kaori Takano, University of Dayton (takanoka@notes.udayton.edu)

This qualitative inquiry examines corporate curriculum from teachers' perspective and reveals the complexities of national educational policy, school ecology, diversified marketing strategies of the business world, and the role of media in Japan. Joel Spring (2003) indicates that American public schools played a major role in developing a consumer oriented society because of the close interdependent relationships among schools, advertising and media. American philosophers (Boyles, 1998, 2008; Molnar, 2005; Saltman, 2000) complain that corporate America turned schools into markets. They claimed that corporations provided support to schools to promote consumerism and materialism, and undermined critical citizenship of school-aged children, and fostered inequality of opportunity for education.

The Japanese government established the current educational system in order to realize the principle of equal opportunity for education (MEXT, 2009). However, national education reforms for the past decade have encouraged

schools to collaborate with the business world, and growing concern about the emerging unhealthy diets and overweight problem of school-aged children created the recent food education law, which asked media to play an active role in promoting food education as a national movement (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2006).

The food industry in Japan took this opportunity to provide corporate curriculum in classrooms to address the importance of healthy diets of school-aged children. These activities appear to be social marketing, which is different from traditional marketing activities and attempts to influence target audience behaviors that benefit society such as public health (Kotler & Lee, 2008). The media was successful in raising awareness of food education and a majority of newspaper articles featured corporate lessons as positive impact on education. However, a few articles discussed negative effect such as potential advertising in classrooms. Using multiple case studies, interviews were conducted with elementary school teachers who have experienced these corporate efforts to examine teachers' critical thinking.

The author finds that on one hand, veteran teachers, who experienced the social changes in the era of a global economy, are critical about corporate curriculum and tend to screen out inappropriate programs or marketing activities. On the other hand, inexperienced teachers failed to consider the unexpected consequences of corporate intent and oversimplified the value of the private sector. Therefore, the author argues that corporate curriculum may undermine the foundational principal of equal opportunity for education because of two reasons. First, corporate programs are unequally distributed in the nation. Second, a gap exists in critical thinking between teachers regarding corporate involvement in schools. The author stresses the need for professional development for teachers and teacher educators so they will be aware of school ecology, national policy and the role of the media. More importantly, teachers should be made aware of the need to take the basic steps of critical examination of business involvement in public schools.

A recent study demonstrates that children's overweight problem finally has reversed (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009). The author argues that the food education movement can be claimed as successful but at the expense of a fundamental principle of equal opportunity for education. Corporate programs may foster inequality in education due to the lack of critical investigation of both media and educators.

#### 6) "Paolo Freire's Education for Freedom"

Dr. Thenjiwe Emily Major, Lecturer, University of Botswana (MAJORTE@mopipi.ub.bw)

This paper discusses Paulo Freire's philosophy of education and its implications for educational policy and practice in Botswana schools. Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian who was committed to the education of the impoverished people in his nation. He believed that education could either be for liberation or domination. His philosophy of education focuses on the struggle for the liberation of the poor. He advocated education for liberation that was directed at the physical and mental liberation of the colonized communities, and liberation from the subtleties of colonial domination (Vanqa, 1998, p. 130). Paulo Freire viewed education as a path to permanent liberation. This meant that the education should make people self-reliant. They should be able to recognize their oppression, resist oppression and then participate in its transformation. Paulo Freire rejected the 'banking method' of teaching and proposed the problem-posing/problem solving method. He said that the banking method makes the teacher the narrator, and students memorize the narrated content en bloc (Freire, 1970/2002). Furthermore, Paulo Freire asserts that "the banking concept of education is based on mechanic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects" (p.77). This method of teaching, according to Freire, creates believers rather than thinkers. It does not challenge students to question the answers but to answer the questions. This is the type of education that is designed to maintain the status quo of the society. He therefore advocated for the problem posing method.

The problem posing method encourages students to think critically. It is the education that makes people aware of (conscientize) their oppression. He believed that through dialogue, the teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is taught through dialogue (Freire, 2002). In this type of learning, students are no longer passive, but are active investigators. He believed that education is a permanent process of liberating cultural action

as people develop the power to perceive the world critically. The goal of Paulo Freire's philosophy is freedom. He advocated education that will free the individual, that is developing an individual, as a "whole person", liberated mentally, spiritually and politically, The individual should be able to reflect and act upon the world in order to transform it. Freire argued that education, as a practice of freedom. is actually a necessary aspect of being fully human (p.81).

For Botswana, Paulo Freire's educational philosophy implies that the school curriculum, the teaching-learning process, should be reviewed to empower students to contribute to their own education, to participate actively as subjects rather than as objects in the teaching-learning process.

#### 7) "On the Problematic of Emancipation in Education"

Cheu-jei Lee, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne (leecg@ipfw.edu)

This paper explores the problematic of emancipation in education. It presents the views of critical literacy (pedagogy) and critical white studies on emancipation. It suggests that their views are insufficient due to their one-sided emphasis on "who" is responsible (i.e., whether the oppressed or the dominant are responsible for emancipation). To supplement what is lacking in the existing literature, Habermas's perspective is argued to redirect our attention from "Who is responsible for emancipation?" to "How can we be emancipated?" and "From what are we emancipated?"

Emancipation or liberation is a recurring theme in education. Yet there are differing views on how to attain it. For critical literacy (pedagogy) theorists and practitioners, emancipation is to deliver the marginalized from oppression. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, one of the most important works in critical literacy, Paulo Freire (1984) seems to be pessimistic about the role the dominant play in emancipation:

It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves. It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught; and the contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man: neither oppressor nor oppressed, but man in the process of liberation. (p. 42, italics added)

If Freire is right, the oppressed need to assume full responsibility for their own emancipation while the dominant seem to have nothing to contribute. This perspective on emancipation can be misinterpreted (though it is certainly not Freire's intent) to blame the victims (the oppressed) if emancipation does not succeed. Yet is it true that the dominant are exempt from the process of liberation? The answer is definitely "no" for advocates of critical white studies. Critical white studies proposes a critical examination of white privilege defined by McIntosh (1997) as "an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious" (p. 291). This approach intends to bring whiteness to educators' attention and suggests that whites, who are usually in a dominant position, are responsible for, and should play a pivotal role in, the emancipation of the marginalized (see McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 2000, 2001).

While it may be important to find out whether the oppressed or the dominant are responsible for emancipation, our perspective should be broadened to consider other aspects of emancipation in order to better understand this issue. Specifically, "How can we be emancipated?" and "From what are we emancipated?" are imperative questions to be answered. This paper argues that Habermas's view on emancipation adumbrated in his theory of communication (1984, 1987) can be appropriated to shed light on this issue by redirecting our attention from the people, i.e., the oppressed and the dominant, to the issue itself.

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**2012 (vol. 6):**

*SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)*  
Formerly "*Midwest Philosophy of Education Society*"

*SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS & PAPER ABSTRACTS, SPECIAL SPSE SESSIONS, ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION-CENTRAL DIVISION*

*CHICAGO, IL, PALMER HOUSE HILTON*

Session 1-1

Linda O'Neill, Northern Illinois University  
Cultivating Dispositions: Philosophy Inside and Outside Teacher Education

John Dewey (1897, 1916, 1938), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975, 1976, 1985), and Jürgen Habermas (1971, 1984, 1987) have all contributed to our understandings of the perils and possibilities accompanying the cultivation of philosophical dispositions. In a previous discussion of the cultivation of dispositions within teacher education programs, one colleague suggested that Dewey's philosophical dispositions seem to arise not only from compliance with institutional norms but in opposition to them as well. Philosophical dispositions described in Dewey's works include: the inclination to reach judgments based on trends rather than single, fixed results, sensitivity to new perceptions, the ability to make meaning even in the face of unpleasantness, an expanding capacity to keep on learning, open mindedness, whole-heartedness, responsibility, caring, and empathy informed by imagination (Kim, 2009; Pamental, 2010). In Dewey's view a philosophic disposition also requires responsiveness to scientific developments since philosophy helps clarify the dispositions that various scientific discoveries encourage us to develop (Baldacchino, 2008; Boydston, 1972/1989). As colleges of education continue to assess teacher dispositions linked to NCATE standards, the potential remains for cultivating Dewey's philosophical dispositions within and against institutional frameworks.

In this paper, Gadamer and Habermas are John Dewey's conversation partners in a discussion of what philosophical dispositions are and what they entail. Contrasts between Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical

hermeneutics with claims regarding the cultivation of dispositions within institutional frameworks and Jürgen Habermas' critical hermeneutics with claims regarding the cultivation of dispositions in opposition to institutional frameworks (Scheibler, 2000) are delineated. The cultivation of philosophical dispositions as institutionalized in university requirements for pre-service teachers aligned with external (NCATE) standards often require a negotiation of tensions similar to those reflected in debates between Gadamer and Habermas. While Paul Ricoeur (1981) has argued that the antimony between hermeneutical consciousness (Gadamer) and critical consciousness (Habermas) is a false one, distinctions between Gadamer's hermeneutics of tradition and Habermas' hermeneutics of suspicion are emphasized here in order to more fully explore personal, professional and institutional tensions that arise in the cultivating of dispositions. After discussing the Gadamer-Habermas debates as they relate to Dewey's characterizations of philosophic dispositions, this paper concludes with implications for philosophy of education inside and outside teacher education programs.

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Session 1-2

Emery Hyslop-Margison, University of New Brunswick; Matthew Rogers, University of New Brunswick



## Education as a Field of Study and Applied Research Methods: A Mismatch?

When considered collectively and historically education research has generated little practical return on a significant financial investment from a wide range of public and private international granting agencies. Many scholars (Egan, 2002; Hyslop-Margison&Naseem, 2007; McClintock, 2007) suggest this lack of practical return follows from a mismatch between education as a field of study and the applied research methods.

In this paper we adopt a conceptual framework based on a critique initially developed by Louch (1966), and later supported by Smedslund (1979) and Egan (2002). The framework offers a plausible explanation on why the pedagogical imperatives advanced by education research are often contradictory or afford little new knowledge to teachers. Our paper will address one central question: To what extent do the research claims on best practice fall into the analytic and arbitrary categories identified by Louch, Smedslund and Egan?

The general objective of this paper is to afford public and private granting agencies the necessary information to focus available resources within education more effectively. We will identify both the potential and the limitations of research in education and, based on the analysis, propose specific investment areas for available research funding within education. Therefore, three additional questions will be considered:

- 1) Is the perceived ineffectiveness of research in education an accurate appraisal of work in the discipline?
- 2) What realistic contributions can research in education make to actually improving classroom teaching and learning?
- 3) Where are available resources most effectively channeled in education research and/or scholarship?

Session 1-3

Sheron Fraser-Burgess, Ball State University

Reconfiguring Social Justice for 21<sup>st</sup> century Educational Equity

### A. Social justice

Social justice, by definition, recognizes the structural nature of inequality and aims to address it at the most powerful and most insidious level.

In this paper, I identify the limitations of social justice as an ethical framework for 21st century educational equality. I argue that social justice as an ethical construction is premised on oppositions (e.g. powerful versus powerless, oppressed versus oppressor and dominant versus the dominated) but its criteria for sorting who fits into the respective categories are grounded in Marxism and critical theory. Those criteria are generally not problematized (for women, minorities, sexual orientation, disabilities) in the literature but they are contingent in nature.

B. I take the limitations of the social justice to be the following:

Political example: It does not apply to transitional phases: when the revolution is incomplete, such as in the case of a black president being powerful but there still exists rampant racial inequality. How does social justice frame the appeal for racial justice?

- Education example: It does not apply to complex cases such as such as men not achieving or women surpassing men in forms of achievement.
- Education example: It does not apply to violations of the golden rule cases when formerly powerless group members utilize the instruments of power to oppress others (e.g.: Gays pushing to silence opposition.)

C. The origins of its flaws are the following:

Social justice does not theoretically incorporate sufficient universal elements. It is particularistic in many respects because of Marx's belief that history was teleological. The following conceptual flaws are sources of the problem

- Its definition of the conditions of its central categories is too fluid because they are based on temporal social and historical conditions rather than identity. However social justice conceptions presuppose an account of group membership that is essentialistic.
- There are social justice presumptions that inherently biased against some segments of society such as males, whites, heterosexual, and the wealthy, able-bodied, in ways that often can

lead to political backlash. Social justice becomes equated with identity politics but it should transcend it.

#### D. Revision/Recommendation

I would suggest:

- An assumption of the comprehensiveness of identity as I define it, with fixed criteria for group membership that allows for both the voluntary and involuntary conditions.
- A principled and clear account of justice located in liberal theory (freedom for self-management) as compared with solely critical theory (structural and long-standing inequality that is only overturned through a revolution).

Social justice as a concept should capture the kind of activism that locates justice not only within contingent social conditions but considers the overall wellbeing of an entire identity group.

#### Session 1-4

Charlie Howell, Northern Illinois University

#### Privatizing Public Higher Education: Some Ethical Challenges

As private providers of higher education proliferate, public institutions are increasingly on the defensive. Traditional high levels of state support have declined and are expected to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. To offset these losses, public universities have dramatically raised tuition levels, but this new income stream is limited by steadily increasing competition and by leveling off in the number of high school graduates. To survive in this new competitive world, public higher education has been forced to adopt the entrepreneurial tactics of its private-sector counterparts: on-site and online programming, customized curriculum, and reliance on clinical, part-time, and other temporary faculty.

For many traditional institutions, this is a painful transition, challenging long-held values about academic authority, requiring hitherto unimaginable flexibility, and demanding that staff and faculty members learn new skills and methods of operation. Painful as they may be, though, these changes are often seen as beneficial to students and to their families and employers. Success in competition requires academic leaders to focus on the needs of these constituencies. When the needs are met, the institution flourishes, and administrators have little difficulty in justifying the sacrifices demanded of faculty and staff.

There are, however, some significant ethical concerns raised by the entrepreneurial behavior of public institutions. In some ways the competitive arena resembles that of K-12 education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as described by West (1994) in his account of the rise of public schools in England during the 1850's and 60's. Though motivated by concern for the well-being of children, the development of the state system had unforeseen consequences. As state provision expanded, private providers were driven out of the market, a state monopoly on educational services emerged, and through various consolidation initiative, families' ability to influence the education of their children significantly declined. The proposed paper explores the prospects for similar monopoly effects in higher education. What factors have the potential to give monopoly power to state institutions? What ethical considerations does this monopolistic potential raise for academic leaders in state institutions? Given the advantages of state sponsorship, what arguments could these leaders offer to justify their entrepreneurial initiatives to private competitors?

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#### Session 1-5

Joseph S. Freedman, Alabama State University

#### Conceptual Frameworks in Historical Context – Their Uses in Academia and Beyond

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teaching Education (NCATE) requires all NCATE-accredited teacher education programs to meet six unit standards as well as to develop a conceptual framework. There is

relatively little professional literature, however, on what such a conceptual framework should be understood to be or to entail.

In the high and late middle ages, an interdisciplinary arts curriculum provided a framework for the overall organization of much of the academic instruction given at the university level. In Northern and Central Europe this framework was severely shaken by the advent of early modern state and the Protestant Reformation. The result was a fragmented curriculum and specialized professorships, limited connections between those subject-matters taught, and the curricular exclusion of some other subject-matters. The emergence of the (interdisciplinary) concept of method in the mid-16th century can be seen as an attempt to help remedy this problem; however, it could be argued that this fragmentation into separate specialized disciplines has largely continued to this day.

Conceptual frameworks are useful – and in some respects, necessary – for individuals engaged in academic as well as non-academic pursuits. In order to write an effective outline, term paper, or lengthier work, a (conceptual) framework is needed. And many or most humans need a conceptual framework (for example, a belief in God, a religious confession, a coherent world view, or some combination of these and/or other beliefs) in order to set priorities and make effective choices in their daily lives.

When creating NCATE conceptual frameworks, education colleges and other education programs have frequently not devoted a lot of attention to how their individual stakeholders might find connections between these two kinds of frameworks; an institutional conceptual framework on the one hand and the conceptual framework(s) of a given stakeholder on the other. It is the goal of this proposed paper to suggest some ways – in the context of the historical evolution of such conceptual frameworks and the scarce recent literature on this same subject-matter - in which such connections might be made.

Session 2-1

Cheu-jei Lee, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne

Praxis Epistemology

Several postmodern themes traceable to Jacques Derrida are widely known and adopted in education. Derrida is an expert in problematizing representation as a basis of knowledge through deconstruction. He is one of the most influential scholars representative of postmodernism. Similarly, JurgenHabermas's critical theory is no less important in its impact on educational theory and research. Though Derrida differs to a great extent than Habermas in his philosophical orientation, this study shows how Habermas's theory of communicative action can be extended consistently toward convergence with postmodern insights in line with Derrida through praxis epistemology.

Derrida is renowned for his deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence, the foundation in which many Western intellectual traditions are rooted. The metaphysics of presence assumes that truth is built on presence and that knowledge originates in presence. The belief in presence is tied closely to foundationalism which holds that there is an ultimate grounding for knowledge claims about the world (Schwandt, 1997)<sup>4</sup>. However, it is the ultimate grounding or presence that Derrida problematizes and deconstructs.

JurgenHabermas is also aware of the impasse of foundationalism. However, he attributes it to a monological paradigm to which foundationalists subscribe. The monological paradigm, or the philosophy of the subject, is characterized by a lone, sovereign subject conceptualizing truth and knowledge through perception. As a result, Habermas proposes a dialogical paradigm where two or more organisms communicating with each other.

Though both Derrida and Habermas are critical of foundationalism, their philosophical orientations seem to be different. Derrida is regarded as postmodern while Habermas is aligned with critical theory. The purpose of this study is to show how Phil Carspecken has aptly supplemented Habermas's theory of communicative action (TCA)

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<sup>4</sup>Schwandt, T. A. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

with a reformulated concept of praxis to formulate praxis epistemology and how postmodern insights in line with Derrida can be linked consistently with TCA through praxis epistemology.

In this paper, Derrida's deconstructive technique, especially his deconstruction of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, is presented first. This is followed by a discussion of Habermas's dialogical paradigm (i.e., TCA) and how it steps beyond the aporias of a monological paradigm. Finally, the discussion focuses on praxis epistemology, especially on how it bridges Derrida and Habermas without subjecting itself to postmodern and foundational pitfalls.

Session 2- 2

Allan Johnston, DePaul University and Columbia College Chicago

Simulation, Seduction, Education: a Baudrillardian Reading of Post-Modern Education

This paper considers the significance, meaning, and importance of Jean Baudrillard's post-modern social analysis to education, including contemporary American educational policies and processes. It looks specifically at Baudrillard's theories regarding seduction, simulation, hyperreality, and symbolic exchange value to explore how and whether these features of his thought apply to contemporary American education.

If Montaigne famously wrote that to philosophize is to learn to die, in post-modern American education to learn is to enter into the symbolic exchange of signs that reinforces a hyperreality of self-enclosure spinning vertiginously out of (individual) control. Such might be a Baudrillardian reading of modern education.

Part of the reason for this effect is the heightened significance education has received as item of symbolic exchange in the modern world. An education with the right labels attached to it increasingly serves as a social marker, as well as serving as a marker of value. Part of the reason for this is the seductive angle that has become increasingly important in post-modern education. Recall that in its root etymology "education" points to the idea of bringing out or leading forth (educere, Latin 'educare'). The word houses the idea of directing, but in at least a reading that traces back to the Platonic tradition, 'to educate' suggests the bringing forth of individual content or potentiality via dialectic, the educating of truth through inquiry. In the more democratic context of contemporary education this educative ideal of thought exchange that builds progressively to a (finally unrealized or unrealizable) truth incorporates the constructivist idea that humans generate knowledge and meaning via interactions between their experiences and their ideas.

In a post-modern or Baudrillardian reading of education, however, the root educative ideal of "educing" is replaced by "seducing," with its conceptual base in "leading aside or away." Rather than bringing out from the subjective center of the being, education, as seduction, via a process of (sometimes misleading) goals and ends to be achieved, involves the objectification of the "other" to be assimilated and used as knowledge that signifies only insofar as it has symbolic exchange value, that is to the extent that it serves as a sign the value of which is determined in its relation to other signs. The effect is to make the student enthralled in promise, to bring him or her into a hyperreality in which any concept of use or exchange value is replaced by symbolic value, and in which the significance of signs is determined by socially coded values that are external to any meaning that accrues outside this self-enclosing system.

Hyperreal aspects of contemporary education can be found in the increasing significance of virtual representation. Consider the example of the computer game, which is increasingly becoming a teaching tool. Role-playing system building projects us into a virtual reality that becomes circular, "hyperreal" in that it operates without reference to the (dull) reality of real reality. Or consider the increasing role of televisual elements area in education. In televisual representations of nature, "nature" is replaced by a "hyper" nature of drama, characterization, theme and even more impressively, spectacle, seducing us with a simulated nature that via its presentation bears little to no resemblance to the "real" "nature" of green stuff one witnesses by, for example, entering wilderness. In fact for Baudrillard wilderness, often reduced to a reserve or "park" in the modern world, is human creation, more important in human life for its symbolic significance as a simulation of the real, like a caravan through a Lion Country reserve far removed from consideration of natural survival.

If representations of real or virtual worlds seduce or bring us to a simulation of the object, the formulaic ruse of "one size fits all" educational policies serves a similar purpose at the institutional level. In "No Child Left Behind," for instance, the policy initially seduces with its promise of safety, accomplishment, inclusion. In fact the policy is now criticized for standardizing learning and reducing the dissemination of knowledge via its "teach to the text" emphasis. Hidden in the seduction is an encouragement of a "race to the top" mentality involving the sign value of achievement as measured by test scores. These forces are underscored by very real threats of funding cuts, school closings, job loss, etc. The system excludes the possibility of fulfilling the ideal of bringing *all* students to a standardized level by a specific time by the nature of its "competitive edge" mentality, and so inevitably creates "otherness" within the system it is meant to aid and promote as the less successful get characterized as lazy, incompetent, etc., foregoing considerations of possible socioeconomic or other factors that determine student performance.

A Baudrillardian critique of education may seem pointless to some, given that Baudrillard often presents the postmodern condition he describes as a *fait accompli*, that is to say as "fatal," a closed endgame that precludes escape. Baudrillard's characterization as a nihilist stems from this fatal aspect of his theory, just as his characterization as a supporter of terrorism stems from his argument that the self-enclosing system of the hyperreal generates within itself the excluded other that only enters the system through violence, as for instance in the attack on the World Trade Center of 2001. Yet if we can postulate knowledge as power if not as meaning, we can speculate that a Baudrillardian reading of the current educational process allows us to recognize forces at play, and perhaps to renegotiate systemic values at least insofar as they operate in symbolic exchange.

Session 2- 3

David L. Mosley, Bellarmine University

Nietzsche's Gay Science as a Philosophy (of Education?)

In this, my third exploration of Friedrich Nietzsche's views on education, I will examine the philosopher's discussion of the *gai saber*, in his *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/87), and the degree to which these may constitute a philosophy of education. Special attention will be given the role of music, especially the *trobar leu*, or light lyrical style, which characterizes the German rhymes of Prince Vogelfrei that bracket the text, along with evidence of Nietzsche's familiarity with the 14<sup>th</sup> century consistories of the *Sobregaya Companhiadels Trobadors*, *The Overjoyed Company Troubadours*.

Session 2-4

Guillemette Johnston, DePaul University

The Inner Processes of the Intellectual Body: Modes of Knowledge Acquisition in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Western Philosophical Discourse in Light of the Yogic Definition of Consciousness

This paper will look at different philosophical systems that address the question of acquisition of knowledge in the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century European tradition. Studying post Renaissance philosophers of the West and early representatives of modern philosophy, such as Descartes, Locke, Hume and Rousseau, it will try to redefine their positions in light of the system presented in the Yoga Sutras, a key eastern work for understanding human nature and certain disciplinarian practices that are meant to enable man to reach inner knowledge and integrity. We will choose as a mode of reference traditional yogic descriptions of different functions and uses of aspects of consciousness as they pertain to the workings of the intellectual body: Ego, intelligence and mind. We will incorporate the analysis offered by the contemporary yogi and philosopher B. K. S. Iyengar to make yoga's complex definitions accessible to the western public.

The purpose of this reading will be to highlight variations between the different theories in order to study what they reveal in relation to a non-western system that deals with the same broad preoccupations: fostering growth and underlining how we perceive, understand, and incorporate knowledge. Besides trying to clarify what each philosopher's theory means within the western tradition, this interpretation will show how each philosopher

touches on a few of the theoretical aspects that are incorporated into the yogic system as tools for learning. Finally, this paper will demonstrate that in the western tradition of Enlightenment theories of learning and knowledge, Rousseau's pedagogical theory bears the most similarity to yoga, in that it addresses similar concerns in the integration of the consciousness of the individual in everyday reality.

Session 2, paper 5

Sam Rocha, Wabash College

Yes. But What Do You Mean by 'Action'?

There is little doubt that an active sense of things is central to William James' philosophy. Understanding James' theory of mind begins with the notion that mind is a verb (a position famously reiterated by John Dewey in *Art as Experience*). This conception of mind has driven an action-centered interpretation of James, and pragmatism in general, that often takes for granted what is meant by 'action.' I will argue that without a rigorous examination of James' meaning of action we do very little to advance a substantial understanding of James, or pragmatism. Furthermore, in educational research, clarifying this question—the question of 'action'—might begin to complicate the relationship between 'theory' and 'practice.' I will show that James advocates for "action in the widest sense." The challenge this presents for the educational imagination might be to question the merits of narrower articulations of James, pragmatism, education, and more.

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SPSE-Ph conference (=international SPSE affiliate): p. 344

Annual Conference of The American Philosophical Association-Central Division, Session of the Society for the Philosophical Study of Education, February 20-23, 2013 New Orleans Hilton Hotel, New Orleans, LA, USA

Chair: David Mosley, Bellarmine University

Abstracts

1) Nietzsche and the End of Education

David L. Mosley  
Bellarmine University, USA

Abstract: The fourth, and final, presentation on Friedrich Nietzsche and the philosophy of education will examine comments on the topic from the philosopher's late works, i.e. *Human, All Too Human* (1886), *Daybreak* (1886), *The Genealogy of Morality* (1887), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), *The Antichrist* (1888), *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1888) and *Ecce Homo* (1888). Because *Ecce Homo* is an extended commentary on his prior work, this presentation will use it as a 'secondary source' and interpretive horizon within which Nietzsche's comments on education can be situated. The presentation will include a brief recapitulation of my earlier reflections on Nietzsche's philosophy of education. Finally, conceding the dangers inherent in generalizing about Nietzsche's kaleidoscopic, explicitly anti-systematic oeuvre, summative, albeit provisional, reflections on Nietzsche's thinking and experience of education's end.

2) Proposal Title: Threats to Democratic Citizenship in Public Education

Policy

Presenters: Hugh Leonard, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick; Emery Hyslop-Margison, Professor, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick



Contact Information: Emery Hyslop-Margison, ehyslopm@unb.ca (506) 458-7457

Abstract: This paper builds on research that connects citizen disengagement to neo-liberal curricula and indoctrinatory instruction (Hyslop-Margison et al., 2007) by identifying the policy source of such instruction and considering a democratic alternative. We argue that neo-liberal teacher education and private-sector-styled management of public schools (Nichols & Griffith, 2009) combine to undermine the fostering of participatory citizenship. After establishing the influence of neo-liberal values on citizenship education we provide a theoretical description of more democratic instruction and apply it against the New Brunswick Teacher Association's (NBTA's) Code of Professional Conduct (CPC). We conclude that given present provincial education policy a robust model of democratic learning would unfortunately constitute a "conflict of interest" for New Brunswick teachers.

1) Health as Wholeness:

Recovering the Ontological Significance of Health in School Health Education.

Matthew Dewar [mdewar@lfschools.net]

Abstract: The struggle to recover wholeness is a recurring theme in the writings of Paul Tillich and Wendell Berry. Both Tillich and Berry wrestle with a profound ontological isolation and disconnect catalyzed by the emergence of reductionism. Consequently, Tillich and Berry highlight the necessity of recovering a lost "whole." Tillich addresses the significance of one's "ultimate concern" and the consequences of losing touch with the "vertical dimension" of reality. Berry critiques the infiltration of technology and reductionism into our understanding and practice of medicine and health care. Though Tillich and Berry address disintegration uniquely, both posit health and well-being as an ontological state characterized by wholeness. The notion of wholeness – as developed by Tillich and Berry – could provide an alternative conceptual framework for school health education (SHE). Current SHE curricula lacks a unified philosophical foundation and often reflects the reductionist conception of health inherited from the "absence of disease" medical model. Consequently, the conceptions of "health" guiding school health instruction too often perpetuate the isolation and disconnect Tillich and Berry warn against. To expand on this limited conception, the development of a more ontologically grounded conception of health as wholeness in SHE curricula would facilitate more authentic SHE instruction.

4) Proposal for SPSE APA Central Division Annual Meeting

New Orleans, LA February 20-23, 2013

Boyd Bradbury

Abstract: The issue of educational opportunity within and among oppressed populations is one of longstanding concern. Ogbu (1990, p. 46) explained that involuntary or caste-like minorities were brought into that society through slavery, conquest, or colonization (e.g. African Americans and American Indians). Several theories rely on culture to explain low achievement, but do so without pejorative attribution of inadequacy or deficiency. One such theory is resistance theory, which contends that during the educational process, minority students actively resist and reject both the implicit and explicit messages attacking their ethnic identity (Erickson, 1987).

While the term "involuntary minority" and associated theories are well understood, this author intends to propose a parallel "involuntary majority" term by means of comparing educational implications of the post-apartheid South African black population with the current educational state of indigenous populations in the United States. The African philosophy of education, as noted by Horsthemke and Enslin (2008), will be considered, as will the impact of historical trauma on American Indians, in an attempt to determine whether established educational systems for both populations preclude educational achievement at those levels enjoyed by dominant cultures.

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Society for the Philosophical Study of Education-Philippines Branch  
Society for the Philosophical Study of Education-Philippines Branch  
Annual Inaugural Conference  
Arellano University Main Campus  
Little Theater Center  
2600 Legarda Street  
Sampaloc, Manila  
Philippines

Saturday March 16, 2013

Registration: 8:30-9:00 am

Entrance Fee: Php250.00

Students with valid ID: Php100.00

**Welcoming Remarks 9-9:30 am**

The Hon. Francisco P. V. Cayco, Chairman of the Board and CEO, Arellano University

Dr. Maria Teresa F. Calderon, Member, SPSE-Ph Program Committee; Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Arellano University

Dr. Alexander Makedon, Chair, SPSE-Ph Program Committee; Graduate Faculty, Arellano University

Dr. Elias Sampa, Member, SPSE-Ph Program Committee; Professor of Education, Arellano University and Trinity University of Asia

Dr. Federico Castillo, Member, SPSE-Ph Program Committee; Professor, School of Graduate Studies, Arellano University

**Session 1:** 9:30-10:40 am

Session Chair: Professor Castillo

1a) 9:30-10:00 am

*The Futility of Education for Employment and the Rise of Credentialism: Recovering a Philosophy of Education in Public Discourse*

Presenter: Professor Elias Sampa, Professor of Education, Arellano University and Trinity University of Asia

Coffee Break 10:00-10:10 am

1b) 10:10-10:40 am

*Paulo Freire and the History of the Oppressed in the Philippines*

Presenter: Ms. Esperanza Prim, School Administrator, St. Therese of the Child Jesus Academy-Malabon City and Doctoral Student, Arellano University

Session

**Session 2:** 10:45-11:55 am

Session Chair: Professor Sampa

2a) 10:45-11:15 am

*Reclaiming Public Sphere in Higher Education and the Democratization Project*

Presenter: Professor Danilo S. Alterado, Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Saint Louis University-Baguio City; President, Philosophical Association of Northern Luzon (PANL)

Coffee Break 11:15-11:25 am

2b) 11:25-11:55 AM

Panel Presentation on Health Issues in Education by Doctoral Students at Arellano University:

*The Philosophy of Midwifery: A Comparative Analysis between Midwifery and Socrates' Method of Midwifing Ideas*  
Ms. Maria Cristina R. Ramajo, Doctoral Student; Program Chair, School of Midwifery and Professor of Midwifery, Arellano University

*Sex Education in the School and Plato's Meno: A Moral Issue Reconsidered*  
Ms. Felisa G. Basijan, Master Teacher, Pedro E. Diaz High School, Muntinlupa City and Doctoral Student, Arellano University

**Lunch Break 12:00-12:40 pm**

**Session 3:** 12:45-1:15 pm

Session Chair: Dean Maria Teresa F. Calderon, Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Arellano University

3a) 12:45-1:15 pm

*For God and Country: Manny Pacquiao as a Pedagogical Forum in the New School of Hyperreality*  
Presenter: Professor Dennis Paul P. Guevarra, Chair, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Trinity University of Asia; University of Philippines-Diliman

Break: 1:15-1:25 pm

3b) 1:25-1:55 pm

Doctoral Students on Florentino Cayco's Philosophy of Education

*The Educational Philosophy of Florentino Cayco as Applied to Radiologic Technology*  
Ms. Maria Glenda Ang-Mondiguino, Doctoral Student and Professor of Radiologic Technology, Arellano University

*Evolution of a University and Philosophy of Education: Arellano University's Jose Abad Santos' Campus (Pasay) and Florentino Cayco's Philosophy of Education*  
Ms. Elizabeth U. Abayan, Doctoral Student and Professor of Nursing, Arellano University Jose Abad Santos Campus

**Business Meeting: 2:00-3:15 pm**

Agenda:

- A. Approval of SPSE Constitution
- B. Approval of SPSE-Ph Affiliate Status
- C. Election of SPSE-Ph Executive Officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary
- D. Election of Student Representative
- E. Next Year's Annual Conference
- F. Other

Break: 3:15-3:25 pm

**Session 4:** 3:25-3:55 pm

Session Chair: Dr. Edytha Padama, Director of Research and Professor of English Literature, Arellano University

3:25-3:55 pm

*Reinventing Philosophy of Education through Physics: Deconstructing our Didactic, Deflating our Deontology, Derailing our Determinism*

Presenter: Alexander Makedon, Graduate Faculty in Philosophy of Education and Consultant in Modern Greek Language Studies, Arellano University; Head, Education Research Unit, Athens Institute for Education and Research, Athens, Greece

Break: 3:55-4:05 pm

**Session 5:** 4:05-4:45 pm

Session Chair: Dean Noli V. Pagdanganan, Dean, College of Nursing, Arellano University

Panel Presentation on the Application of Philosophy to Education

*Deweyan Perspectives in Nursing Education: A Basis for a Skills Training Program in Arellano University College of Nursing.* Presenters: Emilie M. Lopez, Wilma D. Ymasa, Herminita Armamento, Professors of Nursing, Arellano University

*The Philippine Department of Education “Values Education Program” and Plato's Discussion of Virtue in the Meno: A Thrust for the Development of the Human Person*

Presenter: Ms. Myrna J. Visaya, Principal, Maybunga Elementary School, Pasig City and Doctoral Student, Arellano University

**Closing Remarks: 4:45-5:00 pm**

SPSE-Ph Executive Board Members

**End of Conference: 5:00 pm**

*Thank you for your attendance and participation. The Society would like to express its gratitude to Arellano University for providing the facilities, support, refreshments and equipment for the inaugural SPSE-Ph conference. Please check the SPSE-USA web site at <http://spse.us/spse/mpes.html> regarding date and location of next year's SPSE-Ph annual conference. **Hotel Accommodations:** Manila Grand Opera Hotel, 925 Doroteo Jose Street corner Rizal Avenue, Santa Cruz, Manila 1003 Philippines. Tel: (63) 2-3140090 Hotel web site: <http://www.manilagrandoperahotel.com> Please check with hotel directly regarding prices and available accommodation packages.*

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**Abstract** of paper submitted to the program committee of SPSE-Ph by one of the presenters at the SPSE-Ph conference:

**For God and Country: Manny Pacquiao as a Pedagogical Forum in the New School of Hyperreality**

Dennis Paul P. Guevarra

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Trinity University of Asia

**Theorizing Manny Pacquiao**

Manny Pacquiao—global ring icon and the Philippines’ “pambansang kamao” (national fist)—is the subject of the paper. In the paper, the author seeks to demonstrate how the human imagination is transformed through representations, and how these representations possess the uncanny ability to construct and reconstruct realities through the Pacquiao myth. Pacquiao’s transformation from boxer to a pedagogical forum in the new school of hyperreality is made possible through a world of sign-saturation where, bombarded by ever-increasing images, people must find their identities and direct the changes in the postmodern drama of life. Furthermore, the commercial canonization of Pacquiao provides us with an example of a critical public pedagogy that explains his tremendous social, cultural, political, and religious significance.

The paper attempts to read Pacquiao as a social text and a pedagogical forum. The paper affirms

that the Pacquiao phenomenon is a popular materialization of the power of signs and images which is somewhat obscured but no less real. The paper is framed within the context of what Guy DeBord calls as the “society of the spectacle”. In contemporary society, the spectacle—the hallmark of postmodern society—is the rule of human experience. There are, within what we might call the “school of boxing” in contemporary Philippine society, some interesting features that must not be overlooked. First, there is a sense of community (collective effervescence) breaking through the layers of anomie in a mass-marketed celebration of iconography and identity. The boxing Pacquiao is the embodiment of who we are—or at least who we think we are—and our spirits rise and fall with each victory and defeat.

The Pacquiao myth has the power to connect, amiably or conflictually, those with otherwise disparate lives and views. Second, boxing is a culture-building male sport that embodies the sublimation of repressed desires. In a male-dominated Philippine society, boxing is a socially accepted way of working out psychological frustrations. Boxing is a masculine ritual that symbolically plays out men’s unresolved anxieties. Boxing as a form of male gender performance is so identified with violence and domination. Third, boxing has all the trappings of a “school of religion.” Boxing is intimately related to the expression of communal faith and national identity. Boxing, incidentally, has a kinship to faith. The paper ends with the reflection that the “school of boxing” can offer us a fascinating and insightful examination of our mediated lives.

Editor’s note, Dec. 2024:

The SPSE website on whose platform *The Roundtable* was published was erroneously “destroyed” by the website’s commercial US-based host in late 2013 thus denying the opportunity to some of the above SPSE-Ph 2013 conference presenters, such as Prof. Guevarra, to submit their papers for publication in *The Roundtable*.

**END OF ROUNDTABLE “MASTER VOLUME,” 2007-13**

