Introduction

Steve Tozer
University of Illinois Chicago

As recent volumes have led us to expect, *Philosophy of Education 1998* presents a thoughtful collection of essays from men and women, faculty and graduate students of different ethnic and sexual identities, contributing from several continents and from often dissimilar approaches to philosophy of education. Because these annual collections tend to represent the state of scholarship in philosophy of education, recent editors have offered interpretive essays assessing the field. I have found these essays very helpful to my own understanding.

My intention here, however, is to introduce these essays from a more limited perspective: the context of the codified purposes of the Philosophy of Education Society. This is only one of many contexts for interpretation, and while it is less comprehensive than others, it's an interesting one. It provides an occasion to think about whether and how the multiple purposes of our organization are being met by these essays. Just as important, it provides readers a moment to question whether these purposes, articulated a half-century ago, are still serviceable to an organization that has changed markedly in its membership and methods during that time. Our scholarly work might suggest to us, for example, that our stated purposes are not our only purposes, among other possibilities. And, it is true, our Society's purposes are met in ways apart from this annual publication. Here's what the PES Constitution tells us. The purposes of this organization are:

> (1) to promote the fundamental philosophic treatment of the problems of education, (2) to promote the clarification of agreements and differences between the several philosophies of education through the opportunities for discussion afforded by annual meetings, (3) to advance and improve teaching in the philosophy of education both in schools for the education of teachers and in other educational institutions, (4) to cultivate fruitful relationships between workers in general philosophy and workers in philosophy of education, and (5) to encourage promising young students in the field of philosophy of education.

With respect to the papers in this volume, the first, third and last of these purposes can be readily addressed. An essay would not be chosen if it did not appear to the editorial committee to promote the philosophic treatment of educational problems. Essays are included because they are judged to do this well. Moreover, it would stand to reason that the effort to produce good work in philosophy of education would be of benefit to the teaching of philosophy of education in education schools and elsewhere. And with respect to encouraging promising students in the field, one of the featured essays and several of the other essays were authored by graduate students. These things we have come to expect of our annual publication.

Finding Common Ground

In addressing the second and fourth purposes of the organization as they are reflected in this volume, it is useful to turn to some prominent examples: the seven

featured essays that begin this collection. These essays are in their perspectives, themes, methods, and authorships representative of the volume more generally. President Ann Diller's "Facing the Torpedo Fish: Becoming a Philosopher of One's Own Education," for example, might be taken as a fine example of bridging across "the several philosophies of education" in spanning perspectives from a classic philosophical text, Plato's *Meno,* to contemporary feminist theorists Jane Roland Martin, Nel Noddings, and Adrienne Rich, to philosophers of education such as John Dewey, Nick Burbules, and Dwight Boyd. Diller uses the Socratic torpedo fish to argue that students of all ages are capable of taking more purposeful responsibility for their own educations. To do this, she says, requires the capacity to be torpified, "to face one's own ignorance," almost certainly a virtue regardless of philosophical orientation.

Many other essays in the volume draw upon diverse philosophical traditions to seek out areas of agreement, and difference, among competing "philosophies." One of these is Francis Schrag's, "The Feminist Critique of Science and Educational Inquiry." Here Schrag addresses Helen Longino's recent attempt to re-articulate a feminist theory of science. Using the work of scholars as different as Ogbu and Quine, Schrag seeks to locate common ground between feminist and non-feminist theories of science in a "social consequences" criterion for judging competing hypotheses.

Heesoon Bai's "Autonomy Reconsidered: A Proposal to Abandon the Language of Self- and Other-Control and to Adopt the Language of Attunement," is a different sort of effort to clarify similarities and differences in diverse philosophies. Bai seeks to recast the Western liberal ideal of autonomy within a Taoist orientation because she finds the language of self control to be self-divisive. Instead, she writes: "Each particular's attuning itself to every other particular in the given field of organization: such is the Taoist understanding of intersubjective and intrasubjective regulation." Bai is concerned that schooling as typically constituted is particularly prone to the language of control, and she imports a philosophical orientation from a different cultural context to support her critique.

Africana Philosophy of Education

Another interesting cross-cultural development in this year's collection is a group of essays on African and African-American philosophy, led by Lewis R. Gordon's Distinguished Invited Essay, "African-American Philosophy: Theory, Politics, and Pedagogy." Bartley McSwine, Huey-li Li, Renea Henry, Tito Basu, and James Giarelli all write on various aspects of what Lewis refers to as Africana philosophy, and together, this set of essays adds considerably to our vocabulary of philosophical resources. These essays not only serve the purpose of finding points of agreement across different philosophies of education, but they also serve the stated PES purpose of clarifying links between philosophy of education and the field of philosophy -– where Africana philosophy is a new and noticeable development, and where Lewis Gordon is a prominent contributor. Gordon begins by noting features of African-American philosophy that are of immediate interest to philosophers of education, and then presents a brief analysis of the uniqueness of African-

American philosophy in its distinct historical and cultural origins in a system of injustice. Gordon goes on to argue that the pedagogical implications of African American philosophy include an "adult morality" as opposed to intellectual and pedagogical nihilism.

Gordon's essay makes a unique contribution to our professional community, and it is buttressed by McSwine's essay on W.E.B. DuBois, Huey-li Li's piece on African philosophy, and the commentaries by Giarelli, Henry, and Basu, respectively. Their work constitutes a small but critical mass of essays we have not seen before. McSwine's essay provides new insights into DuBois for most of us: the personal and intellectual influence of James, Santayana, and Royce, the influence of Hegel, the particular nature of DuBois's pragmatism, and the philosophical significance for DuBois of double-consciousness and freedom as an African-American. Giarelli, Henry, and Basu, incidentally, also represent the high standard of critical responses to which invited respondents rise throughout this volume.

Philosophy and Philosophy of Education

Also serving to bridge between philosophy of education and philosophy more generally are a number of featured essays that have in common their indebtedness to classic figures in philosophy: Plato and Rousseau. Kieren Egan, in "Conceptions of Development in Education," argues that Plato and Rousseau have provided views of human development so influential and yet so competing that educational conflicts enduring to this day are rooted in these two models. He offers a reconstituted recapitulation theory, grounded in a culture's "cognitive tools," to try to resolve some part of this conflict. As part of a larger project that was prominently reviewed in the *New York Times* [*The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997)], it is not unreasonable to suppose that Egan's work will contribute to discourse in the philosophical as well as the philosophy of education communities.

Rob Reich's essay, "Confusion About the Socratic Method: Socratic Paradoxes and Contemporary Invocations of Socrates," is yet another piece grounded in traditional philosophy as well as in philosophy of education discourses. Reich addresses the enduring questions, "Does Socrates possess knowledge, or are his claims of ignorance sincere?" and "Does the Socratic method lead to truth?" In formulating his answers to these questions, Reich develops an argument for the role of Socratic questioning in education for participation in a pluralist democracy.

Philosopher Jane Roland Martin has long worked in philosophy and philosophy of education, helping to blur the lines between them. Her Distinguished Invited Essay, "The Wealth of Cultures and the Problem of Generations," begins with Plato, Rousseau, Dewey, and their shared view that it is the full culture that educates, for better or for worse. From this she derives a view of "cultural wealth" that has implications for schools and for other socializing agencies throughout any culture. Her notions of cultural assets and cultural liabilities are original and compelling, and her recommendations for cultural "bookkeeping" are provocative. Interestingly, like Gordon, Martin's approach also leads to a pedagogical stance of accepting responsibility for future generations.

That Martin and Reich, among others, pay explicit attention to educational practice in schools is characteristic of many articles in this volume – perhaps more than might be expected of philosophers of education in our time. In 1996, Frank Margonis in these pages referred to concerns about the field that included "criticisms suggesting that the most philosophical of educational philosophy is too far removed from practice to offer educators meaningful guidance in the pressing tasks of schooling."[1] Five years before that, in responding to a series of retrospective articles that reviewed the first fifty years of PES in *Educational Theory*, Maxine Greene used more pointed language:

> What of education in its broadest sense? What of the schools? Do all the events in fifty years of educational change mean nothing?...I am suggesting that these papers seem often to have been written in airless places, with closed windows, by people like Wallace Stevens's rationalists "looking at the ceiling, looking at the floor."[2]

While it might be argued that Greene was referring both to the papers she was responding to and fifty years of papers published by PES, her point is pretty clear: At least one of the things that our work ought to address is what happens in schools.

In fact, papers for this year's volume were invited, but not required, to attend specifically to educational issues of concern to practitioners in schools and to educators other than philosophers of education. The invitation was framed this way out of a concern, expressed, among others, in a recent book by Tony Johnson, that philosophers of education talk almost exclusively to other philosophers of education and have only very limited impact on school practice and on educational discourse outside our own educational community.[3] A great many authors in this volume appeared to take that invitation seriously, or were otherwise motivated to address school policy and practice as central issues. Stacy Smith on charter schools, Randall Curren on critical thinking, Walter Feinberg et al. on models of democracy in school governance, Clark Robenstine on Aristotle for teachers, Chris Mayo on sex education, Stanton Wortham on knowledge and action in classroom practice, and David Carr on the professional education of teachers are just some of these.

These thoughtful treatments of school policies and practice deserve to be read more widely than by philosophers and philosophers of education, but our readership for this volume is fairly limited. Two features of our work seem to be important if we want it to have influence beyond our own small community. One is that it should show strong evidence that we are listening to the concerns of practitioners and other educators, so that the insights we offer actually respond to the problems they are experiencing. Second, and relatedly, is that we need to go to where their conversations take place. While we sharpen our philosophical and educational thinking in pages that only we read, we may need to seek outlets that are widely read by educators other than philosophers of education. I am not suggesting a popularizing of philosophy of education (as if that were possible), but some thoughtfulness about how we can learn to engage a wider community of educators with the kind of outstanding work that is represented in this volume. If it makes sense that we do so, the stated purposes of PES may need to be enlarged as well.

Anyone who has edited such a volume knows that an editor incurs countless debts during the completion of the project. I must express gratitude to University of Illinois at Chicago and Dean Victoria Chou for the necessary institutional support; to graduate students Lyn El Amin, Margaret Klein, Carole O'Connell, and Robert Nowlin and to UIC's Aurelia Jones; to PES President Ann Diller; to Michigan State University's support through the indefatigable Bob Floden and Jennifer Rosenberger; to PES Managing Editors Diana Dummitt and Ginger Reynolds as well as *Educational Theory's* Diane Beckett; and finally, for long editorial hours over a record number of submissions, the members of the PES 1998 Editorial Committee: Susan Franzosa, Xiaodan Huang, Wendy Kohli, Mary Leach, Kevin McDonough, Alven Neiman, Stephen Norris, and A.G. Rud. And, of course, thanks to Nick.

1. Frank Margonis, "Philosophical Pluralism: The Promise of Fragmentation," *Philosophy of Education 1996*, ed. Frank Margonis (Urbana: Philosophy of Education Society, 1997), xi.

2. Maxine Greene, "A Response to Beck, Giarelli/Chambliss, Leach, Tozer, and Macmillan," *Educational Theory* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 324.

3. Tony Johnson, *Discipleship or Pilgrimage? The Educator's Quest for Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 1995). It was to this volume that Margonis referred in footnote 1 above.