
EDUCATIONAL THEORY IN THE EIGHTIES: DIVERSITY AND DIVERGENCE

Wendy Kohli
The New School

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

As I approached the challenging task of reviewing the decade of the 1980s for this special anniversary issue of *Educational Theory*, it seemed important to go back to the *Statement of Purpose* for the journal to get a sense of its intended scope and audience. Here is how it reads:

Educational Theory is published quarterly at Urbana, Illinois, by The University of Illinois. The general purposes of this journal are to foster the continuing development of educational theory and to encourage wide and effective discussion of theoretical problems within the educational profession. In order to achieve these purposes, the journal will be devoted to publishing scholarly articles and studies in the foundations of education, and in related disciplines outside the field of education, which contribute to the advancement of educational theory.

What jumped out at me in reading this statement was the lack of mention, *per se*, of educational *philosophy* or *philosophy* of education, even though the journal — as indicated on its inside cover — is “a medium of expression for the John Dewey Society and the Philosophy of Education Society.” From the start, the journal was intended to be both representative of, yet broader than, the field of philosophy of education: it situated itself in the more general, interdisciplinary domain of *foundations of education*. The Statement of Purpose also suggests that the intended audience for this scholarly endeavor was to be people *within the educational profession*, not necessarily just philosophers of education, and certainly not philosophers in general. The *advancement of educational theory* is the central aim of the journal.

This purpose statement, written in 1951, is a useful reminder that educational theory *is not synonymous with* philosophy of education, irrespective of the sponsors of the journal. The editors have used this distinction as a guide in making difficult editorial choices, even though philosophy of education remains the core of the scholarly mission *because* of the sponsoring organizations.

Retrospectively, we can see how the statement of purpose gestures toward some of the perennial debates that have been addressed directly or indirectly in the journal over the past five decades. I include in this list the differences between and among educational theory, educational foundations, and educational philosophy; the relation of philosophy of education to the “parent” discipline of philosophy; and the relevance — or usefulness — of educational theory (broadly defined) to policy, practice, and practitioners. Consequently, I will begin my review of *Educational Theory* in the 1980s in the context of these debates.

PHILOSOPHY AND OR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

As someone who came to philosophy of education in the late 1970s and early 1980s through the study of the social and cultural foundations (not through philosophy as a mainstream academic discipline), I am quite attuned to the internal dialogues within our quarters about *what counts* as philosophy of education and *who counts* as a philosopher of education. These questions of identity and legitimacy reflect the underlying tension between the “pure” or “parent” discipline of philosophy and its hybrid progeny, educational philosophy.¹ They also reflect the differences between those who are educational *theorists* and those who are educational *philosophers*. Educational theorists are generally considered to be scholars who theorize about education from a range of disciplines. I consider educational philosophers to be *one category* of educational theorists. Furthermore, although educational theorizing is clearly connected to empirical research, the journal *Educational Theory* chose to be defined primarily by the *non-empirical* dimensions of the disciplines of history, sociology, philosophy, and economics; by the various disciplinary foundations of education.

Although I write this essay from the self-named and institutionally recognized position of a philosopher of education, my own identity claim is laced with a degree of ambivalence. My individual, conflicted stance may be indicative of a more general confusion others in the field have felt with regard to the nature and purposes of our scholarship. It is this contested identity that has led to several attempts over the decades to clarify what constitutes educational philosophy and what its role is in relation to education, writ large.

Although the journal *Educational Theory* is not strictly a journal of or for philosophers of education, it clearly is the preeminent journal of record for our field in the United States, and arguably the world. Therefore, it seems important to include some of the pertinent conversations about educational philosophy in this essay.

The 1980s were ushered in by a volume devoted to (re-) conceptualizing our field: *Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, edited by one of the prominent philosophers of education at that time, Jonas Soltis.² The 80th NSSE Yearbook follows two others devoted to philosophy of education: the 41st, *Philosophies of Education*, and the 54th, *Modern Philosophies and Education*.³ The Soltis-edited collection had as its main purpose “to help the

1. For the purposes of this article, I will use educational philosophy and philosophy of education synonymously. I will, however, make a distinction between these terms and educational *theory*.

2. Jonas Soltis, ed., *Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1981).

3. John S. Brubacher, ed., *Philosophies of Education: Forty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

readers readjust their conceptions of what philosophy of education is and to come to see the many ways in which philosophy and education can be connected."⁴ It is significant that Soltis chose to use the phrase "philosophy *and* education" instead of "philosophy *of* education." This distinction suggests that educational philosophers were to be trained in philosophy and then relate that philosophical training to educational problems. James Giarelli, in one of his incisive analyses of the field of philosophy of education, makes the point that "to 'do' philosophy in this view consists in applying analytical philosophical methods to the logic and language of educational discourse."⁵ In Giarelli's "applicative" view, philosophers of education became "a kind of technical support staff which uses the technique of professional philosophy...to bring some consistency and logic to the muddled realm of educational discourse."⁶

The 80th *NSSE Yearbook* received considerable attention in a 1981 issue of *Educational Theory*. David Nyberg, the editor of this special issue, opened a conversation about the contours of the field of philosophy of education with a discussion of Babel, as described in *Genesis*.⁷ Through this analogy, Nyberg posited a connection between the biblical quest for one language and the task of modern (educational) philosophy — particularly in English and American universities — whose "ambition was to invent a method for resolving into various and simple parts the complex productions of human intellect."⁸ He sees the 80th *NSSE Yearbook* as "the newest testament of this ambition."⁹

In his lead article, Nyberg praised Soltis for daring to approach (educational) philosophizing differently from his Yearbook predecessors; namely:

He (Soltis) proposes to demonstrate how philosophy of education has become less comprehensive and more discrete, less noun-like and more verb-like, less system oriented and more issue oriented. His plan for the book is a bold break with the convention established by the two previous NSSE Yearbooks that were given over to philosophy of education. But his plan is perfectly in keeping with another convention — that of ordering the subfields of philosophy as this is currently done in academic departments. So in his table of contents the litany of systems (idealism, realism, pragmatism, and so on) is supplanted by the litany of specialties (ethics, logic, aesthetics, and the like).¹⁰

Soltis's definition of the field as "less comprehensive and more discrete, less noun-like and more verb-like, less system oriented and more issue oriented" reflected the changes going on in philosophy in general. It also reinforced the link to the discipline by mimicking the constitutive categories of the parent.

4. As quoted by David Nyberg, "Thank God for Babel: Analysis, Articulation, Antinomy," *Educational Theory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 3.

5. James Giarelli, "Philosophy, Education, and Public Practice," in *Philosophy of Education 1990: Proceedings of the Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society*, ed. David Ericson (Bloomington, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1991), 35.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Nyberg, "Thank God for Babel."

8. *Ibid.*, 1.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 2.

Harry Broudy, another leading philosopher of education of the time, took issue with Soltis in the same Yearbook and defended *the litany of systems* that had structured the field for years, including idealism, realism, and pragmatism. He further suggested that whole, metaphysical views “need to be preserved” and warned against “the wise-spread adoption of the analytical modes (linguistic and logical) for philosophizing by philosophers of education.”¹¹

So we had two prominent philosophers of education constructing our field through two competing frameworks that valued different conceptions of philosophical practice: Broudy arguing for continued metaphysical speculation and Soltis for more linguistic analysis.

The re-constructing of the field by Soltis also underscored a debate within the education profession as to *how useful* educational theory, in general, and educational philosophy, in particular, should be for teachers and other practitioners. It had become common practice, for example, in teacher education programs of the 1960s and '70s, to have future teachers articulate their own “philosophy of education” through one of the “isms” to which Broudy refers, and to draw out the implications of this “philosophy” for their classroom practice. Although both Soltis and Broudy would agree that good philosophical training was necessary in order to be a good philosopher of education, neither addressed directly a tension that remains with us today: To what extent should philosophers of education be trained as philosophers first and *educational* philosophers second?

Here we enter the murky terrain of “Foundations of Education” where disciplinary identity has persisted as a site of/for contestation. Must one be a professionally trained philosopher to think philosophically about educational themes? Clearly, there are many philosophers of education who believe strongly that one must have a primary grounding in philosophy to be a good educational philosopher. These same folks would argue that good educational philosophy need not be immediately relevant or applicable to policy and practice; on the contrary, they argue that it *should not be* immediately relevant or applicable.

Harvey Siegel, a regular contributor to *Educational Theory* during the 1980s, is one such scholar. He drew a rather sharp profile for us when he insisted, “we are, first and foremost, *philosophers*, part of a larger community of philosophers, for whom the value of philosophy needs no defense, and the usefulness of philosophy not a central concern.”¹² He goes on to argue, “As philosophers of education, our primary purpose must be to develop and deepen our understanding of the whole host of philosophical issues raised by the practice of education” and that we, “like all theorizing must be distanced from and autonomous from the concerns of practice and practitioners.”¹³

11. *Ibid.*

12. Harvey Siegel, “The Future and Purpose of Philosophy of Education,” *Educational Theory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 13.

13. *Ibid.*, 15.

Soltis offered a more nuanced, perhaps more generous, view of our role when he emphasized

the need for the philosopher of education to be a philosopher first, in the broadest sense of the term.... The philosopher of education has a unique role to play in the education of educators. A profession with the minds of future generations in its hands needs the experience of mental sharpening, probing, and reflecting on its task and responsibilities if there is to be any hope that they will encourage reflective and critical thinking in others. Educators need to learn to think clearly and philosophize effectively about what they are doing and should be assisted in doing so with the best philosophical help available. Philosophy and education are natural allies in many respects.¹⁴

With Soltis's reconceptualization of the field tied so closely to the subfields of the "parent," philosophy, some argued that "philosophy of education had gone professional."¹⁵ And, with this "professionalization" we had become increasingly irrelevant. Giarelli offered a competing vision for this: "the philosopher of education will necessarily be a public [my emphasis] rather than a professional philosopher."¹⁶ To this end he or she will "focus on those practices which constitute the essential life activities of communities.... it is the discourse of these practices that gives public discourse its substance and its possibilities for education. In more ways than one, it is the midwife who delivers to the philosopher the educational challenges of tomorrow."¹⁷

Things change; ideas change; fields change. At the same time, some questions remain. We are still grappling with them as we move into the twenty-first century: What does one do as a philosopher of education? What is the relation between educational theorizing and educational philosophizing? To what use, if any, is the educational philosopher, for educators and educational policymakers? Should there be any necessary connection between philosophy and practice? How relevant are we, or should we try to be?

In this essay I hope to illuminate these themes in the context of the scholarship written during the 1980s, the decade so influential in the construction of my professional identity and the shaping of my intellectual positions. I also want to broaden the discussion to include the struggles for disciplinary legitimacy that educational theory in general was experiencing at this time, and to examine the new politically potent discourses that had a stronger *interdisciplinary* orientation. I think here of the influence of critical social theory, feminism, and political economy, to name just a few. Perhaps some light may be shed on the complexities, confusions, and contradictions within educational theory represented by the articles in this journal.

But first, a look at the larger historical context in which we did our work.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When one thinks of the '80s, one most often identifies it with the reign of Reagan and Bush (the elder) in the United States. Elected in 1980 after Jimmy Carter's

14. Jonas Soltis, "Afterthoughts," *Educational Theory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 93.

15. See Giarelli and Chambliss, "The Foundations of Professionalism: Fifty Years of the Philosophy of Education Society in Retrospect," *Educational Theory* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 272.

16. Giarelli, "Philosophy, Education, and Public Practice," 41.

17. *Ibid.*

presidency of "malaise" ended, Ronald Reagan espoused a conservative social and economic agenda that would have a profound — even devastating — effect on educational policy at the national, state, and local levels. From the perspective of liberal and Left intellectuals, as well as progressive educators, the "Reagan Years" unleashed some very dangerous challenges to the fundamental role of public education in a democratic society. The Christian Right was determined to undermine the separation of church and state through its repeated attempts to get school prayer back in the classroom and to promote vouchers for parochial schools. The resurgence of a conservative agenda in domestic as well as foreign policy undermined the taken-for-granted assumptions of the liberal policymakers of the previous decade. At risk was the well-established consensus on public support for educational opportunity and equity that emerged from the "Great Society" days of Lyndon Johnson and endured through the ups and downs of a post-Vietnam economy. Hostility to affirmative action and similar compensatory programs was on the rise. There was a backlash against national or federal policies and programs generally, with a turn toward more "local" initiatives and control. Public education was portrayed as an anchor on the economic competitiveness of the country through a plethora of critical reports such as *A Nation at Risk*.¹⁸ Politicians in Washington and the state houses had permission to launch unbridled attacks on public school teachers, and on the institutions of higher education that prepared teachers. Teachers were blamed for failing schools, and by extension, a failing U.S. economy. The upshot of these scathing criticisms, legitimated by think tanks and foundations, as well as the federal government itself, was a systematic de-funding of public schools, increased stress on individual achievement and competitiveness, and valorization of the discourse of "excellence" over the discourse of "equity." This radical shift in policy and funding led to the top 10% of students in the United States benefiting disproportionately in comparison to the majority of public school students. A new form of social Darwinism in educational policy was instituted in the name of national defense: "don't let the Japanese beat us, no matter the cost." These attacks on K-12 schooling and teacher education forced mainstream liberal and progressive educators on the defensive, often subsuming the educative purposes of schooling to the economic and technological.

During this assault on the liberal purposes of schooling, what were educational theorists in general, and philosophers of education in particular, doing about this radical restructuring of priorities? To what degree did we offer a counternarrative to the one being written by the Right wing at the national level? In what ways, if any, was public discourse shaped or influenced by the work of educational theorists and policy analysts? To whom could one look to find alternative explanations, characterizations, and prescriptions for educational policy and practice? Was this even perceived as an appropriate role for philosophers of education? How were these questions addressed in *Educational Theory*?

18. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983) and Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, *Action for Excellence* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1983).

My sense is that the picture was not a pretty one. Progressives in the academy seemed — to a disturbing degree — to accept defeat, or at least retreat from actively trying to influence political discourse and policymaking. It was as if the progressive belief that theory can in fact change schooling was no longer persuasive. In some quarters, critics took an “outsider’s stance” in an effort to point out the flaws of the Right-wing agenda. And during this time, a debate emerged over the degree to which the academic Left was consumed by new forms of cynicism and pessimism. Coincidentally, the 1980s also marked the arrival of (primarily French) postmodern discourse, which influenced the work of many educational theorists in the United States. Some critics of postmodernism actually *blamed* this theoretical stance for the (apparent) political paralysis on the Left and the resurgence of the Right. But I am getting ahead of myself.

EDUCATIONAL THEORY: A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW

While these political and theoretical shifts were taking place, *Educational Theory* was suffering somewhat of a crisis of its own. The journal was in the hands of several editors-in-chief in the early years of the decade. Joe R. Burnett led the effort from the Fall issue of 1971 through the Summer issue of 1980. He was succeeded by Hugh Petrie who assumed leadership for the Fall 1980 publication and completed the 1981 cycle. Broudy offered a year of editorial leadership during 1982 until Ralph Page assumed the masthead in 1983, and continued into the next decade.

When Petrie became editor-in-chief, he praised Burnett’s “excellent stewardship” of the journal, specifically acknowledging his efforts to improve the quality of the published scholarship as well as secure the financial foundations of the journal.¹⁹ He also singled out Page when he said, “Without Ralph’s wise and steady hand during the transition between editors, I do not know if we would have made it.... we all owe him an enormous debt of gratitude.”²⁰ Ralph not only played a role in the transition from Burnett to Petrie; he also labored for several years behind the scenes, beginning as a graduate student with little compensation, to shape the quality of the journal. Page’s diligent efforts came to fruition when he assumed the editorship mid-way through the decade.

In the same Fall 1980 issue, Petrie used the opportunity of the 30th Birthday of the journal to announce some new directions. In particular he voiced his concerns about its limited reach:

Education needs all the theoretical insight it can get. Nevertheless, I am concerned at the extent to which educational theorists are far more concerned with theory than with education. Thirty years of publication have contributed significantly to the development of the literature in educational theory. That length of time may also have helped create the conditions under which we primarily talk to each other and secondarily, if at all, talk to concerned, intelligent people interested in education who happen not to speak our language. Perhaps even more embarrassing, we seem not to hear the voices of other theorists of education who speak in languages other than the ones which have become traditional in *Educational Theory*.²¹

19. Hugh Petrie, “From the Editor,” *Educational Theory* 30, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 261.

20. *Ibid.*, 263.

21. *Ibid.*, 261.

With this energized indictment to motivate, it is no coincidence that Petrie organized a special issue of the journal that would, indeed, include “theorists of education who speak in languages other than the ones which have become traditional in *Educational Theory*.”²² The traditional languages of the journal, to which he refers, most certainly are the *philosophical* languages. Hence it is intriguing that Petrie recruited Nyberg to edit a special issue devoted to the aforementioned 80th *NSSE Yearbook*. For that Yearbook the editor, Soltis, included articles written by a range of prominent educational philosophers including himself, Broudy, Jane Roland Martin, Donna H. Kerr, Maxine Greene, Robert Ennis, Clive Beck, Kenneth Strike, D.C., Phillips, and James McClellan.

Yet, for his response, Nyberg tapped a broader set of theorists — some philosophers, some not — including Nyberg, Siegel, Barbara Arnstine, Decker Walker, Ray Rist, Patricia Graham, David Berliner, Lee Shulman, Ann Diller, Spencer Ward, Foster McMurray, and, in response, Soltis. By drawing on curriculum specialists, sociologists, psychologists and historians to comment on the field of philosophy of education represented in the Yearbook, Nyberg not only addressed some of Petrie’s concerns; he also appeared to meet the original purpose of the journal: to advance educational theory.

Rist, who at the time was a researcher in the federal government’s Institute for Program Evaluation, took issue with “the absence of any reference to research findings” in the Yearbook articles.²³ He surmised that this indicated “either a lack of familiarity...or a rejection of present research” on the part of the philosophers.²⁴ But he added that this is not a one-way street: as a researcher, he took responsibility for a lack of philosophical understanding on the part of his colleagues and graduate students: “That we have trained for the past twenty years cohort after cohort of graduate students to become accomplished technicians as opposed to thoughtful scholars is reflected now in the low regard with which educational research is held — even by those who practice it.”²⁵

In a similar vein, Shulman, then Professor of Educational Psychology at Michigan State, was prompted to think about “how educational scholars ought to be organized into research communities,” suggesting that “we need to elaborate new prototypes for the collaboration between philosophers and other educational scholars.”²⁶

Ward, a social scientist working for the (former) National Institute of Education, reflected on the cuts in federal spending at the time and the relevance (or lack thereof) of social science research for guiding educational policy and practice. He builds a case for the role of “philosopher as synthesizer”; as someone who could make knowledge

22. Ibid.

23. Ray Rist, “On the Means of Knowing: Linking Philosophy and Research,” *Educational Theory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 27.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Lee Shulman, “A View from Educational Psychology,” *Educational Theory* 31, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 41.

“useful.”²⁷ But let me remind you of Siegel’s position on this matter in this same volume: “our aim (as philosophers of education) ought to be the renewal and strengthening of the tie between philosophy of education and philosophy *proper*. Let us strive to restore philosophy of education to the place of honor granted it by philosophers from Plato to Dewey.”²⁸ Clearly “usefulness of knowledge” was not a high priority for this philosopher. However, it was Soltis who got the last word — Soltis who had edited the yearbook to which these authors were responding. For Soltis, professional philosophy “is not so much theory to be applied to practice as much as it is providing perspective, alternatives to consider, critiques, justifications, conceptual analyses, and the like for educators to reflect on and think with.”²⁹

One such “professional philosopher” who provided an alternative perspective and critique is Roland Martin. The Spring 1981 issue saw the publication of her pathbreaking article, “The Ideal of the Educated Person,” which had been her Presidential Address at the 1981 meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society in Houston. This article set the stage for a (long-overdue) dialogue about gender and institutionalized sexism within the field of philosophy of education. In her important work, Roland Martin takes on the established canon of philosophers of education, especially the work of R.S. Peters, to underscore the way we all have been initiated into *male* cognitive perspectives when discussing the ideal of the educated “man.” Her valiant effort to *engender* the field of philosophy of education highlights one of our more significant professional and intellectual struggles.

In retrospect, one has to ask, however, why this article caused such a stir in 1981! Feminist thought was flourishing in the academy in a range of disciplines. Roland Martin’s ideas were important, but not all that original for feminist scholarship in general. Why did it take so long to influence educational philosophy? Mary Leach, a philosopher of education who “came of age” with me during the ‘80s, took up this question a decade later. In her analysis of *Educational Theory*, Leach found that “out of approximately 716 articles that appeared in the journal from 1951 to 1982...a mere 52 were written by women.”³⁰ Although women’s names appeared more frequently in the 1970s, it was not until the mid-1980s that it was no longer remarkable to find a woman’s name beneath the title of an article appearing in *Educational Theory*.³¹ Having women contribute to the journal, however, was not the same as having women contribute *feminist* perspectives to the journal. Roland Martin’s 1981 article paved the way for others. But it took a proactive, sympathetic stance on the part of the editor to change things. More will be said on the inclusion of gender issues in *Educational Theory* later when discussing Ralph Page’s editorship.

27. Spencer Ward, “The Philosopher as Synthesizer,” *Educational Theory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 51.

28. Harvey Siegel, “The Future and Purpose of Philosophy of Education,” *Educational Theory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 15.

29. Jonas Soltis, *Educational Theory* 30, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 94.

30. Mary Leach, “Mothers of In(ter)vention: Women’s Writings in Philosophy of Education,” *Educational Theory* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 288.

31. *Ibid.*

TRANSITIONS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

During Broudy's brief stint as editor only eleven articles were published in all of 1982. But Broudy still made sure his editorial voice was heard. Echoing some of Petrie's earlier concerns, Broudy invoked an editor's prerogative and challenged academics, particularly educational philosophers, to attend to the language we use in reaching our (various) constituencies. Broudy ended his appeal to those of us who write for *Educational Theory* with this:

Two questions, therefore, confront the journal. One is the representation in its columns of writing from other "disciplines of," even though these may have their own primary publications by which they communicate with their colleagues. The other is whether it has a significant readership among the educational constituencies. The problem of discourse is not urgent if both authors and readers belong to the disciplinary wing educational theory. For them collegial discourse is the proper and sufficient level. If not, then both the topics and the level of discourse have to be selected with diverse constituencies in mind.³²

Coincidentally, in the same issue George Wood challenged those on the educational Left to create a radical pedagogy that can connect with political action and real educational change. Wood, an educational foundations professor (and one of the three contributors in that issue not identified explicitly as a philosopher of education), criticized Henry Giroux's resistance theory, foreshadowing a more prominent presence in the journal for Giroux under Ralph Page. In his article, Wood pointed out what he thought was the main shortcoming in Giroux's theorizing: its lack of "translatability."³³ Being a scholar who was committed to working closely with teachers and to making scholarship accessible and useful to his colleagues in the schools, Wood felt strongly that Giroux's use of language could not translate easily to those educational practitioners.

Among those educational philosophers represented in the same issue, we see two who offered invited Viewpoints on "The New Federalism." Rodney Riegle and Richard Pratte spoke to President Reagan's attempt to realign the responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments. These two entries reflected Broudy's attempt to speak to different constituencies, in understandable language, about the pressing issues of the time.

THE EDITORIAL TENURE OF RALPH PAGE

1983 marked the beginning of Ralph Page's editorship. However, to be accurate in situating *Educational Theory* in historical context, one must take into account the fact that there was a lengthy period of time when the journal got behind on its publication schedule. In the frontispiece of the Spring 1981 issue, Petrie declared,

With the mailing of this issue, *Educational Theory* is approximately two years behind schedule...We are working to regain our normal publication schedule, and expect to be completely caught up by Fall 1983 (by which time we should be ready to send Volume 33, Number 4).³⁴

32. Broudy, "Viewpoint I: On Modes of Discourse," *Educational Theory* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 69.

33. George Wood, "Beyond Radical Educational Cynicism," *Educational Theory* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1982).

34. Hugh Petrie, *Educational Theory* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1981): frontispiece.

What this indicated was a considerable lag-time between submission and publication during the early '80s. Consequently, the historical parallels between the journal and the larger social and political context become problematic. It is perhaps more accurate to look at *Educational Theory* from the mid-1980s on, to understand it as historically situated in the *decade of the '80s*. The publication gap also meant that one could safely assume that it took until 1984 for Page's editorial imprint to be marked solely and clearly on the journal. The remainder of my essay will concentrate on Page's editorship.

Although it is premature in the relatively short history of the journal to single out any one editor for accolades, it is fair to say that the editorial leadership Ralph Page brought to *Educational Theory* was significant. Page's dedication to the job, exemplified by his incisive and detailed editorial responses, and his committed recruiting of a diverse set of authors, deserves appreciation. Although readers of *Educational Theory* now may take for granted the presence of critical and feminist views on education, it was Page's courage and persistence that paved the way for a broader, more inclusive palate for the journal. Not only was he committed to enlarging the readership and more accurately reflecting the range of ideological perspectives in the field; he also set a standard for quality that other scholarly educational journals would do well to follow. Page's tenure as editor raised the journal to a new level, getting notice from a broader, more interdisciplinary and critical readership who had previously dismissed the journal as either too philosophical, too narrow, too conservative, or all of the above.

Even though Page maintained a commitment to an enlightened and inclusive eclecticism, and encouraged a range of authors, it is clear that one of his more significant contributions was creating space for more "alternative" perspectives and voices. I think here of Henry Giroux, whose work is featured (and criticized) prominently in the journal over the remainder of the decade. In the Spring 1984 issue, Giroux offered a critical look at radical discourse.³⁵ As a critical social theorist, Giroux is someone who stands outside the traditional boundaries of philosophy of education and appeals to a broader range of educational theorists. His article continued the turn toward "resistance theory" and away from traditional "reproduction" analyses of the educational system. Publishing this work reflected a new openness for critical Left theorists to publish their work in *Educational Theory*. Prior to that, Marxist or neo-Marxist thought was most often represented by the singular, more orthodox voice of James McClellan.

Another critical scholar growing in reputation in the 1980s was Michael Apple, a curriculum historian and theorist. In a lead article, he examined cultural production, building on the work of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu.³⁶ Apple

35. Henry Giroux, "Marxism and Schooling: The Limits of Radical Schooling," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1984).

36. Michael Apple had the lead article, "The Political Economy of Text Publishing," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 307-19.

focused on the standard texts used in college curricula and analyzed the role of the state in this particular production of knowledge. Furthermore, he argued for long-term empirical study of textbooks as curricular "artifacts," incorporating in this research a strong theoretical and political base.

We also see Giroux's book, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, getting more attention in this same issue, with a critical review by Roger Simon.³⁷ Simon offered a sympathetic analysis of what he termed Giroux's "critical pedagogy" and defended Giroux against those who think his work is not practical. Simon's main criticism addressed Giroux's theory of subjectivity and suggested a turn to psychoanalysis for a deeper understanding of that complex concept.

Also in this issue was a symposium on Gender and Education that included three articles crafted around the work of Jane Roland Martin, published earlier in the journal.³⁸ This symposium was important for *Educational Theory* and for the field of philosophy of education in general because it positioned gender as an important construct with which to re-examine our work as theoreticians and as teacher-scholars who act in the world. In the first of the three articles Ann Sherman focused on the education of the emotions in R.S. Peters and the aesthetic education of Dewey to see the effects of genderism and the possibilities for re-conceptualizing philosophy of education. In the second piece, J.C. Walker and M.A. O'Loughlin, coming out of a Marxist framework, offered a "friendly" critique of Roland Martin's gender theory, arguing for a less essentialist view of sex and gender relations and a more historically situated understanding of women's oppression. In the final offering, Roland Martin elaborated on her discovery of the exclusion of women from the canon of texts on Western educational thought, offering a preview of her book *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman*.³⁹ With this collection of articles, Page gave the readers of *Educational Theory* a much-needed opportunity to explore the complexities of gender and the construction of knowledge. The journal was beginning to play "catch-up" with the rest of the academic world.

By 1985, the increased presence of critical and feminist perspectives in the journal may have made it seem that *Educational Theory* was taking a "left-turn." There are several articles by critical theorists of varying shades. The sociologist, Stanley Aronowitz, led off the issue with his analysis, "Academic Freedom: A Structural Approach." In this piece, Aronowitz suggested that institutions of higher education were in crisis in the '70s and '80s as a result of transformations in the economy and ideological attacks on certain disciplines. In particular, he argued that

37. Roger Simon, "Signposts for a Critical Pedagogy: A Review of Henry Giroux's *Theory and Resistance in Education*," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 321-53.

38. Ann Sherman, "Genderism and the Reconstitution of Philosophy of Education"; J.C. Walker and M.A. O'Loughlin, "The Ideal of the Educated Woman: Jane Roland Martin on Education and Gender"; and Jane Roland Martin, "Bringing Women into Educational Thought," all in *Educational Theory* 34, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 370-88.

39. Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

community and four-year colleges, especially those providing no specialized training or subprofessional credentials, are under attack in the 1980s, both because social sciences and humanities have no specific function in the marketplace for mass technical and bureaucratic labor and because they "represent" the victor that gained minorities and women access to the credential system.⁴⁰

This radical critique of the credentialing system was followed by another, equally scathing analysis of the educational reports of 1983. H. Svi Shapiro offered an economic analysis of education and the state in an effort to provide a critical context for understanding "the recent spate of 'crisis' reports on the state of education in the United States."⁴¹ Like Aronowitz, Shapiro was, unbeknownst to him, meeting the original 1951 statement of purpose for the journal: he was addressing contemporary educational problems and advancing the development of educational theory in the process.

Two other articles in this issue reflect critical, Marxist perspectives.⁴² It is to Page's credit that these previously marginalized views were now included prominently in the journal.

Another strategy Page introduced to ensure a continuing conversation in the journal was inviting regular responses to many key articles. In this way, readers were able to participate in intelligent, even provocative, dialogue and authors were assured of being taken seriously over time. Inadvertently, this structure also resulted in certain authors getting significantly more "air time" than they might have had under a more conventional model. I think here of Giroux, whose work again received serious treatment by a critic an issue later: Dan Liston responded to Giroux's "Marxism and Schooling," which had been published previously in the journal. In his critique, Liston took issue with Giroux's analysis of Marxism and argued for more careful empirical analyses to support the new theorizing being done in "radical education."⁴³ And then Giroux responded to Liston!

More critical scholarship appeared in subsequent issues. For example, Bill Johnston developed an analysis of the correspondence principle within the neo-Marxist framework, implicitly challenging Giroux's critique.⁴⁴ And we see a host of other Left/radical theorists (mostly male) who contribute to the conversation. Landon Beyer, a curriculum theorist, joined Wood in offering incisive analyses and thoughtful criticisms of Giroux's critical educational theorizing.⁴⁵ And the current

40. Aronowitz, "Academic Freedom: A Structural Approach," *Educational Theory* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 7.

41. H. Svi Shapiro, "Capitalism at Risk: The Political Economy of the Educational Reports of 1983," *Educational Theory* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 58.

42. Haim Gordon, "Dialectical Reason and Education: Sartre's Fused Group" and Richard Brosio, "One Marx, and the Centrality of the Historical Actor(s)," *Educational Theory* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 43-56 and 73-83.

43. Liston, "Marxism and Schooling: A Failed or Limited Tradition? A Response to Henry Giroux," *Educational Theory* 35, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 312.

44. Bill Johnston, "Organizational Structure and Ideology in Schooling," *Educational Theory* 35, no. 4 (Fall 1985): 35.

45. Landon Beyer and George Wood, "Critical Inquiry and Moral Action in Education," *Educational Theory* 36, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 1-14.

editor of *Educational Theory*, Nicholas Burbules, developed "A Theory of Power in Education" that synthesized creatively and constructively a range of perspectives on the taken-for-granted concept of "power."⁴⁶ In this important piece, Burbules also took on the under-theorized notion of "resistance" prevalent at the time in the work of Apple and Giroux, among others. Later in the decade, we see Burbules offering a sterling critique of Aronowitz and Giroux's *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Debate Over Schooling*. Once again, Burbules suggested "a fundamental theoretical dispute" over the concept of "resistance."⁴⁷

In retrospect, it is fascinating — even perplexing — to notice the lightning rod effect Grioux's work had on the field. And at this point, the feminists had not even begun to weigh in on his writing — at least not in the pages of *Educational Theory*.

So what *were* the feminists writing in the journal during this time frame? Careful not to privilege one discourse over another, Page continued to develop gender as an important theme with which to be reckoned. The 1985 volume included another Symposium, "Should Public Education be Gender-free?" Three feminist philosophers, Maryann Ayim, Kathryn Pauly Morgan, and Barbara Houston, provided a complex set of answers to the question.⁴⁸ Ayim offered an explication of a "traditional view" that "holds females and males to be different in respects that justify male dominance and female subservience." Pauly Morgan argued for a feminist perspective that is "gender-free." Finally, Houston provided a contrasting feminist view that relied on a "gender-laden scheme."

More articles with a gender analysis appeared in subsequent issues. In Volume 38 we find Susan Laird's original feminist critique of John Dewey.⁴⁹ This was followed by the development of a feminist theory of teaching. In this piece, Jo Anne Pagano reminded us that "gender is one of the fundamental categories according to which we organize our experience of ourselves and others."⁵⁰ She examined teaching as an art form, a *gendered* art form, and was particularly interested in "the business of women teaching women."⁵¹

Finally, toward the end of the decade, we were treated to two more feminist essays: one by Carol Nicholson on postmodernism, and another by Madeleine Grumet entitled, "The Beauty Full Curriculum."⁵²

46. Nicholas C. Burbules, "A Theory of Power in Education," *Educational Theory* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 95-114.

47. Nicholas C. Burbules, "Education Under Siege," *Educational Theory* 36, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 308.

48. Maryann Ayim, "Genderized Education: Tradition Reconsidered"; Kathryn Pauly Morgan, "Freeing the Children; The Abolition of Gender"; and Barbara Houston, "Gender Freedom and the Subtleties of Sexist Education," all in *Educational Theory* 35, no. 4 (Fall 1985): 345-69.

49. Susan Laird, "Women and Gender in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education," *Educational Theory* 38, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 111-31.

50. Jo Anne Pagano, "Teaching Women," *Educational Theory* 38, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 324.

51. *Ibid.*, 321.

52. Carol Nicholson, "Postmodernism, Feminism, and Education," and Madeleine Grumet, "The Beauty Full Curriculum," *Educational Theory* 39, no. 3 (Summer 1989): 197-205 and 225-230.

Attention to postmodernism appeared again in 1989 with an article by Michael Peters entitled, "Techno-science, Rationality and the University: Lyotard on the 'Postmodern Condition,'" and in a different way through Nietzsche, with Eliyahu Rosenow's "Nietzsche's Educational Dynamite."⁵³

KEEPING A BALANCE

Although it is clear that Page created a crucial venue for critical, feminist, and postmodern perspectives in the journal during the 1980s, he also continued to provide a staging ground for mainstream themes and authors. We see, for instance, that Page opened the 1984 volume with a Special Issue on Philosophy and School Finance. This was a set of essays "commissioned on the assumption that philosophers and social scientists...have something to say to each other."⁵⁴ The special editors, Strike and David Monk, were interested in bridging the divide between the conceptual and the empirical, through the real-world issues of school finance. Drawing on authors from a range of disciplines, the editors nevertheless insisted on each "address(ing) a topic with considerable philosophical content," including understandings of school vouchers, school district wealth, and local decisionmaking.⁵⁵

We have Stephen Arons, an attorney and professor of legal studies, commenting on Strike's article, "Fiscal Justice and Judicial Sovereignty."⁵⁶ The policy researchers, Arthur Wise and Linda Darling-Hammond (then at the Rand Corporation) offered their evaluation of school vouchers in relation to the goals and purposes of public education.⁵⁷ Robert Murnane and Edwin West, two economists, were recruited to respond to their arguments. In the same issue, Barry Bull, another philosopher of education, provided a careful analysis of local control situated in the "new localism" of Reaganism.⁵⁸ Bull's insight into policymaking within a liberal democracy suggests the importance of philosophical analysis for educational practice. In fact, this issue as a whole was a clear case of (educational) philosophers providing "relevant" knowledge for policymakers and citizens at large. Furthermore, it reflected very much the historical context of Reagan's domestic agenda with regard to "the new federalism."

Articles about teaching and the teaching profession were also available. For example, in the 1986 volume, Bruce Kimball looked at "The Training of Teachers, The Study of Education, and the Liberal Disciplines." And Robert Ennis asked, "Is

53. Michael Peters, "Techno-science, Rationality, and the University: Lyotard on the 'Postmodern Condition'" *Educational Theory* 39, no. 2 (Spring 1989) and Eliyahu Rosenow, "Nietzsche's Educational Dynamite," *Educational Theory* 39, no. 4 (Fall 1989).

54. Kenneth Strike and David Monk, "Introduction," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 1.

55. *Ibid.*, 4.

56. Stephen Arons, "Playing Ball with the Rodriguez Court: Three Strikes and You're Out," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 23-27.

57. Arthur Wise and Linda Darling-Hammond, "Education by Voucher: Private Choice and the Public Interest," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 29-47.

58. Barry Bull, "Liberty and the New Localism: Toward an Evaluation of the Trade-off Between Educational Equity and Local Control of Schools," *Educational Theory* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 75-94.

Answering Questions Teaching?" followed in the same issue by Shirley Pendlebury's "Teaching: Response and Responsibility."⁵⁹ Both of these entries are in dialogue with earlier work by C.J.B. Macmillan and James Garrison on "the erotetic analysis of teaching," which appeared earlier in the journal.⁶⁰ In keeping with Page's commitment to ongoing scholarly conversation and debate, Macmillan and Garrison offered a retort to Ennis and Pendlebury in the same issue.

Again we see several articles in the 1987 volume devoted to diverse perspectives on teaching. David Ericson and Fred Ellett addressed the aforementioned work of Robert Ennis as well as that of Macmillan and Garrison.⁶¹ Not to be limited, however, to these philosophical positions, Ericson and Ellett paid attention to other prominent philosophers of education who have analyzed the concept of teaching. Included in this work are Thomas F. Green, Paul Dietl, Israel Scheffler, and Paul Komisar. Ericson and Ellett's well-argued position is met with a rejoinder from Macmillan and Garrison as the latter continued to develop their theory of erotetics.

Coming out of a different philosophical tradition, Ignacio Götz, another familiar contributor to *Educational Theory*, looked at teaching from an aesthetic perspective by invoking the work of Albert Camus.⁶² The language of existentialism provided a profoundly different frame for understanding education than the bureaucratic language of accountability, or even the analytic lens of cause and effect. In the 1989 volume, J. Theodore Klein offered "Teaching and Mother Love" as a way to understand an ideal of teaching in the context of "caring."⁶³ Classical approaches to teaching also had a platform in *Educational Theory*. I think here, for example of David Hansen's article, "Was Socrates a 'Socratic Teacher?'" followed in the same issue by Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon's "Teaching in an 'Ill-structured' Situation: The Case of Socrates."⁶⁴

Teacher education and practical knowledge received prominent attention in the 1987 volume through a Symposium edited by the philosophically informed educational researcher, Gary Fenstermacher. In this series of articles, authors were invited to criticize Fenstermacher's "recent work on the connections between educational research and practice, particularly the relationships between a body of research known as 'research on teaching' and actual teaching practices."⁶⁵ The invited

59. Bruce Kimball, "The Training of Teachers, The Study of Education, and the Liberal Disciplines," *Educational Theory* 36, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 15-22 and Robert Ennis, "Is Answering Questions Teaching?" and Shirley Pendlebury, "Teaching: Response and Responsibility," both in *Educational Theory* 36, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 343-47 and 349-54.

60. C.J.B. Macmillan and Jim Garrison, "An Erotetic Concept of Teaching," *Educational Theory* 33, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1983): 157-66.

61. David Ericson and Fred Ellett, "Teacher Accountability and the Causal Theory of Teaching," *Educational Theory* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 277-93.

62. Ignacio Götz, "Camus and the Art of Teaching," *Educational Theory* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 265-76.

63. J. Theodore Klein, "Teaching and Mother Love," *Educational Theory* 39, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 373-83.

64. David Hansen, "Was Socrates a 'Socratic Teacher?'" and Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon, "Teaching in an 'Ill-structured' Situation: The Case of Socrates," both in *Educational Theory* 38, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 213-34 and 225-37.

65. Gary Fenstermacher, "Prologue to My Critics," *Educational Theory* 37, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 357.

Symposium for *Educational Theory* was a direct response to Fenstermacher's position in the *Handbook*. Six different authors offered their perspectives, including scholars coming out of curriculum, teacher education, and educational research, as well as educational philosophy.⁶⁶

In the spirit of the 1951 statement of purpose for the journal, Fenstermacher's work developed out of a lifelong interest in the "theory-practice" debates in philosophy of education. As Fenstermacher became more involved in the policy and practice of teacher education, and the study of "teacher effectiveness," he "became increasingly uneasy with its conceptual and theoretical underpinnings." For him, the research agenda on teaching was "too rooted in naïve forms of behaviorism, too old-fashioned in its philosophy of science, and lacking in ethical foundation." Consequently, he began to understand research and practice "as nonlinear, asynchronous activities, each fairly independent of the other."⁶⁷

IN RETROSPECT

So what might be said in conclusion about this decade: a decade known in hindsight for its avarice and materialism on the one hand and conservative social values on the other; a decade where the Right ascended and the Left retreated; a decade that brought to the United States an intellectual discourse that undermined our taken-for-granted assumptions and foundations? And how did these social, political, intellectual, and economic shifts affect our work as educational theorists and philosophers?

One effect of this shifting terrain was the debate over the contours of the field of philosophy of education. Boundaries were drawn and redrawn, determining who counted as a philosopher and who did not — over what counted as philosophy and what did not. New contestants entered the arena representing different, often previously silenced, voices. The academic consensus about what counted as "good" philosophy was challenged — decentered. Not only were new voices represented, but also new ways of representing ideas. Narrative inquiry, personal voice, autobiographical methods, and nonlinear modes of discourse came front and center to stand with more traditional "analytic" forms of argument and disputation. Feminist theory and poststructural thought competed for space in scholarly journals and at academic conferences. As we noted earlier in the work of Fenstermacher, even mainstream educational researchers were transformed by the epistemological and ethical sea change endemic to the postmodern condition. By the time Ralph Page brought *Educational Theory* into the 1990s, the field of philosophy of education had undergone, yet again, another permutation.

66. Hugh Munby, "The Dubious Place of Practical Arguments and Scientific Knowledge in the Thinking of Teachers"; Thomas Russell, "Research, Practical Knowledge, and the Conduct of Teacher Education"; Brent Kilbourn, "The Nature of Data for Reflecting on Teaching Situations"; Jere Confrey, "Bridging Research and Practice"; Greta Morine-Dershimer, "Practical Examples of the Practical Argument: A Case in Point"; and Margret Buchmann, "Impractical Philosophizing about Teachers' Arguments," all in *Educational Theory* 37, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 361-411.

67. Fenstermacher, "Prologue to My Critics," 357.

By the end of the 1980s, the perennial debate over the connection between theory and practice seemed to be eclipsed by broader intellectual arguments. Similar to other disciplines and fields, we in philosophy of education were struggling amongst ourselves over identity politics and the effects of our "positionalities" on our understanding of the world. We were grappling with the consequences and possibilities of postmodern discourse, particularly the destabilizing forces of poststructuralism and deconstruction. More attention seemed to be focused on the question "what is philosophy?" and concomitantly, "what is philosophy of education?" than on our "relevance" for practitioners and policymakers.