

**The Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting**  
**March 16 – 19, 2007**  
**Atlanta, GA**

**Paper Abstracts**

*Abstracts are listed in the order they will occur on the program. You may wish to print this out and bring it with you to the conference. A limited number of paper copies of these abstracts will be available at the registration desk.*

**Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, First Concurrent Sessions, 9:00 AM**

**A. The Midwife as Matchmaker: Socrates and Relational Pedagogy**, Avi Mintz, Teachers College, Columbia University

In *Theaetetus*, Plato's presents a metaphor of Socrates as a midwife. In the discussion of the metaphor, Socrates claims that an important part of midwifery is matchmaking. The role of matchmaking in Socrates' educational practices, however, has received very little scholarly attention. In this paper, I examine Socratic matchmaking and consider whether Socrates' remarks about sending students to other teachers are ironic or reflect Socrates' belief that others could effectively impart specific skills. I conclude that Socrates believed the right sort of relationships to be a necessary condition for education. Hence, Socrates stands as an early figure in the history of the pedagogy of relation.

**B. An Argument Against Sight-Lovers: Knowledge and Belief in *Republic V***, David Diener, Indiana U

In Book V of the *Republic* Socrates makes an argument against the so-called "sight-lovers" to prove that they, unlike philosophers, do not have knowledge but only belief. This argument, depending on how it is interpreted, allows for very different understandings of Plato's fundamental convictions regarding knowledge, reality, and education. After briefly explaining the traditional interpretation as well as its fairly recent alternative first developed by Gail Fine, I offer a critique of the alternative interpretation by demonstrating that it is neither a necessary nor possible reading of the text. I then give a brief explanation of the far-reaching implications this argument has for our understanding of Plato's philosophy in general and specifically of his philosophy of education as demonstrated in the allegory of the cave.

**C. The Logic of Objectivity: Reflections on the Priority of Inference**, Karim Dharamsi, U of Winnipeg

Contextualism raises doubts about objectivity. It can also politicize what we take to count as knowledge and slip into what I will call "the politics of making." Contra-contextualism some philosophers have made radical moves to secure objectivity by turning to either a super-sensible realm of "mind-independent objects" or some essential feature of human nature for epistemic ground. In this paper I reject both contextualism and any kind of ahistorical commitment to objectivity. By taking architecture as paradigmatic of making, I defend a view of epistemic warrant that is neither wholly contextualist nor committed to

any transhistorical form of objectivity. I maintain that educational practice steers clear of this tension even when theorists in education may not. This is not accidental. Educational practices are discursive and, as such, inferential and normative. Their rationality, and their objectivity, is secured by the logic of inference. I defend this view.

### **Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, Second Concurrent Sessions, 10:30 AM**

#### **A. Three Conceptions of Caring and The Teaching of Educational Ethics,** Michael Katz, San Jose State University

This essay contrasts these three views of caring—those of Milton Mayeroff, Nel Noddings, and one called “professional caring” derived from Jaime Escalante’s character in *Stand and Deliver*. Finally I suggest some potential issues/problems for us to consider as we think about teaching what caring might mean to those planning careers in teaching. This essay also offers a programmatic invitation to philosophers of education to consider the following in their pedagogical practice of teaching ethics to teachers: a) offer competing conceptions of important ethical values; and b) connect these conceptions to provocative novels and films

#### **B. “Our education is sadly neglected”: Reading, translating and the politics of interpretation,** Naoko Saito, U of Kyoto

The paper tries to elucidate a hidden value in philosophical reading in higher education, one that is covered over in the culture of accountability, in order to recount what is “sadly neglected” in education. To accomplish this task, it addresses a specific question: What does it mean to *read philosophically*? I shall respond to this question by looking through the lens of Stanley Cavell’s politics of interpretation, as adumbrated in his *The Senses of Walden*. His “reading in a high sense” points us to a third way of reading beyond both essentialist and contingent reading. I shall then develop the theme of *reading as translating* language – translation in the broader sense of transaction between the “native” and the “foreign.” In conclusion, I shall reclaim the role of the philosophy of education as “the education of grownups.”

#### **C. Kierkegaard and Liberal Education as a Way of Life,** Kevin Gary, Goshen College

At present liberal education is by and large understood and justified as the acquisition of critical thinking skills for individual autonomy. Traditionally, however, liberal education also included a moral or formative dimension. While this focus on critical thinking avoids the entanglements that accompany education for moral commitment, it offers a limited perspective on the tradition of liberal education. More problematically, as Søren Kierkegaard makes clear, it promotes a misguided understanding of freedom. The ultimate aim of this essay is to retrieve a more comprehensive understanding of liberal education that includes the cultivation of critical thinking (or knowing) as well as the demanding task of living into what one knows (or willing), thus intensifying the task of would-be liberal educators.

### **Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, Third Concurrent Sessions, 1:45 PM**

**A. Consuming Schooling: Education as Simulation**, Trevor Norris, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, U of Toronto

In this paper I argue that consumerism eclipses our collective ability to pursue and create a robust and healthy public realm, and that education should function as a means of critiquing and resisting, rather than facilitating, this process. I will draw on Jean Baudrillard's identification of our changing relationships with symbolic meaning and the emergence of a new visual consumer culture in order to demonstrate the mis-educative effects of consumerism, and to highlight the ways in which schools have begun to acquiesce to, rather than resist, these phenomena. Children today are so thoroughly immersed in advertising's world of images and logos that they have no trouble identifying dozens of consumer brands and corporate slogans. If education is increasingly dependent on funding from corporate sponsors, and if the values from consumer culture become integrated into the lessons presented, where then can a critical dialogue transpire? My concern is that consumerism will narrow our political and pedagogical horizons by undermining the personally and politically transformative functions of education.

**B. Unseen Teachers and the Limits of Diversity**, Robert E. Roemer, Loyola University, Chicago

Are there limits to the diversity that is tolerable in the schools? If so, how would such limits be discovered. In answering these questions, the paper first discusses the bases on which diversity becomes significant in the schools. This happens either internally, by the consequences of diversity for pedagogy, or externally, by the consequences of diversity in the distribution of social goods. Depending on the source of significance for diversity, different issues appear, one based on concern for good pedagogy, the other concerned with social justice. But on what basis could a type of basis be ruled out of schools? That which would bring danger to students is one type. But another, it will be argued, is that which transgresses the very conditions that make civic life and citizenship possible. An indicator for the boundary that marks this diversity is that for which no teachers are recognized.

**C. Character Education: The Priority of Philosophy to Procedure**, Jon Fennell, Hillsdale College

This essay defends the view that character education, designed to cultivate good citizenship, should be a component of public schooling. To succeed, the essay must meet the objection, indigenous to John Rawls, but more dramatically rendered by Richard Rorty, that such character education, to be rightful, requires a consensus that does not exist. Character education is therefore inappropriate because it is based on conviction trumping democratic procedure. Michael Sandel's response to this challenge—that the objection exhibits the very behavior it would condemn—falls short. In its place, the essay offers a deeper defense of character education that Rorty, on his own grounds, ought to accept.

**D. What Is Your Philosophical Disposition? Standard X: The teacher has developed an in-depth foundational philosophy**, Ames T. Brown III, University of Bridgeport

A national standard for the teaching profession is proposed which would require the

development of a comprehensive personal philosophy of education. The relationship between professional dispositions and a personal education philosophy is examined in the context of popular debate. Historical placement of what is often referred to by teachers as “my philosophy” is discussed in relation to its existence as a current tradition in teaching. Issues involved in defining how such a philosophy standard would be communicated are explored.

### **Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, General Session, 3:15 PM**

**Disruptions of Desire: From Androgynes to Genderqueer**, Cris Mayo, U of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

This paper examines Aristophanes’ story of the androgynes to argue that desire impels a consideration of the potentials and confusions of the future, not through contemplation but through living, thinking, and acting with others. In Aristophanes’s story, desire enables relationships of difference, particularity and possibility. I examine key criticisms of Aristophanes’s story and counter claims that his account of desire is nostalgic and backward looking. Part of this trend toward removing the disruptions of desire can be found in James Garrison’s suggestion that desire moves toward harmony, an endpoint I argue is premature. I then turn to Luce Irigaray’s claims that the spark of desire works through heterosexual difference and in contrast, I offer a more complex account of the play of difference. Finally, I argue that public school students creating new forms of sexual identity and association, like genderqueer, provide us with a way to think through the embodied movement toward futurity that desire motivates and remind us of the central place of desire in education.

### **Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, Fourth Concurrent Sessions, 9:00 AM**

**A. Educating for Meaning in an Era of Banality**, Stephanie Mackler, Cornell College

In *Teaching as a Conserving Activity*, Neil Postman proposes that education should act as a counter-argument to the excesses in society, as a healthy democracy depends upon the interplay of opposing elements. Accordingly, he suggests that teachers and philosophers of education must identify and develop ways to counteract these excesses. The purpose of this essay is to take Postman’s suggestion seriously. I argue that our culture currently suffers from an excess of banality in terms of the way we use language to describe the meaning of things and events. Students in this banal era must therefore receive an education in meaning. My central aim is to clarify what meaning is, as prescriptions are based upon descriptions, even if the latter are only implied. I argue that meaning is inherently dialectical: It is both inclined toward banality for the sake of convenience and necessarily anti-banal (natal) insofar as meaning arises in response to unforeseeable events. In the process of describing meaning, the danger of an excess of banality and the ethical importance of counter-acting banality becomes clear.

**B. *Aporia* and Humility: Virtues of Democracy**, Karen Sihra, OISE, U of Toronto

Heesoon Bai defines democracy using its literal translation, whereby people have the power of self-determination and self-government. However, this is a broad definition; using it surfaces a plethora of questions not only around what is meant by self-

determination and self-government. Questions also arise around the different types of democracy, i.e. conservative or progressivist, or around what is meant by characteristics that are used in the context of democracy, like equality, voting, or participation. Although defining democracy through asking these questions empirically is an important task, philosophy is charged with an equally significant responsibility, namely what are the philosophical dimensions of democracy. Put in another, perhaps more contestable, way, what are the virtues of democracy? This paper examines the work of Heesoon Bai and Chantal Mouffe to demonstrate that humility is a necessary condition of democracy. Where Bai insists upon a model of liberal democracy that relies on a specific notion of intersubjectivity, Mouffe questions the very presence of morality in political democratic discussions. Although Bai and Mouffe differ in their expectations and perceptions of democracy, I argue that they approach the project of democracy with at least one shared democratic virtue: humility. Furthermore, given that Bai and Mouffe maintain such different positions demonstrates that democracy – whether in the classroom or the broader public – requires humility. The thread of humility that runs through these discussions has particular relevance to democratic education.

**C. Learning (& Leaving) the Comforts of Home: A Radical Pedagogy of Homeplace,** Helen Anderson, OISE, U of Toronto

Building upon Claudia Ruitenberg's call for a radical pedagogy of place, in this paper I examine how notions of an ideal home and homeplace can be taught/learned in a way that perpetuates social injustice. Seeking to uncover and trouble the exclusions inherent in the creation of spaces of "belonging," I argue for a radical pedagogy of homeplace that embraces a flexible, polyvocal, shifting understanding of home and self. Employing concepts of "nomadism," "world'-traveling," and "streetwalker theorizing," I explore how dominant discourses of home, and the oppression to which they contribute, can be resisted, as well as explore the impact this might have on how one performs the roles of scholar, educator, and student.

**D. The Great Indoctrination Re-construction Project: The Discourse on Indoctrination as a Legacy of Liberalism,** James Lang, OISE, U of Toronto

This paper argues that the voluminous discourse on indoctrination, rather than unfolding as a "neutral" analytical project focused on clarifying a troublesome term, can be read as an undeclared "construction project" designed to produce a pejorative concept of indoctrination to defend the discrete, rationally-autonomous liberal learner. I link the emergence of its pejorative connotation to the rise of Dewey's Progressive Education movement and its inherent liberal foundations. I suggest that more recent attempts to delineate necessary and sufficient conditions for pejorative indoctrination by using religious education as a type of paradigm subjects the merits of the discourse as received to compelling critiques that legitimize religious education's right to exist within the liberal construction. This reduces the religious education issue to a kind of "red herring" leaving the "indoctrination project" exposed to extant feminist and related critiques of the rationally-autonomous liberal individual.

**Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, Fifth Concurrent Sessions, 1:45 – 3:15 PM**

**A. Discourse, Theatrical Performance, Agency" The Analytic Force of "Performativity" in Education,** Claudia Ruitenberg, U of British Columbia

In education and educational theory, as in other domains, the popularity of a particular concept can wax and wane, and occasionally a new concept emerges that captures imaginations. "Performativity," especially as used by Judith Butler, is a case in point. There seems to be confusion, however, about what "performativity" means and, perhaps more importantly, what it does. I retrieve and analyze differences and connections between theatrical and discursive conceptions of performativity. This analysis illuminates what Butler's discursive conception of performativity and the attendant conception of agency have to offer education. I close by considering the issue of bullying and hate speech in educational contexts through this lens of discursive performativity.

**B. MySpace Friends and the Kingdom of Ends**, Kalyne Hackney Pudner, Auburn University

The vast majority of American teenagers spend a considerable amount of time socializing electronically, a trend that continues to advance. This paper analyzes "e-socialization" types in terms of specificity and identifiability, then explores the ethical implications of the types individually and collectively. Drawing a distinction between "thin" (for universal humanity) and "thick" (for particular individual humans) respect, it argues that the message and identity indeterminacy inherent in most forms of e-socialization tend to undermine thick respect, ultimately reducing participants to mutual objects of manageable data instead of ends-in-themselves. Ethical education, then, as well as ethical theory and contiguous areas of philosophy, must consciously address the conceptual challenges raised by computer-mediated communication.

**C. Revolutionary Leadership↔Revolutionary Pedagogy: Reevaluating the Links and Disjunctions between Lukacs and Freire**, Tyson Lewis, Montclair State U

It is not uncommon to hear that Marxism is suffering not so much in terms of theoretical rigor but rather in terms of organizational practice. These debates resound outside of the field of education (see for instance Hardt and Negri's theory of the multitude and the multitude of criticism against this position) and inside the field of education (Peter McLaren is key here). This paper is an attempt to reframe debates concerning Marxist organizational theory in terms of the question of pedagogy and its relevance to solving the problem of revolutionary organization. In particular, I will focus on the relationship between Georg Lukacs and Paulo Freire. It is my contention that Freire picks up on a question which Lukacs raises but never adequately answers: How to communicate between revolutionary actors? It is my goal that an analysis of these two theorists will move pedagogy into the center of revolutionary theory and revolutionary theory back into the center of the critical pedagogy tradition.

**D. Holding Persons Accountable for Indoctrination: A re-examination of I.A. Snook's notion of 'intent'**, Barbara A. Peterson, University of New Hampshire

I. A. Snook (1972a, 1972b) argues for an intentional analysis of "indoctrination." Furthermore, he claims that one intends something if she *desires* it or *foresees* it as an outcome of her actions. I argue that expanding Snook's notion of "intent" to include outcomes that are *foreseeable* as well as desired or foreseen allows us to develop a more useful account of indoctrination in helping educators and others identify indoctrination with consistency.

**Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, Sixth Concurrent Sessions, 9:00 AM**

**B. Philosophy of Education and the Contested Nature of Empirical Research: A Rejoinder to D.C. Phillips,** Emery Hyslop-Margison and M. Ayaz Naseem, Concordia U

In a recent article published in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Education*, D. C. Phillips makes a valiant if ultimately unsuccessful attempt to rescue empirical research in education from a range of terminal defects. In the final analysis, however, Phillips' wittily crafted apology for the dominant research paradigm in education unfortunately amounts to misrepresentations of important philosophical critiques on the limits of empirical research. In this paper, we challenge Phillips's defense of empirical research in education and argue that his attack on Egan in particular fails to address the considerable force of the latter's most contemporary critique.

**C. Should Blame Be Part of the Education of Character?** Lynda Stone, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Inspired by and utilizing the idiom of Michel Foucault's methodology of 'problematization,' this paper explores rationalities underpinning the contemporary character education movement in the United States. Following an overview of the movement, two rationalities are revealed, one the presence of virtue and the other the absent/presence of blame. Texts supporting a virtue rationality include the *Aspen Declaration of Character Education*, the movement's founding document as well as a recent essay by philosopher Christina Hoff Sommers. Her position is that direct education of virtues is needed because progressive educators chose Rousseau over Aristotle and thereby produced 'value-free' kids. Texts supporting a blame rationality are largely indirect, in a linking of school discipline to character education from movement leaders. Significantly even without a 'blame' discourse, an essay from anthropologist Mary Douglas points to its historical centrality to culture and its connection to risk. As blame is dangerous, its risk is avoided through discipline and through education. The indirect answer to the paper's question, thus, is that blame is already present in the current education of character and should be educated for. 'How' is a subsequent question.

**D. Engaging Student Disengagement: Resistance or Disagreement?** Barbara Applebaum, Syracuse U

Student resistance to learning and knowing in courses with commitments to social justice is common and well-documented. Yet how does resistance differ from mere disagreement with course content? It is argued that student resistance is unique to such courses because unlike courses that do not make race, gender, class and sexuality explicit, class dynamics *is* an essential part of the course content. Employing Kelly Oliver's notion of "witnessing", this paper explores the type of engagement required for learning to happen in courses that explicitly deal with systemic oppression and privilege. The paper concludes that students who engage might agree or disagree with the class content. However, students who resist refuse to engage. One of the intractable dilemmas that social justice educators face is how to engage systemically privileged students without recentring their privilege and without sacrificing the education of students who are systemically marginalized.

**Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, Seventh Concurrent Sessions, 2:00 PM**

**A. Teaching as Asceticism: Transforming the Self Through the Practice,** Darryl M. De Marzio, Teachers College, Columbia U

In this paper, I discuss a 2003 article published in *Educational Theory* by Chris Higgins. In the article, Higgins offers a critique of what he dubs the “ascetic ideal” in teaching. Suspicious of asceticism through and through, Higgins unleashes a two-pronged attack against asceticism in teaching, arguing that good teaching requires self-cultivation rather than self-sacrifice. However, as I will argue in this paper, asceticism as a mode of self-renunciation is not something that is antithetical to the self-flourishing of the teacher, but, on the contrary, is a stance that contributes to it. Asceticism in teaching is not a loss of self, but a way in which one forms a self. In order to make this case, I will re-interpret a case of teacher burnout, an example that Higgins employs to present his own argument against asceticism.

**B. The Significance of Finding a Witness in Liberatory Education,** Martha J. Ritter, Mount St. Mary's U

Finding a witness—someone who listens—supports speech and in some cases, can be required for speech. The paper focuses on the epistemological significance of finding a witness. The author argues that finding a witness is vital to liberatory educational projects because witnesses can be required for situated knowledge – that is, knowledge that does not in its self perpetuate oppression. And in the meantime, being witnesses for one another supports the kind of moral relations that make continued inquiry possible. The argument links inquiry and situated knowledge to an interpretation of Charles S. Peirce’s conception of truth.

**C. Democracy without Ideology?,** Greg Seals, College of Staten Island, CUNY

I identify what might reasonably be meant by ideological elements in a social scientific theory and contrast them to nonideological elements. Then I describe how democracy functions ideologically in educational theory and, following John Dewey, offer a nonideological democratic theory of education. Finally, I discuss in Gramscian terms an advantage that nonideological theory exercises over ideological theory.

**D. Postsecondary SCHOOLING Education For All,** Francis Schrag, U of Wisconsin, Madison

I formulate a simple argument defending the policy of allocating to each citizen equal resources for postsecondary education, to be used at any time over the lifespan. I expound and defend the debatable premises, rebutting plausible challenges to the argument. My conclusion is that the current policy of subsidizing the academically talented to a greater degree than the less talented is indefensible.

**Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, Second General Session, 3:30 PM**

**A Relational Ethic of Solidarity,** Frank Margonis, U of Utah

This essay describes, criticizes, and reconstructs Paulo Freire’s conception of teacher-student solidarity. Relying upon the theories of Emmanuel Levinas and Elizabeth Ellsworth, I argue that Freire’s ethic of solidarity shows an insufficient commitment to the

teacher's receptivity to those student perspectives which lie outside of the teacher's imagination or political agenda. However, the limitations of Freire's conception of solidarity do not apply to the version of solidarity enacted by Myles Horton and the teachers at the Highlander Folk School, who developed a one-way ethic of solidarity that, unlike Freire's vision, combined the power of collectivity with a teacher who is receptive to student perspectives that stand outside of the teacher's knowledge and imagination.

### **Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, Eighth Concurrent Sessions, 9:00 AM**

#### **A. Must 'Real Men' Have Sick Souls? C. Joseph Meinhart, U of Oklahoma**

In this paper I take a pragmatist approach to the problem of male privilege and miseducation, employing Jane Roland Martin and William James' Varieties of Religious Experience to argue that 'masculinity' is a spiritual quest with a variety of experiences that reflect boys' experience of being educated for manhood. These different varieties of male experience provide models for a wider understanding of manhood than the culturally approved male privilege, while also surfacing some important questions about how masculinity brutalizes boys.

#### **B. Autonomy, Identity and the Role of Narrative: Another Look at Commodity Fetishism, Peter Giampetro, U of New Hampshire**

Rather than being the catalysts for exploration and possibility that we imagine them to be, for many students schools may be future-limiting, places where possibilities are circumscribed. I argue that schools limit one of the most fundamental goals that many of us hold as teachers, that of inspiring our students to be self-directed, to think for themselves, or put another way, to be autonomous. Such limitation is especially true for students of the working class. To make the links between schooling, social class and their influences on self-direction or autonomy clearer, in this paper I draw upon one currently popular way of conceiving the self – as a narrator – and use it to discuss how what I refer to as the “commodification of the ideal of the educated person” helps students develop relatively coherent self-conceptions associated with their social class positions. Such commodification influences the narrative material available for self-conception as well as the experiential conditions that call students to express themselves performatively as working class agents.

#### **C. Meaning, Mind and Knowledge: A Pragmatic View, Christine McCarthy, U of Iowa**

The linguistic/semantic conception of meaning has led to problems when conceiving the nature of mind, and the relation of mind to body and world. Meaning is considered, primarily, as a feature of language. John Dewey is at least partly responsible for the current focus on linguistic/semantic conceptions of meaning. I argue, first, that the linguistic/semantic interpretation of meaning, with the concomitant neglect of objective meanings in nature, leads to practical problems. Second, I set out a realist conception of meaning, and relate this conception of meaning to concepts of mind and knowledge. Third, I discuss the relevance of abstract philosophical issues such as these to philosophy of education, and the import of the objective conception of meaning presented for our conceptions of education.

**Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, General Session, 10:30 AM**

**Is Schooling a Consumer Good? A Case Against School Choice, but Not the One You Had in Mind**, Alexander Sidorkin, U of Northern Colorado

The school choice theory rests on the assumption that K-2 education is a consumer good or service. The assumption is erroneous, because schooling is also a form of labor students perform for the benefit of the society. Consequently, schools cannot benefit from competition the same way other industries do. However, public school's current monopoly is indefensible, and alternative ways of creating an educational market should be considered.