
Introduction

INTELLECTUAL COURAGE IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: LOVING SOULS, TONGUES AFIRE, AND EDUCATION FOR HUMANITY

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[E]ducators are faced with moments when courage must come to the fore, when our voices and our actions come together with our ethical commitments and our professional obligations. (Angela Hurley, 2008)¹

The 2008 meeting of the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society drew a rather large number of submissions, rich and varied in their theoretical approaches and many directly taking on the theme of the conference, *Intellectual Courage: Souls of Love and Tongues of Fire for the Sake of Humanity*. The conference drew philosophers and social theorists from the region and beyond, and several participants made the meeting for the first time. It was gratifying to see such a strong showing during tough economic times and when the need for philosophy of education is acute in policy, schools, and schools of education. It all made for an invigorating conference, and I believe the papers drawn from that conference make for an engaging issue of *Philosophical Studies in Education*.

The editorial board has assembled a varied group of articles inspired by OVPES President Angela Hurley's call for papers, some written directly on the concepts of courage and humanity and others putting the call for intellectual courage into practice on related philosophical and educational topics. The journal reflects diversity of thought from the various branches of philosophy, as well as conceptual work from sociologists, curriculum theorists, and cultural studies scholars.

Hurley called us to speak as poets, turning to Walt Whitman for the sub-title of the conference. In the original poem, the phrase "soul of love and tongue of fire!" appears as an implied response to his question about the value of poets for a country headed for Civil War.² Martha Nussbaum calls the passage "a defense of the role of the artistic imagination in the education of citizens" but also "a call for an appropriately compassionate leadership."³ Hurley has in mind similar roles for philosophers of education—engaged intellectuals willing to "walk abreast with the whole earth,"⁴ whether they sit alone (by blue Ontario's shore or in a windowless office) or come together (at an urban charter school, in a classroom, or at the Bergamo Conference Center).

As expected, moral questions of courage and humanity are well represented in the journal. Arguments about education's contribution to the moral life are a fundamental concern. Authors are concerned with how educators may constitute themselves and their students as free and courageous subjects, agentic knowers, cosmopolitan citizens, and participants in democratic institutions. Difference as self-constituting is repeatedly embraced. While it is not surprising that John Dewey figured prominently in several papers, authors turned to Hannah Arendt most often, perhaps indicative of the dangerous times in which we live and the fundamental challenges (to banality if not evil itself) that philosophers of education currently face in their work.

There are several reflexive papers about academic work and the blind spots in our theorizing: the presidential address and response, the two Phil Smith Symposium papers, and several others, and nearly all use Arendt. Hurley argues for attentive love as a basis for holism, and in response, Chris Higgins draws us to consider integrity-as-wholeness. Helen Marie Anderson, who at the conference enlisted the audience in an impromptu jam, considers how an educational jam might contribute to courageous work for social justice. Calvin DaRonne Harvell argues for an Africana consciousness to inform an enacted philosophy that goes beyond the conference setting and emboldens courageous intellectuals to create rich educational experiences for all students.

The tensions associated with dialogue were alive at the conference. As referenced in Adrienne Pickett's paper on Arendt, the thinking that can be promoted through dialogue is fundamental to academic work. As Pickett reminds us, aesthetic experience is so often overlooked in our theorizing. But it can open our minds to dialogue, as evidenced in Arendt's dialogue (over quite a bit of time) with Ralph Ellison, occasioned by Arendt's critical reaction to photographs of the Little Rock Nine and what she initially argued to be the inordinate weight that had been placed upon the shoulders of the nine African-American teenagers. For dialogue, however, she needed openness to the embodied experiences of others she did not know.

I invite readers to keep in mind that spirit of dialogue, initiated through an aesthetic response to a particular embodied educational struggle, as they read the papers in this issue of PSIE. Philosophy can be solitary work. Arendtian thinking need not be. In reading the poem, I was drawn to the parallels between Whitman's title and my everyday work as an educational philosopher, whose work happens quite often while sitting alone, becoming friends with one's thoughts (as Bruce Novak says in his essay), straining for conceptual clarity. Equally important, however, is the sustenance that comes from gatherings such as OVPES, where we are pulled in ways wanted and unwanted. The danger, Harvell reminds us, is that we may be tempted merely to howl our arguments, only to return home to prepare for the next howling. At its best, OVPES provides an opportunity for dialogic thinking and acting that extends beyond the duration of the meeting.

DIALOGUE DEFERRED

That is my specific hope for readers' engagement with the presidential address and its response. It is not always easy to engage in the dialogue in the moment it is offered. In a particularly memorable moment for me, Angela Hurley in her presidential address provided an extended view into the ideas behind the conference theme, after which Chris Higgins delivered his response. The membership witnessed a crossing of discourses. After Higgins' response, there was silence, no questions that I recall, and I can only recall my inability to quickly capture what I had just witnessed and to phrase a question to spark a dialogue.

In my memory, the respectful silence overshadows the encounter, partly since the OVPES membership is not often speechless. Given the luxury now of being able to read both pieces in their final form, I do think a little more wait time would have taken us in some fruitful directions. In light of the published essays, that dialogue we did not then have together may continue. What both have done is quite intriguing, I believe, and significantly different in argument, tradition, and aesthetic approach.

In the Hurley and Higgins pieces, readers have before them two distinct essays on the ideal of the humane. Hurley stays true to Arendt's notion of natality and depicts a threatening world into which children are placed. In response is Hurley's invocation for courageous humaneness. The aesthetic and emotional qualities are evident and evidently self-conscious from the start, both in her critique of dominant visions of education and her imagining of the possible. She follows Emily Dickinson's push to see the world "slant," making use of emotion in reason.

Hurley's project I take to be a thoroughgoing argument for what it means to place the "humanitarian impulse" at the center of education. Along the way she names the purpose of education to be "helping individuals to be aware of the many possibilities available to their humanness and of how their presence in the world relates to and affects others and the environment."⁵ This purpose is in contrast to the world as it is, with faith and reason cleaved, marked by violence in its many forms, and with consumption offered as the primary means of constitution and remedy. Education complies in the formation of the divided selves that such conditions create, rather than fostering engagement with existential questions, care for others, or the public good.

As Higgins notes, Hurley remarkably brings together a holistic narrative, much like the "more holistic narrative for educational experiences"⁶ that she advocates. She provides glimmers of a fully-formed philosophy of education, inspired as it is by Arendt, Gert Biesta, Maxine Greene, Martha Nussbaum, Parker Palmer, and Jonathan Sacks, among others. Overall, the project rests upon courage gained from attentive love, a pluralist love with

engagement with difference actively constituting the self. The text invites extended reading.

Higgins' response is a compelling contrast to Hurley in emphasis and tone. Higgins signals he will speak in a different voice and notes his response will be a form of appreciation, coupled with an entanglement with some of the pieces of the address. If Hurley reads as a holistic philosophy of educational practice, Higgins is more cautious, playfully serious and at times irreverent, imminently critical as he proceeds.

The first section of his essay is an alternate rationale for turning to wholeness and holistic education. Higgins engages a paradox of arguments for holism—scholarship with its hyper-specialization has surely contributed to the fragmentation of modern life. The second section provides an alternate route to wholeness, which he recognizes as vital to Hurley's argument. Higgins' alternative to Hurley's existentialism is a modified Aristotelean approach, wherein integrity-as-wholeness finds elaboration as an intellectual virtue.

The two approaches to wholeness may variously appeal to those with distinct orientations toward education and/or educational theorizing. Left to the reader and further dialogue is how these orientations may inform each other. As one reader, I am left with appreciation for how Hurley places intellectual courage and holism in relation to each other, which keeps alive the discomfort and unfinishedness associated with life as both a scholar and educator. I am intrigued about how that might be reframed by Higgins. Readers will find that the other essays in the journal add dimension to this dialogue about intellectual courage.

THE BOUNDARIES OF INTELLECTUAL COURAGE

Appearing next in the journal are the two papers brought together as the Phil Smith Symposium, both papers capturing rather well the theme of the conference and challenging us to consider the boundaries of philosophizing for and about intellectual courage. In both cases, the authors offer frames for doing work for social justice that permeates boundaries within philosophy and between philosophy and other disciplines.

In the first of these essays, Anderson calls for aesthetic attention in work for social justice, inviting her reader to consider how a scholarly or educational "jam" might lead to more responsiveness in educational relations. Anderson uses jam as metaphor and experience, a space of improvisational creativity that, like a jam, requires heightened awareness of oneself in relation to others. Essential for social justice work is also the space for critique, she argues, drawing from her improvisational experience and Lea's notion of polyrhythms. In this playful, multiplicitous argument, Anderson embraces discomfort, critique, and for the sake of responsiveness, humility and caution.

The abstractness of philosophizing is called into question by Calvin DaRonne Harvell, who in the second Phil Smith Symposium essay argues for a theoretical paradigm forged from struggle, one that maintains focus on how philosophy might creatively serve to promote life-improving educational experiences for all students. Harvell draws mainly from Maulana Karenga and Kwame Nkrumah, but also Carter Woodson and others, to build an “activist intellectual” model for Kwaiaida philosophy of education, an Africana philosophy that refuses to cleave thought and action, ethics and epistemology. The philosophy centers an African worldview, wherein Africans and descendents of Africans enact philosophy as subjects, challenge the status quo through deliberative critique, and create educational experiences that dignify the humanity of all persons.

FEATURED ESSAYS

The journal then moves to the featured essays, which authors submitted after the conference. These papers underwent anonymous peer review, and those selected for the journal appear in a suggested order of thematic connection. Kerry Burch begins with an essay on the Greek virtue of parrhesia, courageous speaking about the truth. Burch positions parrhesia as a mode of being that is sorely needed in our contemporary context, which he names as a permanent war environment. Burch offers parrhesia as a way to embrace the notion of intellectual courage, noting the significance of risk associated with “speaking truth to power.”

Next comes Bruce Novak’s paper on the audacity of thought and how we might look to Arendt’s “thinking on thinking” to construct a moral basis for democratic education. Novak is concerned with the banality fostered by educational policy and the Heideggerian “they” who have so dominated discourse about teacher roles and teacher preparation programs. Novak envisions education as a kind of polity of dialogue, a drawing out between and within ourselves to foster a new era of thoughtfulness in education, inspired by Barack Obama’s own audacity of thought.

Democratic education remains the topic for the next paper, with Arendt again figuring prominently. Human dignity is at the core of Dale Snauwaert’s essay on a cosmopolitan democratic education. Snauwaert provides a sound philosophical basis for a notion of community in which taking on the perspective of others is critically important as a project of recognizing the other as subject. He reminds readers of the importance of Arendt’s arguments on thinking and argues for dialogical communities in schools based upon moral respect.

The next two papers take up John Dewey. Stephanie Raill Jayanandhan turns to Dewey for lessons relevant to pedagogy of place, which is systematically overlooked in most educational arrangements. A particularly important lesson for place has to do with a meta-analysis of place, and by that

Raill Jayanandhan means that students need to develop abilities to encounter new places outside the confines or auspices of an educational institution. She imagines a number of activities that would connect individuals more concretely to new environments in which they find themselves.

In a paper that is historical and philosophical, Joseph Watras places Dewey in intermediate context of W.T. Harris and Thorndike, arguing that Dewey developed, in contrast to Thorndike, a more appealing scientific form in education. Watras makes debate about subject matter the focus, showing how Dewey and Harris differ in their theories of experience and their views of how subject matter is supposed to prepare students for future life. By placing Dewey in contrast to the more idealistic philosophy of education of Harris, Watras gives us a way in which we might view Dewey's as positioned more closely to Thorndike's than may appear from a longer view

The next four papers stretch the boundaries of ethical theory to tackle distinct projects that all relate to agency. In his paper on standpoint epistemology, Deron Boyles turns to the philosopher Lorraine Code for an alternative to exaggerated, scientific meaning-making. Boyles finds in Code the grounds for enhanced responsibility through knowing, extending her work to education. In this formulation, students' agentic knowing builds upon experience and ecological interconnectedness.

Ethical implications of bio-power are raised in the next piece by Carolyn van der Schee, who takes on the implications of contemporary health policy for the construction of the body in schools. The phenomenon of measuring, reporting, and attaching high stakes to body-mass indexing is provided as an example of how educational institutions actively participate in naming identities and subjectivities, privileging ones over others. Van der Schee builds a case against the overzealous attack on obesity, using Foucault to name the normalizing technology that California has adopted to measure, report, and shame with BMI.

Similarly, the normalization of ability is called into question by E. Frank Fitch, in his essay on disability studies. Fitch finds MacIntyre's arguments about disability especially compelling, drawing (as Rowe does in the next piece) on the problematic place that rationalism tends to hold in defining humanity. Drawing also from Eva Kittay, Fitch effectively repositions disability as normal, defines humanity through relation, and expands our thinking about human value, reason, and dependence. Fitch uses MacIntyre's communitarianism to make the subject especially relevant for education, because of the implications of disability theory for how we might build and sustain community through respect and recognition.

Positioned next in the journal is Bradley Rowe's essay about the significance of considering animal rights in moral philosophy and moral education. Rowe takes on a common notion that rationalism is the basis for

considering the moral worth of beings, extending the work of current animal rights philosophers. He reclaims Rousseau and Bentham's arguments about animals' sentience and makes human responsibility for animal welfare an essential consideration of education for human growth.

Two papers follow that each consider aesthetic components of educational philosophy, and in both cases the authors address significant emotional components of educational experience. As mentioned briefly above, Adrienne Pickett revisits Hannah Arendt's surprising response to photographs of the Little Rock Nine and rather carefully reconstructs the reasons for Arendt's reaction, the critical response she then received from intellectuals including Ralph Ellison, and the subsequent contemplation that that experience created in Arendt's own thinking about her self in relation to others. Pickett draws implications from this analysis for aesthetic experience as critical thinking and the opportunity for dialogue, showing also how this view places her analysis in relation to Broudy and Greene.

In contrast, Chad Barnett's approach draws from literary criticism and postmodern theory to theorize from his empirical study of boarding school students who have run afoul of school expectations through racy representations of themselves on social networking websites. In his paper on postmodern assemblage, Barnett supposes that understanding adolescent identity formation is problematic for educators and educational researchers for its apparently seamless breaching of the real/virtual binary. He is ultimately concerned with the implications for moral education built on virtues of propriety, conscience, and responsibility in the context of powerful consumer culture.

In the final four papers, we turn to distinct linkages between philosophy and teaching in higher education. In the first of these, Ronald Zigler makes use of a survey of undergraduate students about their beliefs about the efficacy of broaching the notion of intelligent design in public school curricula. Zigler warns against the dangers of epistemological arrogance, evidenced in shallow debates between evolution and intelligent design. He repositions the controversy, most recently surfacing in a Pennsylvania school board's policy declaration, as a question of diverse metaphysical paradigms. Zigler advocates a version of a naturalistic metaphysic, because it allows for open minds and both sides to be encouraged to present their best cases in appropriate contexts.

Liberal education is defined and defended in a new way by John Jalbert, who takes the tack of uselessness, drawing partly from Daniel Cottom, as way of updating John Henry Newman's philosophy of the university. Jalbert urges educators in higher education not to blink in the face of encroachments upon liberal education. He argues for the virtue of academic disciplines as ends-in-themselves, rather than either means to external ends or luxuries to remain the province of the privileged. He makes a distinction between two

competing ends of higher education—for the possession of things and for the possession of oneself—and he recommends the language of uselessness as a way of standing firm against utilitarian erosion of the value of self-possession.

Professional education is the specific realm of higher education that Jessica Heybach addresses in her paper, wherein she reconstructs the political machinations behind the removal of the term “social justice” from the glossary of the standards of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Analysis of the spectacle of the controversy, in a moment of contrived special-interest activism, reveals what Heybach depicts as a lost opportunity for intellectual exchange and/or courage in NCATE policy governance and its dependence upon special interest politics. Heybach offers both an intellectual and courageous response that breaks down the anti-social justice movement and creates a productive alternative for new discourse regarding educational equity.

We end the special issue where we began, by attending to education for and about engagement in a simultaneously intellectual and courageous scholarly life. Antonina Lukenchuk works to elevate the scholarly discourse on service-learning in higher education, querying its value as a model of university service and articulating an embodied, democratic ethics. She explores the reciprocity and mutuality inherent in progressive models of service-learning as issues of relationality – both epistemological and ethical considerations. She applies Levinas’ ontologically prior ethics to Arendt’s conception of *vita activa*, arguing for service-learning as an exceptional model of being-for-the-other.

NOTES

¹ Angela Hurley, “Call for Proposals” (2008), <http://www.ovpes.org/call2008.pdf>.

² Walt Whitman, “By Blue Ontario’s Shore,” *Leaves of Grass* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), 264-276, 269 (Sect. 9, line 8). “By Blue Ontario’s Shore” was originally published in 1856.

³ Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 436

⁴ Whitman, “By Blue Ontario’s Shore,” 275 (Sect. 17, line 19).

⁵ Angela Hurley, “Humane Intellectuals: Being Present to Humanity and the World,” *Philosophical Studies in Education*, 40, 9-24, 11.

⁶ Hurley, “Humane Intellectuals,” 15.