Introduction

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It is customary in these introductory pages for the editor to discuss what the collection of essays that follows reveals about the current state of scholarship in philosophy of education. In this 2001 edition of the *Yearbook*, it would certainly be exciting to report — just as we enter a new millennium! — that scholarship in philosophy of education had taken a dramatic turn from what it was the year before. In actuality, the essays included here indicate the continued evolution of fairly well established trends. Essays written from feminist, poststructuralist, antiracist, and liberatory perspectives were once rare in this publication; in recent years, more and more of the essays have at least acknowledged the insights such perspectives have to offer, and a fair number have explicitly embraced them. And while the education of youth and k-12 schooling were once the main foci of work in philosophy of education, over the past decade, much more attention has been given to philosophical problems in higher education.[1] As the current edition attests, rather than replacing historically conventional perspectives, approaches, or topics of inquiry, these trends have made scholarship in the field relatively more diverse.

In their introductions to earlier editions of the *Yearbook*, Alven Neiman, Frank Margonis, Susan Laird, Steve Tozer, Randall Curren, and Lynda Stone provide very helpful discussions about the increasing diversity of scholarship in philosophy of education.[2] It is interesting also to consider this trend in light of Nick Burbules's Presidential Address. In Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus' travels and the changes they initiate suggest to Burbules the process of *philosophical* change. Now, when Burbules refers to "philosophical change," it is not in terms of large-scale paradigmatic shifts, but rather in terms of transformations of thought undergone by individual philosophers. Such changes occur when, for instance, the convictions one once held are shaken or when the theoretical frames that one once found useful appear to be inadequate: "Philosophical change is about returning to things you were sure were true and seeing then differently — returning to the same Ithaca, but yet also an unfamiliar one. The feel of this shift is not one of victory, or superceding a mistaken belief: it is a recognition of greater complexity and uncertainty." It is at least worth considering that the trends noted in recent editions of the *Yearbook* reflect, on a larger scale, something like the process of philosophical change Burbules describes. As more philosophers of education take into account the perspectives and experiences of women, African-Americans, gays and lesbians, among other historically marginalized groups, it would be surprising if the field remained *unchanged*.

Even though this edition indicates that the new millennium was not accompanied by any radical new developments in the field, it is striking that so many of the essays here are concerned mainly with questions in ethics and moral education. At a time when some commentators, especially on the political right, have reduced the

whole of morality to a handful of narrowly defined "virtues," these essays are especially welcome. It is not that, together, they provide a single, preferable alternative vision of the moral life; they are far too topically and philosophically diverse for that. To a considerable extent, this diversity constitutes the essays' collective virtue. In contrast to the moral reductionism of the right, these essays help to illuminate the complexities of the moral life and the difficulties entailed in trying to live well and, moreover, in trying to help students develop morally. They also, not surprisingly, highlight the fact that there is a wide range of different ways in which one may conceptualize what it means to "live well" and to "develop morally," not to mention what constitutes the "moral life."

There is not room here to introduce every essay on ethics and moral education or to discuss any essay at length. Space constraints also preclude discussion about individual responses to these essays; this is unfortunate in light of the thoughtfulness of these responses. What follows, then, is but a sample of the different issues and perspectives brought to bear on these related topics.

In his essay "On Transgression, Moral Education, and Education as a Practice of Freedom," Ronald Glass draws on the work of Paulo Freire in order to discuss the conditions under which the "practice of freedom" may require transgressing established moral boundaries. Glass urges readers to consider the educational implications of the fact that struggles against oppression are not always morally unproblematic.

Two essays discuss different aspects of communicative ethics. Cris Mayo provides a critique of several morally problematic aspects of civility, including such civic virtues as kindness, respectfulness, and tolerance. Because it requires leaving unspoken that which would upset social interaction, Mayo argues, civility enables the maintenance of civil distance; civility keeps at bay those individuals whose central concerns are sufficiently upsetting. Another problem with civility, on Mayo's account, is that it generates troubling social obligations: "Civility acts like a gift that expects reciprocation which essentially puts the recipient into an uncomfortable form of debt." Finally, Mayo argues that, appearances to the contrary, there is a kind of hostility underlying civility that can serve to maintain unjust social relations. The educational implication of Mayo's analysis is that rather than attempting to counter biases through the cultivation of civic virtues (as many schools now do) there is the need for an "uncivil" alternative.

Much of the literature on "student voice" assumes that "silence" constitutes a form of oppression. While acknowledging that silence can signal oppression, in "Silences and Silencing Silences," Huey-li Li presents a range of different possible meanings. Some cultures value silence more than others; and some quiet students may merely be acting according to a cultural norm. Silence may indicate that a student is reflecting on a lesson or listening intently. Sometimes, silence constitutes a kind of resistance. In short, silence can signify many different things. Huey-li also provides the helpful reminder that "silence and speech form a continuum of human communication." Given that education is a communicative process, and that conversation is the medium through which much communication occurs, how

teachers regard and respond to silence, as this essay argues, has profound moral implications.

Two of the essays focus on Levinas's challenge to traditional understandings of ethics. Sharon Todd emphasizes the Levinasian shift away from subjectivity toward alterity as a condition for ethics. One educational implication of this shift is that "working across differences becomes less about learning about others and more about attending to the specificity of relationships in our classrooms." Clarence Joldersma discusses the teacher-student relation from a Levinasian perspective and inquires into the conditions that make it possible for one to learn from, and to teach, another.

Barbara Applebaum discusses a question posed by Dwight Boyd in his 1996 Presidential Address: "What kind of mistake might I be making if I try to 'do' philosophy of education as if my social location does not matter?"[3] Applebaum argues that the task of "locating oneself" belongs primarily to members of dominant social groups. Morally, "locating oneself" entails acknowledging one's privileges, resisting the scripts that can otherwise lead one to behave in ways that reproduce social injustices, and seeking out opportunities to dismantle those injustices.

Daniel Vokey discusses the adequacy of Alasdair MacIntyre's response to what he calls the "catch-22 of Aristotelian moral education:" that humans become virtuous by acting virtuously, but cannot know what that entails without already possessing the virtues. MacIntyre's proposed solution to this riddle is, roughly, that virtue develops gradually in a dialectical process involving one's conception of the good and one's habits of conduct. Lacking in MacIntyre's account, Vokey argues, is sufficient attention to the role experience plays in this process.

Environmental ethics is the topic of John Azelvandre's essay, which examines the work of Liberty Hyde Bailey and John Dewey. This examination is prompted by Azelvandre's conviction that environmental ethics ought to embrace a version of empiricism. Drawing on Bailey, Azelvandre discusses the role of nature study in cultivating students' sympathetic relation with nature. For Bailey, the significance of such empirical study is that non-human nature gives us important insights into how we should conduct ourselves. On Azelvandre's account, Bailey's basic insights about the educational significance of nature study are fortified by Dewey's philosophically rigorous conception of empiricism. Whatever differences exist in Bailey's and Dewey's methods and perspectives, Azelvandre argues that they both provide compelling cases for the educational significance of first hand experiences (of particular kinds). Contemporary environmental educators and ethicists would do well to follow their lead, he concludes.

It is not entirely clear why ethics and moral education have been addressed by so many of the essays in this volume. In part, this may reflect the current preoccupation with "morality" in United States culture at large. There is so much values-talk in the media that it is difficult, perhaps especially for philosophers, not to think about questions connected with morality (although generally quite differently than most politicians and members of the press). Whatever the reason, it is heartening to see

such a wide variety of moral matters addressed so thoughtfully and from such diverse perspectives.

In his Presidential Address, Burbules makes the following observation:

> Society needs philosophers not because it needs somebody to prove things to them, but because it needs people whose role it is to think differently, to stand outside convention and consider alternatives that…enlarge the scope of human possibility.

The philosophers whose work is contained in this volume have fulfilled their role admirably.

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1. Susan Laird, "'Where' are the Philosophers of Education in 1997?" *Philosophy of Education 1997*, ed. Susan Laird (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1998), xi-xii.

2. Alven Neiman, "Coherence, Inclusion, Prognosis: Remarks on the State of the Philosophy of Education Society at 51 Years Old," *Philosophy of Education 1995*, ed. Alven Neiman (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1996), xi-xvi; Frank Margonis, "Philosophical Pluralism: The Promise of Fragmentation," *Philosophy of Education 1996*, ed. Frank Margonis, (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1997), xi-xviii; Susan Laird, "'Where' are the Philosophers of Education in 1997?" *Philosophy of Education 1997*, ed. Susan Laird (Urbana, Ill: Philosophy of Education Society, 1998), xi-xii; Steve Tozer, "Introduction," *Philosophy of Education 1998*, ed. Steve Tozer (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1999), xi-xv; Randall Curren, "Philosophy of Education at the Millennium," *Philosophy of Education 1996*, ed. Randall Curren (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1997), ix-xiii; Lynda Stone, "Post-Millennial PES: Introduction to Philosophy of Education at 2000," *Philosophy of Education 2000*, ed. Lynda Stone (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 2001), xi-xix.

3. Barbara Applebaum citing Dwight Boyd, "The Place of Locating Oneself(Ves)/Myself(Ves) in Doing Philosophy of Education," in *Philosophy of Education 1997*, ed. Susan Laird (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1998), 2.