Trying Times and the Taught Tensions of Educational Relationships

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Similar to the scholarship collected within the first issue of Volume 77 of this publication, the work featured here, within the volume's second issue, was undertaken during the trying times of a global pandemic. And as previously acknowledged in the first issue, these events surely also shape the content and form of the analyses undertaken within these pages.[1]

Yet, despite the truth of that observation, the perceptive reader might push that realization further, to reflect on the degree to which education (and scholarly work focused upon it) is almost always conducted during trying times. That is, education rarely happens under ideal circumstances or within perfect settings. Rather, education occurs within dynamic, real-world conditions of background (or foregrounded) contestation and struggle. The potential effect of this insight is significant.

Perhaps holding the ubiquity of these tensions in view allows one to read the articles of this issue with a mind towards the generalizability of their specific claims? How, one could ask, might the particular concerns of this moment illuminate abiding considerations spanning sufficiently broad and extensive states of affairs? Through the circumstances surrounding their writing, these articles might be attuned to particular tensions within educational contexts. Nevertheless, even though these circumstances might differ between regimes, national contexts, or generations, there exist truths to be glimpsed via their analyses regarding how appropriately thoughtful educational relationships might begin to offer some ameliorative response to the disquiet of the day.

Reading the work of this issue with these thoughts in mind, the collection serves as a window into philosophy of education as its very best; it combines careful attention to the specificity of the world with critical

analyses of the patterns that manifest within it. As always, the educational possibilities at that intersection are myriad.

For example, Charles Bingham follows Langston Hughes in focusing on the generalizability of the specific circumstances that might motivate the relationships within his poem, Theme for English B. In this, Bingham provides a reading of a distinctively educational public sphere: the taught public. Bingham's account provides a perspective from which to view education and the public (and their synthesis) anew in both the present and future. Clio Stearns responds to Bingham, pressing the offered analysis further by demonstrating the ways in which the contribution might be read as both potentially disruptive and status-quo-enforcing. Through this, matters of gender and race are probed, extending the foundation for further explorations of the themes.

Naoko Saito and Tomohiro Akiyama use the specific occasion of a massive global shift to online instruction predicated by COVID-19 to interrogate broad questions about the relationships manifesting throughout digital spaces. In their article, they attend to the ways that teaching at a distance might correspond to the teaching of distance, showing the reader that these contemporary concerns can be meaningfully explored through American transcendentalism. Linking these thoughtful connections to ongoing worries about democracy and discrimination (among others), they provide, in a sense, an initial blueprint for a transcendent common to be created online. LeAnn Holland warmly joins the pair in pressing forward with analyses of togetherness, separation, and withdrawal, highlighting elements of the bold work, and calling for further detail and nuance as the analyses continue.

Nicholas Tanchuk, Tomas Rocha, and Marc Kruse initiate a discussion of the work of Lauren Bialystok to probe the titular question of their article. In this, they suggest that a defense of social justice education that rests on comprehensive liberal justifications is less desirable than a fully learning-focused justification for the same. Their arguments are careful and, via Bialystok, clarifying of general political worries regarding a specific form

of educational practice. Bruce Maxwell is a welcome addition to this conversation, carefully suggesting that the authors' core argument is less about Bialystok's claims and more straightforwardly a criticism of the comprehensive liberalism's assumed justification. Maxwell offers a detailed defense of Bialystok's argument while granting the desirability of further engagement with the normative foundations of comprehensive liberalism as it is endorsed in public educational contexts.

Ron Aboodi poses a set of questions that stimulate a meditation on the very nature of education. By analyzing the paternalistic motivation for manipulation in educative contexts, Aboodi explores a taxonomy of influence that may contain an account of the criteria for determining the justifiability of forms of manipulation (here explored though the hindering of deliberative practices). John Tillson readily engages Aboodi's work to explore potential improvements to, disagreements about, and questions regarding, the claims and arguments presented. By highlighting his own views on manipulation's criteria, Tillson extends the possible range of the conversation Aboodi initiates.

Michael J. Richardson provides a welcome reflection on educational relationships, suggesting that the borders within them are far less well defined than is often assumed. By exploring the tensions between individuality and relationally, Richardson welcomes readers to the task of identifying the many ways in which the rigidity, porosity, and transparency of these boundaries might be morally salient. Chris Higgins engages with Richardson's account of recognition, asking what its criterion of "together"-ness might mean and require. In his view, the Richardson's work initiates a broader and quite ambitious conversation about aspects of education worthy of our attention.

In focusing on thing-centered pedagogy, Jessica Davis engages Joris Vlieghe's and Piotr Zamojski's work to suggest that, as a pedagogical approach that seeks to balance the distance between the student and teacher, a thing-centered approach would do well to allow a focus on more than only subject matter/s. Vlieghe responds to re-characterize the arguments

that form the basis of the article. In this, Vlieghe demonstrates the degree to which the views articulated by Davis share common ground with those advanced by Vlieghe and Zamojski, pointing towards a post-humanist, ecological future.

Brenda Seals and Greg Seals engage the trying context of the COVID-19 pandemic to consider a case comparison between the public health educational efforts of Viet Nam and the United States of America in order to reflect on the stakes of educational theory in these (and other potential) life and death situations. Bryan Warnick responds to the article by noting the degree to which background social and political conditions may need to be addressed in the service of the educational goals Seals and Seals recommend.

Unfortunately, the recent year has given much specific context (attention to state-perpetuated anti-Black violence, COVID-19, struggles for indigenous sovereignty, etc.) for the thoughtful analyses of mourning. Against this backdrop of loss, Jessica Lussier provides an account of the solidaristic practice of mourning-with others as a form of learning. Huey-li Li follows this analysis, offering a true response to, and example of, the call contained within Lussier's work. Taken in tandem these pieces capture much of the current year while also projecting a view of the educational relationships that might follow.

In an impressive work, Rachel Wahl considers what might be learned from her analyses of a specific set of structured dialogue sessions and the ways in which these discussions across difference might yield useful insight into the nature of dialogical reasoning towards justice and moral recognition. Anthony Laden focuses on Wahl's suggestive account of reason and reasoning as these relate to the goals of political dialogue. The synthesis of their exchange provides much for educators interested in the quality and substance of education's civic and political ends.

To conclude the issue, Sally Haslanger, in her delivery of this year's Kneller Lecturer, contributes to the field by outlining a diagnosis and

provisional solution to the problem of learned replication of social hierarchies. On her view, the educational work done in response to these undesirable patterns of power extends beyond only engaging the epistemic dimensions of social reproduction. Instead, using contemporary examples towards identifying more generalizable standards, she demonstrates the ways in which the education of our practices, as components of ideological formation, must be carefully engaged. Quentin Wheeler-Bell offers a two-pronged response in which ideology is further explored and the specific criteria of an education for its critique is offered. While Jennifer Morton responds to the general aim of education for socially just ends, suggesting something of the individual and group costs potentially associated with such aims. In a sense, this suite of work serves as a fitting capstone for the issue's themes, tracing real world problems of injustice towards foundational causes and abiding, educationally sensitive conclusions.

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1 Winston Thompson, "Looking Inward, Justice, Democracy, and Education," Philosophy of Education 77, no. 1 (2021).