Paideusis

Editorial

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Editorial

HEESOON BAI
Editor

Here begins a new tradition for Paideusis: special issues to celebrate the synergy between *Paideusis*: *International Journal in Philosophy of Education*, and the Canadian Philosophy of Education Society's (CPES) Annual Meeting.[1] This year's CPES conference presentations and various collegial meetings were notably animated, convivial, and well-attended, and synergy was palpable in the philosophically-charged air hovering around the philosophers' presentation rooms and the hallways of the Education Building at the University of Saskatchewan, where this year's Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) was held in May in May. Philosophical dilemma, conundrum, fallacy, *non-sequitur*, contradiction, *reductio ad absurdum* – none of these dazed or fazed the philosophers of education who were clearly having *fun*. Is this because philosophy is about f.u.n.: fundamental understanding of nature (human or otherwise)?

Probably the most emphasis should be on 'understanding,' next on 'fundamental,' and least on 'nature,' as the latter two—let it be widely known—are philosophically contested concepts. (*Not that 'understanding' is uncontested!*) My sense, formed by years of "hanging out" with the intrepid followers of Socrates, is that philosophers at the CPES meetings were having such an enlivening time because they were living the *inquiry* and pursuing *understanding through dialogue*. What really matters to us in life and education, individually and collectively (see *Teaching and Value of Inquiry* in this issue)? Inquiry into how we should live today in the midst of global warming and species extinction critically matters to us (see *Placing Caring Relationship in Education*). So does an inquiry into pervasive scientism today and how it affects education and educational research (see *A Reflection on Arts-Based Research*); so do the conceptions of self and their relationship to freedom and agency (see *The Opacity of the Self, Sovereignty & Freedom*). What about the fact that our society and culture perpetuate the dualism between 'mind' and 'heart,' and privileges the former over the latter? How does that impact and shape education, and further, our culture (see *So Much Truth, So Much Being*)? How does the ethics of care address the commodification of knowledge and its pedagogical implications (see *Bridging the Divide between Being and Knowing*)? All these (and more) are fundamental questions for inquiry in the field of education. It is the work of philosophers in education to raise these issues, question underlying assumptions, probe into the ontological and epistemological frameworks within which these assumptions arise, voice ethical concerns, and exercise conceptual creativity in suggesting alternative possibilities in thinking, perceiving, and being.

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[1] For those of you readers far and wide who are new to or unfamiliar with our Society and its annual conference, here are some explanations. *Paideusis* is the journal of the Canadian Philosophy of Education Society (CPES) that meets once every year as part of a Special Interest Group of the Canadian Association for Foundations of Education (CAFE). In turn, CAFE is part of CSSE (the Canadian Society for the Study of Education) – the largest organization of professors, students, researchers and practitioners in education in Canada. And CSSE is part of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, which holds the largest annual academic gathering in Canada, which in turn is part of the Learned Societies – the largest group, you may guess, of scholarly organizations in Canada which hold conferences together, annually.

Philosophers' foremost job is to understand. We start with attempts to understand the lived reality of our world. We want to understand how notions, views, concepts, values, perceptions, and feelings in our particular social locations affect our selves and each other. This attempt to understand lived reality necessitates living dialogue and living inquiry, and, I suggest, this is what distinguishes understanding as an epistemic project from knowledge-building. The project of knowledge-building starts with assembling, sorting, and organizing what already exists as reliable and valid information, or, in philosophical parlance, "true justified beliefs," and then progresses to extend (and in the process revise) as well as apply these. In suggesting that the foremost job of philosophy is understanding, I do not mean to sever the connection between understanding and knowledge-building. Nor do I wish to suggest that philosophers are not interested in or qualified to participate in knowledge-building. Rather, I want to emphasize the unique contribution that the philosophical project of understanding makes to educational discourse. Why is this a unique contribution? Because – and correct me if I am wrong – no one else in the field of education other than philosophers in the tradition of dialogue (*e.g.*, the Socratic dialogue) seems to take up the task of understanding through dialogue as a critically important and serious pursuit. This brings me to briefly illuminate the three-way connection among understanding, dialogue, and a special sense of animation I felt at our last CPES gathering. I owe the reader this connection-making, even if only in a bare outline, because I started out this editorial with an observation about the enlivened and enlivening quality of philosophers who met at this gathering, which we are celebrating now with this special issue, and my suggestion that this had something to do with their having f.u.n.

Understanding the profound complexity of others' and our own lived reality requires us to question how we feel and see the world through the kinds of concepts, beliefs, and values we hold, what touches and moves us, and what kind of meaning we make out of experience. Such inquiry is the work of dialogue (see *Towards a Pedagogy of Dialogical Resistance*). But as anyone who seriously pursues dialogue knows, genuine dialogue does not happen, at least not in the fullest sense, unless the participants connect to each other heart-to-heart (emotionally), mind-to-mind (intellectually), and soul-to-soul (psychically). Such intersubjective connection is an extraordinary achievement, and many have characterized it as a sacred experience. It is an experience of, in Buberian terms, I-Thou connection. And here, for me, is the key understanding that connects aliveness with dialogue: this extraordinary experience of connection is the very substance of synergy and mutual animation. All this is to say that I was very pleased to be part of the CPES gatherings and presentations, and this special issue of Paideusis is dedicated to these events to document some of the dialogues that went on at the presentations, and to make them available in the service of generating more dialogues.

I am extremely grateful to all the authors and reviewers who worked closely and intensely with our very demanding publishing schedule. As well, I thank my "Pai-tech" team, including Managing Editor, Thomas Falkenberg, Editorial Assistant, Johanne Provençal, and our four Copy Editors extraordinaire – Peter Kovacs, Don Nelson, Charles Scott, and Buddy Young, for the breath-taking work of orchestrating the whole production in less than four weeks. This must have been record-breaking efficiency in the academic publishing world. In this case, speed is an indication of not only efficiency but, more importantly, of dedication to the cause of Pai and CPES. I also thank Lou Crockett for the magnificent dragon arising out of the waterfall that graces the cover page of this issue.

I would also like to take this opportunity to formally thank this year's CPES Program Chair, Claudia Ruitenberg (UBC), who so brilliantly put together the CPES program in the first place. As well, I would like to thank our ever-supportive President of CPES, Walter Okshevsky, outgoing Treasurer-Secretary, Don Kerr, and all other faithful members of CPES who supported this idea of creating special issues dedicated to CPES presentations. This publication marks another milestone in the history of CPES and Paideusis.

Yours editorially,
Heesoon