

## **Guest Editor's Introduction**

**A. G. Rud**

*Washington State University*

The roles that foundations scholars can play in a university and in the wider world of practice continue to develop. A standard and needed role that many of us serve is in teaching the usually mandatory history and philosophy of education course to our undergraduates as our contribution to preservice teacher preparation. Some of us work closely with other colleagues, in other parts of the education college, or in areas such as American Studies, or the many departments of a university that sponsor teacher education, while others teach in schools, and advise school boards, education agencies, and national panels. In this issue of the *Journal of Thought*, you will find articles that delve into multiple topics that revolve around the varied roles taken by foundations scholars.

If there is any doubt that there is vitality among foundations scholars, it is dispelled by reading the articles in this issue. The area of teacher preparation is in need of more attention by foundations scholars, and there are examples here. Articles describe ways of affecting practice, such as Timothy D. Slekar and Leigh Ann Haefner's essay about teaching history and science that shows how teacher educators teach reflectively and emphasize practice. The inquiry these scholars talk about is rigorous and a systematic consideration of evidence and data.

Careful consideration of teacher preparation is a valuable contribution that foundations scholars can make in their colleges and in the wider world of educational discourse. So is delving deeper into educational policy, and exposing paradoxes and tensions that may too easily be glossed over. John F. Covaleskie makes this a central claim of his es-

say, when he considers the paradoxical faith that we have in education. He explodes some of these myths, that education is both good for the individual and the economy. If it is good for the economy, then education should be praised when the economy is booming, but it is not. Education is generally ignored during those times, Covalleskie contends. He goes on to add that “the relationship between educational attainment and economic success is more apparent than real.”

The paradoxical pushes boundaries, and causes us to question why a reality is the way it is, as in the hermeneutic religious philosophy of Richard Kearney. Douglas R. Davis asks us to consider Kearney's work in light of education. Kearney is an Irish thinker not as well known to educators as his mentors Charles Taylor and Paul Ricoeur. Davis asks us to consider Kearney within educational discourse due to his emphasis on ethics, social justice, and the meaning of the other. Additionally, Davis believes that Kearney can be valuable to educational thinking due to his post secularism, namely, an “empowering, optimistic, and positive voice for social change and meaningful transformation of human society.” Kearney's emphasis upon the imagination calls us to look at ancient texts not as essential products, and social justice as not a defined goal, but as something that we continue to strive for and reinvent in particular times and circumstances.

Those times and circumstances may call forth extraordinary qualities of individuals, and this is the theme of the paper by Huajun Zhang and Jeffrey Ayala Milligan. They masterfully treat Dewey's method of intelligence in the context of rapid social change in Chinese society, and add the insight of a Chinese contemporary of Dewey, Liang Shuming, on self-enlightenment or *zijue* to treat what they see as a deficiency in Dewey. This self enlightenment needs to be “something not in conflict with but complementary to intelligence in that it provides a motivation for creative action that does not rely on clearly articulated purposes. The individual will not get lost in the radically changing social context when he/she develops ‘self-enlightenment’ and instinctively knows what to do, even though the individual may not have clearly articulated purposes.”

It is an uncontroversial fact that foundations scholars emphasize reflective thinking and practice. While those of us who have studied and written on such activities find these topics familiar and almost overdone, this is not the case in educational practice, where reflection is not taken for granted. The paper on moral education by Ronald B. Jacobson investigates how morality is developed relationally and dialogically, and provides a counter to didactic means of moral instruction. Jacobson relies upon two examples from the work of celebrated teacher Vivian Gussin Paley to show how morality is not something espoused, but developed.

---

Paley's work shows in dialogue the journey that students take, in their inquiry and back and forth contention with others and the teacher, in determining among themselves what is moral.

There are still forces and factors allied against reflective thinking in the classroom, as the paper by Suzanne Rosenblith points out to us. Rosenblith is like many a foundation scholar, in thinking that schools are more than information transaction centers, but are places where students wrestle with moral and existential concerns. The discussion of religions if done properly, and this is where Rosenblith and Kearney speak to each other, allow one to expand one's frame rather than constrict it. Rosenblith looks at the Georgia bible legislation as an example of how the liberal ideals of critical thinking and autonomy were sidestepped in favor of a more rigid evangelism. She urges us to think of ways to weave religious study into the curriculum, but points out that it is not sufficient to make it part of a multicultural course. A task for philosophers of education is to find ways to encourage the reflective study of religion, what Rosenblith, citing Robert Wuthnow, calls reflective religious pluralism, where we actively acknowledge how we are different in religious traditions as well as give a rationale for why it is important to engage with people who have these different religious traditions. Rosenblith acknowledges that "Learning about a range of beliefs and values, which in many cases are incommensurable, forces students to think deeply, critically, and thoughtfully about these beliefs."

Who is the audience for these papers? I fear that what Jan Armstrong calls the political economy of publishing continues to structure and filter such discourse to be available only to a few. If we as foundations scholars are to reach out to others beyond our disciplinary and institutional confines, we must take what Armstrong calls "writing small" to heart, that is, writing in many different ways to reach a number of constituencies. I fear that Armstrong's moniker of "writing small" is too restrictive, however. It does not get at ways to upset the current political economy of journal writing by writing practices that reach out in transformative ways, and that do not merely serve as counts in academic productivity. A step we can all take to that end is to give these essays the kind of attention that will give them all a life beyond the pages of this journal.