

## Introduction

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The North American Society for Social Philosophy (NASSP) facilitates discussion among social philosophers and scholars in related fields on topics of interest in social and political philosophy. In keeping with its publishing program, each volume of *Social Philosophy Today* features a selection of peer-reviewed papers from the preceding year's NASSP International Social Philosophy Conference. Volume 32, "Education and Social Justice," includes papers from the conference that was held at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. In addition to selected conference papers, we are pleased to the proceedings of the "author meets critics" session on Joseph Fishkin's *Bottlenecks: A New Theory of Equal Opportunity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

The volume opens with Margaret Crouch's address to the Conference as the outgoing NASSP President. Following upon a number of well publicized instances of sexual harassment and related sexual misconduct involving individual philosophers and philosophy departments around the U.S., Crouch sets out to explore how philosophers—supposedly committed to self-examination and self-appointed guardians of the field of ethics—could be so prone to unethical behavior in their interactions with students and with one another. Without settling on a single answer, Crouch points to power hierarchies operative within the field of philosophy, and to the broad institutional freedom afforded tenured professors as encouraging and enabling a range of arrogant and bullying behaviors. These include the longstanding tendency to link philosophical acumen with aggressive criticism of opposing views, a behavior has proven difficult to root out even among some who have criticized it. Crouch concludes by exhorting philosophers who occupy various positions of

institutional power to think about how they exercise that power, and to truly take up the hard task of living an examined life.

Part II consists of Lorraine Code's paper, based upon her keynote address at the International Philosophy Conference. In asking the question "Who Do We Think We Are?" Code sets out to examine both the "we" who have remade the natural world for which we are now responsible, and how we should think about ourselves in moving toward a more suitable conception of the self in ecological thinking. On Code's account, such a conception will require a radical questioning of human subjectivity and agency, one that will shake the "sedimented convictions" that underlie the individualism and sense of universal entitlement that propel humans on a path of environmental destruction. Code sees a particular task for philosophical pedagogy in this endeavor, as it can question the imaginary of late capitalism that serves to keep us from developing our capacity for thinking ecologically. To this, however, philosophy must eschew its own Cartesian assumptions and the quest for "a view from nowhere."

Part III includes essays specifically addressing themes in educational theory and the achievement of just outcomes in education. In his paper, Matt Silliman considers the relative merits of conceiving of education as primarily the acquisition of information or specified skills (as the corporate model would have it), or as involving the morally charged and less easily measurable task of cultivating the "whole person." In a lively and sometimes humorous dialogue, Silliman makes a case for the latter, pointing out the manner in which the moral and epistemic aims of education can coincide. With its defining emphasis on individual liberty, liberal programs of civic education rely implicitly on appeals to rationality to try to move students away from exclusively private pursuits and toward acts of public service for the common good. In his paper, Gordon Mower argues that this liberal approach to civic education overestimates both the motivational force of rationality and the efficacy of the dominant pedagogical practices in moving students toward participation in public life. Mower contends, moreover, that a rational agent is likely to find that the costs of public participation in fact outweigh its benefits when compared to private enterprise. Dee Dee Mower uses a Foucauldian analysis to explain differences in pedagogical practices among teachers, showing how teachers become "technological components" within a system. Mower argues that by understanding the ways in which the dispersal and circulation of power shapes their pedagogy, teachers may be better able to reflect on how various surveillance techniques can be employed or resisted in developing effective teaching practices for diverse student populations.

In part IV, Christine Wieseler and Andria Bianchi criticize approaches to disability that tend to discount disabled persons' capacities to accurately describe the quality of their lives and to make autonomous decisions with regard to them. Wieseler specifically takes issue with Anita Silvers's call for conceptual neutrality

in discussions of disability, arguing that conceiving of objectivity as a perspective that is neutral between the perceptions of variously abled and disabled knowers serves to reinforce the privilege accorded to the non-disabled. This further serves to maintain ignorance with regard to the lived experience of disability. Appealing to Sandra Harding's concept of strong objectivity, Wiesler seeks to demonstrate that particular values and identities are essential to building knowledge and overcoming the ignorance engendered by the false neutrality of dominating perspectives. Bianchi's paper addresses the problem of respect for the autonomy of the disabled, with particular attention to the manner in which conceptions of autonomy as an individualized capacity for self-reflection exclude many intellectually disabled persons. Bianchi sees Laura Davy's "inclusive design" approach to autonomy, with its focus on interpretation and advocacy rather than self-reflection as central to self-direction, as a valuable corrective to such conceptions, but questions how such a model might facilitate sexual autonomy for intellectually disabled persons. Bianchi explores possible solutions to this problem in the final part of her essay.

Part V moves on to a diverse set of topics in social philosophy. In her paper, Joan Woolfrey explores both why hope can be characterized as a virtue, and how it takes on a kind of primacy among the moral virtues. Woolfrey argues that because hope is necessary as a character trait for sustained human action generally, it is needed for the development of other virtues as well as for ethical deliberation. In his essay, Matt Waldschlagel criticizes a common view of forgiveness traceable to Joseph Butler, one that takes the end of forgiveness as a kind of self-healing in which the forgiver forgives in an effort to surmount her own negative emotions directed toward the wrongdoer. Using the example of Holocaust survivor Eva Mozes Kor, Waldschlagel argues that this view mistakes a side effect of forgiveness for its goal. He goes on to describe forgiveness as a practice of reconciliation and the removal of the wrong, a practice that can more reliably issue in the desirable psychological benefits of the Butlerian view. In the final paper of the section, Michael Schleeter critically examines the frequent assumption that recent neo-liberal economic policies find their origin in the doctrines of classical economics. Schleeter argues that neo-liberal trade policies cannot in fact be defended on the classical liberal economic theory of Adam Smith, nor do they reflect the historical policies pursued by nations such as the United States as they developed their economies. In fact, neo-liberal economic policies are less free trade in classical sense than they are a kind of protectionism for developed economies.

The essays in Part VI are contributions to the NASSP's annual book award session at the International Conference. The winner of this year's award was *Bottlenecks: A New Theory of Economic Opportunity* by Joseph Fishkin of the University of Texas School of Law. In his book, Fishkin insightfully explores the inequalities occasioned by various "bottlenecks," socially imposed gateways to including tests and other qualifying criteria through which people must pass in order to obtain

much sought after opportunities. As a remedy for the inegalitarian consequences of bottlenecks, he develops and advances a concept of opportunity pluralism, the idea that society should not only provide ways for the disadvantaged to pass through the bottlenecks, but should provide for a plurality of “goods, roles, paths, and qualifications” so as to avoid creating bottlenecks in the first place. This section includes critical commentaries on the book by Jeffrey Gauthier, Jeffrey Brown, and Barry DeCoster, followed by a response by Fishkin.

It has been an honor to serve once again as editor of *Social Philosophy Today*, and to work with all the talented contributors to this volume. I wish to thank them, as well as the many referees who most generously gave of their time to make this volume possible. I would also like to thank Elizabeth Sperry for her excellent work as the organizer of the meetings at William Jewell College, as well as the outgoing NASSP President Margaret Crouch, and the new President Sally Scholz for their continuing advice and encouragement. Finally I wish to thank Diana Malsky and George Leaman of the Philosophy Documentation Center for their help and patience.

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