

Philosophy of Education

Challenges, initiatives and prospects of Education

MARJORIE O'LOUGHLIN, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Philosophy of education as a field of intellectual endeavour has faced significant challenges to its position within teacher education programs. In this partly historical account of its development, for the most part in Anglophone countries, the split between analytic and continental (European) philosophical traditions is briefly identified as one of the ongoing difficulties the field faces, one which still tends to inhibit the engagement of Anglo-American philosophy with postmodernism. Some of the changes occurring in the definitions of the philosophical enterprise in education in recent decades in Australia and elsewhere are explored and certain problems faced by its practitioners noted. Certain varieties of intellectual involvement of philosophers of education are canvassed and the healthy state of the journals is proffered as evidence of the durability of the field despite the obvious decline in the numbers of those teaching in it. The paper concludes with a short discussion of issues and themes that the author sees as needing to be addressed by the field in the future, including the requirement to be cross-cultural in examining key philosophical issues and the importance of being 'empirically responsible'.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines some important issues relating to the current state of philosophy of education in Australia and overseas. The approach of the writer to this very broad and complex theme is necessarily selective and perspectival. In the space allocated, no attempt can be made to comprehensively deal with various philosophical positions nor can there be given a systematic account the work of individual philosophers of education. The most that can be attempted is an identification of some of the most obvious difficulties confronting the field in a period of change and uncertainty, and a brief exploration of some of the directions philosophers of education are taking at the present time in their efforts to re-invigorate that field.

There is no general consensus as to the exact nature of philosophy of education and neither is there a clear-cut definition of who is to count as a philosopher of education, given the fuzziness of the borders between philosophy today and other disciplines. However one way of seeing philosophy of education is by way of its connections with the discipline of philosophy itself, and to make the links between varieties of

philosophical frameworks or sets of arguments and their 'application' to educational themes, issues and problems. While this kind of approach takes us no nearer a definition, it is nonetheless a significant means of illuminating some of the present problems and issues faced by the field.¹ As philosophers of education argue for its continued inclusion within teacher education programs today, it is clear that they draw in a variety of ways upon those foci, frameworks and methods found in the 'parent' discipline.

Changing university curricula, including the rise of interdisciplinarity as exemplified in areas such as that of 'cultural studies', student preferences for more overtly vocationally relevant subjects, and threats to the survival of the humanities within universities both in Australia and elsewhere have all had a significant impact on the position of philosophy as a discipline. Philosophers' earlier claims to suggest to the world of practice how it should proceed, or even more modestly, to specify what might be the general norms and objectives of social life have long been subject to criticism, but there are also other issues to be addressed. The perception of philosophy as an enterprise under challenge may also be related to the decrease in the numbers of those teaching it, and the perceived diminution of opportunities for employment in the discipline. Further, philosophers' own sense that their work is not understood outside the discipline, that students may regard it as irrelevant in an ever-expanding curriculum may contribute to the general feeling of unease. It is of course hazardous to over-emphasise any of these possible reasons though all have played at least some role in the changing position of philosophy within the universities, notwithstanding the fact that outside of the academy in recent times philosophy has enjoyed a considerable resurgence of interest within the broader culture, particularly beyond Australia.²

Philosophy of education, like its parent has faced major challenges in many places over the past decade and longer. With the movement away from earlier foundations models of pre-service education to greater integration and incorporation into differently articulated components within teacher education programs, it has tried to maintain a position as one of the major underpinnings of educational studies.³ This is not to say that philosophical analysis within the various programs that comprise teacher education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels has completely disappeared - merely that it is less often identified as such, having been absorbed into cross-disciplinary courses or programs. What can be said with some degree of certainty, is that there has been a decrease in some parts of the world, including in Australia, in the number of people teaching *only* or even *mainly* philosophy of education and that this decrease has been cause for concern among members of the profession in various parts of the world.

It is obvious that problems facing the field are not attributable merely to institutional and structural changes, but are also critically involve issues of content and method. There are of course many such issues and it is beyond the scope of this paper to canvass all or even the most frequently raised. However there is one which continues to attract much debate. This is the question of how postmodern critique has impacted upon educational critique in general and on philosophy of education in particular. The issue is of particular

significance to philosophy of education because it carries with it a set of arguments and concerns that often rely on what the American philosopher of education, Nicholas Burbules identifies as a set of 'crude (mis)characterisations' limiting much of the work being done in educational theory today. The historical division between analytic philosophy of education and that associated with 'continental' or 'European' traditions, with which the analytic/postmodern is closely connected, is of the 'most tedious and counterproductive dualisms' that has bedevilled the field.⁴ Ongoing attempts to overcome this division is one of the most promising developments in the project of strengthening the field as a whole. Before proceeding further with the discussion is worth briefly recalling the background to that mis-characterisation.

BACKGROUND TO THE 'UNPRODUCTIVE DUALISM'

That analytic and continental European traditions have had significantly different orientations is undeniable. Analytic philosophy is associated historically with English speaking countries though as we shall see further on was never confined only to them. It is a very large enterprise with a number of different strands, the two most simply described as those based on mathematical logic (formalist) and what is called 'ordinary language philosophy'. The former developed in different directions from Frege and Russell's focus on the foundations of mathematics. Consequently mathematical logic came to have a major place within the wider field of analytic philosophy including that of the Vienna Circle, Quine and the semanticists such as Kripke and Lewis. Formalist philosophy is founded on the idea that thought is language; but that language is the formal language of mathematics. Ordinary language philosophers in contrast believe that everyday language - usage - furnishes all that is necessary to make conceptual distinctions and to mount philosophical arguments. The later Wittgenstein, Strawson and Austin focused on the subtleties of ordinary language in context to develop non-mathematical programs of analytic philosophy. Wittgenstein in his well-known account of language games challenged the idea that meaning can be given in terms of the objective world, rather, a language game is a system of thinking and practices embedded in specific forms of life that can only be depicted in terms of what people do and the kind of life they carve out for themselves in their environment. Austin and Searle on speech acts showed how doing things with language, such as threatening and promising, could not be analysed by means of the rules of ordinary logic. Grice tried to reconcile formal philosophy with ordinary language through his theory of conversational implicature, that is, claims concerning the presence of informal inferences in conversational contexts.

Historically there has been made a major distinction between analytic philosophy (conceptual analysis) and continental European philosophy. Generally speaking continental philosophy probes into the meaning structures and limits of thought itself within the ongoing concerns, needs, desires, values principles concepts and language and texts of everyday (that is, philosophical) experience. In its many forms it raises the questions not just about the philosophical enterprise but also about 'non-philosophy'⁵

What makes the latter different from the former and what is to be made of this difference? Should that which we presently regard as 'not philosophy' now be seen as philosophy also? These are questions which in recent decades have also exercised the minds of Anglo-American philosophers and some philosophers of education. At base continental European philosophy had always been concerned with social and historical conceptions of knowledge in a way that generally speaking was absent in the analytic tradition. Moreover, the relationship of European philosophy to other 'disciplines' in the social or human sciences had been constructed in ways that were peculiar to it over most of the twentieth century and have produced a different set of relationships among the various disciplines, from that which is found in analytic philosophy. There are other differences but these cannot be examined here. It is sufficient to acknowledge difference of approach while at the same time seeking points of contact and commonalities of purpose in the diversity of philosophical projects which the two traditions represent.

How then has this division between the two kinds of philosophy played out in philosophy of education, and what other influences are to be found? In the following section of the paper, I will briefly address these questions, beginning with a comments on the changes which have taken place taking place in Australia in recent decades.

SOCIAL AND PHILOSOPHIC CHANGE: A BURGEONING PLURALISM

The period of the late 1960s and the 1970s may be characterised as a time both of change and continuity in the discipline of philosophy in Australia. While varieties of analytic enterprise continued and major work centred on mind-body, logic, philosophy of science and other mainstream areas continued apace there were also vigorous debates arising out of social analysis influenced by Marxism and somewhat later by feminism. In philosophy of education, critique of schooling under capitalism was to be found in the work of Giroux and McLaren, Bowles and Gintis and Michael Apple in the United States and for example, in the work of Kevin Harris in Australia. Radical critique of the social conditions under which knowledge is produced -the 'new' sociology of knowledge of the 1970s - provided significant challenges within the field. But while the work of feminist scholars such as Elizabeth Grosz became increasingly known in social analysis in Australia and thereafter overseas, feminism has never achieved anything more than a very marginal position within philosophy of education in Australia.⁶ This was a period of considerable curriculum change within many institutions and in educational thinking, especially within teacher education. Since then, as the work of Foucault and later postmodernists has become more widely known, there have been various kinds of engagement with the European tradition, though it is probably fair to say that there remains a bedrock of scepticism, even hostility to postmodernism, which unfortunately tends still to be expressed as a general antipathy to anything 'continental'.

The reality is, of course, that there has always been danger in drawing hard distinctions between continental and analytic kinds of philosophy of education. The cross-fertilisations over many decades are deep and significant. One needs only to look

at the trajectory carved out by logical positivism which began in Europe before being taken up by Ayer and others who developed what came to be identified later as the analytic tradition. Phenomenology had also entered the Anglophone philosophical world and indeed has had a long history in the United States, with a particular relevance for education in the work of Maxine Greene and others, and the work notably, of Donald Vandenburg in Australia. American philosophers of education, such as Burbules would also point to the anti-foundationalism of pragmatism in support of the view that many of the claimed differences between continental and analytic philosophy are the product of misunderstandings and ignorance. The work of Rorty is perhaps the exemplar of this fertile mingling of ideas and approaches.

Philosophy of education has taken different paths in different places. It is neither possible nor desirable for one person to do justice to each and every one of these 'stories' of what education is or should be. Australian philosophy of education has had its own peculiar history prior to the widespread adoption of the ordinary language method in the 1960s. Before that time emphasis had lain on 'history of educational ideas' programs within teacher education much of which was carried out in teachers' colleges (later Colleges of Advanced Education). The arrival of analytic philosophy of education introduced a method of examining concepts that were seen as basic to an understanding of educational practice and theory. It was generally embraced with considerable enthusiasm by those involved in teaching it, many of whom did not have philosophical training but found the analytic method attractive. However, by the end of the mid to late 1970s and on into the 1980s, it had itself been seriously challenged not only by forms of Marxist critique of philosophical training as outlined above, but also, with much greater impact, by varieties of pragmatism, such as that of Walker and his colleagues.⁷ More recently, the various debates about the relevance of postmodern critique to education including arguments about what postmodernism actually is and what postmodern readings of educational thought and practice might be expected to yield, constitute a significant challenge to the field both in Australia and elsewhere. They also raise anew questions about of the (still) uneasy relationship between the analytic and European traditions in Anglophone philosophy of education.

At the present time philosophy of education is widely acknowledged by its practitioners to be in state of flux albeit for a variety of reasons, some of which have to do with changing disciplinary boundaries and others with issues of diminishing resources, student demand, requirements that philosophers of education themselves become more entrepreneurial and join the hunt for the research scarce research dollar. There is on the one hand, remarkably little information available regarding student satisfaction or otherwise with courses that are substantially philosophical in content. On the other, the journals reveal a veritable explosion of ideas, debates, discussion, symposia on important themes and issues in recent years. The Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA), *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (EPAT) has been remarkably successful in its coverage of the 'big' issues in philosophy of education. Questions raised

range from analyses of specific policies decisions and implementation, to critique of curricula, examination of pedagogical themes and problems, discussions of the aims of education, policy analysis, issues in educational research and so on. There have been special issues devoted to discussions about globalization and environmental education. Like its 'sister' journal *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, the major publication of the International Network of Philosophers of Education, it provides remarkably wide coverage and deep coverage of major educational issues of the times.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Philosophy of education finds itself very much in a period of change not only in terms of the theoretical resources available but also in terms of the impact of structural change within education itself and social and political changes more broadly - in other words, the material conditions under which it continues to operate. Institutional change and reform, changes in policy direction, alterations in the relationship between teacher employees and the providers, and a host of other re-conceptualizations and re-structurings have impacted on the field in a variety of ways. These impacts have occurred both in Australia and overseas. It has been common practice at conferences over the past decade for philosophers of education to update themselves on the latest casualties in the field, that is, to find out who is no longer teaching something still identifiable as philosophy of education either through retirement of an aging workforce, or as is often the case because of re-deployment of philosophers into other areas within education. Certainly there are major concerns about the employment prospects of younger philosophers, with a variety of measures being implemented to provide some sort of professional affiliation and a sense of being part of the philosophy of education community.

The conversations philosophy of education has been having for the past decade at least have been as much with the other disciplines, with science naturally, but also with 'new' areas of knowledge such cultural studies, and with interdisciplinary studies. The present pluralism in philosophy of education brings the field into dialogue with various kinds of critique, from the transcendental to the deconstructive. There are discussions taking place which embrace the relation between philosophy and other discourses as a real relation, and not merely to engage in a 'detached observer' reflection, an analysis of propositions or an exercise in argumentation with the other side. And there is now increasing acknowledgement of the need for philosophers of education to ensure that they are what Lakoff and Johnson (1999) call empirically responsible.⁸ For some this has meant that they have needed to become more aware than in the past of their connection with the work being carried out by colleagues in a variety of research areas such as neuroscience, the social sciences or other areas. For significant numbers of others however, there has been no great shift in their focus or in their professional self-definition, as they have for many years been engaged in various kinds of research. This would seem to be no bad thing - philosophers need to have their ideas contested in the material world, the world of embodied selves. For many their work is now more diverse,

involving them directly in the processes of seeking large-scale funding, project design, management and implementation in ways some at least, find alienating. In the present pressure cooker environment in universities in Australia, at least, it remains to be seen whether or not this 'expansion' of the traditional role of philosophers of education benefits the field or ultimately contributes to its withering away. If the quality of the debates conducted in the journals is any measure there would seem to be little chance of that. However if the measure of the survival or decline of a field is the numbers of new practitioners being inducted into it then the future for philosophy of education looks less bright.

There are many directions in which philosophy of education can proceed. As I have already indicated publications and conference titles in the flourishing journals indicate that those who work in the field are aware of the difficulties to be faced in a time of enormous institutional social and institutional change. In terms of the changed intellectual landscape from which essentialism and foundationalism have disappeared, there is a continued and vigorous production of work that challenges the current orthodoxies in the theorising, politics and practice of education. But even on the basis of this, it is not possible to list all the possible directions philosophy of education might take. In any case each philosopher will have his or her own selection of themes and prescriptions for future engagement. Mine is but one voice in the conversation about the future of the field. I will therefore content myself with pointing to three issues which I see as being significant.

First, philosophy of education should continue to encourage discussion with philosophers from both traditions - the European and the analytic in all of their diversity and richness. There are important conversations to be had of many kinds. Philosophers of education need to continue their critical debates with the various kinds of post-modernism, not just in terms of individuals' critique and defence of positions, but also with a view to providing a better understanding of its impact in other areas of theory and research. For example in feminism, where I think superficial readings of post-modern theorists has produced confusion around questions concerning women's failure to achieve equality in the wider society and particularly the workplace, it is time for a more critical look at what is useful and what is not in post-modernism in relation to gender issues. Attempts should therefore continue in order to overcome the obstacles to productive interchange between the analytic and continental traditions.

With regard to this task, Burbules has argued that we should not minimise real points of difference or disagreement between these contrasting views. But he also reminds us that it seems, inconsistent with the philosophical spirit of inquiry to rule out of hand the possible insights or benefits of any serious philosophical view, or to assume that specific points of insight cannot be fruitfully reinterpreted or translated from one tradition to another. In his thoughtful response to the book *Thinking again: Education after Post-modernism* (Blake, Smeyers, Smith and Standish, 1998) in the PESA journal *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, he depicts the work as a sustained attempt to show amongst other

things, that Anglophone philosophy of education has been pre-occupied with particular problems, to which another framework (arising out of the European tradition) might do greater justice. As such the book is a worthy attempt to bridge the present gulf.

Second, there is also a need to get conversations going across another cultural divide, that of 'the West', 'the East' or African, or Pacific or others.⁹ If Western philosophy (analytic or European) has come to be defined not just by its argumentative method but also by its canon of themes and issues, then attempts to find equivalents or at least something similar, must surely be a starting point for explorations of 'other' traditions. If for example we understand philosophy as we know it to include the work of Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, Kant and Hegel then at least the following ideas are to be regarded as central to that canon: being, causation, good, illusion, reality, right, truth, understanding, evil and wrong. Obviously not all cultures will have all of these concepts, but all will surely have concepts that at least bear a family resemblance to them. For example no individual could think about action or practice who did not have a concept like our notion of causation. No one could have social norms without concepts that are at least something like notions of right and wrong, and a society without norms cannot exist let alone function. Similarly every culture has had views about what it is for human beings to be embodied (though the West at least since Descartes has quite spectacularly misconceived this, with some rather unfortunate results). And even if there did exist a society which had nothing like any of these concepts, it would be hard to make any sense of one which had no organising concept at all.

Lest attempts at this kind of intercultural approach to philosophy be greeted with scepticism (and the cry that 'this is not philosophy!') I should point out that significant attempts have already been undertaken over many years. Organisations of comparative philosophical studies exist in the United States and Europe, and though some of these seem to have little contact with the mainstream philosophical associations, others have begun to forge links through the holding of conferences and the development of publications which emphasise the diversity of philosophical traditions around the world. In the field of philosophy of education, the International Network of Philosophers of Education has as one of its major aims the fostering of a better understanding of 'other' traditions and is gradually widening its activities to encourage greater participation by philosophers from previously less well known cultures. But the process is slow and there are many problems to be faced in bringing together conference participants from all over the world, especially from newly emerging countries lacking financial resources and infrastructure. Much better prospects are offered through publications. In this respect the editors and contributors to the journal *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (EPAT) have made an excellent beginning.

In 2002 a special issue of EPAT titled 'Education and Philosophy in China' has dealt with a wide variety of topics of interest to both Chinese but also non-Chinese readers. These include discussions of contemporary developments of Marxist philosophy, post-modern notions of human rights, and language and learning orthodoxy in English

classrooms in China. As the current editors express it, there is a desire on the part of themselves and the membership of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) to widen both the contributions to and the readership of the journal 'making a conscious effort to become truly international. Of course as the editor also acknowledges, genuine internationalism requires more than merely the publication of material from other than the English-speaking analytic tradition. This issue of the journal is simply one in the longer-term project towards such internationalism.

Another example of cross-cultural work in philosophy of education also comes from the EPAT editors and members of the Society. Papers from the 1998 PESA Annual Conference were published in a special issue of the journal.¹⁰ These papers focused on Maori philosophy and provide an excellent example of a fruitful encounter with a previously largely unknown tradition. While not avoiding the vexed issue of whether or not Maori philosophy is philosophical in that way that work within the Anglo-American tradition is, the papers addressed issues from the point of view of participants who were themselves indigenous people. Most were from New Zealand but one indigenous author from Australia was included. Raising such issues allowed the expression of ideas that had previously not been considered philosophical at all. As editors James Marshall and Betsan Martin pointed out, philosophical literature or even philosophical literature about Maori concerns is very scarce. Moreover the discipline of philosophy in New Zealand has attracted very few Maori students. Yet as many of the contributors to this the discussion could point out Maori are doing philosophy all the time as it is woven into life and curriculum in Maori space. As with Aboriginal philosophies it is not viewed as something separate from life.

The issue of indigenous philosophical traditions and their possible influence on the field of philosophy of education is one deserving of ongoing attention in my view. In South Africa, for example, the question of indigenous philosophies has received renewed attention post-apartheid, but from individuals who do not publish their work in 'mainstream' national or international journals and who tend to carry out their teaching of African philosophical perspectives in the 'historically black universities' (HBUs) in that country. These philosophers teach and write in a framework still dominated by variants of the Anglo-American tradition or in the face of the now largely discredited, but still persistent Fundamental Pedagogics which had dominated teacher education in the 1970s and 80s. It remains to be seen how the 'struggle' over diverse philosophical traditions in education there will be resolved. Given that there is a very substantial literature already in existence on the theme on African philosophy various initiatives may be taken, but this will depend on a number of factors including the opportunities afforded those interested in exploring African philosophical perspectives in education to publish in major journals.

The issue of philosophy across differing cultures carries with it certain conceptions of communication and knowledge construction. It also raises questions about traditional views of what critical thinking is and how it may be transformed and re-described when differences in context are taken seriously. While critical thinking has been a major theme

in the philosophy of education literature over the past two decades it has only recently been more broadly conceived, through approaches that acknowledge both the embodied character of speakers and the embeddedness-within-specific cultures of all participants to dialogue. In a recent special issue of *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, editor Barbara Thayer-Bacon has her contributors develop a conversation which draws upon the likes of Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, Dewey, Foucault, Greene, Lugones, Anazaldua, Benhabib and Nussbaum. But also in keeping with the inclusiveness of approach and generosity of spirit characterising the collection, a variety of styles are presented, from narratives of personal experience, and the sharing of literary and popular culture examples of thinking-in-context to the more overtly historical, philosophical and deconstructive contributions.¹¹ As this collection demonstrates, critiques of the norm of rationality in critical thinking and the presupposition of a detached, autonomous knower now utilize feminist, transcendental critique and deconstruction among other approaches to both broaden and deepen not only our conceptions of what is involved in critical thinking, but also to conduct an ongoing conversation with those not only within philosophy of education, but outside, in other fields about the nature of the self or subjectivity.

Third, and finally, in concluding this paper, I again turn to the previously mentioned idea of empirically responsible philosophy. For philosophy to remain self-critical it needs to continue various kinds of dialogue about method not only with science and the social sciences, but especially with neuroscience, physiology and psychology allowing amongst other things a fuller exploration of what Lakoff and Johnson call the 'cognitive unconscious'.¹² This is especially important I think in view of the challenges to the notion of self, rationality, and subjectivity with which varieties of postmodernism have confronted us in recent times. A fuller grasp of what the human being is and what she or he may be is crucial for better self-understanding. In the past we have had a particular view of ourselves as characterised by a certain definition of reason. The major philosophical systems which have developed have claimed to demonstrate reason at work as logical inference, inquiry, evaluation, critique, moral deliberation and judgement. A major reconstruction of what counts as reason would mean a change in our concept of ourselves as embodied, embedded and in process of becoming.

Varieties of postmodern and feminist theorising have provided a critique of the operation of rationality as power/knowledge in social life generally and within institutional life in particular. A radical critique of the nature of human subjectivity, informed by neuroscience and other fields as well as philosophy, can show how because reason is embodied, it is therefore moulded by the peculiarities of human bodies. It can show that what has usually been referred to as rationality is evolutionary and not merely a fixed, essential characteristic of the human being, that it is not part of the structure of the universe, but is universal in the sense that it is shared by all human beings, how it is not entirely conscious or literal but substantially unconscious, metaphorical and imaginative. Cross-disciplinary and empirically informed conversations are vital to this enterprise of broadening and deepening the resources of philosophers of education.

NOTES

1. Philosophy of education is regarded by some in the field as having disciplinary autonomy, that is, it is content - specific to education in ways that what I am here referring to as 'mainstream' philosophy is not. This account of the field continues to be influential. However the view I take in this paper is that the major debates in educational theory, policy and practice in the last few decades, and certainly at the present time, have been very closely linked to arguments about method and critique raised within the broader field of philosophy
2. There is strong evidence of growing interest in philosophy as a field of study in the development of phenomena such as the 'philosophy cafe' both in Australia, the United States and parts of Europe and the production of television programs dealing with the application of philosophy to everyday problems by academic philosophers such as Alain De Botton. There has also been something of a proliferation of introductory courses of various kinds aimed at the general public, which continue to attract substantial audiences.
3. This statement refers particularly to the situation in teacher education programs in Australia and the United Kingdom. Any kind of in-depth analysis of the situation in the United States or Europe would require much more space than I have been allocated here. This not however to say that the statement may not have some validity to those contexts, merely that the situation is more varied and complex.
4. Burbules (2000) refers to the habit still prevalent in some places, of dividing philosophy of education into 'analytic' and 'postmodern' schools of thought. The 'tedious' dualism refers not only to the analytic/postmodern division but also to the related dichotomy of Anglo-American use continental philosophy.
5. The term 'continental' is extraordinary in its generality. The 'many forms' which European philosophy has taken include phenomenology, existentialism, structuralism, semiology, semiotics, post-structuralism, hermeneutics, critical theory, deconstruction, and 'genealogy' in the manner of Foucault.
6. This remark may be seen as controversial, but it needs to be kept in mind that I am referring only to the field of philosophy of education, not to other areas of educational theorising such as curriculum or pedagogy. Nor am I referring to work focusing on gender policy and its implementation in schools in Australia.
7. Pragmatism has variously been decried as 'materialist' or post-Enlightenment in the Australian context as in the work of James C. Walker or Stephen Crump.

8. Lakoff and Johnson provide a critique of the rationalism that has dominated Western philosophical thinking and emphasises the need for philosophy to draw upon the findings by neuroscience on the nature of thinking and the (embodied) mind.
9. The terms 'West' and 'East' are used here as a kind of shorthand.
I am aware of their lack of precision and also the ideological baggage they carry when deployed in certain kinds of discourse.
10. See *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Special Issue, 'Education and Cultural Difference', 32: 1, 2000.
11. See *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Special Issue, 'Transforming and Redescribing Critical Thinking', Guest Editor: Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon, 20: 1, 2001.
12. On the basis of recent findings in neuroscience Lakoff and Johnson (2000) claim that most thought is unconscious and that we have no direct conscious access to the mechanisms of thought and language

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