

Following Unnamed Rivers and Ruminating on Teaching as a Vocation

by

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Abstract

The research which is reported in this text is probably best described as an interpretive inquiry which situates itself in the space between theory and practice and which explores the questions:

What do teachers' stories tell us about the call of teaching?

and

How does drama help teachers to re-member and to tell their stories?

Originally imagined as a phenomenological study of teaching as a vocation, this project has slipped to the Acheron¹ edge of academic research and, in so doing, it has been reborn(e) as a tapestry of words.

The fabric of the text is an intertwining of threads of ideas, feelings and imaginings, a pulling out and a weaving in of bits of the tangled and worn, a playing with different textures and different tones. The common threads of the warp, consisting of a series of personal ruminations on the emergence, the development, the completion and the implications of a research project, lend a unity and a strength to the piece. The weft, which incorporates both old yarns and new y(e)arns, is intentionally a coarse interweaving of dark and light, common and exotic fibres. All of the parts are connected as in a Celtic knot with the text of the drama, written as a presentation of the data that

were collected, at the centre. In part, drawing upon images of the arts; in part, borrowing from Zen Buddhism the metaphor of searching for the bull as the search for the eternal truth, the whole work suggests that the call of teaching emerges from a polyphony of voices, that it is heard and responded to in a similar contrapuntality of difference.

In keeping with the tradition of an hermeneutic circle, the parts are seen within the whole and the whole within the parts. The fabric, as such, is a loose weave so that spaces are provided wherein the reader is invited to read in and write out or write in and read out whatever questions or answers that s/he intuits hidden among the threads.

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I also hear the questions and the words of encouragement and guidance of the members of my advisory committee. I am most grateful to Ted Aoki, Carl Leggo, Gaalen Erickson and Linda Peterat for leading me to a place where I am beginning to hear the locusts chirring.

Finally, I am thankful that the Creator provided me with the gifts of a glorious summer in which to write and a splendid beach on which to walk and be filled with the Spirit of Wisdom.

Prelude

*In the pasture of this world, I endlessly push
aside the tall grasses in search of the
bull.*

*Following unnamed rivers, lost upon the
interpenetrating paths of distant
mountains,*

*My strength failing and my vitality exhausted,
I cannot find the bull.*

*I only hear the locusts chirring through the
forest at night.*

"The Search for the Bull" ² by Kakuan

The First Ruminaton

(On Seeking the Question)

The teacher "is the teaching." I remember those words so clearly and I remember the impact that they had on me for I heard them at a time when I was struggling to find an escape from the classroom. Yet, I was sufficiently moved by Professor Ted Aoki's opening address to the British Columbia Teachers' Federation Conference on Quality Education in Vancouver in 1986 that I came away not only with the courage to continue teaching but, moreover, with a deeper understanding of the relationship between the teacher and the teaching. Since that time I have read and listened to others suggest that those who want to teach should have an understanding of the self (Bowman, 1990: 39; Lortie, 1975: 79) but, more often than not, I have found that the focus of educational research and of teacher education has been on the work of teaching and on the ways of preparing individuals for this work rather than on the person who teaches.

In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know something about the person the teacher is.

(It) seems self-evident, commonsensical... but the fact remains that we still have an underdeveloped literature on the personal, biographical and historical aspects of teaching.

(Goodson, 1992: 234)

In responding to what I read as a challenge from Ivor Goodson, I designed a

study that would invite teachers to tell stories about themselves and their sense of a call to teaching, one that would reveal something about the nature of teaching that previously might have been left out.

The work began with the question: What are the lived experiences of teachers with a sense of vocation to teaching? The language is that of phenomenology; it suggests a "traditional philosophic search for universal essences within experience" (Willis, 1991: 180), perhaps even the production of a pure description of the pure meaning of pure teaching. It suggests a study which gathers data, sorts data, places some stories - for the phenomenologist does value narrative - in the margins and some at the centre. It suggests a search for answers, a getting to the truth, a journey into distant mountains to mine the fragments of common experience from the sediments of self.

I must confess that when I began the work, I anticipated such answers; answers that I could share with others so that my truth could have its influence on others, perhaps even those in high places, places of decision-making. My answers, I presumed, could change the world - or, at least my part of the world.

What I had failed to realize was that it was I who needed to change; I who needed to see, to hear, to understand the truth present in me, present in my teaching, present in my other selves and present in their teaching. Yet,

there I was about to set off on another journey where again I would become entangled in the tall grasses, ignoring the chirring of the locusts in my search for what had never been lost.

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen.

Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring.

The professor watched the overflow until he could no longer restrain himself. "It is over-full. No more will go in!"

"Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

(Reps, 1970: 19)

It took some time for me to begin to free myself from the opinions and speculations which had been constraining me, misleading me, interfering with the research process.

Fortunately, as I struggled to choose the best path for my journey, I also began to reconsider the question which would guide my work. I realized that hidden within what I had envisioned to be a neatly-wrapped package was a nest of questions, semantic monsters who hissed and writhed so incessantly that I was forced to loosen the ties that were binding the work, restraining me.

What slithered out and gave birth to **Where** and **Who**, **Why** and **How**.

Live(d) experience enfolded herself and rattled a warning, re-minding me that so long as the storyteller tells the story of any experience, it is alive. Such experience lives again and again, transformed, transforming. (Strange that I, an actor and teacher of literature and the dramatic arts, had been unaware that what is true in the theatre is true also in life.)

The "s" wound and unwound itself, circling and encircling me with the faces of teachers whom I had known and not known, those whom I had been and not been, seen and not seen; teachers of the four elements, the four directions, the four winds, sharing a common task but not a common vision.

The questions produced questions produced questions and I realized that I did not even know what the initial question meant.

What is a vocation?

When does one receive one's vocation?

What is a sense of vocation?

Where does one find a sense of vocation?

What are lived experiences?

How does one discern a vocation to teaching?

What is teaching?

Who are teachers?

Van Manen says that:

the questions themselves and the way one understands the questions are the important starting points, not the method as such. But ... the way in which one articulates certain questions has something to do with the research method.... There exists a certain dialectic between the question and the method. The method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with what makes one an educator in the first place.

(1994: 1-2)

By extension then, the method that one chooses ought to be in harmony with one's view of the world. So I walked away from the books and sat on the shore where *Rûah*³ blew over me another levanter of questions.

What if I am a character in the Creator's dream?

What if the Dreamer has given me the opportunity to play the character as I choose?

What if my becoming the character draws me deeper into the dream and the dreaming?

What if I am in the Dreamer and the Dreamer is in me?

Only through being at one with the dreaming will I become one with the Dreamer.

The unravelling of the original question brought a reconsideration of many things, including the epistemological ground on which my methodology⁴ rested and the research methods that I would use.

I have come to realize that the ground on which we stand is forever shifting.

We know the constancy of our mother earth in her inconstancy, in her regular moving from this place to that. Thus, any discussion of the ground on which this work stands will work against the grain of traditional epistemology since traditional epistemology speaks of certainty of knowledge and of knowledge as a container of truth.

By most definitions, knowledge is the accumulated information which allows the individual to connect the external world with the internal world and vice versa. According to Plato, knowledge is gained as reason allows the individual existing in the real world (*polis*), subject to the disorder of everyday opinion (*doxa*), to gain an understanding of the ideal world (*eidos*). Because he believed that all of the ideal forms were in the mind at birth, Plato saw learning as a process of rational intuition which facilitated *anamnesis* or reminiscence of the world of right thinking (*orthodoxa*). This is very much the notion which was expressed in the midst of Newtonian empiricism by William Wordsworth.

*Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home*

*(from "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"
from Reflections of Early Childhood by William Wordsworth)*

It is interesting that some contemporary theories of knowledge (Bohm, 1990; Pribram, 1991] bring traces of Platonism and of Buddhism into the scientific

realm. Quantum physicist, David Bohm, for example, suggested that there is an enfolding and unfolding of the implicate order of the universe within the explicate order of the individual human mind (Bohm, 1990). Such a view, like many aboriginal and eastern understandings of the interconnectedness and the interpenetration of all that is and all that is not in the cosmos, is reminiscent of that expressed by the poet William Blake.

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an Hour.*

(from "Auguries of Innocence" by William Blake)

I find this bringing together of art, science and spirituality⁵ intriguing not only because it implies a shifting in our conceptions of knowledge but also because it offers hope for an increased emphasis on our spiritual connections within creation. At the same time, however, I am aware that most epistemologies have emerged from and contain within them a dualistic separation of mindless Matter and matterless Mind.

In describing the differences between "masculine and feminine epistemologies" (1988: 8), Madeleine Grumet refers, first of all, to Merleau-Ponty's "knowledge of the body-subject." To his "knowledge in the hands and knowledge in the feet," Grumet adds "knowledge in the womb" (3). She then shares with us the five categories which emerged from the collaborative research of Belenky,

Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule. According to this work, women know in silence, through received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge or constructed knowledge (16). Grumet interprets received knowledge, procedural knowledge and the imposition of silence on women as masculine epistemologies (17) and says that "constructivism (is) the epistemology that celebrates the creativity and the responsibility of the knower as well as the context and relations within which knowing takes place and comes to form"(16).

I understand the negative connotations implied in the categories that have been defined in the Belenky work; however, I believe that it is a dominance of logocentricity, as much as it is the masculine aspects of personality, that has led to the silencing of women's ways of knowing. In arguing for Eros, rather than Logos, as god of the academy, Mary Aswell Doll suggests that there is a need to break the rigidity of the opposites of the masculine and the feminine aspects of personality, to balance "human ability to control, separate, categorize and confront" with "the ability to receive, nurture, relate and bring together" (1995: 42). Knowing in silence, knowing through receiving, nurturing and relating may be better ways of knowing than knowing by controlling, categorizing and confronting but it is in an acceptance of these ways of knowing as being different from one another and still supportive of one another, rather than as superior or inferior to one another that there is a possibility for *viriditas*.⁶

Such a greening of the epistemological ground would invite wisdom back to play a role in our coming to know our selves and the world. Wisdom is a sort of common sense which connects humans to the earth, to humus. At the same time, she gives us wings to lift the earthbody into the realm of the eternal for wisdom is both transcendent and imminent. Considering that both the Greeks (who saw *Sophia* as the source of perfect knowledge) and the ancient Hebrews gave wisdom a woman's body, it seems most appropriate that feminist theory is bringing to the academy a new understanding of the connection between the knowledge of the body and the body of knowledge.

Many discussions of the ways in which we engage intellectually in and with the world - be it Aristotle's three modes of knowledge⁷ or Philip Phenix's five realms of meaning (Phenix, 1964) - ultimately rest on a conception of the world as a world of things, of ideas about things and of the power that the knower holds over those things of which (s)he has acquired certain knowledge. I have difficulty with the fixed noun, knowledge, as opposed to the ever-changing verb, knowing. I have more difficulty with knowledge as it might be rated in degrees of certainty. It is not surprising then that I was both taken aback and amused by Chisholm's thirteen steps "for considering the epistemic status of knowledge claims":

6. Certain
5. Obvious
4. Evident

- 3. Beyond Reasonable Doubt
- 2. Epistemically in the Clear
 - 1. Probable
 - 0. Counterbalanced
 - 1. Probably False
 - 2. In the Clear to Disbelieve
 - 3. Reasonable to Disbelieve
 - 4. Evidently False
 - 5. Obviously False
 - 6. Certainly False

(Fenstermacher, 1994: 23)

As I consider the nature of the knowledge claims that this present work might make, I am torn between O and **all** of the above, though I would be more inclined towards those which fall below the point of counterbalance. Perhaps, as the Greeks would have it, I, as a woman, am one of "those who do not, or ought not, (to) think." On the other hand, I may be a "thinking muse," given to "thoughtful wandering through the shadows of experience, not in order to bring them to light, but to reveal the ambiguous edge of things." This researching may be an inviting of the reader to join me in "a thoughtful experience of wonder, profound meditation and inquiry, perplexity and uncertainty, genuine astonishment and surprise" (Allen & Young, 1989: 1), in a mytho-poetic journey.

Research, like travel or like life, might be seen as a noun, a thing focussed on an end product - certain knowledge or truth. On the other hand, researching, like travelling and living, might in its **being** call the imagination, provoke questions and evoke deeper insight (Macdonald, 1988: 108). It seems

to me that any research which makes claims of truthfulness must be held in suspicion. In quantitative studies, the truth often remains hidden in the questions which are not asked while in qualitative work, truth conceals itself in the words that are never spoken, in the unspeakable. The researcher and the subjects (or the objects) of the research are constantly changing in their relationships, in their understanding of themselves and of the world so that what appears to be true presently may not be true, what appears not to be true may be true. Perhaps, it is best to confess that the truth that we present is the truth as we imagine it, as we have constructed it or as we have allowed others to construct it for us and that it remains a partial truth, a truth deferred.

The question, for me, is not: "Do I know?" but "Am I giving my undivided attention to?" Am I dwelling in the question for it is there that I will find what is **not** known. Without a realization of what one does not know, one cannot know the dimensions of what one does know and it is in the tension between the known and the unknown that one finds the power of what is unknowable. I suspect that rather than possessing knowledge or being possessed by the need to know, I might rather muse on the possibilities between knowing and not knowing.

Such a view of knowledge is unlikely to lead to the sort of phenomenological study which seeks to capture an authentic picture "of the lifeworld ... as we

immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it" (Van Manen, 1994: 9). Despite my belief that our failure to know the oneness of the world⁸ is a result of the limitations of our individual ways of conceptualizing the world, and despite my longing for a way of being in the world which is freed from thinking about the world, I tend to view van Manen's statement as an oxymoron. As Thomas Groome argues:

We cannot interpret our own consciousness by some "pure" phenomenology of it ... we always take a "hermeneutical detour" into our psyches through symbols of the external world that themselves carry and reflect a world of meaning from their historical context.

(1991: 223)

It is difficult to study what cannot be communicated and the very act of communicating demands meaning-making. In order to make meaning and to communicate that meaning, it is necessary to reflect, to conceptualize and to categorize, to use symbols that carry many meanings. While we may share a collection of cultural symbols with others, we are often unaware of many of the meanings that are attached to these shared symbols. That is only one of the reasons that sometimes we may, as Michael Polanyi has told us, tell more than we know (Scott, 1987: 150). Still, it is necessary, regardless of the means of communication, to have attached some meaning to whatever it is that is to be communicated. If we have experienced an object or an emotion; if we have taken some action or been acted upon and if we have apprehended this as an experience, then, consciously or unconsciously, we have turned

back on it. We have re-flected on the experience and this reflection has allowed us to store some meaning in our minds and/or in our bodies. If this is the case, then what is called pre-reflective experience is not experience and it cannot be remembered; neither can it be shared nor studied.⁹ On the other hand, when experiences are shared and studied, the number of "hermeneutic detours" increases in proportion to the number of persons involved in the process.

Van Manen also states that "a person cannot reflect on lived experience while living through the experience" (10). On the contrary, I would suggest that the sort of reflection which transforms is the sort of reflection that informs action in the very midst of experience. This is not to say that the recollection of events through retrospective reflection is unimportant but rather that there is also value in introspective reflection.

Sensing that I would rather be a dancer than either a judge or a miner,¹⁰ I began to reconsider the implications of an eidetic reduction of the stories and of a drawing out of common themes. It seemed to me that while such an approach might encourage a mindfulness, a dwelling in the meaning of things, an evocation of a primal and poetic "singing of the world" (Pinar, 1995: 407), there might be a univocity in the sort of music which called for a setting aside of the particular in its search for the universal (Husserl, 1980: 253; Merleau-Ponty, 1980: 323). I decided to avoid trying to uncomplicate what perhaps is

too dense a concept to be simplified from or to a single perspective and I began to imagine the composition of a more polyphonic work.

After much reflection, I acknowledged that while it is important to see "through the particularity of lived experience" (Van Manen, 1994:185) and while there may well be some fundamental experiences in the lives of most teachers who are called to teaching, the central purpose of the research should be to encourage the expression of many interpretations, an interplaying of many voices speaking from a broad spectrum of experiences within a variety of contexts, rather than to seek a single, universal meaning. The work had shifted from a search for essences towards an elicitation of the intersubjectivity of experiences (Nixon, 1995:14).

As I chose to leave the way of Husserl and to follow that of Hermes, I became aware that all of the questions that had slithered out had been swallowed by the two that twined their way around the caduceus.

What do teachers' stories tell us about the call of teaching?

How does drama help teachers to re-member and tell their stories?

In the Desert

(A Re-Searching of the Re-Searcher)

Light and shadow on the wind erosion patterns of the rocks.
Silence except for the sound of the wind in the piñon pines.

... miles of emptiness.

Perfect silence...

Nada!

(Merton, 1984: 8, 26, 28, 29)

I do not find it surprising that "the theme of the 'desert' is common to many monastic and hermit texts" (Sheldrake, 1995: 22). The desert, like the sea, is a liminal place. It both connects and separates. It is the sort of place where the boundary between the present and the imminent, between life and death, the seen and the unseen, is very thin. Monsters are just beneath the wavy surface; resting in the sands; waiting to strike. Merton writes of "long, lithe, silvery sandy snakes with swollen sacks of poison ... too beautiful, too alive, too much themselves to be labeled. In the desert one does not fight snakes, one simply lives with them and keeps out of their way" (38). The desert, as Sheldrake describes it, "is both a paradise, where people may live in harmony with wild animals, and at the same time a place of trial where ascetics encounter the inner and outer demons" (22).

The classroom tends to be the sort of place where one encounters either the harmony of angels or the trial by demons, but it rarely provides the sort of

sacred landscape where the teacher can be mindful of the presence of both the angels and the demons at the same time. It is not a place where the teacher finds an opportunity to dwell in *kairos*¹¹ for the system itself is bound by the demands of *Cronos*.

Five years ago, I found myself being gifted with such a contemplative opportunity. For at least a portion of the time, my return to the university as a teacher-educator from a position as high school teacher provided a "stillness and a freedom from (the) daily concerns" of teaching (Hunsberger, 1992: 90); it provided a space, between theory and practice, wherein I could critically examine myself and my teaching. In fact, it was a sojourn that might well be described as a desert experience for I found myself in a place of difference, a place of crisis, a sort of wilderness between the one who teaches and the one who helps others to cross the border between student and teacher. There was an interruption of the ordinary which allowed me time to reconsider my vocation, time to listen to and to hear the resonance and the dissonance of the sung and the "unsung tunes and theories" (Grumet, 1988: 11) of my own pedagogy. There was opportunity for me to experience the pain and the pleasure of turning the hyphen on its side so that, like a deacon's stole¹², it interrupted my work as teacher and let my work as teacher/educator flow from the wound that cut through both my head and my heart.

In the public school classroom, like most of my colleagues, I have rarely paid

attention to the interplaying of the theories to which I have danced from day to day, year to year. Dependent upon the degree to which I have found myself persuaded and bound by one authoritative score or another, I have jêté and pliéd in an odd and distorted mirroring of the master(s) or, having collapsed my own identity into the "body mastered" (Taubman, 1992: 220), whirled like a dervish in maniacal servitude. When my students or my colleagues questioned my approach, I have always been able to justify what I was doing - at least, in the world of idea(l)s.

As I re-membered my teaching during this time, I saw myself first in the role of teacher as master, daily challenging my students to reach for The Truth, teaching as I had been taught. My practice which had emerged from practice was repeated, polished, presented, praised, repeated but always within my control, guided by my agenda. Planned and predictable. Students worked at what I saw was best for them, what I wanted them to do. As far as I could tell, most of them were happy to do what I asked them to do but I am not sure how often I paid close attention to any responses other than those I wanted to see and to hear.

In the stillness, I hear again the voice of a young woman whom I have known for most of her life telling me why she was so unhappy in my English 12 class. "You make me feel stupid," she said. "I'm not like (your daughter). When I ask you a question, you answer me as if I should know the answer and I just feel stupid."

She was right and I still haven't freed myself from the old ways but I am trying. I have promised to tell her one of these days and to thank her. I have never told those of my teachers who did that to me.

I recalled those times when, in an attempt to compensate for the swing in the one direction, rather than searching for a place in the middle, I would swing the other way. "I shut the door of my classroom and had discussions on whatever topic came up." Peter Taubman relates his metamorphosis from teacher as master to teacher as friend and I re-membered experiences similar to those he describes (222). Cutting the wires of the public address system so that we wouldn't be interrupted in our serious and not so serious work, bringing my long-haired friends in to the classroom to give poetry readings and inviting students to our parties. Those were great times and many of those students remain as close friends, but I wonder about those who were left out; I wonder about the others, those who were not part of the group. I wonder how many saw that room of our own as a "bunker" (Grumet, 1988: 92).

During my first two years of instructing and advising student-teachers, I found myself being drawn into a pendular process not unlike that which had controlled my teaching practice in the public school classroom. More often than I imagined, I expected the student-teachers with whom I was working to reproduce my practice which had emerged from someone else's practice, to

listen vicariously to my music, to enter into a lively two-step with me and/or their sponsoring teachers. What I did not realize at that time was that my responsibility was to subvert my own practice, to lead my students to a place where, in the stillness, they might discern their own music, a place wherein there was no need to join into anyone else's dancing but where they might imagine a way of moving to their own special tunes.

It wasn't until I began to struggle to articulate the theory which guided my practice, to transpose the tune so that my protégés could sing along with me, that I agonized in the cacophony between the theory as taught and the theory as believed, the theory as believed and the theory as practiced, the practice as imagined and the practice as experienced. I learned that the music to which I had been dancing was arranged differently from that which I had imagined hearing. I had to make a concerted effort to discern the point and counterpoint in my daily working with others; I had to find ways of dancing in the dissonance, ways of giving up the need to claim a romantic resonance which was non-existent.

In the classroom, one learns quickly that the decisions which one makes about practice matter. But the theory which is the warp of the practice also matters although it may take much longer for this realization to have any effect upon the teacher and the teaching. Articulating theory that matters means giving matter to theory. So I, as practitioner, allowed my reflection on

theory to re-member the matter of students. I pictured those young people whose lives affected and were affected by my teaching. I found that, despite my having diminished many by my dark¹³ and faint pencilling of them (Bhabha, 1994: 47), they continued to matter to me. They mattered because they helped me to begin to question the extent to which, in allowing a dis/integration of my theory and my practice, I was betraying the trust that these students had placed in me as their teacher.

I hear again conversations with student teachers who taught me about the importance of relationships. Their work, as becoming teachers, not yet lost in the morass of bureaucratic expectations, finding its meaning in a series of interconnected and complicated relationships, helped me to see that the heart of teaching is in the relationships - the relationship of student and teacher, of this student and that student, of the individual and the community. All of the relationships that are simplified in numbers and acronyms are made more complex as one hyphenates. The student-teacher, the sponsor-teacher, the teacher-educator - so many places of difference; so many occasions when one is shaped by circumstance. These hyphenated spaces, the spaces of crises, are places of danger and of opportunity; they are places where one may feel compelled to move in one direction or the other, to behave in one role or the other. But the secret is to find a way of being comfortable in the middle where one is neither this nor that but both this and that. Peter Taubman suggests that one's teaching, for example, might be situated in a space which is best

described as a "position at the midpoint" (230), "a position of hope" (233).

The teacher who takes a position at the midpoint assumes an identity that can always be drawn in one of two directions - up towards the *eidoi* from which the master returns or down to the unconscious from which it returns as the master...

I suspect that the answer lies in moving in both directions at once.

(Taubman, 1992: 230)

As I acknowledge the importance of my having to move out of the classroom in order to look with new eyes on my teaching, I recognize that this experience is one that could be shared not only with student-teachers in preparing them to be newcomers to the familiar world of the classroom but also with colleagues who may not have had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences from the inside out or from the outside in.

So the nature and the purpose of the research shifted from one where I, as the researcher, would investigate others' lived experiences, seek the essence of those experiences and produce and express my knowledge about those experiences (Van Manen, 1984) to one where I would simply work with my colleagues and invite them to enter with me a quiet place where we could share with one another some stories of learning and teaching that stay with us, stories that might be said to "stick to the heart."¹⁴

The Second Ruminaton

(On the Wisdom of the Fool)

In my comings and goings to and from the classroom, to and from the university, I have found myself often, because of changing roles, as a stranger in a familiar place. While this offers the continued possibility of the desert experience, there is a need to realize that being the outsider in a place that one has called home is easier, more seductive, than being a stranger in a foreign land. When things become too comfortable, there is a need to reclaim the right to be an outsider for, as Kristeva assures us, this is the experience which, in providing the double vision of the migrant (Bhabha, 1994: 5) or of the fool, offers the possibility of subversion and of ethical transformation (Clark & Hulley, 1991: 157). "It is the stranger ... the newcomer" whose presence revitalizes the community, Beck tells us as she extends the metaphor from myth and history to the classroom (Beck, 1993: 98).

In considering the extent to which I remain an outsider in the academy and the extent to which I had to become an outsider in the teaching community where I conducted my research; in considering what is to be gained from looking at the familiar as unfamiliar, I am reminded of the old Hasidic tale of Schlemiel and of his trip to Warsaw from the village of Chelm.

As I have been told the story, Schlemiel had decided that he had to make a

trip from his home in Chelm to Warsaw. Soon after he set out, he stopped for a rest (which, next to eating, was one of his favorite pastimes). Before dozing off, Schlemiel took off his boots and pointed them in the direction of Warsaw so that he would not forget which way to go when he awoke. While he was sleeping, some passersby stopped and turned his boots around. Schlemiel, upon waking, put on his boots and continued on his way - back to Chelm. Of course, since he knew that his boots were pointed in the direction of Warsaw when he went to sleep, he was certain when he reached his home village that, in truth, he had come upon an entirely different community. There were distinct similarities in the names, the dwellings, the people but, viewing them from a different perspective, Schlemiel saw them differently. In the end, he chose to stay in the new Chelm with his new wife, family and friends. Until his next trip to Warsaw.

Sometimes, during my wilderness experience, I was convinced that someone had crept into my room in the dark of night and turned my boots around. I was not at home in the academy as I had been while I was an undergraduate. I found it difficult to re-member the pleasure of the other re-turns when I embodied the joy of coming home and the pride of being invited to teach where I had been taught. Through my sense of alienation, I came to realize that not only was I a different self but also I was in a different place - just as I had been, though unaware, on each of the previous re-turns. I surrendered myself to a place which was familiar yet unfamiliar; somewhere between pleasure

and pain, I rested in excitement and in fear.

I wondered if I were in *Chelm* or in Chelm; in Chelm dreaming about being in *Chelm* or in *Chelm* dreaming about being in Chelm? I imagined that, despite my subconscious concept of the teacher as the one with the answers rather than the one with more questions, I had much to gain from being the schlemiel, playing the fool.

When Quince delivers the Prologue to the play within the play of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, he confuses the punctuation so that he addresses his royal audience with the line "All for your delight/ We do not come," In so-doing, he reminds us that since the time of the Egyptians, it has been the function of the fool to turn things upside down, to make us look at the world with different eyes - even if what we see makes us uncomfortable. The fool "is untamed, unpredictable ... (even) dangerous" (Nachmanovich, 1991:46). "A radiant temporariness, a wayward moment, a brief sublimity - whereby the world as it is is wonderfully and fearfully illuminated" and, as such, the fool is not much welcomed in a culture that has lost itself in its "hollowness, nastiness and superficiality" (Dault, 1995: 53).

I have found that there is great freedom in playing the fool, in learning to give up the need to know who has been playing with my boots and in dwelling in a place that is both Chelm and *Chelm*. As a person who likes to be in control, I

confess that such a giving up has not come easily - to my studies, to my daily life, to my teaching, nor to my research.

*I am being driven forward
Into an unknown land,
The pass grows steeper,
The air colder and sharper.
A wind from my unknown goal
Stirs the strings
Of expectation.*

(Hammarskjöld, 1964: 31)

Journeying Up the Crooked River

(Stories of the Past)

During the course of my doctoral work, I had the opportunity to study with Bill Pinar, Ted Aoki and Madeleine Grumet, all three of whom incorporated autobiographic writing as a significant component of the curriculum.

Although often there is a tendency to view such activity as out of place in the academy, my experience has been that this type of writing is both challenging and rewarding.

For Pinar, autobiography is intended to offer us a way of lifting the fog of the past from the highway of the present (1994: 57), a way of re-membering without succumbing to our past experiences (23), a way of looking through a window at ourselves in interaction with others (265), a way of coming to an understanding of what might be inhibiting a freedom of movement into the future (37). While Grumet's work is shaped also by psychoanalysis and phenomenology, as well as by feminist theory, it tends, like that of Aoki, to stress interpretation. Through the writing and the reading, the searching out of themes, and the layering or re-writing of stories, both Grumet and Aoki practise and encourage the use of autobiography as a way of coming to know less of the self and more of the world.

The following three stories, which reflect some aspects of my coming to know

the world and this present work, probably tell more than I know about my self. The first is one which recalls from my childhood a most profound experience of sound and of silence.

For the first few years of my life, we lived on a farm on the Saskatchewan prairie. Although snakes are a part of the landscape, they are rarely seen. At least, I had never seen one though I knew they existed.

It was late on a hot August afternoon. My mother had sent me to the root cellar to get some food that was to be prepared for supper. I had just stepped onto the first step when I saw IT. I don't remember if the snake even moved but I froze. I tried to scream but no sound came. I tried to run but I remained still - for a long time - until I finally heard the fear calling out from the depths of my being for my mother who came and took the unhappy creature away on the end of a broomstick.

I have never had the courage to write this story before though, on a few occasions, I have spoken it. I wonder how this telling will help me to continue to deal with this fear which is still present deep within me - perhaps as deep as what Jung would describe as the collective unconscious. And, as I read and reread the early parts of this paper, I ask myself how I could have been so careless as to allow so many snakes to make their way into the text. Surely, my mother is not going to come to rescue me this time which is just as well

because she would have to hit me with the broomstick for this time the words themselves have taken on a reptilian power. I feel them as a moving mass inside of me and with my fingers on the keys I release them. The more that I free, the more there are; the more there are, the more they free me of the fear of writing them, reading them, having others read them and respond with wonder or horror or both.

The second story expresses fear of another sort and one which I continually struggle to overcome. It was composed in response to a reading of an article by David Jardine entitled "A Bell Ringing in an Empty Sky."

I sit at the same window where I sat
re/membering H's shakuhachi
playing "Ko-jo no tsuki".

Instead of the sunshine, I see only the rain
and the leaves which were so green
now yellowed,
dying,
falling onto the wet grass.

The gentle music of my teacher which previously came
to mind as I read the words
becomes a jangling of voices
which denies my voice.

A dreaded memory from an earlier life
in this same place
passes in the same body.

He looks up to me as I write.

Was that a smile?

Now that he knows me in a different context,
I wonder

if he even remembers what he did to me
when he rejected my writing
without even trying to understand it.

As I stared out of the window of my office into the trees re-membering, the words and the music of the Japanese lullaby which I had learned over thirty-five years earlier re-turned to me. Later, I sang the parts that I re-called to one of my colleagues and she joined me as I sang. I was delighted when, shortly thereafter, she brought me an illustrated copy of the song which she had found in the Asian Studies Library (see Appendix N).

The third story describes a moving beyond fear by moving deeper into the source of the fear.

Shortly after I began to learn to ski, a wonderful new alpine area was opened up. It sounded very inviting and I silently set myself a goal. Within two years I would ski Seventh Heaven.

The following afternoon, my husband and I found ourselves skiing off a lift in the same direction as most of the other skiers. It was a different direction from the one which we usually took but the snow was nice and the run was not difficult. Still it was soon evident that we were on a part of the mountain which was unfamiliar to both of us. The sign for the lift to Seventh Heaven appeared and a brief survey of the map made us very aware that, unless we were prepared to **climb** back a considerable distance, our only choice was to go

up and then to ski out the other side.

There really was nothing else that we could do but to continue. Had we known that there was a white-out at the top of the lift, we at least might have considered making our way back up to another trail. Below the lift, as we rode up into heavier snow, all that we could see were steep moguls and trees. Lots of moguls. Lots of trees. By the time that we reached the top, the snow and fog were so thick that we could scarcely see the chair in front of us.

Somehow, we managed to follow the other skiers as they wound their ways down, around, and out across the whiteness to the edge of what we assumed was the drop to familiar territory. We searched desperately for some sign of the blue triangle which would mark the intermediate route as opposed to the black diamonds which we were certain surrounded us. My husband pointed out what he thought to be the way and pushed off. I tried to follow but I had no idea of how near or far he was from me as I pressed on, determined to meet my children at the appointed time, moving downwards, one turn at a time, from the hell of Seventh Heaven to the warmth and comfort, safety and light of the day lodge.

Now, as I re-member days of sunshine and sparkling snow that followed and uninterrupted runs across the glacier, I am so thankful that circumstances forced me to that edge and beyond. I wonder what sort of circumstances might

force me to the edge and beyond in that other world - the one described in my second story? Would it have to happen by accident or by conscious intent? Does the memory of one transgression make it easier to commit another? and another? To what extent am I transgressing at present? Will I find warmth and comfort, safety and light awaiting me - or will I slip over the edge into who knows what? Is the "who knows what" necessarily less desirable?

Each of these stories reveals a great deal about me but, if I reflect on what is hidden within the story, each also reveals a great deal about me as a teacher and about my teaching. They are the sort of stories that teachers might share with one another during an informal social gathering, over lunch or at the pub after a professional development workshop. They are not often invited during the actual workshop - unless, of course, that workshop is one such as several of my colleagues and I experienced a few years ago. Based on the collaborative autobiographical work of Richard Butt from the University of Lethbridge, this session was most memorable because, unlike the standard professional development activity, it engaged all of the participants. Knots of people gathered in lively conversation throughout the room and, for a change, no one was knitting. At times, the room was filled with laughter and, at others, there was a profound stillness. Teachers were sharing stories about themselves as persons which, according to Butt (1988: 2), is the first step in coming to understand who we are as teachers. The power of this experience was such that this particular strategy was easily selected as one to be incorporated

within this research project.

Since the central purpose of this study, during the planning stage, remained as a searching for an understanding of vocation and the ways in which teachers discerned this calling, I felt that I needed to add other strategies in order to engage my colleagues in a close examination of what it might mean to have a sense of vocation to teaching. In order to facilitate discussion and to encourage autobiographical writing as well as presentation and representation of the stories generated, I chose to incorporate aspects of Pinar's method of *currere*¹⁵ as well as components of Thomas Groome's shared praxis.¹⁶

Dwayne Huebner says that "human life is never fixed but is always emergent as the past and future become horizons of the present" (Huebner, 1975: 244). In arguing for a dialectical relationship between "the evolving biography of the person and the evolving histories of societies or communities," Huebner identifies "three facets of man's temporality":

The first is the phenomena of memory and traditions as these store and make accessible the past. The second is the activity of interpretation, the hermeneutical art, which is the bridge between self and other; a linkage among past, present, and future; the vehicle by which individuals, in community arrive at mutual understanding... The third is the phenomenon of community as a caring collectivity in which individuals share memories and intentions.

(Huebner, 1974: 37)

Although all three of the methods to which I have referred - Butt's collaborative autobiography, Pinar's *currere* and Groome's shared praxis - incorporate the three facets described by Huebner, my experience with each seemed to offer a different emphasis. For me, what was significant about working in collaborative autobiography was being in community with colleagues; with *currere* the focus was on the temporal aspects of my experience; and with shared praxis, I gained a sense of the importance of the dialectic relationship between story and vision. As a result, my perception of the process which I devised to gather the teachers' stories is that it emerged as a combining of the three. My intention, in so doing, was to provide the opportunity for all of the participants in this study to recall and to share memories of themselves in schools as learners, to remember and to examine their experiences of the call to teaching, and then, to consider the ways in which their present lives are formed by images of the future.

The Third Ruminaton

(On Hermeneutics)

The cursor blinks and I stare blankly at the screen, listening to the hum of the computer as it waits for me to answer, to call the words into somewhere out of nowhere. " *Psing a psalm of psexpeans, apocryphul of rhyme ...*" James Joyce's nonsense makes more sense than my absurd drivel which when printed will slobber its stupid way across the page.

It occurs to me that I am in the academy by pretense. I sit in a room surrounded by hundreds of books filled with thousands of words written by people whom I do not know and I try desperately to play their game, to communicate in words. But the words know me; they know that I don't like them, that I read them, write them, awkwardly so they remain hidden in the books.¹⁷ They are other people's words; not mine.

I have already argued the interconnectedness of experience and the need to make sense of experience and while I believe that it is through conversation¹⁸ that we negotiate meaning of the world, I am not sure that I share the post-structuralist view that we are born and we die in a "web of textuality" (Leggo, 1994: 3). For me, reading and writing seem to be awkward ways of coming to an understanding of the world and of sharing that understanding with others. Although listening and speaking are easier for me than reading and writing, I am most comfortable expressing my responses, my emotions, my thoughts

through movement and sound, using my body as sign (Stinson, 1994).

And yet, I recall, in a paper written not long ago, describing my words as sliding "across the page like skis on a wide open run in fresh snow."

What is it that brings me to contra/dict myself in this way? What has changed the words from this:

My words slide across the page like skis on a wide open run in fresh snow. The sun shines; the shifting of weight is easy, rhythmic, automatic and all that it will take to make me a victim of the slippery slope is a loss of concentration, an edge deflected, a sudden loss of balance. Sometimes the mountain of words works with you; sometimes it does not.

to this?

I am standing on an unfamiliar mountain, at the top of an ordinary run but I cannot push off. I know that I can easily ski out, down and out; that the dangers are no more and no less than I have faced so many times before but I simply cannot move. The voice inside tells me that I am not capable of doing what I know I can do.

Whose voice am I hearing? Whose words am I repeating? Whose judgement has immobilized me? Am I victim of my own imagination or is it "the many-sided, uncontainable, nocturnal transgressor" who is tricking me into this arrest?

We know, or by now we ought to know, that Hermes was never simply our friendly postman but the grand-daddy of tricksters, a figure of anarchy or misrule,

of thievery, treachery, and deceit, someone always a little out of control, the bringer of truth who doubles as the thief of reason and who therefore leaves you in perpetual hesitation as to what you have just heard or said, written or read; in short, a polytropic figure, someone mischievous and untrustworthy, like the language we speak when we try to make sense of anything.

(Bruns, 1992: 215)

The fear which I have expressed is not uncommon in a place where there is the possibility that, dependent upon the other's tolerance of transgressive discourse, one may be judged as being "an individual of insufficient talent and inadequate scholarly experience" trying to hide "her lack of insight behind an obfuscating, flowery, or self-indulgent" writing style (Van Manen, 1994: 17); one may be seen as not having been rigorous enough in the search for the truth. One might "get side-tracked," "wander," even "become enchanted" with one notion or another (33).

I suspect that many, if not all, of these misdeeds are evident in this paper and, if so, it might be assumed that I, like poor Penelope,¹⁹ have fallen under the spell of the dream god. All that I hope is that Pandemonium does not break out here as it did with the faithful weaver.

David Smith cautions that entry into the ambiguous world of Hermes is fraught with dangers as well as filled with opportunities. First of all, he says there is the risk of being seen as impudent and, therefore, of getting into

"trouble with the 'authorities'" (Smith, 1994, p.100). I have been known to call out in class, to speak out of turn (Grumet, 1988: 60) so it is not surprising that I, as teacher claiming the right to have my research read in the academy, am again out of line.

Researchers and teachers are different knowers, and the knowledge they generate as they go about their work also differs....There are serious epistemological problems in identifying as knowledge that which teachers believe, imagine, intuit, sense and reflect upon....Lacking epistemic merit, whatever understanding, belief, or awareness is possessed by the teacher should not be identified as knowledge.²⁰

(Fenstermacher, 1994: 47)

The possibility that I might deceive others is one problem; that we might all be deceived by the words themselves as well as by the ideas carried in those words is another. It is so easy for the writer to assume that (s)he has control over the words that (s)he uses but, in fact, those words are ever and always beyond control.²¹

"When **I** use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, " it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less."

Lewis Carroll in Gardner, 1966: 269

Anyone who presumes to know exactly what meanings the words carry, anyone who imagines that "the loose and baggy monster" (Bruns, 1992: 17) is only released when one enters the work of interpreting text has been duped and may

become lost in a linguistic labyrinth. While language is used to do hermeneutics, it is important to be aware that the use of language in itself is an hermeneutic activity. Each word carries its own history, its own hidden messages, its own power of ambiguity. Some words just carry more powerful medicine than others. It is essential to have respect for all words, particularly those with tangled meanings.

Words are not like the twentieth century nuclear family with 1.8 children; words have large, extended families, cousins in closets, in-laws and outlaws. The pun is an outlaw who loves to be let loose in polite and serious discourse (220); the metaphor has better manners but can prove to be equally unpredictable, equally disruptive.

Hermeneutics, says Smith, is "a kind of dialogical messing about" (121); it demands a sense of balance as those who present the material for interpretation and those who interpret what is presented shift places on the teeter-totter. In whatever role one finds oneself, those who enter into this type of work are subject to contra/diction by the words and by their mystical and grammatical traces.

There is a need to find the right frame of mind;
the delicate balance
between this and that.

Tibetan Buddhist, Soygal Rinpoche tells the story of a monk who faced a similar dilemma:

Knowing that Shrona had been a famous musician before he became a monk, Buddha asked him, "Weren't you a *vina* player when you were a layperson?"

Shrona nodded.

"How did you get the best sound out of your *vina* ? Was it when the strings were very tight or when they were very loose?"

"Neither. When they had just the right tension, neither too taut not too slack."

"Well, it's exactly the same with your mind."

(Rinpoche, 1994: 58-59)

The point of balance will not be the same for all people. Nor will this point be a static point. With everything, including oneself, in constant flux, the balance must be continually renegotiated. It is my assumption that the best position to be in to begin an hermeneutic adventure is in that middle place where, if I am willing, I may see both what is and what is not.

Psychologists teach us that the mind is capable of perceiving either the relief or the background but we cannot perceive both at the same time. (For example, in looking at the familiar optical illusion of the two faces and the Grecian urn) we can literally see either two faces or a grecian [sic] urn at one time.

We cannot see both simultaneously. Everything we know says that one thing cannot be two things at the same time. And yet we know that two things are one thing at one and the very same time.

(Kushner, 1990, p. 12)

In order to discover the balance, one must be open to the mystery of paradox; one must place oneself in the (a)symmetry and allow the imagination to play in the divergence. It is in this area of contradiction where the images dance and move. It is in this area that the mystery²² which we call truth might be revealed.

"In antiquity, speaking the truth frequently meant speaking darkly, where a dark saying (was) not so much secret speech as a saying of what cannot be put into words and which must be looked for elsewhere... ; it is a saying that sheds its light elsewhere than where we stand, perhaps on things we know nothing about or have forgotten" (Bruns, 1992: 22). Despite all of the rigour of research and all of the best efforts to communicate what was observed and learned and validated, we continue to see "through the glass darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:12). The best one can hope for is to catch a glimpse of what might be true.

The river flowed both ways. The current moved from north to south, but the wind usually came from the south, rippling the bronze-green water in the opposite direction. This apparently impossible contradiction, made apparent and possible, still fascinated Morag, even after years of river-watching.

(Laurence, 1975: 3)

The image of the flow of words like the flowing of the river is, I believe, very appropriate. Like *gramarye*,²³ water moves in concentric circles, spiralling outward and downward. On the surface, it may appear tranquil but under the surface there may be currents, undertows. Water, like language, is subject to the winds of change and to interferences. One has to learn how to work with the power of the words, just as one has to learn how to catch the water in the right place at the right time.

Elsie Whitlow describes her daily crossings of the Skeena River near the Kitselas Canyon in the early years of this century:

To reach the ranch, it was necessary to cross the river. This was accomplished by poling or paddling or rowing a boat or a canoe up from the sandbar to the point in the mouth of the Canyon where, if angled correctly, the craft would be carried by the swift current down to a gravel bar lying in the river where it widened out considerably after having escaped to the Canyon. The trick was to catch an eddy at the head of this bar which would carry the craft into comparatively calm water flowing around in a large bay-like area back up the mouth of the Canyon. If one did not catch this eddy just right and thereby escape the main flow of the river, there was a great danger of being carried to an almost certain death in a race which ran with tremendous speed down the narrow channel between the bar and the north bank of the river to a log jam at the head of an island at the lower end of the bar.

(Scott, 1991:35)

Situating oneself and one's work in the academy means taking into consideration the currents, the eddies and the logjams.

For weeks he struggled, but the methods, the procedures, the exercises, the reasonings made no sense to him.

He felt bad.

The others were getting it. What was wrong with him?

And then one day,

following his own style,
he saw,
it came into focus,
he felt,
he knew.

And there was laughing and holding and loving and caressing and backslapping,

not because he had solved the problem,
but because he had found his own style.

(Denton, 1972:14)

The struggle to find a stance that will be acceptable becomes one where one must choose to respond in wholeness, following one's own style; or to compromise one's integrity, appropriating someone else's style.

*The Patch of Sage Old Mouse Lived in was a Haven for
Mice. Seeds were Plentiful and there was Nesting
Material and many things to be Busy with.*

"Hello," said Old Mouse. "Welcome."

Jumping Mouse was Amazed. Such a Place and Such a Mouse. "You are Truly a great Mouse," Jumping Mouse said with all the Respect he could Find. "This is Truly a Wonderful Place. And the Eagles cannot See you here either," Jumping Mouse said.

"Yes," said Old Mouse," and One can see All the Beings of the Prairie here: the Buffalo, Antelope, Rabbit and Coyote. One can See them All from here and Know their Names."

"This is Marvelous," Jumping Mouse said. "Can you also See the River and the Great Mountains?"

"Yes and No," Old Mouse said with Conviction. "I know there is a Great River. But I am Afraid that the Great Mountains are only a Myth. Forget your Passion to see them and Stay here with me. There is Everything you Want here, and it is a Good Place to Be."

"How can he Say such a thing?" thought Jumping Mouse. "The Medicine of the Sacred Mountains is Nothing One can Forget."

"Thank you very much for the Meal you have Shared with me, Old Mouse, and also for sharing your Great Home," Jumping Mouse said; "but I must Seek the Mountains."

"You are a Foolish Mouse to Leave here. There is Danger on the Prairie! Just Look up there!" Old Mouse said, with even more Conviction. "See all those Spots!" They are Eagles, and they will Catch you!"

(Storm, 1972: 76-77)

This story has stayed with me since it was given to me many years ago.

Although Hyemeyosts Storm was the storyteller, I received it by a much more convoluted route. Still I am grateful to all of those along the way. It seems that in this present work I am driven by a passion similar to that which takes Jumping Mouse from his home in the roots of the tree to the river and out

across the prairies to the Sacred Mountains, but the question remains: Do I have the strength and the integrity to keep moving, to climb the mountains and bear the pain of the claws in my back? Will I one day, like Jumping Mouse, see the prairies on the wings of an eagle?

My having chosen to follow along with the deity of roads and doorways does not mean, however, that I am placing my work wholly at the whim of the wily one. That, I believe, would be very unwise since I could as easily find myself on a joyride across the River Styx as at the gateway to worlds unknown. My playing with the text, my interpretation and re-interpretation, my acknowledgment that one question leads not to an answer but to another question, and another, is not an indication that I have "given up on truth" (Lundin, 1993: 205) but, rather that I believe that through interruption, through disruption, through turning things on their sides, I may encourage a paying of attention to the ordinary. It is in the ordinary that the extraordinary makes its presence known.

According to Antoine de Saint Exupéry, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye" (1943, p. 87). The challenge to this sort of re/searching is to find a way of reaching what is at the heart of the teaching, a method of tapping into what touches the hearts of teachers, by breaking in and "crawl(ing) through the narrow spaces" (Pinar, 1994, p. 198) to a deeper understanding of the particular live(d) experiences.

And then, to gently coax out the re-memberings, to breathe new life into them, to beat out the rhythms and to choreograph a new dance, a shared expression of the work.

"Story-telling is a way of life". We are all tellers of tales; we live surrounded by our own stories, the stories of others. We see the world through our stories; some of which may never have happened. We may even try, as Jean Paul Sartre suggests, to live our lives as if, in so doing, we are telling another story (Hwu, 1993: 196). Even when it is falsified, story truth is more truthful than happening truth because the story-telling places the one story within the hermeneutic circle of the larger story (Graham, 1991: 21, 29).

Much is to be gained by teachers sharing stories of teaching and learning; however, I believe that the effect of such storytelling depends to a large part not only on the places and the ways in which the stories are gathered but also on the places and the ways in which they are shared. The places and the ways that I have chosen are both ordinary and out of the ordinary, just as the storytellers and their stories are both ordinary and out of the ordinary.

Holy Dust
(Still More Stories)

con•sume [Middle English *consumen*, from Old French *consumer*, from Latin *consumere*, to take up completely, intensively]

A Devouring: A Consuming

my husband takes his grapefruit
to the dining-room table
muttering something about academic imperialism
for

I have taken over the kitchen table
computer and books and papers
spread amuck
spread on the stairs
spread in the library
the bedroom
the living-room
even the bathroom is not free from
rough drafts
of this
and
that

but I protest for
I AM NOT ONE OF THEM
or
am I?

what is this writing about?
who is it for?

de•vour [Middle English *devouren* from Old French *devourer* from Latin *devorare*, to completely swallow]

Gerald Bruns, as I suggested in the previous rumination, describes the pun as "outlaw discourse, discourse that is out of control" (220). Although I have frequently been surrounded by those who seem to be unable to resist engaging in such discourse, I am rarely tempted to join in. However, having chosen to use the Zen imagery of the searching for the bull as a searching for the eternal truth, I imagine a number of ways of describing and reporting this research. In order to put at rest all of these temptations, I offer two very brief stories.

Earlier this year, my husband returned to the Skeena to visit with members of his family. One thing that he seemed to find particularly amusing was that one of his cousins was devoted to the euphemism, "Bull dust."

A few days after I heard this story, a friend of mine was describing a situation that had taken place in his classroom. His response had apparently been to exclaim, "Holy Shit!" Now, as one who quite likes and who uses this phrase on a regular basis, I was not as surprised as apparently he had been by the outburst.

But in reflecting on the two tales, I wonder where we have constructed the difference. Surely, both men are concerned about the same word - it is just that one was making a specific effort to be polite while the other was embarrassed by his honest enthusiasm. I think that if I were to ask someone to read my work, I would prefer to hear the latter though a combination of the two might be the most appropriate - Holy Dust!

The Fourth Ruminati6n

(Concerning Vocation)

*Listen to me, O coastlands,
and hearken, peoples from afar.
The Holy One called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named my name.*

Isaiah 49:1-2

Since my first experiences in the classroom, more than three decades ago, I have found myself drawn back, time and time again. From travelling, studying, mothering, from business and union ventures and, more recently, from a position as a teacher-educator at a university. Each time that I have re-entered the classroom, the closer I have come to being convinced that there is something in the marrow of my being which draws me to this work. I find myself having to take seriously the possibility that the choice of teaching as my life's work was not mine to make. Rather, the choice which I have been given, over and over, is to respond or not to respond to the call of my calling to teach (Aoki and Shamsheer, 1990:1; 1993: 1).

The word vocation is rooted in the Latin *vocatio*, a calling or summoning, and in *vocare*, to call. Of those whose world view includes the concept of vocation, many consider the source of the calling as coming from beyond the self; others are more inclined to suggest that it emerges from what is deep inside the self, from that which binds us to the earth and to one another. Still others hold

that vocation is both a calling from within and from beyond the self.

Perhaps this vocation, this calling, finds its source in that place of the collective unconscious where all human longing, suffering and hope intersect. Perhaps, the call is from deep within the self and from those whose lives long to be touched by the gifts that others have to offer. Whatever the source of the call, there is a need for a listening to the call. To listen requires a hearing and a heeding, a paying of attention to what is said and "to what remains unsaid" (Moore, 1993: 26). Listening, explains Wen-Song Hwu, "involves ears, eyes, mind and undivided attention" all together (201).

In the chapter which he contributed to the Teachers' College Press publication on teacher renewal, Dwayne Huebner describes a vocation as "a calling forth" and "a calling by" (1987: 19). He says that "teaching as a vocation is a part of an open journey, which we understand as a story being composed in response to that which calls us" (25). Teachers, according to Huebner, are called by the students, by the world, by the community and by tradition. Responding to the call of teaching requires an intentionality and a willingness to be at one with others - "other people, other places, other times" (19) - and an openness to the constant renewal of the world within and without.

While teachers are called upon by the community and the traditions of the community to engage the young in the recollections of the community and to

share with them the "ways of life that would decay and be forgotten were it not for them" (20), they are at the same time called to be a part of the living out of the hopes of the people and of the continued transformation of that community.

Huebner assures us that "the vocation of teaching does not permit fixed meanings or values"(21). It requires "a fundamental fallibility" (24), an insecurity and a willingness to take risks. "To be available to the vast otherness of the world, to be able to respond to the call of others" requires a living "without stereotypes and closure" (25). In order to live out one's vocation, there is a need to listen and there is a need to be listened to.

"The call to be a teacher often wears thin," says Huebner (17). Teachers are often discouraged and disillusioned in schools under the present conditions (19) and yet they feel that they cannot change these conditions (1995: 269). There is a need to understand and to resist the structures of power which pummel the teacher and interfere with a responding to the calling of the voices of the young, of those crying for compassion. One way of ensuring that children's voices are heard amid the "noise of the powerful" (1987:19) is for teachers to come together and to share, to reshape and to recompose their stories (1987: 22; 1995: 271).

According to Larry Cochran, those with a sense of vocation are constantly in a

state of responding to the call. While there are "completions along the way," says Cochran, "one cannot rest in a vocation. Rather one strives unceasingly to realize it" (1990: 160).

My own experience in the classroom and, more recently, in the supervision of student-teachers has led me to an understanding of teaching which embraces many of these conceptions of vocation. In addition, numerous conversations with colleagues and with student-teachers have caused me to question the relationship between a person's world view and the sense of vocation, to wonder if there are circumstances which facilitate the discerning of a vocation, if there is a connection between those with a sense of vocation and those who have taken time to read what is written in and on their bodies.

In choosing to conduct a research project in which teachers re-membered the ways in which they came to teaching, the ways in which they responded and continue to respond to the call of teaching as well as to those experiences inside and outside of the everyday world of teaching which may have supported or interfered with their responding to that call, it was my intention to share with my colleagues an opportunity to focus attention on those personal experiences which form them as teachers. By providing the space for teachers to come together to share their stories and by inviting them and others into the reshaping and recomposing of their stories, I hope that I have played a part in furthering an understanding of the power of working in community.

I hope that the knowledge that I have gained and shared will serve to encourage others to engage in this type of professional development activity and that it will generate on-going discussions among other teachers, teacher-educators and those who are considering teaching as their life work.

Discovering the Footprints

(Of Companions and Their Stories)

Teachers can be the richest and most useful source of knowledge about teaching; those who hope to understand teaching must turn at some point to teachers themselves.

(William Ayers in Pinar, 1995: 553)

There are those in the academy who continue to believe that teachers have neither the interest nor the ability to engage in a critical examination of pedagogy and that practitioner's research is more likely to be atheoretical, to address "trivial questions" (Rudduck, 1992: 165) and to produce no significant contributions to professional knowledge. On the other hand, there is a growing body of research which suggests that the success of professional development and collaborative action research projects may depend upon teachers playing a major role in the initiation, the design and the development of the work (Anders & Richardson, 1991; Baird, 1992; Belanger, 1992; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Francis & Sellars, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1992; Minnes Brandes, 1994). I recognize that it is unlikely that all of the participants in a collaborative research project will ever hold equal status, particularly if the research is being conducted, as in this case, to meet the degree requirements of one member of the group. I also realize that my attempts to redress this inequity were significant but insufficient. Despite my having conducted this research at the same time as I was teaching full time in

the public school classroom, despite my having situated the study in a context where I am known as a colleague and despite my having participated in the shared praxis activities, I could not fully remove the hyphen. I was and am both teacher and researcher, working in a place that is both inside and outside of the research.

Initially, I imagined interviewing student-teachers, teacher-educators and teachers in order to gain a better understanding of what might be meant by a vocation to teaching. However, after careful consideration, I chose to work with a small group of practising and retired teachers in my home community. In the spring of 1995, I met with the Professional Development Co-Ordinator of the local teachers' union and with the District Superintendent of Schools to explain the project and to identify teachers who might become involved in the study. With their support for my recommendations, I sent letters of invitation to twenty possible candidates. Following this initial contact, telephone calls were made to establish suitable times for interviews. During August and September of 1995, interviews were conducted with those who expressed an interest in being involved in the project.

1995 08 21

So the work has begun. I had the initial interview with M- this morning and I feel quite excited by his enthusiasm for the project.

Now, as I sit in the sunshine, listening to the tape, I focus on the words that shaped the conversation - privilege, enriching, relationships, enjoy, share, love, questions.

1995 08 22

Two more interviews conducted today - one with a woman who is planning to retire at the end of the year and the other with one who retired several years ago.

As I listen to the taped recordings of our conversations, I am intrigued by those things that we share in common - the insecurity of the self and the confidence that comes through the teaching, the pleasure in seeing that you can make a difference, and the excitement in thinking and planning in such a way that students can become involved in learning.

[personal journal entries]

While the initial intention of the interviews was to select only those who expressed a sense of vocation to teaching, this criterion was revised so that all who confirmed their interest in examining teaching as a vocation and who expressed their willingness to engage in autobiographical writing were invited to participate in the research project. In the end, the companions on the journey included five women and six men, two of whom are retired. Of the five women in the group, one was a student-teacher for whom I acted as a faculty advisor, one previously worked with me as part of a curriculum development project and one taught my daughter while another taught my son. All six of

the men have been colleagues of mine at one time or another. Everyone brought stories of teaching from many different teaching areas and grade levels, including the university.

The following is an excerpt from some of the autobiographical writing that was generated and collected during a two-day retreat in October, 1995.

[I love playing with children. Actually, I just love playing - period. The age of my playmates doesn't really have much to do with it.

Playing seems to me to be the best vehicle for learning - it's fun. When it ceases to be fun, then I think we call it work. It's adventure - exploring, watching, changing. There's an interesting ingredient - change. Adapting, redefining the rules ... It's forgiving. Play is serious stuff - only you don't take it seriously or then, again, it becomes work. You make mistakes when you play and no one takes notice. You can challenge yourself and others, have battles, cause accidents, scream and yell and, in the end, all is forgiven - because you're playing.]

On the Friday evening, we gathered for a meal in my home - one of those wonderful traditional gatherings that we call a potluck dinner where everyone contributes something special to share with others.

1995 10 15

It is less than a week before the retreat. I went to Granville Island this morning to pick up breads and condiments for Friday evening. Although I have completed all but one of the initial interviews, I have not had time to continue my responses in this journal. The threads continue though. This week I was particularly moved by conversations with two men whom I have known and worked with for a number of years. Both expressed a passionate commitment to teaching and to kids.

I continue to worry about the retreat and my ability to make the most of our limited time together. Fortunately, the feedback at JCT (particularly from Bill and Richard whose work I have drawn on so extensively) helped me to reconceptualize the process.

As I see the interactions unfolding, Friday evening is to be a time for us to socialize and to build a common understanding of Saturday's work.

[personal journal entry]

There were stories and there was laughter and a brief, but heated debate between those who use the word vocation with absolute conviction and those who are uncomfortable with the concept.

1995 10 21

Today is the day. Last night, everyone except B-, was here for a potluck dinner and some informal time together. I really did not expect such enthusiasm, such an extended and rich discussion on a Friday night. Otherwise, I would have used a tape recorder. I must try to recapture the stories and the comments about "bumbling" and "meandering."

It is going to be important to find the right balance today - keeping in and keeping out, leading and not leading.

[personal journal entry]

Saturday morning was one of those beautifully bright, crisp mornings that are so much looked forward to here in the west coast rainforest. We arrived at the retreat centre just as the sun was finding its way through the trees. The birds were singing and there was an excitement in the air. The path through the garden to the house was still dampened with dew but, inside, there was warmth and fresh coffee, a comfortable place to share our stories with one another.

Using those strategies which I have discussed earlier and which incorporated aspects of Richard Butt's collaborative autobiographical research (1990; 1988), Bill Pinar's method of *currence* (1994) and Thomas Groome's *shared praxis* (1991), I invited my companions to consider the following questions:

- (1) How does your call to teaching manifest itself in your life at present?
- (2) If you were to share with us a photograph of yourself as a student, what would we see and what story would it tell?
- (3) What vision draws you into the future?
- (4) How might your teaching help you, your students, the school and the school system to move toward your vision?

The questions were posed one at a time, allowing an hour of response time and an hour of sharing time for each. Throughout the day, people worked

alone, in small and in large groups. We all found places to be peaceful - by the fireplace, outside in the garden, in the study. As I wandered around, I found people talking with one another, drawing pictures, writing poetry, intense in their reflections. Each time that the group came back together, we shared our responses with each other through a variety of methods. Some read to us, some told stories, others showed us pictures or re-enacted events and one made music.

1995 10 21

First Writing:

Question: How does your call to teaching manifest itself in your life at present?

At the present time, it is very difficult to remember the conviction that I held just a few months ago. The system overwhelms with unrealistic demands and expectations that seem to have little educational function. The students who really have little commitment to learning do not call me to teach. They don't call me at all. So it remains memories of past experiences of the passion and the satisfaction which call, the hope that things might change. Then again, maybe it is just the economic necessity, or the philosophical commitment to this project, that calls me to teach.

*Am I making a big mistake here?
Here today?*

*I sit, watching the leaves fall
I listen to the ducks and I wonder -*

Are there grumblings inside?

1995 10 21

Fourth Writing:

Question: How might your teaching help you, your students, the school and the school system to move toward your vision?

We need to share who we are as we have today. There seems to me to be an absence of this sort of intergenerational pedagogy. If we do not learn from those who have gone before we will continue to take two steps forward and two steps back.

*The tripod is **three** steps forward and one step back. Transformation is a slow process.*

[personal journal entries]

There were painful stories shared that will continue to touch our lives and affect our teaching for many years to come. But there was also a great deal of joy and much laughter.

[My motivation to teach is primarily to play and my "call" is just like a friend calling me from outside to come out and play after dinner.

I enjoy myself most when I can play at the things I do - I play in the kitchen, I play in the garden, I play on my sailboat and I often get to play at school - that is so long as I stay committed to the kids. I find them most eager to play - many of the adults seem reluctant - maybe they've forgotten how to play or how good it

feels to play - maybe nobody has called them to play lately.

This opportunity this weekend is playing, isn't it? A group of friends got together because Jeanette said, " Hey, wanna come out and play?"

And an opportunity to play with kids our own age doesn't happen enough these days.]

As I reread this excerpt from one of the pieces of writing given to me at the retreat and as I look back on our time together, I am able to see the kinship that Shaun Gallagher (1992: 46) suggests exists between play (*paidiá*) and education (*paideía*).

Paidiá/Paideía

playing together
PLAYING together
playing TOGETHER
together playing
together: TOGETHERNESS
PLAYING: playfulness
together we play
we play together
we teachers play
play at teaching
teach about playing
play about teaching
together
teaching
playing
together²⁴

Following the retreat, I worked with transcripts of the initial interviews that I had conducted with each of the teachers who participated in the study, with materials which had been gathered over the two days that we spent together, and with my journal entries to create a dramatic work which I hoped would allow our stories to be shared in a wider audience.

1995 12 27

Two months after the retreat and I am back at the work.

Each of those who participated in the project had so much to contribute and, while I knew this from the start, I have quite a different under (?inter?) standing of that now.

After reading my colleagues' words so much more carefully, after choosing, shaping and reshaping their stories (and my story) into a larger tapestry of words of lives of teaching, I feel that I know each person much more intimately than before.

[personal journal entry]

The Fifth Ruminaton
(On the Use of Drama)

Human interaction is at the heart of teaching; and drama is at the heart of all human interaction because it has the power to make threshold people of both participants and spectators. Drama and theatre provide opportunities for a very special kind of border crossing experience because they offer ways of coming to an understanding of the world from a place that is between the æsthetic and the mundane (Grumet, 1988: 79) and between I and Thou.

For Augusto Boal, the theatre is and always has been at the centre of life. It is "a place where time and space, even people and objects, can be unfolded, condensed and changed" (Feldhendler, 1994: 94). Because of the special qualities of the æsthetic space wherein it dwells, drama allows both the actor and the spectator to experience a convergence of self and other, of time present and time absent, of this place and not this place. In addition, because of its unique knowledge-enhancing power, which Boal describes as "gnoseological power" (Boal, 1995: 28), drama enables actors and spectators to gain a special kind of knowledge, a knowledge that emerges from a juxtapositioning of what is happening and what is not happening, a knowledge of what it means to conjoin "the observing-I, the I-*in-situ* , and the not-I" (13), and a knowledge of how the world might be if we were able to see clearly those things which normally "would escape our gaze" (28).

Jacques proclaims, in *As You Like It*, that "all the world's a stage and all the men and women (are) merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts." In this revisiting of Pythagorus' metaphor, Shakespeare reminds us that, whether in the form of play or in the variety of roles which we assume in our daily living, the human animal is constantly involved in dramatic activities. As individuals and as a species, we are so immersed in drama that we often fail to recognize our constant shifting from one self to (an)other. The teacher, however, must develop such a consciousness so that (s)he is profoundly aware of the selves at the core, the selves on the surface, and the selves outside the self. The teacher must make conscious decisions about the masks that (s)he wears and about the degree to which it is appropriate to reveal the real face behind the mask; the teacher must learn how to see a mask and how to see through a mask. Those who teach need to develop the ability to conceal and to expose an authenticity of flesh and blood through the mask.

Artful watching of relevant theatre helps us to struggle with decisions about the masks that we will choose to wear in the classroom and elsewhere. Artful doing encourages us to deconstruct our conceptions of the classroom, to construct an authenticity of the self as teacher, and to reconstruct a vision of the school as a place of transformation. Those of us who, in community, have experienced and reflected on what it means to make believe that we are teachers or students like and unlike ourselves are more likely to carry that

understanding of the world into the classroom.

Since humans walked out of the dreamtime into the confines and the deep recesses of individuality and the need to know, they have continued to seek ways of moving back and forth between the present world and the eternal. Only through the power of the imagination can the human be freed intellectually and emotionally to cross over from one place to another, one time to another, one body to another. Through the power of *ex stasis*, of freedom from the self, and within an *anamnesis*, or re-**present**-ing of the other, drama, specifically, provides such an opportunity.

Making the self and others believe not only that such transformations are possible but also that they have occurred is traditionally the work of shamans and spirit dancers but has become, in the fragmentation that we know as modern civilization, a function of religion, of art, or of madness.

Before humankind desacralized the world, before there was a need to name the singing, the dancing, the re-mem-bering and the imagin- ing, there was no art, and there was no madness - only the desire to be driven from the self towards transformation. Later, after a world of differences was constructed, a world which is understood through the mind, rather than through the body, art became a way of expressing knowledge rather than a way of being in the world. The artist was taught to value cognition over sensation, to avoid becoming

totally involved in the drumbeat. The artist was expected not to lose control, never to imagine the unimaginable.

Nevertheless, like the prophet and the priest, both the foolish and the mad find themselves in that sort of place where the borders of human reality are apt to be ruptured unexpectedly either by the daimons who dwell within or by the wellsprings of the holy which are beyond. Those who devote their lives to their art, or to their faith, move in a sort of precipitous place between identity and no identity, treading a path between the self, who in viewing the world from inside the body assumes a world as known by the self, and the divine, who in being able to view the world through a freedom from self, acknowledges many selves.

An intentional dwelling in this place where fantasy and reality are one is the art of the actor; an unintentional living in such a place is the curse of the mad(wo)man. Yet the space which separates the two is like rice paper; it is pithy but oh so fragile.

John Caputo says that "the work of art springs not from pure madness but from the invasion of reason by madness, from the tension or confrontation between reason and unreason" (1993: 241). I would suggest rather that it springs from divine inspiration which, because of its distance from pure reason, is often mistaken as madness. Both offer a freedom from self; both

demand an openness to a re-presenting of the other. The difference between the two is that pure madness alienates the self; it draws the self into a black hole of self. Where there is total submission to the madness, there is no art (242) and there is no teaching. On the other hand, total openness to the working of the holy within the human is fertile ground both for art and for transformational pedagogy.

I am not sure if it is possible to return once one has truly crossed that border between unalienated madness and "alienated madness" (235); but I am certain that in order to experience what Michel Foucault calls the "night of truth" (Caputo, 1993:233), one must walk very, very close to the edge. There one may be able to respond to that which calls us to live out a vision of wholeness through an acknowledgement and a valuing of difference, through a giving up of the overwhelming desire to know everything. There one may learn to linger in the absence of the reasonable, to listen to and to learn from the silence. Only then will it become possible to be open to the other speaking and acting through the self; only then will it be possible to lead others to a sharing of these experiences.

It is not my intention to suggest that an individual be driven to the edge of madness, though many may imagine that this is an inevitable part of the job of teaching, but I do believe that, in order to acquire a willingness to take the necessary risks, there is a need for a "stumbl(ing) in ambiguity" (Grumet,

1988: 470). Those who teach, like those who act, must willingly learn from their mistakes and they must allow an indwelling of the other (Macdonald, 1974: 113; Huebner, 1995: 273), they must become what Peter Brook describes as open doors (1993).

Neither the actor nor the teacher should simply offer himself or herself as a medium for others to achieve their ends. However, just as the actor must consciously develop an ability to be open to the needs and desires of (an)other, teachers also need to be capable of responding to students as they present themselves rather than as they are described in numerous bureaucratic records and reports.

The beginning and end of educational conversation is also a concern for the person - not people in the abstract, not theories about traits, learning styles, cultural background, or how the young people of today differ from those of yesterday... The subjects of these conversations are categories, not persons... Teachers... do not see or meet categories; such classifications are stereotypes, a form of prejudice. Teachers meet persons. Teachers encounter a uniquely formed person different from any other person in the world, a person with his or her own particular story....

(Huebner, 1995: 273)

The greater the separation between the world of creation and the world of commerce, the greater the demand for education to become a technological extravaganza. Yet, computers and interactive video instruction aside, all that teaching requires is "two human beings, a passion" (Boal, 1995: 16) and

a space in which learning can happen. Similarly, the greater the separation between the world of sensation and the world of cognition, the greater the demand for the theatre to become spectacle. In spite of the costumes, the masks, the sets, the special effects, drama will emerge where there is an actor, a spectator, an "empty space" (Brook, 1968), a willingness to free the self from the self and a desire to make present that which, in the world of *Cronos*, does not appear to be present.

According to Brook, any bare space may serve as a stage. The transformation of that space into a place set apart for the drama to unfold does not depend on physically filling the emptiness but rather on allowing that emptiness to provide a meeting place for the energies of the one who artfully does and the one who artfully watches. (1993: 5).

We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that
the utility of the wheel depends.
We turn clay to make a vessel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that
the utility of the vessel depends.
Therefore just as we take advantage of what is
we should recognize the utility of what is not.

(Corrado Fiumara, 1990: 102)

In sharing with us the words of Lao Tze, Corrado Fiumara draws our attention to the generativity which is present in silence and in empty spaces. These

places of apparent nothingness are the sites wherein the mystery that is the art itself becomes present to us. The places in which the energies and the desires of students and teachers converge hold a similar magic but one which is not always productive. The greater the demand to add the trappings of technology, the lesser the chance that those moments of transformation which happen, unplanned, between whole beings engaged in the act of learning will occur.

Dorothy Heathcote has described drama work as a means of reconceptualizing the world by a "living through" the messiness of human experience (Heathcote, 1983). Commonly referred to as role drama, Heathcote's kind of drama work has been used in schools and in teacher education programmes since the late sixties. By responding "as if" certain circumstances existed, participants are encouraged to look at "reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meaning" (Wagner, 1976: 15). Taking the role of the other is a way of acknowledging and valuing difference at the same time as it reclaims wholeness (167). According to Heathcote, role drama is a way of "dropping to the universal," of tapping "the wellspring, the source of human understanding" (76).

While Heathcote's role drama draws participants into the "as if" experience, Augusto Boal's school of theatre focusses more on the "what if." Both Heathcote and Boal are committed to the usefulness of theatre but Theatre of the Oppressed definitely presses further into the realm of personal and social

transformation. In the Heathcote kind of drama work, there usually are no spectators, only participants. Although Boal's work is presented as theatre, he employs a variety of techniques to actively engage the audience in the work, to transform the spectators into "spect-actors." Initially intended as a means of politically activating those who would prefer to remain passive, Boal's creation of drama games and improvisational techniques for use with actors and non-actors has given a new meaning to participatory theatre. Whether being used for personal or social change, collective empowerment or transformational learning, his unique blend of catharsis and humour has proven to be an effective way of confronting contemporary problems such as violence, racism, homophobia and homelessness. Through the subversive strategies of the joker in Forum theatre and the maieutic work of the director in *Rainbow of Desire*, Boal exploits the power of the empty space to examine and to overcome internal and external oppressions. In his refusal to allow actors or "spect-actors" to make easy judgements, to avoid the deep complexity of human interactions, Boal reclaims the transformative power of the theatre.

Drama is, and always has been, a way of learning, a way of changing people, a way of turning the world. It is not about pretending nor about performing but rather about making **believe**. Learning through drama is a result of the doing, and, in the case of the Boal work, the redoing, as well as the reflection on the doing and re-doing. Because it looks at life as "through a prism," because it "illuminate(s) in a special way," drama is a multi-

dimensioned, many-coloured means of coming to "a change in understanding" (Bolton, 1994).

While the actor does hold a mirror up to nature, it must be understood that the actor is able to pass through the looking glass into a place where there is no need to worry about allowing the words, the actions to unfold unplanned. This protection from consequences means that, through drama, it is possible to rehearse daily living. Drama work is far more than simply playing around. It is a way of confronting human beings, as subjects and objects, with situations which will challenge them and, inevitably, will change them.

According to Murray Schafer, drama has the power to bring us into a space where it is possible to resist the "world of plans" and to reclaim "the world of happenings" (Schafer, 1991: 88). My decision to use drama to draw out and to share teachers' stories was, it seemed to me, a way of inviting people into this sort of place, a way of situating the work, as Ted Aoki suggests, in a landscape which is constantly retextured and disturbed by a multiplicity of lived experiences (Aoki, 1993: 259).

In a paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco in April, 1995, Robert Donmoyer and June Yennie-Donmoyer stated that:

the rise of qualitative methods... was in part a response

to a growing awareness of what gets lost when we translate experience into the language of statistics and try to talk of human beings solely in terms of general categories and ideal types

(1995: 2)

In seeking to "capture human experience without distorting or trivializing it" (3), they began to explore drama as a way of sharing the data that they had gathered. Their decision to use readers' theatre as a way of presenting their findings was based on an understanding that this form would provide the audience with an opportunity "to create meaning from what [was] suggested, rather than from what [was] literally shown" (7).

Working with colleagues at Louisiana State University, Petra Munro has also chosen this method of presentation for data which were gathered in a recent study of the lives of a group of retired women teachers. In attending a performance of this work presented to the Annual Conference of the Journal of Curriculum Theorizing at the Centre for the Fine Arts in Banff, Alberta in October, 1994, I was assured of the power of drama to offer a way of coming to an understanding of human experience from the inside out. It was then that I acknowledged the importance of my doing my research in an area that I knew and through a method which I understood.

By choosing this means of transforming and re-**present**-ing the teachers' stories, I hoped to provide a way for "the subtleties, the nuances, the gaps,

the fissures, the silences" (Leggo, 1995: 6) of the shared experiences to speak to those whose stories were being told as well as to the other members of the audience.

The Musings of the Ducks

(At the Heart of it All: a Readers' Theatre presentation of collected texts of teaching)

Characters:

- Voice 1:** the voice of experience (Howard Blaney)
- Voice 2:** the voice of commitment (Gillian Lewis)
- Voice 3:** the voice of compassion (Mary Ellen Stewart)
- Voice 4:** the voice of idealism (Eric Anderson)
- Voice 5:** the voice of passion (John Marshall) * musician
- Voice 6:** the voice of perseverance (Elizabeth Brock)
- Voice 7:** the voice of confusion (Lucien Robilliard)
- Voice 8:** the voice of the artist (James Murphy)
- Voice 9:** the voice of the fool (Janet Cameron)
- Voice 10:** the voice of the schoolmaster

All of the actors are dressed in black. The actor reading Voice 10 wears an academic gown and the one reading Voice 9 wears a jester's hat. The readers sit on stools placed in small groups on various parts of the stage. The artist and the fool are together at stage right, the musician is at centre stage within but not within one of the groups and the school master remains apart from the others at stage left. Each actor has a music stand to hold the text.

(The musician begins to play softly. The theme is played through before the opening scene is announced by Voice 10.)

~ IN THE BEGINNING ~

Voice 10: Eric Anderson.

Voice 4: Present.

Voice 10: Howard Blaney.

Voice 5: Present.

Voice 10: Elizabeth Brock.

Voice 6: Present.

Voice 10: Janet Cameron.

Voice 9: Present.

(Roll call fades out as monologue begins.)

Voice 9: I don't think that it ever occurred to me that I might be a teacher. From as far back as I can remember - and that would be before I started school - I was going to be a doctor. It wasn't until my early twenties that I began to consider other options.

It's funny when I think about it though - because it must have been obvious. At least to some people - like my younger brother. I sometimes think that he still expects me to tell him what to do and when and how.

I wonder if he remembers when I used to get all of our cousins together, seat them in rows on the staircase at our grandparents' home and make them practice singing Christmas carols. Rehearsing over and over until they got it right and we could go and perform for the rest of the family.

Voice 7: My turn. It's my turn now.

Voice 5: Don't push, Looseeyen.
Voice 3: Bully!
Voice 7: Yeah, who says so?
Voice 5: I do, want to make sompun uv it?
Voice 7: Maybe.
Voice 2: Miss Wright, there's a fight at the swings.
Voice 8: Tattle-tale!
Voice 6: Teacher's Pet!
Voice 7: Smarty-pants!
Voice 4: You're a sissy, Janet Cameron.
Voice 9: Am not!
Voice 4: You are too!
Voice 9: Am not.
Voice 3: Sticks and stones will break my bones but names'll never hurt me.

Voice 2: I was five years old. Just going in to grade one and I was quite excited about going to school. I know that my parents were very pleased because I had Miss Wilmot who was supposed to be one of the best teachers in the community.

All of us had been told to put our heads down and we did. We were very, very quiet because we knew that when the teachers said something like that in those days, they meant it. Nobody moved a muscle.

I was a very good little girl and I had my head down but the little boy in front of me was a bit of a mischief-maker and he liked to get people in trouble. So, after we had been quiet for two or three minutes, he lifted his head up, turned around and whispered something to me. Then he quickly put his head down and I lifted mine up just as the teacher looked up from her work.

"Gillian Lewis," she said, "stand up."

And all the heads came up. Everyone was looking at me. And I was shy. I was terribly shy.

"Gillian Lewis," she said, "come here."

I walked up to where she was standing with her arms folded. And I waited.

Miss Wilmot went to her desk. She got a roll of tape and she said, "I am going to tape your mouth shut."

And that is exactly what she did.

Voice 10: Pickle.

Voice 1: Pickle. P-I-C-K-L-E.

Voice 10: Picnicking.

Voice 3: Picknicking. P-I-C-K-N-I-C-K-I-N-G.

Voice 10: Pernicious.

Voice 5: Pern. Pern.

Voice 10: Pernicious.

Voice 5: Pernicious. P-U-R-N-

Voice 4: I never knew who was first in the class. I never knew who was second. But Betty Jones and I always switched places for third. At the end of every term, we all had to stand in order of our rank in the class and it was always Betty Jones or I in third. One time it would be me; one time it would be Betty. I remember it so clearly. I can remember exactly what she looked like. Beautiful little girl she was at age whatever she was but I hated her guts.

She also took elocution lessons and I can still hear her, "The Owl and the Pussycat went to sea..."

In those days there were a lot of kids in the classes and so the lineup went all the way around the room. I always ended up looking into the eyes of the boy who was 38th. He was always 38th and no one switched with him. I felt sorry for him - but I didn't like him very much.

Voice 2: The picture that I have is of all of us gathered around the table - like a kitchen table, it was warm and inviting and we all wanted to be there to see and to play with what Mr. Reaney had put there for us. He never said, "Do this." It was just there for us to touch, to use, to discover for ourselves.

Voice 5: I was always afraid to try new things - not just in school. I remember the first time I went away from home. I went to stay with my uncle in Vancouver. I must have been there for a couple of weeks but it seemed like a very long time anyway. So finally I was going home and they took me to the station to put me on the train. It was about eight o'clock at night and we had had a huge dinner a little earlier in the evening.

I was pretty scared but they put me on the train anyway. They put me in an upper berth with these heavy velvet curtains. I remember it was very quiet. The train left and I peeked out but I couldn't see anybody and it was very quiet. So I just lay back and listened to the wheels and digested my dinner. Then, I guess it must have been about midnight, I had to go to the

bathroom.

I poked my head out but they had removed all of the ladders. I thought that I could jump down but I might break a leg. But what I was really worried about was finding my way back. With the curtains, they all looked the same. I just couldn't go down there so I figured that I would be alright if I just relaxed. But it wouldn't go away. I peeked out again. Then this conductor came by. He was a really big guy. I said, " Hey, Mr. Conductor."

I guess he didn't hear me because he went on past. So I just retreated back behind the curtains. And I thought that I had to do something. I started going through my pack and I found a plastic bag with my socks in it. I took the socks out and - well, believe me, I felt much better. Unfortunately, I didn't have any twist ties so I held the top of the bag closed. What else could I do?

I lay back and everything was fine.

I must have been pretty tired though because about two hours later I heard this, " Hey!" from the bunk below.

And I looked down at the bag but it was empty.

Voice 6: I went to a highly academic girls' grammar school and when I was fifteen I was a school prefect . We wore navy blue skirts, white blouses, navy blue stockings, black shoes and navy blue blazers. We looked very conforming and we were very conforming.

Now part of my role was to police the appearance of the younger girls. At that time, back-combing was very popular but it was

not allowed at our school. I remember though, on one occasion, I had back-combed my hair and I had to pin my beret in a precarious position on the back of my head. I liked the fashion statement that I was making and felt comfortable with my decision - until I met the senior prefect at the door. I was trapped. I didn't know where I fit.

Voice 1: I was never in trouble in school but Harold Price was. He was in Grade Eight and he liked to swagger around and put fear into the rest of us. I usually stayed out of his way but this one afternoon, he came along after nearly everybody had gone home.

He was making some comment about how strong he was and so I said, "Oh, yeah, come on prove it." He looked around and then he said, "Watch!" Then he punched the wall.

And he punched it again. And again. Three times. I think his hand was hurting but he didn't show it. Instead he stood back; he turned to me and he said, "I bet you can't even make a dint in that wall."

"Oh, yeah," I said. And there was Mr. Innocence with his fist in a big hole in the wall when the principal walked around the corner.

I was absolutely mortified when he said, "Come with me."

I had to pay the penalty but I think that Mr. Thornton knew that I was innocent.

Voice 9: From Grade 10 on, I sort of enjoyed getting into trouble at

school. Not the kind that meant letters home or anything - just the kind that annoyed some teachers and made the other kids laugh. One time though, things got more serious than I had intended.

I was in Grade 11 and had a crush on a boy in Grade 12. This one Friday night, one of the teachers had organized a party for the Grade Twelves - just the Grade Twelves. For whatever reason, my girlfriend and I decided to crash the party. So we went outside the classroom where everybody was gathered and we caught the attention of a couple of the guys. They told us to meet them outside the boys' bathroom window and they would sneak us in.

And we did what they said. I can't remember whether my friend was ahead of me or behind me but I know that I was halfway through the window when one of the supervising teachers came through the door. Fortunately, the principal considered me to be a pretty good student so I wasn't suspended.

Maybe I should have been.

Voice 7: We were about three blocks from the school. There were about forty or fifty kids following Billy Lindstrom. He had this yellow powder that he got out of the Chemistry lab. He said that it would explode if you put it on something hard, covered it with a brick and threw a rock at it. Three or four of us were on the bridge, looking over the rail into the gulley when we heard the bell. Billy sprinkled the powder onto a rock; he covered it. Then he let fly. Now everybody was standing back. We were all a little apprehensive. Three times he missed and I said, "For Christ's sake, we've got to go to school."

"I'll hit it this time," Billy said.

"Well, I'm going to make sure you do," I said.

Pow! That's how I lost my eye.

Voice 8: All my life I have tried to avoid criticism

Voice 9: and rejection.

Voice 8: All my life I tried to fit into the system.

Voice 10: Left! Right! Forward! Back!

(All voices call out these directions at random as all of the actors, with the exception of the one reading Voice 10, try to march in response to the orders.)

Voice 10: This has been a good year. We can well be proud of our academic achievements as well as our accomplishments in sports and in the arts. You have, throughout the year, displayed a high degree of school citizenship and school spirit. I have been impressed by the way in which you have settled down to the main job without shirking or grousing and I would like to congratulate you on your mature approach to your studies.

To all of the graduating class, I say, "Good luck!" We are sorry to have you leave us but we are happy to see you going on into your various fields of endeavour. So I offer to you my final bit of advice, " You will get out of life exactly what you put into

it! May it be much."

(Actor playing the schoolmaster shakes hands with each "graduate" as his or her name is called.)

Voice 1: Gillian Lewis.

Voice 10: Congratulations.

Voice 1: John Marshall.

Voice 10: Congratulations.

Voice 1: Lucien Robilliard.

Voice 10: Congratulations.

Voice 1: Mary Ellen Stewart.

Voice 10: Congratulations.

Voice 9: Well, we're on our way.

All: (Moving about and shaking hands at random - except Voice 10) Yes, we're on our way! Goodbye! Good Luck!

~ THE ROAD TO NINEVAH ~

Voice 9: I never imagined that I would be a teacher. I don't even think that it was on my list - although I do remember considering that I might eventually get a degree in nursing and lecture at the university level. That was after I finally realized that there was never going to be enough money to send me to medical school.

The person who put teaching into my mind was my high school

principal. I had just come back from the city after being refused admission to the nursing school. The administrator said that she did not think I was a suitable candidate - I was too much of a rebel to be a good nurse she said. My mother told me that I had received a telephone call from the principal while I was away. Apparently, he thought that I might be interested in going out to take over a teaching position in one of the small rural schools in the district.

In those days, they were so desperate for teachers, they would take almost anybody who could read and write and had a high school graduation diploma.

So I started looking into the possibilities of entering the teacher training programme at the university. I had my grade thirteen which meant that I could have a certificate and a job in an elementary school within the year.

Voice 8: The only calling to teaching I heard initially was the call to employment and salary. I needed a job and I became a teacher. I did not intend to continue to be a teacher. Two years was what I planned to spend.

Voice 1: Like a lot of people who went into teaching, I went in with the idea of transferring to something else. But in the end, I found teaching very compelling. I guess I fell in love with it.

Voice 8: In Grade 11, my principal suggested that I ought to teach and I told him, "NO WAY!" The last thing in the world I wanted to be was a teacher. I wanted to be an astronomer, or a lawyer, or a politician - anything but a teacher.

Voice 7: Teaching kind of came naturally to me. For a long time, I had known that I wanted to be a teacher. I think I've always enjoyed sharing ideas with people and I've always liked working with kids. Doing what I enjoy and making some money at the same time. It was there; it was obvious.

Voice 9: I loved the practicum. Being with the kids. Working with them. It was exciting to get them interested in learning but I refused to see teaching as anything other than a means to an end - a way to make enough money to go to Europe, to finish my degree, to pay my debts, to go to graduate school.

Voice 8: Getting the B.Ed. degree was relatively easy. I did not have to make big sacrifices to study to become a teacher.

Voice 5: After I finished my degree, I started doing research at the university. I actually thought that was what I was going to do with my life but in my heart I felt something was missing. I didn't know what it was but about a year after I had started my work, I got a chance to do some practice teaching at my old high school. It took me about three days. I was in the classroom and I was having so much fun - and getting paid for it. I loved it so much. In fact, I would have done it for nothing. I loved it so much.

Voice 4: I was working at another job after I got out of university but I didn't like it very much. I had access to a company car and I used to park near a school playground to have my lunch - just to see the kids. I wondered what they were talking about, what they were doing. I thought that maybe if I could talk to individual kids, I could alter their way of thinking. If I could change their beliefs, I might change the world.

Voice 8: I went to seminary to train to be a minister but I changed my mind when I knew that I couldn't afford the truck repair bill and I couldn't afford another three years of study, especially with a child to be born in a few months. So financial urgency drove me to teaching.

Voice 3: I never really thought of being anything else. I was successful at school and everyone always said that some day I was going to be a professor. In those days there weren't many choices open for girls.

Voice 5: My buddy and I joined the Future Teachers' Club when we were in Grade 10 or 11, probably because our girlfriends were in it. It was mainly a girls' club but we got to visit other schools and attend a conference at the university. That sort of whetted my appetite. Then, I was a swimming instructor at the Y and I really enjoyed that. I was good at it. I knew what I was doing; I was confident; I had really good relationships with people. The idea of doing it for a career seemed like a pretty good idea. Besides, they were crying for teachers. My mom was really adamant, hoping that I would go into medicine or be a veterinarian. I enjoyed animals but I didn't have the marks to get into medical school. I wouldn't get into university at all now with the grades I had in high school. I wasn't good academically. I got C plusses and the standard comment - "Could do better." It wasn't until fourth year when I got to take the courses that interested me that I excelled. That's when I got the great marks, the scholarships.

But now I look at the medical profession and I know that that is not where I belong. I wouldn't want to be in that emergency

ward; I wouldn't want to start each day not knowing what tragedy I might have to deal with before I got home. And I guess those medical people probably wouldn't want to be in charge of thirty teenagers in a classroom. They might find that totally frightening.

Voice 3: I came into teaching by accident - a happy accident.

I had finished my first year at the university but there was no money for me to go on. In those days, there was money for boys but not for girls. It was a case of being a nurse or a secretary, that kind of job, or going into teaching. A week before normal school opened, I suddenly decided I was going to apply. I raced up to my parents' summer place and asked for their blessing. Then I rushed back to the city and managed to have a special interview and they let me in.

I never regretted it.

Voice 6: I simply became a teacher because I didn't do the things I was interested in. I was advised not to. When I was seventeen, I didn't know which way I was going so I escaped from the horribleness of not knowing what to do by going to teachers' training college. It was easy but when I finished, three years later, I still didn't know what on earth teaching was all about. Probably the only thing that made me kind of like it was that I had always enjoyed children and I had always been fascinated by watching them in their world.

Voice 2: I think I always wanted to teach. I just didn't know what area I should focus on.

When I was in high school, I decided that I wanted to teach art.

I got a lot of support from my teachers so I went down to the university and majored in Art and English but I was terribly dismayed to find that it wasn't at all the way that it had appeared to me to be. I didn't even want to go back after my first year but my dad convinced me to try something else so I did. I switched into Math and Science. I was doing well but I really had no conception of how to apply what I was learning so I dropped out. Halfway through my second year, I left the university and went to work in an insurance office. I learned a lot about the real world there - particularly the painful realities of gender inequity.

When I quit that job, I knew that there were better things that I could do with my life.

Voice 8: I did not choose to be a teacher. Teaching chose me. Not only did teaching choose me, but teaching would not let me go. The call of teaching has been like a Siren that would not be denied,

Voice 2: Refused to be ignored.

Voice 8: Persistent

Voice 9: Seductive

Voice 5: Consuming.

~ THE CALL; THE CALLER; THE CALLING ~

Voice 7: Something magic happens in the classroom. The bell rings; the students come in; the curtain goes up and we are all on stage

together.

Voice 3: One of the things I really enjoy about teaching is seeing people grow, being nurtured, solving problems, making decisions, coming to a point where they can do things that they couldn't do before.

Voice 2: I like kids and I like teaching but it takes a heck of a lot of energy to do a good job.

Voice 10: Teaching is waking up in the morning and mucking through the day and going to sleep at night in order to wake up the next morning and do it again.

Voice 3: Teaching is hard work. I find it very nerve wracking much of the time. I still get quite nervous. I still feel butterflies in my stomach.

Voice 6: I am not overly enamoured of schools. I think that society is asking a lot when it expects children to learn by putting them together in such large groups in such confined places for such extended periods of time. But having watched my own children grow and develop, and having accepted that I cannot simply wave a wand of high ideals and create an alternative, I am committed to creating an environment in my classroom where each person is given a sense of dignity and is expected to show respect for others.

Voice 8: As a teacher, I hope a lot

Voice 7: I question a lot

Voice 2: I work a lot

Voice 1: I care a lot.

Voice 6: Everything that I create in the classroom is like life unfolding. It's how I'd like it to be. The interactions and connections among people. It's so exciting.

Voice 4: To be a good teacher all you have to do is honestly care about your kids because they feel it and they know it.

Voice 3: I had a most amazing experience on a cold and rainy morning three years ago. It was over the Christmas holiday. This young man in his late twenties knocked at our front door. My husband went to the door and I heard this man's voice asking to speak to me. I had no idea who he was. He said that he had come to make amends for the way that he had behaved in my class when he was twelve.

I knew then who he was. He was one of the most difficult of all of the students that I have dealt with over the years.

Yes, I remembered him and I remembered the class that he had been a part of. The girls had been fine; they were good students and I had had no problem with them but the boys - they were just awful. Negative and angry and unco-operative. I fought with them the whole year. It was so bad that I used to cry before I went to school. It was a real struggle just to get through the day and they probably thought that I was being an old bag.

But here was this young fellow at my door telling me that he had come to apologize for having been so difficult, telling me that he knew that I cared about him and that he appreciated what I

had tried to do for him.

Voice 8: As a teacher I have played many roles

Voice 1: Parent

Voice 7: Coach

Voice 4: Cheerleader

Voice 6: Conscience

Voice 3: Counsellor

Voice 5: Janitor

Voice 9: Bus driver

Voice 2: Friend.

Voice 4: My son's rugby coach came up to me and introduced himself. I happen to be his son's teacher. We started to talk about our expectations for our kids - at home and at school. In this case, both of us expressed the desire to see young people accepting personal responsibility for their actions and behavior. It feels good when you know that you are working together, striving for similar goals. I looked at a number of the boys on the rugby field - I recognized many as former students - and I watched as they played. I like to think that, in some small measure, I have contributed to their sportsmanship, their sense of fair play. That makes me proud.

Voice 2: I have had to learn how to have hope, to never give up on any of my students. I've had to learn how to get over my anger, my disappointments and help them to build up from the ruins again and again.

Voice 8: Friday night is probably not a good night to grade essays. I should have known better but after spending the whole week encouraging my Grade 10's to compose the most wonderful papers ever written, I felt that I just had to read them. So although it was Friday night, and I knew better, I simply couldn't wait.

I read them.

Essay after essay .

Boring and incoherent babble. Lacking in imagination, devoid of insight, empty of passion.

I was disappointed, angry and infuriated.

I should have made constructive comments on the papers and if it had been Sunday afternoon instead of Friday evening I might have at least attempted a modicum of encouragement. Surely I would have avoided responding with such fury that I tore one student's paper with the sharp tip of my pen.

I spent the whole weekend fussing and fuming, waiting for Monday morning when I could tell those useless little sots what I really thought of them.

And then, the weekend was over. After two days of wind and rain, it was suddenly bright and sunny. As I drove to school, I thought about how fortunate I was to be in such a place on such a beautiful day going to work at a job that for the most part I continued to enjoy. I pictured the faces of those children who

were about to be intimidated by my anger and I sensed a need to be gentle with them.

Voice 7: Teaching is a lot like climbing. The more challenging the rock face, the more time I have to take to prepare myself, and the more I have to trust in my ability to find the way. I pay attention to the messages which my body is giving and receiving. I try not to overtire myself; I rest; I relax; I re-energize and I move on.

When I fall, I hang there for a while - in mid-air - gazing at the rock that cheated me and I try to understand why; I try to figure out how I could make it the next time.

Depending on the time of day and the other circumstances, I will make a second try right away from where I fell. Maybe even a third and fourth attempt. But when I reach the point where I cannot push my body anymore, I try an easier way.

Always, I celebrate my successes; I recognize and I hope that I learn from my mistakes.

Voice 5: For me, the passion comes from the insecurity of not knowing what is going to happen next.

Voice 9: Some say that you can find magic in anything that you do.

Voice 3: Teaching is like a giftedness that is given once the task is begun. The power and the passion come when I take the risk of starting.

Voice 10: I think that teaching is leading

Voice 9: And heeding

Voice 7: Juggling

Voice 6: And struggling

Voice 5: Daring

Voice 4: And caring

Voice 3: And sharing

Voice 2: Reaching

Voice 3: And preaching

Voice 4: Bumbling

Voice 5: And mumbling

Voice 6: And stumbling.

(Actors reading voices 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 move from their places, join with a partner, journey around the stage and then return to their places as voice 8 speaks.)

Voice 8: As a teacher, I think that I am on a journey, a journey of becoming and I like participating with others in their journeying.

~ THE RECALLING ~

Voice 9: I guess that I saw teachers as people who knew a lot and who got paid to make kids learn what they knew.

Good teachers were the ones who knew how to get us interested in learning and bad teachers just didn't know what was really

going on.

Maybe things haven't changed that much in forty years.

Voice 2: I love being able to share something that I enjoy with the kids but I find it difficult to deal with those students who seem to be totally unreachable. It is really disappointing to realize that there are some people that you just can't do anything for.

Voice 7: I consider myself privileged to work with individual students. I get to know my students very well. I enjoy having a chance to share knowledge with them and I have developed some lasting relationships. There are a number of students who have graduated whom I go climbing with now. I like that.

Voice 3: Why do I overwork? Why do I end up doing so much work at home? Part of it is that there is just always more to do. But there is also this drive to be perfect.

I try to do too much; I become so absorbed in my work that I nearly burn myself out. But then, I see progress; someone thanks me; someone cares for me; I care for myself; I realize that I do not have to prove my worth by doing; it is alright to say no, to ask for help when I need it; and I am restored again.

Voice 5: It seems that in the last two or three years things have changed significantly. I've always been able to reach out to the corners and gather all of my students in, keep them interested, get excited about learning, have fun. But the system is pushing us now in such a way that there isn't time to do the research, to understand the concepts, to play with ideas. The system is squashing us. My dream kids are coming in with tears in their

eyes; they can't handle being pushed in and pushed out.

Voice 2: I always felt that I was making a difference and the kids were always the most important thing. I generally like kids and feel that we often short change them. They know when you don't really care about them.

Voice 4: If I were given the choice again, I don't think that I would get myself locked into the school system.

Voice 8: I don't want to be a dentist, or an optometrist. I don't want to work in a paper mill. But perhaps I could have done numerous other things if I were more risk-taking, more reckless, less cowardly.

Voice 2: Yes, I would go into teaching again because I really like it. I always felt satisfied, competent, successful. I really believed that I had a lot to offer in teaching. I think it was the right job for me. It helped me personally. It gave me a lot of confidence. I did as good a job as I could do; I helped out and I always felt happy. To me, the classroom was a good place to be, working with the kids, and even the down times - when I was tired, fed-up, and the kids were bratty, it never really got me down, never depressed me.

The organization also appealed to me. I really liked being able to plan a unit and see how I could get the kids interested and involved and see what I could accomplish. But I really miss the kids.

Voice 6: I wonder - did I make teaching meaningful because that it what I had chosen to be engaged in for 8 to 10 hours a day or was it

meaningful originally? Would I have found working in a hospital or being a buyer in a department store equally meaningful?

I think that teaching is probably an okay place for me to be. I think by a happy accident, I found a place that suits me. I don't like policies that make such a common sense enterprise into something that seems so incredibly difficult but I am satisfied that given what I think is a crazy situation, I am making a contribution - not just to the children but to the parents and to the wider world.

Do you think that I just hit it lucky?

Voice 1: I don't know what teaching is like now but I have a pretty good idea that in the thirteen years since I retired it has become very difficult to cope with all of the added pressures. But I still believe that there is no more honored profession. You just have to look at the work with a degree of passion, a degree of flexibility and optimism. And fundamentally, you have to love kids.

What I enjoyed most about teaching was the kids.

Voice 6: In the past, I never knew that valuing people, listening to them and giving everyone a chance to be believed in was worth anything. I always felt apologetic because I was too weak, too forgiving, not tough enough. However, I am older now. I've weathered some storms; I've weaved my way in and out of many experiences and I am satisfied that the work that I do is valuable.

Voice 5: The success that I have had as a teacher came from something

that they couldn't teach me at the university. I think it has to do with your personality. How you get along with people. I know that's what it is. I see that when kids come back from the university and tell me that they had a good time in my class.

I've had fun and I've formed bonds with people that have lasted down through the years. My time has been well spent.

Voice 6: I have finally given up thinking that I have to bend myself in fifty different directions, jump through forty-five hoops, feel insecure because someone else will always know more than I do, will do things better. I am content to be myself and to share what I am, what I know. For me, it is about circles, about what connects us to one another and makes us all stronger in the process.

Voice 1: It is what we do together that can protect others against ignorance

Voice 2: Injustice

Voice 1: Violence

Voice 2: Poverty.

Voice 4: Playing seems to me to be the best vehicle for learning. Teaching is having fun. Adventure. Exploring, watching, changing. That doesn't mean it isn't serious business because it is. Play is serious but it is forgiving. You can make mistakes.

When you take your mistakes too seriously, it isn't fun anymore.

(As this section is read, the actors perform a sort of a dance which comes together in a circle with "besidedness".)

Voice 3: You can't teach to anybody

Voice 1: or for anybody.

Voice 2: or through anybody

Voice 4: or over

Voice 5: or under

Voice 6: or around

Voice 1: You have to teach with each student.

All: (All of the actors move slowly around the performance space and form a circle) Teaching is a besidedness.

Voice 8: The call of teaching is like a river. (The circle unwinds itself into a river and the actors wend their way back to their places.) It is an unfolding, a revealing, a story-telling that alters and revises itself as it is told.

Voice 10: Am I a teacher because I teach?

Voice 7: Do I teach because I am a teacher?

Voice 6: Am I a teacher?

Voice 2: Have I always been a teacher?

Voice 5: Will I ever be a teacher?

Voice 4: Will I ever stop becoming a teacher?

(The musician plays the theme again. The music continues until after the

reflection and then fades out.)

~ A REFLECTION ~

Voice 9: The water passes from this place to that
There is a stillness here
Broken occasionally by
Varying intensities of duck musings.

The Sixth Ruminaton

(On Obligation)

*"Please, sir, instruct me further."
"So be it, my son. Bring me a fruit from the Nyagroda tree."*

Svetaketu picked a fruit and brought it to his father.

*"Here it is, sir."
"Break it open."
"I have broken it, sir."
"What do you see there?"
"Little seeds."
"Break open one of them."
"I have broken it, sir."
"What so you see there?"
"Nothing at all."
"My son, that subtle essence which you cannot see, it is by
that very essence that this great Nyagroda tree stands."*

from the Upanishads

As I recall, one of the more difficult questions with which I was confronted during the initial meeting of my advisory committee was one of those which was most likely to have been asked. What contribution did I expect my work to make to the present knowledge of teaching and of teacher education? As a newcomer to the academy, I was surprised to learn that I was expected to have a plan for carving out a space for myself, a design for filling it with what I would eventually claim as new knowledge, most of which, consciously or unconsciously, I would have reconstructed from others, but all of which would have to be debated and defended as if it were my own. In retrospect, I

wish that I had been wise enough to share the Vedic story of the Nyagroda seed - although there is the possibility that the one who posed the question may have been no more open to Wisdom's whispering of an interpretation in his ear than I was to her prompting. Instead, caught in the stickiness of the student's desire for success, trapped in a desire to give the right answer, I sweated, confessed that I wasn't sure but, still believing that the silence had to be filled, said that I hoped to provide some evidence for the need to change the criteria for selection of candidates entering teacher education programmes.

The system always tempts us to uncomplicate the world, to give the right answers, to speak of people as sifted through a grid of numbers or filtered through a mesh of words. I think of my students at the university and in the public school classrooms. I see their faces, I know their stories - written on paper and in the bones of their bodies. But these are not the students who are on the report cards that are sent home to the parents or off to the university. Those students have no stories - just numbers and impersonal computer comments. And I think of my colleagues, those who worked with me on previous research projects and those who shared in this work. They are not reducible to numbers nor to names. Their stories now are written in me.

Not so long ago I was involved in the sort of research which utilized t-values of scores on standardized tests in support of its claim to be telling the truth about students' abilities to read. Later, in reporting on an action research

project, I contrived to meet institutional expectations for validity by designing scales which measured my perception of the shifts in teachers' stages of concern and levels of use of what I proclaimed to be innovative instructional strategies with which I had evangelized their classrooms. That the subjectivity of the subjects of both of these research projects, like that of the students on the report cards, had been devalued by the subjectivity of the researcher, was never seen, by me nor by others, as an ethical issue. As a result, it is not surprising that, more recently, in my earlier application for study at the doctoral level, the proposals which I generated were filled with pompous theories and self-righteous ethics. What I offered were descriptions of what I would do to, for, some nameless others.

Fortunately, the journeying which I described earlier in this paper brought me to a different understanding of the way in which I should be working. I came to a realization that at the heart of teaching is nothing but what is at the heart of the Nyagronda seed, at the heart of every thing. As a result, the proposal which I eventually submitted to my advisory committee offered the playful suggestion that I might request a certificate of disapproval rather than a Certificate of Approval from the Screening Committee in the Office of Research Services. If working within the rules meant that I could be seduced into again letting my colleagues become subjects/objects of the prepositional phrase instead of subjects of the verb (Aoki, 1988: 410), I felt sure that I wanted my research to be the result of my working against the rules, outside

the ivy-covered, over-arching principles of research which would have me digging into the hearts of teachers looking for some particular essence that might be torn out, isolated from the messy work of teaching, and then described quantitatively or qualitatively.

What had happened to foster this transformation was that "the eyes of the other" came over me, overtook me, pulled me up short (Caputo, 1993: 238). I found myself caught in "a whole network of obligations," a multiplicity of me's pulling at the threads of the re's in my research plan so that I was forced to (re)cognize that I should not, I could not, dance the work on my own. I have been forever changed by my desert experience and by my journey to *Chelm*. My work, therefore, has had to continue to change. The choreography of my teaching and of my re/searching has had to allow space and time for improvisation. **My** research has had to make way for **our** researching.

For a number of years, I passionately pursued Ethics in this place and in that. At one time, I was even planning on conducting a research project that would help me to chastize my colleagues for their breaching of our professional code of ethics. Now, I have declared a severance of the relationship for I have found that Ethics prefers to spend his time with cynics and with pragmatists. I was warned about his inconstancy but I did not pay attention until it was very nearly too late. I was about to take his hand and allow him to lead me into a phenomenological forest. But, fortunately, someone turned my boots around.

I changed direction; I chose Obligation instead of Ethics, radical hermeneutics²⁵ instead of idealistic essentialism, foolishness instead of sensibility. Following John Caputo's lead, but keeping my distance so that I could bypass the fissures and cracks of relativism, I chose to pay attention to that which continues to bind me to the dust rather than to that which has caught me in custom, handcuffed me to a set of rules, arbitrarily created and arbitrarily enforced.

In my journeying away from the familiar and comfortable places, I found that a slippage had occurred between what I had previously assumed to be right and wrong. In having promised to conduct my work ethically and to report my work in such a way that it could be taken seriously, I found myself standing, not on moral *terra firma* as expected but, like Caputo, on ground which tended to shift (3). Estrangement had allowed me to discern what previously I had been incapable of seeing. I realized that ethical eyes/I's have great difficulty in distinguishing between what is wrong and what is simply different. I do not know when I developed the habit of judging others, how I came to imagine myself placed on high but I am very grateful to be engaged in a *metanoia*, in a turning from those old habits (112).

What happened was that I found myself tumbling head over heels in the foul-smelling belly of a whale, forced to give up my journey to Tarshish. Then, having pulled myself up from the vomit of the beast and crawled from the

beach, I finally admitted that I had been trying to escape my obligation to go to Ninevah. Later, in the silence, "the whisper of the will of God" (19) reminded me that though I might be able to wash my dirty self, my dusty self will forever remain. I am dust. From dust I have come. To dust I shall return. I remain caught by the vulnerability of an earthbinding between my self and my other selves, by an irresistible connection between the humus in thee and the humus in me, by the obligations that I owe to others, that others owe to me. The only way that it was possible for me to do this work was to take off my shoes, to touch the earth, to join in her moving and shifting, to dig beneath the surface, to get my fingernails dirty and to let the stars take care of themselves (5-6).

Unlike ethics which come from on high, obligation, Caputo cautions, happens "down low, well below the range of philosophical conceptuality" (72). Ethics are subject to reductionism, relativism, deconstruction; obligation is not deconstructable. Pulling on obligation is like pulling on bindweed. Wherever it is, its roots are there; wherever it is, its roots are not there.²⁶ The application of ethical standards, like the attempt to be rid of the bindweed, gives the appearance of neat closure but it always leaves something behind. Obligation is what is left over. Like "a remnant, an undigested morsel, a loose fragment, a shard" (90), like what goes into the compost or blocks the pipes, obligation irritates; it breeds convolvulus; like water, obligation finds its way into secret places, it eats rocks. In spite of the

neatness of its design, the rigour of its method, the validity of its data, the generalizability of its conclusions, research which has left obligation unanswered will be haunted by those whose voices were left out.

Obligation has spoken to me of individuals with proper names who want to share the stories of their teaching, who want to have their stories heard. She has spoken of those in classrooms, those who want to learn and those who do not know what they want; she has spoken of those who have chosen to teach and of those who have no choice in the matter.

The research began with a question but the questions which Obligation posed took hold and would not let go until they had been paid attention. The question with which I began my reading - What are the live(d) experiences of teachers with a sense of vocation to teaching? - called, by tradition, for a study which would involve a selection of participants, a conducting of interviews, a gathering and an analysis of data, a drawing out of common themes. Reflection. Description. Validation. Reporting on the process; drawing conclusions about the essence of a phenomenon. Searching for the universal; setting the singular aside; and making sure that all of the participants were protected by pseudonyms. Such work would have had to be neat and tidy and ethical.

But the question which Obligation called out to me in a woman's voice turned

out to be a nest of questions, like the child's "Why?" that reproduces itself. What is a vocation? What is the source of this calling? Do all creatures have a calling? What causes some to pay attention and others to avoid responding to their calling? Is everyone's calling spoken in a language that can be understood or is there a need for interpreters, for people who help others to discern the call of the calling? What can teachers learn from one another by sharing the stories of the ways in which each has admitted to having been chosen, the ways in which each has responded to the call, the ways in which each has or has not tried to en flesh the obligation to teach?

I was obligated, therefore, to re-design my study so that it framed and was enframed by a polyphony of voices. I was obligated to create spaces in which these voices could be heard. I was obligated to invite the unpredictable, to take the road less travelled by, one with a few more potholes, a few more detours, one which leads to a whole network of sideroads.

And there was another set of obligations to consider - those which were placed on me by the research itself. Citing Robin Barrow, Edmund Short states that "different forms of inquiry are necessary to address different kinds of curriculum research questions" (Short, 1991: 3). The questions which had finally taken hold of me invited autobiography, stories of particular teaching experiences, multi-interpretations of the texts which were generated as data and created as analysis of data; it welcomed a messing about with form. What

was called for was an interlude: a singing and dancing, a playing together. Such an inquiry carried an obligation for me to get out of the way, to invite my colleagues to enter fully into the process, to become what, in the theatre, Augusto Boal calls "spect-actors" (Boal, 1995: xviii) but, at the same time, it called for me to remain the primary researcher and hence, to accept the obligation to plan, to lead and to shape the work. Otherwise, we could all wander aimlessly through the words - just as I did with a group of youngsters a few years ago.

A

We had been involved for several weeks in a study of the early explorers of the Canadian west - telling stories, drawing maps, preparing and eating bannock and beans, singing songs, learning how to portage canoes, writing journals and participating in interviews in role. The penultimate lesson which was to result in a final journal entry about reaching the Pacific included a trek to the beach.

Everything went well until we started to return to the school. Several students asked if we could take another route - up the creek and through a small wooded area. Most seemed excited by the prospect; several assured me that they knew the way; and one promised to lead us. Predictably, those who were familiar with the trail headed off enthusiastically and quickly - far too quickly for some of the slower ones. As I had to stay behind to help them over the stumps, around the swampy areas and through the blackberry bushes, I was soon separated

from the pathfinders. Shouting and searching for signs of their passage did not save us from a great deal of difficulty and a certain embarrassment when, some half an hour later, we stumbled out onto the road about fifty metres from the well-worn path of entry to the trail.

The pedagogical opportunity embedded in the experience was far too rich for me to pass up. The following morning, we revisited the episode. Students reflected on what had happened, what could have happened and what should have happened. We decided to try the adventure a second time but with some changes. It was quickly agreed that we needed to have a leader, that some criteria for leadership should be identified and that the leader who was chosen would have to provide and seek our consent to follow a particular plan of action. Interestingly enough, the same student who had volunteered to lead us on the earlier occasion was chosen again but the difference was that it was clear to him and to all of us the criteria which had been used to place him in that position of responsibility. It did not take long for him to establish the route and the procedure, to offer his commitment and to seek ours. Within a couple of hours, we had identified criteria, selected a leader, developed a plan of action, completed the second journey to the beach and back, and learned a great deal about the woods, about leadership and about caring for one another in the process.

Ω

As already stated, my research had to make way for the searching and

researching of the others but I was the one who developed the plan of action, selected the point of entry, chose the paths to follow as I will be the one who faces the music at the end of our journeying. What happened along the way as I invited my colleagues to wander with me through the recollections of our teaching and of our becoming teachers was intended to provide spaces for their stories to make themselves heard. Still, it is my research and to suggest otherwise would be not only deceptive but also unwise. Not foolish, but unwise. For the foolish, you see, are closer kin to the wise than are the unwise.

The call of obligation which comes from deep inside the earth comes to each of us in the breath which Wisdom blows into all of her dusty creatures but those who respond to the call of obligation, Caputo suggests, are fools. "Fools consume their lives, their flesh, in the service of others, of other flesh" (127).

The foolishness of obligation means trafficking with the most unbecoming persons, inhabiting the most unseemly places. It means consorting with the ill-constituted, with the lowest registers on the odor of rank. It labors among the poor and the homeless, the mentally and physically disadvantaged. It nurses the sick, tends to the terminally ill, works in the worst schools ... (218)

Wisdom calls out for compassion for all creatures, for justice for the whole of creation, and it is the fools who respond by making gifts of themselves. Teachers are the sort of fools who make gifts of themselves - often, without

any rewards other than in the giving. It is these foolish stories that I have shared and that I have given my colleagues an opportunity to share, such stories that I would hope those who say that they want to teach might read and consider as they move towards making a commitment to this "holy play" (McLaren, 1988: 174).

Playing together, like eating and drinking together, means touching one another - flesh to flesh. Touching the flesh of those who are like me, those whom I like, and touching the flesh of those who are not like me, those whom I do not like. All of us who participated in this project have been called to work and to play with those who are often hard to like and harder still to love. The stories that we have shared reveal how we have met those obligations which have come to us clinging to the flesh (Caputo, 1993:196) of "the marginalized, the outcast, the stranger, the abnormal" (148), those who are designated as intellectually, socially, economically unworthy but who, above all, are worthy of our love.

The nobodies: nobody's children, owners of nothing
The nobodies: the no ones, the nobodied, running like rabbits
dying through life, screwed every which way.
Who are not, but could be.
Who don't speak languages, but dialects.
Who don't have religions, but superstitions.
Who don't create art, but handicrafts.
Who don't have culture, but folklore.
Who are not human beings, but human resources.
Who do not have faces, but arms.
Who do not have names, but numbers.
Who do not appear in the history of the world, but in the
police block of the local papers.

The nobodies who are not worth the bullet that kills them.

(from *The Book of Embraces* by Eduardo Galeano)

The process of gathering the stories carried another circle of obligations. I was obligated to be sure that those who agreed to enter the re/searching with me understood that, throughout the time that we were working together, they had to decide how much or how little they were willing to share with me and, through me, with others. At the same time, this obligation to protect my colleagues as we were digging and delving into our personal histories was juxtaposed with an obligation to lead them into a critical engagement with these re-memberings. This two-fold responsibility motivated me to design a process incorporating strategies that would not only elicit autobiographical information but also encourage and facilitate reflection and analysis.

Although it was my intention to enable all of us to walk into our re-memberings and to consider them as they relate to the stories of others, to our present experiences and to our visions for the future, it was not my intention to press for synthesis within or among the shared stories. The traditional pressing for generalizability, the phenomenological striving for essences and commonalities, was set aside. "The point of view of 'obligation'," says Caputo, is "irrevocably attached to the singular, to the... particular" (191). And, as Wen-song Hwu reminds us, that particular is not a fixed reality (Pinar, 1995: 493). The authentic self, as it were, is a self that is constantly changing, like

an image seen through a mist.

As I moved further into the research, more and more obligations pirouetted around me. To what extent should I encourage the use of other expressive media? What if some wished to tell their stories in poetry, music, drama, dance, visual art? Which obligation should take precedence as I transformed the data into dramatic form? Was I to be more or less faithful to my art, to my research, or to those whose stories I will share?

According to Noddings, "the data are, in an important sense, mutually constructed by researcher and subject" (1986: 509) and so a genuine question arose over the ownership of the data and over the extent to which my interpretations would dominate other interpretations. It was certainly not my intention to take what was not freely given. Nor did I wish to misinterpret the data that were shared with me. Therefore, in my initial contact with those who were involved in the project with me, I made it clear that the data which were to be collected would be transformed into readers' theatre. In addition, while I made a commitment to endeavour to maintain the integrity of the material given to me, I wanted those who would offer the materials as "raw data" to understand from the start that I had no intention of simply translating individual recollections and reflections directly into dramatic dialogue. Having read what Laurel Richardson refers to as "ethnographic drama" (1993: 695), I was quite certain that I had an obligation to shape an

acceptable piece of theatre. I did not and I still do not believe that the simple recording²⁷ of direct dialogue or the transposing of prose into dramatic dialogue²⁸ is any more likely to be dramatic than the writing of words in the shape of a poem is to be poetic. The æsthetic dimension of the research obligated me to move beyond dialogical production of discourse and to give the work a "sense of wholeness, of balance, of design, and of integrity" (Huebner, 1975: 226).

In having committed myself to the composition of a work for the theatre, I bound myself to working with the words in such a way that a tension was created between the said and unsaid, between sound/movement and stillness. Through the focussing on and the contrasting of voices of teaching in different times and places as well as through the incorporation of symbol and ritual, I tried to create a script that would embody the people and their stories but, at the same time, place those stories in a world apart.

The question of whose voices speak in the research findings is one which cannot be avoided in any type of inquiry. By having chosen to invite the researched to become researchers, I chose to enter into relationships that demanded a great deal of trust. Just as my colleagues had to trust me, in my re-writing, and later, the actors in their performing, to be faithful to the stories which they had shared in a caring community so I had to be willing to let my teacher's voice speak as one of many, my playwright's voice keep the

silences between the voices of others (Lather, 1993: 681), and my researcher's voice speak from underneath, rather than from above the work.

In the designing of this study, I chose to share with other teachers "a special kind of voice," one which Janet Miller says "speaks *with* authority" (Agor, 1992: 398). Research about teaching which is "performed by teachers," which is "deeply embedded in practice and profoundly personal" (396) wears an authenticity that is not easily ignored, not easily disguised by interpretation. Therefore, while the experiences that my colleagues shared did pass through several layers of interpretation before being presented on the stage, I believe that, like the threads in a tapestry, the stories continued to make their presence known in the drama. Through the actors bringing life to the words that had been written and re-written, the audience was given the opportunity to watch and to listen through an "open door" (Brook, 1993). The voice of the researcher was displaced (Hwu, 1993: 190)²⁹ so that it became as if the voices of the teachers were being heard for the first time. Then, as now in this re/writing, the untangling of the voices, the pulling out of the y(e)arns, is being left to our other selves.

What a wonderful performance. So well read and with such conviction. Of course, it took me back to when I entered teaching. I would like to tell you my beginnings in teaching, perhaps to add to what was said tonight.

I entered because my ex-wife was destined to be a teacher and I, not knowing what to do with my life at that time, followed her lead. I soon discovered a lot

about myself. Once my Faculty Advisor told me after two observations that "it was obvious (I) couldn't think on my feet."

I'll never forget that comment.

When my marriage ended four and one-half years later, I quit teaching. I no longer had a leader to follow. Besides, I had examined what I wanted in a career and found teaching wanting... I pursued an apprenticeship in carpentry for five years. However, I missed the autonomy I had as a teacher, the camaraderie I experienced with teacher friends and the energy and spirit of the children. I returned to teaching in 1985 and have not regretted it.

Tonight I identified with many of the experiences described by the readers... In this time of change and misgivings about the future there was something warm and strong and reassuring expressed ...in these musings ...

(These comments are excerpts from an e-mail message which was sent to me less than an hour after the stage performance by a teacher who was not involved in the project.)

"From time to time the abyss shows through.... (it) bleeds through the cracks and crevices of ordinary existence." "We are driven to the edge" or, if we have not learned "to laugh off the limits life sets," "over the edge" (Caputo, 1993: 239). What is needed, Caputo assures us, is a joy that is to be found in our ordinary lives, in "the finite, immanent ... goals of daily life, the surpassing joy of the day-to-day, of work and companionship" (234). This is the joy which brings life from the Nyagroda seed, the joy which infused our dancing together

in this research, a joy which will lead, not to a "*Resultat*" (234) which commits murder (Daignault, 1992: 199) by explaining, justifying, legitimating, or which commits suicide by denying all meaning (199), but an "*exultat*" (Caputo, 1993: 234), a loud rejoicing in the very method of our madness, a celebration of what has happened, what is happening and what will happen, be it "for better or for worse" (234).

The Chirring of the Locusts

(Companions Reflect)

In this section it is my intention to respond to excerpts from the materials that were generated by my colleagues during and after the retreat as well as from the transcripts of the interviews, those that were conducted prior to the gathering and those conducted subsequent to the performance of the play. The first theme that I decided to explore was one of personal and professional development. I thought that I would find a number of comments similar to the one quoted earlier which spoke of my having invited my friends to come out to play but, in fact, I did not. While I am still very sure that everyone who gave up the weekend to take part in the research saw it as an opportunity for them to do something for themselves as much as, if not more than, doing something for me, I was unable to find the words that expressed this - probably because it was not a question that I asked. With the following exception, they remained unspoken (but not unheard).

- 22 I: (the sharing of teaching experiences) *is one of the things that lacks in the school. Where I used to work in a day care - it was a day care; it was like underpaid and not officially recognized but everybody there wanted to work for the kids and everybody was learning all the time and we had bi-weekly meetings where we would talk only about dealing with stu- with kids. We had meetings to deal with administration and all of the day-to-day, papers and details of the organization, but we had bi-weekly meetings just to talk about pédagogie*

23 R: Pedagogy

24 I: *pedagogy- and I was really taken by that. I come into the official school system and we have what? two days a year and then we talk about, we spend three hours talking about, well - Should we have a ten minute break in the morning or not? I mean that -*

25 R: What do we do about lates (Laughter)

26 I: (Laughter) *Yes, that's the point I find frustrating in our system. We don't have those times.*

.....

46 I: *I know that it's not easy to be part of a group and to share your personal teaching and to recognize your flaws and but I also know it's very enriching. I mean, there are too few people with whom I can do that and I really regret that....*

(from Transcript A:1)

As I listened to the tapes and reread the transcripts, I continued to wonder how it might be possible to bring to the writing those thoughts and feelings that were hidden in the words, hidden in the choices of words, in the voice, in the gesture, in what was happening between us as we talked. The question remains unanswered.

Almost everyone had something to say about the notion of teaching as a vocation but these lines of poetry, taken from a longer work written by one of

my companions on the journey, seem to capture much of what many of us shared:

St. John's 1970-1976

*I never wanted to be a teacher.
I wanted to be an astronomer
and watch the heavens, or
even a poet and write the heavens.
I took a vocational interest inventory.
I learned I ought to be a farrier,
even though I am scared of horses.*

Vancouver 1989 - Present

.....

*Like Jonah who called to Ninevah
rejected the call, tried to reject the call,
ran in the opposite direction,
but ended up in Ninevah anyway,
no escape, trapped in a big fish belly,
vomited on the shore of Ninevah,
still reluctant,
sulks for days,*

*I do not know in the sentence
the locution or location of my vocation.
Where is the call coming from?
Who is calling me?
I have no vocation, a noun;
I have a vocating, a verb.
At least I am not vacating.*

*I am not responding to a vocation.
I am a vocation, a verb of vocation,
always continuous, present, now.*

*Jonah was not running away;
Jonah was running his vocation.
All I have and do. All the strange
twists are part of my verbal role.*

*I have not been called to teaching.
I am a teacher, teaching always. No
vacation from vocation, no avocation,
my call is all. I live my teaching;
my teaching is lived. I have turned
a circle, round and round, to know
I am a teacher, a farrier even,*

*who shoes students in order
to shoo them away, no
reluctance to walk with them,
only wanting them to hear
the poetry in their journeys.
I am a teacher, I am a farrier
who shoes and shoos students.*

(Leggo, 1996)

The responses to the play from the actors and members of the audience who were not involved in the project were overwhelmingly positive but I knew that I had been part of something very powerful when I conducted the final interviews and heard comments such as these:

- 1 R: The first thing I want to know is whether or not your stories were on stage last night.
- 2 I: Oh, yes! Oh my! I listened for my own and it's almost in anticipation of knowing something of what was to come. After they began, I realized

that- I had a sense of what would happen but because I was listening for my own, I was also really listening to the others ... and it gave me more of a feeling that I think may have come closer to that of people who hadn't been involved (in the retreat) - of hearing for the first time the recollections and the thoughts, the feelings, the background ... and also to watch people's faces which I found myself doing a lot. Not just the performers - in fact, less so the performers, but to watch the faces of the teachers, the people who know teachers and the people who work with teachers and so on and to see the expressions pass over their faces and whole rows of heads nodding up and down together in agreement with what was being said. And sometimes even little fidgeting movements. People were responding so much to what was being said that it was almost as though they had a need to express themselves, that they wanted to be able to say something and didn't have the avenue there but I'm sure - sort of again this cascade of thoughts and emotions. I would think that just from the expressions on their faces and the responses from people that were there, there's lot of people at home did a lot of thinking last night.... I was blown away. It was wonderful. It was just - you , you spoke for us. I mean, you - the performers did but you did because I know you created that ... you took us... and pulled something higher and deeper from it. Boy, it was neat to see that....

This is something that should be on the education channel and it should be a required part of every student teachers' training to listen to people who are teachers, who have been teachers. In all my time of student teaching and everything else that I've done, I never heard anybody sitting down and talking about these thoughts and it was wonderful to be involved in that in the fall and then to be able to watch and hear and go through it again and to recollect those thoughts again and it was just so valuable.

.....

- 5 R: ...to what extent did you think that I had taken material and manipulated it to the point of altering it?
- 6 I: *Listening to my own stories and knowing some of the other stories that had been told in our group meetings, I really didn't get a sense that there was any alteration as such. There - maybe editing taking what could be a rather lengthy story and compressing it but not taking the germ of it, not changing the nature of the story itself ...*

.....

- 11 R: You know that I made a specific decision to use readers' theatre as a way of presenting this. Could you comment on the effect of the readers' theatre in terms of bringing this to life.
- 12 I: *I'm not very experienced with readers' theatre. It was not something that was common or whatever when I went to school and I have had very little exposure to it as opposed to performance theatre which I did quite a bit of but there's just a couple of things because I was so impressed with how things went last night. One of the things that did impress me most was that the audience was left to their own images. Rather than seeing someone else - the closest thing I can relate it to is perhaps the difference between reading a wonderful novel and seeing the television production of it. Something is lost in the translation. It loses the imagination ; it loses the audience participation and involvement. We could see the faces of the performers- the speakers, - but they, in fact, weren't even performing. They weren't creating the visual image for us to be distracted by. They were telling our stories and in so doing the audience could sit and, in fact, close their eyes and in your head have the imagination- have the image of what you yourself have gone through so again, it tied that individual experience into the group, into being a teacher. Wow, it's giving and taking at the same time, there's a real - the audience is involved. And*

that's what just blew me away. 'Cause just as I said. To see all the heads nodding up and down and saying, "Yes, yes, yes. Oh yes, that's it. That's it exactly."

(Transcript B1)

The comments from this colleague confirmed what I had seen and felt - in the writing, in the rehearsals and at the performance. However, I am not sure that I agree with her about the television production part. I did have the performance videotaped with two cameras and I did take the time to view the tapes and to plan the editing so that it could be shared but, it seems to me that like the efforts to transcribe the complexities of the interviews, like the filming of the wonderful novel, something very important would be lost in the translation.

3 R: When you watched and listened to the whole play, were you able to say, "Those are my words?"

4 I: *Yes, I was but - yes, I was.*

5 R: And were you always sure which were your words and which weren't?

6 I: *Not always, no. I think there was some - there's definitely overlap there. People that go into teaching have ... this common experience, I think.*

- 7 R: I find it interesting that I come in and you are playing the acoustic guitar. For me, the acoustic guitar takes it back to the basics and that's the way I see readers' theatre - taking it back to the basics and I'm wondering if I were to say now , okay, I had the choice of dressing those actors up in costumes and making them up and doing an entirely different kind of play - where they performed the characters. How do you think that would have been?
- 8 I: *If they dressed up and each one played a particular character? Each one would have played one of us? Probably - perhaps integration wouldn't have been there somehow- there's an integration that goes on the way you did it with different people where it would have been - it probably would have been received probably totally differently too. Like it's just character sketches I suppose whereas this went a lot - you were attempting to, at least in my mind ... there was more of an integration going on there for sure than I think than having people play different characters.*

(Transcript B3)

A majority of the lines that specifically contained my story were given to the actor who wore the jester's hat. I see/saw myself as the fool, the *schlemiel*, and deliberately chose an actor who is a very close friend and who has engaged in a great deal of fooling around with me over the years to play the role. Although I had worked hard to achieve the sort of integration and overlap that is referred to in the previous interviews, I was very sensitive to the possibility that someone might be insulted if it appeared that I had labelled him or her as

any one of the voices. (In the programme, for example, I separated the list of actors from the list of voices and stated that "I believe that we, as teachers, speak in all of these voices at one time or another.")

That each of us speaks in a variety of voices was confirmed for me, for example, when shortly after I had finished the script, the actor who was to play the schoolmaster, and who proudly carries the reputation of being the master, arrived at school wearing one pink sock and one purple sock. He had a wonderful time inviting responses from students and colleagues throughout the day.

During the previous interview³⁰, my colleague spoke with pride of himself as the fool and then went on to tell the following story:

One of my students yesterday - you know we now are starting a new semester and my grade elevens who don't know me in Chemistry classes. I've been pushing so hard talking about all the stuff that I'm teaching is theory and I said that I stand up here and I talk about sodium and potassium and all that stuff and it's just all theory. We don't really know if any of this is true and I kind of was hammering them story after story of how I hold up this model. "This is just theory. It's not real. We don't even know."

So finally this kid couldn't take it any more and said, "You know what, Mr. D-, I don't think you know what you're doing."

And I said, " You know what! I don't!"

It was beautiful. It was perfect. I couldn't have paid him...

Of course, the telling of and the listening to this story is infilled with laughter. Gary Dault describes laughter as "a prism through which a clutch of other passions can be focussed and dispersed into light and colour" (1995: 51). What a delightful image to keep in mind as I recall the laughter in the interviews, at the retreat, at the rehearsals.

1 R: So what did you think?

2 I: *I thought it was great. I thought it was really interesting. Fast-moving, well done and I didn't know really what to expect - and I guess none of us did - but it was fun sort of sitting there looking down from the moon at yourself. Looking at yourself but also remembering some of the episodes that other people had come up with.*

.....

5 R: I made a definite decision to use Readers' Theatre rather than performance theatre with people in costumes and things and I'm wondering how you feel about that decision.

6 I: *I thought that was a good decision because you were dealing directly and wholly with the text rather than with any kind of body language that they would try and impersonate so I thought that really was a - I've never had that experience of watching that kind of thing before but I had the feeling that it was, it made it very focussed. When you asked me this*

and I think of it being sort of - sort of acted - that it would have detracted from the thoughts. We did the acting at the retreat and we were inside it and dealing with each other. To have a group of neutral people come in and - I think we might have found ourselves thinking, "Did they portray this action or that action right?" No, it just focussed right on what was there and it moved so neatly along. The actors just picked it up and ran with it. It was neat. It was bloody well-written. The medium was very interesting. You found yourself inviting in other people to what was - what became - rather an intimate experience in the retreat and I wondered whether this was going to be an intrusion.

.....

- 9 R: Certainly, it was a wonderful experience for me and I sure appreciate the part that you played in it.
- 10 I: Hey, Jeanette, it was a privilege. It really is unusual to be hauled off the shelf you know, to dust yourself off and make yourself remember things and remember in front of other people and to remember and express weaknesses as well as feelings about your profession. And when you do that you get to that stage, you develop, you really do develop a sort of an intimacy - an in feeling, an in group feeling that becomes a bit privileged in itself because you know other people are doing the same thing and, you know, when you're off and retired sometimes you're - there are stretches in life, a lot of life when it gets too easy. You know when you don't have to think about those kinds of things or be involved and that's why I say it was a privilege because it was enriching to force yourself to live those feelings over and try and be - well, I don't know if you were trying to be objective or subjective about being a part of that - summing yourself up in bits and pieces.

I didn't know if this was going to be an annoyance in terms of my

Kathaumixaw³¹ timing and everything else but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

(from Transcript B4)

When I first moved to this community, I was drawn in to working with students from the UNESCO club to prepare for the International Days. Under the sponsorship of this colleague, who has since retired, the school hosted an annual gathering of students from other countries who were studying at the universities. Keynote speakers would be brought in, debates and discussions would take place in a number of classrooms in the school; there would be a dinner, a dance, parties, a car rally and, in one way or another, the whole community would be involved in this major event. It is not surprising that this man is now playing a major role in the international choral festival which is held bi-annually in our community.

I feel very privileged to know him, to have worked with him for so many years and, above all, to have had him participate in this research.

1 R: Tell me about the play, D-.

2 I: *I thoroughly enjoyed the play. Mainly because, of course, having been part of it and part of the group that devised it, it was a treat to kind of*

listen to the vignettes ... that were scattered ... and listening to those come out from different people was a treat... it sure crystallized for me; I was amazed how you could take an interview in the boat and the stories out there and it was all - just condensed into a forty-five minute play. It was amazing.

.....

- 8 I: *I had never been to a readers' theatre before, I didn't know what to expect and I was delighted. I was absolutely delighted.*

.....

I was thoroughly entertained but again I had been there you know and it was like someone who took my experience and then said, like, "I'll paint you a picture." So I was there for more than the theatre, you know. It was like maybe you took a script from me and you were going to put that script into a - make it into a play and /or I wrote you a story and you were going to make it into a play and I was there to see how you translated it. I wasn't there just to say, "Well, this sounds like an interesting story and I'd like to be there to be part of it." I was a part of it.

- 9 R: *And you were still a part of it in the translation?*

- 10 I: *Oh YEAH! OH yeah! I mean the number of times that I, you know, I physically left there- I mean, just now, I just got a shiver. I was back down in that basement - particularly with the ones that really evoked- all of those just came ringing back to me.*

But just that whole - God, that eclectic. How we all - all the different passions that got us started into this business, you know. The calling - boy, and it ain't a call that's just the one note the loon hears - not at all.

(from Transcript B5)

I am intrigued by the comment "I physically left there." Not long ago, I was involved in a group meditation and I watched people as they allowed themselves to become part of the process. There was such a stillness that took over the place. I saw bodies vacated and I saw them re-occupied as people came back from wherever their re-membering had taken them. It was quite amazing to see and to experience.

1 R: Tell me what you thought.

2 I: *I think it built a culture of acceptance for teachers as real people. That's what I liked about it. I thought that while I was listening to all those voices, there were things that we all shared in common and there was a feeling then of valuing and dedication for the work that we did ...that really did come out and the night of warmth. And then also just the individuals being able to think back to those people and even though I've been part of it, seeing it in that kind of setting with those people reading it made it just more of a story. It was more of a story. It wasn't individual people telling; it was a whole piece and I think that the different people reading all brought a whole new dimension to it so it came alive for me with the performance.*

3 R: If I were to ask you now about the way that I chose to have it

performed, as in readers' theatre as opposed to costumes and individual characters, how would you respond to that decision?

- 4 I: *Oh, I would always go for the readers' theatre. Any time I think where you wanted to do a performance, putting people in costumes and trying to re-create, you know, exactly often is doomed to failure. You know, the less you do of that, the better. Just keep the abstract to it so you can think about the words and you know you're not having two dimensions, one to draw away from the other. And that abstract kind of enables you to just have a setting, The setting was the people and the colour and the music and the semi-circle and the way the voices came back and forth, all of that, but it allowed you the freedom of your own interpretation. If you tried to have people get up there - oh, oh, that wouldn't have worked at all.*

(Transcript B6)

I have already discussed my concerns with those works which are being described as readers' theatre but which, to me, seem to be simply oral readings of unedited or moderately edited dialogue or monologue.

This interview confirmed that I had been successful in my efforts to move the text from the place where the stories had been re-called to a place where they were shared with a broader audience. The readers' theatre piece which I wrote and produced not only incorporated the elements of theatre but also wove the stories together in such a way that even those whose stories were being told

were unable to unravel them from the others.

1 I: *About the presentation?*

Oh, I thought it was great. I found it quite moving. (Still got a mouthful of doughnut here.) I found it quite poignant. It was almost sad. You know, there was so much feeling there. And I think I - I was responding for me. I think I found teaching very, very hard work. And as I listened I could hear that - , sort of thinking I don't know whether I would do it again. You know, people when I say that- people say, "Oh, but you're so good at it." But it's hard work and I think I heard that. And it was very clever the way you wound it- wove it all together. I had no idea how you were going to do it. And it was good and it moved really well. Of course, I was drawn right into it because I had been there and I was recognizing things. There were some people there who had not been present that day. What were their comments?

2 R: *Oh, there were some very very interesting comments,*

3 I: *It was quite wrenching, you know. Like there was a lot that was positive but the thing I was relating to was, was the drain, you know, the demands of it all.*

4 R: *Are you telling me it was depressing?*

5 I: *No, no it wasn't. But it was - it was sobering. It was serious.*

(Transcript B8)

Teaching is, as has been said many times, a very isolating sort of work. We go into our separate classrooms and close the doors and rarely have the opportunity to participate in the sort of "emotional entanglement" that we found ourselves in at the retreat. As Carl Leggo said, in the interview following his viewing of the videotape of the production, it was a "richly human" experience, one where "we shared more than stories." That so many of my colleagues felt that the play "recaptured the intimacy" of the retreat, that it took them back to the place, to the people, to what had "happened in our sharing" confirmed for me that drama has a unique power.³²

The Seventh Ruminaton

(On Possibilities)

As I consider the possibilities contained within this research, I also consider the possibilities that remain outside. There is, for example, the possibility that the work might never have happened. There is also the possibility that it might have been done differently, with different people, in a different place. And, of course, the story of this research might have been told quite differently from the way that I have told it. I extend an invitation to the reader to ruminate with me on these possibilities.

When I wrote the poem which appears in "Journeying up the Crooked River," I was still wrapped in fear of the academy and of the judgement that would come down on my head if I didn't find the right answers and report them in the right way. I was often tempted to leave, to go home and to leave the work undone. But, fortunately, before I folded my tent and ran away, I had a chance (or perhaps not by chance) meeting with a friend who, as only he could, asked the right questions.

Is the work worth doing?
Who will do it if you don't?

So the question turned
and
re/turned

Why should I continue to punish myself in this way?

And the answer - again, the same two questions :

Is the work worth doing?

Who will do it if I don't?

The work was, and still is important to me. There is no question that it was worth doing. In listening again to the tapes of the interviews, in reading again the transcripts and the documents that were given to me at the retreat and following the retreat, in watching the play again and again, I am amazed at the richness which is present in what seems to be such a simple project.

Because the initial idea came through me, because I did work hard in the planning and the preparation, in the creation of the spaces for the stories to emerge and in the re-writing, I do have a sense of pride in the results. But, at the same time, I understand my contribution as maieutic. My presence and my expertise - in the areas of professional development and in theatre - were important but without the teachers who participated as storytellers, as actors and as spect-actors, I would have had nothing to do. There would have been no work to call forth, no play to birth.

The first decision that was made was with regard to methodology. James Macdonald describes three kinds of methodologies that can be used to generate an understanding of the world - science, critical theory and mytho-poetics (Macdonald, 1988: 108). The latter invites an indwelling rather than an experimentation; it speaks of awe and wonder and plays with the puzzles of life rather than searching for solutions. It seemed to be the most appropriate

choice.

Within this framework, there are a number of ways that the research might have been carried out. Phenomenology is one way but, while its traces remain within this work, it is not the way that, in the end, I chose to follow. As discussed earlier, I felt that rather than "crossing out the particular" (Grumet, 1995), rather than taking the risk of losing in consensus and in compromise what might be significant to the individual, rather than screening out voices in an attempt to come to an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon, the work would be enriched by our listening to many voices telling us about the call of teaching as it is heard and responded to and as it is not heard, not responded to.

In listening to the tapes of the initial interviews³³ this afternoon as I weeded my garden, I was very intrigued with the silences in those conversations. I could recall my surprise at some of the responses. There is the suggestion, in one of the conversations, that my body might have shown disappointment - though it was not evident in the speech. But what was very apparent was the indecision. I didn't know whether to proceed and to continue to draw this person into the research or to thank her, turn off the tape recorder and have a casual visit. Instead, as I would in my weeding if I were unsure of the identity of a plant that I found popping up in some crowded spot of my garden, I decided to wait and to see what would emerge. In the end, everyone who had

been contacted and who had responded with interest was invited to participate, to have a voice. (They agreed and I agreed; we were in agreement.³⁴) In retrospect, I would say that this was a good decision. Not only did those of us who were caught by the concept of vocation have to re-think our understandings but also those who had never considered teaching as a calling had to look at that possibility. What emerged in the text of the drama was a sort of con-fusion of views.

The second major decision was to choose the method of gathering the data. Originally, I designed a method which incorporated aspects of Pinar's *currere*, Ondaatje's commonplace book³⁵ (Ondaatje, 1992: 96), Butt's collaborative autobiography and Groome's shared praxis. After having made a presentation to the Annual Conference of the Journal of Curriculum Theorizing in September, 1995, I was convinced that the strategies had to be simplified. Discussions with Bill Pinar and Richard Butt, both of whom had attended my session, supported this decision and helped me to revise the process so that, rather than using text other than that generated by the participants, two school photographs were used as the common place.³⁶ One of the photographs, taken early in the 1920's, shows my father and his classmates on the steps of the same school where I sat with my peers as the second photograph was taken some thirty years later. This decision to use photographs as a means of evoking personal memories had positive results in that it encouraged the others to use their own and other bodies to remember and to recreate a number of very

interesting images from their student experiences.

There are also a number of possible questions that might have been asked in the interviews and in the generation of data at the retreat. Some, for example, might have revealed more about attitudes towards professional development activities and to the activities included as part of this particular project but this information is not especially relevant. And, it does seem to me that in several of the interviews, the attitudes are implicit. What I am not so certain of is whether or not I should have focussed less on the themes of school and teaching and more on the personal stories of the teachers. However, there is always the possibility that had I done that there might have been less sharing. Often people who are not used to working autobiographically - which is the majority of those who were involved in this project - feel more protected when they can place the personal stories within the framework of something else, such as the professional.

The other major decision that was made had to do with the way that I would share the data that were collected.³⁷ In choosing to use drama, I anticipated that I was choosing a way of mirroring the tension and the relaxation, the balance and the imbalance, a way of re-calling "the rhythmic incoherence" (Langer, 1957: 8) of the lives of teachers.

Drama as it is performed in a theatre may be described as being either

presentational or representational. Presentational drama is highly stylized theatre and it makes no pretense, through elaborate sets, costumes or any technical means, to bring a reality to the stage into which the audience can escape. In the case, for example, of Bertolt Brecht's plays the work is framed in such a way that the audience is constantly reminded of its distance from the situation and thus of its ability to make political decisions which will change an unacceptable reality for themselves and for others. Similarly, the work of Augusto Boal sees the theatre as a place for enframing issues in such a way that people become conscious of the need for political change but, unlike Brecht, Boal blurs the boundaries between the real and the imagined, between the audience and the spectator so that the spect-actor can actually rehearse these changes.

In the conventional vocabulary of the theatre, then, readers' theatre, while it does not often serve the sort of political agenda that is present in the work of Brecht and Boal, is presentational rather than representational. I am aware that, considering the way in which I have used the word re-present to mean a way of making a person, a situation, present again, this differentiation may seem both confusing and contradictory. I apologize for this confusion but I will leave the contradiction alone.³⁸

Donmoyer describes readers' theatre as:

a staged presentation of a piece of text or selected pieces of different texts which are thematically linked.

Selections are sometimes performed by individuals and sometimes read chorally by the ensemble or a subgroup of ensemble players. Staging is simple; scenery is normally limited to stools and ladders; props are used sparingly, if at all; and theatrical lighting, although it enhances the dramatic impact of the readers' theatre production, is not required. The performers hold scripts, and any "acting out" of a piece is limited and highly stylized.

In choosing to use readers' theatre, as opposed to performance theatre,³⁹ I deliberately rejected the conjuring up of "the illusion of reality on stage" (1995: 6). Instead of creating a series of characters for the audience to look at, the actors were sharing stories in such a way that the audience was invited to enter into these other places and times as they saw them, as they had experienced them. The work encourages the audience to laugh with, rather than to laugh at, to bring their own stories of pain and frustration, of joy and success, alongside those being told by the actors on stage, and thus, to make meaning of their own experiences.

In writing a script for either presentational or representational theatre, the playwright is confronted by decisions about what characters to bring to life, what sort of language to use, what to include and what to leave out. In this case, I chose to work with voices rather than with characters. After reviewing all of the material which I had gathered, I discerned ten voices of teaching - the Voice of Experience, the Voice of Commitment, the Voice of Compassion, the Voice of Idealism, the Voice of Passion, the Voice of Perseverance, the Voice of Confusion, the Voice of the Artist, the Voice of the Fool, and the

Voice of the Master. In the original production, each voice was brought to life by a different actor but (as I noted in the programme) I believe that we, as teachers, speak in all of these voices at one time or another.

The dramatic framework with which I began was both temporal and conceptual. The opening movement, which establishes itself as set in the classroom through a roll call, draws upon the stories that the teachers told of themselves as students. It includes humorous stories, pleasant stories and some that are far from pleasant. The transition from the student past to the teaching past is achieved through a graduation scene. The second movement, which is introduced through an allusion to Jonah's journeying to Ninevah by way of Tarshish, provides insight into a variety of ways that teachers respond and fail to respond to the call of teaching. The third movement is set in the present and offers a kinetic dialectic of opinions about what teachers perceive as happening in the classroom. The final movement is more reflective and symbolic; the dialogue becomes a moving back and forth from memories of the past to visions of the future. The work ends as it began - with gentle music.

In trying to create a work that was theatrical, a work that was aesthetically pleasing, I knew that there was a strong possibility that I might cover up the truths that had been shared. There was also the danger of romanticizing and thus trivializing the stories. I endeavoured to avoid both of these pitfalls. By drawing from the transcripts of interviews, from letters, poems, stories,

drawings as well as entries from my own and from others' journals, I gleaned stories from each of the participants. Then, through the incorporation of a variety of recollections and reflections in the drama, I tried to provide the audience with insight into personal histories as well as into those experiences that were held in common. I made no attempt to smooth over the disenchantments nor to promulgate the conception of the teacher as "the good kid" (rasberry, 1995). Like the knots and braids in a multi-textured tapestry, the protrusions in our lives were left to draw attention, to invite touching.

"Narrative is not simply personal story-telling" (Smith, 1996). The individual story gains meaning within the context of the larger stories. In this work, the larger story is the story of teaching in the public school system. It was in an attempt to place the stories of individual teachers in a metonymic relationship with the larger story that I chose to use the ten voices of teaching. The voices of experience, commitment, compassion, idealism, perseverance, passion and confusion spoke for all of us just as did the voices of the fool, the artist and the master.

Glasgow Koste, in discussing the transformational work of the playwright that we have called dramatic adaptation, suggests that the process is more of an adopting than it is an adapting. She says, "I find that the narrative sources I have chosen to (adopt, to) 'take up as my own' are as deeply possessed as those primary sources that my 'original' plays are born of." The "deep

responsibility" to those whose stories one is bringing to life on the stage demands a care-full-ness. What Winifred Ward describes as being at the heart of the original story, Koste says, "cannot be betrayed" (1995: 10).

During the initial conversations, one of my colleagues indicated that he would like to perform in the readers' theatre presentation. Of course, this was a possibility but one that I was not really open to then (although I said that we could talk about it and re-consider at a later time). I am even less open to that variation now. For purposes of the research, it was very important that those whose stories were hidden in the text of the play not read the script prior to the production because the script was written to be performed. Although most of what was made present - in the costumes, the set, the props, the movement and the music - is noted in the stage directions, these elements remain tied to the paper, bound in the text. It is only when they are given life on the empty stage with an audience that they express the ideas hidden within them.

As the playwright, I knew what I was trying to create; as the director/producer, I envisioned what the play would be like for an audience but it wasn't until the actors moved into my living room and performed the work that I experienced its fullness.

1996 01 22

Yesterday afternoon the cars began to enter the driveway shortly before 2. Like a convoy, they came one after another and my house filled with a delightful group of teacher/actors and assorted acquaintances whom I had invited to read the play. We made an empty space in the middle of the living room and had a great rehearsal. I was assured that it is a powerful work, a witness to the lives of teachers whom I have known (and those whom I have not even met).

I never cease to be amazed at the power of drama to draw people out of themselves and to unite them in the act of creation.

It was equally important that the play be presented by actors who had not been part of the original group.⁴⁰ However, it is possible, considering that the actors are also teachers and that many of them know the storytellers quite well, that the casting might have affected the way that the work was presented and received.⁴¹ In retrospect, I wonder what might have been learned had I chosen to interview the actors after the performance.

There is the possibility that the project might have been situated in another place and that it might have engaged other people. However, I think it was important for me (and, perhaps, for the teachers involved) that I did the work in my home community where I am known and (I think) trusted. Being able to

meet in my home and at a retreat centre which was also a familiar setting for many meant that we did not need to spend a lot of time creating a sense of community. I believe that, with the time constraints, it was important that the people who were involved knew each other (that is, with the exception of my colleague from the university who did not remain a stranger to the group for very long) and that they felt comfortable with one another. It was also evident that the participants respected one another on a personal as well as on a professional level, that they cared for one another and that they were willing to take risks within the group.⁴²

It is possible that a number of other factors could have caused the project to have emerged in a different way. Obviously, my personal experiences with autobiographical work and with shared praxis meant that I had some idea of the kind of results that might be evoked by using these methods. My commitment to the continuum of teacher education and professional development as well as the sanctioning of this research by the university and by the District Professional Development Committee may or may not have had an influence on people's perception of the value of the work.

As I consider the possibilities for the future of this research, I imagine all sorts of ways in which I can take what I have learned from this project into the next project and the next but the purpose for sharing my research is not so much to describe what I have done and what I will do as it is to excite others about the

possibility of using drama within the whole continuum of teacher education as a way of coming to the "horizons of the self" (Butt, 1995) and of finding the horizons of our other selves.

One of the areas where I have already suggested the work could be applied is in bringing the stories of teachers and student-teachers together. A few years ago, Joe Norris and a group of his students at the University of Alberta produced a videotape entitled *Great Expectations*. Through dramatic improvisation of personal narratives, they presented a series of vignettes from a variety of teaching practica. Since the work was created by student-teachers, it presents an easily identifiable point-of-view. When I showed the videotape at a seminar for student-teachers and their sponsoring teachers two years ago, I found that most of the student-teachers knew similar stories. But, as evident in the response of one of the teachers who was offended by the images of teachers that were presented, the picture was incomplete. The stories were those of the student-teachers, not those of the teachers. It seems to me that the juxtapositioning of a work such as *At the Heart of It All*, with its dramatized narratives of teachers, and *Great Expectations*, with the impressions of student-teachers, might generate some lively discussion as well as lead to interesting follow-up improvisational or scripted drama work.⁴³

The teacher-educator is always challenged to find ways of helping and encouraging student-teachers to view the world of the classroom from altered

perspectives. Unlike those entering most professions, those who enter teacher preparation programmes have spent most of their lives in the classroom. The classroom is a familiar place, too familiar. Those who want to teach need to be able to see this familiar place through eyes other than their own because the classrooms in which they are to be teachers will be unfamiliar places; they will not be the classrooms in which they have been students and the students whom they meet will be different from themselves. Student-teachers who are provided with the opportunity to tell their own stories, are more likely to risk a critical examination of themselves as learners (Jipson and Wilson, 1995) and to recognize the differences between their histories in the classroom and the histories of those who will be their students.

By viewing and discussing a script such as *At the Heart of It All*, student-teachers could come to a new understanding of teachers and of teaching. By re-enacting their own stories and working together to construct dramatic scripts that would re-present those stories, they would have the opportunity to learn more about the selves that they will bring to teaching. By listening to the stories that students tell they might be challenged further.⁴⁴ The incorporation of strategies which help participants to move into their own autobiographies and to place their stories and visions in a kinetic dialectic with other stories, other visions; and similarly, the transformation of these stories into artistic compositions invites both participants and percipients to listen to the sounds and the silences of these experiences more carefully.

Earlier this year, I was invited to present a drama workshop at the British Columbia Teachers' Federation Beginning Teachers' Conference. Instead of introducing strategies that teachers might use to incorporate drama into their own curricula, I found myself helping young teachers to use drama as a way of re-memembering, re-entering and changing their stories so that they could move out from a history that they found to be oppressive.

By engaging in the sort of transformational drama work that Augusto Boal calls Forum theatre and Rainbow of Desire (Boal, 1995), teachers and student-teachers are able to re-present their own experiences in the classroom and to examine their responses to the various situations in which they might have found themselves as students, as student-teachers or as teachers; they can enter the situations as others might have perceived them; they can imagine new ways to approach common problems. They can rehearse their interactions with students and colleagues. By engaging in role drama, teachers and student-teachers can be provided with an opportunity to try on different roles, to wear different masks, to experience the world as it might be experienced by others.

If teacher education curricula were to incorporate drama as a way of providing opportunities for the student-teacher to become mindful of the world of teaching before beginning to author a life as a teacher within a particular

political, social and geographical context, it might help them to peel back the layers of their "taken-for-grantedness" (Peterat and Smith, 1994). As I have suggested in my own stories, teachers need similar opportunities to linger in the images of past, present and future classrooms, to search out themes, to uncomplicate and recomplicate people and situations, to play with language, to create artful texts, to gain what Madeleine Grumet calls "the bitter wisdom of this sweet work" (1988, xx). Through drama, both those who teach and those who want to teach might be engaged in serious reflection on the difficulties of teaching and in the construction and reconstruction of pedagogies which are uniquely their own.

While the actor does hold a mirror up to nature, it must be understood that the actor is able to pass through the looking glass into a place where there is no need to worry about allowing the words, the actions to unfold unplanned. As was discussed earlier, however, such a place holds both dangers and opportunities. It is important that those who lead others in drama activities have an understanding of the way in which drama works. There is always a need to intervene when people are moving too deeply into the work. When wounds are opened, provision must be made through writing or conversation or some other appropriate means to facilitate healing.

Protection from judgement means that those involved in the drama may feel encouraged to become risk-takers. Protection from consequences means that it

is possible to rehearse daily living. Such opportunities for rehearsal of one's work in the classroom might benefit the participants and the spectators, the teachers and their students. Drama work as it could be incorporated in the continuum of teacher education, therefore, would be far more than simply playing around. It would be human beings, as subjects and objects, confronted by situations which would challenge them and, inevitably, would change them.

Teaching is not for "the timid, nor for the authoritarian rule-followers" (Zlotnik, 1995: 9). In the current political, social and economic context, there is a need to engage in lively dialogue with colleagues and with future colleagues about pedagogy as well as about issues of governance and ethics. The theory which holds a teacher's practice together must be drawn out of the tacit realm of practice into the explicit realm of discourse about practice before a critical pedagogy will emerge. One powerful way of doing this is through the use of drama. Rather than promoting the sort of *caedere* which continues to cut off theory from practice, drama work allows for a point and counterpoint of opposition and contradiction; it provides the opportunity to engage in a *cæsura*⁴⁵ that is both a turning from what has been and a seeking, through a contemplation of contradiction, of what might be.

Like desert ascetics (Sheldrake, 1995: 22), those who come together to study and to work in the same place should take the time to create a community of

learners, to enter into conversation about teachers and teaching, to listen to, and to re-enact the stories of teachers who, despite their weaknesses and frustations, are engaged in what Peter McLaren so aptly calls "holy play" (1988: 174).

(The Re/Searching)

(Bringinghurst, 1995: 177)

- **What do teachers' stories tell us about the call of teaching?**

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but which, under the surface, may be a mass of convolvulus waiting to be left alone in order to strangle and destroy the entire garden of thoughts that have been sown in the hope of bearing new fruit. Therefore, although I have made a determined effort to come to a better understanding of the phenomenon of vocation, this understanding has chosen to remain hidden within a multiplicity of interpretations all of which are embodied and context bound.

The Voice of the Artist in *At the Heart of It All* says that "the call of teaching is like a river. It is an unfolding, a revealing, a story-telling that alters and revises itself as it is told" (88). From what I have learned in this research and from my own experience, I would suggest that like Morag's river, this river continues to flow both ways. One way is the way of the calling; the other is that of the heeding. Like the source of a river, the source of the call of teaching is not located in a single site. It is here and it is there. In the children, in their parents and their grandparents. In the community and in the earth as she cries out for another way of our being in creation. In our selves and our other selves. In the disciplines in which we work. Just as the water in us moves into the air and back to the unnamed mountains to become a part of a stream, a part of the river that comes down to the sea, so the call of teaching is both inside and outside the teacher, always moving and changing.⁴⁶ It is in the excitement, in the insecurity of not knowing what is going to happen next.

The stories that were shared suggest that, like Jonah, many teachers do not hear their calling to teaching until they have gone off in the wrong direction and, by circumstances beyond their control, have been brought up short. Some find themselves from the beginning on the right path "by happy accident." Others, like me, have had to enter a desert experience in order to hear more clearly, to see more clearly the way.

Carl Leggo's poem, "Roads to Ninevah," describes the importance of coming to know one's own gifts, of declaring who one is and what one has to share.

When UBC invited me,
I presented myself a poet
who did not fit, no line,
and found a home for poets
where I was not even looking

(Leggo, 1996)

Those who gave of themselves in this research made it clear that the call of teaching is compelling; it is evocative and enigmatic. It causes us to display our passions - for life, for art, for science, for wisdom, for fun, and our compassion - for those who are like us and those who are unlike us, for those whom we like and those whom we simply love.

That the call of teaching is often lost in the noise and busy-ness of the school system was also made clear by both the practising and the retired teachers.

Future re/searching might well focus on this aspect of teaching.

How does drama help teachers to re-member and tell their stories?

Those of us who engage in empirical⁴⁷ research are always "concerned with the problem of how we can capture and keep experience" (Donmoyer, 1995: 2).

Those of us who choose a mytho-poetic methodology wonder how we can set an hermeneutic circle in motion and keep it moving in an aesthetically pleasing way.⁴⁸ My challenge was to find ways of both evoking the experiences of teachers and of expressing the stories of those experiences in an art form.

The arts, according to Elliot Eisner, "are one of the major means people throughout history have used both to conceptualize and express what has been inexpressible in discursive terms" (Eisner, 1979: 200). The decision to use drama as a way of re-membering the stories of teachers was based on my belief that drama has the power to free us intellectually and emotionally so that it becomes possible to cross over from one place to another, one time to another, one body to another. Those of us who watched as our colleague re-membered, in our presence, using our bodies, the story of having her mouth taped shut are forever changed by that story. We became spect-actors and we entered a symbolic form of expression that is beyond expression.

Murray Schafer says that the first purpose of art is exaltation.

The change that occurs when we are lifted out of the tight little cages of our daily realities. To be hurled beyond our limits into the cosmos of magnificent forces, to fly into the beams of these forces and if we blink, to have our eyes and ears and senses tripped open against the mind's will to the sensational and the miraculous. To feel these forces explode in our faces, against our bodies, breaking all encrustations and releasing us with a wild fluttering of freedom...And if we return to our daily routines, they are no longer routines, but scintillate and have become magnificent by our sensing them with fresh eyes and noses and minds and bodies.

(1991: 87)

Drama "is as multifaceted in its images, as ambivalent in its meanings as the world it mirrors. That is its main strength..." (Esslin, 1976: 118). (That I hope is the strength of this work.) Drama also has the ability to change us because it makes us conscious that we are forever walking on holy ground; drama takes us out of ourselves and into our other selves. Sometimes those other selves are distanced from us in time, as in memories of our youth or in dreams for the future, and other times, they are distanced from us in space and experience, as in those with whom we share the universe but of whose lives we have little understanding.

In this research, drama was used as a way of helping teachers to re-member, to give life again to the bodies of the past and to examine the ways in which those experiences have formed them as persons and as teachers. Through these re-enactments, those of us who were seeing and hearing, acting or

spect-acting, learned about the ones whose stories were being told and, at the same time, we learned about ourselves.

As was confirmed in the final interviews, the performance of the readers' theatre was a way of sharing the stories and of valuing those whose experiences were a part of the text. One of the teachers spoke of putting the play on the education channel. Then, she added, *"It should be a required part of every student teachers' training to listen to people who are teachers, who have been teachers."* If that were to happen, I would think that it would generate some interesting discussion about teaching and about the call of teaching.

*There are thousands of falling leaves
in the air
And I am running to catch them
in one hand.*

*Finally, I fall, exhausted
And I find them coming
to my lap.*

(Denton, 1972: 31)

The Eighth Ruminaton

(Still More Questions)

My mind seems to go out on a path the width of a thread and
of endless length, a thread that is the same color as the night.
Out, out along the narrow highway sails my mind,
driven by curiosity, luminous with acceptance,
far and out,
like a feathered hook whipped deep into
the light above the stream by a magnificent cast.
Somewhere, out of my reach, my control,
the hook unbends itself into a spear,
the spear shears itself into a needle,
and the needle sews the world together.
It sews skin onto the skeleton and lipstick on a lip,
it sews Edith to her greasepaint ... it sews scarves to mountains,
it goes through everything like a relentless bloodstream, and
the tunnel is filled with a comforting message, a beautiful
knowledge of unity. All the dispartes of the world,
the different wings of
the paradox,
coin-faces of problem,
petal-pulling questions,
scissor-shaped conscience,
all the polarities,
things and their images and things which cast no shadow,
and just the everyday explosions in the street, this face and that,
a house and a toothache, explosions which merely have different letters in
their names, my needle pierces it all, and I myself,
my greedy fantasies, everything which has existed and does exist,
we are part of a necklace of
incomparable beauty
and
unmeaning.

Leonard Cohen (from *Beautiful Losers*)

Like Leonard Cohen's needle, the pens of both the philosopher and the poet
have the power to tell us what has meaning and what has not, to romanticize

the painful paradoxes of life out of existence by sewing them together in a beautiful but artificial way. Yet, the giving up of the need to understand the world can destroy hope just as surely as the desire to know, to be certain, to give specific meaning to things, can lead to acts of injustice. According to Jacques Daignault, who describes the pursuit of knowledge as "a hunt" with murderous intent (Daignault, 1992: 198) and the "abandonment of any attempt to know" as a form of suicide, there is a need to find a way of dwelling "in the middle, in spaces that are neither terroristic or(sic) nihilistic" (Pinar, 1995: 481). It is in such a middle place, a place of many questions and of no easy answers, that I have tried to situate myself as researcher.

The questions continue: What will happen when the play is presented in another venue? with a different cast? to a different audience? for a different purpose?

If the responses are different or indifferent, does that mean that the work is less valuable?

How should I take what I have learned and apply it to the next project? and the next?

There is always the temptation to believe in the possibility of returning to the way we were, of getting back to the garden. But *Cronos* pushes us on. All that we can hold on to is the ability to remember what has been, to recall (but not relive) the old meanings, to carry the weight of the past memories

with us into the present, to that place of possibilities between the past and the future.

I know sad teachers
they teach what they know

*I know sad teachers, they plan
everything. They
refuse to think about teaching.*

(Daignault, 1989: 129)

This opportunity this weekend is playing, isn't it? A group of friends got together because Jeanette said, "Hey, wanna come out and play?"

There is an old Sanskrit word, *lila*, which means play ... it means divine play, the play of creation, destruction, re-creation, the folding and the unfolding of the cosmos. *Lila*, free and deep, is both the delight and enjoyment of this moment, and the play of God. It also means love.

(Nachmanovitch, 1991:1)

Hey guys, wanna come out and Play? Maybe this time we can tell stories about how we keep our sense of humour when all around us others are losing theirs.

As I reread the Donmoyer article, I am struck by the reference to a certain break-through wherein researchers are "beginning to be thought of as teachers"

(1995: 5). I wonder when teachers will be thought of as researchers, when hearing our own voices, finding and re-telling our own stories will be seen as something other than " 'too close' to the data ", when teacher research will constitute " 'real' research" (Britsch, 1995: 298). I like to think of myself as both teacher and researcher and I believe that my teaching colleagues have accepted my dwelling in two worlds, in Chelm and *Chelm*, at the same time. But for some, the windowpane is more than a multitude of moving molecules. It is seen as a shutting out and a hemming in and I, like Lorna Crozier's moth, will remain forever on the outside beating on the glass.

The moth beats on the glass
softly as the heartbeats
of a bird wrapped in wool.
Such a sad sound, this
faint, dusty drumming,
heard only by the smallest,
the most invisible of ears.

(Crozier, 1994, p. 136)

In leaving my classroom, my community, in returning to the academy as a student, I tried to be less "submissive and compliant" (Grumet, 1988: 155), less "subjected to the will and dictates of the controlling powers" (Huebner, 1972: 126). I tried to reclaim the right to speak my own language - the language often lost in the world of the academy, the language of the teacher. Sometimes, though, I felt very much like the poor little moth beating her wings against the glass. Now I wonder if I have allowed myself to be caught up

in the frenzy of the struggle. Have I forgotten that I have always gained the greatest satisfaction in my freedom to act, to dance, to sing - or even to weed my garden? And when all of this fluttering is over, I wonder if anyone will hear my faint and dusty drumming.

Reprise

The work began as a study of "marrow bone teaching", a term that I created as a result of having read William Butler Yeats' poem "A Prayer for Old Age". I think that it is appropriate that it end as it began.

*God guard me from those thoughts men think
In the mind alone;
(S)he that sings a lasting song
Thinks in a marrow bone.*

from "A Prayer for Old Age" by William Butler Yeats

Indeed as I move nearer to that part of my life when *Cronos* would have me called old, as my body speaks to me in a louder voice than she once did, I find that my way of understanding the world is more and more in and through my bones and just as the very nature of those bones changes from moment to moment, so my understanding is constantly altered by the way in which I interpret the world, the way in which the world interprets me. Such a realization calls for both humility and a sense of humour and so it is in a truly humic way that I have endeavoured to describe the work that I have done.

Notes

- 1 Acheron and Styx are the rivers over which the souls of the deceased are ferried. In Greek mythology, Charon, the son of Erebus and Nyx, is the boatman. However, in the *Odyssey*, Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia, is said to be the guide. The connections of Hermes to this work seem myriad. The name, Hermes, is derived from the Greek word for heap of stones used to indicate a boundary or important site (much in the same way as the Celts used stones). Stones are also used in many cultures as symbols for ancient wisdom and the fact that Hermes was associated with the sacred number four makes this connection all the more intriguing. It is also interesting to note, considering this work has been introduced as a series of ruminations and as a searching for the bull, that Hermes was associated with the protection of cattle. He was also dream god, a protector of travellers and of rogues, god of roads and doorways, a patron of music and the bearer of the caduceus; all attributes which find places of connection to the text of this paper.

- 2 One metaphor that Zen Buddhism has borrowed from Taoism is that of the bull as the image of the eternal principle of life, truth in action. Since I had already decided to use the term rumination rather than meditation, it seemed fitting that I include this first of the ten bulls of the twelfth century Chinese master, Kakuan.

- 3 *Rûah* in Hebrew means wind. The word is used to describe the breath of God, the source of divine wisdom.

- 4 **e•pis•te•mol•ogy**- a theory of the nature of knowledge [from Greek *episteme* knowledge, understanding from *epistanai* - *epi* upon + *stanai*, to stand + *logos* word].

meth•od•ol•ogy - the practice of the epistemology [from Greek *meta* with+ *hodos* way + *logos* word] James Macdonald suggests that there are three types of methodology - science, critical theory and mytho-poetics (Macdonald, 1988: 108). According to Macdonald, all three engage in hermeneutics, in a going between theory and practice, but, dependent upon its specific epistemological foundation, each works within what Maxine Greene would describe as a "different landscape." While my work carries the traces of critical theory, its foreground speaks in the language of myth and of poetry.

- 5 A conference held in Amsterdam in 1990 (Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy) provided a meeting place for artists such as John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg, scientists including Ilya Prigogine and David Bohm and spiritual leaders such as Huston Smith and the Dalai Lama.

- 6 Hildegard of Bingen "the gifted poet, composer, artist and biologist of twelfth-century Rhineland, coined the term *viriditas*" to describe a way of understanding the world. *Viriditas*, like Doll's erotic knowing, is "green and juicy, warm and moist, rather than cold and dried up" (Spretnak, 1991: 87).

- 7 The Aristotelian view was that theoretical/scientific knowledge (*theoria*), practical/political knowledge (*praxis*) and productive/creative knowledge (*poesis*) led to the attainment of truth through rational intuition (*nous*), understanding through reason (*episteme*), art/skill (*techne*) and prudence (*phronesis*).

- 8 In his final talk, delivered two hours before his death, Thomas Merton is quoted by Matthew Fox as having said, "The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen

awareness of the interdependence of all those living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another" (1990: iii).

This is the most concise statement of the worldview on which this paper rests that I can provide.

- 9 Derrida claims that "*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*"; there is no outside text; all "reality is constituted in intertextuality" (Pinar, 1995: 466).
 - 10 A favorite sketch done by the 60's British comedy team, Beyond the Fringe, was entitled "I'd Rather Have Been a Judge Than a Miner." As I considered the Freudian aspects of a phenomenological study, I thought of the work as a form of mining, a digging through the sediments of self which are the accumulations of experience that constitute that part of the self which we imagine we can know and which must be mined to free the ego from what has been hidden, what has been repressed or suppressed by time and by guilt imposed by the super-ego. Dancing to the kithara of Hermes seemed to me to be much more appealing than either going down into the mines or sitting in the guild hall.
 - 11 The first conception of time, *kairos*, bears a sense of the continuity of past, present and future while the second, *Cronus*, carries the ability of its namesake, the Titan son of Uranus and Gæa, to frighten us by the tolling of bells and to devour us with such notions as "time is money."
 - 12 During the course of my research, I found myself blessed by being ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada. The symbol of the diaconate, the servant ministry, is a stole which is worn diagonally from the left shoulder to the right hip - very much as I envision the hyphen to be if it were to be turned on its side.
 - 13 Carl Leggo writes: "As a writer in school I learned to fear the teacher's red pencil like a whip, a rod of fire, that left red welts and bloody wounds, marks of shame..." (1994: 1).
- Which of us, regardless of the kindness of our intent, is free from this guilt?
- 14 This phrase is one that was given to me by Solomon Agbenya, a student-teacher who was in a language education course that I taught in 1993. I can think of no better description for such stories and I am grateful to Solomon for having shared this understanding.
 - 15 William Pinar's method of *currere* has four stages or movements. The first, the regressive, draws on stories of the past; the second, the progressive, moves into visions of the future; the third, the analytical, is the interpretive stage; and the fourth, the synthetic, is the bringing together of past and the future in the present [Pinar, 1994].
 - 16 Groome's method draws on the Aristotelian notion of *praxis* as the "twin moments" of action and reflection but includes the two other dimensions which are superimposed on this dialectic process - that of engagement with theory as text and that of interaction with others. As Groome has designed the process, there are three constitutive components and five movements. These components include the participatory nature of the process, the interconnectedness of its active, reflective and creative aspects, and the centrality of story and vision within the whole structure. The five movements of the shared praxis method are: a naming and expressing of present action (Groome, 1991: 175-186), a critical reflection on present action (187-214), a retrieval of story and vision from selected text (215-248), a dialectical hermeneutic sharing of participants' stories and visions as they play with or against the text (249 - 265) and a personal response (266-293).

- 17 Gerald Bruns discusses Alcibiades' description of Socratic truth as a kind of snakebite (Bruns, 1992: 240. The connections here are again interesting. Hermes rests as the heap of stones within which lurk the snakes, who have already invaded this paper and, who might, at any moment, envenom the writer or the reader with Truth.
- 18 **con·ver·sa·tion** - a close association with others (from Middle English *conversen*, to dwell, associate with, from Old French *converser*, from Latin *conversari*, to associate with: *com* - with + *versari* - to live, occupy oneself.
- 19 Penelope is known for the devious means by which she remains faithful to Odysseus and, while she is only one of many who are said to have been the mother of Pan, there remains the possibility that even this most constant of wives is seduced by Hermes.
- 20 I believe that while Professor Fenstermacher is valuing teacher knowledge, he is placing it on a lower plane than formal academic knowledge.
- 21 We have been duly warned by many contemporary scholars of traces of alchemy and Hermetic enchantment present in language itself. See, for example, Carl Leggo's discussion of the etymology of grammar (Leggo, 1994: 2).
- 22 The term *mysterium* refers to divine truth. This form of wisdom cannot be attained through human reason and human desire alone; rather, it is revealed in God's time and by God's grace. In his amusement with Derrida's rejection of the concept of *mysterium*, Robert Magliola suggests that because the word is rooted in the Greek *muein* ("to close the eyes and/or mouth"), it carries with it an opting out of the "'vision' and 'voice' (of) logocentrism" (Magliola, 1984: 219).
- One must go beyond words to unfold the *mystery*; one must listen to the beckoning of the loon; feel, without touching, the petals of a rose; respond in the fullness of grace to the one who seems least deserving.
- 23 Carl Leggo describes an etymological digging that unearthed the roots of grammar in *gramarye*, an archaic word which he says means "magic, occult knowledge, alchemy, necromancy, enchantment" (Leggo, 1994: 2). Anyone who has tried to learn or to teach the rules of grammar should not be surprised at this kinship.
- 24 This selection is an adaptation of a piece about thinking together. The original work was written by Ted Aoki.
- 25 I confess that there is an irony here in that, on the one hand, I am expressing an obligation to those whose stories I am taking and sharing, and, on the other hand, I am admitting that I am working within the deconstructive mode of radical hermeneutics.
- Nevertheless, I believe that were I to pretend that the message-bearer is capable of delivering the message exactly as it has been seen to be sent, then I would be deceiving myself, my colleagues, my readers and the institution in whose name I am doing this research.
- 26 **rhi·zome** - underground rootlike stems which produce roots and shoots from the Latin *rhizoma*, a mass of roots, from the Greek *rhizoma*, roots of a tree, *rhizousthai*, to take root, from *rhiza*, root.)
- I have often wondered when and where and who has given a new meaning to this word. What circumstances have denied the roots and valorized the stem?

As a gardener, I think that the qualities of convolvulus express Deleuze's intention more clearly.

con•vol•vu•lus - bindweed from [Latin *convolvere*, to interweave]

Certainly, if I were looking for a botanical "war machine" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, xi), for a way to subvert authority by becoming devious, disruptive, deceitful and downright impossible to live with, I would choose the bindweed and the morning glory over the strawberry and the woody nightshade, over the cypress and the cedar.

- 27 We seem to have forgotten the root word of our **recording**.

re•cord - to remember [from Latin *recordis*, to pass back through the heart]

- 28 See, for example, the text which is described as readers' theatre and which is included in the article entitled "Collaboration in Dialogue: Teachers and Researchers Engaged in Conversation and Professional Development" in the Spring, 1996 edition of *American Educational Research Journal*.

- 29 Displacement is not disappearance. I offer two examples which might help the reader to understand this concept more clearly. The first is to be found in the practice of Tai Chi as a martial art. The individual practitioner learns how to protect the self by displacing the self. Rather than trying to match the strength of an attacker with one's own strength, one simply matches strength with an absence of strength. The opponent's power is thus drawn into a sort of reservoir, where it multiplies and from which it returns like a boomerang to ward off the attack. The second example is that of a kaleidoscope. The beauty of the ever- shifting patterns would be reduced if any one of the bits of glass were to disappear. At the same time, in order to allow the fullness of the patterns to emerge each bit must allow itself to be displaced by others in the constant shifting.

- 30 **in•ter•view** - a conversation between [from Old French *entrevue*, *entre* + *voir* from Latin *videre*, to see each other]. I find it very interesting that so much emphasis is placed upon what is spoken and what is heard in the interview and much of what is seen is **overlooked**.

- 31 The name given to the international choral festival which is held in this community every two years in the Klah ah men language means a gathering of people from different places.

As I see my work, it was as much about the gathering of the people - at the retreat, in my home to rehearse, at the Oceanview Commons to perform - as it was about the gathering of their stories.

- 32 It is important to note that the play has now been presented to another audience far removed from the people and the place in which it was created. The responses of the audience at the 1996 JCT Conference were similar to those at the first performance.

- 33 Scheurich says that "some of what occurs in an interview is verbal. Some is non-verbal. Some only occurs within the mind of each participant ... but it may affect the entire interview" (1995: 244).

- 34 **a•gree•ment** - to come into or be in accord; to correspond [from Middle English *agreen* from Old French *agreer* from Vulgar Latin *aggratate* to be pleasing to, to be beloved by]

- 35 It was Terry Carson who first introduced me to the use of the commonplace book as a

- strategy to be used in teacher education. Since that time Dennis Sumara, Pat Clifford, Sharon Friesen, Kim Hackman and Marian Hood have helped me to learn a great deal more about this method of engaging with text.
- 36 Another JCT presentation by Dennis Sumara was also instrumental in this decision. (See the fall, 1995 edition of *English Quarterly*, in which Sumara discusses the use of commonplace books and photographs as "collecting places" for memories.)
- 37 By the time that I was ready to write the play, I had transcripts of interviews, letters, poems, stories, drawings as well as entries from my own and from others' journals.
- 38 According to Marcuse, the world of art is the world of contradiction (Marcuse, 1977:10)
- 39 With the exception of one of my colleagues who wondered about the possibility of setting the play in a staff room with specific stereotypical teachers, all who participated in the retreat and all whose stories were shared were very supportive of this decision.
- 40 Two very powerful pieces of Readers' Theatre were presented at the 1996 Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference. One, *Landscapes of Loss: Lessons from THE OWL*, examines the experiences of four Alberta teachers using the commonplace book method of teaching Margaret Craven's novel, *I Heard the Owl Call my Name*. The other, *Boundary Riders and Border Crossings*, presents stories of three pre-tenured teachers. Both works are written and performed by those whose stories are being told; both works were very well-received by the audience. However, my experience in writing, directing, watching and, later, performing in *At the Heart of it All* confirms my belief that there is much to be gained by watching and listening as someone else re-enacts your story.
- 41 The performance of the play as it was presented to the 1996 Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Conference was different from the original in that there was a different setting, a different cast and a very different audience. Instead of ten actors reading the ten voices, five actors presented the entire script. Two of the actors were participants in the study but the others were not involved in the research in any way. The only major change that I noted in the audience response was that there was more laughter - perhaps a sign of a deeper understanding, perhaps a greater identification with some of the views expressed or maybe just a greater willingness to respond openly.
- 42 I think, for example, of the conditions which allowed me to move beyond the fear of sharing the story of the snake and I see similarities to those provided for the teacher who, through the use of drama, was able to move beyond the silence which had withheld her story of the taping of her mouth shut.
- 43 When excerpts from *At the Heart of It All* were presented at the Curriculum as Narrative/Narrative as Curriculum Conference at the University of British Columbia in May, 1995, one teacher-educator asked for permission to use the script in her classes. It was her intention to have the students do a reading of the work and then to discuss it. I am still awaiting a report on their responses.
- 44 One such dramatic presentation of student stories was given at the recent Curriculum as Narrative/Narrative as Curriculum Conference at the University of British Columbia by Lynn Fels and a group of junior secondary students.
- 45 **cædere** [Latin, to cut off]
cæsure - to pause
- 46 Like Heracleitus' river.

- 47 I am aware that this work in which I am engaged would not usually be described as an empirical study but I reclaim *empeiros*. The stories that we shared are stories of our experience; my work is guided by my experience.

em•pir•i•cal - guided by practical experience [from Latin *empiricus*, from Greek *empeirikos*, from *empeira*, experience, from *empeiros*, experienced in]

David Smith describes empirical research as having "to do with the whole person standing in the whole of life trying to make sense of his/her experience of it all in its wholeness" (1988: 418).

- 48 Grumet says that "the hermeneutic circle, for all its humanistic recursiveness, is obsessed with the beautiful, fusing those horizons, running back and forth between the parts and the whole, and the whole and the parts" (Grumet, 1989a: 229).

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APPENDIX A

The University of British Columbia Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee
For Research and Other Studies Involving Human Subjects.

ETHICAL REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS IN QUESTIONNAIRES, INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS, TESTING, VIDEO & AUDIO TAPES, ETC.

COPIES

4 copies (signed original plus 3 xerox copies) of the complete protocol form containing all attachments must be submitted to the Office of Research Services, Rm 323, IRC Bldg.

HUMAN SUBJECT INVOLVEMENT

Any project (research or other studies) carried out by a person connected with the university which involves human subjects in one of the above activities must be reviewed and approved by the Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee before work is started.

SUBMISSIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

Submissions must be made on the attached Request for Ethical Review form. Because this form is designed to deal with a range of possible projects across the whole of the social sciences, not every question is applicable to every project. Applicants should simply enter 'N/A' when this situation occurs.

HELP

Help with any aspect of the submission may be obtained from Richard Spratley (822-8595) or Shirley Thompson (822-8584) in the Office of Research Services; from the Committee Chairman, Richard Johnston (822-5456); or from a member of the committee.

SHORT SUBMISSIONS

Certain categories of projects only need a short submission. This is done by completing pages 1 and 2 of the pink form and attaching copies of questionnaires or interview schedules. These categories are listed in the checklist on page 1 of the form. If you have any doubts about whether or not your project fits one of these categories, call Richard Spratley or Shirley Thompson for assistance.

TURN-AROUND TIME

The turn-around time is generally between 3 and 4 weeks. Complete submissions, of course, move most quickly through the system. To help you make sure that every needed item is included, two pages of checklists are included at the end of the form. Please take care that every item in every applicable checklist is dealt with.

DECEPTION

If your study involves deception, you must complete page 7 in addition to pages 1 to 6 of the Request for Ethical Review form.

*Detach and retain these instructions

TELEPHONE CONTACT

Initial contact with subjects by telephone is discouraged by UBC. However, surveys where sample selection is not on the basis of information held in confidence by a third party (see below), initial telephone contact may be allowed. If your study involves such contact, you must also complete page 8 in addition to pages 1 to 6 of the Request for Ethical Review form.

CLASS PROJECTS

Class projects which involve human subjects do not require individual review, however each instructor is required to submit annually for each course a form which summarizes the instructions given to the class. For further details, contact Shirley Thompson.

THIRD PARTY RECRUITMENT

When subjects' names must be obtained from a third party who is obligated to maintain the confidentiality of their relationship (i.e. the physician/patient relationship), the third party must ask the subjects for permission to release their names to the researcher. This may also be done by asking the third party to distribute an introductory letter describing the study, with details on how to contact the researcher if they are interested in participating. Details of how third party recruitment will be accomplished and copies of any letters sent to either the third party or to the subject via the third party must be provided. If the researcher already has some form of contact with the subject (i.e. a nurse's contact with a patient) the circumstances of that contact must be fully described.

INTERIM APPROVALS

1) Written proof of agency consent is required for projects carried out at other institutions. When agency approval cannot be obtained without prior approval by the UBC Committee, (as in the case of The Vancouver School Board), a letter of conditional approval will be issued for submission to the agency if all other aspects of the protocol are satisfactory. Applications should be submitted concurrently to the UBC Committee and the agency. 2) Projects which require ethical review in order to obtain research grant funds with which to develop a questionnaire, survey or interview may receive conditional approval with the understanding that any part of the project dealing with human subjects cannot commence until the committee has formally approved a final protocol. Provide as much detail as possible on the preliminary Request for Ethical Review making it clear that conditional approval is being sought.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Members are chosen from appropriate disciplines. Names of current members may be obtained from Shirley Thompson.

revised 27 May 1992

- 12 Summary of methodology and procedures. (Must be typewritten in this space). NOTE If your study involves deception, you must also complete page 7, the "Deception Form".

School District #47 (Powell River) has been selected as the site for this project. Five or six retired teachers and five or six public school teachers who view themselves as having a vocation to teaching will participate in the study. All of the participants will be self-selected.

Prior to the end of the 1994-95 school year, contact will be made with the Professional Development Co-Ordinator of the Powell River District Teachers' Association and with the President of the Retired Teachers' Association. Upon their recommendations, letters of invitation will be sent to twenty possible candidates. Following this initial contact, those who express an interest will be interviewed to confirm both their sense of vocation and their willingness to participate in the research project.

Late in June, 1995, the participants will be invited to attend a two-day retreat. During this time, those involved in the study will engage, first of all, in a series of discussions and, secondly, in autobiographical writing based on responses to selected readings related to teaching as a vocation.

The writing generated during the retreat and offered for use in the research will be augmented by data gathered in individual interviews which are to be conducted early in the 1995-96 school year.

All of the data which will have been collected are to be used as resource material for the writing of the drama.

In September, 1996, the participants in the study will be invited to attend a performance of the drama.

A final interview will provide the opportunity for the participants to respond to the DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION drama and to comment on its consistency with the autobiographical data.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-------|
| 13 | How many subjects will be used? | 10-12 |
| | How many in the control group? | N/A |

- 14 Who is being recruited and what are the criteria for their selection?

Active and retired members of the Powell River District Teachers' Association will be recruited. The criteria for selection will be the individual teacher's sense of a vocation to teaching and a willingness to participate in the study.

15 What subjects will be excluded from participation?

Those who do not meet the above criteria will be excluded.

16 How are the subjects being recruited? (If initial contact is by letter or if a recruitment notice is to be posted, attach a copy.) NOTE that UBC policy discourages initial contact by telephone. However, surveys which use random digit dialing may be allowed. If your study involves such contact, you must also complete page 8, the "Telephone Contact form".

Initial contact will be by letter. (Attached)

17 If a control group is involved, and if their selection and/or recruitment differs from the above, provide details.

N/A

PROJECT DETAILS

18 Where will the project be conducted? (room or area)

School District #47 (Powell River)

19 Who will actually conduct the study and what are their qualifications?

Mrs. Jeanette Scott, a doctoral student in CSCI

20 Will the group of subjects have any problems giving informed consent on their own behalf? Consider physical or mental condition, age, language, or other barriers.

No

21 If the subjects are not competent to give fully informed consent, who will consent on their behalf?

N/A

22 What is known about the risks and benefits of the proposed research? Do you have additional opinions on this issue?

The proposed research project will have no risks associated with it. Any autobiographical material used will be self-selected and will be submitted anonymously. Original transcripts from the interviews will be used only as source material for the drama. All names of persons and sites that are mentioned will be replaced with pseudonyms.

22. (cont.) It is anticipated that the participants will benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their response to a call to teaching, on their shared experiences and on the way in which these experiences come to life in the drama.
-

25. (cont.) Those who choose to attend the retreat will dedicate an additional ten or more hours.
Attendance at the performance of the dramatic composition and the subsequent interview will take an additional two hours.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A Study of Teaching as a Vocation

The following are sample questions which will be asked in each of the interviews:

Initial Screening Interview

1. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
2. What do you enjoy least about teaching?
3. Why did you choose to become a teacher?
4. If you had the choice now, what career would you choose?
5. Have you ever kept a journal or done any autobiographical writing?
6. To what extent are you willing to share your teaching experiences with others?

Final Interview

1. Could you give me your impressions of the drama that was presented?
2. To what extent was the work representative of your teaching experience?
3. In what way(s) did the drama change what was written and what was shared in the discussions?
4. Would you want other people to see a performance of this work?
5. What role do you believe experienced teachers should play in helping others to learn more about teaching?

APPENDIX E

APPLICATION FOR LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY SCHOOL DISTRICT #47 (POWELL RIVER)

Name of Group: Teachers' Collaborative Research Group

Title of Project: A Study of Teaching as a Vocation

Date of Project: September, 1995 - June, 1996

Description of Project:

The objectives are:

- to work in collaboration with colleagues to gather autobiographical writing about teaching as a vocation
- to use the data to create a dramatic composition
- to study our responses to the drama as it is presented in the form of Readers' Theatre
- to interpret the process and the responses as they relate to teacher education

The methodology and procedures:

Seven teachers, one elementary administrator, three retired teachers and one university professor will participate in the study. On October 20 and 21, a retreat will be held at Herondell.

During that time, those involved in the study will engage, first of all, in a series of discussions and, secondly, in autobiographical writing based on responses to selected readings relating to teaching as a vocation.

This writing will be used as resource material in the writing of the drama which will be produced in the spring of 1996.

Projected Expenditures:

Food - \$200.00
Paper and xeroxing: \$30.00
Audio Tapes: \$15.00
Miscellaneous: \$15.00



APPENDIX H

CONSENT FORM

Teaching as a Vocation

As a participant in this study of teaching as a vocation, I understand that I will be invited to participate in a two-day retreat. During that time I will be engaged in discussions with colleagues and in autobiographical writing about my own teaching experiences.

If I choose to offer my autobiographical writing to the researcher, I understand that the names of persons and places will be replaced with pseudonyms.

I am also aware that information which I share through my writing or in interview with the researcher may be incorporated in the drama which is to be written about teaching as a vocation.

In addition, I am prepared to offer a critical interpretation of the drama following the performance.

On the understanding that only the researcher will have access to the data which I provide and that my name will not be revealed at any time, I hereby consent to participate in *A Study of the Lived Experiences of Teachers with a Sense of Vocation to Teaching*. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time without penalty.

Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form.

Signature

Date

Questions about this project should be directed to Dr. Carl Leggo in the Department of Language Education . Office telephone number: 822-4640.

APPENDIX I
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Personal Communication



Department of Language Education
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4
Tel: (604) 822-5788
Fax: (604) 822-3154

Courier Address:
2034 Lr. Mall Road
UBC, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2

Nov. 15, 1995

Hi, Jeanette,

I hope all is well. I enjoyed the time I spent answering the questions on vocation, but, of course, I wish I had even more time to remember and reflect. I am also sending a poem on vocation that I have just written, as well as a few things I have written in the past which speak to issues of being a teacher.

With affection,
Carl

JEANETTE, I HAVE WRITTEN THESE NOTES IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTIONS AS IF I WAS TALKING TO YOU IN AN INTERVIEW:

WHAT DO I ENJOY MOST ABOUT TEACHING?

I most enjoy working with people, or perhaps what I really most enjoy is working with people who are working with words. I enjoy working with wordsmiths. As a teacher I have played many roles--counsellor, janitor, bus driver, basketball coach, friend, etc. But I do not want to return to most of those roles. I am happiest in my current life of teaching, where I seek to treat people like human beings, the way I want others to treat me. As a teacher I think I am on a journey, a journey of becoming, and I like participating with others in their journeys.

WHAT DO I ENJOY LEAST ABOUT TEACHING?

I least enjoy evaluating and assessing and grading students' accomplishments. I have been terribly wounded by the evaluations of my teachers, and I see only injustice and waste and damage done in most teacher evaluations. Evaluation is typically done in order to achieve some imaginary standards or comparisons, to please parents, to stamp most people with a mark of failure. Teachers use grades to cajole and trick and bribe students, and learning ought to be enjoyed and engaged in because people love to learn.

WHY DID I CHOOSE TO BECOME A TEACHER?

I do not really think I chose to become a teacher. In grade 11 my principal suggested that I ought to become a teacher, and I told him NO WAY. The last thing in the world I wanted to be was a teacher. I wanted to be an astronomer, or a lawyer, or a politician, anything but a teacher. I only decided to take the B.Ed. degree after I had completed the B.A. in English and then four semesters of an M.A. in English. While studying for the M.A., I experienced a personal spiritual revolution which opened up new adventures. I started thinking that I would like to be a pastor or minister. But by now I was financially broke. I had been married for almost two years. I no longer cared about the M.A. thesis I was writing. I needed a job and some money in order to make plans for the future. So, I completed the B.Ed. from January to August, 1976. It was not easy to squeeze all the courses into the eight month period, but I succeeded. The degree was fun. I began teaching in Robert's Arm, Newfoundland in September, 1976. My wife Lana started teaching in the same school, too. In my first year I taught forty-eight students in grade seven. I don't think I was a very good teacher. The first month was hellish. Very noisy. I felt like I was lost in a strange world. I was. But the strangeness of my new world was not the strangeness of the classroom world. I was teaching in a school operated by the Pentecostal church--fundamentalist and rule-governed and strict. I was about twenty-three years old. I felt like I had dropped into an alien world. But in some ways it did not matter because I planned to go back to university and train for the ministry. Lana and I saved our money and left Robert's Arm after two years. I was never at home in Robert's Arm. I was

eager to leave. I recall on the second last day in Robert's Arm, I said to Lana, I am so glad to be leaving. I don't ever want to come back. She replied, Oh, our time here has been good. Later that evening my grade seven students surprised me with a party in the school gymnasium. I was reminded that though I was running away from teaching (or at least felt like I was), I had made an impact in my students' lives that I did not really know or understand. I had moved through their lives with a certain kind of eagerness to please them, to serve them, to be good for them (I do not know where that motivation comes from), and I had been good for them (for some of them at least) without even knowing how.

I left Robert's Arm and went to Toronto to study for the ministry. Lana was pregnant. I did not fit well in the conservative world of the seminary. I'm not sure what I mean by not fitting well. I tried to be like all the people I saw around me, but I always felt very uncomfortable. Once again in an alien place. Once again I felt like I was not brave enough to speak in my own voices. I was not reckless enough to express the unpopular views. After two months in the seminary, I knew I did not want to be a pastor. I was afraid a pastor had to be pasteurized. I didn't want that. I wanted to be impure, rough, germ, germinating. So, I decided to complete a one-year certificate designed for people who planned to work in a profession other than the full-time ministry. I applied to my old school board for a job. I was offered a position in Stephenville. I stayed there six years. They were the unhappiest years of my life. Even a decade later, I can hardly say the word "Stephenville" without feeling nausea.

When I first moved to Stephenville with Lana and our daughter Anna (born in Toronto in May, just two weeks before we returned to Newfoundland), I planned to settle down in Stephenville. Lana and I had dreamed for several years about a Harrowsmith kind of rural life, and Stephenville offered the perfect opportunity--a town with recreational and cultural amenities, lots of inexpensive agricultural land on the ocean, only fifty miles away from our home-town, etc. Stephenville was a place we could settle down in. We were wrong. I could not fit into the Pentecostal world, and since I was teaching in a Pentecostal school, I was expected to fit in. I could not, or would not--I certainly did not. I got into trouble. I worked with a principal that I tried to support, but he was an incompetent person, and I now wish I had fought him. Anyway after about three years which were largely spent enjoying my daughter and anticipating the birth of my son, I started planning to leave, to pursue more studies. It took three more years before I had enough money. I took a leave of absence and went to the University of New Brunswick to study for the M.A. in Creative Writing. I enjoyed the studies so much, I quit my teaching job, and completed a second master's before moving to the University of Alberta to study for the Ph.D. With the Ph.D. completed, I tried to find a job in Atlantic Canada, and I finally, somewhat desperately, accepted a job in my old high school. After almost two decades from the time my high school principal suggested that I become a teacher, I returned to that school as a teacher. I did not want to be there. In fact one of the last places in the world I wanted to be was in that school. I was not happy. All my dreams for an academic career began to dissipate. I felt trapped. And yet I worked hard to be a good teacher. I prepared diligently for my classes. I cared about my students. I sponsored several extra-

curricular groups and coached several people for public speaking competitions. I was well-liked by my students. I smiled and laughed a lot. But I felt trapped and unhappy.

I applied for a job at the University of British Columbia. I was invited for an interview. I agonized about the interview. How should I present myself? I wanted the job, but I did not want to present myself in some kind of false way (which is the way I think I presented myself in my school teaching jobs). So, I presented myself as a poet, and UBC accepted me. And in the Department of Language Education I have found a home where I live with more truth than I have ever known.

So, what does all this mean for my calling? I did not choose to be a teacher. Teaching chose me. Not only did teaching choose me, but teaching would not let me go. In many ways I do not think I am a good teacher. I don't even know what teaching is. I just want to invite people to grow in ways that they can take pleasure in. I taught high school for nine years. Amazing! Especially considering that for no more than three of those years did I have any intention of staying in teaching. And here I am now at almost forty-two, and I have never done anything but teach, and I expect to be a teacher all my life. How odd! I did not choose teaching; teaching chose me. I have not consciously called out to teaching, but the call of teaching has been like a Siren that cannot be denied.

IF I COULD CHOOSE NOW, WHAT CAREER WOULD I CHOOSE?

If I could choose any career, I would choose a career as a full-time writer. I would still be a teacher, of course. Writers are always teachers. But as a teacher I am too constrained by the boundaries of time and space--I have limited energy and I am seldom available to many of the people who want to see me and I am always tired. I need spaces of sabbath, and when I am writing I find those spaces because the writing is born out of those spaces only. If I could write full-time, I think I would write some significant books, significant in that the books would encourage people by reminding them that they are wonderfully creative. Those are the kinds of books I want to write.

WHAT IS TEACHING?

Teaching is teasing, taxing, taking, reaching, searching, arching, hearing, speaking, seeking, aching, hinging, catching, hatching.

Teaching is waking up in the morning, and mucking through the day, and going to sleep at night, in order to wake up the next morning and do it again.

Teaching is living un/grammatically.

Teaching is living poetically.

Teaching is trouble-making.

Teaching is about falling in love, desiring the other, seeking to be desired by the other.

Teaching is ineffable.

Teaching is a verb, always tense, past or present or future, sometimes active, sometimes passive.

Teaching is reaching and preaching and screeching and breaching.

Teaching is what I do, a kind of residue, when I am what I am.

Teaching is looking for poets and poetry, and weeping when I don't find them, and weeping when I do find them.

DRIVING LESSONS

(for Anna)

We have driven miles together, you and I,
but soon you will have your own license,
and you will not need me beside you:

*check your blind spots
don't speed
watch out for other drivers
look down the road
watch the crosswalks
look both ways
turn off the signal light*

This evening in early September
you cut a curb too close,
braked hard before an amber light
you hadn't seen, made an unsafe turn.

I barked. I didn't mean to.
Finally I looked at you, not the road.
You were driving blind, the wipers
useless in a torrent of tears.

I said, I'm an ogre of a father.
You said, No, you're a good daddy.

*Once for Necktie Day at school,
you borrowed all my neckties,
and your mother explained,
She is taking neckties for her friends
who don't have fathers.
I was glad I had neckties,
even if I don't wear them anymore.*

We parked on the side of St. Alban's Road
and ate Nuffy's donuts,
then under a full moon
wound our way through Richmond.

I am teaching you
how to drive,
but you are teaching me
how to be a father.

AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

a Readers' Theatre presentation

of

collected texts of teaching

OCEANVIEW JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

February 13, 1996

The voices of teaching that will be heard include:

The Voice of Experience
The Voice of Commitment
The Voice of Compassion
The Voice of Idealism
The Voice of Passion
The Voice of Perseverance
The Voice of Confusion
The Voice of the Artist
The Voice of the Fool
The Voice of the Master

I believe that we, as teachers, speak in all of these voices at one time or another.

The actors who are bringing the voices to life are:

Jim Inkster
Tony Hannon
Alison Harding
Nancy Hollmann
Anne Howey
David Kellum
Ian MacLaine
Barry Prong
Holly Sparks
Paul Wiltse

This Readers' Theatre presentation is an interpretation of stories of teaching which were generously shared by a group of local teachers who gathered at a professional development retreat in the fall of 1995.

This dramatic work, as well as being a part of my doctoral research, is intended to be a very special gift to those teachers whose stories were the source of the text. I hope that it will bring joy to them and to their colleagues, both those who are retired and those who are presently engaged in the wonderful WHIRLED of teaching.

Jeannette Scott

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

1.01**Exceeding Practices of Methodology:
The Productivity of Discomfort**W, 7:00-8:15—**Library** (Symposium)

PRESENTERS: Lisa A. Mazzel, Ohio State University; Elizabeth A. St. Pierre, University of Georgia

ABSTRACT: Within the freedoms of postpositivist paradigms of inquiry lurk "shoulds" and "oughts" for the doing of research. This session will explore how the presenters are foregrounding that which does not fall within the limits of received methodology—that which creates tension and uncomfortableness (and sometimes humor), but which yields productive inquiry and thought.

1.02**Dancing on Holy Ground: an exploration
of drama as a way of re-MEMBER-ing**W, 7:00-8:15—**St. Andrew's Chapel** (Performance)

PRESENTER: Jeanette MacArthur Scott, University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: This Readers' Theatre presentation of collected texts of teaching will invite the spectators into a space where they may listen to and embody the many voices echoing in the halls of that place called school.

1.03**"Help Me Make it Through the Night."
Or, One Constructivist's View
of Teaching and Learning**W, 7:00-8:15—**Barth Room** (Interactive Seminar)PRESENTER: Jerry Levine, West Virginia State College
ABSTRACT: Vygotsky, Skinner, Piaget, and Joan Baez combine to help us all make it through the night. While doing it, we're going to see how predetermined reactions to specific stimuli, the responses of other "students," and our own histories combine to form the meanings we make, the learning we do.**1.01****Zen and the Grading of Students**W, 7:00-8:15—**Upper Seminar Rm** (Single Paper)

PRESENTER: Conrad P. Pritscher, Bowling Green State University

ABSTRACT: Zen context is given to show how changing grading practices may enhance student learning. A discussion will follow.

2.01**Crossing Boundaries in
Aesthetics and Art History**W, 8:45-10:00—**Upper Room** (Symposium)

PRESENTERS: Mary K. Carter, Indiana University; Nancy Parks, Indiana University

ABSTRACT: The transformation of art education, the disciplines of art history and aesthetics, and the theoretical forces that have influenced recent changes within the field are explored. Socially and culturally informed art historical & aesthetic models are proposed.

2.02**Beyond the Span of My Limbs
Gesture, Number, and Infinity**W, 8:45-10:00—**Chapel** (Performance)

PRESENTERS: Susan Gerofsky, Simon Fraser University; Celeste Schroeder, Simon Fraser University

ABSTRACT: The two of us, one a mathematics educator and the other a movement educator, come together on issues of embodiment in education. Our session will use collaborative dance, spoken words and poetry, music, slides of 20th century European painting, and video to suggest visceral connections between the experience of the finite and infinite in math, dance, and art.

2.03**Poetry Reading**W, 8:45-10:00—**St. Andrew's Chapel** (Performance)

PRESENTER: Gary Raspberry, University of British Columbia

2.01**Silence of the Lambs: The
Muting of Preservice Teachers' Voices**W, 8:45-10:00—**Library** (Symposium)

PRESENTERS: Peggy Albers, Indiana University; Jesse Goodman, Indiana University

ABSTRACT: A critique of preservice teacher education that often constructs preservice teachers as passive technicians, and a view into a collaborative program which attempts to reconstruct the role of preservice teachers as active and reflective and to legitimate their experiences as valuable to classroom practice.

3.01**Writing the Forbidden:
On Making Spectacles of Ourselves:
Turning Rage into a Story:
Dangerous Writing, Scary Stories**T, 9:00-12:00—**Upper Room** (Symposium)

(Note the extended time period.)

PRESENTERS: Rebecca Luce-Kapler, University of Alberta; Gail Sidonie Sobat, University of Alberta; Delese Wear, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine; P.K. Jamison, Indiana University Department of Family Medicine; Linda Laidlaw, Simon Fraser University

ABSTRACTS:

- "Writing the Forbidden" (Luce-Kapler & Sobat): In our writing collective with six young women, the work has art objecting rather than art objects. This presentation is a chorus of voices that have whispered, yelled, and wept about bodies, sexuality, and agency through poetry, fiction, and song.
- "On Making Spectacles of Ourselves: Outlaw Emotions in Medicine" (Wear): An exploration of the ways in which the emotional character of young physicians-in-training are molded, and an interrogation of how these practices safeguard the highly scripted identity that operates as a powerful sorting machine.
- "Turning Rage into a Story" (Jamison): I discuss my experience working with health science faculty situated amidst change and forces beyond their control, and the rage that has exploded in these individuals.
- "Dangerous Writing, Scary Stories: An Exploration of Writing, Curriculum, and Identity" (Laidlaw): Through an inquiry into classroom writing I have come to question modern notions and approaches to writing in schools. "Composing ourselves" through writing occurs within a complex fabric of events and relations, both the "daily life in schools" and events which interrupt "the text" of school experiences.

3.02**The Challenges of Postmodern
Curriculum: The "?" of the Debate**T, 9:00-10:15—**Chapel** (Symposium)

PRESENTERS: Wen-Song Hwu, Oklahoma State University; William E. Doll, Louisiana State University; Jacques Daignault, University of Quebec at Rimouski

ABSTRACT: We explore the challenges posed by postmodern thinking and possible alternatives for curriculum and teaching.

3.03**How do cyborgs construct curriculum?****Playing in the Web Sites of the Virtual World**T, 9:00-10:15—**St. Andrew's Chapel** (Performance)

PRESENTER: Karen Anjar, Cal State Polytechnic University

ABSTRACT: The postmodern playgrounds of late 20th century capitalism represent a different sense of place and a different type of being, aptly labeled by Haraway as the "cyborg." Cyborgs, conceived in postFordism and weaned on the media, forge meaning within interfaced imagination on the bandwidth of existence. The relations are much more than technical ones.

3.04**Teshuvah—The Return of Curriculum**T, 9:00-10:15—**Library** (Symposium)

PRESENTERS: Alan A. Block, University of Wisconsin-Stout; Haim Dov Bellak, Claremont Graduate School

ABSTRACTS:

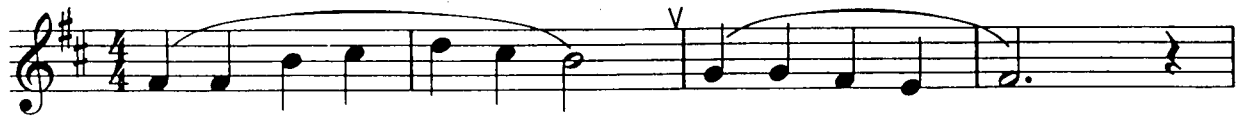
- "Teshuvah—The Return of Curriculum" (Block): I would like to suggest that the Jewish voice has not only been silenced from curriculum studies (we cannot hear a particularly Jewish voice—a voice speaking as a Jew), but

荒城の月

Ko-jo no tsuki

土井晩翠 作詞 滝 廉太郎 作曲

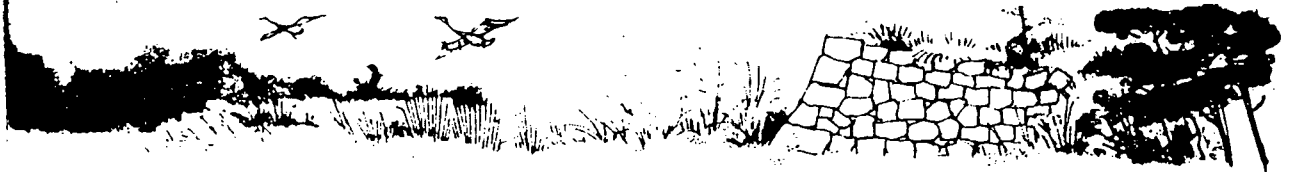
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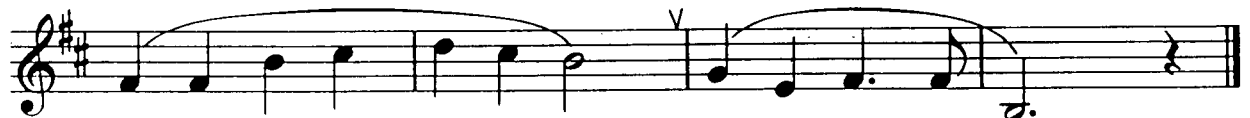
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