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TEACHING AS HERMENEUTICS

DONNA K. DANIEL

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

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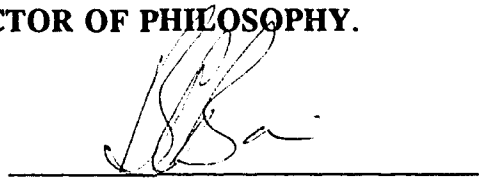

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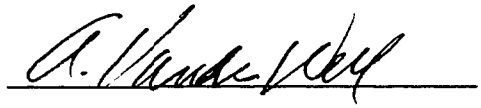

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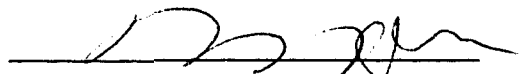

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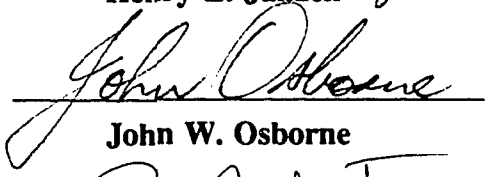

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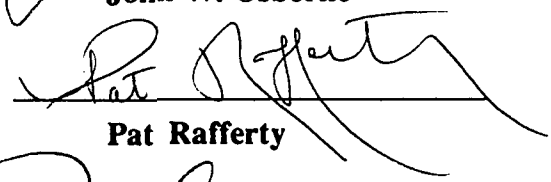

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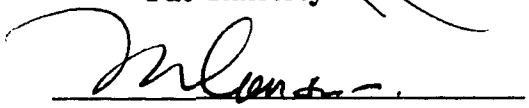

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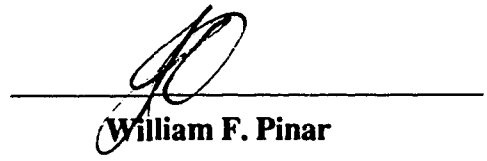

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External Examiner

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The freedom to think and to question has always existed in my world as a student and as a teacher. Great teachers have expanded my horizons of understanding and have challenged me through exemplar and in dialogue to continue to search for possibilities. It is to these teachers, whom I have named above, my co-participants who choose to remain anonymous and the others who have been my colleagues and with whom I have lived this dialectic, that I dedicate this work

and to Ariana, my daughter, who has shown me that some of our greatest teachers are those whom we love and seek to live in dialogue with.

ABSTRACT

The intention of this hermeneutic inquiry is to explore dialogically the substrata of the layers of meaning that teachers ascribe to their experiences. The nature of the educational praxis which a teacher co-constitutes with a student in the classroom is investigated from the perspective of an elementary school teacher. The question of what it is to be a teacher is re-searched hermeneutically through dialogue (Gadamer, 1960). Ricoeurean (1981) interpretive discourse guides this inquiry.

Five experienced elementary school teachers engaged in three phases of conversation. After the first phase, the taped and transcribed dialogues and interpretations were returned to them with comments on themes which appeared to emerge and any questions. Each teacher was asked to respond to their perceptions of the penetration of their intent, to elaborate on their text and to ask any questions that arose. In the second phase, the intent was to deepen the conversation through reflection on what had been expressed and what had been left unspoken. These combined narratives were then interpreted further and organized through the identification and clustering of themes. In the third phase, each teacher was asked to respond to this reflective theming in terms of validation criteria suggested by Madison (1988).

Reflective theming returns to the lived ground of elementary school teaching as: 1) entering a child's horizons of understanding, 2) *currere*, 3) contributing to the being and becoming of child and of teacher, 4) dialectics, 5) situated between the epistemological and the ontological, 6) metaphor, and as 7) hermeneutics. Hermeneutics becomes the *method* or way of inquiry into the meaning of teaching and it is a *metaphor* for the interpretive act that teaching is.

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To choose an advisor is nevertheless to commit oneself by
that choice
Sartre, 1946, p.37

These chapters of my own story would not have been written without the encouragement and teachings of my mentors and of my beloved friends and colleagues. I express my deep appreciation to:

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING

> Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. Man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so (Sartre, 1948, p. 28).

> It is through and by means of education, many of us believe, that individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space. It is through and by means of education that they may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of their lived worlds. It is through education that preferences may be released, languages learned, intelligences developed, perspectives opened, possibilities disclosed
> (Greene, 1988, p. 12).

> Pedagogy then becomes a vocation to live and act within the difference between what we know and what we do not know, that is, to be drawn out to what calls us from within and beyond ourselves
> (Smith, 1986, p. 276).

Since Socrates' dialogical demonstration of the possibility of freedom in and through thought and in learning to challenge one's own thinking, teachers have inspired man's quest for personal freedom and possibility. Commitment to social amelioration and to individual realization have imbued teachers' compositions of "their own scripts of meaning" (Greene, 1988).

The dialogue between today's teacher and tomorrow's child encompasses the present state of knowledge and the challenge of making meaning of that knowledge for each child for tomorrow's world. With an awareness of the present, a teacher creates or rather co-creates 'reality' and instructs for what is yet to come.

In the quest for an understanding of each child and of ourselves, and of the worlds we stand in, we -'we' as teachers and we as learners with our students- re-think the contributions of those great thinkers who have shaped our knowledge base and our own world views.

> (What can my interpretation of the existential anguish of Sartre's *Roquentin* help me to give in a twenty minute parent-teacher interview to a father whose wife has just left? How does my own comprehension of the possibility of accepting and

going beyond pure anguish and despair help me to communicate these possibilities to him as he sits there cradling his two month old infant in his arms?

What aspects of his seven year old child's academic development and difficulties can he hear? Respond to?

What can my knowledge of curriculum and instruction and of ontological issues help me to give to his daughter in my class?)

In this challenge to match world views and in the challenge to create meaningful learning experiences for this child and for the other children in my classroom, I, as the teacher, reopen the question of my present state of knowledge and of the validity and depth of my own world view.

(What aspects of the curriculum content, which instructional processes and strategies, which psychological theorists are meaningful to a particular child at a particular point in time?

And what reflections are part of my own ontogenesis as a teacher and as a person at this time?)

Always the question of the next step reopens the question of the meaning of the learning experience at an ontological as well as at an epistemological level. Where will this skill or strategy or concept fit in the life, in the being of this student?

(Will teaching Damian, in a sixth grade Language Arts class, to write violence as a literary genre -that I do not wish to create with him nor to live in even through literature -free him from living it?)

(Is Surrinder "here"? Can he learn to read about *Mirabelle et sa famille* when his own Mother has been away in another city for three months since her abortion there and his Grandmother sees him as an imposition on her values and her freedom?

Is his outburst of ethnic singing and dancing in the midst of our reading group not an important part of our lesson on *Discours ludique-poétique* ? He is already doing what I am teaching albeit not in my way. Am I wise and flexible and responsive enough in my praxis to appreciate the example that Surrinder offers us to include his utterance and him as part of the learning? What epistemological questions are relevant to Surrinder in the first grade? And what will open possibilities for him to be?)

A teacher reflects on the next step even in the act of teaching and in the spaces within and between specific subject areas, periods, semesters... and twenty-five or more other realities. In thinking about what content and skills and strategies and perspectives to teach a child, the teacher is reminded that even the content of our thoughts is shaped by

our constructs. Our models of the world are given form by the words and categories and metaphors that we presently hold as truths. In teaching students to be flexible in their thinking and in their problem-solving, we, as teachers, remind ourselves to reflect on our own representations of reality and our own world view and to keep them open and receptive.

In reflection upon what will open possibilities for each child, a teacher is reminded that one creates one's own "possible worlds", and therefore that one can stand outside one's present model of the world and re-constitute it . As a teacher opens possibilities for others, a teacher lives the challenge of modelling Being -being fully alive and open to one's own evolving needs and possibilities. If teaching is being open to and opening the worlds of the other, then a teacher, too, is situated in the dialectic between "what is" and possibility.

GLOSSARY

BEING -The *subject* of psychological inquiry in North America has reflected traditionally the presuppositions of empiricist discourses. Continental thinkers have challenged these contradictory and often illusionary foundations. The meaning of human existence is thought to be discursive and problematic rather than fixed and separate from language, experience and interpretation. Heidegger's attempt to create a new idiom with the notion of *Being* introduces the temporal and the existential.

HISTORICITY -For Ricoeur (1981), historicity "signifies the fundamental and radical fact that we make history, that we are immersed in history, that we are historical beings" (p.274). Our lived histories/stories are not chronicles of disconnected, isolated, decontextualized events.

LIVED EXPERIENCE -Dilthey introduced *Erlebnis*, lived experience, as a noun and as a unit of meaning in his discussions of the concept of understanding. He posited understanding rather than explanation as the method of human sciences which he viewed as interpretive. This term represents an epistemological shift and a new discourse. No longer was history viewed as a chronicle of segmented, static moments. The nature of a human world described in this discourse is contextualized, relational, reciprocal. The temporal dimension is processual and simultaneous. Understanding is grounded in the "interconnectedness of lived experience" (Dilthey, 1926, p.154).

HYPOSTATIZATION -references the danger in freezing "reality" and obscuring the temporal and historical lived dimensions.

CHAPTER I. THE QUESTION

> A question presses itself on us; we can no longer avoid it and persist in our accustomed opinion
> Gadamer, 1960, p.330.

INTRODUCTION

This work began perhaps at a prereflective level in my sixth year of life in Mrs. Predy's Grade Two classroom. Newly indoctrinated with all of the then current curriculum theories and methodologies, she brought new learnings but more importantly enthusiasm and joy into my world of books and thinking and understanding. Phonetic instruction had been part of her recently completed teacher training. What magical insight she imparted in showing me the regularities in words! I had been reading since my third year of life and knew that d-o-g spelled dog but had not until her powerful guidance understood that I could with some consistency apply the same concepts to correctly spell sophisticated words like banana. When I thanked her years later at a school reunion for her loving knowledgeable tutelage, she smiled the same open spontaneous smile that I had known so well but appeared quite unaware of the impact she had made on my life. Throughout those early years my uncle was living with my family during the time of his high school education. His first year high school French textbook with its totally controlled vocabulary woven into short interesting narratives fascinated me. It would absorb my attention for hours as I deciphered this mysterious code that I knew was spoken by others in other places. My fascination with the French language and culture remained and years later when my own path lead me to teaching and new questions demanded answers it was a natural part of my quest for understanding to pursue graduate studies in France. No one had told me that I could not speak this language well enough to seek answers at this level to questions about my students' learning problems and so I engaged in studies through this language and learned more than I had anticipated to question.

Back in the elementary school in my own classroom as a reflective practitioner of the art of teaching, I would often find myself in awe of the excellence that my colleagues would demonstrate. How had my grade two teacher imparted to a child the understanding that written language is to some extent systematic and manageable and the confidence to apply that understanding? How did my colleagues impart knowledge of how to master concepts and beyond that, knowledge of how to think and use that way of thinking in other contexts? What was there that I could do to teach understanding to those children who were entrusted to my teaching? The question of what it is that I am doing as a teacher and as a psychologist and what it is that I might do to more profoundly influence my own learning and that of each child in my classroom pressed itself upon me until it became imperative that I seek some understanding of the praxis to which I had so totally committed myself. Introspective reflection upon the teachings of my own great teachers at the elementary school level and at the University level suggested patterns of influence. The joy in learning of epistemologies and world views and of being guided to an understanding of understanding by erudite teachers opened possibilities for more scholarly reflection upon my questions.

A search of the educational and psychological literature, which are replete with idealized examples of what a teacher should be and what the effects of schools might be (Creemers and Scheerens, 1989; Edmonds, 1979), left me poignantly aware that the question of what it is to be a teacher has not been explored with teachers beyond the adjustments of the first year teacher (Craig, 1984; Everett-Turner, 1984). The meaning that teaching and that being a teacher holds for teachers is a fundamental aspect of research <u>on</u> education (Illich, 1983). Although the literature in teaching and learning acknowledges the central role of the teacher in the teaching-learning process, the question of what it means to be a teacher from the subjective experience of teachers remains to be investigated critically and reflectively. It is the subjective experience of teachers that will be the focus of conversations with experienced elementary school teachers.

Education is a phenomenon not in isolation but in dialectical relationship to other human experiences. A teacher is challenged to examine and to address the prevailing and continuing social and existential issues of human existence. That "schools are more than *syllabi* course requirements and instructional materials" is a truism that Purpel reiterates. He writes of the "persistent but quiet voice that (has) long spoken of how connections of clusters of values, attitudes, policies and priorities that form the social and cultural structure influence what happens in schools" (Purpel and Shapiro, 1985, p.xi). Social and cultural changes are echoed in classroom discourses. Implicitly, a teacher is called on to play a part in the adaptation to and integration of change as well as in the transmission of the dominant beliefs and ways of thinking. Indeed, a teacher is challenged to provide constructive responses in a pluralistic society which holds multiple competing goals for educators. The world of a teacher is nested in the larger contexts of social realities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Reigel, 1979). Thus a school is an immediate reflection of the social world. But it is also a *life-world* "positing the existence of other beings like me" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973). As a teacher one shares at various levels of proximity, depth and anonymity, reciprocal perspectives. The life-world of teaching is informed by multiple discursive systems beyond the social and historical including hermeneutics and semiology and existentialism. A "scholarly and disciplined understanding of *educational experience*, particularly in its political, cultural, gender and historical dimensions" (Pinar, 1988, p.2, italics added) is grounded in philosophical discourse in hermeneutics and phenomenology and aesthetics and in psychoanalytic discourse. This reconceptualization of the life-world of educational experience has been shaped by the thinking of Greene (1988), Grumet (1988), Huebner (1975), Macdonald (1988), Pinar (1975, 1988, in press) and Aoki (1990) and van Manen (1990). Their interpretations of educational discourses ground this inquiry which addresses the meaning of being a teacher. To appropriate teachers' experiences, it is only to teachers that we can turn. It is only in returning to the lived experiences of teachers that we

can open up the worlds a teacher stands in. It is only in teachers' words and narratives that we can speak of the life-worlds of teachers.

A. PURPOSE OF THIS INQUIRY

The purpose of this inquiry then is to explore the meanings of the lived experiences of teachers. The underlying intention of this inquiry is to reflect upon pedagogic praxis as the opening of possibilities for children and for teachers. The question of what it is to be as a teacher, as a co-creator of possible worlds will be explored in conversations with teachers. The nature of the educational praxis which a teacher co-constitutes with students in a classroom will be explored from the perspective of five experienced elementary school teachers.

In this search to understand the meaning of teachers' experiences, the hermeneutics of Gadamer (1960) and Ricoeur (1981) provide the major perspectives in which these questions and answers are grounded. The ambiguities and possibilities and layers of determinateness of the life-worlds of teachers (Greene, 1988) are reconstructed from what Ricoeur has referred to as the text or the narratives that emerge in conversations with teachers. Narratives in teachers' words and in teachers' voices are evocative of what it is to dwell in the place of a teacher. A **hermeneutic phenomenological approach** provides the framework to describe and bring out the meanings of this dwelling. Hermeneutics, according to Gadamer, is a dialectic; it is the art of conducting a real conversation. Dialectics as the art of conducting a real conversation is the "the art of the formation of concepts as the working out of common meanings" (Gadamer, 1960, p.331). It consists in bringing out the real strength of what is said. "Seeing each other's point " opens and fuses horizons and restores the original communication of meaning (*Ibid*). In this inquiry, Gadamerian and Socratic dialectics are evoked in these conversations with teachers which seek to unfold empathic generalizations or essences about what it is to be a teacher. This fundamental drive of tension and change implies that knowledge evolves

within heterogeneities. A dialectical view of knowing and meaning is alluded to in a generative sociogenetic view of evolution rather than in a purely Hegelian deterministic view of development and change.

It is to the hermeneutic encounter as dialogue or conversation that we shall turn to hear what Carson (1990) calls "the voices of teachers" and that which Aoki (1990) names the "voices of teaching". A process of interpretation of the combined conversations as tapes and as transcribed texts is engaged in to show the themes and meanings of the experience of being-in-the-world as a teacher that emerges in this hermeneutic encounter with five experienced teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Semi-structured conversations about the meaning of teaching are presumed to allow teachers the freedom to engage in reflection on their experiences (Berg, 1989). An attempt was made throughout the initial dialogues to encourage the teachers to speak freely and openly about teaching. In a second conversation we engaged together in an exploration of the themes which emerged in these initial conversations. To stimulate these first conversations, I was guided by the following questions:

1. What does teaching mean to you? Or more concretely, what has kept you in teaching?
2. In what ways has teaching influenced you?
3. What insights or questions or concerns do you have about teaching?

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE INQUIRY

This hermeneutic inquiry begins with a personal reflective narrative about teaching. The second chapter of this dissertation contextualizes the interpretations of teaching that have been drawn in the literature by first describing briefly the epistemologic shifts in interpretations of knowing and being and meaning in order to make explicit the

foundationalism (Osborne, in press) of the epistemological teacher and child of this inquiry. A reconceptualization of teaching draws from the interpretive traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics and seeks to uncover the existential and ontological realms implied in educational epistemologies. The languaging of disciplines that the ontological shines through is traced in a reconceptualization of teaching that is grounded in a search for understanding. In the third chapter, the methodological foundations of this inquiry are briefly outlined: hermeneutical phenomenology is traced historically and more recently in the writings of Gadamer and Ricoeur. It is this approach which guides an interpretation of the narratives of these teachers. In the next chapter, a hermeneutics as an approach to this inquiry is discussed. The teachers, who engage in dialogue to bring meaning to this question and our dialogical process, are described. In the fifth chapter, each teacher's narratives for the first phase and the second phase are recollected to attempt to synthesize the themes which emerge. Interpretations of these themes are formulated and collected into a recapitulative text in the sixth chapter. Each teacher's responses to the reflective theming, and questions and implications which emerge are summarized in the final chapter.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE INQUIRY

Theoretical formulations about teaching do not speak from the place of the teacher. It is in the circular hermeneutic dialogues with these teachers that this work may make a contribution of scholarly significance to the literature on teaching. Issues of practical and social relevance in educational planning may emerge in the conversations with these teachers. The narratives and themes which emerge may have empathic generalizability (Osborne, 1990). Validity verifications in terms of comprehensiveness and penetration of intent are limited to the responses of teachers engaged in this inquiry to the deconstructions of their narratives.

C. PERSONAL NARRATIVES ABOUT TEACHING

My earliest recollections about teachers go back to my father's profound respect for all of those who had committed their lives to the vocation of teaching. That he had wanted to be a teacher or that he had thought that I might be a teacher were not implied behind his respect. What was implied and demonstrated more overtly was his lifelong love of learning. Teachers facilitated learning, a lifelong process of great significance to personal ontogenesis. My own interest was in Psychology. My Grade Ten Physical Education teacher had assigned a paper on psychosomatic illness. The antithesis of this power of the mind totally captured my imagination. I would be a Psychologist who worked in an educational setting! It was only upon entering the world of a teacher as a student teacher that I experienced the beauty and the integrity of the relationships in that world. The complexity of the dynamics became transparent in a Parent-Teacher interview in that Grade One classroom when the mother of quiet, introverted Jamie mentioned that he spoke constantly at home of his frustration with Bradley. All that she was aware of was that Bradley apparently incessantly disrupted the class and took up all of the teacher's time. What a direct contradiction of the teacher's and of my perceptions of both children! Jamie rarely spoke unless called upon and appeared calm and content. Bradley was exuberant and extroverted and polite. His participation in activities and discussions was appropriate and respectful of others. How could it be that this charming, confident boy might provoke such unhappiness and hostility? How could it be that the outwardly composed Jamie might be experiencing and camouflaging such intense emotions? How might his responses be interpreted? How was I to teach him not only to be more appreciative of Bradley but to begin to develop some of Bradley's qualities in himself? Classroom dynamics emerged in my understanding and added dimensionality to the world of teaching. This awareness of the internal dynamics of each child in a classroom lead me to explore the complexity of intelligence and personality and to reflect upon the interplay between intelligence and personality and behaviour. My dreams changed. I wanted my own classroom with all this

dimensionality and depth and scope to apply insights from psychology and transform the lives of children.

My first month in my own classroom taught me about another invisible layer of my world as a teacher. Because the school caretakers had reached a stalemate in benefit negotiations, the schools were closed. The excitement with which I had anticipated teaching and becoming a real teacher in my own classroom with my own circle of unique children turned to disappointment as I waited. The days became weeks and soon a month had passed. My disappointment turned to puzzlement that a school might be closed for any reason. The foundation was laid for deeper and deeper insights into the interconnectedness of a teacher with colleagues in a school. My gradual understanding of our interdependence and of the vital role that each staff member within the school can play began to develop. Only much later would I appreciate the influence that each custodian and secretary and school nurse and specialist as well as other teachers and administrators might have on the lives of children in my classroom and on my life.

In my second year of teaching, Troy, one of *my children*, was unable to learn to read and write in spite of all that I researched and attempted. His intelligence was in the very superior range and he was an articulate, outgoing, happy child. Some specific learning problems apparently caused him to transpose the letters of words. He was able to describe his difficulties: "the letters just mix themselves up and my brain can't remember in which place they should be". The questions that Troy opened pushed me back to further studies. Never would I know all there was to know about each child and about teaching. Professional development in its many forms was to become part of my lifelong pursuit of understanding. Upon returning to a combined assignment in the classroom and in counselling, each child and each new situation pointed to questions and to new avenues of study. It was always in Psychology that I would seek and find some tentative answers. Always there would seem to be more questions. And more awareness of my own part in a

dramatic interplay with the worlds of a child whom I had assumed I was there to guide and teach.

Each child whose life I felt unable to touch lead me to reading and reflection on classroom management and effective teaching strategies. But I experienced the suffocation and stulification of my own pedagogical responsivity as I attempted to wear the marionette strings of behaviouristic, mechanistic interactions with real feeling children with individual changing needs. My own world view changed as I came to understand that I, as teacher, was capable of practicing only "embodied" knowledge. Only what I co-created with my student in my classroom in all of its contextuality had any meaning for me. And I came to understand more and more fully that it is only that which a child co-constitutes with me and others in our classroom that has any significance for her or him.

The challenge of writing curriculum in Counselling and in Language Arts and in French Immersion opened not only new questions but also new ways of understanding what it was that I was doing as a teacher. By comparison, the programmes and instructional prescriptions for national education in France were so abbreviated and yet so identical in form and in themes and in intention. Some fundamental patterns appeared in the forms of knowing. These comparisons and reflections were the foundation of new insights that crystallized later through the teachings of van Manen and the writings of Osborne (1985) and discussions with Vander Well and Bain. I came to understand that teaching addresses not simply epistemological and methodological interpretations but more importantly ontological issues. It became apparent to me that teaching is grounded in the human search for meaning and that learning or meaning-making is a form of life, that is, a process of understanding. As Smith (1988) expounds, "the whole person standing in the whole of life trying to make sense of . . . existence. . .stands in Being itself" (pp. 418-419). It is clear in a pluralistic world that many dialectics co-exist in teaching. The language to speak of these many patterns of meaning assumes many forms. Some of these forms we have institutionalized as disciplines. The frameworks or languaging of disciplines

(Huebner, 1975) allow the language of ontological interpretation to shine through. A teacher's pedagogical encounter with a child then might be described as engaging in an open, ever expanding hermeneutic circle of understanding. A metaphor of teaching as hermeneutics shines through Phenix' (1964) conceptualization of education as "the process of engendering essential meanings" (p.5). Further re-searching of the literature lead me to the works of Greene, 1988; Pinar, 1975, 1988, in press; Pinar and Grumet (1988) and Huebner, 1975; and Macdonald (1988) who also conceptualize teaching in its intersections with phenomenology and hermeneutics and semiotics and existentialism and psychoanalytic and gender discourses. Their reconceptualization of teaching as a mediation of the space between the existential and the ontological is addressed in the following chapter.

The following chapter is organized around the the changing foundations of the discourses which ground this inquiry. For a hermeneutic inquiry cannot "return to the things themselves" as Husserl admonished. I encounter the teachers with whom I dialogue only through language and through my pre-understandings which, too, are mediated by language. As Bain (1989) reminds us: "In language biological, psychological and socio-historical determinants converge." Further discourse on language of Cassirer (1955), Gadamer (1960; 1971), Heidegger (1971), Kristeva (1974), Merleau-Ponty (1964), and Ricoeur (1981) to name only a few more recent thinkers might be summarized in Varela's (1989) question:

> *Pourquoi la connaissance tient-elle du fait que notre monde soit inséparable de notre corps, de notre langage, et de notre histoire sociale?* (p.97).

From this perspective, I bring to these dialogues my own positings and meanings even as I open to the other-ness of these teachers and their worlds (Ricoeur, 1981). In this inquiry, we seek to arrive at a common understanding of a common world. Yet much will remain unheard or heard in a unique way through my world view and my discourses. For as Ricoeur (1978) reminds us: our interpretation is "not presuppositionless, but in and with

all its presuppositions" (p.37). To make explicit some of my underlying assumptions and understandings of the discourses that shape the life-world of teaching and the literature on teaching, my present evolving but hypostatized understanding of how self and world are co-constituted is presented as a multidimensional dialectical model in hermeneutic motion in the Appendix.

In the next chapter the epistemological influences on our interpretations of language, self and meaning will be discussed. The heuristic forces that shape our understanding of knowing and being and meaning are traced. Teaching is described in these converging discourses.

CHAPTER II. LANGUAGE AND MEANING

> It is by an understanding of the worlds actual and possible
> opened by language that we arrive at a better understanding
> of ourselves
> Ricoeur, 1984, p.45.

> Meaning (becomes) . . . the enormous and unknown region
> that grammar, logic and every other approach to *la langue*
> would look for across epistemological avatars
> Kristeva, 1989, p. 326.

The subject, S, of psychological inquiry is not foundationless. This inquiry situates both teacher and child not in an empiricist mould but in the discourses of semiotics, cybernetic- and existential-phenomenologies and interactionist ontologies. The changing epistemological discourses that ground our understanding of human existence mediate an interpretation of a teaching subject in process (Kristeva, 1974). To address the meaning of what it is to be a teacher is to address the realms of being and knowing and meaning. This inquiry approaches the being and knowing of a teacher through the languages of *text* and its interpretation. In this Ricoeurean sense, text "includes any expression of thought, not merely expressions of thought in words" (Watson, 1985, p. 13). The premise that action may be regarded as a text to be interpreted extends Ricoeur's (1971) hermeneutics to the sphere of the human sciences. Thus Ricoeur's theory of interpretation becomes a hermeneutics of pedagogic praxis. The meaning of teaching will be searched through the hermeneutic circle of reflexivity.

In this chapter the foundations of language, self, and meaning will be briefly discussed to make explicit some of the historical influences on our interpretations. Some of the theories and epistemologies that have shaped interpretations of the linguisticality of experience and the architectonics of self and of meaning are introduced in order that

teaching as text may be contextualized within the structures that give form to its discourses. The amphoras of time that reside ambiguously in and shape pedagogic discourses are brought to consciousness in fragmented theoretical discussions of knowing, being and meaning. Theoretical discourses converge. Simplistic descriptions for purposes of clarity tend towards hypostatization. The reader is reminded of the convergence of heuristic influences on the human science of teaching and on interpretations of teaching. In the first section, views of language, functions of language, and discursive and nondiscursive forms are summarized. The second section addresses the teaching subject from the perspective of three theories of self. The patterns and structures of self that emerge from these presuppositions are discussed. The third section provides an introduction to some of the epistemologies which give form to understanding. Pedagogical theorizing is then recontextualized and reconceptualized within these converging semiotic and ontological and epistemological frameworks.

A. THE LINGUISTICALITY OF EXPERIENCE

> Like air itself, language permeates every nook and cranny of existence
> (Merleau-Ponty, 1973, Cited in Bain, 1989).

The use of language and other symbolic forms is central to experience. For we are born into systems of symbols. And our experiences are woven out of our linguisticality. Our emotions are braided to our language (Vander Well, 1989). Language gives content and form to our experience. We discover worlds through language and other symbol systems such as music, myth, movement and mathematics. Language remains one of the principle means to understanding our contexts and ourselves and the means of going beyond particular understandings at a particular temporal point. Language is the way to

understanding and language enables us to transcend our understandings. Only imagination of the possible liberates us to transcend the actual and even imagination is linguistic (Cassirer, 1955; Langer, 1949; Ricoeur, 1984). It gives us the freedom to change the world through naming it (Sartre, 1964). Freedom which exists in dialectic implies naming the heterogeneities that shape our possibilities (Greene, 1988). Language allows freedom from enslavement by unconscious texts and by illusion. Freedom to choose implies learning of one's boundaries and possibilities. Just as language liberates, it encapsulates (Bain, 1989). As Lacan (1966) paraphrases Sartre: Language remains our *sovereign*. The Charybnis and the Scylla of ontogenesis through symbolic forms, as Cassirer (1955) cautions, lies in the danger of hypostatization of those forms which allow us "to come into being". For if the language which allows us to come into being is inappropriate or if our discourse systems are incomplete or irrelevant, then what we hold as truths is illusionary.

Symbolic interactionist notions of language and ontogenesis invites mastery of the symbolic through distantiation and bringing to consciousness of underlying prejudices and presuppositions. It is this perspective which guides this text. In this section, theories of language which are subsumed and perhaps retained ambiguously in this inquiry will be discussed briefly. Atomistic, structuralist, and semiotic views of language will be explored to trace the evolution of thought about language (Kristeva, 1989). Models of language function arise from changing epistemologies. The communicative, ontogenetic and meta functions of language are cited as exemplars. The discursive and nondiscursive layers of language will be addressed to conclude this brief discussion of the discourses that serve as the tools of ontogenetic, epistemological and hence of pedagogical discussions.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE

Atomistic views of materialist pre-Socratic Greek scholars, such as Democritus, and of the Phoenicians who are credited with having constructed the alphabet, isolated letters of the alphabet as phonic atoms (Kristeva, 1989). Heraclitus believed that "the

qualities of objects were reflected in their phoneticism" (*Ibid*, p.105). Language was viewed as separate from *the real*. Thinking and speaking were synonymous in this view. Rhetoric thus became one of the first instruments of the art of thinking. Atomistic notions were enlarged to include a materialist theory of the word as reflecting reality and lead to presuppositions of one maternal tongue in which nature determines the thetic. Through naming, an object or an abstracted aspect could be recalled and referred to. Transcendental meaning or signification subsequently emerged as privileged and the signifier came to be overlooked; "the word (became) the expression of *meaning* that the named object bears" (*Ibid*, p.109). Plato, in response to Heraclitean claims of a world in flux and contradiction describes a language that begins to question itself in *Cratylus*. Meaning continues to dominate and omit the signifier in the neoplatonic thinking of Cassirer, according to Kristeva (*Ibid*). Word realism is a contemporary example of this notion that is retained ambiguously (Bain, 1989). The power of naming is retained in existential thought but it is given dimensionality through semiotics. The polysemy of words and of utterances embraces and extends a monolithic interpretation of text (Ricoeur, 1981).

Structuralist views of language are traced by Kristeva (1989) from the Renaissance when languages were viewed as concrete representations of a "universal ground of a common logic" (p.326). Eighteenth century rationalism attempted to organize the surface of language into a linguistic system. This early structuralism searched also to recover the link between language and the ontological. The search for the *real* in the next century was directed in comparativism between languages also toward the historical antecedent, the mother tongue of all current languages. This search for extralinguistic reality and history was abandoned in the structuralism of the twentieth century. Contemporary structuralist views include Saussure's search for systematization. The social and psychological part of language is considered independent of the subject by Saussure. "Stratified into more and more formal and autonomous layers, (language) is being

presented in the most recent research as a system of mathematical relations among terms without names (without meaning)". . . until linguistics becomes the science of a system itself (*Ibid*). Kristeva (1989) cautions that "one can say that this formalization, this arranging of the signifier bereft of the signified, represses the metaphysical foundation that the study of *la langue* rested upon to begin with: the detachment and the link to the real, the sign, meaning and communication" (p.327). Psychoanalytic contributions to understanding of the role of the language of the unconscious are also lacking in the signifier/signified image of language. Derrida (1978) unites the structuralist image of signifier/signified as the two sides of a sheet of paper with Freud's metaphor for the unconscious. This sheet of paper, in fact, has a wax slab at its core. Traces or "repositories of a meaning which was never present " are inscribed in the wax to be reconstituted by deferral (Derrida, 1978, p.211). *Différance* allows the interpretation of these never originary writings on this page with a wax core through deferral in time and context. Through deferral, "meaning and force are united" (*Ibid*). The structuralist dilemma of the place of the unconscious is resolved by semiotics.

Semiotics includes and goes beyond the structuralist view of language as the system of signs of a Cartesian subject. Peirce saw semiotics as a general study of signs which function in all areas of human experience. In fact, it was Saussure who derived the name *semiology* from the Greek, *sémêön* meaning *sign* but he assigned the task of determining the exact place of semiology to the psychologist (Kristeva, 1989)! Social sign-systems include explicit systems of communication such as languages and codes and signals as well as gestures, rituals, dress, meal preparation, and myth which convey meaning (Abrams, 1988). Semiotics goes beyond the atomistic static meaning of a term for a mental representation to concern itself with a view of *signification* as that *psychological process* which imbues an image with meaning. Changes in meaning occur through personal and psychological or social dynamics as well as through historical dynamics such

as expressiveness, contagion or euphemism (*Ibid*). This psychological process is contextualized and changing throughout time. Kristeva (1989) implies the epistemological shift that semiotics introduces when she interprets signification as "a theory of social history as the interaction of various signifying practices. . . that sees every realm (of thinking) organized as a language" (p.328). The heterogeneities that semiotics embraces through these interactions of divergent signifying practices provides a view of language that allow one to address the paradoxes, ambiguities and incompleteness of human experience. The ontological is recovered.

The history of thought about language is not bound by static categories. Discourse systems do not abandon earlier forms of thought, they are retained ambiguously (Bain, 1989). The thetic, retained from atomistic views, allows not only referencing but also the construction and reconstruction of experience (Sartre, 1964). Word meaning is expanded through existential, psychoanalytical and semiotic discourses which converge in polysemy. The heuristic functions of semantic ideation, made explicit by structuralists, allow for thematizations and re-schematizations. The metalevels of awareness that semiotic views of language make possible allow for distantiation and appropriation through reinterpretations and interpretations of interpretations. An emergent generative view of unfolding possibilities can be spoken in the languages of semiotic reflexivity. The ontogenetic and the ontological may be addressed through this paradigm. This review of the history of thought about language describes very briefly the multiple modes of thinking about languaging. Awareness of the language forms through which we are freed to think opens the possibility of choosing those symbolic forms that would allow us to bring to consciousness and to embrace the heterogeneities that shape our educational epistemologies.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

The Prague Circle, influenced by Russian linguistics like Roman Jakobson and French thinkers like Emile Benveniste, postulated a functionalist view of language. The

communicative function of language was the basis of this structuralist model of language. Epistemological changes suggested by the works of Freud and Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty reflect the recognition of the languages of interior life and of embodiment in a temporal social world through language. An ontogenetic model of language function emerges. Bateson, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Sartre and Steiner among other seminal thinkers create a new epistemology that suggests a meta-function of language.

The **communicative function** includes the referencing function whereby words orient to realms of experience. Utterances reference simultaneously not only the *concrete reality* of structuralist definition but also the speaker, the relationship, and the unspoken (Bain, 1989). Language is referential; it references also a way of being which is brought to language. The interactionist nature of communication allows the expression of one's perceptual horizon not only to others but also to self (Vygotsky, 1960). A semiotic description of the place of language as signifying systems unfolds the living communication of a *speaking subject* (Kristeva, 1974).

The **ontogenetic function** of language follows the dialectical laws of the social world. Thoughts, feelings and actions are indeed socially constructed as G.H. Mead (1932) proposes. But the social world contains inherent contradictions. Our boundaries are very much merged and intersecting. We are our others and our responses to them. Subjectivity is the introjected selves, the shadows and the echoes of the other (Lacan, 1966). The knowable and the unknowable that shape our being act upon and are acted with or against in a dialectical interplay (White, 1987). Awareness of these forces liberates one to open to other possibilities and if-ness and to participatively be there (Steiner, 1975). We become who we are through our discourses and our praxes. Through the dialogic negotiation of intra- and inter-subjectivity, language serves a self-construal role (Bain, 1989). The languages that shape self are partial and in tension for there are worlds beyond

every present horizon. Final meanings are not prematurely imposed on symbol systems. The power of metaphoricity generates and regenerates meanings through new forms of narrations of past horizons to open them towards future horizons of possibility (Ricoeur, 1984). To reiterate Ricoeur's thesis: through our discourses and our praxes we shape our identities. Our narrative fictions are *redefinitions of what is already defined, a reinterpretation of what is already interpreted* (*Ibid*). A hermeneutic view of becoming is implied in this metadiscourse.

The **metafunction** of language embodies semiotic reflexivity. Luria's internalization of voluntary control frees one to play self-regulatory and planning roles (Bain, 1989). Distantiation allows one to go beyond self-knowledge and conceptions to new and unanticipated understanding (Gadamer, 1960). Awareness at a metalevel liberates us to think and act more and more consciously. Temporal or organizational closure are *opened* in constructions and discernments of self as process through higher orders of recursion (Maturana and Varela, 1980; Keeney, 1983), recollecting Hegelian syntheses. Metalevels of consciousness restore the *flux*, the original difficulty of life that Heraclitus and Plato alluded to and that Caputo (1987) addresses. Somewhere between our powerfully determined and deterministic signifying systems and radical freedom, we as living subjects move beyond ourselves (Greene, 1988).

Our discourses function beyond the Cartesian communicative model of the structuralists. The message becomes a process of signification that opens new horizons of possibility. In lived communication the unconscious, the unspoken and the yet unrealized may be evoked. Self is constructed and reinterpreted through the interaction of various signifying systems. The ceaseless interplay of irreconcilable and contradictory forces and meanings are brought to metalevel awareness through hermeneutic reflexivity. In this hermeneutic circle, our knowing and our being are shaped by our discourses. These signifying systems are discussed next.

DISCOURSE SYSTEMS

> Discourse implies first the participation of the subject in his language through his *speech* as an *individual*. Using the anonymous structure of *la langue*, the subject forms and transforms himself in the discourse he communicates to the other. *La langue*, common to all, becomes in discourse the vehicle of a *unique* message
> (Kristeva, 1989, p.11).

Language in living communication includes layers of signifying systems beyond the system of signs which earlier thinkers addressed. Signifying practices are discursive and nondiscursive. The discursive and nondiscursive are given form by and give form to our knowing and being and meaning.

Discursive practices of the language of direct communication include explicit signs that are the focus of linguistics. *La langue* for Benveniste "designates this formulation of language as a collection of formal signs, stratified in successive layers that form systems and structures" that are social but independent of an individual (*Ibid*). Discourse implies *la langue* in lived communication. Thus philosophy, history, psychoanalysis, all the signifying practices of human endeavor are evoked in discourse. A speaking subject is a temporal contextualized being in dialogue with other speaking subjects. A speaking subject embodies dreams, the unconscious, the mythological, the poetic. The symbolic analogic nature of all discourse is an example of the nondiscursive.

Nondiscursive practices include the unspoken rules of distribution of talk and content organization that are an integral part of an individual's personal and cultural identity (Bain, 1989). These discourse conventions are learned preverbally, sociogenetically even

as one learns to speak. The nondiscursive practices that a child brings to school then become part of classroom discourse (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1988). The nondiscursive symbolization of music, aesthetics, poetics is emotional, synthetic, continuous and fluid. For aesthetics, ethics, dreams are understood mythologically, indirectly. The myth-making process and the nondiscursive ideation of the dream speak metaphorically of the forces that shape our discourses.

Analogic systems which are dominantly nondiscursive faces of discourse, include all nonverbal communication as well as the situational context. "Posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection, and the sequence, rhythm and cadence of words themselves. . . are part of analogic communications that define the nature of interactions" (Watzlawick *et al* 1967, p.62). The content aspect of communication is primarily discursive; the relationship primarily analogic. Neither negation nor conjunction (including contradiction) nor temporal distinctions can be expressed analogically therefore theses and antitheses may be present simultaneously (*Ibid*). Analogic communication speaks also the metaphorical language of analogies. At the metaphorical level, communication is simultaneously analogical and digital. Dream symbolism is analogic in this double sense.

Any *text*, any set of social phenomena is expressed in and expresses signifying systems. Our signifying practices orient us not only to themselves but to other realms. Including the ontogenetic. Dance, music, philosophy, religion, all of our discourses provide us with thematizations that we weave into narratives of who we are individually and culturally. Through our signifying practices we create new schemata, new perceptions, changed beliefs and understandings and hence new possibilities. The changing texts of self are possible through distantiation. Reflectivity allow us to go beyond our constructions of self-knowledge and of cultural conventions through hermeneutic interpretation. The epistemologies, that shape discourses about language*s* and hence about *the speaking*

subject, have been very briefly sketched in this section. In the next section, some of the presuppositions that have structured views of self are discussed.

B. THE SPEAKING SUBJECT

> S'identifier à ce qui est le *procès de l'identité* signifiante, subjective, sociale, c'est précisément pratiquer le procès, mettre en procès le sujet et ses thèses. . . Un sujet non plus simplement expliquant, cogitant et sachant, mais un sujet insaissable parce que *transformant* le réel. Ce sujet-là, qui comprend le mouvement du précédent, accentue en lui le *procès* plus que l'identification. le *rejet* plus que le désir, l'*hétérogène* plus que le signifiant, la *lutte* plus que la structure
> (Kristeva, 1974, pp.160-161).

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF SELF

Conceptualizations of the *subject* of psychological inquiry represent the presuppositions and heuristic influences of theoretical discourses. The nature of man has been contemplated since Antiquity. Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel reflected on being. Present theories of self have been influenced by many traditions including behaviorist, gestalt, phenomenological and existential thought. Thinkers representative of each framework struggle to interpret lived text. Each theory mirrors and projects a view of human nature. Dominant conceptual debates about the nature of self resonate with the discourses that give them voice.

This section summarizes three theories of self. The contributions of psychoanalytical, cognitive and existential-phenomenological views of self will be brought to light to illuminate the teaching self who will be engaged in dialogue in this inquiry. Kristeva (1974) speaks of a subject in process/on trial. This *sujet en procès* is the subject of

hermeneutics. The heterogeneous processes, the hermeneutic circles which the signifying practices of psychological theorizing point toward are alluded to in the examples of processes and patterns which help to define teacher and child as beings.

Psychoanalytic theories of self inform semiotic reflexivity. Freud introduced the analogic, symbolic nature of dreams and symptoms as sign systems of the unconscious and irrevocably challenged Cartesian conceptions of the relation between self and language (Kristeva, 1974; 1989; Lacan, 1966). The polysemic symbolism of the language of dreams reveals that self and meaning are problematic. Self and meaning do not exist; self and meaning are created, hermeneutically, through language. Self and meaning are not preexisting independent realities; they are mediated through language. Self and meaning are discursive. "The subject *is* not; he makes and unmakes himself in a complex topology where the other and his discourses are included" (Kristeva, 1989, p.274-275). The discourses of the unconscious add childhood memories, vocabulary, life style, and personal history/story to the stage/theatre of somatic symptoms and dreams (Lacan, 1966). Language reconceptualized to embody the legacies of psychoanalytic thought speaks of unconscious conflicting motivations. These forces connect the biological and the symbolic in a struggle for a subjective unifying significance (Kristeva, 1974). A self emerges through heterogeneous forces at the symbolic and at the unconscious levels. No originary experiences exist! Perception inscribes traces or representations on a wax slab. Omissions, distortions and condensations of the internal or external plumes of the psyche and social world threaten erasure of the present, of the subject. Only through distantiation and deferral can these traces be recovered and appropriated. As Derrida (1978) poetically describes:

> The metaphor of pathbreaking . . . is always in communication with the theme of the *supplementary delay* and with the reconstitution of meaning through deferral, after a mole-like progression, after the subterranean toil of an impression. This impression has left behind a laborious trace

> which has never been *perceived*, whose meaning has never been lived in the present, *i.e.*, has never been lived consciously
> (p.214).

From a psychoanalytical perspective, "the subject and meaning are not; they are produced in the discursive work" (Kristeva, 1989, p.275). Only radical heterogeneity between past and present, conscious and unconscious, the trace and the semiotic can shatter symbolic unity and reconstitute anew the subject in process/on trial (Kristeva, 1974; Derrida, 1978). *Différance* must be searched in "languages , in discourses in the plural" of a subject who *is* not but who makes and unmakes self in a complex relationship of space and form where other: parent, teacher, student, therapist, friend, discourse, is included.

Cognitive conceptualizations of self emphasize the processes and patterns whereby experience is acquired and organized. Cognitive models of human nature are derived from divergent and converging views of cognition: from behaviourist to computer to sociogenetic metalogues.

Cognitive-behaviourists acknowledge internal cognitive mediation between stimulus and response. Modification of behaviour in this model occurs in social interactions. Cognitive processes mediate in the interpretation of vicarious experience. For example, for Bandura, modelling is influenced by attentional, retention, motor and motivational processes (Schultz, 1981). He further postulates that perception, motivation and performance are influenced by an individual's sense of efficacy. Attitudes and beliefs and personal history are reciprocally determined in interaction with behavioural and environmental stimuli (Bandura, 1977). Dollard and Miller operationalize Freudian defense mechanisms and neurotic symptoms in terms of stimulus-response based on their stimulus-response model of conflict (Monte, 1980). An information-processing metaphor of cognitive processing excludes simultaneous processing and unconscious forces. Consciousness is viewed as epiphenomenal; the analogic processes of the unconscious

cannot be voiced in the reductionist digital language of early computers. A cybernetic view of self as a living system converges with the theoretical formulations of systems theory and ecology. In this view, direct experience or direct sensory knowing cannot exist. A living system "creates and organizes our world of experience" in a recursive dialectical encounter between maps of maps of the territory and the territory (Keeney, 1983, p.45). "Self" is choreographed in a "recursive dialectic alternating between distinctions based on sensory based description and those derived from skeletons of symbolic relations" (*Ibid*, p.46). Epistemological distinctions between self/other, self/environment, self/experience may obscure a view of cybernetic complementarities (*Ibid*). Self and experience are co-constructed between mental process and symbolic form. Dissonance/breach provides the impetus for reinterpretation at a conscious and discursive level. Through language, we can make distinctions and distinctions about distinctions and in the process create ourselves. Language is the "epistemological knife" (*Ibid*, p.110) that forms the hermeneutic process of reflectivity. As Sellick (1989) so powerfully describes:

> The entire universe was itself a mind-like unity constituted by living systems which, through the recursiveness of their organization were able to learn, and which through their interactions in the larger planetary ecology which they constituted and integrated, participated in the evolutionary cybernetic process called *Mind*
> (p.48).

The converging epistemology of autopoiesis also describes the recursion-homeostasis of living systems from the perspective of biology. Varela (1989) adds the perspectives of European thinkers like Heidegger, Husserl, Foucault, Merleau-Ponty and Piaget. The conscious experience of knowing and being and understanding are the focus of this approach. Varela questions whether our consciousness as a living system is separable from our bodies, our language, our social history. Living system and mind are linked. In this view, knowing is ontological: the knower is inseparable from the known, and knowing is

inseparable from being. Being is inextricably linked to lived history. Language is not only a tool of communication but the veritable tapestry in which identity is woven . The hermeneutic circle that provides the woof and the warp includes creation (*poiesis*) and interpretation. Sperry (1987) describes a macroview of functional interactions between brain and mind supporting emergent systems view of consciousness and of ontogenesis. Complex multinested patterns of space and time are included. Conscious and unconscious emergent properties of mind are included. Sperry transcends mind-body dualism and provides a theoretical framework to include Bateson's and Varela and Maturana's views of mind as a living system. Psychoanalytical and phenomenological contributions are not excluded by Sperry's theorizing.

From a cybernetic cognitive perspective, self is embodied and historically situated. Being is contextualized symbolically, temporally, spatially. Ontogenesis occurs within a recursive model of change-stability that seeks to maintain homeostasis. Language belongs to a different domain (Maturana and Varela, 1980) and allows changes to be introduced to the closed system of self through metametaperspectivity. Knowing and being are interwoven; knowing is ontological.

Existential-phenomenological interpretations of being are grounded in the philosophical horizons of phenomenology and existentialism. Husserlian phenomenology advocated a return to the study of *pure consciousness*. Husserl thought that he had transcended the impasses of the empiricist and the idealist views of self when he proposed that all hypothetical presuppositions and all underlying assumptions were to be *bracketed* to access originary experience. Through the work of his student, Heidegger, on *Being and Time*, Husserl recognized the impossibility of bracketing all implicit assumptions and proposed phenomenological reduction as a *return to the things themselves*, a return to the originary experience of a subject and of world as it is lived. The phenomenological views of being of Husserl and Heidegger were mingled with the

existentialist thinking of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Camus among others. These philosophical and existential roots are reflected in the views of R.D. Laing, Rollo May, Maslow, Fromm and Rogers who concern themselves with the signification of the lived experience of an embodied being in a temporal-spatial life-world.

R.D.Laing describes ontological loss of self through the anxieties of engulfment, emptiness and depersonalization (Monte, 1980). Unembodied fragmentation and estrangement arise through construction of a false self, a mask. Early experiences become analogues for later interpretations. His existential view of self recalls Bateson's metaperspectivity. Laing contributes to an understanding of pathological ontogenesis through descriptions of family dynamics such as knotted or double-bind communication and collusion. His phenomenological descriptions of case histories and his interpretations of case notes provide insights into a hermeneutic interpretation of the text that is self (Laing, 1982, 1985).

Fromm views self as created through shaping by social and historical forces. Language shapes the social and individual unconscious as illustrated by taboos. Fromm sees the the existential anguish of loneliness, isolation and meaninglessness as socially and individually constructed. What is given is freedom. To escape freedom, a person may become: submissive to or exploitive of others; destructive of self or others; or conformist to the expectations of others (*Op. Cit.*). The hermeneutic power of reflection can free one to regain relatedness, rootedness, identity, transcendence. Ontological modes of being allow one to transcend the persona; failure to transcend fear and reach growth is what produces destructiveness (Fromm, 1976, 1964). Fromm's view reflects his earlier psychoanalytical, philosophical and sociological studies.

For Rogers, unconditional positive regard, a basic need, frees individuals to develop all facets of self including their internal frame of reference, their personal world view. Thoughts, experiences, evaluations and behaviours that are consistent with self-concept determine adjustment. Congruence between self and experience and between self

and ideal self lead to self-actualization. Self-actualization is a basic, innate urge that is influenced by environment and present feelings. It is a basic impetus towards growth. Learning and experience influence this forward thrust of life (Hall and Lindzey, 1978). Self, for Rogers, includes all that I am and all that I can do. Past experiences can influence self but the focus is on conscious change in the present. Flexibility allows change as new experiences and ideas are encountered. Experience is fluid, ever-changing, open. Self-actualized individuals choose freely and experience a sense of personal power. They live creatively, meaningfully, adaptively. Becoming a person is a process. Self for Rogers is always *in process* .

Maslow's theory of self is similar. But he posits a hierarchy of need satisfaction that frees and motivates growth towards self-actualization. Maslow adds the need to know, to find meaning and to understand including the need to construct a personal theory of one's world in a second hierarchy which is fundamental to self-actualization (Maslow, 1968, 1971). Maslow's view of self focuses on potential, growth, and adjustment. He believes in an inner ability to shape self through choice and responsibility. Needs are genetic but the unique behaviours chosen to satisfy these needs are learned. Self-actualization appears to be a more elusive possibility for Maslow than for Rogers.

An existentialist-phenomenological view of being focuses on understanding the meaning of human experience rather than on explaining behaviour through preformulated hypotheses. Being "can be understood only in the context of the structure of the person" (May, 1958, p.37). This view of self is situated ontologically in an epistemology which is multiperspectivist. Understanding is arrived at holistically and inductively and expressed as descriptions of the *vécu*. Ontological themes are explored as a hermeneutic motion between: possibilities-limitations, freedom-responsibility, nonbeing or death-authenticity, separateness-relationship, significance-meaninglessness.

Converging heuristic influences on theories of self admit to classification according to more than one perspective. The hypostatization of such descriptions tends to abrogate the effects of dialogue between thinkers like R.D. Laing and Gregory Bateson for example. What emerges from this theoretical positing is an expanded and expounded thesis of an earlier Cartesian subject of experimental design. Air fills the lungs with life and interpretations bring new possibilities to the mind and discourses give voice to being which is placed in process/on trial by conscious and unconscious heterogeneities between the existential and the ontological. This *procés* is ontogenesis. Many processes and patterns mediate ontogenesis. Exemplars of this dimension are discussed next.

PROCESSES AND PATTERNS OF SELF

Stability-change issues intermediate ontogenesis. Personality discourses debate these issues from different but converging perspectives. Psychoanalytic theories assume that unresolved conflicts from childhood are deterministic and lead to consistency of characteristics. These fixations speak of patterns that may be brought to consciousness in a "topography of traces" (Derrida, 1978, p.205). The force of opposing traces is discharged through the "interruption and restoration of contact between the (multiplicity of sensitive layers) at the various depths of the psychical levels" (*Ibid*, p.225). Some cognitive-behaviourist theories presume consistency in personal constructs. Implicit theories structure stability of perceptions and actions within each personality. Change is presumed to occur through cognitive re-structuring. Cybernetic models focus on the underlying complementarity of stability and change of living systems. Stabilization of a system's wholeness and reconstructions of patterns and structures that will respect and maintain the self system's integrity and autonomy describe this recursive process of ontogenesis. Existential-Phenomenological views of being describe unique lived worlds. Subjective meanings organize and guide experience. Different models of consistency and change underlie the phenomenologies. Rogers and Maslow emphasize change through self-

actualization. Fromm and May add the ontological dimension. Change occurs as one lets go of the limitations of the existential and opens to the possibilities of the ontological. The ultimate freedom of human nature unveiled by Ricoeur (1978) is the avenue to the ontological.

Patterns and structures of self are described differently within each theoretical formulation. Psychoanalytic views assume unconscious conflicting biological traces whose topography or patterns find expression in the language of dreams and unconscious analogues such as projections and reaction formation. Through the analogic language of dreams, these recurrent patterns may be brought to consciousness. By living in the present the meaning of these repressed themes, psychodynamic patterns can be reinterpreted in the inner and outer dialogue of psychoanalysis. Cognitive views of self are structured around the need to know. Knowing in this sense is ontological. The knower is inseparable from the known. Personal constructs which are inseparable from lived personal history form patterns of meaning. In a cybernetic epistemology, self is not a system distinct from its surroundings. Recursive patterns of communication with self -in relation to self, other, ecology- co-constitute self as a living system. The nonverbal patterns of relations serve as metacommunication. Dreams, schizophrenic discourse, inner speech, and all observable behaviours become for Bateson patterns or "interactive sequences of communication" (Lipset,1980, p.191). Analogic patterns speak the metalanguage of metaphor, not teleology. Bateson reformulates psychoanalytic processes as cybernetic transformations of patterns. Ontogenesis occurs within the recursive patterns of lived communication. Existential-phenomenologies are evocative of the ontological realm. Patterns of being are not deterministic or fixed. Freedom and choice in the here and now create possibility. Our personal mythologies are written as we live them. We write our lived histories/stories through re-interpretation of past patterns in a hermeneutic circle of understanding between archaeology and teleology.

To summarize the contributions of conceptions of being and language to our understanding of *the teaching self*: Subject as language and language in the place of subject introduces being in the complex zone of convergence between psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, social psychology, anthropology, philosophy, biology and semiotics to name but a few discourses. For all human practices are the languages, the signifying systems that place self in process, on trial by signification (Kristeva, 1974, 1989). Being is situated inter- and intra- and trans-linguistically and temporally and spatially in a dialectic between complementary and contradictory forces. Language is a principle means of acquiring self. Consciousness is not independent of the symbolic (Bain, 1989). One not only mirrors the symbolic world, one re-creates that symbolic world. Both inner and outer experience may be distantiated from, through language. Being may be objectified, brought to consciousness through verbalizations. But the realm of language is inadequate to organize thought about the ontological. And some aspects of thought appear independent of the discursive. Nondiscursive styles of thought such as styles of inner speech which are dialogic or antidialogic are examples of factors of self which have been alluded to but left out of cognitive dialogue about the creation and the re-creation of self. In the Existential-phenomenological approach, being remains problematic. To understand being which is in flux, hermeneutic reflexivity opens horizons through distantiation and makes possible appropriation of other realms of understanding (Gadamer, 1960). Through language, we enter the *vécu* of other. Being that can be understood is discourse.

Understanding of the teaching subject and the lived experience of the classroom is bound up with language. The teaching subject remains in process/on trial by meaning. A teacher as a living system may speak in analogues and in metalogues of the interactive sequences of inner and outer communication in a classroom. These converging views are expressed in the text of teacher. The epistemologies which shape our interpretations and

our interpretations of interpretations will be reviewed in the next section in order that we might situate this inquiry which questions the meaning of the teaching subject.

C. BETWEEN THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THE ONTOLOGICAL

Understanding is always partial, incomplete and based on premises and presuppositions about the nature of knowledge. Different epistemological assumptions guide different interpretations (Kuhn, 1970). Some of the theories which have dominated our views of meaning are discussed in this section. Those epistemological discourses that organize realms of meaning in the classroom are reviewed before reviewing the literature on teaching in the final section of this chapter.

THE NATURE OF MEANING

Empiricist-positivist explanations seek to hypostatize meaning. Although Auguste Comte did propose an evolution of understanding from a theological stage (of will, ego, soul, drive, desire, need) to a metaphysical stage (that reifies the forces of the first stage), he viewed the positivist stage of explanation and logic and experimentation as the highest form of knowledge (Angeles, 1981). In empiricist discourses, direct or indirect sense experience is viewed as the source of all knowledge. Even words and theories reference concrete experience. An atomistic view of language structures an empiricist theory of meaning. This view has tended to dominate scientific discourse into this century and is retained ambiguously and directly in contemporary curriculum discourses.

Idealist conceptualizations view meaning as constructed. The rationalism of Descartes emphasizes reason as the source of all knowledge. Mind is all that can be known; the material world is separate and accessible only through mind. Principles and laws that are presumed innate govern the ontological and can be deduced logically. Structuralist theories of language reflect this rationalist view of knowing. Kant challenged rationalist and

empiricist sources of meaning. Unknowable mind or transcendental unity provides categories of understanding and intuitions of space and time and applies them to experience. Hegel denies Kantian distinctions and postulates relationships between "that which is given to our experience and the categories used to structure and understand it" (Angeles, 1981, p.120). Understanding develops through a dialectic of contradictions: as a thesis and the antithesis that it generates are both found to be inadequate interpretations, what is retained from both positions is synthesized and leads to a new thesis that is generative (Kristeva, 1974). This teleological view of knowledge shapes psychoanalytic discourses and the hermeneutic circle but is transcended by each domain. Semiotics encompasses and transcends a Hegelian view of meaning.

Interactionist epistemologies address the interrelationship between mind and body or consciousness and the ontological. Knowing and being are inseparable. Spinoza viewed mind and body as aspects of the same nature. Freud's interpretations of hysteria are a discourse of mind-body connection. Merleau-Ponty perhaps more than any other thinker carried forth this epistemology to the existentialist and hermeneutic thought of this century. Consciousness is the consciousness of a perceiving subject-in-the-world as well as of-the-world. Mind and body are inseparable. Knowing is participative first and contemplative only through distantiation. Language, as divergent signifying systems, opens the hermeneutic circle of reflectivity. Cybernetic epistemologies focus on the self-regulatory aspects of living systems in which mind and biology are inseparable. Knowing and being thus are one; knowing is ontological.

These epistemological frameworks contain implicit presuppositions about the nature of knowing and hence about the nature of being. Knowing and being and meaning are interpretations. The ontological is flux. Understanding can be only partial and incomplete. It is not that each perspective on the nature of thought has a different part of the whole, but

rather that "they have different ways of appropriating the whole" (Watson, 1985, p. 72). Madison (1988) argues that in the human sciences, "epistemology must give way to hermeneutics" (p.40). In contemporary epistemology, Wittgenstein is one of the seminal influences in redirecting attention from claims of knowledge to an analysis of their meaning (Flew, 1979). To understand is to *interpret* and interpretation is the means whereby we can come to know in its own other-ness what is humanly other, in effect to coincide imaginatively with it, to *relive* it (*Ibid*). The task of hermeneutic reflection then is to question our understanding of understanding and ultimately self-understanding: how do we know what we know? Epistemological claims to knowledge are necessarily partial; human understanding of the ontological is finite and pluralistic (*Op. Cit.*).

Hermeneutics retains the openness of human discourses to the flux and flow of life. Understanding remains in tension, in dialectic between the heterogeneous discourses of the conscious and unconscious, the internal and external, the psychological and social. Hermeneutics, as a theory of interpretation, posits that all is interpretation (Gadamer, 1960). Meaning is not to be conceptualized epistemologically in a hermeneutic approach. As Gadamer describes: it is not the concrete representation of some concrete state of affairs; rather understanding is transformative. Hermeneutics is evocative of a changing, evolving, dialectical rather than a timeless, invariant notion of meaning. Heidegger (1927) posited that understanding is not something we <u>have</u> but rather, is what as existing beings we <u>are</u>. Being that can be understood is language for Gadamer. Understanding is essentially bound up with language (Madison, 1988). Gadamer (1960) extends the hermeneutic circle of understanding to partners in dialogue, like teacher and child. Understanding is reached in a dialogical transformative process. Each engages in the maieutic process of "the working out of common meanings" (*Ibid*, p.331). The midwifery metaphor of Socratic teaching speaks of the dialectical art of thinking. Through dialogue, each enters the horizons of understanding of the other. In the fusion of these horizons, we do not remain what we were. The *effective history*, the lived story of effects of each

participant, is transformed in a pedagogic encounter between two differing horizons of being. The hermeneutic circle of inquiry into meaning opens the discourse of being. Knowing and being are inseparable in this dialogical search for meaning. Ricoeur, in an interview with Kearney (1984), makes explicit the dialectics of interpretation. Meanings are never pure phenomenology of consciousness; lived reality is "already *represented* in some sense" (p.24). Understanding must be sought in language. The presuppositions and premises in our thinking may include doublebinds and deadlocks. Interpretation thus becomes *the art of deciphering indirect meanings*. The polysemy of text is uncovered in a discovery of meaning in the lived worlds of a classroom. The curricular narrative and the narratives of a child must be defined and redefined in the sediment of traces, which must be deciphered within the discourses and practices of classroom. What is said and what and how one lives the text of curriculum constitute the content and form a classroom. The hermeneutic circle allows us to open these possible worlds. A hermeneutic search for understanding guides this inquiry into the meaning of what it is to be a teacher. Hermeneutics will be discussed in more detail in chapter three and interpreted as an approach to this inquiry in chapter four. The next part focuses on how these frameworks are translated into epistemologies that organize and that are the content of our classroom discourses.

CLASSROOM EPISTEMOLOGIES

A view of teaching as the teaching of interpretation situates the content and form of teaching within the framework of differing positions of understanding. This positionality is constructed and deconstructed within the complex, heterogeneous forces of teaching self and becoming child. Macdonald (1988) situates teaching between the epistemological and the ontological. What we regard as knowing and how we understand being is mirrored in what we appropriate and live with other in the text that is classroom. Our epistemologies shape our ontologies. What and how and whom we hear as we engage in dialogue with a

child takes place within the time and space that Gadamer (1960) describes as "our own present horizon of understanding" (p.273). We enter the horizons of a child, we enter into this *vécu* through language. As teachers, we ask that a child step into our horizons and appropriate our understandings which we express through our discourses. Perhaps it is our responsibility first to enter the horizons of a child so that we might know what scaffolds a child requires to enter our horizons. To leave the stability of our own living system and to allow ourselves to appropriate and to be changed by what we see in a glimpse, perhaps we must know how it is that we see and know. To teach a child understanding, and to understand our own understanding perhaps we must make explicit the ambiguously retained epistemological aporias that converge in curriculum discourses. Possible paradigms that might give form to a teacher's praxis include divergent epistemological foundations.

An atheoretical position of instrumentalism that posits that hypotheses and ideas are merely tools allows conceptual manipulations to explain and create possibilities for human experience and adjustment. This position acknowledges that knowledge is derived from experience; truth, which is changing and tentative, is that which has practical value. Educational stances derived from the thinking of John Dewey, invite pragmatism or experimentalism. This position is evident in experience-based learning with sensorily manipulable materials which are essential for example to teaching mathematics to young children and biology to all children. Mechanistic epistemologies view all phenomena as if they were physical and subject to material changes without ontological priority of the whole. Behaviourist paradigms deconstruct experience and consciousness such as a pedagogic encounter into complex mechanistic stimulus-response systems. Behaviours and emotions are viewed as conditioned into a child, thus, amenable to change by modifying these causes (stimuli) or effects (responses). Classroom management strategies at one level retain a simplistic but effective way of relating through the anchoring of appropriate behaviours. Empiricist discourse holds that all knowledge is dependent upon or inferred

from sense data. Factual knowledge provides an essential albeit limited description of the experienced world. Empirical observations validate and define the scope and limitations of generalizations and laws and theories (Phenix, 1964). The content of each curricular domain essentially retains an element of empiricist knowing. Empirical knowing is the formulation of general patterns directly or indirectly through observation and measurement. "These patterns express constancies that hold, within specified limits and under stated conditions, throughout the changes occurring in . . . interactions" (Phenix, 1964, p.105). Not only scientific knowing and not all scientific knowing assumes an empiricist approach in which the subjectivity of the discourse does not show through (Madison, 1988). This particular way *of ordering the chaotic flow of experience* (*Ibid*) is part of understanding in all curricular discourses. Idealism may allow one to make distinctions between what is given to experience through our sensations and the *a priori* structures or categories of understanding that allow us to interpret what is given. Much of what we teach is organized and categorized or formatted first with the belief that our students will then know what it is that they are experiencing. Teaching structures of thinking in the form of metacognitive strategies reflects this epistemology. Organicism is an epistemology analogous to a living organism. This analogy presumes, then, that like an acorn that implicitly holds the form of an oak tree, the personal becoming of a child is a foretold and to some extent deterministic teleology. The questions of the nature-nurture debate that prevail in educational debate about the nature of intelligence and consequently about instructional programmes for a child derive from one's position on this model of truth. Emergent ontogenesis (Varela, 1989) addresses the process of generativity, possibility, becoming. The continuity and emergence of consciousness imply autopoietic systems that are self-referring and self-constructing which exist in tension or dialectic. Higher levels of abstraction and metaunderstandings are learned in a dialectic between stability and change through intervention with meaningful Rorschachs (Keeney, 1983, p.178). Teachers assume responsibility for creating meaningful Rorschachs. Contextualism and gestalt theorizing attempt to grasp and define

this contingent, indefinable and changing whole. Changes in metalevels of understanding dominate pedagogy. Thinking skills which are inherent in all educational praxis are being taught as a separate discourse in an attempt to introduce understanding more directly (de Bono, 1967; Sternberg, 1984). The analogues of business epistemologies (Crocker, Charney and Chiu, 1984) have been applied to teacher decision-making groups in an attempt to disrupt the homeostasis of closed systems. Transcendentalism goes beyond the empirical world of experience to the intuitive or spiritual. Beyond the languaging and experiencing is the ontological. The ontological is expressed in the elementary classroom within the texts of bibliotherapy referencing being beyond personal and present interpretations of self and of world.

A dialogical notion of meaning, which starts from a recognition of the plurality of meaning systems (Fujita, 1986) is co-constituted. Epistemological pluralism converges in all pedagogy. Although classroom relationships may be asymmetrical and pedagogic discourses may privilege one discourse. It is validated in a reconception of pedagogy that places a child at the centre of the forces that converge in teaching. Young (1987) summarizes this view of a child in a pedagogy that is inclusive of the signifying systems of psychoanalysis, existentialism, phenomenology, autopoiesis and hermeneutics. He cites Morgan's (1975) description of a child as an interpreting being, dialectically engaged in an interactive pedagogy. A teacher is situated hermeneutically in a generative praxis of meaning. The content and form of a child's search for meaning are grounded in a dialectic of freedom.

Those patterns of meaning that dominate our interpretations of what is true and of significance shape our classroom dialogues. "Our continuing search for greater understanding, and for a more satisfying interpretation of what is" leads us beyond the pedagogic encounter of different horizons of understanding to the ontological (Macdonald, 1988, p.109). The hermeneutic circle of understanding is an analogue of the content and

form of our classroom dialogues. Curricular content reflects our interpretations of what is of significance. And the significance of what is of significance constitutes another analogue of the hermeneutic circle of understanding which we engage our students in to seek that which is personally and experientially meaningful for them. The hermeneutic circle allows us, through reflexivity, to reach horizons beyond our present understandings and to transcend the limitations of the forms which shape our understandings. The form of our relationship with our students, as we guide them beyond our differing horizons of understanding in a pedagogic encounter, also engages us in hermeneutic discourse. The living communication of pedagogic encounter occurs between two differing horizons of understanding.

The analogic and the discursive are "*vehicles* for potential information" (von Foerster, 1984, p.194). "Learning is seen as a process of . . .evolving domains of relations between the organism and the outside world, of relations between these domains, etc. Teaching in this frame of mind is the facilitation of these evolutionary processes" (*Ibid*, p.154). Content and our relationships with it and with ourselves and others are taught. We teach our interpretation of how to relate to curriculum discourses and to worlds beyond prescribed curriculum.

Through the epistemologies of being and meaning, the Cartesian subject has become a subject who speaks and thinks and feels. The subject is now a living system. Teachers and children as living systems are the subjects of this inquiry into the meaning of teaching. Teaching involves the reorganization of a living system. Maturana and Varela (1980) suggest the inherent difficulty in reorganizing a living system. Keeney (1983) speaks of the importance of constructing "different patterns and structures that serve to maintain the integrity of the whole" if one wishes to effect change (p.178). To teach a child to make distinctions and to make distinctions about distinctions, perhaps we, as teacher, must first become aware of our own distinctions and how we make them. The complexity of such an undertaking is revealed when we try to enter the hermeneutic circle of a child to

help make meaning. How does this child make distinctions? What theories of knowing and meaning shape this child's understanding of our signifying systems. Through which exegetical forms will we enter the realm of this child to open present horizons of understanding? And through which signifying systems will we open a child's horizon of understanding to appropriate some of our discourses? This reflection is continued in the next section where we enter the horizon of the classroom; perhaps to leave at the conclusion but not the end of this inquiry with a deeper understanding of what it is to stand in an elementary classroom in the place of teacher.

D. A RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF TEACHING

> . . .questions regarding the nature of one's inner experience, point to that level of existence known as the *lebenswelt* . Let us study this *lebenswelt*, the experience of the educational journey; it is the study of curriculum reconceived, that is, *currere*
> Pinar, 1975, p.399.

> Retrospection about the threads of continuity and change composing an individual is the discipline of biography. These same threads projected into the future become the concern of the educator
> Huebner, 1975, p.242.

A reconceptualization of teaching is grounded in the curriculum theorizing of Pinar and Huebner and Macdonald and in the educational philosophy of Greene and Phenix. These seminal re-thinkers of educational theorizing draw from the interpretive traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics and look beneath the certainty of positivist epistemologies to address the existential and ontological questions "on the edge of (our) awareness" (Huebner, 1975, p.217). In this section, the literature will be reviewed to trace a reconceptualization of the educational epistemologies and discourses that structure our interpretations and reinterpretations of the texts of our lives in our classrooms and beyond

our classrooms. Curricular languages and classroom meanings will be searched in the literature on teaching.

The reconceptualizations of Pinar, Huebner, Macdonald, Phenix and Greene seek to provide an interpretation and understanding of the *lebenswelden* which take into account the multidimensional faces of human experience. Teaching is reconceptualized as a validation and an interpretation of "one's own inner experience". The connections and interconnections that a child is lead to make between curricula and lived experience trace a personal "educational journey". Educational experience, in its temporality, speaks of continuity and change; old beliefs and behaviours must be reinterpreted in light of the present, placing personal knowledge in a new and dialectical relationship to the past and to the future. "These same threads, projected into the future" speak of a metaphor of teaching as interpretation, interpretation of what we presently hold as truth and reinterpretation of texts that we read and live in our classrooms with our students. Reconceptualist thought situates pedagogy and praxis in intentionality toward a future becoming, within the languages and forms of multiple classroom discourses, as a "process of engendering essential meanings" (Phenix, 1964, p.5). Meaning and knowing and being as classroom discourses are discussed in this section.

TEACHING AS HERMENEUTICS

> . . . it is proposed that both theory and practice are contributory to revealing greater understanding, to being a part of the hermeneutic circle. Both enter in as a necessary moment in the hermeneutic circle, the quest for understanding and meaning; and as such the dialectic of theory-practice must itself be viewed in terms of what it reveals that creates new meaning for us through our interpretation. . . .In the engagement of theory and practice we (may be) emancipated from previous misunderstandings

> and then freed to reinterpret situations and reach greater understanding
> (Macdonald, 1988, p.107).

Speaking a middle way - A teaching moment is a search for signification. Enlarged perceptions, new schematizations, changed beliefs and interpretations, and hence new ways of being are possible in this quest for understanding. Converging signifying systems ground the interactive sequences of inner and outer communication of teacher and of child. These recursive patterns of dialogue are descriptive of the pedagogic act. A metaphor of birthing is suggested. Ontogenesis and new meaning are co-constituted in this dialectic of theory and practice. "Playing in a pre-reflective landscape, a child" makes no artificial distinctions between thinking and doing. Theory-praxis dualism is transcended in a child's experiencing and learning" (Rafferty, 1991). As Ricoeur (1981) reminds us, all understanding is self-understanding. Educators, as early as the time of Socrates sought to "speak a middle way", to act as a midwife, *maieutria*, to assist in the birth (Grumet, 1988, p.164) of "a project that is the outline of a new being-in-the-world" (Ricoeur, 1981, p.202). Is it this bringing to new life that we allude to when we speak of ourselves in *loco parentis*? Indeed a teacher's relationship with a child cradles the personal becoming of child and of teacher. In the pedagogical relationship between a teacher and a child, teachers, too, "are challenged to see their own lives as potentiality, that is, as an oriented being and becoming" (van Manen, 1982, p.293). A pedagogical stance in front of each child implies opening to the is-ness of the other and opening to the is-ness that is I, teacher. In this "tensionality of both distancing and nearing. . .(we) come to know how sufficiently as humans we inhabit where we already are as teachers" (Aoki, 1990, p.2). Multilayered relationships between "individual and other individuals, other material objects, and other ways of thinking" about and interpreting the world are embodied in pedagogical encounters (Huebner, 1975, p.244). In the texts of our lives, beneath our inferences and

interpretations, we find our constructions and deconstructions of our selves. And in our classrooms we consciously or unconsciously participate in the construction and deconstruction of the architecture of self of each child with whom we interact (Pinar, in press). Reinterpreting our present situations and reaching for greater understanding of ourselves and of our worlds engages us in a hermeneutic image of teaching. A maieutic moment of meaning-making is revitalized by Kristeva's (1974) positing of "the writing subject". The *teaching subject* engages in a lived pedagogic moment in a hermeneutic circle between differently situated ways of being. Consciousness is far from dominating the process but consciousness and distantiation intertwine in tension with the preconscious within the threads of the text of classroom experience.

Pedagogic tactfulness or sensitivity or our "cultivation of judgment and professional wisdom" (Pinar, 1988, p.10), although it "does not derive from general principles or theory" (van Manen, 1984), is informed by and thus in dialectic with general principles and theory. We find our is-ness and the is-ness of a child in lived experiences of praxis within and beyond our personal and collective discourses. Our responsivity to the text that is child reveals our sensitivity to our own interpretation of who a child is and what a child needs from us and perhaps speaks of our relationship with our own inner child. A pedagogic act is speech or silence or gesture or glance.

> The structure of the look is essentially dialogical. Like speech, the look can be given and received, returned or refused, but only in those fleeting moments of fusion, those instants in the lives of lovers, parents and children, teachers and students can the look contain the complete reciprocity of which the poets dream
> (Grumet, 1988, p. 97).

The architecture of self within this complete reciprocity speaks of the paradoxical structure of classroom meanings that are "hemned in by language" (Huebner, 1975, p.217). The glance, gesture, silence and all that is referred to, are hemned in by and

transcend language. In opening with our students to other possibilities and if-ness and personal "being and becoming", the knower and the known open to an emergent understanding of the ontological for which we must "work to find language and forms" (*Ibid*).

THE TEXTS OF THE CLASSROOM

> All the cognitive operations that we call knowing, all the methods of the disciplines, their collections of concepts, truths, assumptions, hypotheses, express relations between subject and object, knower and known, person and world. The relation of these terms "subject" and "object" in epistemology, consciousness on the one hand and all that is other to consciousness on the other, are preceded by the subject/object relations within which human consciousness comes to form, the relation of the infant to the person or persons who constitute his world
> (Grumet, 1988, p.185).

In our classroom discourses, we enter into dialogue through multilayered, intersecting signifying systems. Our personal, autobiographical discourse, as teacher and as student, is marked by our lived languaging experience in our ethnicities, genders and by the temporal and sociohistorical moment. Our classroom discourses intersect, for example, with our aesthetic awareness and our gender discourses (Pinar, 1988). The linguisticality of experience is a fundamental presupposition of this reconceptualization which draws from multiple discourses -hermeneutics, phenomenology, semiology, existentialism, psychoanalytic theory and gender theorizing as well as pedagogy.

Languages and forms - Some of the languaging and forms of communication systems within our schools reflect the language games of different curricular disciplines. Classroom discourses address interindividual communication, although the goal of

education is intraindividual learning and change (Cazden, 1988). Communicative competence is a judgment based on the views and beliefs of the dominant discourse structure (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1982). Cazden invites us as teachers to contemplate how our observable classroom discourses affect the unobservable thought processes of each participant in our pedagogy and thereby the nature of what each child learns. "Ideally, one would hope to find classroom opportunities for children to practise a growing range of discourse functions . . .first in situations in which a scaffold or model of some appropriate kind is available, and then gradually with less and less help" (Cazden, 1988, p.53). Dialogue and reflection may be modelled and encouraged in our classrooms to help a child learn to discern preconscious connections and to develop new competencies. Our style of inner and outer discourse may be dialogical or anti-dialogical (Bain, 1989). Knowing within a classroom thus may be articulated as fixed and guided by antidialogic discourse or as problematic and dialogical. Our discourse systems may be open or closed to generative, transformative shifts depending on our paradigmatic views of our worlds.

Phenix (1964; 1975) attempts to outline the ways in which experience might be interpreted through the patterns of meaning in the disciplines that structure educational experience. His ideas overlap the forms of knowing that schools teach rather directly. Each discipline is grounded not only in its own linguisticality but also in its own historicity. Underlying premises about language and self and meaning shape the discourses in our classrooms. Meanings in the classroom represent the epistemological pluralism that has been traced in this chapter. A multiplicity of discourses form and inform knowledge. To embrace the ambiguities and paradoxes and heterogeneities of the ontic flux, different signifying systems must be included. Phenix, thus, suggests six realms of meaning derived from fundamental understandings about the nature of self and knowledge and meaning: Personal knowing, symbolic knowing and aesthetic/ethical knowing are discussed. Phenix distinguishes between aesthetics and ethics and adds the realms of empiricist discourses in science and the transcendental realm of history, philosophy, and religion which seek to

interpret the meanings of the past, the meanings of meanings and the meanings of the other realms.

Personal understanding is mediated by all forms of communication including nondiscursive symbolic forms. Personal knowing is participative, embodied existential knowledge. Participative knowing, as postulated by Merleau-Ponty, is primary. Being, in the Heideggerian sense, is personal knowing. Personal knowledge concerns being itself. The ontological and the existential are inseparable from personal meanings which are acquired in I-Thou relationships in which each is concerned for the other. Buber (1965) reminds the "educator" to recognize what:

> "he. . . is able and what he is unable to give of what is needed-and what he can give now, and what not yet. So the responsibility for this realm of life allotted and entrusted to him, the constant responsibility of this living soul, points him to that which seems impossible and yet is somehow granted to us -self-education. The forces of the world which the child needs for the building up of his substance must be chosen by the educator from the world and drawn into himself (p.101).

Education is situated in the lived dialectic between personal knowing, prescribed knowing, and possible knowing. A teacher must enter the private world of each student and live within that space to know those forces of the world which the child needs. Grumet (1988) cautions those in the place of teacher as the vehicle of influence to enter into a pupil's personal world rather than to posit pupil conceptually. In all that we do and all that we are, we express our personal meanings. Temporality and connectedness to others and worlds are expressed in personal interpretations or "choices" (May, 1975). In a classroom, a teacher's personal knowledge about what to do with a particular child at a particular time, is a theoretically-informed, multidimensional way of knowing (van Manen, 1990). Personal theories may simultaneously or tangentially overlap or contradict domains of experience.

Fragmented or holistic, explicit or not, they structure the worlds that a teacher co-creates with each child. Symbolic knowing includes not only movement, ritual, dress, gesture, graphic symbols, dreams but also patterns and analogues at all levels of communication (Bateson, 1972). Symbolic discourse includes metaphorical language with its inherent ambiguity and the symbolic languages of mathematics and imaging and dreams; it also includes the analogic forms of expression and gesture and act and movement. How to speak and how to gesture and be is not taught directly in our classrooms. But the dominant analogic as well as other symbolic systems are pervasive in classroom discourse and determine what is viewed as "knowledge" and what occurs as "learning" (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1982). Aesthetic/ethical knowing are traced by Phenix to Aristotle's practical intelligence of making and doing. Phenix (1964) makes a distinction between the two arguing that the arts are *made* for contemplation and ethical acts are *doing* for participation (p.218). But both may be presumed to exemplify the universal. Both are uniquely lived. A sense of integrity or wholeness (rather than the morality that Phenix speaks of) unites these two ways of knowing. Aesthetic and ethical truth lies in wholeness and connectedness and integration; it refers to balance and harmony and appreciation (Jagodzinski, in press). Like art and poetics and integrity, aesthetic and ethical truth speak "a discourse that requires and sustains continuous connection between *the voice that is* and *the voice that is coming* and *must come* " (Valéry, 1940, p.99). It is in the integrity of a work of art in painting or music or dance or literature, that a work speaks. In the integrity of a pedagogic moment the art of teaching and the art of being speak, if one might but listen. Historical knowing "comprises an artful re-creation of the past, in obedience to factual evidence, for the purpose of revealing what man by his deliberate choice has made of himself within the context of his given circumstances" (Phenix, 1964, p.7). It refers not only to contemplation of what was but also to contemplation of the present moment as if it were past through distantiation. Historical understanding is social and contextualized in time and space and interpersonal dimensionality. In our classrooms then historical knowing implies an appreciation of

personal and cultural lived biography to move beyond chronology. Transcendental or spiritual knowing is concerned with ultimate meanings and ultimate truth. Transcendence refers to that "never-finished enlargement of contexts within which every bounded entity is enmeshed", that "never-ending web of unfoldings. . . .within a wider context of relationships and possibilities" (Phenix, 1975, p.324). For "to be humanly alive is to experience each moment as a new creation, to know that this moment, though continuous with past, is yet a distinct and fresh emergence, which will in turn yield to still further realizations" (*Ibid*, p.326).

Rather than a notion of meaning that is timeless and invariant and free from the interplay of language, classroom discourses voice a concept of meaning that is changing and evolving. Exegesis of the ontological requires dialogical discourse in a context of freedom. The relationship between the known and the knower in the ontological realm suggests a curriculum of openness to fresh possibilities of insight and more illuminating patterns of thought. A teacher can only provide a context of freedom and "interpersonal resources for the formation of unique structures of existence" (Phenix, 1975, p.333). Spaces for autobiographical re-interpretation open for those who seek them in the lived moments of Show and Tell and circle times and class discussions. It is in a pedagogic moment that meta-meaning is brought to conscious awareness. Understanding is sought through the languaging and perspectives which guide and shape our pedagogical and praxiological discourses. Our search for meaning with our students must be brought to consciousness through a process of reflection and dialogue. For this "process of reflection. . .is reflection upon the self, not reflection on the theory as in a critical theory mode"; the "ground of talking, which is proposed here in terms of methods, is the frame of horizon of the hermeneutical circle of understanding" (Macdonald, 1988, p.111).

AN ONTOLOGICAL PLATFORM

A genuine meeting of the different horizons of a teacher and a child occurs within the lived experience of a classroom. It occurs within and beyond a praxis where the theory-practise dualism -the artificial distinction between thinking and doing- is restored to contemplative action (Pinar and Grumet, 1988). As Macdonald (1988) describes the state of the art : "neither the specific words of theory nor the specific pedagogic acts of educators are the reality of education. What defines each is the spirit and vision that shines through the surface manifestations" (p.110). "Ontological interpretation . . . rather than an epistemological or methodological one" is evoked (Pinar, 1988, p.101). And it is out of the frameworks or languaging of disciplines that the language of ontological interpretation shines through in a view of human existence grounded in a search for meaning. Pedagogic intentionality in the texts of teaching, "(seeks) meaning not only in the story but also in the dance of the body-subject through the prereflective landscape nestled in the shadows of the text" (Grumet, 1988, p.61). Hence teaching is reconceptualized in its ontological and existential context and the depth and complexity of the teaching task is restored to its original difficulty.

Standing in Being - Smith (1988) poetically speaks of the place of a child in pedagogy: "the whole person standing in the whole of life trying to make sense . . .of existence. . .stands in Being itself" (pp.418-419). Through distantiation and fusion, a teacher enters the understanding of a child and with this child opens the spheres of understanding, knowing that s/he "stands in Being itself". For, as Macdonald (1988) suggests, "the hermeneutic circle of understanding, which lies within each of our epistemologies or world views, also transcends each method in the form of an ontological platform" (p.109). Hermeneutic reflexivity as posited by Gadamer and Ricoeur guides us beyond the epistemological to the ontological in "our continual search for greater

understanding, and for a more satisfying interpretation of what is" (Macdonald, 1988, p.109).

Pinar and Grumet (1988) speaks of the earliest pedagogue, "the *paidogogos*, the Greek slave who used to escort his young charge to school" (p.164), poetically alluding to the place of language as the mediator between the epistemological and the ontological: "With our language we speak a middle way, both familiar and strange. We catch them (the young) and wind them up in our weave of words" (*Ibid*). It is language which allows us to communicate in our world of the classroom, within and beyond the I/eye (Aoki, 1990). Private worlds are brought to the public domain of classroom. All understanding is essentially bound up with language (Madison, 1988). As Gadamer (1960) states: "Being that can be understood is language (p.xxii); Language is the universal medium in which understanding itself is realized "(p.350). In our attempts to make meaning, we learn with our children whom we teach that our utterances reference simultaneously not only our experience and our interpretations and our relationships with self and other and world but also the unspoken (Bain, 1989). In being is also non-being; and for Sartre, the void calls for fulfillment. For Heidegger, striving for the possible acknowledges that existence is conditioned by nonexistence. In our schools, we teach for authenticity that is a personal "becoming of a child", not a deterministic unfolding of self-actualization but an ontogenesis of self. The architecture of identity is mediated through "our weave of words"; the "co-construction of face" (Bain, 1989) mediates our way to self, others and our worlds (Smith, Giles and Hewstone, 1983). Through conversation, in the Gadamerian sense, a teacher invites points of view and meanings to be discussed and reflected upon in a group context. Curriculum as *currere* is brought to life in this epistemology. Grumet's (1988) midwifery metaphor becomes a metaphor of journey in male discourses. Teachers, in the place of mediators of the space between the existential and the ontological, are challenged to reconsider the nature of educational experience as it is lived in a classroom. The languaging

to speak of these many patterns of meaning and of these exegetical forms is reflective of the multidimensionality of existence. Multiple signifying systems and varied metasystems of interpretation address the ontological that shines through the surface manifestations of our personal meanings. In this reconceptualization of teaching our task then is the interpretation and reinterpretation of the texts of lives in our classrooms that we might seek beneath our surface manifestations to uncover our personal meanings and possibilities. Pinar describes this hermeneutic function,

> Autobiography is interesting when its telling enlarges and complicates the telling subject, and the listening subject. We are not the stories we tell as much as we are the modes of relation to other our stories imply, modes of relation implied by what we delete as much as by what we include (Pinar, in press, p.415).

A lived moment in a classroom is the archaeological site which "we inhabit where we already are as teachers" (Aoki, 1990) with all of our theorizing and languaging and techniques and skills. We open spaces and perspectives and thus we participate in the architecture of other as we orient a child to the possible. In "the *praxis* we learn to devise", we teach with intentionality for freedom, "for overcoming the determinate. . .in full awareness that such overcoming can never be complete" in an ontological landscape (Greene, 1988, p.5). Our journey with our students leads beneath the surface manifestations of our psychological and communicative functions and beneath our world views and signifying practices and beneath exegetical languaging through our contextualized temporal being to the ontological realm of possibilities. A teaching subject participates through distantiation and fusion in interpretations of the ontological beyond the epistemological and exegetical forms that allow us to "speak a middle way". We continue to seek languages and forms that can be used to express and communicate the experience of teaching.

CHAPTER III. TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF UNDERSTANDING

> At any rate understanding in the human sciences shares one fundamental condition . . . namely, . . . to determine anew what is examined. But the meaning exists at the beginning of any such research as well as at the end: as the choice of theme to be investigated, the awakening of the desire to investigate, as the gaining of the new problematic
> Gadamer, 1960, p.251.

INTRODUCTION

The first two chapters of this inquiry contextualize the question, *What is it to be a teacher today?* The problematic unfolds in the autobiographical awakening of the question in the first chapter. In the second chapter, the meanings of teachers' experiences are grounded in the dialectic between the theoretical foundations and the lived praxis of pedagogical relationships in a classroom. An approach appropriate to this problematic of an understanding of the life-world of a teacher will be explored in this chapter. The contributions of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to our present understanding of the lived worlds of a classroom will be interpreted. Gadamer's and Ricoeur's theories of interpretation, which constitute the epistemological foundation of the methodological approach to this inquiry, are hermeneutically grounded in their reading of these thinkers (Weinsheimer, 1985).

The epistemological foundations of educational inquiry are grounded in at least two different but not antithetic formulations of the nature and derivation of knowledge. The search for knowledge in educational inquiry requires both explanation and understanding. The **empirical-positivist approach** provides explanation in terms of hypothesized relationships between constructs or data expressed as variables which are systematically observed or statistically analyzed to express reliable, replicable generalizations. Analytic thought, associated with Descartes and his dualism of an epistemological subject who

seems to form representations of an objective reality, introduces linearity, explication, control, and predictability. The tenets of empiricism continue to contribute to contemporary 'replications' of reality. Certainly, educational inquiry and theorizing and practice have been dominated by this paradigm. This literature on the teacher and on teaching acknowledges the primacy of the teacher. However, positivist studies tend to objectify the teacher as an independent or intervening variable separate from the dialectics of pedagogy and praxis. The complex and multivariate nature of the problematic in educational inquiry cannot always be reduced to discrete variables or constructs. Although positivist discourse may be challenged for what may be perceived as a simplistic, reductionist view of reality, it allows for specific questions and issues in education to be addressed with systematization and replicability. **Human Science approaches** generate an interpretation and understanding of the multidimensional faces of human experience in its subtle and multilayered dimensionality. The uncertainty and transience and paradoxes of existence are evoked rather than controlled or denied by these approaches that hear beyond definitive and fixed meanings. This paradigm allows for an openness to human discourse that is expressive of the existent with its "constant margin of incompletion, of arrested potentiality which challenges fulfillment" (Steiner, 1975). Hence the flow or the flux of life can be brought to "a conscious awareness" (Gadamer, 1971, p.38) through language. Although human science forms of inquiry may be challenged from a positivist perspective for a lack of objectivity and rigor mortis in terms of reliability and generalizability, they allow for the human dimensionality of education with all of its unfulfilled potentiality and paradoxes and complexity to be uncovered. Shulman (1985) warns researchers that the "The danger for any field of social science or educational research lies in its potential corruption . . . by a single paradigmatic view (p.4). Epistemological pluralism is not necessarily a sign of a preparadigmatic state as Kuhn suggests (1962), but rather is a response to the conceptual complexity of educational discourse. The epistemological complementarity (Keeves, 1986) of these views is expressed in the search for knowledge in education. Both paradigms

have contributed to increasingly sophisticated research and theoretical formulations (Husèn, 1988). Both levels of knowledge and meaning belong to educational inquiry. We explain subjectivity and the world in terms of empiricist formulations. And we restore the *flux* or the flow of experience as lived through hermeneutical reflexivity. These two possibilities reveal not different aspects of the same worlds, but different ways of appropriating the whole. It is the nature of the problematic which determines the nature of the inquiry: the question determines the method (Osborne, 1990).

It is hermeneutical thought that forms and guides this inquiry into the life-worlds of teachers' interpretations of their experience. What it is to be or to dwell as a teacher is a question that evokes a postpositivist approach. An approach that emphasizes interpretation and understanding is appropriate to interpret the meaning of being a teacher. For as Ricoeur (1981) proposes: "The most fundamental phenomenological presupposition of a philosophy of interpretation is that every question concerning any sort of 'being' (*étant*) is a question about the meaning of that 'being'" (p.114). The postpositivist discourse which this problematic concerning the meaning of the being of a teacher opens can only be skeptical and incomplete and without ultimate closure. In opposition to positivism, Ricoeur's hermeneutics speaks of "metaphorical truth" (Madison, 1988, p.82). It is postcartesianism and moves beyond the transcendental, constructed subjectivity of Husserlian phenomenology. It allows for the nonperspectivist view or multiperspectivism symbolized, for instance, in the 1926 illustration of a woman by Picasso (Palmer, 1977). In this world view, human *being* is viewed as multilayered and historical. The tension or reciprocity between intersubjective and intrasubjective discourse and between conscious and unconscious discourse reveals itself in the apparent paradoxes and contradictions of human existence. Being is addressed in its connectedness and wholeness which is experienced and represented as fragmented and transient and paradoxical. Hermeneutical approaches are based on the presupposition that knowing is constituted in multiple discourse systems. Conversation is the mode of inquiry into this discursive knowing. An

elusive analogical unity or system of meaning is created in dialectic between the reader and the text and the "extralinguistic worlds" which language refers to (Caputo, 1987, p.149). A hermeneutical phenomenological approach provides the perspective for unfolding and interpreting the layers of meanings of teachers' experiences. These questions and answers are grounded then in the dialogical hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur. These perspectives are traced historically in this chapter.

A. HISTORICAL ROOTS OF HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics is grounded in the reflective tradition of thinkers like Dilthey and Schleiermacher and in Husserlian phenomenology. The epistemological basis of phenomenological description is not rooted in a theory in the proper sense but rather in an approach or perspective for describing a lived experience. Contrary to Husserl's claims of a presuppositionless science, this approach embraces implicit assumptions, premises and presuppositions for knowing about the world. It is these presuppositions themselves which form the foundations of the ways of knowing or understanding that are called into question by poststructuralist hermeneuticists (Palmer, 1977) like Derrida and Foucault. It is the dialogical hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur which provide the seminal ideas on the linguisticality and textuality of understanding that guide this inquiry into the meaning of teachers' worlds. The development of their hermeneutical phenomenological perspective is traced historically to the contributions of Schleiermacher and Dilthey and Husserl.

The concept of phenomenology traces its etymology to the Greek noun from which the term "phenomenon" derives and to the Greek verb, *phainesthai*, meaning "to show itself", "to bring to light". It is involved in an epistemology of reifying things, knowing through reification, converting abstract concepts mentally. The question of the adequacy of the reification must be validated by the Husserlian dictum of going back *to the things themselves.* Phenomenology is a study of essence. "It is a process through which

essence which is implicit in existence is brought to the surface, articulated and made amenable to debate" (Bain, 1990). Through it, we do not create but acknowledge, *agree to the truth of, own to knowing*, acknowledge what was always there. Phenomenology is not interpretive yet it cannot be anything but a question of interpretation. Its nature is hermeneutic. As Ricoeur (1981) states: On the one hand, hermeneutics is erected on the basis of phenomenology and thus preserves something of the philosophy from which it nevertheless differs: *phenomenology remains the unsurpassable presupposition of hermeneutics*. On the other hand, phenomenology cannot constitute itself without a *hermeneutical presupposition* (p.101). The noun, hermeneutics, traces its etymology to the Greek noun *hermeneia* and verb *hermeneuein* which are translated as 'interpretation' and 'to interpret'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1983) defines hermeneutics as 'of interpretation' and the verb, interpret, as 'to expound or bring out the meaning of; explain and translate'. Hermeneutics then is the bringing to light of the meaning. The first use of the word, hermeneutic, recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates back to the year 1737. In Greek mythology, Hermes, the wing-footed god is given the task of translating what is beyond human understanding into comprehensible form. The riddles of human existence were interpreted by Hermes. Hermes is credited with bearing the gifts of language and writing which provide the basic text of human understanding. Mythology speaks openly of his charm and of his deceptiveness.

Hermeneutical phenomenology, as Ricoeur (1981) terms it, provides an approach for understanding the common meanings of a lived experience. The nature of a world described by this epistemology is contextualized and relational rather than linear and sequential and decontextualized. Time in the lived world is not segmented and monochronic (from the Greek, *kronos*), but processual and intercurrent or simultaneous (the Greek, *kairos*). Space in the life-world is contextualized with "inner horizons" and "outer horizons" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, p.153). Relations are reciprocal and "arranged according to various levels of depth, proximity and anonymity in lived experience"(*Ibid*,

p.61). Interaction patterns are dialectical and they shift and change and evolve through time. Knowing is constituted in language and hence also is historical and sociogenetic and dialectical. Bain (1989) contends that the relationship between language and experience can operate at different levels. Knowledge has at least two faces: we see only partial aspects of either. Experience includes the verbal which is bound logically and psychologically *and* the concrete which is bound not only by objects in space and time but also by their symbolic representation. We accumulate experience in the form of schematized knowledge. This 'knowledge' constitutes our understanding of the different faces of experience. And thus we attempt to 'control' the paradoxes and contradictions in the existent with its "constant margin of incompletion, of arrested potentiality which challenges fulfillment" (Steiner, 1975). We invent the world as we would that it were. "We deal with experience through symbols: much of what we experience as reality is predicated upon sets of imaginary metaphors about how the world works" (Bain, 1989). The meaning of experiences can be brought forth in opening a question through conversation and in keeping the question open to all of its possibilities. Meaning is dispersed and deferred in our multiple discourse systems. Understanding, then, is identified as an epistemological and an ontological issue (Gadamer, 1960; Ricoeur, 1981). The reconceptualization of teaching which draws from hermeneutics, semiotics, existentialism, phenomenology and gender theorizing that was traced in the educational literature in the preceding chapter will be approached through hermeneutic inquiry. To contextualize the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur which guide this inquiry, the development of phenomenological hermeneutics will be traced historically in the next section.

SCHLEIERMACHER AND DILTHEY

> Just as every act of speaking is related to both the totality of the language and the totality of the speaker's thoughts, so understanding speech always involves two

> moments: to understand what is said in the context of the language with its possibilities, and to understand it as a fact in the thinking of the speaker (Schleiermacher, *Compendium of 1819*, p.74).

Schleiermacher (1768-1834), a Protestant theologian and classical philologist, is regarded as the father of hermeneutics (Palmer, 1969). In an attempt to systematize text interpretation, Schleiermacher united the hermeneutical traditions of biblical exegesis with the principles of pure self-reflection from transcendental idealism and the philological methodology of classical text interpretation. Understanding of the language of a text or a dialogue, in this methodology, was to be recovered through a reconstruction of the historical context; the transcendental subject was presumably extricable from this chronological history. In his *Compendium of 1819*, Schleiermacher states that understanding takes place only in what he refers to as the "coinherence of two moments": Man is a constantly evolving mind and his speaking can only be understood as a moment in his elusive mental life. An "act of speaking" must be understood as "a moment in the development of the person" and as "a modification of the language". An utterance must be understood then in relation to the grammatical or "interpersonal linguistic system" and also in relation to the speaker's life-process or chronicled psychological history. The task is to grasp the thought that underlies a given utterance. Disciplined reflection would reveal those categories or structures that are independent of experience and through which we can presumably experience an objective world. But these inner mental processes remained obscure. Schleiermacher's emphasis on systematic laws obscured further the creative implications of a truly dialogical hermeneutics (Palmer, 1969). Nonetheless, his grounding of hermeneutics in the linguisticality of understanding forms the foundations of postpositivist textual interpretation.

The hermeneutic circle is alluded to in Schleiermacher's work. He introduces the concept of the hermeneutic circle in stating that an interpreter must first scan a text to have an overview of the text as the parts can only be understood in terms of the whole. He states

that "within each given text, its parts can only be understood in terms of the whole, and so the interpreter must gain an overview of the work before making a more careful interpretation.... Here, too, there seems to be a circle" (*Op. Cit.*, p.85). Although the "living voice" facilitates understanding, both written and spoken words call for the art of interpretation which is an "unending task". "The opening up of the hermeneutic dimension in its full scope" (Gadamer, 1967, p.18) may be recovered in Schleiermacher's *coinherence of two moments* as an analogue for Gadamer's fusion of horizons.

In summary then, his reflections have certainly added depth and dimensionality to the Kantian impersonal subject in turning attention through language to the subjectivity behind the text. His focus on the subject behind the text alludes to the preknowledge necessary for understanding which constitutes the circular nature of understanding. However he does not crystallize the centrality of language nor the inextricable historicity of the worlds addressed by hermeneutics. He reduces the place of lived communication when he states: "Everything presupposed by history is only language". The inner mental process remains nonlinguistic and ahistorical and obscure. It was Dilthey who was to interpret Schleiermacher and to extend his ideas which form the foundations of the dialogical hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur (Palmer, 1969).

> Understanding of other people and their life-expressions is developed on the basis of experience (*Erlebnis*) and self-understanding and the constant interaction between them
> (Dilthey, 1926, p.152).

Dilthey (1833-1911) interpreted and applied Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and his own analysis of the process of understanding to all areas of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaffen*) which he viewed as interpretive disciplines. Dilthey posited understanding as the method of the human sciences, rather than explanation, which he suggested was the method of the natural sciences. He derived his formal methods of interpretation from the "ordinary forms of understanding that characterize human life and

social interaction". Dilthey's concept of understanding is grounded in the process of life itself. "Every lived moment of life is a remembered moment and not a flow: *it is fixed by attention which arrests what is essentially flow.* Temporal succession . . . cannot be experienced. We do not experience the flow itself" (Dilthey, 1926, p.151). He goes on to state that the "interconnectedness of lived experience" or "life" or what he also refers to as "the process of becoming" are arrested by observation. "Life discloses itself at a depth inaccessible to observation, reflection and theory" (*Ibid*, p.154). Dilthey (1926) argues that the "schematic and symbolic representations" (p.159) in the unfolding of individuality "cannot be represented by logical formulae". His thesis is that personal life is limited but imagination opens "many other existences". "Man, tied and limited by the reality of life is liberated not only by art . . . but also by historical understanding" (p.161). History is described by Dilthey as a "series of world views". For Dilthey, hermeneutics becomes the science of "interpretation of the written records of human experience" and "we can only transcend the narrow sphere of our existence by interpreting other life -expressions".

To elaborate an approach "adequate to the fullness of phenomena", Palmer (1969) proposes that Dilthey introduced immediate lived experience or experiencing (*Erlebnis*) as a noun and as a unit of meaning. Dilthey saw feelings and values and meanings as part of the "total context of relationships held together in the unity of experience" (Palmer, 1969, p.109). Also implicit in experience is temporality or past and future as well as present. Understanding of the present includes the horizons of the past and future. Life is seen as re-interpretation of the past. The historical context is part of and inextricable from the lived experience. Heidegger's treatise expounds Dilthey's understanding. These themes are echoed in Gadamer's notion of effective-historical consciousness. Understanding (*verstehen*) in Dilthey's hermeneutics refers to that moment when one comprehends or re-experiences the lived experience of self or other. Understanding and self-understanding frees one to fuller self-knowledge. For Dilthey, "meaning is what understanding grasps in the essential reciprocal interaction of the whole and the parts" (Palmer, 1969, p.118). The

hermeneutic circle proposed by Schleiermacher is developed by Dilthey: "the whole receives its definition from the parts, and reciprocally, the parts can only be understood in reference to a whole" (*Op. Cit.*.).

Dilthey elaborated on Schleiermacher's notions and contributed the concepts of meaning as temporal and historical, and of words as polysemic (Dilthey, 1926, p.163). Historicity was lived experience and not chronology. He extended hermeneutics to interpretation in the human sciences. He posited understanding as the method of human sciences, rather than explanation, which he suggested was the domain of the natural sciences. But understanding for Dilthey, as for Schleiermacher was limited to the reconstruction of the speaker's or the author's experience (Palmer, 1969).

HUSSERL AND HEIDEGGER AND MERLEAU-PONTY

> . . . life is continually there *for me*. Continually, in respect of a field of the present, it is given to consciousness perceptually, with the most originary originality, as it itself; memorially, now these and now those pasts thereof are "again" given to consciousness, and that implies: as the "pasts themselves". Reflecting, I can at any time look at this original living and note particulars; I can grasp what is present as present, what is past as past, each as itself
> (Husserl, 1977, p.19).

Husserl (1859-1938), a mathematician who completed a second doctorate in philosophy on the psychology of the concept of numbers, sought to develop philosophy as a rigorous science. In his *Logical Investigations* (1900), he established the phenomenological method through a systematic investigation of consciousness as his way to the understanding of meaning. He was concerned with the intentionality or meaning of mental activities as well as of phenomena. In the process of "bracketing" or *epoché* as suspending belief of the external world, one was to try to discover the *essence* of experience or phenomena without presuppositions or assumptions or premises. In his later

writings, Husserl let go of phenomenological reduction as the bracketing of the experience of meaning. Instead he accepted phenomenological reduction in the *return to the things themselves.* Not the trace, but originary experience itself was to be recovered in this *return.* Husserl's attempt at a presuppositionless inquiry is a response to the challenge of "keeping the difficulty of life alive" and keeping its distance (Caputo, 1987). To bring order to the flow of experience or the flux, Husserl makes explicit the horizontality or contextuality or "subtle structuring" of experience by "consciousness which weaves the world into a unity of meaning" (Caputo, 1987, pp. 40-41). The Husserlian doctrine of the constitution of meaning is an attempt to fix the flow of experience. The textuality of the world necessitates the interpretive act. For Husserl, the ontological ground is implicit in intentional acts. What Husserl attempts is an immanent account of the transcendent (*Ibid).* But the *real* cannot be known apart from consciousness. His ontological presupposition of pure reflection or transcendental consciousness is criticized by Heidegger as metaphysical; and his idea of presuppositionless originary experience is discredited as a Cartesian amphora by Caputo (1987). Although Husserl asserts that "phenomenological research transcends in principle the opposition between subject and object and discloses the correlation of act and object as its own great field of study" (Gadamer, 1963, p.145), the Cartesian split between the epistemological subject and objective object is not transcended. Nor is idealism. As Sartre (1957) argues, "after having determined that the *me* is a synthetic and transcendent production of consciousness, (Husserl) reverted to the classic position of . . . the transcendental *I* . . . behind each consciousness" (p.37). The Transcendental *I* remains ensnarled in " the conceptualizing, spatializing and atemporal categories of idea-centered thinking" (Palmer, 1969, p.125).

In his later writings, constitution of the life-world as the "pre-given" world becomes temporal, intersubjective and historical. But Gadamer (1963) questions this notion of historicality: he questions whether "the entirety of possible 'worldviews' and the multiplicity of historical worlds are embraced by the presuppositionless Husserlian concept

of life-world" (p.161). It is apparent that Husserl had not read the lessons of Dilthey. Although it is through language that one accesses the life-world of Husserl, he cautions us about the "seduction of language". He does acknowledge that experiences are "deposited" in language and that words point to the things themselves but originary experience need not be expressed or represented because for Husserl "there is no prelinguistic stratum, no private sphere of self-consciousness in which the self is in naked contact with itself" (Caputo, 1987, p.133).

Husserl's contribution lies in his clarification of intentionality as constitutive of consciousness implying that world is a "pole of unity within experience and of experience" (Madison, 1988, p.11). Husserl attempts to confront the Heraclitean challenge of describing "the flux (which) is at once the raw material of phenomenology and its constant opposite" (Caputo, 1987, p.37). The *lebenswelt* is recovered and epistemology must give way to an openness to the discourses of being-in-the-world that unfold (*Ibid*). He points beyond objectivism and relativism (*Op. Cit.*). Although Husserl was unable to transcend the dominant discourses of his time, he provides the ground of hermeneutics. Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty elaborate Husserlian breakthroughs in our understanding of meaning.

> To discuss language, to place it, means to bring to its place of being not so much language as ourselves: our own gathering into the appropriation (Heidegger, 1971, p.190).

Heidegger (1889-1976), Husserl's student, adds the temporal dimension to being. Heidegger transforms the Husserlian transcendental *I* and life-world with this existential temporal concept of Being which he describes as Being-in-the-world and Being-one's self and potentiality-for-Being and Being-possible and Being-free in *Being and Time.* Heidegger names this Being which we are and which includes inquiry into the possibilities of its Being and which ultimately belongs to its essential constitution, *Dasein.* Dasein designates a pure expression of Being rather than a specification of its content.

Interpretation of the meaning of Being seeks an interrogation of Dasein. Such interpretation implies understanding of something like "world" and the "Being of beings within the world". These ontological problems are grounded for Heidegger in the "existentiality of existence", whereby we grasp each inquiry as a possibility of being of each existing Dasein. Caputo (1987) argues that it was Heidegger who "unleashed" a radicalization of hermeneutics in "keeping the question of Being open . . .and restoring the original difficulty of Being " resisting the inclination to make things easy, to treat Being as the stable stuff and fullness of presence which the metaphysicians were trying to make it out to be" (p.2). However, Heidegger's philosophy subordinates epistemology to ontology, according to Ricoeur (1981), and addresses only itself. Habermas (1987) argues that indeed Heidegger's hermeneutic project "comes to a standstill" leading back only to itself (p.148). Heidegger attempted to go beyond the meaning of beings to the meaning of Being in a metaontological discourse but succeeded only in a hypostatization of Being (Steiner, 1978).

In his later writings, Heidegger poetically decries the primacy of language: "It is not man who determines Being, but Being that via language discloses itself to and in man" (Heidegger, 1971, p.128). The empiricist discourses of science are forever transformed in Heidegger's poetics as well as in his argumentation. Heidegger elaborates on the centrality of the role of language in phenomenology in "pointing out" and in showing the "concealment" in the familiar. Heidegger, interpreted Husserl's notions of truth as disclosure. Heidegger speaks of truth as the dialectic of disclosure and concealment and of the ambiguity of truth. Language is autonomous and speaks through humans. For Heidegger (1971), "Saying is in no way the linguistic expression added to the phenomena after they have appeared -rather, all radiant appearance and all fading away is grounded in the showing Saying" (p.126). Being, which shows itself through language, is evocative of all of what is, changing throughout time but remaining all that exists and all that has been since the beginning. Dasein includes all of what is in what Heidegger terms its

forestructures. An understanding of understanding, exegesis, is based on the presuppositions that are the forestructure of dasein itself (Heidegger, 1927). This understanding of the hermeneutic circle foreshadows the interpretive work of Ricoeur.

Steiner (1978) acknowledges Heidegger's attempt to transcend Platonic idealism and Aristotelian positivism (p.150) but critiques Heidegger's view of Being:

> Being (now almost invariably hypostatized through its capital letter), dwelling in a house of which he is, at his rare best a custodian, but never architect or proprietor, the thinker must be prepared to speak seldom, to speak fragmentarily when he speaks at all, and to suffer constant misunderstanding and contradiction
> (p.129).

Steiner suggests that Heidegger's endeavour to free scientific language from its "unexamined and often illusionary presuppositions" although frustrated, remains his contribution (*Ibid*, p.157). His implicit questioning of largely unexamined presuppositions of language in his attempt to speak of the paradoxical nature of the Heraclitean flow of existence (Caputo, 1987, p.67) is articulated and amplified by Ricoeur. In his later dialogue on language, Heidegger (1971) opens the possibility for hermeneutic discourse between beings and Being. What Heidegger contributes to hermeneutics is the opening of the question of Being and the restoration of "the original difficulty of Being" in the midst of flux (Caputo, 1987) through a restoration of temporality to Being. His reading of Dilthey and Schleiermacher served him well. In grounding all understanding in "the historical character of existential understanding, he cleared the ground" for Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics (Palmer, 1969, p.161).

> Given a perceptually new natural and historical situation to control, the perceiving subject undergoes a continued birth; at each instance it is something new. Every incarnate subject is like an open notebook in which we do not yet know what will be written. Or it is like a new language; we do not know what works it will accomplish but only that, once it has appeared, it cannot fail to say little or much, to have a history and a meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.6)

It is **Merleau-Ponty** (1908-1961), a French Philosopher, who radicalizes Heidegger's absolute subject that covers the totality of what exists. Merleau-Ponty's human subject is a subject <u>in</u> the world. If one is connected to the world, then the world is also connected to the human being. The world is human. It is not the world of idealism but a world with a thinking presence of an existent subject. Such co-constitutionality involves the dialectic between embodied subjective participation in and contemplation of what is in the world. For Merleau-Ponty, theories of reality, therefore, are theories of perception. His search lead him beneath perceptual knowledge and beneath the idealist duality of consciousness-object joined by intentionality to their roots in Being. Co-constitutionality places being back in the world. One is of the world but also in the world. Being is both existential and ontological.

In his questioning of the foundations of knowing and being, Merleau-Ponty recognizes the ontological nature of both body and world (Lapointe, 1975), each both immanent and transcendent, are lived by a perceiving, speaking subject-in-the-world. In this landscape, behaviour takes on a dialogical, communicative quality embracing Freudian (and Lacanian) hermeneutics of the language of human conduct (Giorgi, 1974, p.62). Language becomes the language of a speaking thinking subjectivity. There is no dualism between language and thought: speaking thought and thinking speech transcend the dualism. Patterns of meaning underly all of these relationships including the dimensions of history. We are to seek an understanding from all angles simultaneously (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Merleau-Ponty's view of "the essential ambiguity of being-in-the-world, in that it is always open to several interpretations in terms of different layers of meaning" (Spurling, 1977, p.44) is the fundamental presupposition of Ricoeur's interpretations.

Merleau-Ponty's contributions lie in his reflection upon earlier hermeneutic discourses and upon the psychological discourses of his contemporaries. He embraces the antithesis of philosophy and psychology that a Husserlian prereflective world implies. Husserlian reductionism is refuted: "*The most important lesson which the reduction*

teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction" since we are not absolute mind and since our reflections are carried out in the temporal flux which we are trying to seize, there is no thought that embraces all our thought (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.xiv). The monologues of Heideggerian Being become dialogical. We are situated in the world, in communication with others reflecting upon the temporal flux which we are trying to seize in a Merleau-Pontyean interpretation. As he states: "Communication with others, and thought, take up and go beyond the realm of perception which initiated us to the truth" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.3). His reading of Cassirer suggests to him that "Language does not yet contain its meaning" (*Ibid*, p.8); meaning is disclosed through reflection in an archaeology of sedimentations of later knowledge (*Ibid*, p.5). "The structure of the the life-world (is) to be dug out from under the sedimentation of scientific knowledge and beliefs, and its intentional roots brought to light. Phenomena. . . are both factual (they exist for consciousness) and essential" (they are meaningful for consciousness) (Spurling, 1977, p.9).The intentional threads which attach us to the world are slackened in reflection. No absolute mind exists; *there is no inner man*, man is in the world and only in the world does he know himself (*Op. Cit.*, p.xi). Merleau-Ponty refutes Husserlian idealism as a form of subjectivism and thus of dualism (Madison, 1988, p.60). For Merleau-Ponty, subjectivity is both immanent and transcendent. Ever in the process of becoming, this temporal being "is in the world and only in the world does he know himself" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.xi). This being in the world is body, body as a human body which transcends consciousness-world distinctions (Madison, 1988, p.68). Thus philosophies of pure interiority or pure exteriority and dualism are transcended in this understanding of the corporeality of subjectivity. Lived corporeality as lived time and space is not monolithic. Ambiguity is introduced for our being in the world is compounded through and through of our relationships with the world (*Op. Cit.*). And world is in flux. All dualism is not dissolved. The perceiving subject lives the heterogeneities of Lacanian discourse dialectically within a symbolic matrix (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Merleau-Pontyean discourse embodies

psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity as an exemplar of epistemological pluralism. Psychology, as Science, states Merleau-Ponty (1964) has nothing to fear from a return to the perceived world, nor from a philosophy which draws out the consequences of this return. In this reflective philosophy, understanding crosses and draws from "the epistemological avatars" that Kristeva (1989) refers to (p.326) and being as a relationship between body and world returns phenomenology to the ontological.

In summary then, it is Schleiermacher who reflected on the subjectivity behind the text and the unending hermeneutic circle in interpretation. The task of hermeneutics, for him, was to reach beyond the linguistic or grammatical interpretation to the subjectivity of the one who speaks. The historical context was to be reconstructed in order to recover and understand the language of the text. However, his transcendental subject presumably was extricable from history conceptualized as chronology. It was Dilthey who extended these ideas and applied them to all of the human sciences which he viewed as interpretive disciplines. Dilthey viewed the "unfolding of individuality" as "inaccessible to observation, reflection and theory" and therefore introduced the the concept of "lived experience" as a unit of meaning. Implicit in lived experience is temporality and historicity. Language, in his view, is polysemic. Understanding is hermeneutic in nature. The narrow sphere of our existence, according to Dilthey, can only be transcended through the interpretation of historical records as human experience. Understanding evolves as reciprocity in a hermeneutic circle. Husserl dreamed of an absolute and final rational science that might be applied in the description of lived experience. He, too, attempted to describe lived experience; he believed that his transcendental subject transcended the opposition between subject and object in his attempt to fix the flow of experience and to keep it alive. In his attempt to understand the intentionality or meaning of phenomena and mental activities, he proposed the suspension of belief in the external world in order to discover the essence or *eidetic image* of an experience. He lets go of bracketing in his later writing and views phenomenological reduction as the "return to the things themselves", a dictum that remains.

Experiences were presumably "deposited in language". The constitution of the life-world in his later writings (Husserl, 1936), becomes intersubjective and temporally situated but difficulties remain in interpreting where *I* ends and other subjectivity begins. The Husserlian notion of life-world does not appear to include the multiplicity of historical worlds and all the possible world views. This last work appeared after the publication of his student's treatise on *Being and Time*. It is his student, Heidegger, who restores some of the original difficulty of being in introducing temporality. But his ontology is criticized for its obscurity and hypostatization. Heidegger in his later writings critiques his own earlier notions of "preunderstanding, the hermeneutic circle, and the phenomenological theory of horizons" as subjectivistic and metaphysical (Caputo, 1987, p.95). Merleau-Ponty transcends the limitations of these earlier thinkers by placing being in a world which is co-constituted. The Heraclitean flow is expressed in all of its complexity and ambiguity, for "we are through and through compounded of relationships with the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.xiii). A perceiving, speaking subject lives corporeality, spatiality and temporality. Consciousness-object dualism are transcended. Embodied being and psyche and the embodied being and psyche of others are lived in dialectic. The hermeneutic project of keeping alive the questions of human existence is traced in the works of Gadamer and Ricoeur.

B. DIALOGICAL HERMENEUTICS

All of the philosophers who have been discussed are seminal in the transition from empiricism and constructivism. Positivism in philosophy refers to "that movement of thought which originates" with the Cartesian dualism of a knowing or epistemological subject and the external world (Madison, 1988, p.x). Descartes (1596-1650), a French philosopher and mathematician, postulated two separate independent realms: a non-material thinking substance accessible through introspection and the material body in the

material world. The nature of mind, in this model of reality, resides in the non-physical and is beyond the scope of science. Kant (1724 - 1804), a German philosopher, postulated that the human experience of the material world is largely "*constructed* by the active human mind" (Churchland, 1988, p.84). Human understanding imposes order on sensory data and structures the world-of-human-experience; knowledge of the external world is organized by our categories of understanding. For Kant, the inner world, too, is a "constructed world" and "has access to itself only through its own self-representations" and therefore remains transcendental in nature and unknowable (*Ibid*). Kant's epistemology distinguishes between the world of experience and the "categories" used to structure and interpret what is given to experience. These structures transcend experience and are preconditions of knowledge (Angeles, 1981). The Kantian world-of-experience then is largely a constructed world. Husserlian phenomenology was an attempt to go beyond the empirical self and beyond the transcendental self in order to go behind the constructs and presuppositions to the *essence* or originary nature of experience. Husserl discovered subjectivity in consciousness but it remained ensnarled "behind each consciousness" with access to itself only as a "synthetic and transcendent production" of self-representation (Sartre, 1957, p.37). Heidegger adopted Husserlian phenomenology but rejected an epistemological distinction between consciousness and the external world. He viewed existence as accessible only through descriptions of Being. Being, for Heidegger, becomes a mode of being in the world through participation in Time, which is inseparable from Being; past and future Being are inseparable from the present. Merleau-Ponty went beyond Heidegger's epistemological subject via perception *and* temporality to an existentialist view of the nature of experience. And it is he who met the challenge of the Husserlian impasse and went beyond the idealist wholly constructed view of a world to an interactionist phenomenology of perception with a perceiving-speaking-thinking subject, in communication with others, who co-constitutes the world.

Madison (1988) suggests that the radicalization of interpretive philosophy begins with Husserl and his effective deconstruction of "both the epistemological subject and the objective world" (p.xi). Palmer (1977) reminds us that Heidegger "argued that man must take 'a step back' . . . from everything that has been constituted by the structure of modern thought"; and that Heidegger redefines "what it means to 'be' in the world and in the matrix of time", thus pushing us to "reask the most fundamental question of all -the meaning of being" (p.372). It is Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur who indeed transcend the horizons of the analytical philosophy of positivism and idealism. In calling into question the significance of method itself, Gadamer re-opens the question of understanding. Method is not the way to truth, as Gadamer (1960) points out in *Truth and Method*. Rather a dialectical approach guided by the nature of what is being understood evolves through a questioning responsiveness. Truth and method remain in unresolved tension (Weinsheimer, 1985, p.xi). In questioning the foundations of the phenomenology of understanding itself, Ricoeur (1969) opens the hermeneutic circle to the modes of the possible. The narratives which emerge in all human practices may be interpreted in the tradition of Ricoeur in a quest to reach the meanings behind the symbols. The nature of philosophy as reflection illustrates at a deeper level that "the advantage of a hermeneutics of symbols is indeed access to lived experience" (Bourgeois, 1972, p.235). Interpretative philosophy opens the problematic and keeps the problematic open to the flow of life in a living circle.

GADAMER

> Understanding begins . . . when something addresses us. This is the primary hermeneutic condition . . . . The essence of the question is the opening up, and keeping open, of possibilities
> (Gadamer, 1960, p.266).

> Knowledge always means precisely, looking at opposites. Its superiority over preconceived opinion consists in the fact that it is able to conceive of possibilities as possibilities. Knowledge is dialectical from the ground up
> (Gadamer, 1960, p.328).

Gadamer (*né* 1900), a student of Heidegger, has identified understanding as an epistemological and ontological issue. He asserts the linguistic character of human experience, addressing the question of the relationship of language to being and understanding. Understanding is not prereflective or presuppositionless; it requires interpretation. But the scientific method is not the only way to understanding. In *Truth and Method* (1960), Gadamer questions the notion of a method which names truth. Rather he proposes a dialogical approach to understanding that evolves in conversation through a "questioning responsiveness". One of the fundamental presuppositions of hermeneutics that Gadamer recovers is the Diltheyan concept of *effective history* or "the consciousness of the history of effects" of lived tradition which embodies a shared historical continuum between the interpreter and the phenomenon" (Ricoeur, 1981, p.53). Gadamer extends Dilthey's invitation to transcend one's narrow world through the understanding of history; history and tradition can be reempowered through appropriation. Language is part of that tradition. The totality of our relationship to the world finds its expression in language. The Gadamerian dictum, "being that can be understood is language" (Gadamer, 1960, p.432) does not imply that language is the instrument of subjectivity but rather that language, "finite and historical (is) a *repository* and a carrier of the experience of being which had come to language in the past" (Palmer, 1969, p.213). Meaning and truth are to be creatively appropriated in a constant revivification of historical knowledge (Madison, 1988).

Gadamer revives Husserlian claims for universality. His claim is that universality lies in putting aside *prejudice* which Ricoeur (1981) defines "in the double sense of precipitation (to judge too quickly) and predisposition (to follow tradition as authority)" (p.66). Gadamer defines prejudice as judging too quickly or as the predisposition to follow

tradition not as lived experience but as authority. Hence, universality, for Gadamer, lies not in putting aside presuppositions and premises and in essences but in putting aside prejudice and in keeping the question open. Gadamer (1960) defines this hermeneutic project of describing our experience of world as we live it as universal. Language "provides an initial schematization for all our possibilities of knowing" (*Ibid*, p.66). Gadamerian hermeneutics directs its investigation behind language through the "dialectic of participation and distanciation" in the "reflective consciousness of this methodology" (Gadamer, 1971, p.83). The hermeneutic circle of understanding for Gadamer involves the fusion of horizons through dialogue of two differently situated consciousnesses, recalling Schleiermacher's image of the "coinherence of two moments". The hermeneutic circle, for Gadamer, is visible in the metaphors of dialogue and fusion. It is these presuppositions of a shared history and of the possibility of fusion, Gadamer (1960) argues, that must be made explicit in the dialogue which emerges in response to a problematic in an open "I-Thou intersubjectivity" (p. 221). Gadamer (1966) describes the hermeneutic circle of the I-Thou relationship where "each one is at first a kind of linguistic circle, and these linguistic circles come into contact with each other, merging more and more (through language as each) seeks words to reach the other" (p.17). What becomes the fundamental dimension of hermeneutics is the infinite dialogue that is opened in the direction of truth that we are, seeking words through which we might reach the other (*Ibid*).

Bain (in press) challenges the Gadamerian notion of hermeneutic reflexivity as a general universal theory reminding us that these "formulations were bound by a limited cultural *Weltanschauung*" (p.2) and that :

> *There is no such thing as immaculate perception.* Subjectivity is an inappropriate basis for a general theory as perception is always motivated by knowing consciousness -by a particular self in a particular moment in lived time -with all the vagaries of personally schematized knowledge in a particular context (pp.5-6).

Habermas (1970), too, debated Gadamerian hermeneutic understanding as biased by context and first schematizations: "Hermeneutical understanding cannot enter into a question without prejudice; on the contrary, it is unavoidably biased by the context in which the understanding subject has acquired his schemata of interpretation" (pp.296). Hirsch's criticism of the arbitrariness of Gadamerian interpretation is two-fold. Firstly, Hirsch (1967) criticizes his Heideggerian rejection of subjectivity which privileges "what is said" so that that becomes the real "subject" and secondly, that methodological criteria are not provided to arbitrate conflicts of interpretations (Cited in Madison, 1988, pp.26-27).

Gadamer's contribution lies in his attempted "fundamental analysis of what is necessarily involved in all acts of understanding and interpretation" (Madison, 1988, p.4). Understanding is relative to temporal and historical horizons and evolves dialogically in conversation through the tensionality between proximity and distance. Gadamer (1966) observes that: "the real power of hermeneutic consciousness is our ability to see what is questionable" (p.13). Hermeneutics is no longer restricted to a written text; conversation becomes text. Dialogue suggests ways of opening ways of being that Ricoeur develops. Understanding becomes transformative, in an endless limitless possibility of meanings through continual appropriation and reappropriation. Ricoeur (1981) credits Gadamer with disclosing the "idea that communication at a distance between two differently situated consciousnesses occurs by means of the fusion of their horizons . . . which can be contracted or enlarged" (p.62). Understanding is liberated from a closed circle that returns to itself. In Ricoeurean discourse, hermeneutics becomes "the ontology and phenomenology of understanding" (Palmer, 1969, p.215).

RICOEUR

> In contrast to philosophies concerned with starting points, a mediation on symbols starts from the fullness of language and of meaning already there; it begins from

> within language which has already taken place and in which everything in a certain sense has already been said; it wants to be thought, not presuppositionless, but in and with all its presuppositions. Its first problem is not to get started, but, from the midst of speech, to recollect itself
> (Ricoeur, 1978, pp. 36-37).

The foundational subject which Husserl attempted to free is further deconstructed and recovered by **Ricoeur** (*né* 1913) in his recognition that "there is no self-understanding which is not *mediated* by signs, symbols and texts" (Cited by Madison, 1988, p.92). Mediation on these symbols starts from the "fullness of language". Meaning arises from the "encounter with certain thought-provoking symbols mediated by its culture"; "meaning does not originate in the conscious, reflecting subject" (Madison, 1988, p.93). But the polysemic possibilities, the multiple meanings from Dilthey are not limited to the level of signs. Interpretation and reflection as interpretation are re-collective of the multiple levels of meaning that characterize the context or textuality of our existence. Polysemic possibilities are not limited to the level of words but extend to the multiple levels of meaning that characterize our existence. Ricoeur's is not a presuppositionless philosophy but an interpretive philosophy in and with all of the presuppositions of human existence. Gadamerian conversation yields what Ricoeur calls text or narrative; text is extended to include all human practices. For Ricoeur, our narratives constitute our self-knowledge. The symbols in our narratives can be deciphered, according to Muto's (1972) understanding of Ricoeur, in terms of larger totalities, or other symbols, or rites or myths, or in terms of the unification of a number of different levels of interior and exterior experiences. Ricoeur's is a hermeneutics of the interpretation of the hidden levels of meaning in the narratives that we tell ourselves. Ricoeur (1981) describes the several layers of meaning in textuality which imply several simultaneous readings and interpretations which occur in a tension. For Ricoeur (1981), a hermeneutic phenomenology implies at a deeper level that "to interpret is to explicate the type of being-in-the-world unfolded *in front of* the text" (p.141). The

hermeneutic circle for Ricoeur (1978), then, is "between my way (or mode of being) - beyond the knowledge which I may have of it -and the mode (or the way) of being disclosed by the text as the work's world" (p. 146). The living circle of understanding is between my way of being and the way disclosed by the text. His is a hermeneutics of the interpretation of the hidden levels of meaning in the context of polysemy and rooted in the symbolic function of all language. The nature of experience, in this model, is symbolic. Our interpretations of 'reality' and our personal theory of knowledge converge in our actions and in our narratives. Our personal narratives become our fundamental 'reality'. The discourses of the text we live that we have appropriated into our subjective lived experience, must first be distantiated from and 'read' as an objective interpretation in a hermeneutic arc between subjectivity and objectification. As Madison (1988) explains: "Perhaps in reflecting on his own cosmic-constitutive activities and in gaining a better understanding of how it is that those things he calls by the name of "reality" come to be for him, the human being might actually succeed in better understanding what it means for him to be" (p.139). Ricoeur (1981) objectifies the "narrative structure of existence" which we create and which we can transform. He argues that understanding itself is narrative and that the "partial explanatory segments of this or that fragment of behaviour are integrated in a narrative structure" (*Ibid*, p.267). All discourses connect up with experience in this broadly inclusive notion of text. It is these signifying systems that are deconstructed by Derrida and Foucault. Ricoeur attributes the recognition of the central question of meaning to Husserl and to Heidegger. As Ricoeur expresses in dialogue with Kearney (1984), structuralist analysis concerns the "arrangement of texts and textual codes; hermeneutics looks to the 'meaning' produced by these codes". He argues:

> "It is my conviction that the decisive feature of hermeneutics (on the other hand) is the capacity of world-disclosure yielded by texts. Hermeneutics is not confined to the *objective* structural analysis of texts nor to the *subjective* existential analysis of the authors of texts; its primary concern is with the *worlds* which these authors and texts open up. It is by an understanding of the worlds, actual and possible, opened

by language, that we may arrive at a better understanding of ourselves" (Ricoeur, 1984, p.45).

Ricoeur (1971) locates "explanation and understanding at two different stages of a unique *hermeneutic arc* " (p.557) between prereflective and depth interpretation. Dilthey's dichotomy is placed within a hermeneutic circle; explanation and understanding become for Ricoeur different levels of interpretation rather than different methods (Beshai, 1975). Ricoeur (1971) states that this approach to the dialectical "relation between *erklären* (explanation) and *verstehen* (understanding/ comprehension) in the human sciences" are the main implication of his text-interpretation paradigm (p.545). He critiques Gadamer's Romanticist notion of "the dialogical situation as the standard for the hermeneutical operation applied to the text (and argues rather that it is this hermeneutic) operation which reveals the meaning of what is already hermeneutical in dialogical understanding" (p.546).

Ricoeur addresses the Heraclitean flux of the ontological through metaphorical discourse. The historical situation conditions but does not limit understanding. The "interplay between mask and voice, face and speech, look and language, *eidos* (which Husserl took from the platonic as a way of naming that which is present behind appearances, yet gives appearances their uniqueness and vividness) and *logos* " (which stands for the underlying reason of what is, all that is) (Caputo, 1987, p.289) are freed in Ricoeurean interpretation. The plurivocity that unfolds the layers of meanings of *traces* of actions "is exhibited in the form of a conflict of interpretations. . . .The final interpretation appears as a verdict to which it is possible to make an appeal" (Ricoeur, 1971, p.553). Through the hermeneutic circle of disclosure and appropriation, "understanding is entirely *mediated* by the whole of explanatory procedures which precede and accompany it" (*Ibid*, p.561). His reading of Freud, Merleau-Ponty, and Saussure weaves their understandings within the threads of the text of being that Ricoeur opens. The heterogeneities of conscious and unconscious, subjectivity and objectification, trace and metaphor unfold in discourses of being. Kristeva's (1974, 1989) subject in process/on trial may be understood not as

something hidden behind the text, but as something disclosed in front of it. The appropriation of the worlds that are disclosed recovers the ontological horizons of hermeneutical interpretation for it is being itself that we seek to understand, being that is embodied, discursive, contextualized. The perplexities of existence that are fragmentarily and incompletely formulated unfold in this conflict of interpretations (Ricoeur, 1974) that goes beyond a Gadamerian exegesis of truth. The epistemological questions that Gadamer has failed to resolve are reopened through the analogue of text. The symbolic nature of human action opens this text of being at the level of methodology.

To summarize then, as we have traced in Chapters two and three, positivist discourses offer epistemologies of closure; hermeneutics seeks to introduce approaches to understanding the ontological. The ontological refers to Reality or existence in the broadest possible sense. It is the study of what it means to be, to exist in the midst of constant change. Heracleitus (540-450 BC), often considered the father of dialectics, spoke of the unending flux of the universe. The stability of the river and the instability of its water are classic analogues of the stable and changing nature of the world. *Logos* is the underlying cause. Aristotle spoke of this flux as *kinesis*. Time introduces dimensionality. Existentialism is expressive of the predicaments of existence. Existence is presumed to precede essence. Individual existence has no essential nature. Essence unfolds in the acts of choosing. The existential then refers to the possibility of acting with an awareness of the predicaments and choices of existence. The semiotic discourses of Kristeva, the psychoanalytic insights of Lacan, the existentialist psychologies of Sartre and Laing, and the analogues of Bateson are examples of contemporary discourses which open to a fundamental metaphysical understandings of existence. The dominant signifying systems that speak of existence in the individual sense and of existence in the broadest sense converge in Ricoeurean hermeneutics.

Ricoeur postulates a theory of interpretation that situates knowing between the existential and ontological. The epistemological basis of hermeneutic description is not rooted in a theory in the proper sense but rather in an approach or perspective for interpreting lived experience in all of its possibilities for generativity. His hermeneutic phenomenology is grounded in the reflective traditions of thinkers like Schleiermacher and Dilthey and in Husserlian idealist phenomenology and in the discourses of his contemporaries. Husserl and Heidegger attempted to introduce approaches for understanding the original difficulty of life (Caputo, 1987). Husserlian and Heideggerian hermeneutics opened to the ontological. But Husserl untutored by psychoanalytic discourses sought a return to the nonexistent originary. Heidegger added the dimensionality of lived time to being but hypostatized being in his circular referent of being back to itself. Merleau-Ponty opens the question of the ontological and keeps it open. Although Gadamer ignores Merleau-Ponty's teachings of corporeality and lived language, it is he who opens the hermeneutic circle to possibilities through his metaphors of dialogue and fusion. Unfortunately his understanding of effective history closes upon itself. Merleau-Pontyean breakthroughs take on epistemological possibilities in Ricoeur's theory of interpretation. The assumptions, premises and presuppositions that form the foundations of the ways of knowing are evoked rather than denied in the dialogical hermeneutics of Ricoeur and it is he who radicalizes the horizons of phenomenological philosophy. He seeks "not to discover some pristine immediacy but to mediate again and again in a new and more creative fashion" (Ricoeur, 1984, p.24). Ricoeur deepens the contributions of each of these seminal thinkers in a discourse of interpretation without metaphysical closure.

It is the phenomenological philosophy of Gadamer and Ricoeur that guides this interpretive inquiry into the meaning of teaching. The hermeneutical approach of Gadamer, guided by the nature of what is being understood, evolves through questioning responsiveness. Ricoeur's hermeneutics seeks to uncover the several layers of meaning in our personal narratives hidden in the symbolic function of language, in conversations, for

example. In this model, consciousness is possible only to the extent that it has been 'verbalized'. Language makes explicit and accessible the properties or relationships in experience. These polysemic possibilities, these "*worlds* which open up" may be interpreted through distantiation and then appropriated into subjective existence to arrive at a better self-understanding. In this chapter we have traced the philosophical and historical roots of phenomenological hermeneutics. Seminal scholars such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl and Heidegger are reviewed. Their underlying presuppositions for knowing about the world are outlined in an attempt to elucidate their contributions to the thinking of Gadamer and Ricoeur. For it is these epistemologies themselves that guide phenomenological hermeneutics which seeks to interpret the flux and polysemy of the ontological in its discursive structure through multiple signifying systems. And it is the ontological in its narrative structure which we address in this inquiry into meanings that "shine through" the multiple signifying practices of the lived texts of teachers. It is to hermeneutical phenomenological discourse which one may turn to begin to disclose the worlds opened up in the narratives of the teachers in this dialogue and to unfold the ways of being in teaching. Hermeneutics as an approach to the question of the meaning of the *vécu* of a teacher is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV. METHOD OR TRUTH?

> The very idea of a situation means that we are standing outside it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it. We are always within the situation, and to throw light on it is a task that is never entirely completed. . . To exist historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete. All self-knowledge proceeds from what is historically pregiven
> (Gadamer, 1960, p.269).

> The text speaks of a possible world and of a possible way of orienting oneself within it. The dimensions of this world are properly opened up by and disclosed by the text
> (Ricoeur, 1978, p.51).

The first two chapters of this text contextualize the question, *What is it to be a teacher today?* The epistemological foundations of being, knowing and meaning are discussed in the second chapter. An historical outline of the hermeneutic discourses that open to the possible worlds of teaching is traced in the preceding chapter. In this chapter, the hermeneutic circle of understanding is discussed as an approach to the question of the meaning of what it is to be a teacher. The hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur provide the major perspectives in which these questions and answers are grounded. The intention of this inquiry is to explore the *vécu* of the teacher dialogically (Gadamer, 1960) in an interpretation of the substrata of the layers of meaning (Ricoeur, 1974) that teachers ascribe to their experiences. Gadamer shows a way in dialogue, Ricoeur opens interpretation to disclose the ways of being unfolded in mediations. In this chapter, procedures in hermeneutic research and the question of validation are discussed. Then the specific phases of the hermeneutic reflexivity of this inquiry are described. A preliminary inquiry is interpreted to provide an example of a text of teaching.

A. VALIDATION NOT VERIFICATION

Method is not the way to truth, as Gadamer (1960) points out in *Truth and Method.* Rather a dialectical approach guided by the nature of what is being understood evolves through a questioning responsiveness. No final, complete illuminations are achieved in hermeneutic reflection. Truth and method remain in unresolved tension. Hermeneutic reflexivity allows for an openness to human discourse that is expressive of the existent. This position goes beyond the modernist idea of definitive and fixed meanings. Method, from the Greek, *methodos* means following a way. Methods offer different ways of following or appropriating meaning. The dialogical way or method outlined by Gadamer (1960) derives from Platonic dialectic, from the Greek *dialegesthai*, meaning to talk with. Method as a disciplined approach to understanding thus remains problematic, in dialectic. The tension between truth and method moves for Gadamer "between dialectic and dialogue" (Weinsheimer, 1985, p.36, moving within the historical being which is ours. This "method of the dialogue depends on both questioner and answerer" (Watson, 1985, p.85). "In a sense, each dialogue has its own method (and yet) it is always the same method" (*Ibid*, p.87). The questioner becomes the midwife of signification, "a conduit, a vehicle, a mouthpiece, a spokesman, a herald, a prophet, an interpreter, a *hermeneus*. His perspective is transmissive, oracular, revelatory, inspired, illuminationist" (*Ibid*, p.27). What shows through reflects the changing presuppositions of the questioner. For all understanding posits a preunderstanding, "a preliminary way of seeing. Just as understanding is not placeless and empty, so questioning is not without its own horizons of expectations (Palmer, 1969). But those presuppositions that are the foundations of our expectations are not historically fixed as Gadamer (1960) implies, they are subject to change. Meanings with their polysemic possibilities, viewed as dispersed in language and deferred into the future with connections to their origins, and expressed in the plurivocity

of multiple signifying systems, are unfolded through a hermeneutic approach (Ricoeur, 1974). Hence a dialogical way to understanding implicitly opens to a questioning of its own guiding assumptions as a means of reaching beyond itself, calling the hermeneuticist's own horizons into question and transforming fundamental understandings (*Ibid*). In this approach, signification and being remain problematic. Method remains in tension with understanding. Understanding is symbolic, mediated, bound up with language and the historicity of the interpreter.

Since long before Dilthey's distinction between explanation and understanding, methodological discourses have attempted to capture definitively the ontological. However different epistemological presuppositions have determined different ontologies. Johansson (1989) defines atomistic ontologies as those that presuppose that the "understanding of the world as a totality is secondary to its parts" while holistic ontologies presuppose the existential interdependence of the all (p.6). The explanation-understanding debate is an ontological debate "between traditions which allow no place anywhere in science for the subject category, and those which maintain that the subject category captures precisely what is specific to the social sciences" (Johansson, 1989, p.7). Ricoeurean hermeneutics addresses a holistic ontology through an openness to the possible worlds of subjective experience of a "*desubjectivized* subjectivity" (Madison, 1988, p.92). Ricoeur (1971) argues that the human sciences may be said *to be* hermeneutical "because it is subjectivity that becomes their text and because their methodologies develop procedures of interpretation of discourses that refer to worlds" (p.529), that is, to the ontological. He argues for epistemological pluralism proposing a hermeneutic arc rather than a dichotomous relationship between explanation and understanding. Being, which is the text of teaching as a human science, thus may be viewed as "a project, that is, the outline of a new being-in-the-world" and may be understood only in the dialogical situation (*Ibid*, p.536). The multipositionality between us (as re-searcher/teacher/child in the *vécu* of a classroom) necessitates interpretation (Steiner, 1975). Only through interpretation of the symbolic may

we arrive at an understanding of the worlds of others. For being is not a known waiting to be uncovered, it remains problematic (Bourgeois and Schalow, 1987). The ontological unfolds in front of our search for understanding. Understanding is mediated; there is no "immaculate perception" (Bain, in press), only trace already mediated, perhaps schematized, conceptualized, but never prior to our being-in-the-world. The project that is teacher or child transcends the Cartesian subject-object split. To understand the meaning of what it is to be a teacher then is evocative of epistemological presuppositions that address the heterogeneities of subject as process. Ricoeurean discourse opens to the being and becoming of teacher and of child. The reciprocal "priority of significance to fact, relation to substance, and understanding to knowledge" (Weinsheimer, 1985, p.5) of the hermeneutic approaches of Gadamer and Ricoeur, do not negate knowing, distantiation or explanation but place them in tension with meaning, appropriation and interpretation.

Ricoeur (1981) suggests that preunderstanding or prejudice and the situation remain "dichotomous" in Gadamerian hermeneutics (p.90); the triangulation of "situation-understanding-interpretation" (p.57) transcends these dichotomies and the psychosociological conditions and opens texts to "an unlimited series of readings, themselves situated in socio-cultural contexts which are always different" (p.91). Existential conditions are always new. And Ricoeur extends Gadamerian distantiation of the said, cautioning that the saying disappears. It is the things said that direct the dialogue, replacing the reference. "It is not so much what language refers to as what it makes manifest" (Madison, 1988, p.87). The semiological challenge of reference is resolved by Ricoeur (1981): "the reference is to the mode of being unfolded in front of the text" (rather than an intention or a pristine perception hidden behind it) through *mimesis* or creative imitation, that is, through imaginative possibilities, the mode of the possible (p.93). Understanding thus may enlarge self "by the appropriation of the proposed worlds which the interpretation unfolds" (p.93). In this unfolding self is transformed: interpretation (reading) introduces imaginative variations. Self-understanding is a metamorphosis that

develops in the dialectical play between distantiation and appropriation. For wherever there is a situation, there is a horizon which can be contracted or enlarged. Experience, the way of being, which comes to language constitutes "the most important phenomenological presupposition of hermeneutics for Ricoeur (1981, p.118). This *lebenswelt* designates "the reservoir of meaning, the surplus of sense in living experience, which renders the objectifying and explanatory attitude possible" (p.119).

At the level of methodology there are no rules. Ricoeur suggests however that the dialectic between validating and guessing must submit to critique; validation for Ricoeur (1981) requires:

1) a circular reconstruction of the text as a whole; mea..ing is construed through the "judgment of importance",
2) reaching the text from "different sides. . . like a cube, or a volume in space" present as relief; meaning is related to the cornerstone of the text through the narrowing of the scope,
3) hearing the plurivocity that opens a text "to several readings and to several constructions"; the verbal intention is deciphered unfolding several layers of meaning through a cumulative, holistic process not linear succession,
4) arbitrating possible interpretations; agreement is sought in a hermeneutic circle between guess and validation through a logic of qualitative probability that shows "that an interpretation is more probable in light of what is known" (pp.211-213).

Rigour in hermeneutic inquiry implies validation rather than verification (Ricoeur, 1971, 1981; Shapiro, 1986). Cherryholmes (1988a) claims that the meanings of measurements and constructs also are dispersed in traces and deferred in time throughout and beyond language and text. Our conceptualizations and constructs and the discourses and practices within which they occur are "constituted through a multiplicity of forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts" (*Ibid*, p.438). Research discourses emanate from subjects and

hence must acknowledge their voices, their different systems of interaction, their changing competencies . "Construct validation in interpretive research moves closer to life as experienced and lived" (*Ibid*, p.433). There is no unmediated presence that definitely determines the meanings of constructs and measurements, hence, validity is a process, always in motion. Muto (1972) proposes three criteria of this process: *claritas* (meaning in whose brightness everything clear remains) implies bringing "to light meanings which remain faithful to the original yet (drawing) out implications which manifest searching" within contemporary horizons of understanding by going in and beyond the text making explicit what is implied and clarifying latent meanings; *serenitas* (meaning by whose strength everything stands firm) signifies upholding the worlds of the text and cautions against violation of the text to make it conform to one's own notions through acquiescence to the essential meanings of the text embodied in words; *hilaritas* (in whose play every liberated thing hovers) signifies that the restorative task is "playful and praising (rather than) negative or fault-seeking or image-breaking" (pp.188-189). Ricoeur's (1971) plea for a logic of qualitative probability rather than a logic of verification is taken up by Shapiro (1986) who argues that understanding *is* a form of verification. According to him, knowledge claims cannot assert validity as correspondence but only as verisimilitude, the appearance of truth. Certainty is always in tension with doubt. Only in appropriation of possible worlds, only in living the word of the text does one understand. Shapiro (1986) grounds validation in the experiential criteria of the hermeneutic circle between embodied knowing and interpretation . The criteria of validation that he posits are: followability, coherence, consistency and recognition. Interpretations may have empathic generalizability. Kvale (1986) also defends Ricoeur's position that a logic of probability is more appropriate to the interpretation of the ambiguity of meaning as "the meaning-atomism of positivism" does not encompass the lived contexts and the lived history/story that Ricoeurean interpretation addresses. Validation must encompass: 1) the heterogeneities of human existence which must be exposed and posed against each other; 2) the *status nascendi*

which must have priority over the *status quo*, - the becoming must be freed"; 3) interpretations that serve in unmasking worlds which must also be open to changing, possible worlds; 4) the lived social and historical contexts of the text which condition our experience and our interpretations (Kvale, 1986, pp.18-20). Triangulation offers an approach to observational validity for Kvale (1986). The dialogues with each teacher in this inquiry may be confirmed against each other and against the interpreter's and reader's experiences and against future dialogues and interpretations. Informant triangulation may be evident also in the unity or "intertwinedness" of meanings and interpretations (*Ibid*). Denzin (1978, 1989) describes a logic of triangulation which employs multiple methods of observation including data, investigator, theory as well as methodological triangulation.

Interpretation is subject to conflicting possibilities at multiple levels. As Ricoeur states, in dialogue with Kearney (1984),

> There can be no praxis which is not already symbolically structured in some way. Human action is always figured in signs, interpreted in terms of cultural traditions and norms. Our narrative fictions are then added to this primary interpretation or figuration of human action; so that narrative is a redefining of what is already defined, a reinterpretation of what is already interpreted. The referent of narration, namely human action, is never raw or immediate reality but an action which has been symbolized and resymbolized over and over again. Thus narration serves to displace anterior symbolizations on to a new plane, integrating them or exploding them as the case may be (pp.23-24).

The conflicting interpretations of human discourses grounded in psychoanalysis, semiotics, history, anthropology and multiple other discourses which converge in human experience, cannot be reduced to a centralizing, "totalizing schema of thought" (*Ibid* , p.27). The plurivocity of these discourses which serve to integrate or to explode our lived heterogeneities must be arbitrated according to Ricoeur. Madison (1988) defines methodological criteria to arbitrate conflicts of interpretation. His rhetorical validation is

grounded in his logic of argumentation . The methodological principles that he suggests are summarized:

1) coherence -implies unity and "harmony of all details with the whole";
2) comprehensiveness -involves interpretation of the issues and presuppositions of the subject of the dialogue as a whole;
3) penetration of intent -"brings out a guiding and underlying intention in the work";
4) thoroughness -addresses all of the questions and issues raised in the text and in the interpretation;
5) contextuality -calls for respect for the historical grounds of the discourse;
6) agreement -substantiates the "real meaning of what an author says" and may open new horizons in the interpretation;
7) suggestiveness -implies originality in the exegesis and raises questions for future interpretations and for future research as the implications and 'ultimate validity' emerge (*Ibid*, pp.25-39).

To conclude then, theoretical formulations about teaching do not speak from the place of a teacher. The question of what it is to be a teacher has not been addressed with teachers. It is in the openness to the "other" and in the circular hermeneutical dialogue with these teachers that this work may make a potential contribution of scholarly significance to the literature on teaching. Gadamer (1960) opens dialogue as the text of the hermeneutic encounter. Ricoeur (1971, 1981) meets the challenge of psychoanalysis and semiotics and opens to the ontological by expounding on the living languages of discourse and the possible ways of being disclosed. For Ricoeur, being remains problematic. Interpretation then takes on multiperspectivity including metaperspectivity. Meanings are always interpretations and therefore are dispersed and deferred (Derrida, 1978; Cherryholmes, 1988a, 1988b). Madison (1988) grounds validation in coherence, comprehensiveness, penetration of intentions, agreement and thoroughness including contextuality and

imagination. Validity verifications in terms of comprehensiveness, thoroughness and penetration of intent and agreement will be limited to the responses of the teachers engaged in this inquiry to the deconstructions of their narratives. A dialectical multidimensional model of my present understanding of the genesis of self and meaning, which is illustrative of the hermeneutic motion between my presuppositions that ground this hermeneutic interpretation of teaching, is diagrammed in the Appendix. In the next section, the dialogical procedures of Gadamer (1960) and Ricoeur (1981) are described as I have interpreted them to conduct this inquiry. This chapter concludes with the text of a preliminary investigation which focused the question on the changing contexts of teaching as an example of an existential-phenomenological description of teaching.

B. MEETING THE TEACHERS

> . . . language, in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other's point, performs that communication of meaning which . . . is the task of hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1960, p.331).

Hermeneutical phenomenology, as Ricoeur (1981) terms it , provides a context for understanding the common meanings of a lived experience. Ricoeur (1981) objectifies the "narrative structure of existence". He argues that understanding itself is narrative and that the "partial explanatory segments of this or that fragment of behaviour are integrated in a narrative structure" (p.267). A hermeneutic phenomenology implies at a deeper level that "to interpret is to explicate the type of being-in-the-world unfolded *in front of* the text" (Ricoeur, 1981, p.141). It is to this approach which we shall turn to bring to light the deeper meanings of the teachers' narratives. A narrative, in the teacher's words and in the teacher's voice, is evocative of the personal and transcendental meanings of what it is to dwell in the place of the teacher. A hermeneutic

phenomenological approach provides the framework to describe and bring out the meanings of this dwelling. In the search for understanding the meaning of the teacher's experience, we shall turn to the *narrative*, the narrative which cannot ever be made fully explicit, nor completely clear. For it is the fundamental ambiguity of the narrative which holds the essence of all speaking and thinking and acting. To describe and to reconstruct the "several layers of meaning" in these narratives, the "circular character" of the hermeneutic approach is evoked (Ricoeur, 1981, p.211).

> Ultimately, the correlation between explanation and understanding, and between understanding and explanation, is the *hermeneutic circle*
> (Ricoeur, 1981, p.221).

Hermeneutics, according to Gadamer, is a dialectic of the art of asking questions, the art of thinking, the art of conducting a real conversation. Dialectics as the art of conducting a real conversation is "the art of the formation of concepts as the working out of common meanings" (Gadamer, 1960, p.331). It is to the hermeneutic encounter that we shall turn to hear, through the dialectic of conversation, what Carson (1989) calls "the voices of teachers".

The question of what it is to be a teacher was posed to five experienced elementary school teachers with varied curriculum interests and varied formal education.

SHIRLEY is a sincere fifty-three year old lady who has taught elementary school children for more than thirty years. She is a highly skilled teacher who is responsive to the needs of her students. Her response repertoire and her wisdom are grounded in a sensitivity to others and in a wide range of experiences. Her empathy for others and her sense of humour enhance staff morale at her school and contribute to a positive school climate as well as classroom climate.

Shirley entered the teaching profession with two years of teacher training and returned to University after twenty years of teaching to complete her bachelor degree.

CHARLES is a deeply reflective, highly intelligent, dialogical man in his late fifties. His early classical education was capped with a master's degree in Administration. His personal commitment to teaching and to children and to his colleagues is reflected in his decision to teach classes as well as assume his administrative responsibilities in a large elementary school.

This erudite, loving man makes his presence felt in his attentive listening to the real issues and needs in a child's or a teacher's communication. In conversation with colleagues, he engages in that openness which allows for "the working out of common meanings".

TRINI is an extroverted fifty-one year old *bonne vivante* who has taught in Canada for twenty years. After her initial teacher training and ten years of teaching experience in South America, she replied to an advertisement for teachers in Canada. After one year of teaching in a northern community, she completed a second bachelor degree and continued to teach during the years that her three children were infants. She later completed a graduate diploma in Library Science.

Her love of literature and social history inspire her teaching. Trini tends to descriptions of reality as she experiences it. She does not couch pain in euphemisms nor does she indulge in what she terms "North American neuroses"! Her confrontation with life and with teaching is direct. Presently she is pursuing her interest in writing children's literature and is completing a master's degree in Language Arts. The class which she teaches is a special needs class of children who have been identified for special placement.

CARMEN is a poised, vivacious forty-one year old teacher who is in a transition period in her career. She had taught elementary school for five years until the birth of the first of her two children. When the children entered school, she returned to her teaching career, as she refers to it, on a part-time basis for the past five years. Presently she is contemplating the importance and the place of teaching in her life.

After graduation from a French Immersion programme, her training included a bachelors degree in languages and an undergraduate degree in teaching. During the past four year period, Carmen has registered in workshops each year in pursuit of her own interests and to enhance her teaching skills.

MICHELLE is a dedicated, creative, energetic art teacher. Her pedagogic relationship with the child extends beyond her classroom and her school. She has chosen to be "oriented toward. . .the activation of voices rendered silent by contemporary narratives (Smith, 1986, p.281). We see in her actions her commitment to human rights and peace and to teaching as the opening of possibilities for others. She gives her time and her knowledge during the summers to the education of teachers in El Salvador. Michelle has travelled extensively and has taught in different parts of Canada and in Spain. She is presently teaching in Montréal.

The participants range in age from forty-one years to their late fifties; two teachers are in their forties and three are in their fifties. Two of the teachers are married, one is living in a relationship, and two are separated and divorcing. Four of these teachers have children; two have school age children living at home. The participants' educational levels range from the bachelor degree to the master's degree. The careers of the participants in this inquiry have spanned a seventeen to thirty year period or longer.

WITH THE TEACHERS: THE HERMENEUTIC ENCOUNTER

> Using conversation as a mode of researching . . . finds its rationale in Gadamer's statement about the hermeneutic priority of the question.... The priority of the question is posited by the observation that we are already immersed (prejudiced) in a historical situation which structures consciousness. The question, by admitting to this finitude of experience, creates a structure of openness which allows us insight into the way we typically view the world (Carson, 1984, p.63).

Three phases of dialogue will form the basis of the proposed hermeneutic encounter. Carson's (1984) formulations of three guiding research principles are adopted in this inquiry.

PHASE I	GUIDING RESEARCH PRINCIPLES
To initiate conversation	To orient the participants to my interest in teaching To come to know the teachers and their experiences
PHASE II	
To continue the conversation by keeping the conversation open	To remain mindful of the hermeneutic priority of the question and to continue to search to understand the experience of teaching
PHASE III	
To reflect on the meaning of teaching	To interpret and to show the meaning of teaching for the participants To critically reflect upon teaching and the meaning of being a teacher

Before the **first phase** (between June and November, 1989), I met with each of the teachers in a setting that they preferred. The nature of the inquiry was explained and their educational background was discussed. We discussed our next conversation which would be taped and transcribed and returned to them before our second dialogue.

In **phase I**, the conversations were audiotaped and transcribed. The tapes were listened to and each transcribed text was read; interpretations or themes or questions for clarification were noted. The transcripts and notes and questions were returned to the participant prior to our next encounter. They were informed that they would be presented with my interpretations and with tentative questions that might guide our conversation about teaching about a week before our next meeting. These questions would serve to open the dialogue and to initiate the flow of the participant's narratives in the second phase.

In **phase II**, again the conversations were taped, transcribed and interpreted. These transcripts and interpretations and the themes of the combined narratives were returned to these five co-participants.

In **phase III**, each participant was invited to engage in further dialogue to clarify and expound upon themes addressed or omitted in Phase II. I asked each of the teachers to reflect on their themes and the themes of the combined narrative about what it means to be a teacher in terms of Madison's (1988) validation criteria (p.29). The teachers were asked to reflect on the thoroughness and penetration of their intent in my interpretations and on the comprehensiveness of the themes of the combined narrative. These dialogues also were audiotaped and transcribed.

A process of interpretation of the *combined* conversations as tapes and as transcribed texts including the reflections and comments (Holmgren, 1987) was engaged

in to show the themes and meanings of the experience of being-in-the-world as a teacher that emerged in this hermeneutic encounter with five experienced elementary school teachers. Interpretive procedures suggested by Rafferty (1990) guided this search for an understanding of what it means to be a teacher. After each phase of dialogue, the conversations were transcribed. These transcripts were read and re-read. Evocative phrases and sentences were highlighted. Each teacher-participant was assigned a colour-code. The highlighted phrases and sentences of each teacher were written on corresponding colour-coded index cards. Three different sizes of index cards were used to represent each phase. In each phase, themes were identified after several reorganizations of these carded statements. Coloured self-adhesive removable notes allowed for further cross-referencing in the final phases.

I proposed to explore with teachers the question of what it is to be a teacher. My intention was to dialogue with teacher to bring some understanding to what the experience of being as a teacher is. My objective was to engage in unstructured, responsive dialogue about what it means to be a teacher. The three questions which were provided to focus our conversations are the following:

1) What does teaching mean to you? Or more concretely, what has kept you in teaching?
2) What effect has being a teacher had upon you?
3) What insights or questions or concerns do you have about teaching?

In these semistandardized dialogues, my intention was to allow freedom to digress in order that I might enter the worlds of the classroom from each teacher's perspective (Berg, 1989, p.17) . Probes such as the following were used to encourage elaboration: I understand in that that . . .; How did you interpret that? Tell me more about that.

To summarize, the question of what it is to be a teacher was explored through dialogue with experienced elementary teachers. Conversations with five experienced elementary school teachers were taped and transcribed and returned to them with comments on themes which appeared to emerge and any questions. Each teacher was asked to respond to their perceptions of the penetration of their intent; to elaborate on their text and to ask any questions which they had. In the second phase, the intent was to deepen the conversation through reflection on what had been expressed and what had been left unspoken. The individual narratives of the first two phases are presented in the next chapter as the *data* of this inquiry. These combined narratives were then interpreted further and organized through the identification and clustering of themes which are presented in a unifying narrative in chapter six. The textuality of teaching is described in the words and narratives of these teachers. The reflections of each of these five teachers on the validity of my interpretations of their texts and more broadly of the text of teaching and implications which emerge are discussed in the last chapter. In the next section, my preliminary existential-phenomenological inquiry that focused on the changing context of the teacher is summarized as an example of the texts of teaching.

C. THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF THE TEACHER: A Preliminary Study

As the context of education changes so the teacher's experience of teaching must also be renamed and reappropriated. The social and private meanings which one has taken into oneself are placed before one as open questions. What is it to be a teacher today? A phenomenological inquiry returns to the ground of experience by letting teachers speak for themselves of their experience. The question, *What is it to be a teacher today?* was asked and pursued hermeneutically through a series of conversations involving three experienced teachers. These conversations were then organized through the identification and clustering of themes which emerged. The inquiry proceeded through three stages. Conversations

were initiated to provide the ground for positing further questions. A preliminary interpretation was presented to the teachers in order to invite further dialogue and to deepen the conversation through further opening of the question. Commonalities in the experiences were drawn out. Etymological sources and idiomatic phrases and descriptions in philosophical sources were explored. In the final interpretation which is presented below, teaching is described around those themes which emerged.

Changing expectations

> Today teaching is much more stressful (long sigh) than it used to be. There seems to be a lot required of us (long reflective pause) without the necessary support that we used to have before. There are many new changes that they are implementing and we are expected to integrate these changes. It seems that there is so much more that they expect us to do.

A second *they* resonates. The word speaks of an unidentified, disembodied, unreal other. As Heidegger (1971) observes, "Human expression is always a presentation of the real and the unreal". The *us-they* challenges our notions of co-constitutionality. What is missing is a dialectical understanding of power, of teachers as agents as well as objects of power.

> It is stressful to try and get through the curriculum and do all of the other things that they expect you to do. Now we are concentrating on creative writing. So we must get the kids to get through all of this creative writing in addition the regular curriculum. So you have to take time away from one subject or another where the principal still expects you to have the same high achievement at the end of the year. You spend all of your time on creative writing like we have been doing this week because it's Writer's Week. But then there is a system Math Test coming up next month.

This is the voice of the teacher whose personal aspirations include the writing and publication of children's literature. She is the innovative teacher of creative writing with a Masters' degree in Language Arts, who more than ten years ago introduced the concept of publishing children's creative writing at the school level.

What is teaching today? Is this speaking of curriculum and all of the other things that they expect you to do and tests and achievement what teaching is today? Where is the child? What is the *vécu* of the child?

> There is no time for the individual attention that you would like to give. There is hardly any time for any followup because of all of the marking that you do with thirty children in a class. You have to do that marking yourself because you want to see what the child is doing and how the child is achieving. Some of that slips by. I think some of the children do need that individual attention.
>
> There's always something else to cut in, to cancel the time because we have assemblies or concerts or swimming or skiing or something else to cut in, to cancel the time. Someone is coming in to discuss Block Parents or something else.

The something else makes visible the existential grounds of this teacher's interpretation of what constitutes the life-world of pedagogic knowing and tact. The essential structures and relationships of pedagogic phenomena show themselves in the something else (from the Gothic, *some thing other, some other thing*) some other thing, other than what one knows to be the task *cuts in*. Cuts into what? Some other thing must be appropriated by the speaker's presumptive unity as an educator. Some other thing from some other one. Some other one with other expectations and perceptions of what it is to be a teacher.

We-They

> The world is already there. The real is a closely woven fabric . . . It is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them. (The world is) an indivisible unity of values shared . . . in which perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.x-xi).

What is this world of teaching? Hermeneutic inquiry views the speaker as engaged in an ongoing attempt to make meaning of a commonly held world of teaching. In the text that is spoken, much that is unspoken is brought into disclosure (Heidegger, 1927). The we-they

speaks of isolation, of a separation in this common world. According to Gadamer (1960), this separation, this distancing of horizons must take place in the understanding itself, and hence hermeneutics must ask how it happens. What understanding or mis-understandings have brought about this separation? How has it happened? Is a fusion of these horizons of understanding possible?

> The pressure is there because of PR (public relations). (A sardonic tone changes the usually aimiable, well-modulated voice of the speaker). Everyone is selling their school nowadays.

Spurling's (1977) assertion that "All human activity is a form of commerce with the world . . ." is a metaphorical construction of reality that these teacher will not appropriate!

> It is a competition.
>
> Parents are shopping. They're shopping around. One parent said that she wanted to visit. She just walked in off the street and decided she would stay and observe what was being done to see if this was the class that she wanted her kid to be in.

Is the merchandise metaphor of our consumer society becoming reified and appropriated in an inappropriate context? Or is there an essential ambiguity of being-in-the-world, in that it is always open to several interpretations in terms of different layers of meaning (Spurling, 1977)?

> All of us are aware that we have customers we don't often see. The people who pay the bills have to viewed as buying a service whether they're buying the service for themselves or they're buying it for someone else. The vendor has an obligation.
>
> We experience the phenomenon of increased accountability in a public education system that is supported by taxpayers who no longer have children or who will never have children in the school system.
>
> The School Board advertises a lot more nowadays. For example, there is going to be a forum on electing trustees.

The we and the they are being identified. But are they becoming more real? And what is it that the taxpayer is buying? What is the obligation? What must we *sell* (from the Gothic *seljun*) meaning offer as sacrifice? Is the analogue appropriate? What understandings and values belong to those who support our education system? Do we really know? As policy formulation reflects the perceived political demand for accountability and quality control and as pedagogic praxis is reduced to measurable skills, managerial competencies and instructional objectives, the educator appears "to be in danger of falling into the mechanistic fallacy -that of ignoring the most human element: man's subjectivity" (Van Manen, 1979). Indeed, one might ask whom education systems serve. Is the school set up to serve children? Society? Who is the child's advocate? Where is the parent? What things and truths and values show the parent's contribution to the lived experience of the classroom?

Where is the parent?

> The parents are always there. And they're observing. And they're always asking questions because they are there and they know what is happening.
>
> Because we don't have Aides anymore, each teacher is expected to have parent volunteers from the class. They're always there. They're in the staffroom all the time and you don't dare say anything. Some teachers find that real stressful because you can't relax. We are professionals and sometimes if you want to talk about a student or a programme or curriculum concerns, you can't because there are all these parents around. We had one parent who apparently overheard the teachers talking about one child who was supposed to be tested for the Resource Room and she went and told this parent, "Did you know that your child is going to the Resource Room?" No, of course she didn't so she phoned the school outraged that she had not been informed only to find out that it was not her child! So you have that problem of confidentiality. They can carry anything out of the school.

In the speaking, something is being allowed to be seen. Through *logos*, we take beings that are talked about out of concealment (Heidegger, 1927). A hermeneutic dialogue with parents may show the multilayers of perceptions and meanings of this experience for them

and the implications for their child's education. In the teachers' statements we hear substrates of additional explications (Husserl, 1973). The issues of respect and control and freedom emerge between the spoken words and unspoken sentiments. The words speak. We must seek the speaking of language in what is spoken (Heidegger, 1973). Let us hear in the teachers' voices what the parents are saying.

> Our interests are entirely different. Once you get them there they are very vocal. They object to whatever they think is objectionable.
>
> You always hear what they say to each other. During a visit to a teacher's classroom, Mrs. B. stated her criticisms and evaluations of the teacher to other parents in a loud voice. We tell parents that we have an open door policy and that they are free to come anytime. But certainly not to criticize. I mean we don't go to their workplace and tell them "this is what you should be doing" and "this is what you shouldn't be doing".

The parents, too, appear to be reifying an image of teaching that places them as advocates. But what is it that they think they are advocating when they object to whatever they think is objectionable?

What are the parents thinking?

> Most thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking -not even yet, although the state of the world is becoming more thought-provoking. It could be that prevailing man has for centuries now acted too much and thought too little.
> Is there anything at all left today in which man does not take an interest, in the sense in which he understands interest? Interest, *interesse*, means to be amongst and in the midst of a thing and to stay with it. But today's interest accepts as valid only what is interesting. And interest is the sort of thing that can freely be regarded as indifferent the next moment, and be displaced by something else, which then

> concerns us just as little as what went before. . . .Most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking. We have still not come face to face with, have not yet come under the sway of, what intrinsically desires to be thought about in an essential sense (Heidegger, 1964, Excerpts, p.326-328).

And so it appears that the child, the essential sense of what intrinsically desires to be thought about is displaced by something else. The interest in the child is displaced by demands and criticisms. In the interest of the child? Or do they stand in the place of an interest in the child? Displaced onto other instead of shared, co-constituted responsibility for the being and becoming of a child. Perhaps we are still not thinking enough and perhaps we are still acting without thought. Teachers in doing everything to please everyone all of the time without stating their needs and their limitations. And parents in overzealous critiquing and exaction of "rights".

Exaction of their Rights

> Parents certainly seem more aware of their rights, quotation marks.
>
> They come and they *demand* that their child be removed from certain classes because the child is unhappy because of some reason or other. They demand that a child be put into a class because a friend is in the class and that is the way it must be. A parent who had a child in a split grade removed the child from the school because the child could not be put into a straight grade. But there's a sibling coming to the school and the parent volunteers around the school. So she constantly complains and criticizes because she couldn't get her way. But you know, that's what makes me so mad because you would think that since she's at the school helping, she would be more aware and understanding.
>
> They threaten to withdraw their children and place them in another school that offers what they want. "If you won't offer my child a lunch programme, then I will take my child to such and such a school that has a lunch programme!"

The teachers speak of demands and criticisms. We hear that the parents can take away from the school. The parent comes as a volunteer to offer support to their child and to their child's teacher. They come to give support and in coming to give they take away from the school. One might ask what it is that they take away and what it is that they might bring to the school.

> We have to make sure that we deal with difficult situations. I'm going to phone a lady tonight and try very hard to get her to be supportive of our particular school. She has said some very negative things against us which I think are part of her own emotional problems. I don't think they have a thing to do with what's been happening to her son at school. She bad-mouthed us to a trustee of another school system and then that person passed it on to one of our trustees who asked to have the woman phone her. The woman phoned her and said all kind of nasties. So the trustee got hold of my superior and my superior got hold of me.
>
> You realize just how important it is that you don't have people in the community who are going to get a picture that isn't true. Often people who have never been in the building have a misperception. I don't like it. I would like to think that we have the mechanisms for solving our problems at the school level and we certainly make a lot of effort to do that.

Teachers want to give a picture that is true. Certainly teaching too is concerned with the interpretation of a valid truth, but the truth is proclamation and whether it is successful or not is not decided by the ideas of the teacher (Gadamer, 1960). Heidegger's proposition is that the essence of truth is freedom, the possibility of correctness is grounded in freedom. In order to carry out any act, the actor must be free. Freedom reveals itself for Heidegger as letting beings be, letting beings be as the beings which they are. These teachers speak of the loss of freedom to be the beings which they are. Perhaps this loss of freedom is what is offered as sacrifice in exchange for a merchandise metaphor for Education. Whether their truth is successful or not is indeed not decided by them. How would unsuccessful truth be lived? Taught? How would unsuccessful truth serve the child? If teachers do not have the freedom to be the beings which they are, then do their students have the freedom to be the

beings which they are? If students are to find the language through their teachers to name and appropriate their experiences, then are the students, too, appropriating disharmonious language and dystopic truths? What freedom do the students have to be the beings which they are?

Freedom to be the beings which they are

One might indeed ask what the experience of the students is when their teachers freedoms are distorted and it is the non-essence of their being which is allowed to come to the fore. What is the freedom that the parents ask for the child?

> I don't think that the parents are asking the child to take any responsibility. Everything is the teacher's responsibility. In my class almost half the class is on a homework book, the teacher's responsibility. Any time we call home about a child not doing the specified work, we're asked by the parents to put the child into a homework book. So at the end of the day, we have over fifteen students lined up waiting for you to write out their homework. I don't think the children are getting any idea at all that learning is in any part their responsibility.

> I gave a test and the child got 14% and the father sent a note to ask what had happened with instructions that I phone him. I asked the child if he had studied for the test and he said 'no'. I asked if he had told his father that he had not studied his notes and he said 'yes'. What more could I tell his father? A couple of weeks later I gave another test; he improved his mark by about 10%. He had 24% this time. I don't think *I* should have to explain to the father what happened. Nor that the highest mark on the test was above 90%.

> I have a child right now in my class whose mother claims that he has an ulcer which he developed in the third grade. He repeated grade two and that caused him to have an ulcer. And so whenever he misbehaves in class, it's because something is bothering him which he won't talk to her about according to her. In an interview he sits there looking at her without speaking as she says this and she bursts into tears. So the next few days when he comes to school, he is pretty obnoxious. But if you talk to him about his misbehaviour, she says you are unsympathetic, that you just don't

> understand. She comes in every day complaining that we are unsympathetic and that we don't understand because her son is having problems and she threatens to move him. What we're being told is that we're not doing enough and that we don't care enough: 'you don't care about my child. My child has problems so he should be allowed to misbehave in your class because he has problems'.

What is the child's truth indeed? In the teachers' text is also what the text does not say. What is unknown is brought to light. Behind the discussions of the parental perception of responsibility is revealed the teacher's perception of responsibility. For Merleau-Ponty (1962) in his introduction to his *Phenomenology of Perception* "of course, these two perspectives, in each one of us, cannot be simply juxtaposed, for in that case it is not the I that the other would see, nor he that I would see. We must necessarily have some appearance for each other". He expounds further that "the *Cogito* must reveal me in a situation. The world is not what I think but what I live through. The world is what we perceive". Seeking the essence of the teacher's perception does not presume that perception is truth, but that perception is defined as access to truth. In naming what the parents are saying and doing as *taking away the children's idea that learning is any part their responsibility*, the teacher is ascribing meaning or intentionality to what the parent is saying and to the parent's actions. What is it that they, the parents, really want for their child?

One mother asks for sympathy. But as Kierkegaard (1843/1983) attests in *Fear and Trembling*, "Sympathy has a curious dialectic; it demands guilt one moment and refuses it the next, and that is why being predestined to sympathy becomes progressively more dreadful" (p.104). Is it indeed sympathy that this mother wants for her child? What does she wish for him? Education? Kierkegaard (1843/1983) offers this interpretation of what education is:

> What, then, is education? I believe it is the course the individual goes through in order to catch up with himself, and the person who will not go through this course is not

> much helped by being born in the most enlightened age
> (p.46).

The teachers in what they do not say appear to be expressing an awareness of what this course is and of the freedom which would reveal itself as letting their being and their students' being be as the beings which they are.

Existential issues -praxiological considerations

The interview, from the French *entre vue* , seeing the between, creates a dialogical and dialectical relationship between the teacher-interviewer and the teacher-interviewee and between their perceptions of the phenomenology of teaching today. Hermeneutic interpretation becomes an organic process in which background and understanding reconstitute one another (Yalom, 1980). We see in the between a transition from a metaphor of course or *currere* to a revived metaphor of production and promotion including the marketing of self. These teachers speak of more than impression management. The issue is freedom. That of the teacher and of the student. The freedom "to be as oneself means to act: that is to decide here and now, taking into account the elements of one's situation. From this point of view it is absurd to decide for someone else. One cannot take the responsibility in place of the other" (Hellemans, 1984, p.126).

We are brought back to the inevitable realization that existential and ontological issues are inseparable from the profoundest social and ethical considerations. In the voices of these teachers, one hears the existential anxieties in the teachers' isolation from those whom they named as *they*. Freedom and responsibility are issues that ask to speak in what the teachers say and do not say. Can one believe that the teacher today has the same sense of meaningfulness as a teacher of Henry Brooks Adam's day when one believed that " a teacher affects eternity: he can never tell where his influence stops"? Teachers speak rather of their anxieties and their changing practice of their art, their *praxis* (from the Greek, doing).

> The main anxiety for teachers must be: "Am I going to get through?" All of these changes and demands call me to bring into question what I am doing.
>
> I guess I started teaching such a long time ago when the teacher was regarded as 'somebody' in quotation marks. When the teacher's word was truth. When people respected the teacher. They came to you for advice and they would abide by your decision and they would appreciate what you had done for their child.

Am I going to get through? Through to what? Through what? "Am I going to get through?" at one level sounds like the existential refrain of a popular song. And at a deeper level, it resonates with the poignant plea of every ontological question. How am I going to get through? How am I going to be the being that I am? What is the course I must go through to catch up with myself? One hears of the days of meaningfulness when a teacher was regarded as 'somebody' quotation marks and when a teacher's truth was spoken and appreciated. What is the truth that today's teacher speaks?

> It is just too much sometimes. I am becoming more and more tired.
>
> I can see other teachers getting really stressed out. They're tense. Going, going, going. I hear them saying: "I just yelled at the kids nonstop today".

That today's teacher is in crisis is a truism. Husserl (1965) addresses the issue of crisis when he proposes what it is to be: "To live as a person is to live in a social framework wherein I and we live together in community and have the community as a horizon. Here the word *live* . . . is to be taken . . . as signifying living, manifesting spiritual creativity - in the broadest sense creating culture within historical continuity" (p.150). He distinguishes between healthy growth and decline 'even for societies' (*Ibid*). The teacher appears to be in crisis or danger/opportunity as the Chinese symbolize crisis. In danger of not living, of not 'manifesting spiritual creativity'. In crisis, from the Greek word for decision. What

decisions then must the modern teacher make? What praxiological and existential decisions does a teacher make today?

> I have realized my limitations of what I can do and what I cannot do. For instance, I used to assign the work and try to give feedback in a day or two. Now my marking will be done but not necessarily within a day or two. It has to wait because there is so much more to do. For example, I took a report in. Then I said, 'No! I have my family'. There is no way one person can mark a double set of sixty-one tests and notebooks *plus* the reports in two days.
>
> Instead of more research and group work, we have to give children less hands-on experience because of the shortage of time. The amount of work that gets done has decreased both quantitatively and qualitatively. With smaller classes and fewer demands, you could select specific areas for more elaborated research and writing and guide them through the topics individually or in small groups. With more children, there is less time for individuals or small groups.
>
> My colleagues call me Pollyannaish (states this erudite, respected teacher who is completing his doctoral dissertation). But it's not that I'm doing what I love but perhaps that I have learned to love what I am doing.

Perhaps it is in the unspoken, unexpressed anxiety and the marital breakdown of the third teacher that the existential position speaks the most clearly. What was spoken in the eloquent silence of the one who chose not to comment on anxiety and the meaning of the experience? Silence can sometimes say more than words.

This existential-phenomenological description shows my earlier interpretations of conversations with three experienced teachers. These conversations were more structured around the meaning of the changing contexts of teaching. In the next chapter, the texts of the five experienced teachers whom I then dialogued with more generally about the meaning of teaching are thematized. These themes are drawn together in a combined narrative in chapter six.

CHAPTER V. TEXTS OF TEACHING

> Reflective theming is more concerned with what we might call a hermeneutic returning to the lived ground of human experience within the story -a place wherein inhabits a tensionality of both distancing and nearing. It understands such a place as a resonant place where emerging from the silence may be heard the movement of melody and rhythm - polyphonic voices of teaching. Where might such a place be? Paradoxically, the place is where we already are -a place so near yet so far in that we have forgotten its whereabouts. Reflective theming may allow us to come to know how sufficiently as humans we inhabit where we already are as teachers
> (Aoki, 1990, p.2).

A hermeneutic approach returns us to the lived ground of the experience of teaching. In this chapter, the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur is translated into an approach to understanding the meaning of teaching for five experienced elementary school teachers. In the initial phase, I engaged with each teacher in informal conversations about their classroom projects and their professional interests. To come to know each other, we talked first without the intimidation of a taperecorder and transcriber. It is with regret that I recollect lost narratives and reflections. But the level of trust and mutual respect that we developed would have been possible only with these hours of talk. Our later taped and transcribed dialogues are reflected upon and thematized. The dominant thematizations of each teacher's conversation in phase I, that speak to me of the place where we already are as teachers, are illustrated in the tables which follow. Some of the sentences spoken by each teacher that suggested these interpretations are included to provide examples of the interpretive process. In this chapter, the dominant themes that emerge in the first two phases and a narrative structure are proposed for each teacher. Then the themes of the five

teachers are organized into dominant and related themes. A combined narrative is developed in the next chapter.

A. COMING TO KNOW THE TEACHERS

Dialogue was initiated in the first taped and transcribed encounter by asking each teacher to speak about the meaning of teaching. The following questions were presented in writing during our first meeting to orient each teacher to my interest in teaching:

1) What does teaching mean to you ? What has kept you in teaching?
2) What effect has being a teacher had upon you? In what ways has your career as a teacher influenced you?
3) What insights or questions or concerns do you have about teaching?

The presentation of these questions was not intended to structure the conversation so much as to give it more focus than the perhaps too open-ended prompt: "Tell me about teaching". My intention was to focus on the meaning of teaching, not on the changing context of teaching as I had in earlier pilot interviews. The initial interpretations of these conversations are summarized. Only the dominant themes for each phase are summarized in the tables below to illustrate the interpretive process which I engaged in. The narratives of each teacher are represented independently in this chapter.

VOICES OF TEACHING

In this section, the dominant themes are identified and examples are given of what each has said. These thematizations are woven together into unifying narratives to come to know where we already are as teachers.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE	MY VOICE
I knew that I could walk through that classroom door, and even at the school where I am at now that doesn't have doors (gentle laughter), I can go into that classroom and leave my problems behind.	Walking through the metaphorical door of the classroom
(The children) have a lot of love to give and I felt that I was important enough for them to give it to me. Much as you hope you're giving it to them, they certainly give it back to you ten-fold more. It made me feel important that I could be part of their life. I have received so much more than I have given.	Feeling own specialness and uniqueness in children's love
You win them over by being genuinely concerned, then you can get through to them in any other way. Once they feel they can trust you, they have the confidence in you that you will understand. Once you've established that you've got them right where you want them. Those are the rewards that keep you hooked into teaching.	Reciprocal love between teacher and child is the key to *teaching*.
Certainly the curriculum has got to be important, but I think more important is that you have the respect of the children, respect for them to share their life with you. I think that teaching is much more than the tests that we give and the scores that we *have to achieve* and the very fact that the school board is placing so much value on these achievement tests. For the child that we get nowadays, first and foremost is being able to cope with life. You know that you are touching many lives in that classroom.	Curriculum is important but much more important than test scores is the touching of lives in the classroom
Teaching cannot be a twelve hour a day job. You must have outside interests. You have to have a life as well outside of teaching because there is a life outside that classroom. You cannot be a balanced person unless you have both.	Dialectics between outer and inner worlds

CHARLES' VOICE	MY VOICE
I think that she gave them an education. You could see where she was letting them do things but she was always there. She is prepared to stand back and let them make mistakes. I think that she has the art of teaching.She is extremely sensitive and has more of the arts of communication than most people. Human beings need to be concerned and interested in one another and teachers have to exemplify that.	Giving them a real education
You open up a whole other realm of truth. I think if you expect the best, you get the best. Matter isn't predetermined and the directions it goes in aren't predetermined. Piet Hein has expressed that it is like a billiard game -the balls go in all sorts of directions. The physicists tell us that the person doing the experiment has an effect upon the outcome. You come into a whole new aspect of matter that we are completely unaware of, where it is not rational by our standards now. It holds a potential for a whole new way of looking at things and at our way of reacting things and to one another and to what we see in one another and to the effect of what we see in one another.	Opening to that whole other realm of truth
Most of the people in education are principled and they want to do the right thing. Teachers all want to do the right thing. They want to teach. They want to do a good job of teaching. They go in and they do the job and they do the best they can with the job and they very often take far more time than theoretically they are paid for in order to do the best job they can. I call that professionalism.	Wanting to do enough for children

TRINI'S VOICE	MY VOICE
It's like being a second mother to them somehow. You're there for them because you're interested in them and in what is happening to them. You're doing this for them as well as for yourself. It's some feeling of fulfillment for you to know that I have done the best I could and it did make a little difference. Then that child can go on to accomplish much. In the back of our minds is our motto: if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again. There is hope.	Teachers contribute to the personal becoming of a child
Teaching is a vocation, something you are called to do. I think we teach children how to live , that is, how to relate to other people, how to be sympathetic, how to listen and to realize that other people have points of view and there is no right answer necessarily for everything.	Being called to teach
There's always that little bit of excitement when September comes. You have a new set of kids and what will this year be like? Will I be able to do as much for these kids as I want to? They always come back to visit. These kids would come back so excited. There's somebody there that they know and they can get in touch with them and they come up to you and boast about their wonderful achievements and they know that you're there and listening to them. It's not just something monotonous . . . because you're dealing with humans and everybody's different and so you might have something planned and something else has happened and this is the lived experience so you use it to teach a lesson. One of the exciting things is that everyday is different. I like the contact with the children, other staff members, yes, but the contact with the kids -in a way they keep you young!	The excitement of teaching -Contributing to the personal being and becoming of a teacher

CARMEN'S VOICE	MY VOICE
One of the things that I really value about teaching is the idea that we have relationships with so many people. You have relationships with the students, the parents, your colleagues, the consultants, the administrators, you know it's just endless, the relationships that you have.	The multilayered connections of the classroom kaleidoscope
Because you have those high expectations placed upon yourselves, you become more informed about certain areas, like what is real art and what is arts and crafts? I think that those sorts of expectations really pushed me in ways that I wouldn't have been pushed with other principals. I might have been quite satisfied with what I was doing in the classroom. You didn't realize how much pressure that was putting on you.	Expectations as a double-edged sword
You really feel like you're having an effect on them, that you're making a difference to them. You feel that you are affecting these children's lives, that you do have input into them. I think that we reach out to them on so many levels. We reach out to them in a very holistic sort of way. We're really involved in these kids lives. Every teacher is so different and I think every teacher gives to the children in a different way.	Making a difference in the lives of children
Think of all the people we deal with in our profession. It develops us as much fuller persons and it develops skills in us that are highly valuable to have. I feel that I can have a lot of impact on other people from just having had experience in the classroom We sense a lot of things that other people don't because we have to be attuned to body language and to mood.	The personal being and becoming of teacher

MICHELLE'S VOICE	MY VOICE
I think that teaching is very much a give and take situation. It's a sharing of information. It's a sharing of knowledge. I might have one body of knowledge that my students don't have or haven't acquired as much or in the same way and that I can share with them. But what usually ends up happening is that I then get from the same students another body of knowledge or other insights either about the information that I am giving or about whole other bodies of information. There's been many a time when kids have said something to me, and I have been taken aback or been surprised and I've gone home and thought about how that must reflect how they see the world and how that's different from mine.	Teaching as a reflective process
One of the things I try to do is somehow talk in kids' terms. And sometimes I imitate the way they speak, just in fun. But it gives a little in. You've got access through that kind of communication. It's almost as though you have opened up a little door and you can slide in on their level.	Appropriating children's discourses to enter their horizons
When you stop and think of the skills that are required to be a teacher, it's quite an impressive list. I mean you're recreation manager, you're a nurse, you're a parent, you're a psychoanalyst, you're a friend, you're a mob control director, in other cases you are police person. You are professor, you're provider of information, you're a peacekeeper, you are manager, you are economist -how do you use those resources you have in the best possible way? It's phenomenal the number of skills that are required to teach.	Teaching as

NARRATIVES OF TEACHING

Through the metaphorical door of Shirley's classroom

Shirley's warmth and acceptance permeates her relationships with her colleagues. Her compassion for others and her sense of humour enhance staff morale at her school and contribute to a positive school climate as well as to a warm classroom environment.

It was Education Week when I walked into her school to meet with her and to arrange a time when we might have our first conversation about teaching. The school was adorned with displays of children's projects that revealed to a teacher's eyes and understanding hours of intense individual instruction and involvement. Only an experienced teacher could see past the aesthetic, simple presentations to the teaching and re-teaching and editting that had been required beyond the usual exigencies of curriculum expectations. Fatigue hung on the faces of the teachers in marked contrast to the radiant sense of accomplishment that one might have anticipated. Humbly and tiredly, Shirley acknowledged the mammoth task; it was not until later in our next conversation that she was able to express her pride in the excellence that these projects demonstrated.

Theme one -*Behind the metaphorical door of the classroom*

Our conversation about teaching began from the place of Shirley, the teacher, as a person. She describes her classroom as a haven from the marital stresses she has experienced. As she puts it, "even at the school that I'm at that doesn't have doors (gentle laughter), . . . I could close that door and go into that classroom and forget what was happening at home".

> The children have been important to me because they probably have given me the love that I didn't get. I really felt that I was special because I had the love of those children. They made me forget a lot of things and I could get in there and be a part of their life and that was important to me.
>
> They have a lot of love to give and I felt that I was important enough for them to give it to me. Much as you hope you're

> giving it to them, they certainly give it back to you ten-fold or more.

Theme two -*The reciprocal bonding between teacher and child that is the key to teaching*

Her profound and reciprocated love for the children whom she teaches is for her the key to teaching. She speaks of the significance and the influence of the children on her life through the love that they give her. She states that she felt her own specialness and uniqueness in their love for her. It is, according to her, probable that her students were particularly important to her because they gave her love that she did not otherwise experience. Embedded in her narratives about teaching is a strong sense of her transformation of the children's lives through her love for each one of them. She speaks of becoming "part of them, part of their life" and says that she "wins them over by being genuinely concerned". Once a child knows that she will care and understand, then she believes that she "can get through to them in any other way".

> Because we're with the children for so many hours of the day, I really feel that we almost become a surrogate parent.
>
> In this day and age the children, so many of them, go to daycare, not too many of them really go home to parents anymore.
>
> I make the children do as they are told and we establish that very early in the year and they know just how far they can go and they know what the consequences are and they know that I am not going to be happy if they do this or they do that. But it isn't long before we establish the fact that they know I'm going to be fair. They know where I'm coming from. And I think that we establish boundaries very early but they also know that I'm going to be fair and they also know that I am going to care about them. And I think that that has to be established before you can do anything else. Once that's established, you can always make them do whatever you want them to do. I think again that those are the rewards. You win them over by being genuinely concerned, then you can get through to them in any other way.

Theme three -*Curriculum is important but more important than curriculum is to be able to cope with life*

Curriculum outcomes are highly important to Shirley. But much more important than schooling is educating each child to be "able to cope with life". A child who is ill or exhausted and falls asleep in class needs to be covered with his coat and allowed to sleep rather than awakened and sent home "because there isn't anybody at home to go home to". She accepts that "it's important that we realize that and that we be part of the understanding that maybe (a child) doesn't get anywhere else". So she shows them that she cares about what happens at home and teaches them the skills and attitudes to cope with "the things they're going to have to put up with". Through stories and discussions and brainstorming ideas about how to cope with specific feelings and situations, she knows that she is empowering a child in a difficult situation and "touching many lives in that classroom". When Sam comes to school looking particularly downtrodden and confides his unhappiness to her, she guides the other children to focus on what they "can do to make Sam's day more pleasant" and teaches them in the process how to love each other and show they care. Because Shirley understands that until a child has a sense of acceptance and a sense of stability, a child is not "going to achieve very well", she creates an environment of acceptance and stability and assumes responsibility for teaching coping skills for situations beyond the classroom. She has confidence that a child will master the other skills and concepts that she teaches once a child feels accepted and secure in the network of relationships in her classroom.

> Certainly the curriculum has got to be important, but I think that more important is that you have the respect of the children, respect for them to share their life with you. I think that teaching is much more than the tests that we give and the scores that we have to achieve and than the very fact that the school board is placing so much value on these achievement tests. For the child we get nowadays, first and foremost is being able to cope with life. And if you have a hand in that, a hand in knowing that this one is going to come to school not having had any breakfast or that one is going to come to

> school and his parents have been mad at him or his mom has been mad at him. They all bring their own experiences in that door every morning and in this day and age a lot of them are not pleasant experiences that they have had to deal with before they come to school. And I think that that part is very, very important, that they're happy, that they're happy to come to school, that they're happy to be with you. That you're going to understand that if this one is tired and he lays down or he puts his head down and he goes to sleep, that you're going to leave him sleeping for a little while because it's more important that he have a little rest. That happens many times. Or this one is not feeling well but there is no one at home to send the child to, so I 'll get a pillow and I'll cover him up and I'll let him sleep. Because there isn't anybody at home to go home to. This happens a lot. And I think it's important that we realize that and be part of the understanding that maybe they don't get anywhere else.
>
> The fact that they can't multiply right now by four isn't important in their life, that will come. As long as you understand that this one is having a pretty rough time at home, that no one really cares about him, bring in some of the skills that he's going to need to cope with life at home. If you can do that and understand where he is coming from, forget the achievement tests. Some of them just aren't going to achieve very well until things stabilize. And you have to understand that.
>
> You know that you are touching many lives in that classroom. You can do it though language arts, you can do it through story time, you can do it through any content, really.

Theme four -*Teaching as the touching of lives*

This compassion and depth of understanding, that allows her to "touch many lives in that classroom", was heightened according to Shirley through her own experiences of "inequality" as a teacher with two years of training. She describes her own process of change and self-acceptance after she completed her degree and observes that when she felt better about herself then she was more capable of loving the children and therefore received more in return. Her rewards come from the children and from their parents. For example, the stories that the children write reveal their emerging skills in articulating their feelings and learning to cope with them. Each child's stories can be shared with a parent who hears these feelings behind the story and can respond to their child through the sharing of the story. Shirley touches many lives indeed!

Theme five -*The multilayered worlds outside the classroom*

When Shirley walks through the metaphorical door of her open area classroom, she engages in intervisitations and conferences whereby she can "interchange ideas" and continue to learn from colleagues. She speaks of the need to identify concerns and to problem-solve together and of the importance of "getting to know each other and respect each other" and "learning from each other". In the multilayered world outside the classroom, are other classrooms and other schools. Movement through exchanges or transfers between schools are imperative to prevent stagnation and a narrow interpretation of the theories and research that penetrate our teaching.

Theme six -*Finding balance within and between the inner and outer demands of teaching*

Her final insight about the life-world of teaching is that the "pressures are so much more than they were" and she fears that "we will lose a lot of good teachers because of those pressures". She questions how "we could get rid of some of those stresses that plague the new teacher, that plague all of us but more so the new teacher". It is "nothing but experience that will tell you that you can't do everything and so you do the very best you can each day". She speaks of the demands of teaching and of the associated exhaustion and pleads for us to understand the importance of "outside interests". She underlines the importance of preparing for lessons and keeping up with new materials and new information and attending conferences, but cautions that "there is a life outside that classroom" and that we need the "balance of the outside world" or indeed we will become very narrow.

Entering the whole other realm of truth through metalogue with Charles

Charles models what he holds as truths. This erudite, loving man makes his presence felt in his attentiveness to the real issues in our dialogue. He engages in that openness which allows for real exploration and insight to occur.

Theme one - *Entering that whole other realm of being*

One dominant theme underlies the multilayered narratives that Charles weaves. He speaks of what *real* education is. From many different perspectives, this experienced educator, addresses *the whole other realm of truth* of the art of teaching that "is blended with a lot of highly specialized knowledge". This truth embraces the Being-in-the-world of teacher. This ontological realm is expressed in a classroom through "ways of relating" with self and colleagues as well as with each child "with no exceptions". Like a rondo, Charles' words and narratives and own Being chant of "warmth, tolerance, love, acceptance, sensitivity, compassion, selflessness". He models acceptance of a teacher's "right to their own opinions including hatred", and in the same text speaks of the challenge that a teacher meets in embracing this heterogeneity in "building bridges to replace barriers or resentments". Even as he describes how excellent *his* teachers are at learning and modelling "new ways of looking at our way of relating to one another and to what we see in one another and the effects of our ways of relating", the power of his role as teacher is experienced in all of its dimensionality. When Charles speaks of the gift of a teacher to children in "letting them do things but always being there" (Being-There, for each one, at each step, if one stumbles or doubts), one senses his presence, his Being-There where one might need him. He lives this *whole other realm of truth* even in our conversations as he speaks of the excellence of teachers whom he works with daily. I felt his sensitivity to me and to this process which I was engaging us in. His responsiveness at a meta-level to our conversation and to the questions behind my questions that I was attempting to articulate through our dialogues let me know his Being-There, for me. He assumed responsibility/responsiveness through gentle probing to invite me to reflect with him on our dialogical process.

> There is a Canadian poet who was being interviewed on CBC radio and the interviewer said, "What do you think of the meanings that people read into your poetry?" And he said, "Well, they are interesting, but they weren't there when I wrote it". I think very often we force kids into analyzing

> (poetry) to the point where it becomes meaningless. I think when you read something at any particular time, you are ready for a certain kind of understanding from it and if you try to force people to look for other meanings and other understandings, you're going to get things but I am not sure that they are always going to be what is there.
>
> Charles: In a conversation I am not sure that people are that careful about their structure. I suppose that there are things you can interpret from it but I don't know that I would want to put too much value in it. I think that you would be reading a lot into it that probably wasn't there. Don't you think?
> Donna: I don't know. It is a process I'm trying to go through. I think of what you said about teachers coming in with great warmth and acceptance of the child. Don't you think that they are communicating great depths in that acceptance?
> Charles: I would. Yes. Yes. Sure you can say that they are communicating (Silence. Reflection.) And you could open up a whole other realm of truth.

I experienced what Macdonald (1988) speaks of as the reality of education in "the spirit and vision that (shone) through surface manifestations"(p. 110). It is with this spirit and vision, this caring that Charles sees each teacher. Not naively but with compassion for the human condition, he states that each teacher whom he has worked with, "wants to do the right thing", "wants to do the best they can", "wants *to teach*. Charles speaks of teachers whom he has known and their professionalism that is not contingent upon salary but upon conscientiousness, upon wanting to do *enough* for a child.

> Human beings need to be concerned and interested in one another and teachers have to exemplify that. I am particularly impressed when (teachers) do demonstrate those qualities. Mr. J. and the interest that he took in his students and the way he demonstrated that just exuded a warmth and acceptance for all children, never any exceptions. Some teachers aren't able to accept *all* children the way (he) did.
>
> I think that (Miss R.) gave them a real education! You could see where she was letting them do things but she was always there. She was setting up the ideal model that she is capable yet she is prepared to stand back and let them make mistakes too as long as they are reasonable ones. She has the art of teaching!

Theme two -*The existence and essence of teaching*

The repetition of this theme of the levels of meaning that a teacher addresses is reflected in all of the facets of this precious jewel which he describes from many levels and angles. The complexity of the contextuality of his world is expressed with all of its ambiguities and lack of closure. For him, "unifying connections" exist at epistemological levels through principles and goals and texts and at the ontological level of being. This whole other realm of truth where a teacher addresses a child in all that each is, where the teacher is there for a child, is the lived experience of a classroom: what Pinar calls *currere*, the lived curriculum. "Metaphors of the marketplace" (Carson, 1990) are in dialectical relationship with this understanding of educational praxis. The processes and skills that give form to the curriculum are but the structure of the heterogeneous forces that shape (breathe life into) the responsibilities and meaning of what it is to be a teacher. But to emphasize the form through comparisons with big business is to deny the existential (existence) and the essential (essence) of the teaching/learning experience.

> Since I started teaching, teaching has become much more scientific. However, I still think the art (of teaching) is an essential factor.

> Schools are places where people learn. They are taught in by people who go into it not for money but because they feel they want to do something that is a service. You didn't go into education figuring on how much money you were going to make. It was something that you wanted to do. And most of the people in education are principled and they do want to do the right thing. Teachers all want to do the right thing. They want to teach. They want to do a good job of teaching and they don't usually turn off because they are not getting paid enough. They don't usually say, "Well, I'm only going to work from nine to five because I'm not getting paid enough." They go in and they do the job and they do the best they can with the job and they take very often far more time than theoretically they are paid for in order to do the best job that they can. I call that professionalism.

Knowing the excitement of difference yet oneness with Trini

The familiar yet indescribable blend of smells of the school filled my nostrils as I walked down the unknown corridors to Trini's classroom. The voices and curious smiles of the preteenagers in her family grouping greeted me. The sun streaming through the windows showed the era of this school and added to its unique ambiance. More than a dozen reminders of possibilities rather than rules, calligraphied in Trini's own handwriting, framed the windows. Children's maps and projects filled two other walls. The nature of the group was evident only in the stimulation-reduced front wall where a classic alphabet was displayed above the front blackboard. The children's responses spoke to a trained ear of children living with learning limitations and special needs. An invitation to reflection was heard in Trini's style of dialogue with these children. Her acceptance of their individuality was reflected in their self-acceptance. This group of children from three grade levels who had been integrated within their neighbourhood school formed a cohesive working unit under Trini's tutelage. Their difficulties were apparent but it was their possibilities and humanness that one felt were the basis of their relationship with their teacher. When the bell rang, they broke into spontaneous, relaxed chatter. Their friendly bantering and the warmth of their smiles and Trini's laughter with them voiced the relationships of this classroom. Four and five year lags in mathematics and reading scores are part of their lived experience but the being and becoming of child and of teacher are of deeper significance in the worlds that unfold in front of Trini.

Theme one -*Teaching as knowing that you are there and that you are listening*

When she is asked to speak about what has kept her teaching across a time span of more than thirty years and across four countries, Trini speaks of the excitement of teaching. Her dark eyes sparkle and her whole being becomes engaged in her descriptions of the wonderous differences between children and the opportunities that their lived experience

opens for her to teach them meaningfully. This highly skilled practitioner of the art of teaching attributes her students' successes to her motto: "There is hope and you should keep trying!" What those "who march to a different drummer" need, according to her, is "a caring atmosphere" where you "let them realize that you're somebody they can depend on".

> Give them the benefit of the doubt and know that there is some where, somehow each child can learn. That they might not make the gains or achieve as much as you expect that they could but somewhere along the line they can at least learn something. Kids have different learning styles and one way is not necessarily the right way. It's good to try different things with different kids, try different styles with the children. Never give up!

Indeed she loves to hear of her student's "wonderful achievements" long after they have left her classroom and her school when they come back to her classroom "so excited and want to see a familiar face". As she says, speaking certainly at least for herself if not for all teachers, "They know that you are there and that you are listening to them". It is not surprising then to hear her speak of the mutual delight in her encounter with a former student in a graduate class at the University.

> It's like being a second mother to them. You're there for them because you are interested in them and in what is happening to them.
>
> I guess they like to be listened to just like we like to be listened to and to get their feelings across and I guess if we consider them and their feelings, show them respect , then I guess we get it back.
>
> They always come back to visit. I think that's one of the things that I like about being at my school is that these kids come back (after they complete the elementary level) so excited and want to see a familiar face. They come up to you and boast about their wonderful achievements and they know that you're there and you're listening to them.

Theme two -*The classroom as an analogue for outer worlds*

What Trini teaches is the need for adjustment to each other in what she calls a big world community. The ambiguities and paradoxes of existence suggest to her that there is

no right answer for everything and that there are always other points of view. It is this perspective that guides her image of teaching. She states that "how they live with their classmates for a year in one classroom . . . with different backgrounds and different hopes (is an analogue for) the world at large". What she basically tries to communicate, she states, is our oneness in spite of differences in language, traditions and ways of being.

> I think we teach children how to live, that is, how to relate to other people, how to be sympathetic, how to listen and to realize that other people have other points of view and that there is no right answer necessarily for everything and their point of view is not necessarily the right one but that there are others and that in this big world community we have to make allowances for differences. And so just how they live with their classmates for a year in one classroom, and they're all different with different backgrounds and different hopes but they can get on, this is the same way when they go out into the world at large. That's the way it's going to be, and things aren't going to be necessarily their way and so they should adjust. So we teach them to make decisions as they mature and to know that there are different people all over the world. Even though our life styles might be different, we are all human beings basically, and so we have the same feelings and emotions even though we might not speak the same language or eat the same food or act the same way. But we're still all one. This is what we basically try to get across to them as a teacher.

Theme three -*Reviving the lost art of story-telling: teaching through the structure of mythos*

At the elementary level where she has always taught, she communicates these understandings through informal dialogue and stories. She believes that children understand the concepts and learn more in a story form "because people remember stories". Her belief is that "kids are more inclined to remember stories than the dry as dust facts" so she advocates reviving the lost art of story-telling. As she proclaims: "I thought story - telling is a lost art. If we revive it and use it to teach through it, it just might reach the others we haven't been reaching all along". Her storying and informal talks with her students after she has taught a social studies class for example, creates an informal atmosphere

where her students feel free to participate and put their understandings into their own words. The insights of Vygotsky (1960) inspire Trini's dialogues with children in the groups she gathers around her in a little circle on the floor.

> T: I like to gather the group around me and have a little circle, to sit and talk.
> D: What do you talk about in those circles?
> T: Whatever it is we're teaching. It might be the social studies, to sort of give an informal atmosphere so that (everyone, even the slowest learner in the class) feels free to participate.

> I have found out just how important oral language is and so I thought that through story-telling (learning some of these subjects, social studies, might not be so difficult for kids to grasp these concepts) if it can be given to them in a different way, for instance through story-telling. If you can make a story up and give them the facts but in a story fashion, how much more interesting that will be! And maybe they learn more because people remember stories, they remember different things about it. So you're trying to teach them about Mexico, you can tell them a story about Mexico in which you mention the weather and the land and then they'll get the concepts just the same but in a story form. And I think kids are more inclined to remember stories than dry as dust facts. So that's why I thought story-telling is a lost art, if we revive it and use it to teach in it, we just might reach the others we haven't been reaching all along.

Theme four -*Teaching as a vocation*

This third generation teacher speaks of teaching as her vocation. Trini was the only one of five siblings to hear the call to teaching. She was aware that she would not be rewarded with status nor monetarily but still she knew, always knew that she, like her mother and both of her mother's parents, would be a teacher. Her earliest recollections are of her "teachers who were really interested in us as persons and in our lives. It was a really big thing going to school and learning". She attributes her understanding of the needs of children today to talk to and to be listened to by a teacher to these early experiences with caring teachers "who were willing to mother". What Trini believes that she has experienced in her vocation that she would not have experienced in another profession is the knowing that she has "dealt with so many lives along the way and that somehow you might have

made a difference in their life and that you know all of these people out there, there's that wonderful community out there that later on you have somehow helped to be useful citizens".

> You yourself feel a feeling of achievement. You have the bright kids of course who will carry on and will do well. But those who are struggling, if they make even just a little change and you know that this change was caused through you and that you have helped them along the way, then it is a feeling of achievement. It's some feeling of fulfillment for you to know that I have done the best I could and it did make a little difference. We are all building on what the last teacher did and that's our building block. So we build on what was there before and if somebody else builds on that then that child can go on to accomplish much.

> Donna: What do you think teaching has brought into your life that you might not have experienced in another profession?
> Trini: Knowing that you have dealt with so many lives along the way and that somehow you might have made a difference in their life, for the good hopefully. You know all of these people out there. There's that wonderful community out there that you have somehow helped to be useful citizens.

<u>Carmen's kaleidoscope of connections in the classroom</u>

Theme one -*The multilayered contextuality of a teacher's worlds*

Carmen speaks of the multilayered contextuality of the teacher's worlds. The lived contexts of relationships with children, colleagues, consultants, and parents bring life and meaning to Carmen's experience of teaching. The flexibility in the grade levels and schools that teaching provides allow her not only the possibility of "a fresh start every year" but also the opportunity to work with different administrators and whole different communities of people. Carmen exclaims: "I mean the variables that you can change to keep the job interesting are phenomenal! It's always something new, something different." Each opportunity challenges her to grow in different ways, she says with delighted laughter.

> I like the flexibility in that you can work at different levels. You can work in different schools and you can work with

> different administrators. I mean the variables that you can change to keep the job interesting are phenomenal.There's a whole number of them.
>
> I suppose one of the things I really value about teaching is the idea that we have relationships with so many people. Like if you're people-oriented which I think teachers are, you have relationships with the students, the parents, your colleagues, the consultants, the administrators. You know, it is just endless, the relationships that you have. I think that feeds teachers, too. It is so relationship-directed.

Theme two -*Making a difference*

The colourful kaleidoscope that Carmen creates in her life permeates her classroom atmosphere and the differences she seeks to make a difference in her own life make a difference in the lives of the children whom she teaches. She speaks of the many different levels at which a teacher reaches out to a child acknowledging that "the academic level is just one; we reach out to them emotionally and physically and spiritually. We reach out to them in a very holistic way. We're really involved in these kids' lives. When we deal with very young children, we have a tremendous impact on them. We can make their lives better in some way". The reward of teaching for Carmen is the feeling that she is "affecting these children's lives". As she states it: " I think that if I make a difference for one child every year, that's still one child in a year".

> I remember one little boy I had worked very hard getting him on the right track at the beginning of the year. He seemed very anti-French. So finally I had his mother and him in and we talked about his strengths and how French could work for him and then he started painting these beautiful paintings for me. He was very artistic and I can remember one he did of a chameleon which I loved because it was so much like him. He was very different in class and in trying to understand each other, we worked out something that worked for both of us. When he gave me this painting, I thought, that's just so much like Allan. He's different. He's special. I think those are the things that are special about teaching, aren't they?
>
> You feel that you are affecting these children's lives, that you have input into them. And sometimes I think even if I make a difference for one child every year, that's still one child in a year.

> When we deal with young children, we have a tremendous impact on them. We can make their lives a little better in some way. I think that we reach out to them on so many levels. The academic level is just one.

Theme three -*The double-edged sword of expectations*

The high expectations that Carmen has of herself and the high expectations that some principals expound are a double-edged sword. She describes her learning in areas in which she would perhaps "have been quite satisfied with what (she) was doing in the classroom". She is exuberant about the challenge but speaks also of the desperation she experienced in working with a principal with whom she "always felt there was something more (she) could be doing as a professional. After a while, you just burn yourself out because you've tried a lot of different things and it's always something more that is expected from the teacher".

> And I thought, 'Oh my god, after all this stuff I have tried to do. Don't tell me I have to more flexible!' You know how you really arch your back. You just go, 'arghhh'.
>
> I think that those sorts of expectations really pushed me in ways that I wouldn't have been pushed by other principals.

Theme four -*Teaching as an oriented being and becoming*

Teachers are challenged, according to Carmen's interpretation of teaching, "to see their own lives as potentiality, that is, as an oriented being and becoming" (van Manen, 1982, p.293). Carmen speaks of the possibilities in this dialectic between inner and outer worlds for what she calls growth. The learning opportunities for a teacher to explore her own style and learn about herself inspire Carmen. Teaching has opened possibilities for her to learn to recognize illusions and her own limitations. Teaching has also allowed her the opportunities to learn many skills. She describes teachers as highly skilled professional people engaged in education which she describes as "all encompassing". It is precisely because "as teachers we're called upon to deal with the public and to deal with all ages that (teaching) develops us as fuller persons and it develops in us skills that are highly valuable to have". She believes that teachers can have impact because of the power in the spoken

word. As teachers we develop the ability to express our thoughts succinctly. She describes the wide repertoire of skills and sensitivities that are developed in the contextuality of teaching: we have to be attuned to body language and to mood, we learn to handle a lot of angry children nowadays, we become excellent communicators, good organizers, good at negotiation and tactful, and we become positive thinkers. The list of attributes which Carmen believes that teachers develop is certainly descriptive of who she has become!

Possibilities for learning with Michelle

Theme one -*Teaching as a reflective process*

Michelle speaks of teaching as the opening of possibilities for learning. Always she learns with and from her students at all of the levels that she has taught at. Her love of learning is heard and felt in the melodious tone of her voice as well as in her words. She puts it simply and succinctly when she says, "The day that I think that there is nothing else to learn is the day that I stop teaching". Teaching is giving and taking. It is the sharing of knowledge. "What usually ends up happening in all levels of teaching is that (she) then gets from the students another body of knowledge or other insights about the information that (she) is giving or about whole other bodies of information". She speaks enthusiastically of a beautiful work of art that an elementary child created with stencils and pastels. Her genuine admiration and her request to use this piece in other art classes invited the appreciation of others and encouraged her students to appreciate their own works. Another example of a shift in her horizon of understanding that she describes occurred when she was teaching in Quebec and learned a very different world view when she understood that her students had learned not seven continents, which she had assumed as factual data, but five! As she says, "Certainly teaching children from other cultures, you do get a whole other insight into perspective. Even in holding a class, you make certain assumptions. And it's the students that will then challenge those assumptions by something as simple as them

not understanding the question". Because children are brought up with a generational gap in a world different from the one that we were brought up in, Michelle often finds that their responses cause her to reflect on how they see the world that is different from her understanding and to question the bases of these differences.

> I think teaching for me is an opportunity to learn. I think that's always been a key factor. I love learning new things. The day that I think that there's nothing else to learn is the day that I stop teaching. I quite sincerely think that. I think that teaching is very much a give and take situation, it's a sharing of information, it's a sharing of knowledge. I might have one body of knowledge that my students don't have or haven't acquired as much or in the same way and that I can share with them. But what usually ends up happening, and I have found this at all levels of teaching, is that I then get from the same students another body of knowledge or other insights either about the information that I am giving or about whole other bodies of information. I think that's one of the very key factors about why I like teaching.
>
> There's been many a time where kids have said something to me and I have been taken aback or been surprised and I have gone home and thought, well, that must reflect how they see the world then, or that's different from mine, and why.

Theme two -*Appropriating children's discourses to enter their horizons*

These different possible worlds are opened in Michelle's classroom for her students through her appropriation of their discourses. Her ability to learn other languages easily is to what she attributes her ability "in picking up their lingo". This openness to the language of the children is an analogue of the mutuality that Michelle believes is what teaching is. "When you've got access into that kind of communication, it's almost as though you've opened up an little door and you can slide in on their level, and of course you can bring in all the information that you want to bring in on their level once you're in and that's the key thing". In her words:

> I don't know the exact process that happens but I think that if there's any way that we can be more accessible to them or show that we're open to some of their styles or some of the things that are important to them, then they will likewise be more open to some of the things that we have to share with them. I think that there's a lot of mutualness that has to go

> on. I think that that is what leads to most of the success in (teaching).

Addressing children's real concerns is another example of opening to what is important to them. Michelle's description of creating a learning environment embraces and transcends contemporary positivist explanations of classroom climate. She creates first and foremost an environment in which her students will be more receptive to her perspectives and the important subject matter that she must teach. By creating an environment where her students can talk about issues that are important to them, Michelle is able to then get on with all the other subject matter. Her student's receptivity to learning is enhanced by her receptivity to discussions of issues that are important to them. At the sixth grade level, she finds that Health is one of the most important subjects and also sets the atmosphere for learning in all the other content areas. In Health, she is able to deal openly and directly with topics that concern them such as peer pressure, role models, and friendship problems.

> And if you can relate it on their terms, such as, yes, I know what's going on. I know that some days a group of you get together and you're friends and two days later they all can't stand you. So what do you do about that? That's real and that happens and if it happens to you, you are not alone in the fact that happens. I've had kids come up to me and I'll say, 'Well what exactly do you expect me to do? Do you want me to talk to these kids? I can talk to them and I can try to explain your point of view but do you think that is going to stop it forever more? No. Do you think it will happen again? Yes.' Well, what do you think you can do to help get over it? Maybe you should just back off for this time. Maybe you should just help them work it through. Maybe you could just recognize and acknowledge some of those kids realities. That's a great help and I think the kids recognize that. I think they recognize that you are acknowl[illegible]ging that they have certain realities and that they are living through these things. You don't have all the answers and they know that and you know that. But at least you're open to discuss it and to create that atmosphere where there is that openness to discuss it and that openness to acknowledge that ya, you're feeling pretty lousy today because all of your friends don't like you. And yes, I still expect you to learn Math, but I understand you're feeling lousy. Even that acknowledgement makes a big difference.

By recognizing and acknowledging "some of these kids' realities", Michelle has found that her students "recognize that (she) is acknowledging that they have certain realities and that they are living through these things". And they in turn understand that although she does not have all the answers, that at least she is "open to discuss it and to create that atmosphere where there is that openness to acknowledge it and that openness to discuss it". She finds that even that acknowledgement makes a big difference. And in opening a platform for them to be able to express their views, she sees the end result as increased understanding of and openness to curriculum discourses. The multiperspectivity of Michelle's way of being-in-the-world is taught to her students directly in discussions and implicitly in what she describes as the atmosphere that she creates in her classroom. Her dialogical style is modelled and taught directly as a discourse possibility. In opening to the worlds of the children in her classroom, she opens a little door for them to enter other worlds of possibility. Teaching is the teaching of "understanding that, if nothing else, there are other points of view and it's not as simple to say, well one is right and one is wrong".

Theme three -*Teacher as*

Michelle voices her amazement at the tendency that she has discovered in teachers to belittle themselves. The roles that a teacher must learn to fulfill and the skills that a teacher must learn contradict pejorative self-perceptions. She describes a teacher as: recreation manager, nurse, parent, psychoanalyst, friend, mob control director, policeperson, professor, provider of information, peace keeper, manager, and economist, who must decide how to use the available resources in the best possible way. Her concern is with the external pressures, the external pressures of testing that measures subject matter and not understanding, the external political pressures that determine the value of education and the value of children, the external pressures that dissipate her personal energy level.

This first phase of conversations is summarized in the form of brief narratives that draw their unity from my interpretations of the dominant underlying themes. But the depth

and richness of each dialogue defies summary. To every truth that I have given expression, I have been aware of many possible interpretations and ever aware of unexpressed themes. The narrative structure that I have determined to condense these five conversations communicates only aspects of what was expressed. In an attempt to bring out the text of each one of these teachers, I focussed on the emphases and tried to remain faithful to the discourses of each teacher. In reading their transcripts once again after this initial level of interpretation, commonalities emerge that I have not given voice to in this first interpretive reading. Indeed each re-reading reveals layers of interpretations that I have not given voice to. The second phase of conversations includes each teacher's reading and response to my interpretations and my reinterpretations of this initial level of interpretation. These responses are reflected in the next section.

B. CONTINUING THE SEARCH TO UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF TEACHING

Carson (1984) reminds us of the hermeneutic priority of the question in our search to understand the meaning of teaching. Questions that opened themselves up in my search to understand the meaning of teaching for each of these teachers in our first conversations guided our second taped dialogues. A typed transcription of our first taped conversation and my interpretations as well as my questions were returned to each teacher before we met for this phase. I asked also that they respond to the narratives which I had constructed in terms of the penetration of their intent. Questions about my interpretations are explored more directly in our third taped conversation which will be discussed in the concluding comments of the final chapter. In this phase, we addressed these issues and questions which I posed in an attempt to further clarify these texts of teaching. These questions are listed and each teacher's response is summarized in this section.

Shirley

A transcript of our first taped conversation and my interpretation was provided to Shirley a few weeks before our third encounter. The following three questions were posed to Shirley:

1) You spoke in our last conversation of a space in which you model what you hold as truths. How do you teach children to reflect on their experience and to cope better in their own lives?
2) You have told me that when you touch a child's life, the changes touch your own life. Tell me about a child whose life you have touched and who has touched your life.
3) You have spoken of the multilayered worlds of the classroom. You spoke on the one hand of the expectations of parents and of the board and on the other hand of what you call the *balance* that the outside world brings, -of the importance of the dialogue with ideas and other people and the world outside teaching. Is there more that you want to say about that?

Theme one -*Creating a space where one models what one holds as important*

Worlds exist behind and beyond the metaphorical door of Shirley's classroom. Shirley creates worlds that reflect what she holds as important. Teaching for Shirley means the freedom to open possibilities for herself and for her students. Throughout the text of our conversations, one hears what is meaningful to her. How she lives her beliefs and her values is heard in the relationships she models and develops with and between her students. This metalevel theme echoes within the possible worlds that Shirley opens. Shirley teaches a dialectic of freedom within her classroom.

Theme two -*Contributing to the personal being and becoming of a child*

The reciprocal bond between a teacher and a child is the key to teaching. Understanding the worlds of a child, knowing "what they're bringing to the classroom from their own lives, experiences, problems, ways of living", opens spaces where a teacher can enter. And frees a child to know other worlds, other possibilities. Being there for a child creates a classroom that is "one safe place to be". Building trust and confidence through encouragement teaches a child to believe in him/herself and to take the risks necessary to learning.

> You win them over by being genuinely concerned, then you can get through to them in any other way. Once they feel they can trust you, they have confidence that you will understand. Once you've established that, you've got them right where you want them.
> (Conversation 1)

> It is just beautiful to watch how a child will begin to believe in themselves and take the risks that she would normally not have taken if you hadn't shown that understanding. You can see the look of happiness on her face, the look of fear fading into the background because she doesn't have to fear me. I'm going to accept what she has to offer today or what she offered yesterday and we've built on today and maybe tomorrow she can take another step further.
> (Conversation 2).

> It's building bridges, I think. I don't know how else to explain it. (She can think) 'I'm okay at school, I may have to deal with a lot when I get home'. She had the day care to go to right after school and of course that was difficult, too, but was probably better than the home situation which is not just the greatest, but that was her life and you had to build it at school because that was the one safe place she could be.
> (Conversation 2).

Theme three -*Currere: The lived curriculum*

Curriculum that is lived in a classroom is co-created between teacher and child. Decontextualized, disconnected conceptualizations are beyond young children's horizons of understanding. To appropriate, to take into self enlarged understandings, a child needs connections. The worlds that a child brings to a classroom must be bridged to open

horizons. The hermeneutic circle of understanding may be opened through experiences that relate to lived experiences that a child brings to the classroom.

> You can't just pop them into something, you have to build on their experiences. What they bring to school may not be enough. So you build on experiences. I think of the Hutterite visit which was an excellent example of that.
> (Conversation 2).

> You have to know your children. You get to know them first and you find out what they're bringing to the classroom, what they're bringing from their own lives, their own experiences, their own problems, their own way of living. You understand that first. I think you have to get to know your children first. When you do then I think you can use your lessons to lead in from what they're bringing to the classroom.
> (Conversation 2).

> I got to know this little girl and to know what her parents were like in our first parent interview. No wonder the little girl was so unsure of herself because the parents were at loggerheads with each other. You know that the mother had already been away from home for a period of time and (the child) was living in the environment with her dad that was not a good one. You knew that he was a very angry man and you knew that the minute you raised your voice you'd see that look of terror across Heather's face. And so I guess that to begin with, you had to find out what the child was bringing to school and what she was having to live with day in and day out, the insecurities, the fear of mom leaving again, the fear of dad's wrath because he was probably drinking too much or other chemicals that were going on in the home. This little girl was having extreme problems in just coping with a classroom when she came in, in the morning. And then we wonder why that child was having difficulty reading, keeping her mind on things, having difficulty doing just the basic things. And I guess we have to take a look at that, at least I think I have to look at what the child is bringing to me in the morning. You'd spend a little bit of time finding out what kind of a day they've had or what kind of a morning they've had. Things they might want to get rid of and they might want to talk about, and to let them know that you understand that and then you get rid of that and then you begin to present your lessons. And during the course of the day, many examples can come up where you can say, 'Well, don't you remember when we did this this morning and you weren't feeling very good about it but how do you feel about it now?' Or, 'here's an example from a story we've just read. You see other people have similar

> problems and this is how they did it '. So you relate what you're learning with your own lives.
> (Conversation 2).

Theme four -*Teaching reflection on experience*

To be there participatively in a child's experience, to hear a child's voice, opens a child's possibilities for being. For being free, safe. For being heard, seen, understood. Entering the worlds of a child invites a child to come out and be in a teacher's worlds. The distantiation that understanding is and requires models another way of being-in-the-world for a child. Providing experiences and asking questions of comparisons with other ways of life and modelling a dialogic style makes contemplation a possibility.

> Shirley: We talked about (the field trip to a Hutterite colony) when we got back to the classroom and the children thought that that would be really tough, that would be really hard not to have the opportunities that they have in the city to go to different things. But then we talked about it being well, you've never had that in your life, if you've never had that in your life you wouldn't really know what it would be like not to have it, so you wouldn't have the same expectations. And they said, 'if we've never been exposed to something like that we wouldn't know what we were missing'. So we compared their life with someone else's life and I think many of them sat down afterwards and said, 'hey! I have things pretty well looked after'.
>
> Donna: They became more appreciative of their own culture? They appreciated the freedom for sports and other activities that the Hutterite children enjoyed but they also appreciated the possibilities in their own community.
>
> Shirley: Yes. 'Aren't we lucky that we can do the things we can do. We can go to a play, we can go to a hockey game, we can go to any shopping centre in the city because my mom has a car, my dad has a car'. Things that they took for granted, I think they were able to take a look at and say, 'Hey, just a minute, this life I live is pretty good'. Some parts of Heather's life are okay. So it was a good experience for all of us this year in that regard. It's good I think to take a look at the way other people live and I'm glad we had an opportunity to do that.
>
> Donna: And so you teach them to reflect on how they live and to appreciate it.

> Shirley: There's always the comparison -and that of course is the curriculum, too. (Conversation 2).

Charles

In our second transcribed conversation, I posed two questions in order to clarify with Charles that I had correctly interpreted his intention in the text of our first taped dialogue.

1) You spoke in our last conversation of the whole other realm of truth besides skills and processes that a teacher is responsible for. I have interpreted that to mean the deeper levels of human existence. You spoke of modelling skills of living and of our interdependence. What have I missed in this understanding?
2) You have alluded to some of the contexts that we teach within. How are we to bring the voices of parents, boards, ministers of Education, theorists and employers to our teaching?

Theme one -*Contexts of teaching*

The lived contexts of teaching extend beyond the curriculums and the communities that we teach within. In Charles' voice, we are reminded that the world is small indeed. The interdependence of all of the forms of life on this planet make us responsible for respecting and for teaching respect for life and for all different forms of life on Earth.

> In order to live together we have to have an attitude toward other people of acceptance and tolerance of differences. We have to have a respect for life and all of those things that go with the different kinds of life (Conversation 2).
>
> There are a lot of differences among human beings and we have to resolve these and come up with some compromises that allow us all to exist (Conversation 2).
>
> Every act has a corresponding reaction, not necessarily as we understand the action and reaction. It holds a potential for a whole new way of our looking at things and our way of

> reacting to things and to one another and to what we see in one another and to the effect of what we see in one another (Conversation 1).

Theme two -*Speaking a middle way*

And so a teacher is in the place between. Between curriculum and child. Between child and other. Between known and unknown. Between present and future. The heterogeneities that mark human existence are the context of the place a teacher stands in. Hence a teacher must distantiate from present horizons and assume a larger perspective. What is right and what is good for all must be modelled within a school environment, which is a middle way. Coming up with compromises that allow us all to exist does not absolve a teacher of responsibility for deciding what is better for humanity and taking a stand. Assuming a different perspective and position sometimes than a child's parents places a teacher in dialectic between the lived curriculum of a classroom and that whole other realm of being, between the being and the becoming.

> I don't think that we can be like politicians and go with the whims of the polls, with the evidence the polls provide because those are influenced by what is on television. I think we have to say that this right and this is good and therefore this is what we are going to do and to say. Fighting is wrong. I know I am in conflict with some parents and yet I know (fighting) is wrong for the school and I shall continue to maintain that and to restrict it on school grounds because it is wrong. And I guess as teachers we do at times have to say that this is what is right and the other is wrong and therefore we have to do what is right. Yes, we have to expose our students to all sides of a question but if there is an aspect of it that is liable to threaten our students in any respect, then we have to take a stand on what we believe is in the best interest of the students. We can't expose them to, it's irresponsible to expose them to physical danger (Conversation 2).

> You don't teach acceptance of one another, an acceptance of people. But I think that's what an accepting teacher does (Conversation 1).

Theme three -*Teaching as hermeneutics*

In assuming responsibility for interpreting what is important, a teacher stands between the existential and the epistemological, between the epistemological and the ontological. To bring curriculum discourses to understanding, a teacher must distantiate from them and understand where these discourses come from. At another level, because "we retain what we relate to", we appropriate, take into ourselves what is meaningful for us. Only those discourses which a child and a teacher can relate to are heard. The web of understanding that Charles speaks of is another metaphor for the hermeneutic circle of understanding. A teacher opens present horizons and introduces possible worlds.

> But there has to be an understanding on the part of the teacher, I believe, even at the grade one level, as to where these ideas that are in the curriculum are coming from in order to give them proper perspective, understanding, so that kids understand what it is that they are learning. It's not just an isolated fact, it's related to other things and we retain what we relate to. The web of understanding rather than pockets of isolated information. It's all part of good teaching (Conversation 2).

Trini

I posed the following questions to Trini in our second taped and transcribed meeting:

1) You have spoken of a teacher's contribution to the personal becoming of a child. Please tell me more about that.
2) How has teaching contributed to your personal becoming?

Theme one -*Contributing to the being and becoming of a child*

How her students live in her classroom for a year with their classmates is symbolic and preparatory for life in the worlds outside her classroom, Trini believes. She teaches

them to make allowances for differences and to appreciate that others might have other points of view. It appears to her that teachers have had to assume more responsibility for teaching personal and social skills and attitudes because this role has been abandoned by parents in this decade. She describes each teacher as building on what the last teacher did to contribute to future decision-making as well as to academic skill development.

> I guess in a way it's like being a second mother to them somehow. You're there for them because you are interested in them and what is happening to them (Conversation 1).

> All your life experiences help to make you the person you are. We teach children a lot nowadays about social skills - about relating to other people, respecting other people, and giving everybody their say. As they go on they learn to be more tolerant as adults and realize that everyone is here. We all, as I have said before, have to learn to live together. Hopefully, we help to make them into better persons (Conversation 2).

Theme two -*Contributing to the being and becoming of a teacher*

As one listens to Trini speak of the tolerance and acceptance that she instills in her students, one feels her tolerance and acceptance. Behind her words, one hears the voices of curriculum discourses. What is written by and taught by teachers is also learned and relearned by teachers. Trini speaks of trying to find the good even within a child who is difficult to love and of drawing out those positive qualities. She speaks also of learning to accept personal disappointments and of living her teaching mottoes within her own life.

> I think maybe teaching has helped me to be more tolerant, to realize again the differences that there are in the world . . . and that there is something worthwhile and loveable about each and everyone of us (Conversation 2).

Carmen

The transcription of our first dialogue was returned to me within a week by Carmen with written comments to elaborate on our conversation! Because our dialogue was so rich and overladen with themes and in anticipation of the nature of the questioning in the next phase, I asked Carmen the following questions:

1) To which themes might I have given more emphasis?

2) What would you like to add to what we have discussed about teaching?

Theme one -*Teaching as an oriented being and becoming*

For Carmen, teaching is a reciprocal life-giving process. The being and becoming of child and of teacher are lived in that life-giving process. A teacher learns through the situations of a child. Those whom we teach provide us with understanding of our own unfolding if we "are open to where the children are at". For example, "you learn in helping a child to cope with loss how to then cope with your losses". As Carmen explains, "We are always *in process*" and "our experiences with the situations of children in our classroom broaden our whole understanding of how life works". Opening possibilities for a child in a classroom also opens possibilities for a teacher.

> Teaching is always a process. We are ever-changing just as the children in our classes are. Just as we give life to the students in our classes, they give life back to us. And they are in a constant, continuous process of growth and we are, too. It's a reciprocal life-giving process where we can learn as much from our students as they can learn from us (Conversation 2).
>
> Every child is so different in the classroom. And so when you are focussing on someone who is dealing with let's say a situation of loss, you learn in helping that child cope with loss how to then cope with your losses. . . . They cause you to be reflective about life's processes and then if at some point in time you meet that challenge in your own life, you've already been through a situation where you've had

> to understand it cognitively and it perhaps helps you deal with it emotionally (Conversation 2).

Theme two -*Making a difference*

The meaning of teaching for Carmen unfolds in reaching out to children. Making a difference in the lives of children is what makes a difference in Carmen's life. Her conviction is that teachers must believe that they "touch the lives of children who are in their classes and that they do make a difference". To be effective educators, we must acknowledge our power to "give life to others".

> I have read this little statement: "We are given life to give life to others". When I think about that it ties in beautifully with what we have said so far, that teachers are in a situation where they are involved in many relationships with others, that they can make a difference and I think teachers have to believe that if they are going to be an effective educator. They have to believe that they do touch the lives of the children who are in their classes and that they do make a difference (Conversation 2).

Theme three -*Dialectics between inner and outer worlds*

A teacher's power to touch the lives of others includes colleagues as well as students. Carmen calls on teachers to "develop a confidence in their own knowledge base" and to keep their classroom doors open to extend their skills and power to touch others beyond their classrooms. Education is "much broader" than a classroom or school or curriculum and teachers "must recognize that their particular experiences have value". The heterogeneities of being that is always in process place in tension and connect inner worlds and outer worlds. We are always in process, in dialectic. We are our actions. Environmental dilemmas, for example, arise from inner-outer separation. To overcome blocks and barriers in students, teachers are called on to develop in their students those inner attitudes that "give meaning to the content" so that (learning) is a worthwhile experience". Curriculum, too, is lived in dialectic between inner and outer worlds.

> That would be the broad theme that I see for teachers, that they have to not close their classroom door and think that the way they touch others stops at the classroom door, that it's much broader than that.
>
> Our world is becoming smaller and smaller. And we're realizing with the environmental dilemmas that we are facing that we have to be part of a team. We can't just be thinking of ourselves. We do have personal needs but we need a balance between what's good for us personally and what is good for the world as a whole. And there is a very spiritual theme that is woven through that. . . . It fits with giving life. If you didn't feel that you were here to give life to others, you would never approach it that way (Conversation 2).
>
> It comes back to my premise of balance again. Balance in the classroom, balance for ourselves as persons, balance within the school boards. And I suppose it even evolves to what we have discussed before -on a global level where there also has to be a balance in the world as a whole. I believe that educators make a big impact and can affect issues at a world wide level. We do have that power. But we can only have that power through balance (Conversation 2).

Theme four -*Teachers as caregivers*

Teachers are the greatest resources of school boards. And boards and teachers in the Nineties, according to Carmen, will focus on approaches that are life-giving to teachers. To be able to continue working at a very deep level with children, "teachers, who are part of the caregiver group, must remember that they need to give to themselves also". This highly skilled group with its special knowledge base must be respected and cared for by school boards to protect its power to make a big impact.

> One thing that is important to focus on is wellness for teachers. I think that that will be a big thrust of school boards in the Nineties because teaching is such a demanding job and burn out rates can be very high. And it's your best teachers who burn out. The teachers who are very committed and who are very thorough in their approach and deal with children at many levels are the people who burn out and these are the school boards' greatest resource. If they want to have the opportunity to access these people's experience and knowledge base, then they have to have programmes in place that focus on wellness for teachers (Conversation 2).

> Effective teaching begins with knowing how to take care of yourself first and realizing that that is important (Conversation 2).

Michelle

The following question was posed to Michelle in order to have her elaborate on an idea which I had not permitted her to express fully in my enthusiasm to hear more about her comments on teaching as a reflective process.

> You have put into words what is becoming my understanding of teaching, that is, that what we teach is understanding of a world with many possible interpretations. You spoke of modelling this world view that there is not one truth or one perspective for your students. Please comment more on this.

Theme one -*Teaching exegesis*

In the text that Michelle weaves of words and experiences, one sees through the transparencies of her narrative that teaching is the teaching of interpretation of what is, of the ontological. We are not limited to our experiences and to our present interpretations. A teacher's task then is not only to present different perspectives to elementary school students and to give them knowledge of different possible worlds but also to give them "the courage and the excitement and enthusiasm to be able to explore the fact that there are different perspectives". Everywhere in every context with every age level, Michelle has discovered "a great richness and a great wealth" in opening to the perspectives of those whom she teaches. It is the "learning along the way" that she finds of value. For there are no ultimate truths, only changing contextualized understandings which unfold in front of us.

> We really do present various different perspectives to our students and give them the knowledge and I think the *courage* and the excitement and enthusiasm to be able to explore the fact that there are different perspectives. I think one thing that would really discourage me would be if we as teachers saw ourselves as teaching, in quotation marks, "*what is truth* ", in parentheses, (*what one individual or what one society perceives as the truth*) (Conversation 2).

Theme two -*Teaching as hermeneutics*

What Michelle instills in her students is a love for learning and a love for exploring because there are no ultimate truths. Only a better understanding of what is around us can be attained, not any definitive and absolute end goals. Her horizons of understanding are expanded in her elementary school classroom when a student challenges her presuppositions "by something as simple as not understanding the question". Michelle loves the challenge of different ways of seeing the world. Openness to others and their interpretations is taught analogically in Michelle's classroom. It is evident in her personal commitment to contribute to the present and to the future of students in El Salvador where she works with teachers for a few weeks every summer.

> I think the ultimate aim is to try . . . to attain better understanding of what is around us. And one way, one very concrete way, of attaining better understanding is to be really open to other people's realities and perspectives and to let ourselves learn from that. And it doesn't matter who the students are, what age group, what context, what backgrounds they come from
> (Conversation 2).

C. REFLECTING ON THE MEANING OF BEING A TEACHER

The first two phases of this inquiry have been thematized and described in narrative form for each co-participant in the first two sections of this chapter. These narratives and the original transcripts have been reread several times. In this section, reflective theming

summarizes and unifies the polyphonic voices of teaches. The themes that emerged from our dialogues and my interpretations of the first two phases of conversation with each of the teachers are summarized in this section. The following seven themes were interpreted to return us to "the place where we already are" as teachers, to echo Aoki's voice. Teaching thus may be described as:

1) Lived Curriculum,

2) Contributing to the being and becoming of child and of teacher,

3) Dialectics between inner and outer worlds,

4) Between the Epistemological and the Ontological,

5) Metaphorical,

6) Entering a child's horizons, and

7) As hermeneutics.

In the following table, related themes are represented for each of these dominant themes. Examples from the texts of each of the teachers are summarized in the third column.

DOMINANT THEMES	RELATED THEMES	EXAMPLES
Interpreting Curriculum Discourses so they are meaningful for children	Tying the curriculum to the experiences that children bring Currere: The Lived Curriculum	Children's discourses Classroom discourses Hearing the voices of the curriculum
Contributing to the personal being and becoming of child and of teacher	Making a difference Touching lives Teaching today's child for tomorrow's worlds Being There	Learning about being from a child Teaching coping skills
Dialectics between outer and inner worlds	Teaching as an analogue for outer worlds Standing in tension between all of the heterogeneities	Learning from children's experiences Needing balance of outer worlds Double-edged sword of expectations
Between the epistemological and the ontological	Opening to that whole other realm of being	Multilayered contexts beyond a classroom Teaching the whole child
Teaching as metaphor	Teaching as	Roles/Skills Maieutic process Possibility
Entering a child's horizons	Reciprocal love between child and teacher as the key to teaching Being There	Concern and interest in worlds of a child Mutualness
Teaching as hermeneutics	Teaching as a reflective process The hermeneutic circle of understanding Disclosing possible worlds	As expressive of all of the above themes

These themes were presented to each of the teachers before our fourth meeting. Each teacher was asked to reflect on these themes of teaching in terms of the validation criteria that Madison (1988) proposes (p.29). The following questions were posed. Each teacher was asked in our fourth encounter to reflect on and comment on those questions that had relevance for them.

1) **Comprehensiveness** -Do these themes taken together speak of teaching? What important issues and premises are missing?

2) **Penetration of Intent** -Have I addressed your guiding and underlying meanings? Which themes might have been given more emphasis? Which ideas have I overlooked?

3) **Agreement** -Have I represented what you meant to say? Have I opened any new possibilities or insights for you in my interpretations of our conversations?

4) **Suggestiveness** -What implications do you see for future research into what it means to be a teacher? What questions open up for you as you reflect on these themes?

Conclusion

Reflective theming may indeed "allow us to come to know how sufficiently as humans we inhabit where we already are as teachers" (Aoki, 1990, p.2). Where we already are in a dialectic of becoming is perhaps contextualized in a particular way in an elementary classroom. What we seek to uncover in these conversations is how we inhabit this place where we already are as teachers. The themes which emerge in these dialogues are interpreted in terms of commonalities. These themes are developed into a unifying narrative

description of teaching in the next chapter. Reflections on these reflections in terms of validation concerns are discussed in the last chapter.

CHAPTER VI. WHAT IS IT TO BE A TEACHER?

> What, then, is education? I believe it is the course the individual goes through in order to catch up with himself, and the person who will not go through this course is not much helped by being born in the most enlightened age (Kierkegaard, 1983/1843, p.46).

What it means to be a teacher emerges as problematic with all of the original difficulty of explicating life. *Currere*, the course that an individual goes through, references heterogeneous processes of unfoldings not a linear genesis of self as Kierkegaard implies. Catching up with oneself, in a circular hermeneutic motion, places one in the midst of the Heraclitean flux "in a nostalgia for unity, that appetite for the absolute (that) illustrates the essential impulse of the human drama" (Camus, 1955/1940, p.13). This elusive course toward unifying identity and understanding is traced from the multiperspectivity of classroom teacher in an attempt to name what it means to be an educator. In questioning the meaning of teaching, in opening to the presence of teaching in each dialogue, -"in the thin membranes of structures which we stretch across the flux, in the thin fabric we weave over it, there are certain spots where the surface wears through and acquires a transparency which exposes the flux beneath" (Caputo, 1987, p.267). The thin narrative fabric of our conversations reveals many transparencies which expose the lived texts of teaching. In this co-construction of text with five teachers, the thematic structure is intended to act as 'thin membranes' which permit the being and meaning of teaching to show through. In this chapter then, meaning is sought through the transparencies of the narrative structure. The priority of the question over definitive answers must always remain in the background of reflective theming. Otherwise we fall once again into the abyss of atomism. "The necessary inconclusiveness and infinality (*unabschliessbarkeit*) in any human speaking and inquiry (places these thematized boundaries) against the background and within the setting of that

which remains unbounded, within the the apeiron", the inchoate flux (Gadamer, 1980, p.xiii). Not as originary experience but as trace that might have been otherwise. The discursive quality of meaning and the problematic nature of being, which have been discussed in the second chapter, contextualize this search for an understanding of what it is to be a teacher. In the preceding chapter the texts of the dialogues of five experienced elementary school teachers have been interpreted individually after each of two taped and transcribed conversations. In this chapter, the thematic structure of these separate narratives is re-interpreted once again with another reading of the original transcripts in an attempt to unfold the meaning of a teaching moment. The combined unifying narrative which is constructed in this chapter includes also those themes of teaching which are only alluded to for "comprehensiveness" (Madison, 1988, p.29). The narratives of each teacher's own dialogues and the themes of this combined narrative were provided to each teacher before our final dialogues that we might address questions of validation together. These responses will be discussed in the final chapter.

In this chapter, the meaning of what it is to be a teacher is narrated in the following unifying, interconnected themes:

1) entering a child's horizons,

2) interpreting curriculum discourses so they are meaningful for children,

3) contributing to the being and becoming of child and teacher,

4) balancing inner and outer worlds,

5) standing between the epistemological and the ontological,

6) teaching as metaphor, and

7) teaching as hermeneutics.

These seven themes echo throughout the dialectics that work in the narratives of these teachers. The themes are heard perhaps more intensely in some dialogues than in others. Each theme is developed and traced in dialogue and in the literature on educational discourses.

Theme one -*Opening a child's horizons*

> All our pedagogic being with children is a form of speaking with them. Even when we quietly listen, raise eyebrows, nod encouragingly, embrace, turn away, or hold a child's momentary attention with a meaningful look, we may do so out of a pedagogic concern. So that in everyday concrete situations where we speak with children, pedagogic being is something that occurs as a showing in our being, in the way we are present to children in space
> (van Manen, 1982, p.285).

In our conversations about teaching elementary school children, each teacher names the importance of communicating caring and concern to a child. Their texts speak of *being genuinely concerned and thus getting through to them in any other way* and of *letting them know that you are there* and *opening a little door and sliding in on their level.* This acceptance of each child and each child's concerns develops an atmosphere of trust and safety. In being open to a child's lived experiences and in *being there* for a child, a doorway is opened to learning.

Through the appropriation of children's discourses, Michelle is able to enter their horizons of understanding and to extend them. Her receptivity to those issues that are of concern to her grade six students opens a place of mutual sharing. As she says, "It's almost as though you've opened a little door and you can slide in on their level, and of course you can bring in all the information that you want to bring in on their level once you're in and that's the key thing".

> One of the things I try to do is somehow talk in kids' terms. I think I 'm fairly perceptive in picking up their kind of lingo, perhaps it's just from the experience of learning other languages.

> I think we have to find ways to access into children and into their way of thinking so that they're a little bit more open and receptive to just receiving what you have to say.
> If there's any way that we can be more accessible to them or show that we're accessible or show that we're open to some of their styles or some of the things that are important to them then they will likewise be more open to some of the things that we have to share with them. I think that there is a lot of mutualness that has to go on (Conversation 1).

Shirley, too, speaks of becoming "part of them, part of their life" and of winning her students over by being genuinely concerned: "You win them over by being genuinely concerned, then you can get through to them in any other way". Her genuine concern for each child in her second grade classroom involves caring for an ill child when there is no one at home to go home to.

> So I'll get a pillow and I'll cover him up and I'll let him sleep because there isn't anybody at home to go home to. This happens a lot. And I think it's important that we realize that and be part of that understanding that maybe they don't get anywhere else (Conversation 1).

> It is just beautiful to watch how a child will begin to believe in themselves and take risks that she would normally not have taken if you hadn't shown that understanding (Conversation 2).

Shirley opens childrens' worlds to her teachings and to other possibilities by creating an environment of acceptance and safety. Whatever a child is experiencing is validated rather than denied. When a child opens to Shirley's acceptance and encouragement, then Shirley can open that child's world to other possibilities.

Trini, who teaches a combined class of twenty students between eleven and thirteen years of age, believes that what "those who march to a different drummer " need is a caring atmosphere "in which you let them realize you are somebody they can depend on."

> They know that you are there and that you are listening to them. You're there for them because you are interested in them and in what is happening to them.

Trini offers her students hope. Some of her mottos which inspire her teaching and those whom she teaches include: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again; There is hope and you should keep trying; and Success is there if you work hard enough". She has learned that each child is unique and that "somehow each child can learn". Her belief that there is hope inspires hope and possibilities for her students. Possibility is the doorway to learning and learning is the opening of possible worlds.

Each teacher speaks of the importance of entering into a child's worlds, of winning a child over, of reaching a child, of making oneself and the curriculum accessible to a child's understanding. Gadamer (1960) uses the metaphor of "fusion of horizons" to describe how understanding occurs between two differently situated persons. Ricoeur (1981) describes this process that these teachers engage in with a child as appropriation, taking into oneself the worlds of the other. When learning or appropriation occurs, a child's horizons of understanding and possible ways of being are expanded and extended. To engage in that process, a teacher enters what Vygotsky (1978) has referred to as the zone of proximal development and that interpsychological process between teacher and child becomes transformed into an intrapsychological one within a child (p.57). Gadamer (1967) describes the hermeneutic circle of I-Thou relationships where two differently situated horizons of understanding "come into contact with each other, merging more and more . . . and never without the inner infinity of the dialogue that is in progress between every speaker and his partner (wherein each) seeks words through which one reaches the other person" (p.17). Bain (1989) speaks of this dialogical discourse. Within an I-Thou relationship between differently situated horizons of understanding, a teacher seeks to reach a child. A teacher is brought into direct contact with the being of a child in a pedagogic I-Thou relationship. A teacher co-creates an I-Thou dialogue in opening to a child's experiences and discourses, interpreting the analogic communication of a child (and a child's parents). Analogic communication is read as Derrida (1978) proposes that dreams are interpreted. The language of a child perhaps like dream discourses "are presented to us

like two versions (*mises en scène*) of the same subject matter in two different languages: . . .like a transcript . . . (and) as it were in a pictographic script, the characters of which have to be transposed individually. . . not as an inscribed image but as a figurative script, an image inviting not a simple, conscious present perception of the thing itself -assuming it exists- but a reading" (p.218). A child's gestures and actions speak louder to a teacher than do a child's words. Another of Gadamer's contributions to our understanding of "the particular sensitivity and sensitiveness to situations" that a pedagogical relationship is comes from Helmholtz' notion of tact (p.16). In keeping oneself open to a child and to what is coming into being in a classroom, tact helps a teacher also "to preserve distance; it avoids the offensive, the intrusive, the violation of the intimate sphere of the person" (*Ibid*, p.17). van Manen (1990) describes pedagogic tactfulness. In this inquiry, each of the teachers has alluded to or described the place of tactfulness in their pedagogical relationships with children. They speak of: becoming part of their lives, being there for them, winning them over, and being genuinely concerned for them. Sensitiveness to a child's situation is described as transformative at least of the child-teacher reciprocity. This theoretically-informed, multidimensional way of knowing what a child means and lives and what a teacher is to do or what a teacher is not to do at a particular moment is the art of teaching that Charles speaks of. In German, *tact* refers to the beat of the conductor's baton. An image of a conductor's beat submerged to allow the lyrical to seep through is reminiscent of classrooms as spaces where one is freed to think and to learn knowing one's harmony with others and with worlds beyond. The uniqueness of a child is experienced by a teacher and hence by a child in this openness where always in the background resonate the discourses of curriculum and of what is beyond one's present understanding. A teacher participates in what Keeney (1984) describes as a higher order of recursion which is learning. A teacher draws a distinction between child and self and between child and a child's interactions with family and others and relates to a child in a way that is respectful of a child's present situation and at the same time invites a child to open present horizons

and homeostasis to live other ways of relating in a larger open contextual system beyond that of home and of classroom. A teacher engages in a cybernetics of stability and change. Maturana and Varela (1980) describe a living system as a closed system. Bateson and Keeney remind us that living systems are contextualized and that beyond the closed systems are other systems. Opening to meta-levels of relating, changes a child's perspectivity and may open horizons to other possible worlds (Ricoeur, 1981). Learning, according to these experienced teachers, begins with building a relationship. A teacher's presence with child speaks of being. As Aoki (in press) states:

> "teaching so understood is attuned to the place where care dwells, a place of engathering and belonging, where the indwelling of teachers and students is made possible by the presence of care that each has for the other".

Theme two -*Interpreting curriculum discourses so that they are meaningful for children*

> Curriculum is a moving form. That is why we have trouble capturing it, fixing it in language, lodging it in our matrix. . . We are trying to grasp a moving form: to catch it at the moment it slides from being the figure, the object and goal of action, and collapses into the ground for action. Through its movement curriculum intertwines the ideal and the actual. Its epistemologies are translated into physical space and time where they determine where children sit, what they touch, whether they feel the heat of the sun
> (Grumet, 1988, p.172).

It is indeed the *lived experiences* of a child that provide the bridges between a child's worlds and the understandings which a teacher wishes to introduce and enlarge. *What children bring to a classroom, what they are living through*, must be connected to curriculum concerns *to make curriculum meaningful, to bring curriculum to*

life. Curriculum, interpreted as a living discourse, places external knowledge in tension with personal knowledge.

In Trini's words "because you're dealing with humans and everybody's different, you might have something planned and you go in and something else has happened and this is the lived experience and so you use it to teach a lesson". She advocates reviving the narrative structure, the lost art of story-telling, "to reach the others we haven't been reaching all along". Trini gathers her students in a circle around herself in informal dialogues that free her students to express their understandings of concepts in their own words. By hearing in a child's words and seeing through a child's images, those experiences that are meaningful to them, Trini is able to bring meaning to some of these experiences and through them to teach the concepts prescribed in the curriculum.

What a child brings to a classroom is also what Shirley uses to co-construct learning experiences that are meaningful to the children whom she teaches. As she advises, "you can't just pop them into something, you have to build on their experiences. What they bring to school may not be enough". So she adds experiences like her field trip to a Hutterite colony. The dialectic between experience and knowledge is validated in Shirley's teaching rather than denied. Curriculum is brought to life in her classroom by creating opportunities beyond the texts within her classroom. Written texts are expanded to include lived texts of experiences which can be discussed. Comparisons are made and related to experiences rather than drawn abstractly.

> You have to know your children. You get to know them first and you find out what they're bringing to the classroom, what they're bringing from their own lives, their own experiences, their own problems, their own way of living. You understand that first. When you do then I think you can use your lessons to lead in from what they're bringing to the classroom.
>
> You can't just pop them into something. You have to build on their experiences. What they bring to school may not be enough. So you build experiences. I think of our Hutterite

> visit which was an excellent example of that (Conversation 2).
>
> Forget about the fact that they can't multiply by four. That right now isn't important in their life, that will come. As long as you understand that this one is having a pretty rough time at home, that no one cares about him, bring in some of the skills that he is going to need to cope with life at home. If you can do that and understand where he's coming from, forget the achievement tests, some of them just aren't going to achieve very well until things stabilize. And you have to understand that
> (Conversation 1).

Certainly Shirley's students' academic successes indicate that she has made curriculum discourses meaningful for them! In providing experiences with other ways of life, Shirley breathes life into her curriculum. And in accepting what her students bring to her classroom, Shirley gives life to them. Curriculum becomes part of their life experience.

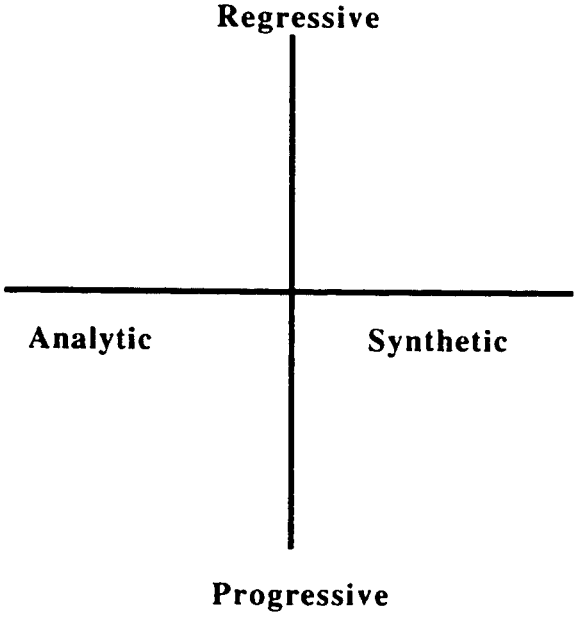
Michelle finds that in "acknowledging that (her grade six students) have certain realities and that they are living through these things" and in opening discussions of these real concerns of theirs, that she creates an atmosphere in which curriculum, too, is one of the real concerns lived together in her classroom.

> Maybe you should just recognize and acknowledge some of these kids' realities. I think kids recognize that. I think they recognize that you are acknowledging that they have certain realities and that they are living through these things. You don't have all the answers and they know that and you know that. But at least you're open to discuss it and create that atmosphere where there is that openness to discuss it (Conversation 1).
>
> I find that kids are really very open. If you can find a way to present it in a way that is meaningful to them they're very receptive
> (Conversation 1).

Where curriculum discourses come from and their place in a wider epistemological framework must be known to a teacher, Charles cautions. Curriculum must be related to experiences and to existing understandings. "Pockets of isolated information" will not be understood or retained, according to Charles.

> There has to be an understanding on the part of the teacher I believe, even at the grade one level, as to where these ideas that are in the curriculum are coming from in order to give them proper perspective and understanding so that kids understand what it is that they are learning (Conversation 2).

Discussions of what is of significance to a child bring curriculum discourses to life and bring meaning to a child's experiences. *Currere*, a lived curriculum, *touches lives*. *Currere*, from the Latin root of curriculum, means to run a course or a race. Pinar's (1988) interpretation of the lived experience or the course of curriculum does not deny that concepts and dominant curriculum discourses are transmitted nor that a dialogue develops between child and worlds. Nor does he deny the possibility of transformation. But reductionist models and deterministic concepts of changes are narrow views of this educational journey. Pinar (in press) describes *currere* as a course situated between the conceptual and the interpretive frames and between a Sartrean (1963) model of memories and an imagined future:



As Grumet (in press) expounds,

> Thus, to talk of the dialogue of person and world is not to break down this complex interaction into separate parts, subjecting each to a distinct, isolated analysis. Nor are we describing education as a magical transformation, a metamorphosis of self into the forms of the world. Educational experience is a process that takes on the world without appropriating that world; that projects the self into the world without dismembering that self, a process of synthesis and totalization in which all participants in the dialectic simultaneously maintain their identities and surpass themselves" (p.41).

In this inquiry these five experienced elementary school teachers speak of the process of this educational experience as a dialectic between what a child is living through in inner worlds and the lived curriculum of a classroom. Shirley, Michelle and Trini speak of the need to know not only the curriculum but also the nested contexts of their students. These teachers speak of the importance of interpreting curriculum discourses so that they are meaningful for children. To bring curriculum to life so that a child might appropriate understandings that are of relevance, a teacher seeks to hear a child's discourses and to co-constitute to some degree the lived experience of the educational course. Alternate meanings may be suggested to students without denying the validity of meanings that they bring to school (Cazden, 1988). Classroom experiences thus interpreted become part of a child's lived experience. Curriculum-as-lived transcends an instrumentalist view of curriculum development and implementation. Rather than an Aristotelean view which places theory before practice, a Platonic interpretation that embraces the poles of subjectivity and objectivity is suggested by each of these teachers. Knowing is open to being and inseparable from it; thoughts and actions speak of who one is on this course. A teaching subject and a learning subject engage in personal meaning-making in the lived relationships of a classroom. Teaching practices then are in tension between cognitive curriculum

prescriptions and the lived contexts and interpretations of teacher and of child. Curriculum is a text which experienced teachers deconstruct and interpret to bring to life not only empirical knowing but also personal, experiential meanings. Different ways of knowing are heard in the plurivocity of these teachers. Empirical knowing, interpretation, and reflection are validated. Abstracted, reified curriculum thinking is lived in tension with its meaning to the being and becoming of those whom we teach.

Theme three -*Contributing to the personal being and becoming of child and of teacher*

> (Teachers) themselves are challenged by the emancipatory interest of pedagogy to see their own lives as a potentiality, that is, as an oriented being and becoming (van Manen, 1982, p.293).

Each of these five teachers has voiced an understanding of teaching as contributing to the being and becoming of a child. A teacher *makes a difference in a child's life* not only in the present but also in the future. The *reciprocity of a teacher-child relationship* contributes also to the being and becoming of a teacher. These teachers speak of teaching as *making a difference*, *touching lives*, and describe it as *a life-giving process*, *a transformative function* that creates future citizens. Opening possibilities for a child in a classroom brings to a teacher's consciousness the possibility of opening horizons of understanding and possible worlds for a teacher as well as for a child.

Carmen speaks of making a difference, affecting children's lives, reaching them at many levels. She believes that "we are given life to give life to others" and states that effective teachers engage in a life-giving process. She speaks of how opening possibilities for a child in a classroom also opens possibilities for herself as a teacher.

> Teaching is always a process. We are ever-changing just as the children in our classes are. Just as we give life to the students in our classes, they give life back to us. And they

> are in a constant, continuous process of growth and we are, too. It's a reciprocal life-giving process where we can learn as much from our students as they can learn from us (Conversation 2).

We are always *in process.* Kristeva's discourse echoes in the humanistic psychology that converges in Carmen's descriptions. She speaks of constant, continuous growth. We learn about being in teaching others. Opening to a child's experiences and situations orients a teacher to a broader "understanding of how life works". Helping a child cope with loss, for example, helps a teacher learn to cope with losses. What Carmen learns from children and families in her classroom expands her understanding of her own family situation. Teaching opens worlds for a child and also for a teacher. Carmen believes that she learns to understand how life works from her experiences and reflections as a teacher.

Shirley believes that the reciprocal bonding between a child and a teacher is the key to teaching. This bonding is grounded in an acceptance of all that a child brings to a classroom including parental drug abuse and the related familial dysfunction and pressures. Understanding the being of a child, the worlds a child brings to her classroom and becoming part of their experiences inside and outside her classroom places Shirley in a transformative role. She teaches her students to cope for example with separation and divorce, and anger and sadness. By being genuinely concerned, she is able to reach them and to teach them. Far more important than schooling for Shirley is educating a child to be "able to cope with life". She touches many lives in her classroom by modelling and teaching accepting, encouraging relationships in which a child can feel safe enough to risk learning. What they bring to her classroom becomes the lived curriculum that teaches them how to live not only in their present situations but also what qualities and understandings they might develop to face future situations. She tries to "find out what experiences they're going to have to have . . . so that they have some coping skills for the things that they are going to have to put up with". Shirley teaches her students to risk and to believe in themselves at least within the safety of her classroom. Hopefully a child retains this

knowing that she, a significant other, believes in them. This acceptance of where they are in the present frees them to believe in what each might become. Shirley's acceptance also models a way of being in front of the curriculum discourses that must be heard. The reciprocity of pedagogic relationships contributes to Shirley's becoming. She feels that she receives ten fold what she gives. Her students have given her their respect and their love which has also been transformative of her being and of her becoming.

> You spend a little bit of time figuring out what kind of a day they've had or what kind of a morning they've had, things that they have to get rid of and things they might want to talk about, to let them know that you understand that and then you begin to present your lessons. And during the course of the day many examples can come up where you can say, "Well don't you remember when we did this this morning, you weren't feeling very good about it but how do you feel about it now?" Or here's an example from a story we have just read. You see other people have similar problems and this is how they did it. So that you relate what they are learning with their own lives (Conversation 2).

> Certainly the curriculum has got to be important, but I think more important is that you have the respect of the children, respect for them to share their life with you. I think that teaching is much more than the tests that we give and the scores that we have to achieve. For the child we get nowadays, first and foremost is being able to cope with life (Conversation 1).

Michelle discusses topics that are of importance to the children whom she teaches to establish an open platform on which curriculum issues become the connective tissue of her praxis. What is meaningful to her students is discussed during and between classes. Dignifying and respecting her students' real concerns opens a way of being in her classroom and beyond her classroom. Her openness to learning from and with her students engages them in a process of challenging and expanding their present understandings. It also teaches them a way of being.

> I think that it is really important that as teachers we basically instill in our students a love for learning and a love for exploring (Conversation 2).

Trini also speaks of teaching today's child for tomorrow's worlds. What a child learns to live in relationships with other children in her classroom for a year teaches them to live later within the larger world contexts in the future. Life experiences make one the person that one is, says Trini. The experiences of a classroom are part of this formation. Learning to live together speaks of being and of becoming. What one learns in a classroom is learning for life. Trini believes that societal changes and the resulting parental abandonment of the teaching of personal and social skills in the eighties and nineties has placed this responsibility directly upon teachers. What she teaches influences Trini. She interprets curriculum discourses for her students and believes that she, too, learns from them. She believes for example that the tolerance and acceptance of differences that she teaches have helped her to learn to look at each child individually and to find the good within and to draw it out. At a more personal level, she acknowledges that she has learned to face disappointments and the urge to give up and that she has learned to be more forgiving also of herself.

> We are all building on what the last person did and that's our building block. So we build on what was there before and if somebody else builds on that then that child can go on to accomplish much
>
> I think we teach children how to live, how to relate to other people, how to be sympathetic, how to listen and to realize that other people have other points of view and there is no right answer necessarily for everything . . . . This is the same way when they go out into the world at large (Conversation 1).
>
> All your life experiences help to make you the person you are. We teach children a lot nowadays about social skills - about relating to other people, respecting other people and giving everybody their say. Hopefully that lesson is learned. As they go on they learn to be more tolerant as adults and realize that everyone is here. We all have to learn to live together. Hopefully, we help to make them into better persons (Conversation 2).

The contents and processes that we teach and the relationships that we live in our classrooms speak of our understanding of what is of importance in the present and in the future. What we teach is what our curriculums seek to interpret. What is regarded as knowledge and what occurs as learning affect children's opportunities for learning how to be in classroom contexts and in worlds beyond our classrooms. Teachers who accept children's discourses and hear their lived experiences behind their words and their actions can provide the scaffolds that open possible worlds (Cazden, 1988; Greene, 1988). Rollo May (1958) traces assumptions about being not as a thoughtless accident but as problematic to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud. An understanding of teaching as contributing to an oriented being and becoming introduces being in the complex zone of convergence between existentialism, psychoanalysis, humanistic psychologies, and cybernetic epistemologies of cognition, to name but a few discourses. Being and becoming remain problematic and discursive. For our consciousness is a social discourse. Even the way we experience our own embodiment is discursive. A child is being in the process of becoming within layers of social influences of which a classroom represents but one. How a teacher is with her students teaches being. Each teacher spoke of freeing a child to think and to act more consciously. In consciously participating in bringing to understanding a child's experience, a teacher engages in a dialectical motion of the emergent. For how we feel and act may be changed by how we learn to talk and to think. Ways of conducting oneself as a teacher that are affirming open possibilities to see, think, feel and act. A teacher's own being is involved. A child and a teacher's unfolding experiences may be freed from repetitiveness. To appropriate one's own freedom and possibilities therefore implies choosing within the limitations of conditioning and present horizons. Both Sartre (1948) and Ricoeur (1984) argue that although past and present lived contexts are powerfully deterministic, teacher and child imaging other possible worlds make it possible to alter situations as they are not independent of self. Telling and re-telling one's story for example may amplify or atrophy aspects of self (Pinar, 1988b). Our boundaries are very much merged and intersecting: we

are our parents, our teachers, our students, our responses to them (Lacan, 1966). In teaching other ways of being in classroom relationships, a teacher brings to consciousness the separate space of a child, freeing a child from shadows and echoes. A teacher, in believing in a child, facilitates the possibility of transcendence of what has been and opens to what might be. Rogers (1961) describes the process of reaching the being behind the persona that these teachers speak of as reaching a child. Roger's message of learning as making a difference and teaching that makes a difference are echoed in the voices of this inquiry. As Maslow (1968) reiterates the messages of these five elementary school teachers, "What we must do is accept the person and help him learn what kind of a person he is already". He goes on to explain as these five teachers have:

> We would be non-threatening and would supply an atmosphere of acceptance of the child's nature which reduces fear, anxiety and defense to the minimum possible. Above all, we would care for the child, that is enjoy him and his growth and self-actualization (Maslow, 1968, p.693).

In creating spaces of responsivity , child and teacher are freed to explore relationships of self to the shadows cast by the past and to shift boundaries and re-write their narratives. Possible worlds unfold in the inter- and intra-subjective experiences of a classroom. A description of teaching as contributing to the being and becoming opens an understanding of teaching as a human project and not simply a methodological or conceptual one.

Theme four -*Balance between inner and outer worlds*

> Ce sujet-là, qui comprend ce mouvement (expliquant, cogitant, et sachant), accentue en lui le *procès* plus que l'identification, *l'hétérogène* plus que le signifiant, la *lutte* plus que la structure
> (Kristeva, 1974, p.161).

The heterogeneities that mark human existence that Freud, Lacan, Kristeva and other great thinkers allude to are the lived contextuality of the worlds of a classroom. Both teacher and child live a classroom dialectic *between inner and outer contexts*. Contexts in the mind include lived experiences, interpretations, schematizations, unconscious forces and all of those other internal conditions that influence what a child learns and what a teacher teaches (Cazden, 1982). Outer contexts of unappropriated discourses and experiences include epistemological, political, social, and other uninternalized forces. What is taught and what is learned remains in balance between these inner and outer worlds. The *lived curriculum of a classroom remains in tension between the word and the lived experiences* of teacher and of child. A teacher stands in balance between all the heterogeneities of present and future, known and unknown, anticipated and unexpected, the individual and the collective. These teachers described a *classroom as analogous to the worlds beyond the classroom*, and spoke of *the double-edged sword of expectations*, and of the *need for the balance of other interests*.

Carmen suggests that a teacher gives meaning to content and overcomes blocks and barriers in students by building bridges with a child's experiences and attitudes. Curriculum is a lived dialectic between the inner worlds of her classroom and the worlds beyond her classroom. She invites teachers to open their classroom doors.

> Our world is becoming smaller and smaller. And we're realizing with the environmental dilemmas that we are facing that we have to be part of a team. We do have personal needs but we need a balance between what's good for us and what is good for the world as a whole.
>
> It comes back to my premise of balance again. Balance in the classroom, balance for ourselves as persons, balance within the school boards. And I suppose it even evolves to what I have discussed before on a global level where there also has to be balance in the world as a whole (Conversation 2).

Shirley speaks of a dialectic of freedom. The freedom to open possibilities for her students and for herself is modelled and developed with and between her students. She teaches coping skills in classroom discussions that her students might better cope with what they bring to her classroom and with what they must face again when they leave that inner safety. She is very aware of the forces in their outer worlds and of the confinement of their own horizons. She seeks also to free herself from the limitations of her own inner horizons and says that teachers need the balance and broadening of outside interests. Shirley narrates the story of a child in her classroom with a very negative attitude that was preventing him from attempting any projects or assignments. She describes the process she engaged him in to begin to believe in himself and to ask for help instead of panicking when he was unable to understand a step in a task. His classmates would smile encouragement at him and remind him that the "hate" word just had to go from his vocabulary. Shirley also described a grade two girl who lived in terror of her father's violence. In a parent-child interview in her middle class community school, Shirley became aware of the drug abuse of the father and the mother's abandonment of her child when she would leave the home to escape her husband's rage. These lived experiences of this child spoke of her inner fears. Shirley understood her need for acceptance and reassurance "before all else" in her classroom. The heterogeneities of conscious and unconscious influences on this little girl's life were in dialectic with what she lived in Shirley's classroom. In opening horizons to other possible worlds, Shirley teaches a dialectic of possibility.

Trini describes teaching as analogous to outer worlds. Curriculum discourses, according to her, address societal change and societal expectations. Teachers are called on to assume responsibility not only for the inner worlds of a classroom but also the inner worlds of personal skills that were taught in the home until this decade. Outer societal change places the responsibility for teaching these skills on today's teacher.

> Just how they live with their classmates for a year in one classroom, and they're all different with different

> backgrounds and different hopes but they can get on, this is the same way when they go out into the world at large (Conversation 1).

Charles describes the challenge that a teacher meets in demonstrating tolerance and acceptance of all children. Acceptance can only be modelled, it cannot be taught directly. A teacher's own intolerances and prejudices and hatreds are lived in a classroom. These ambiguities and paradoxes that mark human existence contextualize the place a teacher stands in. Some teachers exude love and acceptance of all children. Others live the tensions between their inner worlds and their understanding of the need and importance of "compromises that allow us all to exist". A teacher is in the place between. Between unconscious forces and conscious understandings. Between known and unknown. Between inner and outer worlds.

Shirley, Carmen and Michelle all encourage teachers to seek balance between their professional and personal lives and caution against the pressures and risks of narrowness and stagnation of the inner worlds of teaching and of the dangers in not seeking other involvements. Charles states that our inner worlds and outer worlds are inseparable. Classroom praxis constitutes an analogue of outer worlds. Always a classroom overlaps the lived contextuality of outer worlds at the edge of awareness. The heterogeneities of being, that is always project, in process, suspend teaching in a balance between inner worlds of meanings and experiences and outer worlds of challenge and possibility.

It appears appropriate to clarify the reference to the concept of dialectics in this inquiry as this term has been appropriated in popular curriculum discourse by those who identify the term narrowly with a particular ideology. Dialectic (from the Greek *dialectiké* or *dialectikos*)refers to the art of conversation or to logical argument or debate. In conversation, knowledge is brought into the open through asking and answering timely questions. Hegelian dialectic was a process of leading a thought to its contradictions thereby creating a new unity. This developmental dialectic arrives at synthesis resulting from the interaction between thesis and antithesis; this new unity becomes the thesis of a

further dialectic. Change and evolution through this triadic dialectic pointed to a perfection which was not elaborated by Hegel. In early dialectic or debate, the goal was to logically refute an argument or to lead the other into contradictions and paradoxes which presumably then served to refute their position. The Socratic dialectical method of inquiry sought to reveal the generalization or essence or ideal form exemplified in a moment. Currently these contradictory and paradoxical tensions reveal the complexities and ambiguities of the human project. This fundamental drive of tension and change implies that understanding evolves within heterogeneities.

Kristeva's (1974; 1989) notions of a speaking subject translated as a *teaching subject* revitalizes a teaching moment with lived subjectivity and with historicity. A teaching subject thus is shown as a complex, heterogeneous force emphasizing that consciousness is far from dominating this project. Such positing of a teacher is inseparable from a theory of subjectivity that embraces the unconscious and the unarticulated and the antitheses of the conscious and the distantiated. Classroom practices thus understood neither reify nor negate fragmented, monolithic empiricist discourses. Nor are the polysemy and plurivocity of a Ricoeurean dialectics of determinism hypostatized. Significance exists in heterogeneous contradictions between irreconcilable forces -separate but inseparable from the dialectical interplay in which they assume equal if asymmetrical functions. Derrida (1973) describes being as

> "the self-presence of the living present (which). . .springs forth. . . from the possibility of a retentional trace. It is always already a trace. . . . It is always already engaged in the *movement* of the trace, that is, in the order of signification. It has always already issued forth from itself into the expressive stratum of lived experience (p.85).

The paradoxes and contradictions of self as a dialectical motion of traces seek signifying unification in narrative whereby the signifying unity of a child's lived meanings are

interpreted and re-interpreted in the place of identity (Pinar, 1988). This dialectical motion between what we live and our interpretations within a lived curriculum in a classroom is the proper locus of emergent meanings in which being transcends consciousness-object distinctions and is temporalized and embodied as becoming. Teaching as a project is a dialogical rather than a monological experience. And even the monologues of inner talk exist in dialectic with dialogues with teacher, curriculum, classmate. "Kristeva's notion of intertextuality, the idea that every text functions in terms of another" (Ricoeur, 1984, p.21) suggests a dialectical interplay between the inner texts of experiences and the texts of classroom experiences. Outer worlds are the texts within which classroom texts (in the Ricoeurean sense of lived text) function. In the dialogues in this inquiry, these teachers speak also of a dialectical interplay between classroom experiences and worlds beyond a classroom in spatial, temporal and social contextuality. A classroom becomes an analogue for outer worlds. Pinar (1975) speaks of this analogue: "It is clear to me now that when we speak of education we speak in the context of a microscopic paradigm of a macroscopic human condition, a paradigm that holds all of the complexities in microcosm of the larger condition" (p.4). Many levels of dialectic are suggested. A dialectical interpretation of the meaning of teaching focuses upon the simultaneous motion along at least the following dimensions: 1) unconscious-distantiated understandings, 2) familial-classroom contexts, 3) stability- change issues, 4) past/present traces-future interpretations , 5) static abstractions-ceaseless flux of experience (the immanent and the transcendent), 6) actuality-possibility, and 7) the epistemological and the ontological. Heraclitus' image of worlds at once stable and changing, stable like a river, changing as the waters in the river recalls the illusionary nature of stability. The father of dialectical thinking reminds us that our classrooms, our curriculum discourses, our schools are lived within heterogeneities in time, space and interpretation. Teaching practices are the site of the most radical heterogeneity. Teachers speak to a child who does not simply explain, cogitate, know, but to an elusive, dialecticized subject who transforms the real.

Theme five -*Between the epistemological and the ontological*

> The whole person standing in the whole of life trying to make sense of existence. . .stands in Being itself (Smith, 1988, p.418-419).

A teacher stands also in dialectic between the epistemological and the ontological. Curriculum discourses speak of what knowing is. Educational epistemologies describe how we know and what constitutes knowledge. Although often accepted as fixed and conclusive, epistemologies are interpretations or present understandings of the flux and flow that is the ontological. Epistemological discourses approach the ontological differently. *That whole other realm of being, the spiritual level, all that there is* that these teacher speak of, reference the lived multilayered contextuality within which the epistemological is lived within a classroom.

Charles speaks of that realm beyond individual being. The art of teaching, according to him, embraces the being-in-the-world of a teacher whose *techné* includes highly specialized knowing but transcends that teacher, that time and those epistemologies. For him, unifying connections exist at epistemological levels and at the ontological level. In the lived praxis of a classroom, a teacher addresses a child in all that each is, in all that each is becoming, and in all that might be.

Carmen emphasizes that teachers reach out to children on many levels beyond the academic. She refers to the spiritual realm. Teachers, she believes, reach out to children in a very holistic way. We hear the echoes of the ancient Greek understanding of education as *phaideia*, referencing the nurturing of body, mind and spirit of a loving mentor with wisdom.

> I think that when we deal with young children, we have a tremendous impact on them. I think that we reach out to them on so many levels. The academic level is just one. We reach out to them emotionally, physically and spiritually. We

> reach out to them in a very holistic sort of way (Conversation 1).

Trini speaks of our oneness in spite of our differences in language, traditions and ways of being. She teaches tolerance of different backgrounds and different hopes because beneath the surface differences "all human beings basically are the same". Epistemological differences must be respected; there is no final and conclusive position "that is necessarily the right one". Shirley also teaches with an understanding that what is learned in a classroom transcends that place and that time and that interpretation.

Macdonald (1988) speaks of "our continual search for understanding and for a more satisfying understanding of what is" (p.107). He situates teaching between the epistemological and the ontological. Epistemology (from the Greek, *episteme*, meaning knowledge, systematic knowledge, and *logos*, the study of, the theory of) concerns the study of the presuppositions and the nature and scope and validation of knowledge. To be aware of existence beyond our personas and our identities and beyond our own present being is to be aware of the ontological (from the Greek, *ontos*, meaning existence, the really existing things). Ontology is the study of existence as a whole, of "reality".The underlying premises about existence of any epistemology or system of ideas are the foundation not only of knowledge but of "the fundamental structure of our thoughts about reality" (Flew, 1979, p.230). Watson (1985) argues that different epistemologies define different ontologies (p.72). But as Bain (1989) contends, epistemological discourses are retained ambiguously. Our educational discourses include the converging presuppositions of instrumentalism, empiricism, idealism, emergent ontogenesis and transcendentalism to name but a few. The discourses of psychoanalysis, humanism, and hermeneutics, for example, shape our pedagogical pluralism. Interactionist ontologies that presuppose mind/body and consciousness/being as interrelated focus on embodied participative knowing and the ontological as inseparable. Knowing is ontological. Coming to know and

coming to be are one and the same process (Lacan, 1966). The transcendental (constituting) and the immanent (constituted) ego are realms of "experience that point to the characteristics of being-itself which lies above the split between subjectivity and objectivity" (Tillich, 1952, p.25). A teacher is a whole being and a child is whole being standing in the whole of life trying to make sense out of existence. Understanding is not something that we have but rather it is what as existing beings that we are. Understanding is incomplete and discontinuous, mediated again and again. Human existence is grounded in experience which is "the ultimate grounding to which we as acting beings have access" (Madison, 1988, p.103). Experience is already symbolized and resymbolized. Reinterpreting our present situations and reaching for greater understanding of our ways of being and of the worlds we live in guides us beyond the epistemological to the ontological. Seeking to understand all of what is reminds us that knowing is ontological. Knowing and being are inseparable. Ricoeur (1974) doubts "the possibility of making a direct ontology, free at the outset from any methodological requirement and consequently outside the circle of interpretation whose theory this ontology formulates" (p.6). The ontological unfolds in front of the epistemological in a hermeneutic motion.

Theme six -*Teaching as Metaphor*

> Only metaphorical discourse can say something about something without hypostatizing that about which it speaks (Madison, 1988, p.85).

In searching to describe what it means to be a teacher, each co-participant almost inevitably turned at some point in our dialogues to metaphorical discourse. And at a meta-level, each spoke of the worlds of a classroom as analogues of outer worlds. An image of the hermeneutic motion between living systems was implied in each of the suggested themes. What it is to be a teacher has been described in these dialogues in terms of a

plethora of metaphors, roles and possibilities. Metaphors of midwifery and mothering, of guide and journey, of builder and project, are but a number of the images that these teachers suggested to interpret what it means to stand in the place of a teacher. The maieutic process that Socrates engaged in projects a classic image of the teaching-learning process that Dewey and proponents of learning by doing advocate under a sensitive eye. *Currere* speaks of an educational journey into the anticipated and into the unexpected.

Teaching as mothering -When these teachers and when I speak of the children whom we teach or have taught and of the classrooms in which we teach, we all speak of *my class, my children*. This idiomatic claim reveals perhaps a hidden understanding. These children, whom I have not borne, become mine to bear, mine to create a space for. As Carmen says, "Bert is so hard to bear." It is more than tolerance of his acting out behaviour that his teacher is called to be responsive to. She is called to respond to Bert beyond these actions. The meaning of these actions may be understood by Carmen. She may "stand under" them and take the place of this child to learn to be able to make a space for Bert. An inner space, an accepting, caring place. Where Bert can be. Where does "my child" go when I, as teacher, cannot bear her/him, when I cannot provide a space where that child can be and become? In speaking of what she is having difficulty doing for Bert, truth emerges in the negativity, in the understanding of what teaching is not, of what she is not providing that she believes a teacher must. A teacher gives life to a child. In the life-giving process that is teaching, a child is birthed and re-birthed. Shirley and Trini also speak of teaching as mothering, of their place *in loco parentis*.

Teaching as opening possible worlds -Possible worlds are created in accepting a child and in creating a safe place. Possible worlds are opened in a dialectic of freedom that Shirley teaches within her classroom. She hears her student's voices and speaks to them of others who have experienced their situations and how they have coped

with them. She creates a place behind the door of her classroom where a child can feel safe and cared for. Shirley also speaks of teaching as opening possibilities for herself. Behind her classroom door, she, too, is free to create a world as she would have it. Her opportunities to attend workshops across North America and to continue her studies have contributed to her own being and becoming. She speaks of building her own self-esteem by completing her degree. Periods of transition in her personal life and in her professional life challenged her to reflect and make significant personal changes. Carmen describes teaching as providing her with possibilities for learning about her personal challenges, her family, and others through the relationships she has developed within and beyond her classroom. In teaching children how to cope with situations, she learns how to open more fully to herself and to situations she must cope with. Trini, Michelle and Charles speak of teaching as the opening of worlds in teaching an appreciation of the perspectives of others and an openness to and the courage as Michelle believes, "to explore the fact that there are other perspectives." The reflection that Michelle teaches opens her grade six students to reflect on contingencies and possibilities. Implicit in each dialogue is an understanding that a classroom is an analogue of the worlds beyond, temporally and spatially. Possibilities in ways of relating, ways of being, in a classroom suggest possibilities beyond a classroom for a child and for a teacher. Not all possible worlds that a classroom might become are welcomed by these teachers. Shirley alludes to the bureaucratic chimera that teaching is at one level. By grafting the tissues from different perhaps incompatible origins (discourses), a monster of hybrid character is suggested in the pressures of evaluation, for example. A lion's head may indeed be forced onto a goat's body!

For Ricoeur, metaphorical truth is tensional, dialectical truth that embraces the heterogeneities and paradoxes of *dasein*, being, consciousness. Rather than an analogy of space for this being in process, Ricoeur (1966) suggests "an analogous experience of transitions, passages (in which). . . .The most remarkable *passages* of our process, are

often the crises, the hiatuses, in brief, the forms of distention from which we must win back the intentions capable of unifying them" (p.453). Meaning is not something to be recovered but something to be discovered, unfolded. Consciousness develops not as a facile play of opposites but as contingence, as that which might not have been or which might might have been otherwise. Ricoeur (1966) offers the example: "I might have been any other, had other parents, other body" (p.455) pushing one to become aware of one's factual existence and of one's being even beyond those contingencies, opening possible worlds! Metaphorical truth opens an intended meaning which transcends language, not as an intralinguistic or extralinguistic reality but as a referencing of a way of being which is brought to language (Madison, 1988).

Theme seven -*Teaching as hermeneutics*

> Hermeneutics, radically interpreted. . . distinguishes itself from other forms of inquiry by its essentially educational nature. That is to say, hermeneutic inquiry has as its goal to educe understanding, to bring forth the presuppositions in which we already live. Its task, therefore, is not to methodically achieve a relationship to some matter and to secure understanding in such a method. Rather, its task is to collect the contours and textures of the life we are already living, a life which is not secured by the methods we can weil to render such a life our object
> (Jardine, in press, p.189).

The quest for understanding and meaning in a classroom suggests an image of teaching as a hermeneutic circle between the contours and textures of the life we are already living and the contours and textures of our life as it might be understood. "Education is concerned with the *bringing forth* (*educare*) of human life" (*Ibid*). Both the content and form of classroom discourse are hermeneutic. What and how we teach are interpretations of

what is of importance and of possible worlds. And they open ways of being. The hermeneutic circle of understanding opens to new interpretations and unfolds new ways of orienting oneself within the ontologies that are disclosed. As horizons are opened and expanded, a child's and a teacher's misunderstandings and limited understandings as well as the *not understanding* that Ricoeur and Gadamer reference, are interpreted and reinterpreted. The hermeneutic circle opens through distantiation and appropriation of more coherent and comprehensive and more penetrating interpretations. This living circle opens to increasingly larger realms of the unknown.

An image of teaching as hermeneutics is heard in Michelle's voice and words when she speaks of teaching reflection and interpretation. The possibility of different perspectives and different interpretations of what might be assumed as factual have become very clear to her as she discusses the most fundamental issues with children and she brings these understandings to her praxis. She engages with her students in an openness "to other people's realities and perspectives". She opens to their views and their feelings and she encourages them to see situations from the perspectives of other. When a student does not understand a concept or misinterprets her teachings, she seeks to understand their presuppositions and to make her own more explicit to herself and to that child. This way of being in front of the unknown is modelled for and discussed with her students. Her grade six students learn that exegeses represent different premises and different discourses. They see and hear her commitment to learning more about "all that is around us" and her love for exploring that has lead her around the world as a teacher. "No matter who the students are, what age group, what context, what backgrounds they come from", she finds "a great richness and a great wealth that we all can benefit from". This perspective that self and meaning reflect signifying practices is communicated in her encounters with those whom she teaches.

> I think that teaching is very much a give and take situation, it's a sharing of knowledge. I might have one body of knowledge that my students don't have or haven't acquired as much or in the same way and that I can share with them. But what usually ends up happening, and I've found this in all levels of teaching, is that I then get from the same students another body of knowledge or other insights either about the information that I'm giving or about whole other bodies of information

> Even in holding a class, you make certain assumptions. And it's the students that will then challenge those assumptions by something as simple as not understanding the question. And so you have to delve a little bit deeper to figure out why they don't understand my question. And that opens up whole other vistas that you might not have had any access to before (Conversation 1).

> Certainly teaching people from other cultures, you do get a whole other insight into perspective and that we might see things in a certain way because we've been raised in a particular culture. Remove yourself from that, and there's a whole other way of looking at it (Conversation 1).

> It is becoming more and more important in teaching, given the world and the situation that we are in right now that we really do present various different perspectives to our students and give them the knowledge and I think the courage and the excitement and the enthusiasm to be able to explore the fact that there are different perspectives.

> I think the ultimate aim is to try . . . throughout life to attain better understanding of what is around us (Conversation 2).

Trini, too, teaches a respect for different points of view and different ways of being. Different epistemologies show differences that she hopes will be respected as her students go beyond her classroom. Discourses and world views may differ but at a deeper level, she believes and teaches that we are all one. Trini guides her students to more penetrating interpretations. She hopes that they learn a tolerance for differences and for ambiguity.

> I think we teach children how to live, that is , how to relate to other people, how to be sympathetic, how to listen and to realize that other people have points of view and there is no right answer necessarily for everything and their point of view is not necessarily the right one but there are others and that in this big world community we have to make

> allowances for differences. So just how they live with their classmates for a year in one classroom, and they're all different with different hopes and different backgrounds, but they can get on. This is the same way when they go out into the world at large. That's the way it's going to be and things aren't going to always be necessarily their way and so they should adjust. So we teach them to make decisions as they mature and just know that there are different people all over the world. Even though their lifestyles might be different, we are all human beings basically, and so we have the same feelings and emotions even though we might not speak the same language or eat the same food or act the same way, but still we're all one. This is basically what we try to get across to them as a teacher
> (Conversation 1).

Shirley teaches self-understanding. She educes understanding and acceptance of the presuppositions which a child lives and brings forth the hope that it might be otherwise. Children's worlds are opened through her teachings of how others in similar plights to theirs, distantiate from the intolerable and appropriate possibilities. By creating possible worlds in her classroom, she allows them to image possible worlds and in teaching her students to be there for each other, she seeks to open their horizons to encompass interpretations that help them cope. In being there for a child and accepting them and their situations, she teaches a dialectic of hope.

> Last year there was a family breakup and dad moved out of the house. I found many books in the library. . . *Dad Doesn't Live Here Anymore* was one book I read to them and out of that came a whole lot of feelings and how to cope with those feelings. You would be amazed at the amount of input you get from the children in your brainstorming. And you think "wow, this isn't just one incident". You know that you are touching many lives in that classroom.
>
> And lots of times you'll see a child coming to school being really sad and so you'll ask "what's wrong?" And because you've gained their confidence they'll usually tell you. Well then first thing in the morning (you ask), "What can we do to make Sam's day more pleasant?" You'd be amazed at how the children will react as well because you are interested and because you've had them give you input as to how you could make little Sam's day a better day because he's not feeling very happy this morning. You'd be amazed at how Sam is feeling in a couple of hours (Conversation 2).

Charles describes the hermeneutic circle of understanding as "the web of understanding". He believes that teachers must know where curriculum discourses are coming from that they might relate understanding to a child's present horizons and to future horizons and to wider contexts. Indeed a teacher must distantiate from present horizons and assume responsibility for a middle way. Teaching is situated between the present and the future, between the known and the unknown, between the actual and the possible. Charles calls on elementary school teachers to educe understanding of the life we are living not to secure the contours and textures of life but indeed at times to challenge them. He counsels teachers to stand for what they know to be truth even when it is in contradiction with a child's parents' understandings. He cites ecological concerns and aggressive behaviours as examples of contexts in which a teacher might present and model broader understandings. He was engaged in writing a letter to a parent who had transferred his son from his school and complained because of a difference in positions about what Charles had interpreted as physical aggression. This father had encouraged his child to stand for his rights. The child's interpretation of this advise extended it to include aggressive behaviours towards peers and younger children inside the school. Charles was unable to communicate to this parent (who was living in a conjugal relationship with his child's maternal grandmother) a perception that violence escalates violence and that fighting was simply unacceptable. Sometimes in education, *educare*, caring for a child, for others and for humanity as a whole, means that to bring forth human life, one must take a position that is beyond the present understanding of those whom one teaches. Teaching is also teaching reinterpretation of present understandings. Charles encourages teachers to have the courage to stand for what they believe and to model those behaviours and values that they hold as truths even as they open to other possible interpretations.

Hermeneutics emerges as the *method* or way of inquiry and it is a *metaphor* for the interpretive act that teaching is. Ricoeur (1971) argues that "the human sciences (as the

study of meaningful action) are hermeneutical" to the extent that meaningful action may be objectified and to the extent that their methodologies develop some of the interpretive procedures (p.529). Praxis, as thoughtful action, may be objectified in a dialectical "detachment of the *meaning* of the action from the *event* of the action" (*Ibid*, p.538), suggesting a polydicity (propositional structure) of content and a plurality of references (for example, temporal, logical, psychological). Educational methodologies frame and reflect our procedures of interpretation. Hence teaching may be described as hermeneutic, as the teaching of interpretation and understanding. The hermeneutic motion speaks of an analogy of what teaching is at at least three different levels: as a hermeneutic circle between two differently situated horizons of understanding; as the unfolding of understanding within the relationship of its wider contexts to its parts; and as a dialectical play between the microcosm of *currere* and the macrocosm of the ontological.

Teaching as tensionality between subjectivities -Teaching may be imaged as a hermeneutic circle between two differently situated horizons of understanding. Teacher and child must appropriate each other's discourses in an I-Thou relationship. Michelle speaks of opening a door and bringing in curricular content by appropriating her pupil's discourses and opening to their concerns. The hermeneutic motion is transparent also in her description of how children challenge her assumptions and presuppositions and consequently her present understandings "by something as simple as them not understanding the question" (Conversation 1). A teacher opens horizons of understanding and frees a child and self "to reinterpret situations and reach greater understanding" (Macdonald, 1988, p.107) through appropriation of meaningful Rorschachs like the field trips and dialogical interpretations that Shirley speaks of. In the reciprocal motion between Shirley and her pupils, she, too, feels loved and respected. She believes that she receives ten-fold what she gives. Carmen learns about herself in opening to the worlds of each child whom she teaches. In teaching a child how to interpret situations and to face them, she

learns how to face her own experiences. She states, for example, that she has learned that "one's perception of a situation is what determines the degree of stress that one feels" (Phase 1). Intersubjective and intrasubjective worlds are opened in this opening of ever-expanding circles of understanding. Horizons expand and shift as we symbolize and resymbolize moments of grief or joy in our pasts. A teacher brings to consciousness and comprehension unconscious forces and interpretations on the stage/scene of classroom. *Dasein* "only comes into authentic being when it is comprehended" (Ricoeur, 1974, p.6). Consciousness or self-understanding evolves in a hermeneutic circle between an archaeology of unconscious forces and a teleology that opens in front of itself in a meaning in motion (Ricoeur, 1974). Learning may be described hence as the internalization of and distantiation from one's own experiences and from the shadows and discourses of others; as an interpretation and reinterpretation of traces which are already symbolized. Steiner (1975) describes the appropriate motion of this transfer of meaning (pp.296-301). He speaks of *trust* "that there is something there to be understood"; of the *aggression* in the incursive and extractive act of understanding; of the *incorporative* dialectical movement of embodiment and of meaning; and of the *reciprocity* of the the dialectical initiation of "new formats of significance" by distantiation and contiguity. Vygotsky (1960) describes a zone of proximal or potential development, which in dialectic with educational experiences under teacher tutelage, may be expanded. Bruner (1986) and Cazden (1988) suggest that teachers open their own minds to children's discourses and provide scaffolds that allow children to go beyond misunderstanding and not understanding. Thus present horizons of understanding are expanded for child and teacher as a motion between two subjectivities and within subjectivities. Horizons are expanded not only through appropriation, the process of making one's own what was other in a fusion of consciousnesses (Ricoeur, 1978). What is also understood is oneself before the text that is other. New modes of being or new forms of life disclose a new way of self-understanding. The hermeneutic circle

moves between the apprehension of projected worlds and the expansion of self-understanding in front of those worlds (Ricoeur, 1978).

Teaching as tensionality between self-understanding and the continual exegesis of all the significations that come to light in classroom discourses -A teacher's praxis integrates the theoretical and the practice, not only through action and reflection, but as "part of a larger interpretive endeavour which includes intention and direction toward the recovery of meaning and the development of understanding" (Madison, 1988, p.105) in a hermeneutic motion. Through signifying practices, discourses, and epistemologies, we teach interpretation of meaning and of self. What we teach, where these discourses come from, and their meanings in a wider epistemological frame must be questioned by a teacher according to Charles. Where they come from is important and more important is where they lead us with our students. Trini, as well as Charles, understand that a teacher's way of being is learned, too, by a child. Acceptance cannot be taught directly; it can only be experienced. How we relate to our students and our environment as well as to our curriculum content discloses possibilities. What we teach is what our curriculums seek to interpret. Our resymbolizations must recover their original meanings and develop our students' and our own understanding. The hermeneutic circle extends to a wider context opening to an archaeology of the sedimented meanings in our theoretical discourses and to a teleology of our understandings and thus our students' of our practices. An archaeology of our educational epistemologies offers a regression; but meaning is sought "not in what precedes but in what follows" (Ricoeur, 1974, p.21). Possibility unfolds in front of our interpretive work not in a return to the archaic. The movement of interpretation towards a development of understanding, expression, meaning is constituted in a movement of interpretation through the *continual exegeses* of all the significations that come to light (*Ibid*). Not only what we teach but how we teach may be learned by a child. The analogic, what is modelled in our relationships

with them and with curriculum content, is also appropriated by those whom we teach. And by ourselves. Pedagogic actions of teachers and the actions of children are analogic. Like dream discourses, they are overdetermined and may be interpreted at more than one level. Content, thought and the analogic must be interpreted like "writing within speech" (Derrida, 1978, p.218). Their meaning is not something hidden but something disclosed in front of the lived textuality of a classroom. The worlds disclosed within the theoretical discourses and praxis are both reflective and self-referencing, and intentional and world-referencing. Classroom discourses "speak of possible worlds and of possible ways of orienting oneself in those worlds" (Ricoeur, 1978b, p.144). This dialectic between disclosing a world and understanding one's self in front of this world evokes an image of classroom discourses as analogues or meta-level dynamics that move from an understanding of what is said to an understanding of that which has been spoken about in all of its polysemy and polyvocity. Appropriating the metalevel of shared meanings and understandings of theoretical discourses and educational praxis, is an aggressive, incorporative act that opens new formats of signification and introduces changes in a higher order hermeneutic loop (Keeney, 1983). The theoretical is linked with the lifeworld of a child as *second degree* concepts (Baldurson, 1983). Understanding unfolds within the relationships of its wider contexts to its parts. The hermeneutic motion mediates self-understanding and world-disclosure.

Teaching as tensionality between the subjectivistic and the ontological -Curriculum, as *currere*, is a microcosm of the existential in hermeneutic motion with the macrocosm of the ontological (Macdonald, 1988. New ways of self-understanding open new modes of being or new forms of life. Our knowing and our being are inseparable. In Charles, Michelle, Shirley and Trini's voices we hear their understanding of teaching as the teaching of genesis of self and sense in an ever enlarging hermeneutic circle. Shirley co-creates with her students new ways of being at least within

her classroom through bibliotherapy and dialogues about problematic situations which they are living. Learning to read in Grade One or to write different literary genres in Grade Six open whole new modes of being in the world. The hermeneutic circle at this level becomes ontological in nature (Gadamer, 1960; Ricoeur, 1974). The circle is "displaced from a subjectivistic to an ontological level" (Ricoeur, 1978b, p.145). Reconceptualized educational discourses embody an understanding that our knowing and hence our being, is discursive. Being is formed and transformed by our discourses in a dialectical play. And the notion of text is expanded to embrace the lived texts of a classroom in an ever enlarging hermeneutic circle that is also a temporal projection. Today's child learns for and co-constitutes tomorrow's worlds. This radical hermeneutics that is ontological in nature begins with the Heideggerian fusion of "the Kierkegaardian project of the genesis of self with the Husserlian project of the genesis of sense. . . .An existential ontology of the self as a being of becoming and temporality in concert with the Husserlian" theory of intentionality grounds consciousness in the ontological (Caputo, 1987, p.59). Kierkegaardian *repetition*, production of self, however, moves forward in a "linear progression" rather than in a circular Heideggerian movement (*Ibid*, p.61). For Heidegger, *dasein* is defined as existence of which we already have preunderstanding, as being which is concealed but accessible in the present, cutting short its futural projection. However, Ricoeur (1974) re-opens the "truncated ontology" of Heidegger which returns to originary unity (p.19). Ricoeur re-opens the problematic of language, reflection and existence. We are reminded thus of the impossibility of freeing the ontological from the circle of interpretation within which this ontology is formulated. "A separate ontology is beyond our grasp: it is only within the movement of interpretation that we apperceive the being that we interpret"(*Ibid*) within the dialectical play between the polysemy of traces (which Ricoeur describes as a thesaurus) and the conflict of interpretations within which we perceive the being we seek to understand. Praxis, as thoughtful action, is ontological. The complexity and ambiguity of a pedagogic act is restored.

The meaning of what it is to be a teacher is evocative of the hermeneutic motion at perhaps three levels: as tensionality between subjectivities, as tensionality between self-understanding and possible ways of being in the worlds disclosed by classroom discourses, and as a tensionality in *currere* between the subjectivistic and the ontological.

In this search for unifying thematizations, the ontological priority of the question transcends an atomistic conclusiveness. Being and meaning are kept problematic. What it means to be a teacher is condensed in these seven interrelated unifying themes. Five experienced teachers speak of the importance of entering the horizons of understanding of a child and appropriating a child's way of being that they might interpret curriculum discourses meaningfully for that child. *Currere*, as lived curriculum, brings life to classroom experiences which are connected to all that one is. Knowing and being are inseparable. The Kierkegaardian sequential, monochronic (from the Greek, *kronos*) image of the course one runs to catch up with oneself opens through Heideggerian and Ricoeurean re-interpretations to a processual, intercurrent or simultaneous emergence of possible worlds. *Currere*, as the teaching of possible worlds is dialectically situated between the epistemological and the ontological. In the voices of these teachers, we hear that teaching is situated temporally and contextually between inner and outer worlds. Teaching is situated within the heterogeneities of the psychological, symbolic and social. The theory-practice issues of this particular domain perhaps more than in any other field, are in dialectic with all the converging social and temporal discursive influences. Educational discourses speak of the lived contextuality of a classroom, embracing for example, political, historical, and psychoanalytical discourses. A whole teacher and a whole child stand in the whole of being seeking to understand all of what is (Macdonald, 1988; Smith, 1988). Metaphorical images of teaching as the opening of horizons in a hermeneutic motion between different understandings of different ways of being can

describe the meaning of what it is to be a teacher without hypostatizing these interpretations.

In this chapter, these themes that are evocative of what it means to be a teacher are woven into a unifying narrative. Questions of validation are addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

> We say that we *conduct* a conversation, but the more fundamental a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a fundamental conversation is never one that we want to conduct. Rather, it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it. The way in which one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own turnings and *reaching its own conclusion* (italics added), may well be conducted in some way, but the people conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led
> Gadamer, 1960, p.345).

> Only by recognizing the various obstacles and opacities which the project of understanding encounters, and by thus resisting the facile solution of some *absolute synthesis* of knowledge which would contrive to resolve prematurely the conflict of interpretations, can we achieve an authentic grasp of the role of human creativity and imagination in spite of all the odds
> (Ricoeur, 1984, p.16).

In this search to hear the meanings of teaching in the voices of experienced elementary school teachers, we are reminded that our conversations take their own turnings and reach their own conclusions. The inconclusiveness and the discontinuities in any speaking and understanding may be lost in the illusionary finality of narrative text. That the question has ontological priority over any conclusions that are reached, may be overlooked. The question remains to be asked again and again. In different contexts. In different periods in our collective lived stories. Any understandings arrived at are only tentative and open to change and reinterpretation. In the thin fabric we have woven over the problematic of teaching in our dialogues, in the transparencies that show through each

teachers' words and in the transparencies that show through the words of this interpretation, each reader is invited to see and hear personal meanings and new questions and new challenges. The question of what it means to be a teacher has pressed itself upon us and continues to ask itself. We can no longer avoid it and persist in our static hypostatized understandings (Gadamer, 1960, p.330). The tentative thematizations proposed in this work will be discussed in terms of triangulation by multiple readings by the co-participants. The plurivocity of their discourses have been reduced to a unifying narrative structure. Hence to arbitrate conflicts of interpretation and to address questions of validation, each teacher has responded to the suggested thematizations of teaching as:

1) opening a child's horizons,
2) interpreting meaningful lived curriculum,
3) contributing to being and becoming of child and of teacher,
4) standing in dialectics,
5) situated between the epistemological and the ontological,
6) as metaphor, and
7) as hermeneutics.

Madison's (1988) methodological principle's of validation guide this search for empathic generalizability of these texts spoken in the voices of these teachers. Each teacher was asked to reflect on any of the following questions that had relevance for them. The **comprehensiveness** of these interpretations of what it means to be a teacher, that is, the interpretation of the issues and presuppositions of what teaching as a whole means to teachers was addressed by asking: Do these themes taken together speak of what it is to teach? What important issues or premises are missing? The **penetration of intent** in bringing out the guiding and underlying intentions of their communications was questioned: Have I addressed your guiding and underlying meanings? Which themes might have been given more emphasis? Which ideas have I overlooked? To address the

agreement of these interpretations with the real meaning of what these teachers had expressed and with new horizons of understanding, they were asked: Have I represented what you meant to say? Have I opened any new insights for you about teaching in my interpretations of our conversations? To question **suggestiveness** of future research and of ultimate validity, these questions were asked: What implications do you see for future research into what it means to be a teacher? What questions arise as you reflect on these themes? In this final chapter, these questions of validation are discussed and the thematizations that guide this narrative interpretation of what it means to be a teacher are reflected upon in dialogue.

A. QUESTIONS OF VALIDATION

> All understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation
> takes place in the medium of a language which would allow
> the object to come into words and yet it is at the same time
> the interpreter's own language
> (Gadamer, '960, p.350.

Comprehensiveness -In the third phase of dialogue about the comprehensiveness of my interpretations, Trini and Carmen expressed the position that these themes were comprehensive and covered all of their understandings of the issues involved in what it means to be an elementary school teacher. Shirley suggested that more emphasis be given to a theme which she had expressed in the first phase of our conversation. Shirley asked that the pressures of teaching, which have been thematized as one of the heterogeneities of teaching, be articulated more directly and stated more vehemently. Shirley and Carmen express the importance to teachers, to children, and to boards that school boards listen to and hear the voices of teachers. The impersonal third person reference to school boards speaks a monovocal, reductionist, objectified discourse that is in direct contrast to the plurivocity in which Shirley and Carmen speak of teachers

and teaching. Charles reiterates the importance of the influence of a teacher's personal life which had also been summarized as a part of the dialectical contextuality between inner and outer worlds and imaged in an understanding of being and knowing as inseparable. In our third dialogue, he spoke again of a teacher as a whole person in the midst of all that is and metaphorically described teacher and child "relationalities and tensionalities" (Carson, 1991) in

> the example of how a leaf of one plant will shadow another and affect its growth and it in turn will affect something else (Charles, Conversation 3).

The theme of being and becoming within the context of lived relationships in a classroom and beyond a classroom, and the theme of the dialectics between inner and outer worlds allude to this understanding of interdependence and interconnectedness perhaps without sufficient thoroughness and emphasis. Certainly Shirley and Carmen have also expressed the importance of their lived experiences in their personal lives, of the dialectic between the private and the personal. While Grumet (1988) speaks of "the schism between the public and the private world" (p.153 and 169), we hear in Charles' voice and in the voices of Shirley and Carmen that the dialectic of private and the public are lived behind the metaphorical doors of a classroom. Children's lives and teachers' worlds are lived as wholeness not as fragmented, dissociated periods in a school day, beginning and ending as each walks through a classroom door. An elementary school teacher teaches out of being, out of all that s/he lives inside and outside a classroom.

It is Michelle who opens the presuppositions of the meaning of teaching and who reopens these interpretations to integrate broader intersecting discourses and to explode these symbolizations and displace them on a new plane (Ricoeur, 1984, p.24)! Michelle sees that

> the task is not to close the circle, to centralize or totalize knowledge, but to keep open the irreducible plurality of discourse (that). . . may interrelate and intersect (*Ibid*, p.27).

Michelle gives voice to the political discourses and gender discourses and to the aesthetic discourses that she believes intersect our educational discourses. Charles had alluded in our second conversation to the appropriate place of political discourses in lived dialectic with classroom experiences when he suggested that teachers are called to deeper and to broader understandings, certainly of the voices of children and of the ultimate meaning of educational experiences, than those who hold public office. This issue was articulated more explicitly by Michelle. She questions political ideologies which espouse children as our greatest resource and fund defense programmes significantly more than they fund educational programmes. And she questions political monolithic reification of education as job training. Michelle challenges teachers to assume responsibility for an understanding of the convergence and the contradictions of educational and political discourses and to assume responsibility for communicating to politicians their understandings of the complex, multilayered sedimentations of meaning of what it is to be a child. She believes that as teachers we must make our voices heard and that we must also make the voices of the children whom we teach heard.

Gender discourses are an issue which Michelle suggests are of particular signification in an interpretation of the meaning of elementary school teaching. Indeed a significant proportion of elementary school teachers are women. Not all women who teach have appropriated male discourses. Her perception is that male elementary school teachers are remarkably and disproportionately *absent* in the work that is done in their schools. The nurturing and caring, and the committee and day to day responsibilities within a school are assumed by the women who teach.

When questioned about the influences of aesthetic discourses on her interpretations, as she is an art teacher and an artist, she spoke of aesthetic discourses as suggestive of the search for understanding which she had discussed in our first conversations.

> I think that it is becoming more and more important in teaching, given the world and the situation that we are in right now, that we really do present various different perspectives to our students and give them the knowledge and I think the courage and the excitement and enthusiasm to be able to explore the fact that there are different perspectives. I think one thing that would really discourage me would be if we as teachers saw ourselves as teaching, in quotation marks, "*what is truth* " in parentheses, (*what one individual or what one society perceives as truth*). I think that it is really important that we as teachers basically instill in our students a love for learning and a love for exploring (Michelle, Conversation 2).

> Certainly teaching people from other cultures. you do get a whole other insight into perspective and that we might see things in a certain way because we've been raised in a particular culture. Remove yourself from that, and there's a whole other way of looking at it
> (Michelle, Conversation 1).

Perhaps in seeking to resolve prematurely a conflict of interpretations, this inquiry might have omitted these emphases which unfolded only in our final conversation. Michelle has opened new horizons of understanding and has made explicit the conflicts of these interpretations -perhaps the ultimate validity of the meaning of what it is to an elementary teacher are only beginning to unfold. In opening these horizons of understanding, Michelle addresses validation as contextuality in situating elementary school teaching in contemporary discourses which are grounded in the lived history/story of the nineties within political and gender texts.

Penetration of intent -Charles, Shirley and Trini commented that this interpretative work made their statements intelligible in seeing them as an attempt to resolve questions of the meaning of teaching as problematic (Madison, 1988, p.29).

> I think that you have really interpreted just what I said, or *intended* to say (laughter) very well!
> (Trini, Conversation 3).
>
> Donna: Have I understood and interpreted your underlying meanings? Have I overlooked or not given enough emphasis to issues which you have expressed?
> Shirley: I don't think so. I think you have done a fine job, Donna.
> (Shirley, Conversation 3).
>
> I'm just flabbergasted that you can focus on these things from all the babbling I've done
> (Charles, Conversation 3).

In her loving, caring voice, Shirley stated that I had not misinterpreted or overlooked her underlying meanings. Then she urged me to remember to mention the pressures that teachers "have to tolerate and to contend with". She admonished school boards to listen to the voices of teachers and to understand what it is to be a teacher. She did not admonish me or comment on the thoroughness of my interpretation of our first conversation in which she had clearly mentioned her fear that the dramatically increasing pressures on teachers and particularly on new teachers entering the profession would discourage many from remaining.

Agreement - Each teacher suggested that these interpretations agreed with what they were actually saying in our transcribed conversations. The new and enlarged perspectives on teaching which these transcripts and interpretations opened up in our next conversations are interesting to trace.

Suggestiveness -Michelle's perspectives which unfold in our last conversation are suggestive of new conflicts of interpretations. She introduces opacities in this understanding of what it means to be a teacher in opening horizons of understanding by

naming converging discourses that contextualize and inform a personal and shared meaning of teaching. But in making them explicit, she introduces transparencies through which we are invited to look once again at our text and at the text of teaching as lived beyond the boundaries of these pages. She discusses the implications of contradictory political positions for policy and for praxis and proposes that a course on the meaning of political discourses for pedagogy and for the lives of children be part of professional teacher formation. Gender discourses open the question of the meaning of teaching and give direction to further re-search and interpretation. Michelle's understanding and interpretation of the implications of aesthetic discourses for teaching invite parallel interpretations of the implications of curriculum discourses for our understanding of what it is to be a teacher. A distinction between what it means to be a teacher and what teaching means is implied and suggestive of further questions.

Charles opens questions about the backgrounds that teachers bring to teaching. Shirley opens these questions in another direction and addresses them to school boards and universities when she discusses the implications of teaching cocaine and crack babies.

> I really think, Donna, that we are coming into quite a different time in teaching with cocaine and crack babies who will be coming into our schools. I think teaching is going to take a whole different turn around requiring a whole different approach to handing curriculum and to handling children
> (Shirley, Conversation 3).

For Carmen, this reflection prompts her to invite school boards to give more than "lipservice" to looking at teaching a child as a whole child. She finds philosophies and projected priorities in contradiction with present policies of evaluation and the present proportions of our children who complete our educational programmes. In our second conversation, she speaks to boards about taking responsibility for, responding to, the wellbeing of teachers as whole persons. Both children and teachers must be addressed in discourses of respect. A teacher who is objectified cannot engage in dialogue.

Trini validates at a subjective level an understanding of teaching as hermeneutics, as the expanding of present horizons, when she speaks of the power of this reflective experience to open her to reflection on her own teaching experiences that she lives with her students in her classroom. This inquiry points for her to the suggestion that as teachers we engage in deliberate reflection on our lived educational experiences to distantiate from ourselves and our preconscious interpretations and appropriate understandings that honour ourselves as well as our students. Trini contemplates and reinterprets a child's experience and her understanding of teaching as a consequence of her participation in these dialogues.

> I think it's really good to stop and reflect. Maybe we should do it more often because sometimes as I say when you really feel discouraged, you say, "Gee, I'm not doing what I'm supposed to be doing". But I'm thinking of a little girl who has had a really difficult year. She was absent one third of the whole year and I would think, "Well she didn't come to school so she didn't learn a lot". But then maybe this was a place for her to be away from the other things because her mother was in jail and she has to look after a baby brother and a sister. So this was somewhere for her to come and to be for a little while even though she wasn't here every day. And maybe it was good to be with the other kids and to just have different experiences from her day to day living. And this was something different. It was sort of like a port in the storm for her
> (Trini, Conversation 3).

This narrative structure, spoken in these teachers' words, which is "a redefining of what is already defined, a reinterpretation of what is already interpreted. . .symbolized and resymbolized over and over again" was an attempt to integrate anterior symbolizations (Ricoeur, 1984, p.23). These teachers have spoken about issues of validation of the resymbolizations of the symbolizations expressed in these conversations about teaching. The experiential criteria of the hermeneutic circle between embodied knowing and interpretation grounds these interpretations (Shapiro, 1986, p.175). Each teacher validated the reflective theming. Personal meanings and more general discourses were given voice that were missing from the first two phases of conversation when questions of

comprehensiveness were asked. These imaginative, interrelated, intersecting discourses that these teachers bring forth are suggestive of further research and interpretation (Madison, 1988). Certainly many questions remain to be explored. Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) discuss the significance of place. The work of Habermas on Freudian psychoanalysis is proposed "as an epistemological basis for an understanding of the meaning of place and its embedded psychic and social forces. . . .The literary concept of place (which) finds an analog in the epistemology of social and educational research" (*Ibid*, p.5) remains to be unfolded in front of a re-reading of this text or of this place. Implicit in these dialogues is a collusion perhaps not to speak of race and social class. Or perhaps rather than denial, is a Western Canadian epistemology, a particularized way of being-in-the-world that seeks to hear the voices of a teacher beyond the colour of eyes and skin and gender. A distinctive way of knowing, that is part of our nondiscursive network, may speak of the lived history/story of social relationships with a recent past of interdependence for survival. Patterns of immigration and the segregation of our Aboriginal peoples and of our impoverished may dialecticize issues of race and class rather than provoking dissonance/breach or confrontation. The unspoken remains to be voiced.

B. REFLECTIONS ON THESE THEMATIZATIONS

Entering a child's horizons -Each teacher has expressed an understanding of *teaching as caring*. Aoki (in press) writes of teaching as the *indwelling* "made possible by the presence of care that each has for the other". An understanding of educating as *educare*, the bringing forth of life, is evoked. When these teachers speak of being present to and of entering a child's worlds, their genuine caring is heard. Only in appropriating the concerns of a child, does a teacher reach an elementary school child. Each teacher describes curriculum as central to elementary school teaching yet secondary to the relationship that is developed: the relationship between teacher and child and the relationship between child

and what is known. Maslow (1968) informs us that what we must do if we want to be teachers

> "is to accept the person and to help him learn what kind of person he is already. What is his style, what are his aptitudes, what is he good for, not good for, what can we build upon, what are his good raw materials, what are his potentialities? We would be non-threatening and we would supply an atmosphere of acceptance of the child's nature which reduces fear, anxiety and defense to the minimum possible. Above all, we would care for the child, that is enjoy him and his growth and self-actualization" (p.693).

Maslow goes on to draw parallels to Roger's position. What is dramatic is the similarity of these words and these understandings to those of these five teachers who have been co-participants in this dialogue about teaching! Is it indeed Maslow's discourses that these teachers have appropriated?

Interpreting curriculum discourses meaningfully -*Currere*, the complex connectedness between lived experiences and the possible worlds of an imagined future, is grounded in a hermeneutic motion between the conceptual frames of external knowledge and the interpretive frames of personal meanings. The meaning of curriculum to an elementary school teacher is personalized and contextualized in living discourses that are co-constructed with a young child. Curriculum is brought to stand in dialectical relationship to a child and to a child's experiences. Keeney's (1983) description of the therapeutic process of learning change appears parallel to the teaching process. Meaningful rorschachs are introduced to a child. If a child assumes some "meaning or order in it, his search for meaning will then generate new structure and pattern" (*Ibid*, p.170). Narratives and lived experiences in and beyond a classroom are examples of common Rorschachs that teachers introduce. What is taught is that which is prescribed but it must be resymbolized to become

meaningful to a young child. Perhaps the most meaningful educational journey is that of personal becoming.

Contributing to the being and becoming of child and of teacher - Teaching is a human project! Teacher and child are in process. Teaching a child to think and to act more consciously opens other ways of being. This discourse of possibility is heard by a teacher. The reciprocity of a pedagogical relationship contributes also to a teacher's own unfolding. Rogers (1961) describes the process of reaching the self behind the persona that these teachers speak of as reaching a child. Children see behind personas. Roger's message of learning as making a difference and teaching that makes a difference are echoed in the voices of this inquiry. Indeed the qualities Rogers describes of facing a problem, realness or congruence, unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding and a child's perception of these qualities in a teacher are heard in these teacher's descriptions: of openness to children's familial and personal problems, of their own realness in relationships with their students, and of their acceptance and understanding of each child. In this experience of teaching what one believes, a teacher is freed to discover actual feelings and to become oneself as a living, breathing, feeling, fluctuating process, that is being. In this Rogerian description of what it is to be, we hear the converging discourses of: Kristeva (and a teaching/learning subject in process), of Maslow(and the power of acceptance), and of these five teachers who describe teaching and knowing and being as problematic and discursive.

Dialectics between inner and outer worlds -An understanding of teaching as dialectical situates the inner contexts of the mind of child and of teacher within the worlds of a classroom and within the heterogeneities of converging discourses and forces. As I came to know each of these teachers through our conversations about a topic of such profound significance to us, I learned about personal challenges that they had faced. One

had met the challenge of a life-threatening disease and one had lived twice through hospitalizations with psychotic episodes. Perhaps the dialectic of teaching is indeed a dialectic of being. To be is always to be in tension or in balance between psychological and social forces. Teaching is situated within lived contextualities that are temporal, psychological and social. These many dialectics co-exist and converge. They are "the proper locus of emergent meaning" (Madison, 1988, p.20). In being open to knowing as problematic and dialectical, a teacher models a way of being in which dissonances and ambiguities are not only tolerated but accepted as part of the human condition. Kristeva's (1974; 1989) notions of a speaking subject translated as a *teaching subject* revitalizes a teaching moment with subjectivity and with historicity. A teaching subject thus is shown as a complex, heterogeneous force emphasizing that consciousness is far from dominating this project. Such positing of a teacher is inseparable from a theory of subjectivity that embraces the unconscious and the unarticulated and the antitheses of the conscious and the distantiated. Classroom practices thus understood neither reify nor negate fragmented, monolithic empiricist discourses. Nor are the polysemy and plurivocity of a dialectical determinism hypostatized or denied. The converging theoretical, curriculum, social, economic, and political discourses play in an ever-changing, overlapping dialectic. Significance exists in heterogeneous contradictions between irreconcilable forces -separate but inseparable from the dialectical interplay in which they assume equal if asymmetrical functions.

Between the epistemological and the ontological - "We teach out of our own being -there is no where else to teach from" (Abbs, 1981, p.12). What our discursive and our nondiscursive language makes manifest is a way of being. Our teaching of epistemologies opens ontologies. Caputo (1987) images a retrieval of the ontological in a circular motion, in the unfolding of the back and forth motion between being and understanding. Understanding may *fall* from its own primordiality/past into distractions of

the commonplace and the superficial or by the present which draws it away from its projective work of authentic understanding and its futural projection (*Ibid*). But understanding is ontological. Knowing and being are inseparable. What we know is who we are and how we stand in the worlds of teaching and beyond our classrooms. Coming to know and coming to be, as Lacan (1966) states, open the same horizons of understanding. These teachers of young children speak of an intuitive understanding of the impossibility of separating who we are from how we think and talk and act.

Teaching as Metaphor -Teaching as the co-creation of possible worlds is a metaphorical image of what teaching means and what it might be. The Ricoeurean notion of contingency implies a freedom to look also at teaching as if it might be otherwise. Imaging alternative possibilities for evaluation, for example, and opening to the web of relationships with parents, politicians, policy makers in an open dialogic encounter are but one path to a dialectic of freedom that Shirley and Michelle teach and work towards.

Teaching as hermeneutics - An understanding of teaching as hermeneutical is evocative of an image of teaching as the opening of ever-expanding circles of understanding. Teaching is described as the *living circle* lying at the centre of understanding ourselves in present and possible worlds. Understanding occurs in a dialectical motion between different ways of being. Possible worlds are opened in this hermeneutic motion between present understandings and reinterpretations. Exegeses retrieve the ontological in the movement between knowing and being. A hermeneutic motion exists between *archaeology and teleology* in a living circle of self-understanding; between *theory and praxis* in a description of teaching as the teaching of world-disclosure in continual exegeses; and between the *epistemological and the ontological* in a dialectical play between our interpretations and the new modes of being which our interpretations open. To be a teacher means to open new ways of understanding self and world. To be a

teacher means to teach understanding and in co-creating "new formats of significance" (Steiner, 1975, p.301) or metalevel recursions, to open possibilities for new ways of being in a never-ending circle of understandings, in infinite dialogue.

C. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The heterogeneities of existence that coexist, run their course, and remultiply (Greene, 1988) ground the meaning of what it is to be a teacher. Being as a teacher is inseparable from being-in-the-world. Teaching may be viewed then as one of many possible worlds in dialectic with the sedimented meanings of our lives. The meaning of what it is to be a teacher is perhaps individual, unique, personal. Some common threads run through this text. Each of these themes runs through the others as a thread in a Gobelin is woven through all of the others. The work of interpretation has been to discern the path of a thread or perhaps more clearly to discern a pattern embedded in a kaleidoscope of colours. Teaching as a dialectical hermeneutics is a tapestry on which a child works beside a teacher to weave meanings.

The threads of this text are interpreted and reinterpreted to understand from these conversations with five experienced elementary school teachers what it means to be a teacher. Indeed "a conversation has a spirit of its own and that language used in it bears its own truth within it. . .and reveals something which henceforth exists" (Gadamer, 1980, p.345). Partial understandings are expressed and henceforth exist. The intention each teacher in this inquiry expressed is to care, to bring curriculum discourses to life, to teach understanding of self and of world and of possible worlds. These intentions exist in dialectical relationship with the pressures of change that were described more intensely in the preliminary inquiry summarized in chapter four. What teaching means shifts in emphasis in dialogue "in which we do not remain what we were" (*Ibid*, p.341). These descriptions in the voices of teachers speak of this time and this place. More specific questions might be articulated and explored to hear voices of teachers and to allow

teachers to express concerns and doubts and questions that teachers might begin to have an effect on an understanding of what it means to be a teacher. This repeating of our story, recollecting what has been brings to consciousness the meaning that is behind us so that we can have meaning before us. What teaching means to each of us and what teaching means as a collective narrative can inform our theoretical discourses and our praxes beyond the doors of our classrooms.

Perhaps the most dramatic insight of this inquiry is to learn that teaching is a discourse of being. We teach children, beings-in-process. Perhaps our drop out rates speak more clearly of what teaching might be than do our test scores which now preoccupy us. What and whom we teach, when it negates or violates the ontological, although it may not always be heard in our achievement scores, may be voiced in the silence of those who leave the worlds of schools. Perhaps in search of what they have not found within schools or within themselves. Perhaps it is to them, too, that we must turn to hear more about what it is that a teacher is and that a teacher might be. Not to add to our already overwhelming guilt and anxiety but rather to change some of our ways of relating to each other and to our programmes of study, to change our epistemologies and our ontologies. What teaching means from the perspective of a child remains to be explored. It is to teachers that we might return to hear the voices of those whom we teach. And to the children themselves to hear in their voices what teaching is.

The converging heuristic influences on our understanding of the human science of teaching are summarized here to the contextualize the voices of the teachers whom we have heard as co-interpreters. We are reminded in Chapter two in discussions of language and the linguisticality of experience, of Ricoeur's (1981) claims to have resolved the semiotic challenge originating from the convergence between structuralism ("which eliminates any reference to a speaking subject from its analysis of signifying systems") and the psychoanalytic hermeneutics of symbol (pp.34-35). Indeed language is referential; Ricoeur amplifies the reference, the world of the text, to refer to *a way of being which is brought to*

language. The teaching subject is influenced by the presuppositions of converging theoretical discourses. Kristeva (1989) suggests that being must be searched in the "language*s*, in discourse*s* in the plural" of a speaking subject who is not but who makes and unmakes self in a complex architectonics where the discourses of other are included (p.272). Contemporary psychoanalytic interpretations of self unfold not originary experience but traces "whose meaning has never been lived in the present, *i.e.*, has never been lived consciously" (Derrida, 1978, p.214). "There is no such thing as immaculate perception" (Bain, in press). "Cognitive cybernetic conceptualizations view self as a living system creating and organizing our world of experience. Ontogenesis occurs within a recursive model of change-stability. Knowing and being are inseparable, contextualized spatially, temporally, symbolically. Self is embodied and historically situated. Knowing is ontological. Existential-phenomenological interpretations of being focus on understanding the meaning of human experience. "What we understand first in a discourse is not another person, but a project, that is, the outline of a being-in-the-world (Ricoeur, 1981, p.202). Self and meaning are discursive. The project that is teacher or child transcends a subjectivity-objectivity split. Teaching is not a known waiting to be uncovered. It remains problematic, mediated -unfolding *in front of* the worlds which it opens up and discloses. A teacher participates in this opening of worlds and in this unfolding.

Kvale (1986) speaks of Ricoeur's (1971) idea of a logic of probability as more appropriate than a logic of verification to the lived story and the lived contextuality that interpretation addresses. He argues that texts to meet criteria of validation must encompass 1) the heterogeneities of human existence, 2) the priority of becoming over the *status quo*, 3) an openness to changing, possible worlds, and 4) an openness to the lived contextuality which conditions our experience and our interpretations (Kvale, 1986, pp. 18-20). Indeed these teachers describe teaching as embracing the heterogeneities of existence, as contributing to being and becoming, as opening possible worlds, and as conditioned by converging discourses! When heterogeneities are unnamed; when *status nascendi*, the

becoming is denied; when *mimesis*, the mode of the possible is not evoked; and when social and historical conditioning are accepted as fixed and definitive, we have an image of what teaching is not.

Ricoeur's (1971) premise that action may be regarded as text extends his hermeneutics to the sphere of teaching as one of the human sciences. Thus this inquiry is hermeneutical at more than one level: as an interpretation of teaching as a human science, and as understanding of teaching as the teaching of exegesis. This double hermeneutic is the *method* or way of inquiry into the meaning into what it is to be a teacher and it is a *metaphor* for the interpretive act that teaching is and that teachers teach. The problematic that teaching is and that being a teacher is, is opened up in this interpretive inquiry. Teacher and child as discursive and discourse in the place of teacher and child introduces teaching in the complex zone of convergence between psychoanalysis, cybernetics, phenomenology, philosophy, biology and semiotics to name but a few discourses. All human practices are the signifying systems that place being in process/on trial by signification (Kristeva, 1974, 1989). Language becomes a principle means of acquiring self. Understanding is essentially bound up with language. Being and becoming remain problematic, in flux. "Human life as a whole remains strange, disconnected, incomplete and fragmented" (Ricoeur, 1981, p.267). Understanding can only be partial and incomplete. Different exegeses have "different ways of appropriating the whole" (Watson, 1985, p.72). Different epistemologies open different ontologies. Understanding is reached in a hermeneutic circle of conversation between teacher and child in a dialogical transformative process. Understanding unfolds in front of the worlds which it opens up and discloses in a unifying narrative structure (Ricoeur, 1981, p.111). In a classroom, the curricular narratives and the narratives of a child are symbolized and resymbolized and the sediment of traces are deciphered and reinterpreted. Classroom discourses and praxes help teacher and child to work out common meanings and personal meanings. What is said and how we live together the worlds that open up in front of our curriculum discourses constitute the content

and form of our classrooms. How we view and hear a child and what we view as content and form, structure how we live our experiences in our classrooms. What we regard as knowing and how we understand being is mirrored in what we appropriate from and live with a child in the worlds of a classroom. What and how and whom we hear as we engage in dialogue with a child takes place within the time and space of our present horizons of understanding. In opening to the infinite understanding of dialogue, we allow ourselves to appropriate, to take into ourselves and to be changed by the discourses of the children whom we teach. Teachers, as co-creators of the educational experiences that are lived in a classroom, are mediators of the space between the epistemological and the ontological. Teaching is lived by these experienced elementary teachers in its ontological context. In hearing about teaching in their voices, the depth and complexity of the teaching moment is restored to its original difficulty.

Teaching is grounded in the *apeiron*, the inchoate flux, the ontological. What it means to be a teacher is bound up with the dialogical relationship between teacher and child and between curriculum and child. A hermeneutic motion between the worlds that open up to teacher and to child in this infinite living circle that transcends time and place speaks of what it means to be a teacher.

We come not to a conclusion but to another level of understanding -questions will continue to open in a living circle of conversation about what it means to be a teacher. The ontological priority of the question invites continuing dialogue.

OPENING POSSIBLE WORLDS

Opening possible worlds
A teacher stands in the Between.

Between
past and possible
knowing and being
being and becoming

In place and time
In spaces and forms

Knowing and showing in act and in word
a reflection of inner
an image of outer
an icon of possible worlds.

D. Daniel
October 5, 1991

BY WAY OF AN EPILOGUE: HEARING THE VOICE OF A CHILD

DONNA- Do you have an idea of what it is that we will be talking about?

CRYSTAL-Teaching.

DONNA– I want you to tell me what teachers are to you as a grade 4 student. Tell me what teachers mean in your life.

CRYSTAL– Well, it's very important because if we didn't learn anything we'd have nothing to depend on. With an education it gives us a chance to be something we want to be.

DONNA– And how do teachers do that when you're nine years old? How does a teacher teach you what you want to be? What is an education when you're nine years old?

CRYSTAL– Our teacher's really, really nice. And she teaches us the basic thing and then she adds on. She'll draw on the chalkboard and explain it to us and ask us if we have any questions. And if we do she'll go in detail and explain it and she'll help us all she can. She's really good in science and art's her speciality. She helps us with any questions in science we have. In Art we do really neat projects like we made butterflies out of tissue paper. It was really, really neat.

DONNA– How do you know which questions to ask? You said she helps you with any questions you have. How do you know what it is that you need to learn? Or how do you know what questions you need to ask?

CRYSTAL– Well, if we don't understand something we ask her and if it's a really good question she'll go into detail and she'll tell all of us what it means. She wants the rest of the class to know instead of just telling us individually after.

DONNA– What is it that you're learning?

CRYSTAL– Well in Language Arts /Social we're learning about the depression and she's really good in that and in Science we're doing owl pellets and she knows what every little bone is and she can help us identify what everything is. In Math she's always taking extra periods to do that with us because she thinks it's important that we learn Math.

DONNA– You said you're learning about the great depression in Language Arts. Are you learning information?

CRYSTAL– Yes. She gave us three questions we had to study and answer. The first one was, 1) "What made the depression in America and Europe?" We had to go through two books that we had. They were really good. They had lots of information. We had to fill that one out and two was, 2) "What made the depression worse in the prairies?" and that one was in one of the books and it had lots about it and three was, 3) "What were the living conditions?" and that was really interesting to find out how they lived and what it was like to be in the homes.

DONNA– When you were learning that did you think about your own life today? Did it cause you to learn anything that would be useful in your life?

CRYSTAL– Well, we're a lot luckier now. They used to make homes out of top soil. They used to cut the top and make grass homes so we're really lucky now to have nice homes and well, ... We have a lot over them. We have entertainment. The free entertainment they had was pianos, if they had enough money to buy one. They used to make up little games and that was really all they had. They had a couple of toys that they made that were really, really simple. But that's really all they had and now we have lots of fun things to play with and lots of entertainment and stuff to do.

DONNA– How did your teacher get you to learn this? How did she get you to think about how your life is different and to realize that you have more leisure activities?

CRYSTAL– Well for every topic we have, she picks a good book that she reads every year to the kids. This year we're reading "Booky". It's a story about a girl in the depression who lived in a lower class home and they didn't have lots of money and the parents were always fighting over financial things. Our teacher just helped us along and she pointed out stuff in the books and she told us little points that she knew that weren't mentioned in the book or in the story.

DONNA– And so by her choosing a real life story, or fiction about a girl that was about your age, you could relate to that information and it was more interesting to you?

CRYSTAL– Yes. The story's really good. It's a family and they're struggling and they have a neighbour that's rich and they've been helping them along but they don't want to take charity. And it's been hard for them but yes, it's easier to relate to because she's our age.

DONNA– Do you ever stop to think, or have you ever stopped to think about how the teacher plans how she's going to teach you and what she's going to teach you?

CRYSTAL– Not really, but she probably has lesson plans that she makes up according to how the class is and what they can learn.

DONNA– Who is one of your most special teachers?

CRYSTAL– My grade 2 teacher, Madame Godin. They live right across from us now. She helped me a lot. We'd have animals and *she'd help me get over the creepy crawlies* and I used to be really afraid of the little insects and she helped me with that and *she taught me spelling and h.)w to relate to other people and how to make friends*. That was a real problem with me, I couldn't make very many friends.

DONNA– And how did she teach you how to make friends?

CRYSTAL– Well, she'd always be nice and she'd always, if you didn't have someone to play with, she'd try to find you someone. She'd just be really nice to you and help you in any way she could.

DONNA– And how did that make you feel?

CRYSTAL– Well, it really *made me feel special because no one had really taken the time* to find me someone to play with or things to do. And she's always been special. She just had a baby.

DONNA– What is a teacher? How does a teacher do those things? What does a teacher do that makes you feel special?

CRYSTAL– They've always helped me along in things like spelling. I still have problems with it but this year she's trying to help me to see what's my problem and how I can solve it. And they've also helped me, like before I never used to use a dictionary because I didn't know how to use it, and they taught me how to use it and it's just been little things like that that really made me feel special.

DONNA– By them helping you. And teaching you to overcome fears and teaching about things that you were having trouble with. You felt special to them.

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– How does that help you to learn when a teacher makes you feel special in that way?

CRYSTAL– You just have some feeling for the teacher, like she likes you and if she likes you she wants to help you learn.If they like you, and they want to help you learn, you feel that you can learn easier from them so *you take every little thing they tell you in.* This year's teacher is really funny. She's made lots of little jokes but they have little messages in them that we're supposed to learn with.

DONNA– So each teacher seems to have a different way of teaching you what's important. This teacher this year does it with humour and the one in grade two did it by having animals in the class and spending time with you.

CRYSTAL– Well she spent time with us and she'd teach us about the animals and she'd teach us different things that would help us and that made me feel special.

DONNA– How did she teach you to get along with others? You said that was something you needed to learn at that time in your life. How did she teach that to you?

CRYSTAL– Well...she would just have *a good relationship with you* and she'd help you to relate to other people and help you to be their friend and to make them your friend.

DONNA– By...

CRYSTAL– Well..she would *just be there if you needed someone to talk to* and then she taught us that there were other people that we could talk to. And if we needed someone to talk to she'd be there but if there was something else we wanted to talk to someone else about she'd tell us to maybe go and tell one of our friends like one of the other girls . And she would always encourage us to go and play with someone else. And not to always play with the same person. And that really helped me because I would always play with one person and then she told us that there were other people and to go and play with them and see what they were like.

DONNA– I'm glad I asked you to tell me about what teachers are, what teachers do. I've talked with other teachers and they've also told me about loving the children and they said that when they work with children they give love to the children but they get back much more love than they give. Would you say that your teachers have loved you and that you have loved them?

CRYSTAL– Yes. If you give someone love they always give it back as if they repay you. But if you're loved by someone, and you love them, it's sort of like you both give off love.

DONNA– You're motioning with your hands like it goes back and forth.

CRYSTAL– Yes, you sort of give each other love.

DONNA– And so you know what these teachers are talking about. You agree that this is an important part of teaching.

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– You said it helps you to learn when you feel special to the teacher.

CRYSTAL– Yes, because they seem to notice you more and smile at you.

DONNA– There are so many things I could ask you...I wanted you to just talk about some of your learning and what happens in the classroom and I guess I need to ask you questions to have you tell me about those things. How does that feeling of being special to the teacher help you learn what the teacher is trying to teach.

CRYSTAL– Well there are other children but, like we all *have a bond with the teacher*. I think probably all the other children also have a bond with the teacher. She likes all of us and we like her and there are some bad times when we don't like the teacher but we all seem to like her and that liking us seems to follow her and watch what she's doing and she does really neat things. She's really good at drawing and she goes into sketches and tells us we have good answers and we're a really good class. That makes us feel really good.

DONNA– And so then because you have what you call this bond with the teacher, then you want to follow and do everything that she does.

CRYSTAL– Yes, you want to learn from her you want to sort of nab, eat every little thing she says and put it into your brain. That bond seems to always be there.

DONNA– Tell me about that bond. That bond that always seems to be there.

CRYSTAL– Well, it's something the teacher has for you, a special love, like she comforts you, and if you're having problems she just won't say get away and just go away. She'll help you and try and make things right, try and make you find out why it's wrong and what you can do to help it. And at the start of the year we made little promises,what we were trying to accomplish this year and that was really fun. She always has really neat things to do.

DONNA– I'm sorry. I don't want to interrupt you. What you're saying is excellent for what I've asked you to do this interview for but I don't know if I have the volume button up high enough, that's why I moved that way. And so you were saying that you made these promises at the beginning of the year.

CRYSTAL– And she tried to help us if we had a problem, to still try to fulfill our promise.

DONNA– Be more specific. What were some of the promises the children made or that you made?

CRYSTAL– Well I made a promise this year that I'd try and learn how to spell things right and I'd try and get a really nice crest in Canada Fitness and she helped me with spelling a lot because I was in French for 4 years.

DONNA– What is this bond that you talk about with your teacher?

CRYSTAL– It's just *a love or friendship in between the two, in between you and the teacher*. They like you and you like them, and if there's something wrong they'll help you and there's just sort of this thing that goes between you and the teacher that she won't push you away. She knows that you have a problem and that if you have a problem it's her responsibility to help you. And try and make this problem go away.

DONNA– Can you think of a problem that you worked on with your teacher?

CRYSTAL– Well at the start of the year, there were some kids that were bothering us and the teacher just didn't say go away and solve your own problem. She tried to help us and see what was wrong in between us. And she tried to make it right. And now we're actually sort of friends with some of them.

DONNA– Some of these children who were...

CRYSTAL– Yes, who were bothering us.

DONNA– Bothering you and being rude to you at the beginning of the year.

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– And if you wouldn't have had that bond with her you wouldn't have been able to tell her about that.

CRYSTAL– Well, you feel comfortable with them and instead of her just being a strong teacher, like just go away, *you feel comfortable with telling them what's wrong and asking them to help you with it.*

DONNA– What happens when you ask someone and you know they care?

CRYSTAL– Well, you feel more comfortable telling them the little things that sort of make you feel bad instead of just not telling them and feeling worse and worse and angry and stuff. It makes you feel like you can talk to them, they'll listen, and they'll never say I don't really care what your problem is. They will listen and see what they can do for you.

DONNA– And when you have that caring and that help to solve something that seems like a big problem at the time, how does that help you then in the classroom? Are you saying that that helps you in the classroom?

CRYSTAL– Yes, it makes you feel more comfortable. Instead of feeling, oh my goodness, she might get after me for something, you feel more, if I did something wrong and the teacher gets after me it's for my own good. You feel more comfortable feeling like she cares and that's why she's doing it instead of, she just wants to make me hurt. It's not that feeling that she wants you to feel bad, it's that *she wants to make you aware of what you did and try and help you to solve it or make it better.*

DONNA– It's so interesting to have this conversation with you. We've talked about a lot of things but we've never talked this way about your school and your learning.

CRYSTAL– I really like this school, it's good. But there are some parts that aren't as great but there are lots of good things.

DONNA– What are some of the parts that are good and what are some of the parts that aren't as great?

CRYSTAL– Well a lot of the kids think that they're the top, and they'll push you. Like these kids they were being really mean to us, it's because we were new and we were a grade younger than they were. We were sort of the bottom and since it's partly AC, they always think oh we can do anything, and sometimes you don't know some things. And I really like this principal this year, he's really nice and helpful. Like Meagan got hurt today, she twisted her knee. The principal was somewhere else but he came and he tried to help her and see what he could do for her and he's really nice. The gym is sort of small and cramped but it's okay. I really like the talent show at our school. It's really neat. Everybody has a talent and some people contribute their talent and show everybody else what they can do. And we've a really nice courtyard in our school and we just got little fish that our teacher put in. She's really good with animals. We try and keep the courtyard clean and the school ground clean.

DONNA– Is that a special project that your class is taking on, to keep the courtyard clean?

CRYSTAL– No, everybody pitches in but our class helps a lot because our teacher is the science person. It's seems to be, she didn't special in it or anything but she seems to know a lot about science and it's really nice. Our teacher made us switch with Mr. Amils, he's the computer expert and since our periods are the same the other class has art and we have computers - they switch. So they get the best of art and we get the best of computers and then we get it with our teacher too. And we do really neat things. And I really like the programs they have at lunch. There's curling, they teach you how to do that and arts and crafts and you can make all sorts of neat things and computers where you can play fun things. And there's a really nice thing when it's cold and rainy. There's always rent a really nice movie for us so we can watch. And we have floor hockey for anybody who wants to play. I like that.

DONNA– So school for you includes a lot more activities than just the classroom activities and school to you is more than your classroom. It's the school yard and the courtyard.

CRYSTAL– Yes. Another thing I like is in my other school in hand bells you had to be grade six to play and in this school they don't really care what grade you're in as long as you're in division 2. They let you have a chance and they let the grade fives patrol and in the other school they only let the grade sixes patrol. And that was really good. I really like the kids. Some of the kids are really nice and they help you with things. If someone's hurt they'll come and ask you what's wrong and help you. That's nice, *it's a healthy environment.*

DONNA– Outside your classroom. So to you the school is more than your classroom.

CRYSTAL– Yes, it's the whole school. I like a lot. Really the only thing I don't like is the gym, it's about half the size or a little bit less than our old gym. And so we get a lot less space to move around.

DONNA– And you love phys-ed.

CRYSTAL– Yes! I love phys-ed and art, even if I can't draw very well.

DONNA– I'm trying to put a question together, formulate a question, and I can't think quite how to ask you because you've introduced an idea that the teachers haven't quite in

the same way. And I'm wondering what is the school to you? What's the space that you learn in?

CRYSTAL– *School's sort of like a second home* because we're there almost as much as we are at home except that we're usually asleep at home. We have a really fun and colorful classroom that's a really nice place to work in because I always work better in really colorful places. And in art we always do fun things and they're always put up on the wall and they're usually really colorful and we have really nice seating plans. Our teacher researched what grouping we all are in. We were either fire, air, water or land. And she put fire with the air because they mix really well. And the land with the water because the land sort of needs the water.

DONNA– Earth with water...

CRYSTAL– It's land. Together they are the land.

DONNA– Is that an old idea from old philosophy? Did she explain where she got this idea?

CRYSTAL– She got it from a magazine. That turned out really nice and now we're just in rows of three and that's really good too.

DONNA– And so you've tried different arrangements.

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– And one that you liked was that one.

CRYSTAL– I like this one too. I'm sitting beside Chris now. Chris is really quiet but Josh sort of talks a little bit much but... it's okay.

DONNA– And you like that idea of her sitting the class according to some model. It sounded interesting to you?

CRYSTAL– Well, it's really neat that there is something like that and I just happened to be a fire so I don't really mix with land or water but the air sort of goes with me. I like that idea that she will sort of *research what will work and what won't*. I like that.

DONNA– I am so amazed and impressed with the ideas that go through your mind. So to you the school is... the seating arrangement, learning, but first of all the teacher. Is the teacher the most important?

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– And your relationship or your bond with the teacher.

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– And then the seating arrangement.

CRYSTAL– I like, I think the principal's third, because he's really warm. He helps you a lot. And he even sometimes plays basketball with the boys and soccer. He always comes and plays with you. Like he'll choose the team he wants to be on then he'll play with them and coach them on some things that they could do and some things that aren't really right. I like him a lot. And he came on our Drumheller trip and that was really nice.

DONNA– You haven't talked about the other children, your other classmates.

CRYSTAL– Well a lot of the kids in our class are really, really, really nice. Some are a little outspoken and things but they're nice too.

DONNA– What do you mean by nice?

CRYSTAL– Well, if someone doesn't have a lunch they'll always give you a little thing from their lunch and if you're having a problem with math or science or something, *they'll help you, instead of just telling you to just solve it on your own.* And they'll guide you on some things to do and the kids outside our class. A lot of them are nice but some don't, really care for you, they sort of, they call you names and stuff and they aren't very nice but some of them are nice.

DONNA– Some of that other group have a different way of relating to you than your class does.

CRYSTAL– Well because they're an older grade they seem to think, they're the mightiest, they know everything. You're just some little grade fours. And they seem to think because we're smaller we're not as important and that older grades are better. But a lot of them are nice. Some of them just have little things like that. And the grade sixes are really nice. When they patrol they let you do certain things, and some things that aren't very good for you they won't let you do because it might hurt you or something. And they're nice in that way. And they coach you along with some things. Like in soccer, sometimes they'll stop and they'll help you a bit. Like they'll sort of coach your game. And they'll really friendly.

DONNA– Does this happen a lot on the playground where children will teach each other skills in different sports?

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– Or take care to help you with some....

CRYSTAL– Um um, yes. A lot of us, if we're doing something wrong, someone who knows a lot about it will *come and help us.* And if we know something that someone else is doing is wrong, *we go and help them.* And that happens a lot.

DONNA– Like for example...you talked about sports. Are there other areas where that happens?

CRYSTAL– Well, just in some games like jumprope, if you're not doing something right, they'll tell you and, and if you're doing something wrong, say on the monkey bars, and you could get hurt that way, *they'll tell you a safer thing to do that's just as much fun as doing what you were doing.*

DONNA– Is that the usual way that it is? Has it been like that most of the years of your schooling?

CRYSTAL– Yes, everybody's been friendly, ya.

DONNA– At the two schools that you have attended, children treat each other that way where they're helpful to each other and they're friendly to each other and they teach each other?

CRYSTAL– Well at this school we seem to help each other a lot more but at the other school, yes, we helped each other.

DONNA– How do children learn to do that? To be co-operative and to help each other?

CRYSTAL– Well, if we have a problem we know that someone will come and help us but if there's someone else that has a problem and we won't help them, they won't be there for us, or someone else because they'll think well if you don't want to help me, I'm not going to help anybody. And we know that we have to share because *it's our school.* And we don't want anything bad happening because then everybody will be not very happy and it won't be a very good school anymore.

DONNA– And so you think of it as your school. It's your school, it's not just your class.

CRYSTAL– It's like our second home. Our school. *It's more than a school, it's like a home.* Because you're there almost everyday and you get to know people. And *you want to take care of this place* because *it's special to you* and *you learn there.*

DONNA– And one of the ways you take care of this place is to take care of other people and their feelings.

CRYSTAL– Yes, and we have yard cleanups and other activities that helps take care of the looks of our school.

DONNA– And I notice that you talk about taking care of children in kindergarten and grade one to be sure that they have someone to play with.

CRYSTAL– Yes, we have partners and if they're having trouble we'll help them and even the grade ones, if there's something wrong we'll try and help them and correct them so that they don't have anything that's wrong. Like if someone's bullying them up, we'll try and stand up for them and stuff like that.

DONNA– Do you help them work it out? Or how, what do you do?

CRYSTAL– Well we usually go up and find out what the problem is and why they're bullying them and then if it's really, really out of hand we'll tell the teacher and let the teacher help them.

DONNA– Have you ever felt left out at school, or have you seen someone who looked like they felt left out?

CRYSTAL– Yes, we try and include the people who aren't feeling very happy.

DONNA– Have you had days when you've felt sad?

CRYSTAL– Yes.

DONNA– How do you handle that at school?

CRYSTAL– Oh, well I try and find a friend, like Christine that understands and I'll play with her and we'll talk things over and stuff and we'll just sort of tell each other about things. If she has something wrong, we'll talk.

DONNA– It's interesting to hear this. It's so interesting. Is there anything else that you can think of that you'd like to add about teaching or school?

CRYSTAL–Well I really appreciate the teachers who spend the time and help us and the kids who will pitch in. Teachers are really important because if we didn't have them we'd know nothing and we'd just be.. out of it.. And the time that they spend helping us is really, really important. I don't know how to say this but, they take their time and they explain and I really appreciate that and they'll help you and they like you.

DONNA– Can you imagine the time when there weren't schools and teachers?

CRYSTAL– Yes, that would be hard, not knowing very much and always... without school I think I'd be bored because there's really not very much to do. Of course, there's television and games and stuff but, it wouldn't occupy you for 365 days of the year for so many years. So school is something that keeps you busy and you learn. It's fun and welcoming. At the start of the year, the kids that had been at the school before helped the new kids. They helped you. They showed you around and told you what places you could go and where you shouldn't go. That was really kind of them.

DONNA– Thank you for taking this time from your busy life.

CRYSTAL– Oh, you're welcome.

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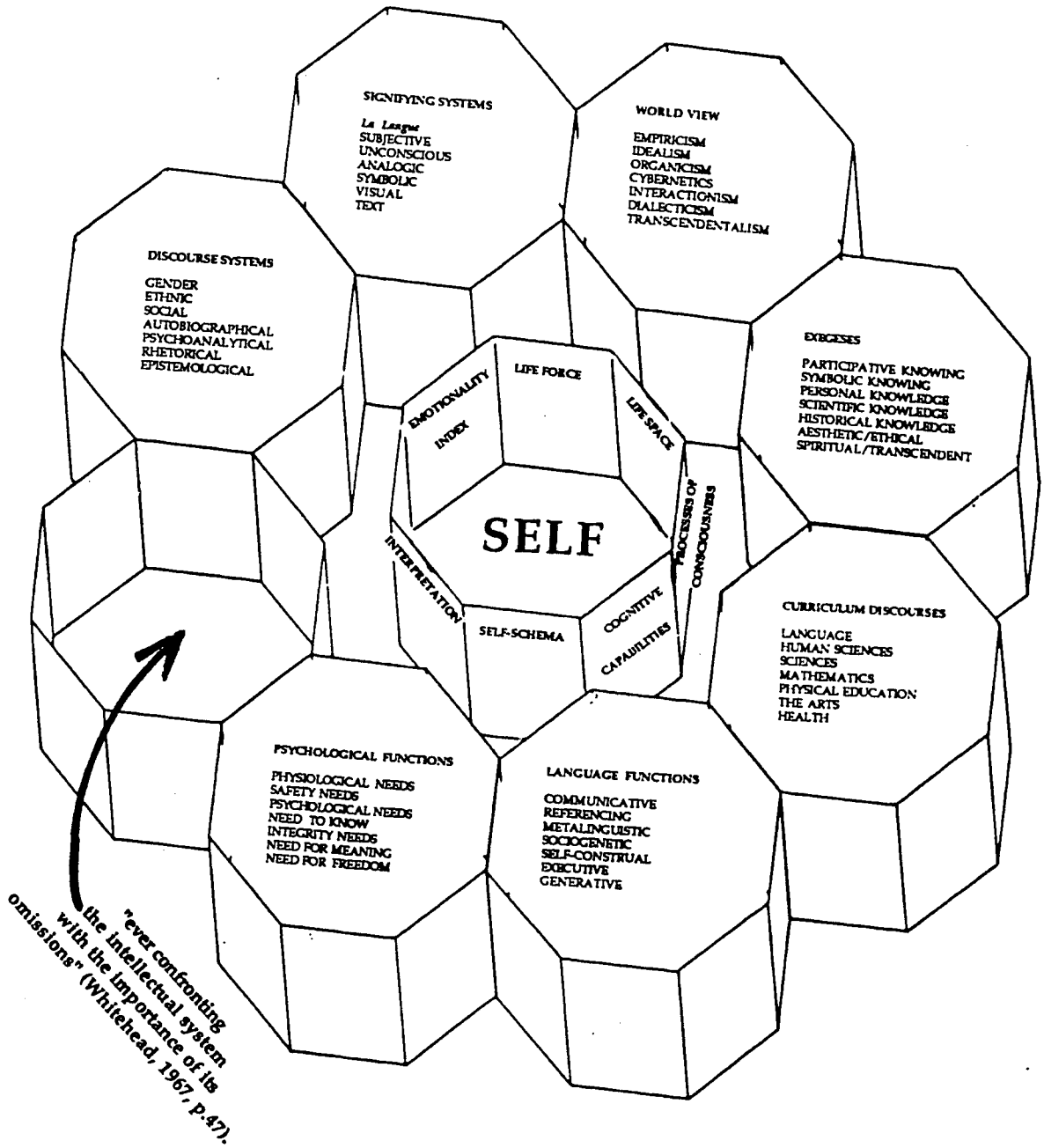
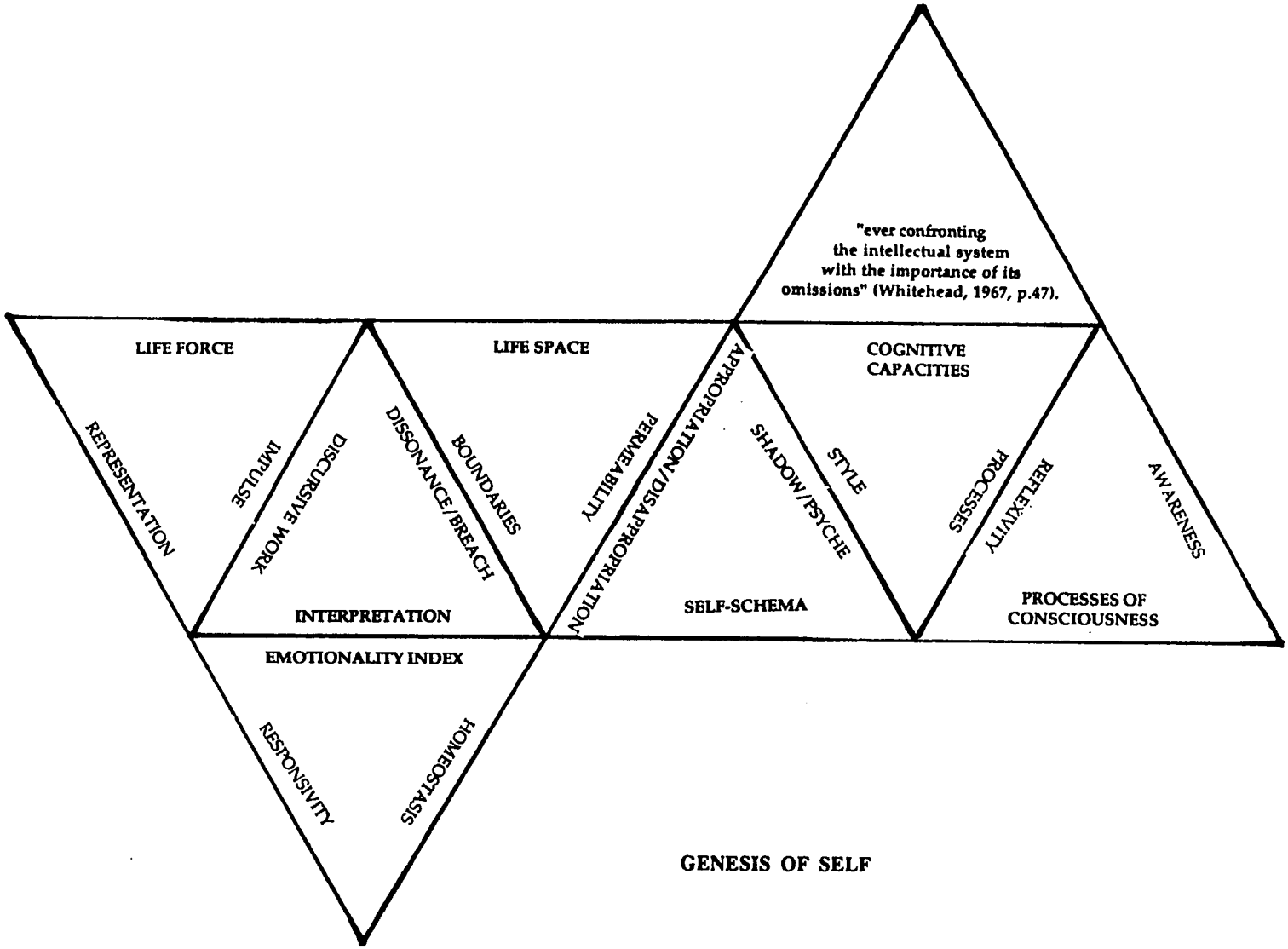
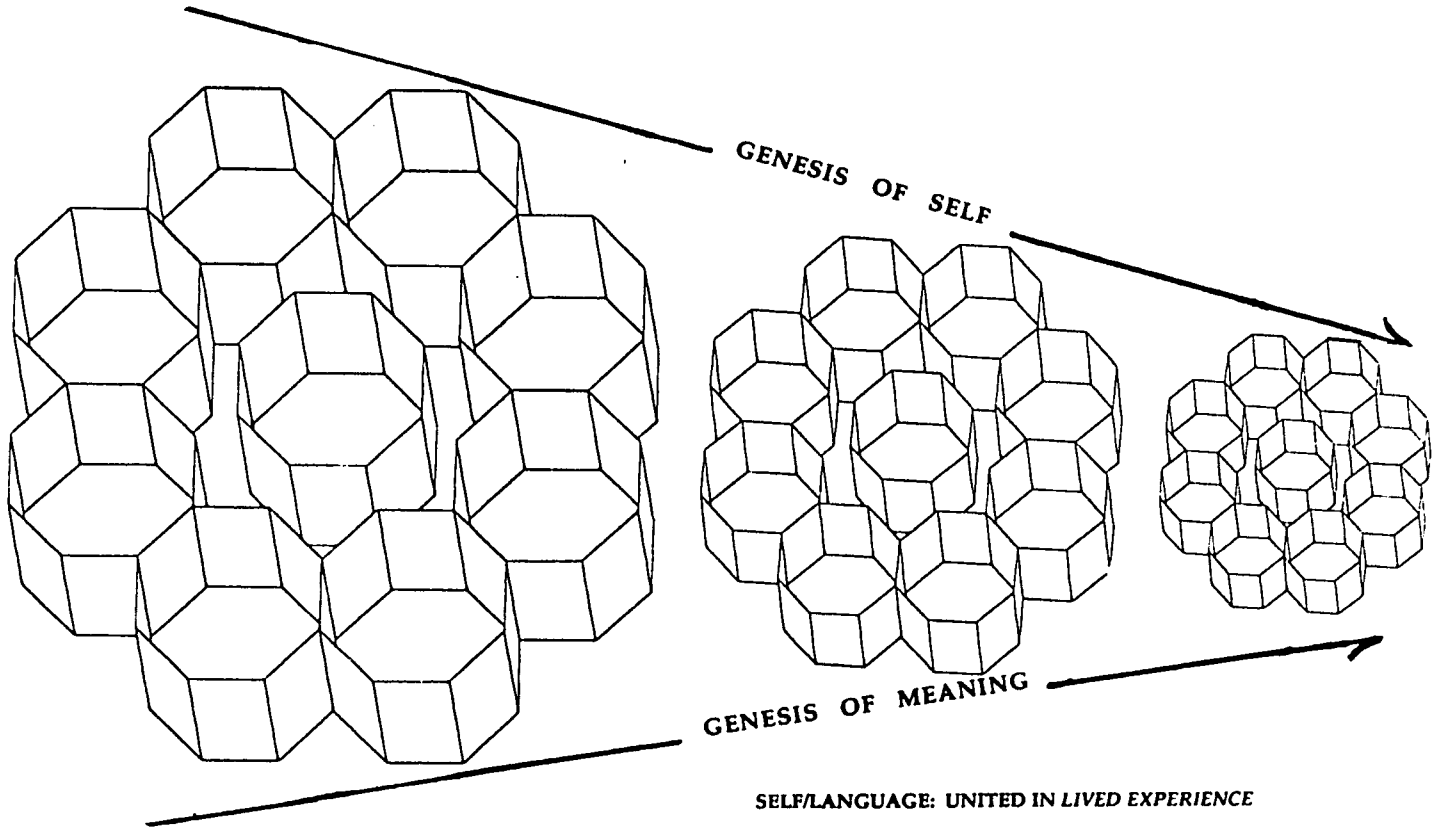
APPENDIX

A DIALECTICAL MODEL OF THE ONTOGENESIS OF SELF AND MEANING





GENESIS OF SELF



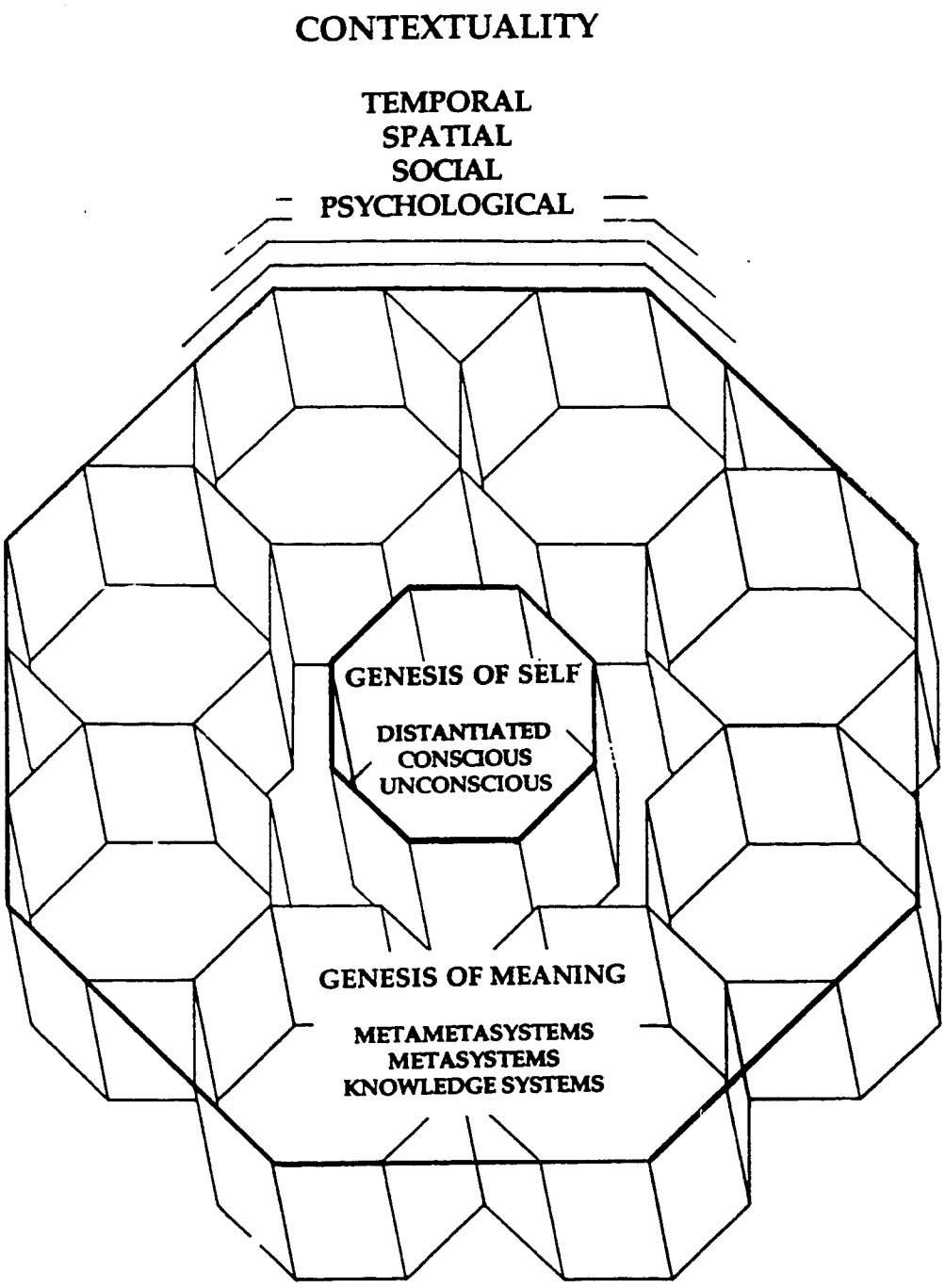
SELF/LANGUAGE: UNITED IN *LIVED EXPERIENCE*

DECREASING COMPLEXITY WITH INCREASING ORGANIZATION

REGRESSION ENCOURAGED TO RE-STRUCTURE ORGANIZATION

STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT: IRREGULAR/UNEVEN/VARIABLE

INDIVIDUAL PROFILE: CONNECTIONS/INTERSECTIONS WITH OTHER NOT SHOWN


CONTEXTUALITY
TEMPORAL
SPATIAL
SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL
GENESIS OF SELF
DISTANTIATED
CONSCIOUS
UNCONSCIOUS
GENESIS OF MEANING
METAMETASYSTEMS
METASYSTEMS
KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS