

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
JUN 25 2000		03 10 2003
JAN 22 2002		

FRAGILITY AND ENDURANCE IN CHILDREN'S WRITING
AND TEACHING AS ACTS OF ATTENTION

By

Dirck Roosevelt

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

1998

ABSTRACT

FRAGILITY AND ENDURANCE IN CHILDREN'S WRITING AND TEACHING AS ACTS OF ATTENTION

By

Dirck Roosevelt

The teaching of schoolchildren is widely understood, by practitioners and scholars, if not by the general public, to be complex, untidy work. At the same time, the demands placed on teaching and schooling are immodestly high, e.g., that schools should produce good citizens, that schools should bring "all children" to academic accomplishments reflecting standards that are high and rigorous. John Dewey and other notable figures before and since argue for a positive connection between education and democracy. Dewey also argued passionately that the qualities of artistic expression and experience should be nurtured in schools, indeed, that education would not be fit for democracy nor would democracy be achieved *until* "the release of distinctive aptitudes in the arts" became the chief business of schooling.

This study enters into these issues from a point of view informed by the author's own practice as a teacher and, especially, a teacher of writing, for more than 20 years, and, by the author's deep sympathy with the ideas and ideals of John Dewey.

The study proposes a "shift in perspective" or a "reorientation of views" on teaching. Arguing that habitual views of teaching portray the teacher as properly yet preternaturally "busy" with, for example, the activities of telling, interrogating, judging, and correcting students, the study proposes in contrast that we consider teaching as importantly comprised of "acts of attention." The construct of "acts of attention" is proposed as an interpretive

device for understanding aims and efforts of teaching that seek to draw out and engage children's creative or artistic abilities, as writers of fiction and poetry. "Acts of attention" as a construct helps make visible and available to discussion under-examined aspects of teaching, such as the experience and maintenance of states of trust, mistrust, and doubt between students and teacher.

The study site and the context for these proposals and discussions is the author's own teaching of a "writing workshop" to diverse classes of fourth graders attending public school in a mid-sized industrial city. A small number of children and their writing are represented and discussed extensively and in great detail. Drawing on philosophers such as John Dewey, Annette Baier, Stanley Cavell, and Elaine Scarry, on the psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, and on scholars of literature such as Harold Rosen and Robert Scholes, the author theorizes and practices "sympathetic readings," that is, interpretive engagements with the children's texts. These engagements and the descriptions and analysis in which they are embedded are intended both to make persuasive cases for the "unsuspected" power of the children's writing and to provide concrete material with which to discuss and explore the construct of "teaching as acts of attention."

Copyright by
Dirck Roosevelt
1998

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

Acknowledgments

The acknowledgment is an intimidating genre, indeed, gratitude being such a weighty load to bear, so happily borne, but making such a sound along the nerves I get dizzy. It is true that *all* the friends, loved ones, students, and significant "others" I know could deservedly find their place in here: true debts, impossible to redeem in practice. Those who have had confidence in me, those who have allowed me both doubt and confidence in them, are the larger cast; those who have directly contributed to my doing of this work are the ones who *must* be named (with the usual caveat issued in advance for all: no one receiving my thanks for what works in this dissertation must be held liable for the errors and blind spots in my thought nor the obscurities in my expression).

First of all I wish to acknowledge the teachers who so generously let me find the space to do the teaching I report and discuss, and who entered so willingly into its spirit: Alyjah Byrd, Jane Boyd, and also, Barbara Acker. They do the work that must be done, with grit and grace, and they helped me to do my part in more ways than they know.

I did not teach children in Patricia Pricco's classroom, but innumerable conversations with her amidst the joint work of teacher education and thought for children contributed enormously.

The incisive and capacious support and instruction of Suzanne Wilson were invaluable in bringing me up to and into this work.

Jessica Howard, Corinne Biggs (formerly Hyman), and Patricia Carini are friends, colleagues, and teachers without whom this never could have happened; Jessica, in particular, I thank for her endless and formative encouragement in helping me learn how to have the confidence to write.

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

Lillian Weber is ever in mind as the paradigm for passionate conviction I have needed, and endlessly admired.

The study group for comprehensive exams that I was lucky enough to be part of ("compers") was an invaluable source of support over the years of working on this dissertation: Carol Barnes, Steve Mattson, Sue Poppink, Kara Suzuka, and Sarah Theule-Lubienski.

Then there are colleagues, friends, and intimates who deserve fuller acknowledgment than space allows me: Thea Abu El-Haj (so much thought, shared doubt, and mutual struggling), David Carroll (well, how many years now?), Sarah Cohen (you know), Susan Donnelly (countless close readings, insights, and shared interests), Helen Featherstone (so much warmth, shared thought, and humor), Magdalene Lampert (great teaching, great flowers, great friendship), Sharon Feiman-Nemser (how did you find time to be aware of *this?*), Ruth Heaton (brains, heart, company, this it-turns-out-survivable thing called a dissertation), Susan Melnick (bad times can make good connections), Janet Johnson Navarro (small spaces and big thoughts, and dissertation struggles, shared over the years), Bill Rosenthal (Mal, *here* of all places, certainly), Eliot Singer (too smart for his own good, generous to a fault, like this whole list), Steel Stillman (well, for a brace of decades, at least, now, of *looking and talking*, for instance...), Steve Swidler (stubbornly and rightly persevering, and dissertating brilliantly, and more), and Kara Suzuka (doubting and befriending and thinking in good measure). To each, I hope you know at least a small portion of how much I have benefited from and often depended upon you.

Of course, my parents, for all their sufferings, strivings, triumphs in the face of the impossible, and love.

Ad

Ad

• Co

Ad

Ad

• Co

Ad

Ad

• Co

Ad

Ad

• Co

Ad

Ad

• Co

Ad

Ad

Ad

Ad

Ad

Ad

• Co

Ad

Ad

Ad

Ad

Ad

Ad

And, at the center of the structure, I acknowledge with deepest appreciation, gratitude, and respect, my dissertation committee:

- Cheryl Rosaen, for her kindness in joining this project at a very late date, for giving it such scrupulous attention, and for setting me straight on some crucial points.

- Jenny Denyer, for all of the same, for innumerable acts of good friendship and collegueship, and for tolerating so much verbosity in so many contexts.

- David Labaree, for his exceptional intellectual and personal decency and generosity, including his willingness to enter into and contribute to such an idiosyncratic project, and for much material support as well.

- David K. Cohen--certainly, for far more than I can say--for his always bracing, always wise, always warm, and always welcome interest, interest that has done so much to teach and to encourage me, and for the person he is.

- Joseph Featherstone. Jay's apparently infinite humanity and capacity for hope, never more present than in dark times, his passion (for the democratic prospect I continue to believe underlies and justifies this project, for the work of human imagination, to name but two), his wit, and his extraordinary and unfailing generosity, have helped to keep me afloat on many a turbulent sea and have helped me believe and know much I have needed to believe and know. I cannot thank him enough.

- Deborah Lowenberg Ball, the director of my dissertation. Deborah: well, Deborah is close, as close as teachers and friends come, to indescribable. Renowned for her work in mathematics education, she had no hesitation in signing on for a project not associated with that, but located well within the work for which she is or should be equally known, studying teaching practice "from the inside." Over the years she has become a "co-participant" in my

but a conversa

acknowledge

ment and a

alteration. D

may say from

ing she has o

upper reason

mind no less t

ous. I am h

and as there is

Finally to T

tion to detail,

Add to Tena

fully telling m

notice mostly

project, a conversational partner--like Jay and a few very significant others I have acknowledged, but with a particular and uncalled for intensity of commitment and attention both to detail and to "big picture"--at the heart of the dissertation. Deborah has, I mean, acted as if understanding what I am trying to say "from the inside" is the only way to direct a dissertation; so thinking, she has challenged and fortified me at every step of the way. I had no right or reason to expect this much from a person who set out to do no more and no less than an honest job of teaching. The gift is simply enormous. I am forever grateful and indebted, and, again, can not say nearly as much as there is to be said.

Finally, to Tena Harrington, for endless patience, encouragement, and attention to detail, my deep thanks.

And to Tena, Tammy Hillis, and a good number of others, thanks for repeatedly telling me to "get back in that office and *write*." Oh, yes, it was Jay's office, mostly.

Layer 1: Intro

Overview

Context

Explain

The end

Conclusion

Layer 2: The

Structure

The first

Section

Analysis

Analysis

Analysis

Conclusion

Layer 3: The

Conclusion

Section

Section

Section

Section

Section

Section

Section

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Overview	1
Contrasting "busy-ness" with "attention"	2
Establishing some theoretical context and antecedents	7
"The case is of child": Theory and point of view, continued....	12
Organization of the dissertation	18
Chapter 2 "There the kid was, stranded in a car": Reading the Fictions of Children as if they Mattered.....	21
The fictional: Some theory	21
Fiction: A stab at a "close" or "sympathetic" reading.....	34
A child's writing, a teacher's reading: Forms of Thought.....	52
A child's reading: Seeing resemblance in difference	57
Afterword: Thinking about teaching, opening up "attention".....	61
Chapter 3 "You are getting ready to be a new person": Mediation of Faith and Doubt in a Writing Workshop?.....	77
Feelings of authority and the authority of feeling: Why look at doubt? A beginning	77
A boy who presents a problem: Comedies of unreliability.....	85
"What kind of place is this?": Fictive adventures, live themes.....	100
Wondering and hurt: A further look at trust.....	125
"I still need a key": Creating a voice	135

Value

After
and its

Unit 4
Business

Other

After

Business

The

Some
Further

Other
sent

After
the

Unit 5

After

After

Other

Other

Other

Other

Other

Valuing doubt: Further speculations	147
Afterword: Attention as accepting doubt, having faith, and "taking him at his word"	159
Chapter 4 "Unsuspected Literatures": Public School Classrooms as Laboratories for the Creation of Democratic Culture.....	170
Overview	170
Art and democracy as related works.....	171
Instance of what a child's poem can achieve.....	173
The need for "democratic culture"	182
"Sometimes it makes you go insane": Further correspondences.....	189
Culture-making: "No contact of this human sort is replaceable"	196
Afterword: Teaching--attending--"forms of life" and the existence of a fragile community of sentient readers.....	200
Chapter 5 Conclusion with respect to teaching.....	212
An immodest recapitulation.....	212
Four aspects of "teaching as acts of attention".....	214
Creating conditions and opportunities.....	216
Sanctioning the content	219
Being an audience, being interested	220
Giving editorial help, helping to make the writing.....	221
Coming to closure.....	222

Appendices.....226

 Appendix 1 Notes on Method.....228

 Appendix 2 Brendan's final version of "The Garbage Can
 Seller," March.....249

 Appendix 3 C.J.'s "Gang War" Story (in two parts).....253

 Appendix 4 C.J.'s "Street Ball"259

References.....265

Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

Only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual. The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art.
John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (1934, pp. 345-346)

This dissertation proposes a shift in perspective on teaching. I argue that some conceptions we have of teaching are so habitual and ingrained that they are difficult even to perceive and that these conceptions effectively prevent us from noticing other aspects of the work of teaching that are, I argue, potent, significant, and deserving of far more scrutiny than they have, to my knowledge, received. I want to turn our gaze, for the time being, *away* from what I call, in brief, "the busy-ness of teaching" in order to orient us to what I will call "teaching as *acts of attention*." The primary site for this effort to expand and re-think some of what we mean by "teaching," this effort to re-direct our vision, will be my own practices of teaching writing to nine and ten year olds. And the main line of approach to those practices, in turn, will be through contemplation and exegesis of some of those children's work as writers: imaginative work that, I suggest, "elicits" a surprising and compelling "vision" of "the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual." Thus discussion of some aspects and possibilities of teaching I wish to understand as acts of attention will be situated in presentation of actual efforts to teach, presentations themselves contextualized--because teaching is only a means, a gesture made in faith good or bad--by examination of the thought and creativity of those subject to the teaching.

Contr

Cons

How

What

How

What

How

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

How

What

Contrasting "busy-ness" with "attention"

Consider three vignettes of teachers and teaching.

Horace tells the students to open their textbooks to page 104 and read the paragraph at the top. Two students have no textbook. Horace tells them to share with their neighbors. Always bring your textbook to class. We never know when we'll need them. The severity in his voice causes quiet. The students read.

Horace asks: Betty, which of the words in the first sentence is an adverb? Silence. Betty stares at her book. More silence. Betty, what is an adverb? Silence. Bill, help Betty. It's a sort of a verb that tells you about things. Horace pauses: Not quite, Bill, but close. Phil, you try. Phil: An adverb modifies a verb... Horace: O.K., Phil, but what does "modify" mean? Silence. A voice: "Darkly." Who said that? Horace asks. The sentence was "Heathcliff was a darkly brooding character." I did, Taffy says. O.K., Horace follows, you're correct Taffy, but tell us why "darkly" is an adverb, what it does. Taffy: It modifies "character." No, Taffy, try again. Heathcliff? No. Brooding? Yes, now why? Is "brooding" a verb? Silence.

Horace goes to the board, writes the sentence with chalk. He underlines darkly. Betty writes a note to her neighbor...

Horace's Compromise, TheodoreSizer, (1984, pp. 12-13)

Mrs. Zajac seemed to have a frightening amount of energy. She strode across the room, her arms swinging high and her hands in small fists. Taking her stand in front of the green chalkboard, discussing the rules with her new class, she repeated sentences, and her lips held the shape of certain words, such as "homework," after she had said them. Her hands kept very busy. They sliced the air and made karate chops to mark off boundaries. They extended straight out like a traffic cop's, halting illegal maneuvers yet to be perpetrated. When they rested momentarily on her hips, her hands looked as if they were in holsters. She told the children, "One thing Mrs. Zajac expects from each of you is that you do your best." She said, "Mrs. Zajac gives homework. I'm sure you've all heard. The only meanie gives homework." Mrs. Zajac. It was in part a role. She worked her way into it every September.

Among Schoolchildren, Tracy Kidder, (1989, p. 4)

A part
part of
or more
or his
has and
a set
the one
national
a day
this a
formation
and a
leader
rooms
rooms
a team
the other
and a
the one

The one
should
of a
the other
the one
the one

There are
command
and of the
the real
the other
the other
the other
the other
the other
the other
the other

A fourth grade student ostentatiously, vigorously, crumples up a piece of his own writing--a story he has labored over for a week or more--and tosses it in the trash, indignantly turning his back on his teacher, who doesn't want him to do this, doesn't want this anger, wants to read the writing, and who, of course, wants as well to feel a successful teacher. In the tellingly ugly phrase that comes undesired to mind, he wants to "keep the kid on the reservation." The teacher reaches towards the child, telling him to dig out the work, assuring him of his interest. The child walks away. The teacher has angered him, through some imposition of authority, some failure to heed, some perceived or actual mistreatment, a shortcoming of fairness or interest. The teacher, for plenty of understandable, and indeed, justifiable reasons, wants to maintain his authority. He also wants to be a responsive and a useful teacher for the child. He wants the child to know he cares about the work thrown away, out of his reach, out--apparently--of the child's universe of cared-for things. He wants to help the child take whatever next step the writing may have suggested.

The teacher reaches towards the child--as if to put a hand on his shoulder, to say, "go ahead and pick it up, I do want to read it," or as if to say, "damn it, go get that back now." Or as if to communicate both moods at once. The teacher stretches towards the child, physically, and in his attitude, his effort (in thought, feeling, will) to retrieve a situation gone sour.

Memo, Dirck Roosevelt, (Fall, 1996)

There are commonalities across these three vignettes. Each teacher tells--commands--and speaks as if entitled to, as an authority, though the amount of telling varies from portrait to portrait. Both the fictional Horace and the real teacher of the third vignette can reasonably be said to be failing in these moments: a precise understanding of adverbs is not (yet?) evident, the child's short story remains defiantly (perhaps, or sadly), in the trash. Beyond this, the differences between the first two scenes on the one hand and the third on the other are of more interest than the similarities. The scenes are constructed differently, for one thing. "Horace" and "Mrs. Zajac" are, literally, the lead characters in each of their scenes; indeed, Chris Zajac is described as

process in 2
the stage an
a month pro
apartments
and teach
the two se
and there
and Certa
the that B
the Sizers
transfer all
man to be
mainly a
and she is
part of the
nothing
and inclu
the claim
the dimen
relatively
and madeq
the fact s

to improve
the

an actress in "a role" ("in part," to be sure). These two teachers appear first, down stage and center. The third scene, however, opens with the actions of the "fourth grade *student*," to which the teacher--as if now striding down stage towards the student--attempts to respond. To the extent that the much abused "teacher-centered" versus "child-centered" distinction holds water, the first two scenes depict teacher-centered instruction; the third may suggest a child-centered classroom. The quality of feeling varies from scene to scene as well. Certainly we infer, correctly, Horace's feelings of frustration--but it is notable that "brooding darkly" has had all the feeling washed out of it--except that in Sizer's clever handling the phrase takes in Horace, Sizer himself, and the reader, all gloomily brooding on teaching--but for the students the phrase appears to be mainly an occasion to demonstrate their inability to satisfactorily account for adverbs. Chris Zajac's feeling would appear to be feigned: she is an actress emoting as part of her job.¹ The teacher in the third vignette, or the author of that vignette, though, appears almost preoccupied with feeling: The student is "indignant," "angry"; the teacher is full of "wants," including the wish to "feel successful." He is also angry, has "ugly" thoughts, claims to "care," and virtually pleads with the child, suggesting yet another dimension of feeling. Horace *interrogates*, and explicitly, immediately, *judges* the adequacy of students' answers (so far, they are all judged inadequate, though several are allowed to show some promise). Mrs. Zajac "halt(s) illegal maneuvers," "like a traffic cop"; her hands are described

¹ This of course would not be an entirely fair characterization, as readers of *Among Schoolchildren* will know. For my purposes the fact that both "Horace" and Chris Zajac are honorable teachers doing good work in difficult circumstances is an asset. The distinctions I am drawing are not between "good" teaching and "bad" teaching; rather, they are between, most broadly, different *views* of teaching or, more narrowly, they are efforts to relocate peripheral or neglected aspects of teaching to the center.

as ready to draw pistols at any moment. Above all, she is "*very busy*." The third teacher "wants to be...responsive."

In this dissertation, I examine teaching with an eye towards that desired quality of responsiveness. This necessarily locates me and the work in relation to two equally important subjects of examination: the interior state from which *desiring* and *responding* emanate, and the persons and objects to which the teacher responds, wishes to respond, or fails to respond. Hence, my own teaching, allowing me (partial, to be sure), access to my own "interior states," and prolonged exposure to my students and their work, is the research site.

Centrally, the dissertation proposes a conceptualization of *teaching as acts of attention*. The goals of this (re)conceptualization are multiple. In the first place, the concept enables me to illuminate important but under-examined aspects of teaching--to call them from the periphery to the center of the stage. ("Trust" between students and teachers--and its complements and contrasts--is one of those "under-examined aspects," one I examine at length in Chapter 3.) In the second place, more ambitiously, the concept of teaching as acts of attention offers itself as the shift in perspective I spoke of at the outset, a potential reorientation of our understanding of what is fundamental to teaching. Methodologically, the concept functions both selectively and dialectically. That is, as an organizing idea, it helps me to choose from among the available data, and serves as an interpretive lever for examination of that data. And the concept organizes the rhythm of the work, directing and animating the flow of analysis now to particular, concrete events, now to larger ideas and speculations, and back again.

One

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

11-11-11

One place to begin the argument for this concept is through a preliminary inquiry into the meaning of the word and the idea, "attention." We were told of the third teacher that he

stretches towards the child, physically, and in his attitude, his effort (in thought, feeling, will) to retrieve a situation gone sour.

This teacher, in this small drama that did in fact occur, can be said to be *attending to* the child. The fact that that attention is not visibly bearing fruit is part of the meaning of the word--that is, it is one of its myriad potentials. As the dictionary gives it to us, "attention" (cognate with "tend" and "tendency," a fact that will turn out to have importance) literally, originally, means to *stretch towards*. It is not given that *reaching* or *taking hold* will occur. The word long ago acquired meanings implicating an attitude of the spirit as well as the body. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), the basic meaning of the word is:

To stretch to... *hence*, to direct the mind or observant faculties, to listen, apply oneself; to watch over, minister to, wait upon, follow, frequent; to wait for, await, expect...

Attention connotes, then, a disposition of will, mind, energy, sense organs, and heart; as an attitude of the body it conjures up both the image of stretching towards an object of concern, and that of the body held in reserve, awaiting the occasion for action. Attention implies both watching out *for*, or over, and waiting *upon*; it suggests *concentration*; as a sibling of *tend*, it incorporates the feelings of *care* and the activities of *caring-for* or *cultivating*. (These last meanings, in turn, will take us to *culture* and *culture-making*, important topics throughout the dissertation, and central to the discussion of Chapter 4.) As the use of "minister" (as a verb; the noun form works as well) in the *OED* definition points up, the attitude of attention paradoxically

1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 45
 46
 47
 48
 49
 50
 51
 52
 53
 54
 55
 56
 57
 58
 59
 60
 61
 62
 63
 64
 65
 66
 67
 68
 69
 70
 71
 72
 73
 74
 75
 76
 77
 78
 79
 80
 81
 82
 83
 84
 85
 86
 87
 88
 89
 90
 91
 92
 93
 94
 95
 96
 97
 98
 99
 100
 101
 102
 103
 104
 105
 106
 107
 108
 109
 110
 111
 112
 113
 114
 115
 116
 117
 118
 119
 120
 121
 122
 123
 124
 125
 126
 127
 128
 129
 130
 131
 132
 133
 134
 135
 136
 137
 138
 139
 140
 141
 142
 143
 144
 145
 146
 147
 148
 149
 150
 151
 152
 153
 154
 155
 156
 157
 158
 159
 160
 161
 162
 163
 164
 165
 166
 167
 168
 169
 170
 171
 172
 173
 174
 175
 176
 177
 178
 179
 180
 181
 182
 183
 184
 185
 186
 187
 188
 189
 190
 191
 192
 193
 194
 195
 196
 197
 198
 199
 200
 201
 202
 203
 204
 205
 206
 207
 208
 209
 210
 211
 212
 213
 214
 215
 216
 217
 218
 219
 220
 221
 222
 223
 224
 225
 226
 227
 228
 229
 230
 231
 232
 233
 234
 235
 236
 237
 238
 239
 240
 241
 242
 243
 244
 245
 246
 247
 248
 249
 250
 251
 252
 253
 254
 255
 256
 257
 258
 259
 260
 261
 262
 263
 264
 265
 266
 267
 268
 269
 270
 271
 272
 273
 274
 275
 276
 277
 278
 279
 280
 281
 282
 283
 284
 285
 286
 287
 288
 289
 290
 291
 292
 293
 294
 295
 296
 297
 298
 299
 300
 301
 302
 303
 304
 305
 306
 307
 308
 309
 310
 311
 312
 313
 314
 315
 316
 317
 318
 319
 320
 321
 322
 323
 324
 325
 326
 327
 328
 329
 330
 331
 332
 333
 334
 335
 336
 337
 338
 339
 340
 341
 342
 343
 344
 345
 346
 347
 348
 349
 350
 351
 352
 353
 354
 355
 356
 357
 358
 359
 360
 361
 362
 363
 364
 365
 366
 367
 368
 369
 370
 371
 372
 373
 374
 375
 376
 377
 378
 379
 380
 381
 382
 383
 384
 385
 386
 387
 388
 389
 390
 391
 392
 393
 394
 395
 396
 397
 398
 399
 400
 401
 402
 403
 404
 405
 406
 407
 408
 409
 410
 411
 412
 413
 414
 415
 416
 417
 418
 419
 420
 421
 422
 423
 424
 425
 426
 427
 428
 429
 430
 431
 432
 433
 434
 435
 436
 437
 438
 439
 440
 441
 442
 443
 444
 445
 446
 447
 448
 449
 450
 451
 452
 453
 454
 455
 456
 457
 458
 459
 460
 461
 462
 463
 464
 465
 466
 467
 468
 469
 470
 471
 472
 473
 474
 475
 476
 477
 478
 479
 480
 481
 482
 483
 484
 485
 486
 487
 488
 489
 490
 491
 492
 493
 494
 495
 496
 497
 498
 499
 500
 501
 502
 503
 504
 505
 506
 507
 508
 509
 510
 511
 512
 513
 514
 515
 516
 517
 518
 519
 520
 521
 522
 523
 524
 525

combines a kind of leadership and a kind of service. Finally, attention connotes expectancy: a sense that something or someone valuable or important will happen here, which we are called upon to notice, if need be, to protect, and to engage.²

Establishing some theoretical context and antecedents

The concept of *teaching as acts of attention*, then, may serve to shape how we look at and understand teaching. It concentrates on observing, listening, noticing, remembering, anticipating, reflecting (in both its currently fashionable and its more literal senses), imagining, cultivating, and contemplating as components of teaching. In addition to these largely receptive activities, the concept is intended to focus on doing something with the fruits of that receptivity; specifically, it addresses *creating* in several senses to be developed more fully in subsequent chapters, such as, creating *culture*, making *space*, and helping children to do the work of culture-making, specifically in the case of this work, *writing*. In these senses, the concept relies in part on William James' "*where faith in a fact can help create the fact*" (1984, p. 323; the whole essay is pertinent to my work here). All of this is in deliberate contrast to teaching understood as consisting largely or essentially in telling, commanding, instructing, directing, interrogating, testing, judging, correcting, and the like. A contrast between active and passive is *not* intended, though a contrast between calm and restless may be appropriate. Most succinctly, the intention is to counter the image of teaching

² I follow the etymological trail a few paces further for the sake of another word. One of attention's relatives is *tendency*, which can be described as an inclination, a predisposition, a likelihood, an attitude or orientation of the spirit or soul. (It is even perhaps, containing *tend*, the attitude or fact of embodied care.) The word "attitude" has at this point made its way into the discussion half a dozen times. I don't think this is incidental and I would like, looking ahead, to mark for future reference the fact that *attitude* is an importantly placed, significant word in *The Child and the Curriculum* (Dewey, 1956b).

appears

and not

the 1980

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

1980 and

as a preternaturally *busy* endeavor with an image of teaching as a *thoughtful* activity (not finding that phrase paradoxical) (see [Lampert, in press] and [Schön, 1983]). And, as indicated a moment ago, making space for *students'* "thoughtful activity," including the activities of "observing, listening, contemplating, making," and, centrally, *imagining*, is essential to and is indeed the justification for this perspective on teaching. I will return to this issue repeatedly. I want to stress that the images and conceptualizations I outline here and pursue in the body of the dissertation are not designed to *eliminate* "telling," etc. as elements, they are intended only to move those familiar teaching activities to the side for the time while bringing *attention* to the fore.

Conceived of in these terms, teaching is an aesthetically oriented activity, one which might be viewed as a form of *criticism* in the non-pejorative sense of *acts of appraisal and appreciation*. It also appears as a *psychological* activity in several senses, including the literal and the Deweyan: as work concerned with "how mind answers to mind," "soul action," "inner attention," and "the first hand and personal play of mental powers" (1974 , pp. 324 & 318). These terms, these "inner" or "psychological" aspects of teaching, will recur liberally throughout the dissertation.

What, though, gives rise to the image of the "busy" teacher, and what more can be said about what might be gained by, at least temporarily, displacing it with a focus on teaching as acts of attention? The busy image is there in Horace's pedagogy as earlier shown: give directions, ask questions, evaluate responses,³ give further instructions, all at a rapid clip, all in the

³ Note Jackson's observation (1986, e.g. pp. 66-68) that in questioning for the purposes of evaluating teachers betray a lack of trust, are "insincere," for another glimpse of why a look at *attention* in teaching may yield insights and possibilities impossible to grasp in the more familiar view; again, "trust" and its problems is a central theme of my Chapter 3.

service of the teacher's previously chosen destination. It is even more visible in Chris Zajac and her "frightening" energy. It is grimly visible in Jackson's depiction of the "the teacher, with his prescriptive dicta and his surveillance over students' attention...the student's first 'Boss,'" and of school as a place where students are obliged to learn "the denial of desire" and how to "falsify behavior" (1968, pp. 31, 15, & 27). And it is straightforwardly visible in an anecdote told by a colleague. She observed one of her student-teachers during "center time" (a time when students are permitted to choose from a number of activities and are allowed an amount of self-direction towards ends of their own choosing). She asked why the student-teacher seemed so bored and disconnected, apathetic. The student-teacher replied, as if with her hands still in her pockets, that she thought of "center time" as "more or less my break time" (K. Dunsmore, personal communication, 1997). --As if, when the student exercises some volition and self-direction, the teacher is necessarily out of work. Here, as with the Jackson remark it echoes, we touch on a theme I will address by a different route later: questions of the possibilities of schooling as fostering, or impeding, the development of democracy. And the "busy teacher" image can be caught in the "common view of teaching as prevention and repair,"⁴ a view which would seem to have little to do with the meaning of *to educate*, to lead forth, to draw out.

A source or originating occasion of this expectation of busy-ness--which the teacher tends to feel so strongly it is hardly if ever necessary for any on-looker to propose it--can perhaps be found in a deep paradox of teaching. On the one hand, as teachers we are supposed to possess something our students can benefit from--we may as Jackson says be akin to "gift-givers" (1986, p. 67)--

⁴ (D. Ball, personal communication, 1997). This view assumes as its starting point the idea that children are essentially faulty goods.

and we wish to feel needed; on the other hand, as has often been observed, our purpose as teachers is have our usefulness outgrown, to be left behind. Both expectations cannot be satisfied at once, nor once and for all. Pushing a bit further, we can see that there is *sadness* in teaching: Though, in our relationships with students they may or must be, in sociological terms "primary" to us, we are necessarily "secondary" to them.⁵ This adds a considerable dimension of feeling to "being left behind."⁶ And yet, or therefore, there is *anxiety* in teaching, when we return our gaze to the idea that students are expected to need us, that we are supposed to have something of worth that they don't have. This leads us to look for what they *don't* know and *can't* do, because *there* we see a job of teaching to do. We worry if they seem to understand something we have missed, if they don't seem to need us. What am I do if I don't have anything to tell you, to show you, which I can test you on next week? What if your behavior does not stand in need of correction? I will have no purpose, my work will have no focus, nor justification. This anxiety, then, puts a focus on children's inabilities and needs, on their dependence--which can be seen as precisely the thing teaching is supposed to "remedy."

If we could look past or through the busy-ness of the teacher to the thoughtfulness and receptivity of the teacher, we might see something of the interior life of teaching. This, again, would be a vantage point for "psychological observation," for "insight into soul-action"--that of the teacher (Dewey, 1974, pp. 325 & 319). For example, to refer once more to one of the "under-examined" aspects of teaching I am interested in, we might glimpse something of how the teacher experiences trust, mistrust, and doubt,

⁵ (D. Labaree, personal communication, 1997).

⁶ Of course, granted a reasonable degree of psychological good health, this is also cause for great satisfaction.

worry and confidence, etc., and how these play both into the overt or manifest activities, choices of action, of teaching and into how the teacher listens and understands, or fails to understand. Such, at any rate, is one of the aims of this dissertation.

Looking at the teacher as one who listens, who is receptive--who is attentive--brings up again the idea of teaching as aesthetically oriented, with a job of teaching being to provide the student--more accurately, the student's *work*--substantive gestures of appraisal and appreciation. This is to identify the teacher as, in part, an *audience*. In particular, the teacher will be the kind of audience that artists in all fields seek: one that is responsive, willing to be led where the artist wishes (game for "the willing suspension of disbelief"), enthusiastic at least some of the time, but also actively intelligent and critical, within, for the most part, the terms set by the artist's project and tradition. This conception, again, argues for contemplation and reflection, in which the teacher makes no haste to determine the meaning of students' work and expressions but rather is willing to live with them and let their meanings emerge and accrue over time. Simone Weil stresses this aspect of effortful patience when she says, "[a]ttention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready..." (1977, p. 49). One is *ready* because one is expectant, hopeful, curious; one *suspends thought* --provisionally, in order to be ready to resume thought guided by the student's productions--because the job of attending is not to *determine* the object of attention but to be alert and alive to it *as* it emerges, to answer it on its own grounds, the grounds where we meet, where the child's present and future tendencies are joined.

The idea of the teacher choosing a certain--provisional, temporary, expectant--*emptiness* of thought, and the idea that the object of attention will

necessarily
way. Can
concept of
ways we co
movement in

The cas

Reaching

er of the cha
n longer I ha
ere. And t
ten of teach
ere-the en
sion to have
and re-ma

A second

minizing
studies to
London. De
central lazi
sited in the
and cr
ture, "sua
reas of the
the child
Revised u
the prob

not necessarily be the child *per se* but the child's representations in works (see, e.g., Carini, 1991) brings to the fore another of the teacher's jobs within the concept of teaching as attention. That is the job of "making space," perhaps, we could say, making a *play space* in which the child can experiment, invent, imagine, take risks.

"The case is of child": Theory and point of view, continued

Reaching, from these last remarks, back to the three vignettes near the start of the chapter, there are two dangers that need to be addressed. One is the danger I have tried to vivify with discussion of the "busy-ness" of the teacher. And that is simply to suppose that teachers and teaching are the objects of teaching. They are not: the teacher is a means or a medium; the student--the enhancement of the student's experience, the enabling of the student to have transformative power over experience and the world, thus to join and re-make the "community"--is the point.

A second danger is the one Dewey tried to talk us out of long ago, the dichotomizing of "child-centered" and "teacher- or subject-centered" approaches to teaching and curriculum building. In *The Child and the Curriculum*, Dewey did his economical best to argue us out of the intellectual and moral laziness involved in all dichotomous thinking and specifically involved in the notion that we must *either* suppose that "life (is) petty, narrow, and crude...the child egoistic, self-centered, impulsive..." and that therefore, "(s)ubject matter furnishes the end, and...determines the method (whereas) (t)he child is simply the immature being who is to be matured" *or* that "the child is the starting-point, the center, and the end" (1956b, pp. 7, 8 & 9). He urged upon us a "reconstruction" of what is after all "a really serious practical problem--that of interaction"--also called "*due* interaction," which I

take to be an invocation of *justice*--between "an immature, undeveloped being and certain social aims, meanings, values incarnate in the matured experience of the adult" (p. 4, emphasis added). He warned as well that such reconstruction entailed "travail of thought" (p. 4) and then went ahead and tried to walk us through it, asking us to understand that subject matter is not "fixed and ready made," that the child's experience is not "something hard and fast," but rather, "fluent [as if "experience" itself could *speak*: which, as I hope to demonstrate, it can], embryonic, vital," urging us to "realize [that is, both to see and to make true in action] that the child and the curriculum are simply two points which define a single process" (p. 11). He developed the idea of "the psychological" and "the logical" (e.g. p. 10) as characterizing those two points, instructed us on the usefulness and beauty of "maps" while insisting that "(t)he map is not a substitute for personal experience(, it) does not take the place of an actual journey" (p. 20). The purpose of the map, the purpose of subject matter, is to give "past experience in that net form which renders it most available and most significant, most fecund for future experience" (p. 21). Subject matter--hence presumably the whole apparatus of the classroom--has no justification except insofar as it acquires "significance" and fertility in the life of the child. Thus the teacher's "problem is that of inducing a vital and personal experiencing" (p. 23). Dewey never uses a word like "vital" (like "fecund" before it) carelessly. He means us to understand that the child's experience in the classroom, if it is educationally, morally, politically justifiable, must have aspects of urgency, even of necessity, and it must *actually* be life-producing which is in Dewey's terms to say, productive of ever richer, more significant, communicable human experience. He points out, like Rousseau before him, that "(w)e get used to the chains we wear" (p. 28): we get used to trivial, insignificant, "deadening," isolating experience or

area for

42 pack

3227 28

100

ZR02

and

James

23 44

again be

1933

52 years

System a.

The rad

out is the

227

1979

2300

ordin.

Sam W.

Now, the

11. 12. 13.

indirect

to be

stet. ar

1990

2. 1985

the chair

2012

100

2000

1990

substitutes for experience. "The danger here is not a merely theoretical one. We are practically threatened on all sides" (p. 24); "evil" is the word repeatedly used to describe the result of getting all this wrong (e.g. p. 24).⁷ (As with most philosophers, we owe it to Dewey to take his choices of words utterly seriously. If we do that, the passion in this apparently dry and awkward prose leaches out of the page and into the reader.)

Dewey concludes by addressing the problem he initially set out to address: "How, then, stands the case of Child vs. Curriculum? What shall the verdict be?" (p. 30). (That this is metaphorically posed as a legal matter supports again the suggestion, that this is a matter of *justice*.) At this point, Dewey bears close watching. I will quote at some length. He begins to answer his question as we would expect:

The radical fallacy in the original pleadings with which we set out is the supposition that we have no choice save either to leave the child to his (*sic*) own unguided spontaneity or to inspire direction upon him from without.... There is no such thing as sheer self-activity possible--because all activity takes place in a medium, in a situation, with reference to its conditions. But, again, no such thing as imposition of truth from without, as insertion of truth from without, is possible.... Now, the value of the formulated wealth of knowledge that makes up the course of study is that it may enable the educator to *determine the environment of the child*, and thus by indirection to direct. Its primary value, its primary indication, is for the teacher, not for the child. It says to the teacher: Such and such are the capacities, the fulfilments, in truth and beauty and behavior, open to these children. Now see to it that day by day the conditions are such that *their own activities* move inevitably in this direction, towards such culmination of themselves. Let the child's nature fulfill its own destiny...

Moments later, Dewey begins his final, very short paragraph:

⁷ Which is thus another opportunity to assert that the "child" vs. "curriculum" dichotomy is a surface manifestation of the deeper problem: the failure to properly value ordinary experience, which as I read Dewey and as I read the facts, is a failure to fulfill or live up to democracy's promises.

The case is of Child. It is his present powers which are to assert themselves; his present capacities which are to be exercised; his present attitudes which are to be realized.

(pp. 30-31)

Having undone ("deconstructed," we might say) the false dichotomy calling for a choice between the primacy and determinacy of the child *or* the curriculum, he concludes, "*the case is of Child.*"⁸ This somewhat wily pronouncement leaves us with a challenge: How are we to understand "subject matter" and "medium...situation" in these ways, as "*indications*" (not determinations, not prescriptions) of "the capacities...in truth and beauty and behavior" open to our children?⁹ Joining the long line of people who have tried to make not only theoretic but, as he urges, practical use of Dewey's work, I propose that the concept of teaching as acts of attention may be of assistance, by virtue, for instance, of the stress this perspective places on the interior ("psychological") activity of the teacher. That interior activity centrally includes the *interpretive pedagogical work* explicitly called for by Dewey when he speaks of "*indications*" (pointings, showings, proclamations), when he writes that subject matter "*says to the teacher: Such and such are the capacities...*"¹⁰ The concept of teaching as attention should also be of help in taking up Dewey's challenges here in that it is a concept which places "determining the environment of the child" close to the heart of teaching,

⁸ Notice that the title of the essay is dyadic--child and curriculum--not triadic: "teacher" is omitted. Cohen (personal communication) deems this an odd omission, as in one sense it certainly is (for Dewey is certainly not developing a view of schooling that will diminish the teacher's practical--or moral, or epistemological--importance; quite to the contrary). In another sense, though, the omission can be seen as a reminder that the teacher's is a service job, the teacher is, as previously said, "merely" a means, an occasion.

⁹ Dewey is echoing Keats here--"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,--that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know"--a fact that *Art as Experience*, which quotes Keats liberally, will make clear is not insignificant.

¹⁰ Compare Ball in the same spirit, as I read her, (e.g., 1993) on what it takes to "hear the math in the child."

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

1000

understanding "environment" to have moral as well as aesthetic, intellectual, social, and material dimensions.

*

*

*

I have on several occasions made reference to the aesthetic as a dimension of teaching, have supposed that criticism understood as "acts of appreciation and appraisal" is an element of attentive teaching, have just underscored an *interpretive* activity crucial to teaching understood in these ways, and have been pleased to have cause to quote some of Dewey's references to "beauty" and to art. I elaborate on these and related ideas and issues in the chapters to come, but it is appropriate to anticipate here by saying a little bit about why I will find it useful to consider the work of children much as one might consider adult artistic productions.¹¹ In *Art as Experience*, a bedrock text, I might say, for my project, Dewey asserts that,

In the end, works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man (*sic*) in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience.
(1934, pp. 104-5).

Early in the book, he has devoted an essential chapter to the transformation of "experience" (the mass of "doings and undergoings" comprising human life) into "*an* experience"--a crucial distinction and transformation, the function of which is essentially to give pattern, order, stability, and significance (and to leave behind the literal and the autobiographical, to venture into the world of potentiality) where there was

¹¹ This will not be quite to claim that all of this work has a claim on our aesthetic attention and interest independent of our work as teachers--though I *will* claim that some of it essentially does.

10-11-68

10-12-68

10-13-68

10-14-68

10-15-68

10-16-68

10-17-68

10-18-68

10-19-68

10-20-68

10-21-68

10-22-68

10-23-68

10-24-68

10-25-68

10-26-68

10-27-68

10-28-68

10-29-68

10-30-68

10-31-68

11-1-68

11-2-68

11-3-68

11-4-68

11-5-68

11-6-68

11-7-68

11-8-68

11-9-68

11-10-68

11-11-68

11-12-68

11-13-68

11-14-68

11-15-68

11-16-68

11-17-68

11-18-68

11-19-68

11-20-68

11-21-68

11-22-68

11-23-68

11-24-68

11-25-68

11-26-68

11-27-68

11-28-68

11-29-68

11-30-68

12-1-68

12-2-68

12-3-68

12-4-68

12-5-68

12-6-68

12-7-68

12-8-68

12-9-68

12-10-68

12-11-68

12-12-68

12-13-68

12-14-68

12-15-68

12-16-68

12-17-68

12-18-68

12-19-68

12-20-68

12-21-68

12-22-68

12-23-68

12-24-68

12-25-68

12-26-68

12-27-68

12-28-68

12-29-68

12-30-68

12-31-68

1-1-69

1-2-69

1-3-69

1-4-69

1-5-69

1-6-69

1-7-69

1-8-69

1-9-69

1-10-69

1-11-69

1-12-69

1-13-69

1-14-69

1-15-69

1-16-69

1-17-69

1-18-69

1-19-69

1-20-69

1-21-69

1-22-69

1-23-69

1-24-69

1-25-69

1-26-69

1-27-69

1-28-69

1-29-69

1-30-69

1-31-69

2-1-69

2-2-69

2-3-69

2-4-69

2-5-69

2-6-69

2-7-69

2-8-69

2-9-69

2-10-69

2-11-69

2-12-69

2-13-69

2-14-69

2-15-69

2-16-69

2-17-69

2-18-69

2-19-69

2-20-69

2-21-69

2-22-69

2-23-69

2-24-69

2-25-69

2-26-69

2-27-69

2-28-69

2-29-69

2-30-69

3-1-69

3-2-69

3-3-69

3-4-69

3-5-69

3-6-69

3-7-69

3-8-69

3-9-69

3-10-69

3-11-69

3-12-69

3-13-69

3-14-69

3-15-69

3-16-69

3-17-69

3-18-69

3-19-69

3-20-69

3-21-69

3-22-69

3-23-69

3-24-69

3-25-69

3-26-69

3-27-69

3-28-69

3-29-69

3-30-69

3-31-69

4-1-69

4-2-69

4-3-69

4-4-69

4-5-69

4-6-69

4-7-69

4-8-69

4-9-69

4-10-69

4-11-69

4-12-69

4-13-69

4-14-69

4-15-69

4-16-69

4-17-69

4-18-69

4-19-69

4-20-69

4-21-69

4-22-69

4-23-69

4-24-69

4-25-69

4-26-69

4-27-69

4-28-69

4-29-69

4-30-69

5-1-69

5-2-69

5-3-69

5-4-69

5-5-69

5-6-69

5-7-69

5-8-69

5-9-69

5-10-69

5-11-69

5-12-69

5-13-69

5-14-69

5-15-69

5-16-69

5-17-69

5-18-69

5-19-69

5-20-69

5-21-69

5-22-69

5-23-69

5-24-69

5-25-69

5-26-69

5-27-69

5-28-69

5-29-69

5-30-69

5-31-69

6-1-69

6-2-69

6-3-69

6-4-69

6-5-69

6-6-69

6-7-69

6-8-69

6-9-69

6-10-69

6-11-69

6-12-69

6-13-69

6-14-69

6-15-69

6-16-69

6-17-69

6-18-69

6-19-69

6-20-69

6-21-69

6-22-69

6-23-69

6-24-69

6-25-69

6-26-69

6-27-69

6-28-69

6-29-69

6-30-69

7-1-69

7-2-69

7-3-69

7-4-69

7-5-69

7-6-69

7-7-69

7-8-69

7-9-69

7-10-69

7-11-69

7-12-69

7-13-69

7-14-69

7-15-69

7-16-69

7-17-69

7-18-69

7-19-69

7-20-69

7-21-69

7-22-69

7-23-69

7-24-69

7-25-69

7-26-69

7-27-69

7-28-69

7-29-69

7-30-69

7-31-69

8-1-69

8-2-69

8-3-69

8-4-69

8-5-69

8-6-69

8-7-69

8-8-69

8-9-69

8-10-69

8-11-69

8-12-69

8-13-69

8-14-69

8-15-69

8-16-69

8-17-69

8-18-69

8-19-69

8-20-69

8-21-69

8-22-69

8-23-69

8-24-69

8-25-69

8-26-69

8-27-69

8-28-69

8-29-69

8-30-69

8-31-69

9-1-69

9-2-69

9-3-69

9-4-69

9-5-69

9-6-69

9-7-69

9-8-69

9-9-69

9-10-69

9-11-69

9-12-69

9-13-69

9-14-69

9-15-69

9-16-69

none before, that is, to make out of the flow of experience, art, to make out of the inchoate and the private, the communicable and the communicated. From this point of view, the purpose of subject matter is to enable students to transform their experience, to achieve, "in a world full of gulfs and walls," "unhindered communication." (And, as we will see in Chapter 4 especially, students' transformed, ordered experience as art can in turn become "subject matter.") If, as David Hawkins would point out, you don't have subject matter, you can't have communication (see 1974a¹²). But subject matter--the "acquiring" and "mastery" of subject matter--is, again, not an end in itself; its purpose is to help the child achieve "fecundity" of experience, to achieve significant communication. Contemporary philosopher Elaine Scarry, in another text that has become fundamental to my thinking in this project, makes the same point in different language when she says that a poem "exists not for its own sake but to be read...the poet is working not to make the artifact (which is just the midpoint in the total action), but to *remake human sentience...*" (1985, p. 307, emphasis added). From here, two points emerge: One, the attentive teacher (if he or she is a possibility) will expect to have his or her capacity for feeling--his or her *compassion*, his or her ability to *perceive--re-made* by the works of children, and that will be a democratic project; Two, a purpose of teaching will be clarified or highlighted: to enable people to achieve these kinds of *power in and for their own and each other's experience*.¹³ In the body of this dissertation, the locus for the development

¹² Also see (Hawkins, 1974), a very useful critique of *The Child and the Curriculum*, which Hawkins also sees as making "a rather awesome demand" on us as teachers and theorizers of teaching (p. 173).

¹³ Perhaps here it is well to recall that both "experience" and "experiment" are rooted in the word *peril*. (That is, "to have power in and for" another's experience is to render the other person vulnerable, or, more accurately--as I discuss in Chapter 3--for the other to "accept vulnerability.") Also see Dewey (again from *Art as Experience*): "It is the fate of a living creature [i.e., an experience transforming human person]...that it cannot secure what belongs to

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

Org

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

10/1/2020

and representation of that kind of power, and the source of remaking, will be the writing of children.

Organization of the dissertation

In Chapter 1, I have attempted a philosophical and theoretical overview of the dissertation. I have been particularly concerned to introduce and begin to develop the concept of teaching as acts of attention, and to suggest some of what this concept may afford (e.g., a "psychological" view of teaching, a glimpse into its interior; a further contribution to the already significant body of discussion and example of teaching as a "reflective" or a "thinking" practice). I have been at pains to say that, while I propose this concept in contrast to the image and implied concept of teaching as "always busy," I do not intend an active/passive dichotomy, nor do I mean to replace--but only to add to, and for a space to *displace*--more familiar views of teaching. I trust the following chapters substantiate these claims. I have also attempted to situate the idea of teaching as acts of attention within a reading of Dewey, specifically, his account of the child, the curriculum, and the interpretive teacher in *The Child and the Curriculum* and his connections of art, the universal human capacity to transform experience into forms of lasting worth, and democratic possibility in *Art as Experience*. He will be a recurrent and I hope a familiar figure in subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the reader to my primary inquiry site, my teaching of a fourth grade "writing workshop." I provide an overview of some of the literature on this topic, including some critiques of my own. I

it without an adventure in a world that as a whole it does not own and to which it has no native title. Whenever the organic impulse exceeds the limits of the body [i.e., most of the time] it finds itself in a strange world and commits in some measure the fortune of the self to external circumstance" (p. 59).

outline a theory of narrative and of fiction and critique the emphasis on "personal experience narrative" in so many contemporary accounts of writing pedagogy. I then begin to expand and make available the idea of teaching as acts of attention by endeavoring a conception and a performance of a "sympathetic reading" of fiction written by a fourth grade child. I surface, and challenge, a likely reading of this work as excessively "violent"; in particular, I criticize what I see as typical "autobiographical" or "literal" readings of children's work. I offer instead a reading stressing this work's ability to contribute to adults' (persons') sensibilities and understandings and propose that classrooms should be places "safe for dangerous ideas."

In Chapter 3, I examine at length the writings of one fourth grade boy, our interactions, and my year-long (and subsequent) efforts to understand him and his work, and to devise appropriate teaching "moves," including interpretive ones. I come to argue that a student's *doubt* of the teacher may be a healthy, educative phenomenon, and I attempt to weave together literary/aesthetic appreciations of this child's work with philosophic investigations of the phenomena of trust and doubt with some excursions into the psychology of trust, doubt, and growth.

In Chapter 4, the imagination, always important in this project, is named by children and becomes the central phenomenon of interest; similarly, an important part of the context for me, that of the appropriate relationships between schooling and teaching and democratic principles and aims is also explicitly identified and brought to the fore. In this chapter, the site for the inquiry is *poetry*--some produced by students of mine, some produced by well known adult writers. The creation of "democratic culture" is the immodest subject of the chapter, in which ideas about art assume increasing pertinence. Discussion ranges--even more than in the previous

chapters--from the nearly microscopic detail to concerns so large as to almost defy honest talk.

Each of the three central chapters concludes with an explicit account of how I see the effort to do and understand teaching through the lens of "attention" to be visible in the stories and interpretations I offer. It is also the case that the manifest activities of teaching become more visible as the chapters succeed one another.

In Chapter 5, I review the concept of teaching as attention as it might appear after dwelling in the concrete detail of the stories which have intervened since the present chapter. I also briefly sketch out further implications, specifically implications for teaching and for the education of teachers, suitable I hope for further inquiry.

In Appendix 1, I discuss my research methods and rationale.

Chapter 2

"There the kid was, stranded in a car": Reading the Fictions of Children as if they Mattered¹

As this is written, the world is full of the clang of contending armies.

--John Dewey, *Democracy & Education* (1966, p. 146).

The fictional: Some theory

Children's writings typically elicit a narrow range of adult responses.

Sometimes we are charmed, though perhaps not deeply or memorably.

Sometimes we are dismayed. For long stretches, we become preoccupied with the mechanics of children's writing: its spelling and punctuation, more ambitiously, its syntax. In recent decades, "writing process," "writing workshop," and similar approaches have been gaining in popularity.² These

¹ The work in this chapter was supported in part by the Michigan Partnership for a New Education and the Department of Teacher Education, College of Education, Michigan State University. The opinions expressed are my own.

The bulk of this chapter appeared under the same title in *Curriculum Inquiry* (28),1. © 1998 The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April 1994.

For many helpful comments on this work, I am gratefully indebted to Deborah Ball, Alyjah Byrd, Susan Donnelly, Jay Featherstone, Sylvia Rundquist, and several anonymous reviewers.

² Though it seems possible the appeal has crested.

Lucy Calkins (1986; 1991) and Donald Graves (1994; 1983) are two of the most well known contemporary proponents of these approaches, approaches which value the development of individual "voice," place considerable faith in the child or novice writer's capacities to make worthwhile selections of content and form, and assume the importance of a "real" audience. There is also a growing literature expressing skepticism, at least, about many of the assumptions, claims, and implications of these approaches to school writing. Trenchant, though often sympathetic, criticism was offered some time ago by Barrs (1983) and Delpit (1986, 1988, 1992), joined more recently by Lensmire (1993, 1994a), Dressman (1993, 1995), Stotsky, (1995), and Tobin (1995), among others. There are three main thrusts to these critiques: that "writing workshop" advocates are oblivious to social (racial, economic, class, and cultural) biases and inequities built into, or at least very typically present, in these approaches, and--a related but distinguishable complaint--that these approaches sentimentalize childhood; finally, several commentators criticize what they see as an over-valuation of the "personal experience narrative" and corresponding under-valuation of other genres, including fiction.

The work of Calkins, Graves, et. al., has important antecedents in, for example, the work of Kenneth Koch (1971, 1974) and Teachers and Writers Collaborative, both of whom came to

more ambitious and generous positions stress young writers' capacities as generators of ideas, themes, and forms in the service of the writers' own interests and experiences. Such approaches encourage us to be surprised, startled, even challenged by children's writings; they help us to appreciate the linked development of technical command and substantive concerns, and they remind us that "real writing" generally exists in relationship to an *audience* (though that audience may be provisional, hoped for, unrealized). Importantly, these approaches honor children's *choices* of topic and form. However a tendency also exists to treat child-writing, whether or not presented in the first person, as if it were essentially autobiographical, a more or less straightforward rendering of personal experience. I have observed this tendency--so pervasive as to be nearly invisible--with experienced teachers, with undergraduates studying to become teachers, and even with parents embarrassed by the quantity of blood and violence in their own child's writing.³ The literalistic tendency to read children's writing as if it simply

attention during the sixties. Similarly serious attention has been paid to the writing of older students by Mike Rose (1989, for example), and Peter Elbow (1973, 1986). The so-called whole language "movement" is clearly part of this context as well.

And Michael Armstrong's appreciative curiosity, tactful analysis, and graceful prose set an extremely high standard for anyone writing about children's writing (Armstrong 1980; see especially the aptly titled "The Literary Art of Children," pp. 10-52; also see "The Leap of Imagination" [1998]).

The larger tradition, from my perspective, is that of "progressive education," with its emphasis on humans as active shapers of experience and authors of inquiry. The giant figure here of course is John Dewey, speaking at the turn of the century of the need for an education addressed to "our impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce" (1956a, p. 26). *Art as Experience* (1934) is for me an especially important source. Also significant to me here is the work of Patricia Carini and other colleagues of mine at the Prospect School (see, for example, Carini's discussion of children as "makers of works" [1991]; also see her essay, "Dear Sister Bess" [1994], in which she investigates--with different inflections but many overlapping concerns--a theme I take up, the teacher's work as a *reader*).

³ Indeed, the very popularity of the "writing workshop" approach may have something to do with this. The literalistic tendency, and a kind of apprehensiveness about fiction, is discernible in the writing of a number of its advocates. In *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Calkins, 1986), the writing of fiction is addressed awkwardly, as an afterthought; in *Living Between the Lines* (Calkins, 1991), it is hardly possible to find a sample of child-writing that is not in the first person, not explicitly derived from an actual incident in the writer's life. The

1

opens a window onto the facts of the writer's life is greatest when the content is disturbing. And this is understandable: clearly an important part of a teacher's duty is to consider whether, for example, a child who writes about child abuse may be representing actual, firsthand or near-to-hand, experience, and is therefore in need of concrete help, not literary guidance.

But it is also the case that children often, even typically, choose to write *stories*. In my experience with elementary school youngsters story⁴ is the genre of choice and "once upon a time" has yet to lose its fundamental appeal. Child-writers demonstrate repeatedly, by the formal, narrative conventions they employ, and often by diction and tone as well, that they are well aware of operating in the realm of *fiction*--a place where tales are made,

"personal narrative" and the "memoir" seem to be the genres of choice for Calkins (see, e.g., 1991, p. 165f.). I maintain that this preference does not necessarily coincide with children's preferences and proclivities in a context of choice. Barrs (1983) develops this argument in sometimes devastating detail. And Power (1995) similarly critiques the "confessional" strand in Calkins' work. More recently, both Calkins (1986, 1994) and, especially, Graves do give more attention to fiction. In his more recent work, Graves (1994) agrees that "(o)f all the genres, fiction is usually (children's) favorite" (p. 287). But he continues with apparent wariness: "Of all the genres...fiction is the most demanding. This does not mean that children should be held back from writing fiction. Rather, it means that we need to do much more to help them than we may have realized in the past" (p. 287). As he continues--in the sole chapter devoted to fiction in this very large book--he stresses the difficulties of writing fiction. In contrast, though not necessarily in contradiction, I will take the impulse to fictionalize to be a fundamental human property and a resource for teachers.

Wariness about the fictional and the fantastic has a long history, from which (otherwise) progressive pedagogues are by no means immune. The "Bank Street Readers," for example, eschewed all deviations from "the real"; in *The Little Red Schoolhouse* (DeLima, 1942), a fine documentary history of a progressive school, there is some wonderful (and some less wonderful) writing by children, but realism is absolutely the order of the day. Chukovsky's *From Two to Five* (1963) contains hilarious, and sad, accounts of some Soviet educators' disapproval of fairy tales and nonsense verse: literature, they claimed, which had no place in the life of the young child, who would be corrupted by it into mistaking the imaginary for the real.

⁴ Neither "short story" nor "novel," as the terms are employed in discussion of adult writers' work, seems, on the whole, quite right for discussing young writers' work (which possesses elements of both). The fairy or folk tale is, I think, a more apt prototype. "Romance" is a candidate too--possibly the best of all. I stick, for the most part, to "story" as the most basic term, except when genre distinctions seem specifically helpful for analyzing and appreciating particular pieces of children's writing.

and the facts of the world not merely recorded but subjected to transformative order or disarray.⁵

In this chapter, I want to claim a larger space for the fictional--a space larger than that often provided for it in classrooms, and in the literature on children's writing. I propose that fiction is a site, or an occasion, for the productive, sometimes *disruptive*, educative encounter of the child-writer and the world of culture, imagination, morality, hope, and doubt. I argue that an important part of our jobs as teachers in this context is to be alert, appreciative, self-questioning *readers* of children's stories. I claim that the narrative act is *the* essential, generative, meaning-making act: and if this is so, and if we take seriously much of what we claim to believe about the act of reading, then as teachers and readers part of our work is to make meaning *with* the child-writer. To support these claims, I show a child-writer at work on the craft of fiction and I suggest some appropriate readings that respect the fictional character of his work, readings that seek to be true to the idea that "right reading" is neither capricious nor passive, but is an active engagement with the possibilities of meaning provided by an author. I do not wish to simply discount the value of the first-person, autobiographical narrative; I *do* want to propose that we do better at recognizing and appreciating the fictional, and to provoke some discussion of when readings that stress the fictive impulse might be the most pedagogically just, and useful, readings.⁶

⁵ Harold Rosen--whose work I find indispensable--offers several telling examples of children's inclinations towards the fictional (1986). Barrs too--(1983, e.g., pp. 836 and 837)--provides confirming observations, as can many other teachers and parents. And Lensmire (1994a, e.g., p. 90f.) observes a preference for fiction, in an analysis stressing psychological and sociological factors.

⁶ I hope my use of "just" will be validated in due course. Meanwhile, though, a criticism that could be fairly--justly--leveled at excessive emphasis on the "personal experience narrative" is that it invites us to be careless of children's (and families') privacy. A continuing search for the "authentic"--the more painful the experience, the better, from this point of view--especially when it is relatively powerful adults, teachers, asking relatively powerless children to provide it has, I think, something distinctly unseemly about it. Power (1995)--and

Finally, I suggest that such readings, through their capacity to force a reevaluation of experience and their creation of a public space occupied by writer and readers, have an implicitly social, indeed political, import. Initially, though, I need to stipulate some of what I mean by "fiction" and offer a brief account of the reader's role in encountering fiction.

At a time when literary theory is remarkably abundant, and remarkably contentious, this is doubtless a foolhardy task, but I don't see any fair way around it. Two well-regarded students of language provide reliable and, I hope, unexceptionable, points of orientation. The lexicographer Eric Partridge traces the etymology of "fiction," finding that its Latin root means "to model in clay," from which follows, "to fashion or form, and finally to invent, imagine..." (1983).⁷ And Jerome Bruner observes that, despite "the specialization of ordinary languages in establishing binary contrasts...none impose(s) a once-for-all, sharp grammatical or lexical distinction between true stories and imaginative ones..." "Truth and possibility," he goes on to say, "are inextricable in narrative" (1990, pp. 52, 53). These observations, in conjunction with each other, allow us to take in the most significant features of the terrain: On the one hand, fiction is a making, more pointedly, a *making up*, a work of the synthetic imagination; on the other hand, "nothing can come of nothing," as the fool said to King Lear⁸--the fictional sculpting

by her report, Donald Murray--has a similar reaction.

⁷ This movement from the concrete to the intangible--or from the material to the metaphoric--occurs repeatedly in the history of European, if not all, languages. Readers of fiction are expected to make this move with *narrated events*, not just individual words.

⁸ It may be helpful to imagine in what contexts would it be helpful to ask, "Is *King Lear* true?" What happens when we ask if it is "possible, or plausible?," and what if we ask if it is "false, or a lie?" The play is full of great truths and facts of a sort--jealousy is poison, honest love often goes unrecognized, the destruction of linguistic and of civil order are connected, and so on--but as a whole it is a fiction. And so on.

Philosopher Elaine Scarry--who will become increasingly important to me in subsequent chapters--will come to say, "When one day the nature of human creation is fully unfolded, a new language will accomodate a long array of distinctions that are now nearly invisible, and that only begin with the profound difference between a creation and a lie, a fiction and a fraud"

must begin with the stuff of fact. Furthermore, in stories, we are interested equally in "truth" and "possibility"; neither we nor our language, speaking us as we try to speak it, knows exactly when and where, nor how, to distinguish between them.⁹

Nor do we necessarily care to. It is the imperious play of imagination on fact, imagination on imagination, word upon word upon world, which animates us as we partake of story. Indeed, we can think of fiction as an arena of free play--dramatic play being the prime example of this--though "play," as Vygotsky (1966) among others reminds us, does not mean "without rules."¹⁰ In the familiar childhood plays of "house," "school," "forts," and all their many and more particularized off-shoots, there is never just *one* thing going on. We may observe startling feats of mimicry in which a parent or a teacher's exact gesture and tone are perfectly replicated; we may hear impressive acts of retentive listening, in which vocabulary, diction, and actual dialogue of characters from favored stories (books, movies, tales told aloud) are borrowed wholesale. We are likely to see ordinary objects, often discarded ones--cardboard boxes, sticks, bits of clothing--transformed into minimalistic but evocative props. We will certainly also see actions and hear words that have never before happened, at least not in the children's experience. If we watch closely, we will observe both preexisting agreements

(Scarry, 1985, p. 150).

⁹ And so we could return to "autobiographical" readings and the "personal experience narrative," and say that autobiographical stories too are constructions, selections, chosen representations of the self--not quite "the self itself." Rather than treating children's fictions as if they must "really" be true life stories, then, we could ask why we should take the "true life stories" at face value. But that is not the job of this piece.

¹⁰ Gregory Bateson--(1972)--is one of those others. I am indebted to Eliot Singer (personal communication, 1995) for helping me to see that the connection between play and story is not self-evident, and for his own worthy articulations of the links. Nor can I fail to mention (though he did not get play altogether right) the man who proposed "that every child at play behaves like a creative writer" and that "a piece of creative writing, like a day-dream, is a continuation of, and a substitute for, what was once the play of childhood" (Freud, 1995, pp. 143, 152).

and the development of new ones, concerning what kinds of things particular characters may, and may not, do and say, valid and invalid uses of props, specified powers belonging to specified characters, and so on. And all of these things will be going on together, woven into an experience that its participants find coherent and engrossing. In other words, there will be lots of pieces of ordinary life, cultural inheritances of many sorts, long-standing and novel conventions governing the participants, and invention, both as to some particular words and actions and as to the overall selection, rejection, and combining of the elements. Ideas and energy will generate the play, and result from it. All of this is true of stories too, in terms both of the relationship between author, plot, character, and genre, and the relationship between reader and story, though stories are significantly different from play in their tangible residue.

Entering the fictional world, we feel ourselves to be in the presence of *invention*. Much may be familiar, or much strange--a ratio that will typically change, in one direction or the other, over the course of a good story--but the sense that the imagination has been at work already, conjuring possibilities, *making things up*, will be palpable. This signal difference between fictional and nonfictional genres seems so obvious as to hardly deserve emphasis, but it does--in part, to repeat, because the distinction is simultaneously obvious and muddled. "Nothing," indeed, "can come of nothing": the fictional world necessarily shares features of our world, including signs and symbols and other "stuff," both "natural" and "cultural." But these are combined and revised, and often intensified, in ways that may be idealized or fantasized or may take on the quality of a nightmare. They have a logical plausibility, though the logic may be that of the psyche in fear, in exultation, in hope--intermingled, most likely, with the mundane, with elements of the psyche

that daily undergoes school or work or family or state. There can be no sharp dividing line between the fictional and the "actual" world as far as *features* or *activities* are concerned; the fiction writer has no resources to draw upon other than the ones we all possess. The nine year old who asks, "but is it *true*? did Hercules *really* exist?,"¹¹ is asking a question that is at the same time naïve and correct. If there was no room for confusion about such things, fiction would have no claim on our attentions. The fictional part of story craft lies much more in the employment of language and form which seduce our attention, and the knitting together of incident in ways which stimulate, provoke, and ultimately please by their resolution (or by the significant character of their irresolution), than in the inventiveness spent on the discrete elements of the plot. In many traditional forms of fiction--(a capacious category: think of *Tristram Shandy*)--one source of our pleasure as readers lies in the ways in which we remember and are reminded, and allow ourselves and are allowed to half forget, that we are in the presence of invention. If we had *all* awareness or *all* forgetfulness of the made--fictional--nature of the story, the pleasure and sense of emancipation mingled with concern that a good story provides would be much diminished.

What truly sets fiction apart from daily life is *not* any special property of the specific scenes it gives us; rather, it is the fact of those scenes (made, recalled, recombined--no matter: *chosen*) being subjected to *order*--their "beginning, middle, and end-ness," we might say.¹² That order, that ability to

¹¹ A type of question that will, in my experience, persist well into the elementary school years if it is not--as it too frequently is--met with instant correction, not infrequently disdainful, and even derisive.

¹² So I feel confident in asserting that my occasional movement back and forth between "story," "fiction," and "narrative" is not, as it may appear, slippery or evasive. On the one hand, "beginning, middle, and end-ness" is the essential common ingredient to any reasonable meaning of any of these words (notwithstanding the ways in which "modernist" and/or "post-modernist" work may strive mightily to resist these features: resistance which would be meaningless and indeed invisible without recognition of those very features); on the other

"see how things come out," and to see something of their origins is a property of art--and religion--but not of the continual flux of daily life. This order is the "value added" of the human imagination.¹³ Meaning, in other words, is a product of the imagination--which does not mean it is a lie.

The relationship between literature and "the real world" is "problematic," indeed. This is not a startling observation. What's important to keep in mind is that as ordinary readers, we appreciate and manage this problematic relationship all the time, as do children. The excessively literalistic reading is a special peculiarity of teachers reading children, whereas the playing with the lack of clear demarcation--the pleasurable tensions of doubt and possibility, which can become the challenges of being implicated--is the common property of readers (and listeners) everywhere. "Was Hercules real?" is a question to be treated with respect¹⁴ because the *possibility* of Hercules killing his teacher in a rage, for example, blundering dangerously, "not knowing his own strength," and so on--to mention those possibly less familiar parts of the story that fourth graders of mine found immediately interesting, and uneasy-making--is exactly what makes his story meaningful and compelling. Dismiss the question as childish or silly and you have dismissed that potential for meaning. The move from literal plausibility to

hand, in generally preferring "fiction," I am deliberately accentuating the "made-ness," the *invention* of what goes on within the structure.

¹³ There are, of course, works of art that refuse, or try to refuse, the privilege of granting order. But these works take their meaning from the tension between "actuality" and "art": they could not exist without a tradition of order-giving art against which (vainly?) to rebel. In "Texts for Nothing," Beckett's narrator insists, "a story is not compulsory, just a life, that's the mistake I made, one of the mistakes, to have wanted a story for myself, whereas life alone is enough" (1995, p. 116). The futility of this resistance is unmistakable, and moving.

¹⁴ And not just from nine year olds. "Real naïveté is precious," according to Clara Park. In her marvelous essay, "Rejoicing to Concur with the Common Reader," she goes on to quote a community college student: "Mrs. Park. We've read what Homer says about the afterlife, and what Plato says, and now we're reading what Dante says and they're all different. Mrs. Park. Which one of them is true?" (1991, pp. 1-2), a question she uses to launch one of her own, "(h)ow would we teach literature if we were in fact convinced...that it can matter in the lives of our students?" (p. 5).

metaphoric truth will occur in time, and the power of the metaphoric will be greater if some shadow of the horror of actual possibility lingers.

"Pity and fear" remain among the most welcome gifts of fiction.

Glimpses of possible meaning, the chance to recognize aspects of one's own experience in the well imagined drama of other experience, the prospect of another set of human relationships--all are offered to the reader. But the reader pays a price of admission: we must enter the fictional world on its terms, we must treat it as if it *could be*. We must be prepared for some truth. Otherwise, no recognition is possible, and the fictional world is not animated, as it must be, by the *reader's* imagination working in concert--even if sometimes unwilling concert--with the author's. Again, it is not the task of fiction to offer us a wholly alien world; rather, its job is to force upon us some recognition--it is to make us say, "Here are some things that are true about my day-to-day world, though perhaps I have not thought of them before, or for some time," or, "Yes, I too have had dreams, or fantasies, or nightmares like this." The fictional world discloses to us, if we let it, commonalities, places where our various individual continents touch shores, share horizons. Without recognition, there could be no reading. (Or, as Walter Benjamin observes, the crucial thing about the multiplicity of human languages is the fact of translation--imperfect, to be sure, but actual [1969, p. 72].)

There is risk here, as in any project entailing self-knowledge, as in any relationship. We have many ways of speaking of how reading is an active, even vigorous, relationship, one in which the reader undergoes the chance of being implicated, or "rewritten," by the text. Rosenblatt, following Dewey, refers to reading as a "transaction" (1978). Scholes tells us, "to read rightly we must start to write ourselves. We shall have to add something to (a) text in

order to read it" (1989, p. 5). "Reading," he goes on to assert, "is not just a matter of standing safely outside texts, where their power cannot reach us. It is a matter of entering, of passing through the looking glass and seeing ourselves on the other side" (p. 27). My current favorite picture of the relationship between reader and story comes from a writer who is both a novelist and a teacher. In his book, *Reads Like a Novel*, Daniel Pennac recalls the early "instruction" in reading the parents gave to their child.

We opened him to the infinite diversity of things imaginary, initiated him into the joys of static travel, endowed him with ubiquity, delivered him from Chronos, plunged him into the fabulously populated solitude which is a reader's. The stories we read to him were swarming with brothers, sisters, parents, ideal doubles, guardian angels...who, for their part, were struggling with their own ogres, and so found refuge in the worried beatings of his heart. He'd become, as a reader, their reciprocating angel. Without him, their world didn't exist; without them, his own world remained to him hopelessly impenetrable. He thus discovered the paradoxical virtue of reading, which consists in abstracting us from the world, to let us find a meaning in it.

(1994, pp. 9-10)

That is one kind of reading--idealized, yet very real. It bears some relation to ways we sometimes think of reading when we talk about what we want to have happen for our students as readers (though no doubt "constructivism" is more safely dry than "reciprocating angel"). It bears, as far as I can tell, *no* relationship to the ways in which *we* customarily read what our students write. Much of our training--and, it must be admitted, many of our inclinations as well--steers us in other directions. We look, often, for faults--which is, too often to say, to the places where we see a job for ourselves, our job being to fix, to add, to correct, to bring something new to the picture, to do something the student, we think, or hope, could not do

without us. With the best intentions, we often look to generic features: is there "expression" in the prose, is there plenty of "description," are there "characters, setting, goals, obstacles, and resolutions"? There is nothing wrong with any of this, up to a point, except that this "busy-ness" is both too much and not enough: the implied treaty, the mutually obliging transaction, between writer and reader is left out of account. When we want to praise, we also look for the familiar--which is not at all the same as saying, we look at ourselves, look to see if we can recognize ourselves in the crazy mirror of the work.

The literalistic, "autobiographical" reading of children's writing--regardless of the genre chosen by the child--again, more often than not, fails the test of "right reading." When teachers (and psychologists) read children's writing as if it must be a more or less decodable transcription of the child's "real life experiences," we are, I argue, being far more naïve, with far less justification, than the child who asks of Hercules' exploits and sufferings, "but is it *true*?" It seems odd that people whose business is childhood should take such narrow, unresponsive views of children's capacities. For it is not at all clear that what I'm calling "autobiographical" readings are, pedagogically speaking, the most fertile (always allowing for the possibility, which certainly happens, that a child-author *is* "sending a message" calling for direct, practical response). We can, that is, think of the author as a collection of biographical facts, a series of life experiences with an end point marked (for the reader's purposes, though not the teacher's) by production of a particular text. We can also think of the author as a *maker*--that is, a person who thinks and has ideas (sees possibilities and meanings), a person who shapes ideas and events in linguistic, narrative, form with some consciousness of a hearer or a reader whose response is of some interest. From the perspective which takes

author-as-maker (again, not necessarily exclusive of consideration of the author's biographical facts), we gain access to the idea of craft as something which may be open to teacherly intervention and support, and content as something which may be susceptible to teacherly thought, productive of teacherly imagination.¹⁵ (Of course, "teacher" in these instances can be replaced or joined by "colleague," "classmate," "peer.") In stressing the possibility that a child's writing may be productive of thought for a teacher, and of genuine "literary" interest to a teacher, I am not, I think, indulging in a sentimental egalitarianism: I am Romantic, if that is the word, enough to believe that no generation of adults has reached an acme of knowledge and understanding such that we can reasonably and responsibly suppose that the duty of children is first to master all that "we" know before getting around to knowing anything for themselves; I am sufficiently committed to the idea of inquiry and the possibility of being educated that I think it is reasonable and appropriate for teachers and students *both* to approach the world as learners; but I am working on flatter ground here. I understand children to be continually engaged in creating and shaping meaning in language, typically in narrative form;¹⁶ I try to take seriously the idea that literary meaning is a product of the encounter between reader and text, a product made possible by, but not guaranteed by, the author. If these assumptions are correct, and if part of our job as teachers is (1) to respond to and try to further children's efforts to make meaning, and (2), more narrowly, to help them be literate, then it is sensible to explore deliberately our roles as readers of children's texts. I try here to make a case for and to do a piece of such exploration.

¹⁵ And in both these kinds of "access" we have, certainly, been enormously aided by the work of Graves, Calkins, et. al., though the particular kinds of "teacherly thought...(and) imagination" I am exploring here do not seem to me to be a feature of these authors' work.

¹⁶ Bruner argues that from as early as eighteen months a child's "leaps forward in speech were fueled by a need to construct meaning, more particularly narrative meaning" (1990, p. 89).

Fiction: A stab at a "close" or "sympathetic" reading

I move now to a presentation and close reading of several pieces by a nine year old (I am a white male) whom I taught a number of years ago. I propose that if we are to give a fair reading to this work, we must do several things more or less at once. We must grant the possibility that his writing deserves to be treated as fiction. Doing this, as teachers, we will want to remind ourselves from time to time what pleasures, possibilities, forms of command, fiction provides for the writer. And we must do the real work of reading: making, or "constructing," as we like to say, meaning *with* the writer, not standing safely apart from the text. This means admitting the possibility that the world he narrates is the world we, too, live in--not merely a private one, not merely the facts or fantasies of *his* life, but some of the facts and fantasies of our own. I argue that one reason for us, as *teachers*, to read in these ways--intently, personally, vulnerably, subjectively--is that this provides us with a way of finding out the real quality of what our students do (see, think, perceive). I hope to persuade the reader that this child-author has produced "worldly fiction" worthy of our attention as readers and as inhabitants of a world discernibly similar to the fictional one. I assert that, while I find this writing remarkable in several respects, this child-writer's *capacity* to contribute is not unique.

* * *

There the kid was stranded in a car with a dead guy on the driver's seat. The kid moved the guy in the back seat and tried to drive the car first he went backward then he went forward and there was blood all over the windshield the kid put on the windshield wipers and said "I killed 2 guys!" the kid yelled he didn't know how to drive. the car

was a Lamborghini so he went as fast as the car could go he got there in 6 hours.¹⁷

Brendan¹⁸ was a student in my fourth grade writing workshop when he wrote these lines. The blood on the windshield, so thick and greasy it requires wipers--conjuring up a vivid cinematic moment (one very reminiscent of *Pulp Fiction*¹⁹)--captures in an image the recurrent violence of this story and the way in which the protagonist essentially can't help *but* see the world through a bloodied haze, while the passage as a whole captures the sense of being at all times in danger of being out of control: the world as full of anarchic force.²⁰ There is to my ear a pronounced writerly sensibility at work here as well, as evidenced by the poetic rhythm of the first quoted line (which scans reasonably well in dactylic meter):

Thére the kid was
stránded in a car
with a déad guy
on the dríver's seat.

The ambiguity of punctuation in the entire passage can even be seen to increase its poetic sense. Finally, as one unifying thread, the specification of *six* hours is characteristic of the story as a whole. The first, perhaps most lasting, impression most readers take away is that of bloodiness and confusion. What is not evident in the passage itself, but is very much part of

¹⁷ Children's writings are reproduced essentially as they appeared in one version or another. I have occasionally made silent changes in punctuation or spelling to approximate the spoken delivery of a piece or to help the reader focus on the meaning but, as almost all the work quoted here went through a lengthy process of revision, these changes are very few. A complete unedited typescript of this story is attached.

¹⁸ A pseudonym as are all children's names in this dissertation.

¹⁹ Which movie, however, came out several years after Brendan did his writing.

²⁰ At the risk of cliché, I find it hard not to be reminded of Yeats' lines in "The Second Coming" (written, like *Democracy and Education*, in about 1916): "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,/The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/The ceremony of innocence is drowned..." (1956).

the story I want to tell, is that these lines also represent a long, even arduous, process of revision.

I was a guest in Brendan's classroom, teaching three to five hours a week in the context of a several year collaboration with Alyjah Byrd, my host teacher in a professional development school. The student population was multi-ethnic, multi-national, and moderately diverse socio-economically. The workshop structure was simple. The first session of each week usually began with a meeting involving discussion, often leading to an assignment. For instance, early in the fall, we talked about "where ideas for writing come from," we did a series of exercises in description of natural objects, and worked on a group description (oral and written) of a historical photograph. On rare occasions, I made individual assignments. The bulk of the writing time, however, was devoted to "choice writing," during which students were responsible for generating themes and forms on their own or in collaboration with peers. I met with individual students for conferences when I saw a need or when they requested. Each week I also provided a "back up assignment"--a theme, opening sentence, or direction "for people having trouble coming up with ideas." At least one, and usually more, sessions each week ended with a twenty minute meeting for "sharing work." Alyjah Byrd and I also met each week to discuss individual students, the workshop, "writing across the curriculum," and other topics of mutual interest. The stories and other pieces I consider here were written the year after the Persian Gulf war, the year when Jeffrey Dahmer achieved notoriety for cannibalism, also the year when Mike Tyson went on trial for rape--violent events which all made their way into the children's writings and discussion of each other's writings.

From October to March, Brendan worked intermittently--in bursts of concentration, leavened by work on assignments and on other pieces of his

own choosing--on the story from which I've just quoted, "The Garbage Can Seller." The story first came to my attention when "silliness," in the form of raucous giggles, broke out at Brendan's table. The flush on his face when I glanced over, and the way others looked from him to me to their pages and back, suggested that he or his work had stimulated the outbreak. It was mid-October, early in our work together: the students were unsure about my expectations and the extent of their opportunities, particularly in regard to "choice writing"; I was intent on establishing a serious (though not a solemn) atmosphere and on communicating my watchfulness and interest. Looking over Brendan's shoulder, I read:

Once upon a time in a very small small store there was 13 garbage cans. The man that owns it is poor, he lives in a small box. He is rich compared to his friends, he has a wicked step brother that is rich: he owns a store that sells everything, even boxes...

Continuing, I learned that the poor man, later identified as Henry, had bought, at the rich step-brother's store, "a can of beans and 2 boxes of cheese." These lines, I supposed, had led irresistibly to thoughts of flatulence and thus to giggles. Without much deliberation, I urged Brendan to continue writing, enjoining everyone to "seriousness" and "concentration," trying to address my commentary to the behavior surrounding the writing and not to the text itself. Looking back on my journal, I can see that I had doubts, over the next several weeks, about the future of this story, which quickly grew violent as first Henry's house was destroyed, and then he and his wife were "slaughtered." Brendan kept working on it, though, and was eager to read what he had to the group at sharing time. In early November, he did.

Henry's wife, it transpired, had given birth to a baby an hour after she died. At fourteen that baby--now, "the kid"--goes to the police "to find out who killed his mother and father," only to discover his next-door neighbor is the murderer. When he returns, he finds the neighbor "dead on the floor." Standing over him is the boy's grandfather--apparently they are meeting each other for the first time--who is also the father of the dead "bad guy." (Thus the "bad guy" is also the boy's uncle.) Again, the writing was greeted noisily, with what I took to be nervous laughter. Brendan himself was not composed as he read. Instructing him that his job was to "read so that we can pay attention," admonishing the others for "silliness that's not helpful to the person who is sharing or the people trying to listen," I pressed him to keep going. The brief discussion that followed focused to some extent on the question of *why* the bad brother killed "the kid's" father--"I *told* you, he was jealous," the grandfather explains--but most questions turned on the difficulty people had keeping the characters and their familial relationships straight.

Indeed it *was* difficult to keep track of the characters. For the most part, they were unnamed and related by blood or marriage; all were embedded in a densely eventful story spanning several generations. Increasing "goriness" was notable--corpses continued to multiply--as were the motif of poverty, the recurrent orphaning of the central character, and Brendan's frequent use of number: costs, earnings, and time regularly being quantified. I did not at the time formulate an idea that later seemed very apparent, that on one level the story (at least in this version) is a classic tale of the search for one's origins, a search which--as, for example, in the myth of Theseus--is typically, even perhaps necessarily, accompanied by psychic and bodily risk. (Not only have "the kid's" parents been murdered before he was born, but the evildoer is a

member of the family. Biblical references to brothers come to mind here, as do certain fairy tales. Borrowing a psychoanalytic lens for a moment, we can imagine that the dead father and the now dead uncle represent two polar possibilities of the parent--the good and the "wicked"--which in turn become two possibilities of the child's fate. Nor is the threat over with the death of the "bad guy." In good mystery story fashion, the hero's search apparently endangers not just himself but others: his grandfather is the next to be murdered.) If such a reading makes sense, it is worth remembering that the outcome of such a search is typically the formation of an identity that is on the one hand historically conscious, even tragic, and on the other, self-created. (We do not need to burden Brendan with a conscious analytical understanding of his story in these terms to regard him as working with such themes and possibilities,²¹ any more than we need expect a young man's reading of Hamlet to be the same as that of maturity, or the anonymous tellers of "Rapunzel" to understand their story as Anne Sexton [1971] or Bruno Bettelheim [1977] came to understand it.)

Early on in Brendan's work on "The Garbage Can Seller," I found myself speculating about my decisions--spontaneous perhaps, they nonetheless *were* decisions--to encourage Brendan to stick with this story, or at least, not to discourage him. It is not that, in the early stages, he *needed* my encouragement, though I think later on my close work with him helped to sustain his investment; it is just that I had doubts about the "seriousness" and potential of the piece, at a time when I was working hard to establish a serious atmosphere for the workshop. (As a guest in the room, I had simultaneously to earn my right to the role of "teacher" and to establish that

²¹ Though I can't help recalling that once when the class was speculating about the origins of language, Brendan suggested that it had been invented by children (a possibility that Lewis Thomas, for one, found worthy of consideration [1990, p. 95]).

my manner and expectations were in some respects different from Ms. Byrd's, but no less serious. Characteristically, I was asking the students to contend with a good deal more ambiguity than they were used to in school. I gave no grades, and I very seldom quantified my expectations for their writing--nonetheless, I expected productivity, care, and respect for the efforts of others. Each of these expectations had particular colorings and implications for individual students, as I got to know them and their work. And they were free to exercise a good deal of choice--as to theme, form, writing companions, etc.--not only free to, but expected to: thus, I hoped, choice and responsibility were jointly experienced. Given the unusual degree of choice, the non-specific, non-quantified expectations, and the fact that we were "in school," it was important to me, at this still early stage in the game, to establish that the workshop did entail "real work.") It is easy enough to express disapproval. This can readily be done without being explicit, through tone, look, or re-direction--even when students nominally have "choice" as to theme. Students generally understand very well the tacit limitations on their freedom of expression in school. I was confident that some teachers--perhaps including myself at other times--would have found ways to divert Brendan from this content, if not to render it inconceivable before the fact. I wondered, if these suppositions were correct, how he surmised that perhaps the boundaries on acceptable content in *this* situation were not what they sometimes were in school. I became the more intrigued by these questions when it occurred to me that the somewhat exaggerated, somewhat uncomfortable, laughter of Brendan's classmates may have been prompted less by the beans and cheese than by an appreciation of the "anarchic" strain in the plot. ("Silliness," as the word is used in elementary schools, can after

all be understood to mean a kind of anarchy--hence the discomfort, and constrained vocabulary, it evokes in adults.)

I did not, in any case, discourage Brendan, and soon came to affirm that decision, finding myself enthusiastic about the concentration and care he was investing in the project, and increasingly curious as to how it would develop, both in craft terms--it soon became clear that it was in a seemingly endless process of revision as well as extension--and in substance. For a while, I persuaded him to work with me on a genealogy of the characters. He put up with this good-humoredly and indeed began in his text to name the characters and otherwise make it a bit easier to distinguish them. The genealogy has often seemed to me since then a quixotic, clumsy move, largely missing the force of the story. I now see it as my attempt to bring order to a chaotic ("anarchic") situation: a wrong-headed imposition, probably, but still an understandable teacherly response.

Meanwhile, Brendan's story grew ever more extravagant in the violence of its imagery. The introduction gave us the garbage can seller, living in a box, going to buy groceries from his wicked step-brother,²² for his wife, returning to find his house vandalized, and then being murdered by an unspecified "they." His wife is also murdered, though she manages to give birth, posthumously,²³ to a baby boy. We move forward in time to a plausible age for coming of age, fourteen, at which point the boy seeks those responsible for his parents' murder. It turns out he has been living next door to the murderer, over whose corpse he meets his grandfather, who explains that the dead bad guy--the boy's uncle--had killed the boy's father out of jealousy. The

²² Though "step" is later dropped. I assume, as in so many fairy tales, it has served its purpose, as an intensifier, or even synonym for "wicked," not as a literal indication of familial relationship.

²³ In the version Brendan was reading to us in November.

"old man" invites the boy to live with him; however, en route to his house, in the middle of explaining that indeed, he had killed the uncle, on account of his membership in "the mob," the grandfather is himself killed, by the mob. It is as at this point that the boy finds himself "stranded in a car with a dead guy on the driver's seat." In the final chapter, the grandfather's corpse (and car) is stolen, and the police and the boy go in search of "the mob's hide out."

And when they did find it they peeked in and saw the mob having a feast. The police man said "they're eatin em!" and the boy said "no they're not stupid, he's over there," he was tied to a wood cutter. The police man said "it don't matter he's dead," the police man pulled out his walkie-talkie and was gunna call the other police men. The boy snatched it away and called in backup. They got there in an hour and crashed the party. Some police men got killed and some didn't but they got the mob. And locked them up for 2,240 years without bail or parole.

The End

My notion that there is some humor here--in, say, the phrase "crashing the party," or in the almost quaint reference to the "wood cutter" (has Brendan heard "Along Came Jones"?)--is not, as far as I can tell, typical. Perhaps it is aberrant. Far more usual is this reaction from a colleague, an experienced, generous, and accomplished teacher:

...I don't want to play psychologist, but this is a disturbed child--preoccupied with...killing, a lot of killing--I don't know whether he's--I don't know whether he's watched a lot of violent TV or whether his parents might be violent...I would think he might be a child at _____ school,²⁴ I think he might live in that area...across from a couple of bars.... Perhaps--probably there's a lot of resentment in the family against people who have money-

²⁴ A more urban public school, serving a predominately black and Latino, socioeconomically mixed, population; also, the school I am working at at the time of the interview--the school of the children who will come into the next two chapters.

-and--the child--maybe it's been homeless or there's some
problems with paying the rent or what. It's ahh, weird...
(Interview with "L. G.," 11/19/93)

The leap from distressing content in the child's writing to the assumption that there is equivalent distressing content in the personal facts of the child's life is an easy one, perhaps a habitual one for many of us in our responsibilities as teachers. (And these "leaps" all too often--as hinted at above, and substantiated later in the interview--take in a large measure of socioeconomic and racial stereotypes.) Again, I don't wish to deny that our responsibilities as teachers must certainly include asking ourselves if our students' writings are telling us something literal, or "true," or at any rate very pointed, about their lives, something we ought to be aware of--but I believe our educational responsibilities require some different responses of us as well. Indeed, the facile assumption of, and subsequent search for, direct autobiographical connections may well distract us from that which is of greatest educational interest and import.

I suggest again that we consider "The Garbage Can Seller" as a piece of *fiction*--an approach that obliges us, again, to construct some meaning *with* the writer, through the medium of the text, rather than supposing the writer is just handing us the meaning ready-made (and rather than constructing meaning *at* the writer, as it were). What might such an approach yield?

- In a close up, formal perspective--considering matters of diction and imagery, for instance--having fiction in mind would draw our attention to several features of the story's final paragraph. "The mob," the specter of a human being becoming a "feast," the man "tied to the wood cutter," "the walkie-talkie" even, and the final locking-up of the mob "for 2, 240 years without bail or parole": for all of these, the obvious assumption is that they

are drawn from an available cultural vocabulary (whether TV news or grade-B movies or even old songs by The Platters); the burden of proof--a heavy one, I think--would be on any notion of their being drawn from the firsthand, "real-life" experience of a nine year old living in suburban housing in a large university town.

- Taking a broader perspective, it is often helpful to try--as a temporary move--to reduce a piece to its narrative bare bones. If we do that with Brendan's story, we might get something like the following.

The hero is an orphan, a boy who has never had the chance to know his parents. He is alive at all only because his mother, though murdered, managed still to give birth to him. As he approaches maturity, he sets out to discover the murderer of his parents. It turns out he has been living beside the murderer all along: literally, as his next-door neighbor, figuratively, in that the murderer was his uncle. By the time "the kid" "meets" the "wicked step-brother," though, he too is dead--killed by his own father, the boy's grandfather, whom the boy is also meeting for the first time. The "old man" offers to take in the boy, but he too is murdered (by "the mob" to which the "wicked" uncle had belonged). The boy is now actually as well as symbolically bloodied, in the car that is the murder site. The grandfather's corpse is stolen. The police and the boy go in search, and find him. The boy corrects the policeman's grisly notion--that the corpse is being eaten by the mob--and the boy, not the policeman, calls in reinforcements. The bad guys are put away for good and then some. There is no hint that "the kid" wishes to perpetuate the vendetta.

Thus: a boy goes in search of his origins, that is, his parents' killer--all, besides himself, that remains of them. It turns out he is descended from a line which is half good (presumptively, and perhaps on the evidence of his near-miraculous birth), half evil. Fratricide has taken place. Then, at the very moment when the hero is about to confront this partial or alternative lineage (hence, possible destiny), the "wicked" brother is killed by his own father. Briefly, this parent--the boy's grandparent--offers the prospect of a family for the boy, but he too is killed before he can make good on this offer of a partial restoration of order. This fourth (?) murder leaves the boy "stranded" again, at the

wheel of a vehicle he cannot, at first, control. (Indeed, he declares he himself has become a killer too--"I killed 2 guys!"--but it is never clear who. Pedestrians? Or, somehow, by initiating the search, his uncle and his grandfather?) The boy is then instrumental in achieving justice of a sort for his parents' and grandfather's murders.

Through his quest, the hero travels from a state of ignorance about his origins--or rather, about the ruin of his origins: he has not had the whole story--to a state of experience and knowledge; he moves from total or near total helplessness to a qualified degree of power, a point at which he can take some effective action. The cost of all this is of course the experience itself, as well as further destruction.

He has not been born in safety nor into a world that proves safe. (How many children, at one time or another, protest, "I didn't ask to be born"?) His situation is not promising. Doing nothing is apparently not an option. He sets out to learn about his past and arrives at his future, a place where he must try to take action in the world. Which is to say, to discover his fate. The knowledge is not comforting, the action not very effective, but these are our only prospects.²⁵

What we gain from such a distillation--granting that it could be done more artfully, and with different emphases--is a sense of the plot as mythic or archetypal. Which is one way of saying the narrative has become accessible to us, recognizable as a variant on the shared narrative of the identity quest: Who am I, where did I come from, how is my destiny shaped by my past, how do I--can I?--become an active shaper of my own destiny? In his radical call for a revaluation of ordinary, common experience--with art as a means for and an image of this possibility--Dewey remarks that "it is the fate of a living creature...that it cannot secure what belongs to it without an adventure in a world that as a whole it does not own and to which it has no native title"

²⁵ Formally, the story is a tragedy, in that it ends with the restoration of order. The other possibility of course is a comedy--ending in a marriage.

(1934, p. 59). We might say that an orphan is the perfect symbolic representative of such a fate--being dispossessed, needing to "make one's own way" without capital, is emblematic of the orphan, which is perhaps why he (typically: though a female classmate of Brendan's wrote several tales in which an orphaned girl was the hero) is such a favored figure in fairy tales, amongst other literatures. Trying to teach us how to "read" a work of art, Dewey--as so often, recalling earlier (e.g., Wordsworth's) and anticipating so much contemporary (cf. the remarks by Scholes earlier quoted), thought--asserts:

Perception is an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy.... (T)o perceive, a beholder must create his own experience. And his experience must include relations comparable to those the original producer underwent. They are not the same in any literal sense.... Without an act of recreation the object is not perceived as a work of art.

(1934, pp. 53-54)

If, then, we are to give Brendan's story a "right reading"--or, as I would also like to say, a *sympathetic* reading--we'll have to actively work with the text, bringing to it the energy and feeling of our own experience, engaging with emotionally "saturated" experience presented in the text, to arrive at an experience of our own which is not exactly new, but transformed. If my reading of the story is at all reliable, that transformation will have something to do with re-experiencing myself as an "adventurer" in a world that "(I do) not wholly own," in which, perhaps, I am curious about origins, invested in my fate, and anxious to take effective, moral action--to control that bloody car, not kill anyone with it, maybe even apprehend the perpetrator of so much prior violence. And here having restored the circumstantial, "violent," flesh to the bones of Brendan's story, the reader's question becomes, "How credible,

how familiar, is this *depicted* world of violence and mayhem?" Is there any answer other than, "very familiar indeed"?

Such readings, I submit, establish that the child-writer and the teacher-reader share significant common ground. (For a teacher, an adult, this might be one instance of a reading that does not stand "safely outside the text.") But this it is clear is reversible: A "right reading" is one which *finds* common ground in an enabling text. From any perspective we choose--ethical, epistemological, psychological, pedagogical--this means that we understand the story as being a story of the *public* world, not a mere transcript of the private facts, fears or fantasies of the writer.

Nothing of Brendan's school life outside of these writings, in any case, gave any reason at all for entertaining the kinds of dire worries they sometimes elicit. (No signs of "preoccupation" with violence, nor violence, nor unusual fearfulness; no worrisome encounters with parents; etc.) On the other hand, turning from the *content* of his writing, and from speculation about his extracurricular life, to Brendan *as the writer*, much that was noteworthy was evident over the course of his work on "The Garbage Can Seller" and other pieces. There was, as opposed to the disorder and violence of the events written, the discipline and gentleness of the child writing; there was appreciable growth in his writerly skill (technically and substantively), increasing self-confidence, and an apparently self-conscious use of writing to begin to explore some of the possibilities and predicaments of grown-up life.

Consider these further glimpses of Brendan as a writer:

- He completed, for a display of workshop writings in December, a substantially different revision of "The Garbage Can Seller," beginning, "Once upon a time in Chicago 1947, on the very poor side of town there was a little store owned by a man named Joey Wilcox." From this opening line alone, we

can see that Brendan is by now in far greater command of the strategy of specifying, quickly and efficiently, time, place, characters' names, and other details that will enable the reader more easily to follow the story line (though "efficiency" is not perhaps a characteristic of the piece as a whole). He introduces a whole other conceit--one popular with his peers, too--of beginning the story with a dream, one that may or may not turn out to be real, or that may render the events "unreal" (a ghostly possession occurs as well). He continues enthusiastically to explore the pleasures of literary diction, speaking at one point of "a bunch of ruthless bandits," and at another declaiming that "the Fire Engines rolled in like 1,000 horses running through the wild west." Horror and inter-generational complexity continue to be prominent features. In a twist, he concludes the story on a note of decided ambiguity: the killers, also identified as "two friends," escape to "a very small island with more criminals to kill. Or maybe to kill them." Ultimately, he decided to combine this version with the final revision of his first attempt, creating a somewhat unwieldy story in which several of the same events are depicted in different times and with different families.²⁶

- His growth in literary craft was further evident in a piece he wrote in the spring in response to a whole-class assignment. Everyone was to write a fable for a class book. Brendan's contribution follows.

THE MORAL IS PAY YOUR TAXES OR ELSE

Once upon a time in Kansas there was a family that lived in a old beat up barn. It was March tax season. One day early in the morning the tax man came to collect the taxes. He said "I have come to collect your taxes. The father said "I'm sorry we don't have the money please give us another week. So the man said "Okay just one more week. So he hopped on his horse and rode off. So Monday rolled

²⁶ It is this version, the final one, that is appended.

around and the tax man came back, he said "Do YOU HAVE THE MONEY?" The father said "No." So the tax man grabbed the mother and tied her to a barrel and took a ax to her head and made the whole family watch.

This was going on for years and years the tax man had given them weeks and weeks and weeks it was the same thing every year.

So finally it came to the teenage boy the last of the family living.

So they tied him up to a barrel and chopped his head off but he was still alive and he was laughing. They dug a hole threw the body in and then the head after it.

This is striking prose, in several respects. In the first place, it is shocking, an effect it achieves through technique as well as content. It is markedly concise and economical, moving swiftly to its conclusion. Setting and characters (if that is the word: "archetypes" might be more apt) are quickly established, with just enough time-consuming detail to create for the reader the experience of moving from the mundane to the horrific. The prose is simple--the sentences are much tighter than in "The Garbage Can Seller"--but artful, demonstrating once more the author's pleasure in literary diction (e.g., "Monday rolled around"). The rhythm is sure and compelling, poetic at moments (as in the second, unpunctuated, paragraph with its insistent but not overly tidy repetitions: "for yéars and yéars," (twice), "wéeks and wéeks and wéeks" (three times), "the sáme thíng évery yéar" (semantically once, rhythmically four beats, the most pronounced phrase of all). Formally, the narrative begins in the classic way (while yet locating us in the mythic mid-America of, say, *The Wizard of Oz*, not the same as the far-off land of fairy tales). Our expectations of a conventional resolution are raised only to be confounded, however. And this happens twice: We naturally

hope that "the teenage boy, the last of the family living," will put a stop to the killing, restore order and decency, but he does not. Then we may hope for at least a sort of moral triumph, as might be achieved if the story ended with the image of the boy laughing--but we're not permitted that either. The story ends bleakly and with the sound of finality. This is effective fiction by any formal criteria I can think of. Substantively, the fable stands as an accomplished rendering of several of the themes--poverty, family dismemberment and the orphaning of the only son, extreme and irrational violence, questions (despair even) about the prospects of effective moral action in the world--which stand out in the more laborious work of "The Garbage Can Seller."²⁷

- Finally, in his year-end self-evaluation, Brendan writes:

- 1.) I think i am a good writer. I really want to write like Stephan King when i grow up.
2. I think Writing Work Shop has helped me with my working abilities and has kind of been icouriging me to do better in school.
3. I think the kinds of books i like to wright are books about homeless people to help them get off the streets and adventures, funny books, scary books.
4. Adventures, scary, and funny books interest me. because i like them.
5. i need to work on punchuaction.
6. My imagination helps me write.
7. Punchuaction and people not under standing my writings get in my way.

Brendan's sense of accomplishment and growth, as a writer and a student, was shared by his current and previous year's teachers, his mother,

²⁷ "The Moral Is...," which was written very rapidly and with no apparent effort, can thus be thought of as another, in some ways more successful, revision of the earlier pieces, a procedure well recognized by writers. See, for example, Elizabeth Bishop: "I think everyone feels that his or her best poems were lucky accidents.... But of course they really aren't at all--they are indications that you have worked hard on all the others, and felt deeply, and somehow managed to create the right atmosphere in your own brain for a good poem to emerge" (1994, p. 86).

and me. Most significantly for my purposes here, it is evident that he is thinking of himself *as* a writer of fiction, that is, as a person--an author, a *maker*--who shapes event and language in purposeful narratives, narratives that have as one of their aims the seduction of a reader's attention. (Note for instance the manipulation of diction we have seen, a kind of play pleasing to writers--who wish, however, for readers with whom to share the pleasure; and the comment, "people not understanding my writings *get in my way*.") He identifies his writing as, in part, representative of his perceptions of and concerns for society; he is cognizant of genres from which he makes selections; he associates his activity with that of "real writers." The stories I've presented are unified internally by stylistic elements such as repetition, quantification, and strong rhythm; the violent disruption of family structure is a motif common to all; taken singly and in order of composition, they display a movement through escalating crises to, in turn, resolution (not perhaps fully satisfying), apparent irresolution, and complete dissolution. There are appreciable, makeable, shareable strains of *meaning*, one of which I synopsise as, "Is morally effective action possible for a young (male) person growing up 'today'?"²⁸ Through all of this, Brendan is certainly, in some sense, "expressing himself," if that tired expression can still carry meaning--though I maintain he does this at least as much through his qualities as a craftsman as through his distinctive themes and plots. "The teenage boy the last of the family living" may be no more than a mere subject of experience, a victim; Brendan the writer is evidently more than that: it seems far more appropriate to regard him as a linguistically alert thinker in the process of

²⁸ In the next chapter, the reader will meet CJ, a young writer whose protagonists can also be heard as raising this same question, repeatedly and urgently.

growing up as a citizen. As such, what he is "expressing" is a world we share with him, though we may choose not to recognize, to "own," it.

A child's writing, a teacher's reading: Forms of thought

I began this account with several concerns in mind. I have maintained that the "fictional impulse" is evident in children's writings far more than some recent literature on the teaching of writing to children, and much practice, seems to acknowledge; correspondingly, I've argued that our readings of children's writings--including those where the fictional imperative is, to my ear, very apparent--are too often reductionist, naïvely literal and "autobiographical." I have claimed that such readings fail to reflect much of what we currently claim to believe about reading--that it is an "active," joint, meaning-making transaction between reader and text--and I've attempted to demonstrate some readings of a child's writings that seem to me more fully to respect the fictional impulse. The readings I attempt are aided by attention to formal elements in the work; and they are readings that implicate the reader in the text, and in the world that the text may illuminate, locating author-student and reader-teacher as being able to participate jointly in a *public* space created by complementary experience, shared conventions, and shared predilections for narrative. I've aimed to portray Brendan as a student who shows himself able to take formative responsibility for an interest, to pursue an idea and a project over many months, to shape language effectively and to develop appropriate self-consciousness in the process.²⁹ I have proposed that a reading attentive to substance in these ways may not only be more appropriate--more responsive to the purposes and

²⁹ Ideas which, with the qualified exception of the last, seem to me in keeping with the integrated, nondichotomous, morally charged views of human effort and intellect urged on us by Dewey in, for example, "Interest and Discipline" and "The Nature of Method" (1966, chaps. 10 and 13).

powers of fiction to criticize and to celebrate, to imitate and to transcend--but may also be more pedagogically useful and just, in that it provides access to, and offers respect for, the child's capacity for making meaning and exerting discipline over time.

I would like now to modulate the terms in which I address and readdress these concerns. I would like to assert again that the narrative act is *a form of thought* ("a meaning making strategy," as Rosen insists [1982, p. 10]), as in its way is reading, and to stipulate that fiction is an *art*. I will rely rather heavily on Dewey to help me, I hope, make clear why these modulations and assertions might matter. To begin with, thinking entails memory and anticipation, musing and selection; it entertains the possible as well as the actual, it necessarily transcends present time and solitary self (all of which, again, are clearly part of story-making). Writing during World War I about "thinking," which he insists entails "risk" (1966, p. 148), Dewey goes further:

Reflection...implies concern with the issue [i.e., *outcome*, but "topic" or "subject" can be heard as well]--a certain sympathetic identification of our own destiny, if only dramatic, with the course of events.... If we cannot take sides in overt action, and throw our little weight to help determine the final balance, we take sides emotionally and imaginatively. We desire this or that outcome. One wholly indifferent to the outcome does not follow or think about what is happening at all. From this dependence of the act of thinking upon a sense of sharing in the consequences of what goes on, flows one of the chief paradoxes of thought. Born in partiality, in order to accomplish its tasks it must achieve a certain detached impartiality.

(p. 147)

(The "paradox" of thought here is of course identical with the "paradoxical" nature of reading earlier identified by Pennac. Similarly, it is the self-same paradox that allows writing--no matter how intellectually and emotionally charged for the writer--to become an *object*, subject to dispassionate craft.)

The scenario Dewey has in mind here is, first, of a "general in the war, or a common soldier, or a citizen of one of the contending nations," any of whose "concern with the issue" is concrete and total; second, "neutrals," for whom "the stimulus to thinking is...indirect and dependent upon imagination" (p. 147). We are all "neutrals" when it comes to reading or watching a story--and yet, by this account, if we are *thinking*, we do not stay neutral, we have made a "sympathetic," "dramatic," identification of ourselves with the events depicted. Otherwise, they have no meaning for us,³⁰ they are hollow. Dewey stresses the meaning of "sympathetic" that is more or less equivalent to "partial" ("we desire this or that outcome": that the allies will win, or not; that "the teenage boy the last of the family living" will survive, or at least leave behind a visible smile). I wish as well to take "sympathy" in its more neutral meaning--the meaning that is similar to "compassion," to *feel with*, with no particular judgment (yet) attached to the feeling. This is more or less the sense in which Rousseau uses "pity" (1966, p. 32, for example); Max Scheler characterizes it as "the processes which one may describe as 'rejoicing-with' and 'commiserating'...processes in which we seem to have an immediate 'understanding' of other people's experiences, while also 'participating' in them" (1970, p. 3).³¹ In this sense, sympathy is involuntary, though it can very well be suppressed. Certainly, "sympathetic identifications" of both the narrower and the broader sort may be troubling, as I have tried both to stress and to acknowledge (i.e., the bloodiness of Brendan's stories, is distressing--and the thought that the anarchic and violent world he shows may be in some true way be the one we live in and

³⁰ Pragmatically speaking, they have no *consequence*--but it is clear (for Dewey already in 1916) that *imaginative* consequences count.

³¹ A more familiar link might be to David Hawkins' assertion that "we're all in *it* together" (1974, p. 62)--mutually ignorant, puzzled, stimulated, or curious, depending on your mood or temperament: but in no case have we *chosen* this ontological state.

re also su

be disturb

and photo

because th

capacities-

Which is v

meaning o

Great Dep

Beca

bian

guar

to re

indy

ima

pote

pow

The highlig

for the

the their

gents. It g

pare the

falls, it m

ssible, in

te moral

possibilities

iteration

for its obj

the partic

are also subject to [may even have helped to make] is also distressing). But the disturbance here, in fiction, is not exactly that occasioned by horrid events and photographs (of wartime, say), on the news. The disturbance is *greater* because the violence, the chaos, what have you, is only felt because of our capacities--the writer's capacity, and the reader's--to *imagine* it. It is in us. Which is what makes it *instructive* in both a literal and the common meaning of the word. Consider a later remark of Dewey's (written during the Great Depression rather than wartime):

Because art is wholly innocent of ideas derived from praise and blame, it is looked upon with the eye of suspicion by the guardians of custom, or only the art that is so old and "classic" as to receive conventional praise is grudgingly admitted.... Yet this *indifference to praise and blame because of preoccupation with imaginative experience* constitutes the heart of the moral potency of art. From it proceeds the liberating and uniting power of art.

(1934, p. 349, emphasis added)

The highlighted phrase has various possible applications. I stress its sense that, for the artist-writer and the viewer-reader, to the extent that they have done their work well, the imagination temporarily overpowers all other agents. It gets past all the gates of custom and safety we have erected. On this plane, the imagination--of which sympathy is a species--is not moral at all; that is, it makes no judgments of right and wrong. But it makes morality possible, in that it makes consequences appreciable, "real." And, specifically, "the moral potency of art" comes in its "disclosure of possibilities"--possibilities of the human heart, and the humanly inhabited world. "Liberation" points to the freedom from a feeling or thought that can result from its objectification (the "paradox" earlier referred to); it refers also and more particularly to liberation from an unsatisfactory present, whether

through vision of a possible and better future, or through a deep and even impartial seeing of the flaws of the present, urging a need to change. I am not, however, suggesting that Brendan is engaged in a conscious act of social criticism, any more than I earlier wished to suggest a *conscious* myth-making activity on his part--though both sorts of activity might be part of what it means for a *reader* to "make meaning" of a fictional text, from which work stems one form of the "unity" Dewey refers to.

I do want to argue that Brendan is doing something we ought to call *thinking*. I stress this word for several reasons. As educators, nurturing the capacity for and exercise of thought is presumably one of our most fundamental duties--so making "thought" somewhat visible should have some usefulness in helping us make wise selections of activities to foster, to discourage, to wait patiently upon, and the like. Thought, moreover, is taken to be *active*, more than a mere reaction, though it is a mysterious "activity" indeed (notwithstanding a large literature fortunately beyond the scope of this dissertation). Finally, though, it is the public character of thought I want to emphasize. As the word "re-cognition" suggests, when we communicate and understand, one thing we are doing is participating jointly in *thoughts* about something (the weather, the state of our souls, the world around us). Objects of art--including good stories--are both records of thought and occasions of thought (the record being inaccessible without an active infusion of new thought). Another way of saying this may be to say, they are not mere acts of "self-expression." Again, Dewey can help:

The act of expression that constitutes a work of art is a construction in time, not an instantaneous emission.... (T)his statement signifies...more than that it takes time.... It means that the expression of the self in and through a medium, constituting the work of art, is *itself* a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in

which both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess.

(1934, p. 65)

The "objective conditions" are, first off, the medium--paint, or marble, or in Brendan's case, language--and in the second place, aspects of "the world out there," an entity both actual and imagined. The world out there, as it happens and as we imagine it, is in constant flux, the language is a field of infinite potentialities, the self is continually under construction. "Prolonged interaction"--including much writing and crossing out and rewriting--brings "form and order": the experienced world--acutely imagined, severely edited into story--becomes newly legible; language achieves a specific, hitherto unrealized, bounded shape; the self acquires a new layer of definition through the activity of *making*, laying down of perception. The job of the reader is to cross over into the text, leaving safety behind, to do the "re-creation" Dewey speaks of, and so have one's own experience rewritten, and so animate the text. *If* a job of education is to promote the child's making of meaning--acquisition of "form and order"--this crossing over becomes a job of teaching too.

A child's reading: Seeing resemblance in difference

Am I asking Brendan's writing to carry an excessive burden? In that I am applying to it too many words of my own, doubtless; in that it has the power to move, to "unite," in Dewey's words, I believe not. I offer one final episode to confirm this from a perspective other than my own. I take this episode to be an instance of "right reading," of reading with "sympathy."

"The Moral of the Story Is Pay Your Taxes or Else," was, as I've said, a response to an assignment: everyone in the group had to write "a fable,"

which, we had decided, is a particular kind of story providing a moral or a lesson. It is at best barely plausible that the "lesson" of Brendan's fable is given by the title; it would be far more artistic, far more characteristic of a writer concerned with homelessness who, in acute and uneasy, ungentle, humor, titles a work "The Garbage Can Seller," to generate tension between title and text. As some of Brendan's classmates said in the introduction to our "Fable Book,"

There can be more than one moral in a fable. For example, there can be a written moral for your story or fable, and the reader can still make up another moral. Sometimes a moral is the solution of the fable. But sometimes a moral might not be a solution--for example, if a fable has a sad ending to the story, the moral might not be a solution.

As one part of the Fable Book assignment, each fable was to be accompanied by a drawing, made not by the author, but by a reader, a classmate. This part of the assignment, then, was a kind of exercise in interpretation. The boy who illustrated Brendan's fable certainly did not provide a "solution," but it is arguable that he provided a countermoral. He showed, crudely but very clearly, a *crucifixion* taking place beside what looked like "a old beat up barn." I was at first startled--partly, no doubt, because I had had no more than superficial faith that I really would get interpretations, not "mere illustrations"³²--but quickly felt the rightness of the drawing. In no way a literal response to the story, a crucifixion--as a symbol of innocent suffering--provides not only a coherent response, but a satisfying one, one that adds a measure of hope: that meaning might result. So Brendan's classmate had surely interpreted the story, had done the work of "re-

³² Probably too because in this multinational school of many different faiths, all reference to religion was officially frowned upon--a fact that, unfortunately, ultimately led me to discourage this picture.

creation." He had made a statement about its meaning not explicitly given by the text, he had found form that was latent in it, drawing on it and on his own imaginative experience. Like any good interpretation, this drawing has the power to make other readers reconsider the text. I, for example, can not now read "The Moral Is..." without connecting the gory dismemberment and death of the family and, in particular, of "the teenage boy the last of the family living," to other instances of innocent suffering and sacrifice potentially redeemable in the consciousness of those who witness, survive, or come after. We can say that an interpretation creates a kind of community around the text--the "liberatory unity" Dewey speaks of.³³ In this case, for instance, I now recognized Brendan's classmate and myself as participating jointly in an arena of meaning created by Brendan's fable and our reaction to it. It seemed to me, also, that this boy, in drawing the crucifixion, had intuitively apprehended something crucial to Brendan's fable with a speed and a sureness that spoke of a commonality of perception and understanding between the two, a commonality that awaited an occasion of recognition. Despite various obvious differences between them--for instance, race, first language, and preferred subject matters in writing--their experience of the world had important similarities, such that when mediated by Brendan's fable, the connections leapt to the fore, silently.

In her book, *What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* (1989), Adrienne Rich speaks with wonder and pleasure of the common English names of certain wildlife, and in particular of "the poisoning of heterogeneous images" in designations like "Leather Star" and "Volcano Barnacle." She remarks,

³³ An idea I will develop somewhat further in Chapter 4, "Unsuspected Literatures."

H
re
cl

The perc

the only

America

Borden?

movies o

bury tale

a time..."

face of th

survive t

teaches, t

to an auc

"text," af

dimension

the music

want to h

Harold R

takes up

not so tal

the feelin

to have a

we are

capacity f

removing

Borden 8

Human eyes gazed at each of all these forms of life and saw
resemblance in difference--the core of metaphor, that which lies
close to the core of poetry, the only hope for a humane civil life.
(pp. 3-4)

The perception of "resemblance in difference" *is*, many of us would agree,
"the only hope for a humane civil life." The meanings of "Kansas" in
American culture--*The Wizard of Oz*? "Amber waves of grain?"--Lizzie
Borden?, the Jeffrey Dahmer story, the Christ story, homelessness, gangster
movies of the 1930's and 1940's, money and the lack of money, the classic
fairy tale invitation to give oneself over to the pleasures of story--"once upon
a time..."--the existence of groups called "families," in which it is the ordinary
fate of the young to see the protective capacities of their elders diminish, to
survive their death or disappearance, the idea of a fable as a story which
teaches, the perception of violence as shocking, but also perhaps pleasurable,
to an audience--and, certainly, more--came together, are brought together--a
"text," after all, is a weaving, a made object with *texture*, with depth and
dimension, contrast, shadow, to be passed through the fingers repeatedly--in
the musings of nine year old boy and certain readers of his writing. I don't
want to heap too much on it--"It's only a story," after all. But a story, as
Harold Rosen insists, is *an act of thought*, and a story that is remembered
takes up residence in the thoughts and feelings of others--it has no life if it is
not so taken up. A story worth its salt becomes a communal meditation on
the feelings and perceptions and apprehensions we delight in having and fear
to have and must have if we are to live in the world as sentient beings. And
if we are not sentient, we shall lose both the objects of our thought and our
capacity for thought itself, and certainly render ourselves incapable of
perceiving "the resemblance in difference" that we require to perceive. What
Brendan gives is a chance to take another look at how the world announces

self in

teachers

indeed q

relatively

indetermin

At

He

just a m

material

and effort

ended

reading" (

eract an a

standing

be notion

brant ass

r effort

And help

ipulate,

remain lo

remain

nd Schol

Leshire

Epens a

teaching

itself in our time, and an occasion to ask ourselves, What is our duty as teachers in a world that looks like *this*? The meaning of the question is indeed quite different if we suppose the world we are peering at is the relatively narrow and private one of Brendan's autobiography or a larger, indeterminate one in which we all figure as players.

Afterword: Thinking about teaching, opening up "attention"

Hoping that large question will linger in the air, I turn now to what is, I trust, a more modest task: I want to begin to draw out, from the specific material of this account of Brendan's stories, some of the particular aspects and efforts of teaching that the idea of "teaching as acts of attention" is intended to frame and bring into focus. Clearly, I have offered "sympathetic reading" of children's fictions "as if they mattered" as one way of trying to enact an attention at once circumspect and imaginative. I claim that such attending can be considered an element of *teaching* in part, of course, because the notion of "making-meaning-with"--as Scholes for literature and Dewey for art assert is *essential* to the fulfillment of textual or artistic objects--is then an effort to help fulfill some aspect of the child's meaning-making capacity. (And helping people develop their capacities to make meaning is, I will just stipulate, a central purpose of teaching.) I want both to propose that there is a certain logic to this argument--one I have attempted to illustrate in practice in the main body of the chapter with the aforementioned assistance of Dewey and Scholes, among others--and to acknowledge that there is a curious, Cheshire Cat-like quality to the argument, in that so much of the "reading" happens *after* the activities one would normally call, for better or worse, "teaching," are long over.

Cer
enabling a
and small
require the
Brandan's
the reading
understood
sufficiently
Perhaps the

The
ried with
ago I und
put a grea
when I fir
wrote, my
Brandan to
situation si
report m
business o

1. I
to no
rather

2. I
be se

3. T
with

Certainly I want to say again that attention is an *attitude*, a potentially enabling attitude, that may manifest itself along a continuum of ways, great and small, over time (and, as such an attitude, in some sense it does not require *justification* from its objects, though I have in effect been asking Brendan's stories to "justify" themselves here). But the temporal quality of the reading I endeavor raises directly some further aspects of teaching understood as acts of attention that I think are sufficiently describable, and sufficiently close to recognizable as "teaching," that they deserve explication. Perhaps they will even restore some body to the Cheshire Cat.

The temporal, in a sense, the developmental, nature of the reading I've tried with Brendan's stories is easily illustrated. Not too many paragraphs ago, I underscored a point the reader will surely not have overlooked: that I put a great deal of energy into interpretive engagement with the stories. Yet when I first introduced Brendan at work on "The Garbage Can Seller," I wrote, my attention having been drawn by "raucous giggles," that "I urged Brendan to continue writing...trying to *address my commentary to the behavior surrounding the writing...not to the text itself.*" Not long after that, I report myself meddling, more or less, in that text--specifically, through the business of the "genealogy." These are three distinct modes of response:

1. The neutral, apparent non-response which clearly does not amount to *no* response but rather is a tacit (provisional) nod of approval or, rather, acceptance;
2. The "meddlesome" response, which, had it borne more fruit, could be seen as a kind of co-participation in the making of the text; and,
3. The active, engaged response of interpreting, of "making-meaning-with."

Attention

how to sh

Eas

a larger sp

classroom

propose

educative

imaginati

sympathe

their capa

public spa

political,

The

'space," p

in particu

into a rou

'cultivating

want to be

island for

writing wo

list, in the

week, not

of choice

time and

tools and

is the "Fab

passing-ar

"Attention" does, for me, run through and link these responses, as I hope now to show.

Early in the chapter, outlining an agenda, I said that I wished to "claim a larger *space* for the fictional--a space larger than that often provided for it in classrooms, and in the literature on children's writing." I went on to "propose that fiction is a *site*...for the productive, sometimes disruptive, educative encounter of the child-writer and the world of culture, imagination, morality, hope, and doubt." And, sketching the argument for sympathetic readings, I concluded by suggesting that "such readings, through their capacity to force a re-evaluation of experience and their creation of a public *space* occupied by writer and readers, have an implicitly social, indeed political, import."

The architectural metaphor that isn't quite a metaphor, the figure of "space," points to several of the meanings of attention that have been at issue; in particular, it organizes the three modes of response to Brendan's writing into a roughly coherent whole. Keeping in mind that "tending," hence "cultivating" and, ultimately, "culture," are bound up in the verb *to attend*, I want to bend the metaphor into making or *clearing space*, as in clearing a plot of land for planting, as in making an open plaza in the middle of a city. In the writing workshop, the effort to clear away, to make room, is most obvious, first, in the allocation of time for the workshop itself (three to five hours a week, not in school terms a trivial amount), and, second, in the priority given to "choice writing" (that time when each child was responsible for finding theme and form) within the workshop. Now, within this "space" various tools and constraints--a "back-up assignment," "sharing time," projects such as the "Fable Book," to mention only some of those I have touched upon in passing--are certainly provided; nonetheless, what I want to stress at this

sage's t

There ar

formal a

hand, an

hardly

importan

psycholo

turn to

want one

of learni

mind. T

workshop

assignme

flexible.

although

not prese

attitude t

writing, a

successio

time and

If we are

possessive

politely, v

likely to h

¹ However

many of st

program, a

their felt pr

immediat

stage is that which is cleared away, absence being not always easy to notice. There are, for example, no quizzes or tests, nor indeed hardly any traces of formal assessment.³⁴ (Informal assessment and evaluation, on the other hand, are continuous--but that is so much a part of the fabric of this story that it hardly seems to need pointing out.) Certainly, as I've indicated, I had important expectations for the children's writing, but these tended to be psychological and subjective, e.g., that the writing they were doing come to *matter* to them in some way. I seldom quantified my expectations (as in, I want one more page). Nor did I come to each workshop armed with a battery of "learning objectives," though, again, it is evident I had some big ones in mind. Though there were of course certain routines--beginning each workshop session with a group meeting, the provision of the back-up assignment, fairly regular sharing times--I tried to keep these capacious and flexible. I did not wish to routinize or calcify "the writing process" itself, so, although "draft" and "revise" were very much part of my vocabulary, I did not present writing as a necessary sequence of steps. I did try to manifest an attitude that said, Of course false starts and unfinished work are part of writing, and--for reasons I hope my comments on "The Moral Is..." as a "successful revision" make clear--I permitted a good deal more repetition of theme and plot than I observe many of my colleagues being comfortable with. (If we are to treat children as "real writers," we should allow that obsessiveness is a big part of the make-up of grown-up "real writers." More politely, we could call upon the important observation that most of us are lucky to have one or two ideas in a lifetime, ideas we may--again, if we are

³⁴ However, in the years since I taught Brendan, writing has become a focus of the state's battery of standardized tests. Indeed, although the test focuses on "process writing," in this classroom, and in others I know of, "writing workshop and fun writing" are no longer practiced, due to felt pressures of the test and from district curricular mandates (A. Byrd, personal communication, 1997).

lucky-S

this per

It's not

rule rat

s one of

attention

schoolin

B

et has s

sexual sp

provision

Can Sella

conscious

decisions

nonethel

worth of

Brendan

than the t

effortful

attention

suspendi

This stand

if sympat

mention n

with the n

² And of c
nature ma

lucky--spend a lifetime or so working and re-working) There were limits to this permission to reiterate and revisit--I occasionally invoked a standard, "it's not good to get stuck in a rut"--but these limits followed no particular rule, rather, a kind of crude sense, a kind of tact, if you will, whose cultivation is one of the central themes of this work and of the idea of teaching as attention. I think then of the workshop as a time when some of the clutter of schooling is brushed away,³⁵ a time to deal with the blank page.

But, as Brendan "deals" with that page in his extravagant manner, my job has still just begun. For, in addition to trying to make the material and social space of the *classroom* hospitable to imaginative activity--including, provisionally, the unseemly, potentially disruptive activity of "The Garbage Can Seller"--there is a kind of "making space" that must go on in the consciousness of the teacher. This could be put as a matter of making decisions ("spontaneous," less than fully deliberate, intuitive, "they nonetheless *were* decisions") about when to *defer* evaluation (about the worth of "The Garbage Can Seller," for example) and about *what* to evaluate (Brendan's evident "investment of concentration and care" in the text rather than the text itself, for example). This could also be seen as the stance of "effortful patience," which is one way I have proposed to understand "attention." This is attention as Simone Weil spoke of it, as the job of "suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready" (1977, p. 49). This stance of *expectancy* and *receptivity* is perhaps the first step on the road of sympathetic reading. Attention is *empty* in the sense that the object of attention is not to be determined by the teacher but is to come into view; it is, with the meanings of *cultivating*, *tending* and *tending to*, and *waiting upon*

³⁵ And of course there is no logical reason to confine this disencumbering to a place in the schedule marked as "writing workshop."

or more

cultivate

interest

abandon

And as

making

The Gar

ever imp

to touch

dear, ma

say again

to adults

worth. (

recognize

supports

students

chapters.

fiction an

teaching

Gi

ready

turn out

can be see

teaching

sometime

this case

or *ministering* in mind, an image of a plot of land, now cleared, to be cultivated, an open square or a stage on which someone or something of interest or importance may emerge. Thought here is suspended, not abandoned: it awaits prompting and guidance from the object of interest. And as the object comes into view, to reverse a phrase, the *patient effort* of "making-meaning-with" can begin in earnest. Assuming that that object-- "The Garbage Can Seller," for instance--*may* turn out to be of interest and even importance, *if* I can create in myself the right conditions of receptivity is, to touch on an important point not yet, for reasons of narrative clarity, made clear, made far easier if previous observations of children investing, let me say again, "effort and care" into projects not at once compelling or attractive to adults, have ultimately revealed products of available and assessable worth. (In this sense the sympathetic reading of Brendan's stories is recognizable *as teaching* long after his fourth grade is over in that that reading supports and encourages my ability to "give the benefit of the doubt" to *future* students' projects, including some students to be introduced in subsequent chapters. Likewise, this makes clear that, encountering Brendan and his fiction and my musings on that fiction, the reader is, inevitably, entering a teaching story that long precedes these events.)

Giving Brendan's story the tacit nod of approval, and trying internally to ready myself for the possibility, even the likelihood, that that story will turn out to have recognizable and explicable value (for thinking, as thinking), can be seen as two kinds of "making space." The nod and the internal readying can also be seen as a series of moves and decisions that I will sometimes find it useful to term "sanctioning the content" of the writing, in this case violent, perhaps "unseemly," clearly--to "L. G.," for example--

disturbing
of teaching
then to en
meaning

Also
the frisky
understan
consequen
at the wh
justify to
speculatio
on the fir
writing as
more abou

Th
gaining r
which ma
side to exp
narrative
cannot be
activity de
has is poe

A proce
nations
of the dan
made mo
ably avail
the fiction
of the al
generately

disturbing content.³⁶ Clearly the logical next step (not that, in the real world of teaching, these "steps" happen or can happen in neat, linear fashion) is then to engage with that content, to read it as if it will yield interest and meaning.

Almost without knowing it, this reading "as if" gets one involved in the "risky" business of thinking as Dewey understood thinking, as I understand sympathetic reading: as a matter of "sharing in the consequences"--the consequences of being orphaned, for example, or of being at the wheel of that bloody car. It was this reading "as if," and the felt need to justify to others--and the research project that grew in part out of these speculations, doubts, and puzzles--that led me eventually to put such a stress on the *fictional* character of Brendan's writings, for it was recognizing the writing *as* fiction that reminded me how to read, and prompted me to learn more about how to read.

Thus I come to the final kind of "making space" I have in mind: granting room and respect for the "play-space" of fiction. This is the space in which many normal consequences are suspended; it becomes possible and safe to explore possibilities of image (the windshield covered with blood) and narrative logic ("and they threw the head in after") that otherwise obviously cannot be. It is in this space, as I shall increasingly argue, that imaginative activity does some of its most important work: both the *criticism* of the world that is poetry,³⁷ even, as I've suggested, the bleak poetry of "The Moral Is..."--

³⁶ A process of revision cannot be allowed to be endless, so I will take this opportunity merely to acknowledge, but not now to take up, the fact that readers may find the "disturbing content" of Brendan's stories--and even more, those of C.J., to be addressed in the following chapter--to be made more so by the recent series of schoolyard killings by children and by arguments that widely available cultural images of violence and an *inability* to adequately distinguish "fact from fiction" help account for such horror (see, for example, Bok, 1998).

³⁷ Recalling the etymology of "fiction" offered earlier, it now is pertinent, having deliberately introduced "poetry," to note that, etymologically, a *poet* is a *maker* (Partridge, 1983).

and

prospe

cia pos

the tent

possibili

have att

I

several v

of intere

using A

occurs

to help i

in this cl

taking c

enhance

encoun

within th

and resp

practical

and conv

spect of

to

implan t

the no

intense

to I am

to have

to be ke

to be in

to be in

criticizing by sound, image, and implication a world in which a young man's "prospects of effective moral action" look very bleak indeed, and the positing of a possible and preferable world (which these stories of Brendan's do only by the tenuous modes of "beginning-middle-and end-ness," suggestive of the possibility of meaning, which his classmate of the crucifixion and I in my way have attempted to rise to).³⁸

I have used "space" here as a figure of teacherly efforts to attend in several ways, always with the image of clearing an area in which something of interest or importance may eventuate, and then seeing to, looking after, caring for, that possibly important, interesting object or performance when it occurs. (In the case of a story, then, the teacher may "look after" it in an effort to help it fulfill its meaning-making capacity. The further argument, initiated in this chapter and to be taken up later, is that in doing this, the meaning-making capacity of both the student-writer and the teacher-reader are enhanced.) Space has meant the provision of relatively generous, relatively unencumbered time and opportunity to write during the school day, and within that time and opportunity for others--classmates, teacher--to hear/read and respond. In this respect, space-making has a goodly number of concrete, practical components: uncomplicated, for the most part, but driven by ideas and convictions--and curiosity. Sometimes it will seem useful to sum up this aspect of the dimensions of teaching I am trying to take conceptual hold of as

³⁸ Quoting "Matthew Arnold's dictum that 'poetry is criticism of life,'" Dewey goes on to complain that the phrase "fails to see or at all events to state *how* poetry is a criticism of life; namely, not directly, but by disclosure, through imaginative vision addressed to imaginative experience (not to set judgment) of possibilities that contrast with actual conditions" (1934, p. 346). I am of course suggesting that poetry or fiction may criticize as well by imaginative "disclosure" of something of the *horror* of "actual conditions" and present possibilities. Goya and Beckett are but two examples that immediately come to mind of artists who have likewise used the imagination. Later, in the poetry of a young girl (Chapter 4), we will see what at least one reader, I surmise, takes to be a very painful disclosure of possibilities in marked contrast to actual conditions.

treating

for children

effort to c

suspende

preconditi

recognitio

play-spac

Dewey (19

all of these

environme

educational

Taki

ouched on

understand

seems entir

or her best

all-they are

less good c

atmosphere

emphasis a

atmosphere

Insert Bis

to say I a

conceptual c

atmospheres

in minds, we

tain and em

"*creating conditions and opportunities (constraints, expectations, invitations) for children to write.*" Space has meant the more psychological matter of the effort to create *internal* conditions in the mind of the teacher: conditions of "suspended thought," "emptiness and expectancy," understood as preconditions for sympathetic reading; and space has been used to mean the recognition and validation of both the ties and the distinctions between the "play-space" of fiction and "the real world." It is also relevant to note that Dewey (1956b, e.g., p. 31), using a "space"-like word he favored, would say that all of these activities can be understood as part of "determining the *environment* of the child," which he deems a, if not the, fundamental educational task.

Taking all these senses together, a remark from poet Elizabeth Bishop, touched on in passing earlier in the chapter, (in connection with understanding "The Moral Is..." as a revision of "The Garbage Can Seller"), seems entirely to the point. "I think," she writes, that "everyone feels that his or her best poems were lucky accidents.... But of course they really aren't at all--they are indications that you have worked hard on all the others [i.e., the less good ones], and felt deeply, and *somehow managed to create the right atmosphere* in your own brain for a good poem to emerge" (1994, p. 86, emphasis added). It is of course the notion of "somehow creating the right atmosphere" (or as I have said, "space") that particularly makes me want to re-insert Bishop here. One way of characterizing what I am attempting would be to say I am trying to go a bit beyond that word "somehow," to gain some conceptual clarity about how we go about creating the right conditions, atmospheres, spaces. When we are discussing what goes on in people's brains or minds, we are not, I trust, ever going to achieve unassailable, rationally plain and empirically verifiable, clarity, nor are we ever going to have a

language

Which is

highly I t

Bishop's

but also v

classroom

writers in

this I am

write, but

the questi

will retur

Thre

teaching

Sympathe

tion to a

actively

attention

example, i

in which

normal-an

conversati

interrogate

asking be

series o

handling

ed learn

can usual

language better suited for our purposes than the language of metaphor. (Which is by way of acknowledging that a quality of "somehow" will always, rightly I think, pervade this discussion.) I am also attempting to locate Bishop's "right atmosphere" *socially*: not only within the mind of the writer, but also within the mind of the teacher-reader and in the public space of the classroom, a space constituted in part by the interactions of readers and writers in and around texts which evince "hard work" and "deep feeling." In this, I am guided not only, unoriginally, by the climate of the times in which I write, but by Dewey's insistence that as teachers we are vitally concerned with the question of "how mind answers to mind" (1974, p. 324), a point to which I will return.

Through spatial images, I am trying to open up some of what I mean by "teaching as acts of attention," to discuss more fully some particular "acts." Sympathetic reading, as I said early on, can be understood as one prolonged effort to attend, with many stages (as just reviewed), stages which occur recursively, readings which reverberate. Then too, the idea of teaching as acts of attention has itself functioned as an analytic tool or perhaps challenge. For example, it has only been by reading and even obsessively re-reading the data on which this chapter is primarily based--Brendan's stories, my teaching journal--and earlier drafts of the chapter itself--and then by putting myself in conversational milieu where the idea of attention could be expected to be interrogated, that the recurrence and importance of the figure of space-making became visible; in particular, became visible not simply as an absence or series of absences but, rather, as a circle of activity and effort. To rotate the attending idea once again, it is possible to say, that I am trying to understand and learn how to practice teaching itself *as* an inquiry (an effort made more than usually visible and vulnerable once it became clear to me--for the most

part, af

protect

on in B

specula

story," a

debts.

sense w

self-con

made m

commen

dispassi

writings

only, it

and care

intereste

that inve

the circu

powerful

described

"A

in Dewe

thing to

imaginati

reading

be imagi

suppose c

slow, a m

part, after Brendan's fourth grade year--that I was engaged in the research project that would become this dissertation). So, when I report that "(e)arly on in Brendan's work on 'The Garbage Can Seller,' I found myself speculating about my decisions...to encourage Brendan to stick with this story," and that, "(l)ooking back on my journal, I can see that I had doubts...about the future of this story," I am trying to make attention--in the sense we often use "reflection"--a deliberate part of my teaching. Choosing self-consciousness in this way had at least three consequences at the time: It made me considerably more deliberate and curious about deciding when to comment directly to the content of children's writings, when to opt for dispassion, when to focus on, for example, children's *reactions* to each other's writings not the writings themselves, or to address myself to formal elements only; it made me a more sensitive observer of the qualities of "concentration and care" Brendan invested in his stories (both because I was curious and interested in what was going on for him, and because being able to point out that investment to myself and others legitimated--more or less, enough for the circumstances--my permitting him to continue in these veins); and it powerfully stimulated me to read Brendan's stories in the "as if" mode I have described.

"As if" is the mode of the imagination. With this in mind, I call again on Dewey and on a statement of principle that goes to the heart of what I am trying to do in and understand about teaching. This re-invocation of the imagination serves to link, directly, *methods* of teaching and analyzing teaching with the *purposes* those methods aim to serve--for an education of the imagination (literally, a *drawing out* of the imagination) is a major purpose of this teaching, and imagination is likewise, I am trying to say, to show, a major resource or duty of *the teacher*. Finally, this will be to re-

appro

develo

imagi

think

the

the

the

the

the

note

feeling

matter

and em

this un

learning

classro

know

some

deeply

from an

reenco

ment

learning

place

mate, to

face

disrupt

approach "teaching as acts of attention" from an angle suggested but not developed moments ago: the idea of creating a "play space" in which "imaginative activity does some of its most important work...(e.g.,) the *criticism* of the world that is poetry."

At the conclusion of *Art as Experience*, then, Dewey declares,

Our revolt is in fact a reflection upon education that proceeds by methods so literal as to exclude the imagination...one not touching the desires and emotions of men (sic).

(1934, p. 347)

I note in passing that Bishop's assertion that a good poem depends in part on "feeling deeply" exactly parallels Dewey's assertion that an education that mattered--one that was not sterile--would be one that engaged the "desires and emotions" of students. I want myself to assert that it is in the spirit of this unfinished revolution that I try to teach and to understand teaching and learning. As Brendan's teacher, my aspirations centrally included making the classroom--the writing workshop in particular--into *an environment hospitable for imaginative activity*. I wanted, indeed, for children to learn something of the pleasures and powers of (written, especially) language deeply informed by their "desires and emotions," language as a tool for giving form and shape and substance to desire and emotion, language as a site for the encounter and re-creation (as Brendan's fable was re-created as a crucifixion) of desire and emotion. I wanted to do what I could to continue learning about how to make the classroom be, if possible, whenever possible, a place that honors our human "impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce." I wanted, as I came to think of it, that the classroom be a place *safe for dangerous ideas*--awkward perceptions, unseemly imaginings, disruptive thoughts. That is, to repeat, there needed to be *space* for Brendan

to hav

for his

propo

teacher

unless

activity

observ

to see

these q

present

teachin

the ans

teacher,

recrea

strange

the teac

respons

assertion

the cons

have cal

my fate

own and

world in

⁸ This no
can help in
testing a
method s

to have such ideas, space for me to hold and not instantly reject them, space for his classmates to contemplate them.

These aspirations turn out to be intimately linked to earlier propositions of Dewey's. At the turn of the century, he proposed that for teachers, "the root of the matter"--the matter that is teaching--"is not in (us), unless (we) continue to be students of subject-matter, and students of mind-activity" (1974, p. 321).³⁹ We must, he urged, learn and continue learning to "observe psychologically" (p. 325), to gain "insight into soul-action" (p. 319), "to see...*how mind answers to mind*" (p. 324, emphasis added). These skills, these qualities of vision, are a crucial part of what I am trying to make more present, more central, and more comprehensible through the concept of teaching as acts of attention. I mean this in at least two ways: that fostering the answerability of mind to mind is a central task of teaching (hence, as a teacher, I am, again, actually delighted when one mind answers another by "re-creating" "The Moral Is..." as a crucifixion); also and perhaps more strangely, I am proposing that cultivating answerability, responsiveness, *in* the teacher's mind *to* the student's mind--call this *attending*--is also a key task (responsibility) of teaching. It is for this reason, in particular, that Dewey's assertion of the "dependence of the act of thinking upon a sense of sharing in the consequences of what goes on" (1966, p. 147) matters to me. In what I have called sympathetic reading--a form of thought, a meditation--it will be my fate too to live as if in "an adventure in a world that as a whole (I do) not own and to which (I have) no native title" (Dewey, 1934, p. 59), to live in a world in which a "young man's prospects of taking effective moral action"

³⁹ It is not my intention here to pursue the "study of subject-matter" fork, except to observe that I felt it necessary, trying to learn ways of reading Brendan's stories, to ruminate on the meanings and ambitions of fiction, ruminations that could perhaps be construed as part of my continued study of subject-matter.

are few

living" i

"M

phenom

meaning

derives

wing or

and an i

separate

as two w

experim

understa

undersco

teenage b

live and

body...an

studias.

threaten,

experenc

uplicate

uplicate

He

re classro

analytic w

to ideas

clusive

narrative a

are few, to live in a world in which "the teenage boy the last of the family living" is not living for very long.

"Mind" is a name we have given to the home or site of the phenomenon of "thinking," here understood as, in particular, "making-meaning-with." "Idea" is a name for one product of thinking; the word derives from *to see* (Partridge, 1983). We could suppose an idea then is a *clear seeing* or an acute perception, a something clearly beheld. Thus, an *image* and an *idea*, rendered evermore distinct by the same dualism that has separated or tried to separate feeling from thinking, turn out to be construable as two words for one kind of product, representations of and attempts ("experiments," Dewey would say) at "getting to the heart of the matter," "understanding." I make this slightly cumbersome statement in order to underscore my contention that when Brendan gives us, successively, "the teenage boy the last of the family living," his head "chopped off but...still alive and laughing," and finally, "a hole" into which they "threw the body...and then the head after it," in these images he is *thinking*, he is giving us *ideas*. I would say these are potentially dangerous ideas--they may threaten, for example, our sense of well-being, our hopes for childhood experience; they are images of and ideas about a world that, I have argued, implicates us (we can't apprehend them *as* ideas unless we're willing to be implicated); they threaten us with complicity.

Hence my gradual understanding of and increased concern for making the classroom "safe for dangerous ideas." When I began the more formal analytic work on Brendan's writings, I had a modestly good general sense of the ideas for which I have relied upon Harold Rosen (though they are not the exclusive property of him or anyone)--that a story is an act of thought, narrative a meaning-making strategy, and so on--and I had certainly

experienced the truth of these ideas as both a reader and a writer. But as I worked, with the aid of Rosen, Dewey, Scholes, and many others, on the doing and the conceptualizing of "sympathetic reading" of Brendan's stories, it became ever more important to try and say why this might matter *for teaching*, to fend off, or answer, an imagined impatient reader who would regard all this as a somewhat precious and mostly misplaced piece of literary criticism. The surest way to do this has seemed to be to take as seriously and as far as I could the proposition that Brendan is offering ideas, that his stories are truly acts of thought. For surely no one can argue that thinking and having ideas are anything other than central to any humane and defensible conception of education.⁴⁰ To take this proposition seriously in the ways I wished, in ways that respected the qualities and indeed the traditions of Brendan's writing, Dewey's discussions of the need for "re-creation" by the viewer (here, reader) of a work of art, and his insistence on the "dependence of the act of thinking upon a sense of sharing in the consequences of what goes on" (1966, p. 147), were invaluable. Only, in this phrase, it has been *my* attempts as a teacher to think--to read "intently, personally, vulnerably, subjectively," to have my own experience "re-written"--that have become the warrant for asserting that *Brendan* is thinking, having ideas. (Is there any other way in which thought proves itself *as* thought *except* in the answerability of one mind to another?) This prolonged, asymmetrical transaction has both been a process of attending, in several senses, and an effort to understand and explicate and demonstrate something of the process of attending: in particular, attending as a means of furthering and honoring

⁴⁰ --To an education for democracy, as well, I will wish to argue. In this context, I think we can and must understand the institution of public education as both an expression of faith in the possibility of democracy and an effort to further democracy: thus, an institution dedicated to the premise that all children, as all citizens, can have worthwhile ideas, ideas that can enter powerfully into the experiences and imaginations of others.

human i

creating

human imaginative capacity enacted in the meaning-making activity of creating stories.

I
A
a
e
c
in
c
in
f
h
th

F
A
A

have o
intellect
it serves
creative
describe

The w
Education
University
An ear
Education
This w
of Barber
my help
for Suzu
1998

Chapter 3

"You are getting ready to be a new person":

Mediation of Faith and Doubt in a Writing Workshop?¹

I [see] the child as in the position of having to steal language from his or her elders. The concept of stealing [is] prompted...by wanting to emphasize the asymmetry of the work to be done on each side of the inheritance, the elders exaggerating their contribution of sounds, as if to relieve themselves of the anxiety in the fact they mostly repeat themselves and wait.... This condition is the basis and parable of the possibility and necessity in the education of humans, of making language mine, of finding my voice (my consent, my right to speak, to promise, to break my promise).... Call this...the condition of the possibility of the self-theft of culture...

Stanley Cavell, A Pitch of Philosophy, (1994, pp. 36-37)

Feelings of authority and the authority of feeling: Why look at doubt?

A beginning

As a teacher of writing and a once upon a time would-be writer myself, I have often tried to articulate how I understand "what writing is": what intellectual, psychological, personal, social--in a word, educational--purposes it serves. I mean particularly, though not exclusively, what used to be called "creative writing," i.e., fiction and poetry. A phrase I have often used to describe one crucial function of such writing is to say that its work is to "give

¹ The work in this chapter was supported in part by the Michigan Partnership for a New Education and the Department of Teacher Education, College of Education, Michigan State University. The opinions expressed are my own.

An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, (Roosevelt, 1996).

This work would not have been possible without the generosity of my colleagues Jane Boyd and Barbara Acker. I am also gratefully indebted to Deborah Ball and Jay Featherstone for many helpful comments. Special thanks to Ruth Heaton, Steve Mattson, Sue Poppink, and Kara Suzuka for help with data collection. I am also grateful for the intellectual and moral contributions made by Thea Abu El-Haj.

1000

large

and

re-

his o

some

plaus

relati

for, if

form

have

and w

him a

for it

see it,

that "

imagi

the re

the lo

in the

compl

school

argum

may b

1. I su

netion

form to feeling."² I mean by this something along the lines of, through language grasping at experience, through *written* language giving a special grip and hold to that grasping, "the desires and emotions of men" (sic) may be "re-created" in such a way that the writer has new, more powerful, access to his or her own experience, is in a position to represent and thus discover something more of his or her relationship to the world, is able to assert some plausible, albeit perhaps modest, transformative control over that relationship. A young student of mine--a ten year old child with a reputation for, if not stealing, its cousin, lying--spent the better part of a year giving such form to feeling and re-creating his relationship to the world about him, as I have come to see it--to "steal" his way into a new relationship to voice, self, and world, in fact--in remarkable ways. Specifically, I have come to think of him as having given specifiable, concrete shape to the feeling and experience (for it is an event, not just a state) of *doubt*. In this chapter, I describe how, as I see it, he did so, and how I as the teacher, again as I see it, played some part in that "taking hold." This is necessarily a speculative inquiry, one in which imagination guided by logic must have its say. I have done my best to alert the reader at those moments when my interpretations, in my view, follow the logic of the available evidence but are not themselves directly confirmed in the evidence.

In this account, I hope to continue trying to expand and usefully complicate our understanding of the place and possibility of writing in the schools. But I have a further aim in view: I want to make a start at a larger argument about teaching, specifically, that *doubt* between student and teacher may be a healthy, educative, phenomenon, not something simply to be

² I suppose I am here echoing Wordsworth's tricky statement that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...recollected in tranquillity" (1965, p. 460).

depl

conce

hope

contu

mean

class

viciss

more

final

for m

propo

and le

make,

both v

studen

serves

the air

and to

very a

and w

latent

back fr

argume

he wri

broug

I am

he does

the bus w

deplored and if possible fixed. This argument, in turn, is located within the conception of teaching as acts of attention, a concept which the chapter, I hope, continues to illustrate and develop. "Attending," for example, continues to look like preoccupation and meditation upon a student, his meanings, and my relations--and in the background, but significantly, his classmates' relations--to these; though here these meditations and the vicissitudes of this relationship are more dramatic--more comic, even--and more exposed than in my account of Brendan. In regard to *doubt*, I do not, finally, take a thoroughly skeptical view, as one might who wished to argue for mistrust or doubt as desirable *goals* or outcomes of an education; rather, I propose a characterization of teaching as a "*mediation* of faith and doubt,"³ and learning likewise as a kind of reconciliation of the two. I aim here to make, not only the teacher's often understandable doubt of, and need to find faith with, the student, subject to examination, but to make the issue of the *student's* doubt of the *teacher* central. The concept of teaching as attention serves here to help me "look past...the busy-ness of the teacher to the...interior life of teaching" with which this chapter is centrally concerned--and to find, ironically but in no contradictory spirit, that that interior life is very active indeed. "Attention's" meanings of "watching out *for*, or over, and waiting *upon*" are also pertinent to the teaching discussed here. And, "attention," helps me to understand, and perhaps to do, a kind of stepping back from self difficult but important to do in teaching. In making these arguments, not only do I draw heavily on my own work as a teacher, and on the writing and classroom life of my fourth grade student, and, as throughout, on John Dewey; I draw also on various thinkers writing outside

³ I am indebted to David Cohen for this formulation (while I cannot hold him responsible for the uses I make of it), and to his pointing me towards Willard Waller (1965) and his relevance for this work.

of education *per se*, in particular, the philosopher Annette Baier and the psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott.

Several other contexts need to be acknowledged before turning to my story. One is the history, especially the recent history, of efforts to fashion "authentic" or "powerful" pedagogies of writing. I will let the work of Graves (e.g., 1983; 1994), Calkins (e.g., 1986; 1991), Delpit (e.g., 1986; 1988; 1992) and Lensmire (e.g., 1994a; 1994b) serve as markers for this history, which I have reviewed at somewhat greater length in Chapter 2; Silberman (1989) provides a very useful and principled (though already somewhat dated) overview of this territory. My own interests in this matter continue to include a desire to claim a larger space for children's fictional impulses, and to do so by attempting "right," "sympathetic," or "attentive" readings of their fictional work. This chapter works on, and also complicates, that project.

Finally, I want to situate my work within the larger context of "progressive" education. As I understand them, all progressive pedagogies, whether located more at the psychological/individualistic end of the spectrum, or more towards the political/social end, seek to develop and enact a vision of classrooms as places in which children are encouraged to exercise and further their intellectual, imaginative, and social powers. A progressive classroom or school, in other words, cultivates children's capacities as self-initiating but not autonomous--rather, connected and responsible--actors, in whatever realm of social and academic--ultimately, political--life they find themselves. From this point of view, writing, fascinating and fertile though it is as a human pursuit, is but one element in a larger landscape of hope and frustration. I believe it is important to stipulate my larger ambitions--ambitions which include the development of children's "expressive," let's say, and "authentic," "voices"; their "rights to speak, to promise, to break

their promises"--for a number of connected reasons. In the first instance, the aims and practices I imply bring the locus and nature of classroom authority into the very center of the frame. I play deliberately on "authority": the writer is an author--literally, a creator--and the teacher is an authority--source of direction and maybe wisdom, responsible one--and the root word is of course the same, a root implying parentage. The progressive educator, as I depict her or him, seeks to elicit and encourage children's capacities to be authors, in many senses and suggestions of the word. At the same time, in our time and culture, we have, at best, limited resources for imagining classrooms as places that are not exclusively adult-directed. Compulsory public education is the most obvious impediment to such imaginings; whatever we may think age or greater experience owes to youth is another, more diffuse, impediment. As Waller observed in the 1930's a "school is a despotism...in a state of perilous equilibrium...a despotism resting upon children, at once the most tractable and the most unstable members of the community..." (1965, p. 10). It is not responsible to invoke the notion of children exercising authority in classrooms without acknowledging and seeking to explicate some of the tensions between the putative authority of the children and that of the teacher.⁴ The question of the sources and extents of the teacher's authority and power is not made less important or troublesome in "progressive" classrooms. On the contrary; it is more so. It is at least more exposed. I try to let it be similarly so in this paper. I explicitly raise and examine the issue of trust between student(s), teacher, and surround (classroom structure, expectations, provisions, tone, etc.). Trust is a concept that properly looks quite different when viewed as between parties with non-

⁴ A *full* explication of this tension--desirable though it surely is (and impossible though it might be)--is beyond the scope of this chapter.

equal power and authority, for example, teachers and children (see Baier, 1986), a point I will develop at some length later. For all these reasons, my claim to be working in a progressive tradition is at least as significant as the narrower context of the "writing workshop," however conceived.

At the time of the stories I will tell, I was a guest in Jane Boyd's classroom, a fourth grade of 28 students in an urban public school, also a professional development school associated with Michigan State University. The class was approximately two thirds black and Latino, one third white; approximately one fourth were designated as having "special needs"; about half received free or reduced lunch (B. Rochowiak, personal communication, January, 1998). Middle and working class families predominated; there were several instances of extreme deprivation and/or familial disarray. Barbara Acker, a special education teacher working on an "inclusion" model often worked alongside me; Jane was usually out of the room. (These demographics were roughly typical of the school as a whole, though the inclusion approach to special education was not.) This was my second year in this school, working at Jane's invitation.

The workshop met four afternoons a week for an hour and a quarter per session. I began each workshop with a group meeting. Announcements, assignments, and occasional "mini-lessons" or reviews (of vocabulary, punctuation, commonly confused words, etc.) were the primary order of business here, with assignments at times leading into substantive discussions. I made assignments with several purposes and audiences in mind. I wanted to ensure that each child did at least a small amount of exploration of genres and themes, I wanted us to regularly have some work in common (thus enabling, I hoped, productive and provocative comparisons, illustrations of novel and unexpected responses to the "same" topic, task, or form), and I

wanted to give myself periodic opportunities to direct attention to a particular topic. And I wished to demonstrate, to the children, but also to other teachers, that, despite a degree of choice to which they were quite unaccustomed, this was "real school." On Mondays, I typically gave an assignment suitable for working on, steadily or on and off, over several days. Typically these assignments aimed to highlight or develop some aspect of form and genre (though this vocabulary did not figure in my talk with the class). In the fall I gave a number of assignments highlighting, and calling on children to employ, patterns and structures drawn both from their own work and from material I presented to them.⁵ In the spring, I assigned students the

⁵ For example, regarding structure:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Star</u>	<u>Desire or Need</u>	<u>Trouble</u>
Seven Ravens		<i>little girl, sister</i>	<i>find brothers, set free</i>	<i>lost key</i>
<i>Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby</i>		<i>Brer Rabbit</i>	<i>thrown into Briar Patch</i>	
		<i>Brer Fox</i>	<i>eat/skin/burn Brer Rabbit, rope to hang, intelligence*</i>	<i>fire</i>
<i>Helpers</i>	<i>Candy</i>	<i>Tar Baby Aladdin Christina</i>	<i>wife house, baby, father car</i>	<i>car accident</i>

In this assignment, I provided the categories, drawing in part on previous discussions about "what makes a story good." "Title" and "author" need no explanation; "star" was a term proposed by students in the previous discussion; "desire or need" was my term (in lieu of the more typical "goal"). Perhaps I borrowed it from Kenneth Burke, who is certainly where "trouble" (livelier, I think, than the more usual "obstacle") came from. It will be noted that "resolution" and "setting" are, deliberately, absent. The italicized examples were generated during discussion, drawing on stories recently read to the group. (Candy was one of the students.) The assignment was to write a story including one or more members for each category. I complicated and varied this structure and, with some help from the group, added possibilities to the key categories, over the course of the fall. The point was not so much to teach that stories *must* include each of these structural elements as to draw attention to the fact that stories often do.

* Cameron, a student to be met in the chapter after this one, characteristically, suggested that Brer Fox was lacking in intelligence.

A "pattern" assignment was based on the blues standard "Call it Stormy Monday"

job of selecting and responding to a word, phrase, or idea from the Gettysburg address, treated as a piece of poetry. And, for most of the year, I gave a very brief assignment called "focus words" on the other days of the week. In this, I gave the students two words--typically, contrasting words, one relatively abstract, one relatively concrete, both with some emotional valence (e.g., *pride* and *winter* on one day; *fear* and *nighttime* on the next); the direction was to choose one and write about it (a minimum of five lines at first, later ten--one of the very few places where I quantified my expectations for writing). Often we would brainstorm possible approaches (e.g., describe the thing, say what it makes you think of, do a story about it, etc.) during the meeting. This device had several purposes. It was intended to ease (speed up and quiet down) the transition from meeting time to writing time, by giving everyone something to do right away--a focus, a tool for concentration. It also ensured a certain modest but nonetheless reassuring (to my colleagues, for

(Crowder, et. al., 1988):

They call it Stormy Monday
But Tuesday's just as bad.
Yes, they call it Stormy Monday,
But Tuesday's just as bad.
Wednesday's worse
And Thursday's oh so sad.
Yes, the eagle flies on Friday,
And Saturday I go out to play.
Yes, the eagle flies on Friday,
And Saturday I go out to play.
Sunday I go to church,
Then I kneel down to pray.

Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy on me.
Lord have mercy,
My heart's in misery
Crazy about my baby--
Yeah, send her back to me.

I wrote the lyrics out on chart paper, we discussed them (and generated quite a respectable, traditional interpretation in the process) and then they were to write a "poem" of their own, beginning with Monday, alternating "good" and "bad" days with reasons of their own.

example) minimal daily productivity. And, given that most of my students--in this as in other years--tended to gravitate towards fiction writing, focus words were a way of nudging them towards consideration of other forms, as each focus word response was typically either a sort of incipient essay or a poem.⁶ Assignments notwithstanding, my intention was that students would generally spend at least half of their time on "choice writing." The meeting was followed by "silent ten," theoretically (and sometimes in fact) a ten minute period of silent, independent writing time. This in turn was followed by "quiet writing" time, during which collaborative projects were permitted, sometimes encouraged. A degree of conferencing took place amongst the students, especially at times when we planned to change the work on display or publish a collective book, but I did not formalize "peer conferencing," though I conferred often with individuals and small groups. I also did not make "revision" a ritual for each week or each piece of writing. For some students it was a pretty regular activity, and everyone worked at it, as part of the assignment structure, at least a couple of times over the course of the year. In the fall, and then again in late spring, I scheduled "sharing work"--a time for everyone to gather on the rug and those who wished to to read or present their work--a couple of times a week at the end of the afternoon. I also read to the group intermittently (e.g., "Brer Rabbit" tales [Rees, 1988], *Tuck Everlasting* [Babbitt, 1975])--as part of the meeting, in lieu of sharing work, during "silent ten," or at the end of an unusually unsettled afternoon.

A boy who presents a problem: Comedies of unreliability

Describing his "method of doubt," which directs "never...accept anything as true if (one has) not evident knowledge of its being

⁶ As the year went on, another function of the focus words turned out, for many, to be as a particular kind of communication with me, a phenomenon I describe at more length later.

so," Descartes adds, "Not that I imitated the skeptics who doubt just for the sake of doubting, and affect to be always undecided; on the contrary, my whole aim was to reach security, and cast aside loose earth and sand so as to reach rock or clay."

Discourse on the Method, (1971, pp. 20 & 28, emphasis added)

One day in late September, Erika, a black student who is new to the school, complains to me, "C.J. said I was going to marry Anthony Y. [who is white and was in C.J.'s class last year] (and) the babies would be mixed..." This has caused derisive laughter amongst the several (black) students in the vicinity. C.J. himself is a very small, angular featured, conservatively dressed, African American boy of nine, in his second year in this school. He is repeatedly the object of complaints. Erika is often an accuser, though I believe she enjoys the role of the righteously indignant and would not willingly forego *all* of these dramas; Anthony Y. and C.J. are involved in a long-running dispute whose causes I am unable to determine, though part of the dynamic may be that Anthony is quickly provoked into a flushed face and a passionate retort, often physical, whereas C.J.'s demeanor is impassive and his tone sardonic long after everyone around him is thoroughly fed up. Earlier in the month, Anthony came to me three times in one week to tell me that C.J. had threatened to "get him" after school (--an event for which he, Anthony, was not simply going to *wait*). Nor are these by any means the only children who have been affronted. C.J. has called Candy "zebra breath"; he has borrowed a pen from Miguel, (the least offensive person in the room, and the one least likely to take visible offense), and has steadily, silently, refused to return it; he has frequently made Eric, (who spent the previous year in a football helmet, being extraordinarily prone to seizures), the butt of cruel jokes. And so on. He is from time to time accused of stealing, and has an all

too we

point-

what is

teacher

misdem

howeve

questio

curious

become

doing,

word,"

in these

to do b

to carry

I

and den

impass

an impr

apparen

everythi

impossi

and sinc

central p

the bet

a classro

that the

then, I

too well established reputation (dating to the previous year) for lying. At one point--in an atypical loss, or partial loss, of self control--he puts into words what is often suspected in his tone, saying, publicly, "Fuck you" to another teacher. Much of the time, though, he is only reported to have committed misdemeanors--they are infrequently observed by his teachers, who, however, find the reports very easy to believe. Confronted, or merely questioned, he cocks his head to the side and gazes at you as if in assessment--curious, as I come to imagine him, as to how much temper (which is to say, it becomes important to note, *feeling*), he has provoked. He denies wrongdoing, or--far more irritatingly--says, in tone, expression, and sometimes in word, "So?" He will not be drawn into a discussion either of facts or of rights in these situations; sometimes, he goes through the motions of promising "to do better," but these are nearly always prompted by his mother, and seem to carry little force.

I find C.J. challenging, as he presumably intends. The pattern of "lying and denying" is troubling, and troublesome. Demeanors I describe as "impassive," "sardonic," or "assessing" might also be summed up as "cold," an impression heightened by the quantity of violence in his writings and the apparent lack of affect attached to it. He seems, in short, to do, if not everything in his power, a great deal, to make trust in him difficult or impossible. However, as I think about C.J. in September--and indeed all year, and since then--trust, or confidence, seems to occupy something very like a central position in the teaching I am trying to do. I believe, for example, that "the better angels of our nature" are usually somewhere in the offing and that a classroom can and should be a good place to entertain them; I tend to think that the offering of trust is usually reciprocated, in time. Trustworthiness is often, I believe, as William James put it, one of those "cases where a fact

cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming," a situation, that is, "*where faith in a fact can help create the fact*" (1984, p. 322). Whether my stance is naïve or merely stubborn is, I suppose, a matter for conjecture. C.J., in any case, tested my ability to maintain this stance. As time went on, I came to think of him as implicitly raising the question, "How much trust is necessary or desirable in an educative relationship, how is it to be obtained when conditions militate against it, and in what directions must it flow?"

In my day to day work, then, I determined to offer trust to C.J. whenever possible. I wanted to "give him the benefit of the doubt," and to make the gesture explicit. The corollary, which I left implicit, was that I would exercise particular vigilance, would be on the look-out for occasions to point out wrong-doings which I myself saw. There was no shortage of opportunities for either move. If I saw him shove someone out of his way, call someone a name half under his breath, surreptitiously "borrow" someone's magic marker, and the like, I would call him on it--"that's the kind of thing that makes it hard for people to trust you"--and correct him briskly, never questioning or inviting discussion. The following journal excerpt from October is fairly representative of times when I "gave the benefit of the doubt."

Ralph & C.J. had a tussle yesterday--it is true that the list of people who find cause to complain about C.J., & who can get genuinely, deeply, angry is long.... (I)t is also true that Ralph is sparked to fists pretty quickly. They both agreed that C.J., coming up behind/next to Ralph, had complimented his work; Ralph [who is white] either said "thanks" or "thanks boy" (the first time I thought I heard "boy," but Ralph didn't repeat [on the second telling] & C.J. didn't pick up on, so I let it lie); C.J. put his hand on Ralph's head & either forcefully or not, either friendlily or not, pushed his head a bit (as you might tousle someone's hair?)--I told them I could either believe that C.J. had meant to bother or that he hadn't meant to bother/be rough, but [nevertheless] had been: could they tell me how to decide? No.

OK, I said, then I am going to trust, to believe that C.J. didn't mean to bother, because I prefer to trust--but I need him to help me be able to trust him. Did he understand? Nod. Did Ralph? Nod. OK for now? OK.

(Journal, 10/8/94)⁷

The anecdote has its share of ambiguity (e.g., the possibility that C.J. had been given cause to be offended, the possibility--less clear at the time, I like to think, than in the recounting--that both boys were simply nodding and yessirring in an effort to get back to their own pursuits as soon as they could--which is surely how Waller would interpret it). Variants on this approach were times when a complaint involving C.J. would be made and I would say to him things like, (as I did in response to the "mixed babies" episode), "what I'm noticing--about every two days, around where you are, is trouble." A trick to all this was to find ways to make it clear that I was not being willfully blind or oblivious, not, as it were, looking for ways to be taken advantage of. It was important to avoid "offering trust" in ways/at times that would seem patently unfair or inappropriately incurious (as to the "true facts of the case") to other children. Another tricky thing was to find occasions when I was in genuine doubt about what to believe, times when I could legitimately suspect C.J.--and *still* "give the benefit of the doubt" with a degree of honesty. The first "trick" encompasses common enough teaching moves, ones perceptible to a sensitive observer who spends enough time in many an early childhood classroom. I spell these out because I think the second "trick" is *not* susceptible to observation and yet was the whole point of the exercise. It

⁷ My journal is characterized by informal shorthand, idiosyncratic punctuation, and poor spelling. I have silently corrected these features. The journal was for me a recording space (my major way, in addition to collecting work, of keeping track of what children were doing, what plans and agreements we had made and so forth), a reflective space (a place to raise questions and to critique my practice; sometimes, a place to let off steam), and a place where I did some but not all of my planning.

requires, or consists of, an internal teaching "move" without which, I believe, the gesture would be moot, practically and morally: I had to be vulnerable to real doubt, at some risk of having my trust abused, for my gesture to count as "trust" at all. A sure thing would mean nothing. Real trust required taking the risk that I was being gulled *and* finding it in me to have faith that, at least in part, C.J. had been inclining towards "the right thing," or had done no wrong thing. I could not *say* "I'm choosing to trust" but *mean* "my suspicions are thicker than they were before." I had to be willing to turn my back on him for a while, and he had to know that, to believe I was doing that.

Over the course of the fall and into the early winter, this approach seemed to be bearing some fruit, but there was nothing like uniform progress. On the one hand, C.J. regularly sought me out for conferences about his writing (which he was not obliged to do), and he often seemed to go out of his way to give me a rather formal "good bye, Mr. Roosevelt" (e.g., 11/12 and 11/28) at the end of the day (a hectic time when such courtesies were not the norm). On the other hand, troubling incidents continued. The following, from early December, was one of the worst.

...while my back was briefly turned, C.J. was up out of his chair and pounding on Eric in the chair next to him, hitting him repeatedly, hard, perhaps as hard as he could, on the head & shoulders. I grabbed him & lifted him up, plunking him down near the door & sending him to the office...

(Journal, 12/7/94)

(Lest I appear to have over-reacted, I point out that Eric was the boy who had spent the previous year in a football helmet to reduce the chance of injury

during one of his many seizures, a fact of which C.J. was well aware.⁸) Clearly, I had to be careful in turning my back to C.J.

On this same day, however, when he was returned to the classroom at home-time, about an hour later, C.J. went directly to his cubby, retrieved his latest story, and handed it to me silently on his way out the door. Such contrasts--unreliable, even conceivably dangerous, child; child who seeks me out in my role as writing teacher and is sometimes gravely courteous to me--gradually forced themselves on my consciousness. Belatedly, I began to consider that, all the time I was contending with my difficulties trusting *him*, *he*, in fact was doubting *me*. Following Descartes, I choose "doubt" to characterize C.J.'s stance and actions because the word connotes an active seeking and testing--a quest for certainty--rather than a merely passive or reactive mistrust. "Mistrust," furthermore, suggests an attitude formed, a judgment at least tentatively made, whereas "doubt," again, implies a question, a live investigation.⁹

A review of my journal substantiates this reconsideration, this refocusing of my attention *away* from my attitude towards the child *to* his attitude towards me. (The teacher is accustomed to interrogating; the teacher must be *subject* to interrogation.) C.J. in fact sought me out more frequently

⁸ To this day, I am not certain what prompted the outburst, though I do know it was a generally unsettled, unhappy day in the classroom. I can speculate that something about Eric's vulnerability, and social awkwardness, made C.J. acutely uncomfortable. And it is quite possible that Eric was in some way deliberately provocative: he was known to be on several occasions later in the year. Such mysteries are, too often, an uncomfortable feature of school life--especially when, as in this case, someone else handled the subsequent disciplinary conversation.

⁹ James is again relevant. Consider: "(T)here is some believing tendency wherever there is willingness to act at all," and, "Let us give the name *hypothesis* to anything that may be proposed to our belief...(and)...call the decision between two hypotheses an *option*"; these in turn come in several forms: "*living or dead; forced or avoidable; momentous or trivial...*" (1984, p. 309). Finally, taking doubt as an active search, with C.J. thus portrayed as on a quest that is at base moral, consider this: "If your heart does not *want* a world of moral reality, your head will assuredly never make you believe in one" (p. 321).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268
269
270
271
272
273
274
275
276
277
278
279
280
281
282
283
284
285
286
287
288
289
290
291
292
293
294
295
296
297
298
299
300
301
302
303
304
305
306
307
308
309
310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361
362
363
364
365
366
367
368
369
370
371
372
373
374
375
376
377
378
379
380
381
382
383
384
385
386
387
388
389
390
391
392
393
394
395
396
397
398
399
400
401
402
403
404
405
406
407
408
409
410
411
412
413
414
415
416
417
418
419
420
421
422
423
424
425
426
427
428
429
430
431
432
433
434
435
436
437
438
439
440
441
442
443
444
445
446
447
448
449
450
451
452
453
454
455
456
457
458
459
460
461
462
463
464
465
466
467
468
469
470
471
472
473
474
475
476
477
478
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500
501
502
503
504
505
506
507
508
509
510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518
519
520
521
522
523
524
525
526
527
528
529
530
531
532
533
534
535
536
537
538
539
540
541
542
543
544
545
546
547
548
549
550
551
552
553
554
555
556
557
558
559
560
561
562
563
564
565
566
567
568
569
570
571
572
573
574
575
576
577
578
579
580
581
582
583
584
585
586
587
588
589
590
591
592
593
594
595
596
597
598
599
600
601
602
603
604
605
606
607
608
609
610
611
612
613
614
615
616
617
618
619
620
621
622
623
624
625
626
627
628
629
630
631
632
633
634
635
636
637
638
639
640
641
642
643
644
645
646
647
648
649
650
651
652
653
654
655
656
657
658
659
660
661
662
663
664
665
666
667
668
669
670
671
672
673
674
675
676
677
678
679
680
681
682
683
684
685
686
687
688
689
690
691
692
693
694
695
696
697
698
699
700
701
702
703
704
705
706
707
708
709
710
711
712
713
714
715
716
717
718
719
720
721
722
723
724
725
726
727
728
729
730
731
732
733
734
735
736
737
738
739
740
741
742
743
744
745
746
747
748
749
750
751
752
753
754
755
756
757
758
759
760
761
762
763
764
765
766
767
768
769
770
771
772
773
774
775
776
777
778
779
780
781
782
783
784
785
786
787
788
789
790
791
792
793
794
795
796
797
798
799
800
801
802
803
804
805
806
807
808
809
810
811
812
813
814
815
816
817
818
819
820
821
822
823
824
825
826
827
828
829
830
831
832
833
834
835
836
837
838
839
840
841
842
843
844
845
846
847
848
849
850
851
852
853
854
855
856
857
858
859
860
861
862
863
864
865
866
867
868
869
870
871
872
873
874
875
876
877
878
879
880
881
882
883
884
885
886
887
888
889
890
891
892
893
894
895
896
897
898
899
900
901
902
903
904
905
906
907
908
909
910
911
912
913
914
915
916
917
918
919
920
921
922
923
924
925
926
927
928
929
930
931
932
933
934
935
936
937
938
939
940
941
942
943
944
945
946
947
948
949
950
951
952
953
954
955
956
957
958
959
960
961
962
963
964
965
966
967
968
969
970
971
972
973
974
975
976
977
978
979
980
981
982
983
984
985
986
987
988
989
990
991
992
993
994
995
996
997
998
999
1000

than many children in the group, more so than any of the other boys, with one possible exception. Most of my conferences were held on an ad-hoc, informal basis as the need arose from a student's point of view or my own. (I did sometimes schedule conferences in advance, but proved, speaking of reliability, embarrassingly unable to make good on such promises most of the time.) C.J. often asked for conferences, and often--daily, for a while--chose to sit at the round table where I stationed myself, even on days, as were frequent in the fall, when I'd had cause to reprimand him at group meeting.¹⁰ And he complained when I promised but failed to get to conference with him--though I sometimes didn't fully register this complaint until *after* he'd gotten into some kind of trouble (for instance, one day I sent him to the office, he slammed the door dramatically on the way out--"OK, Mr. Roosevelt," loud and sarcastic; only later did I recall he'd earlier complained of waiting "*months*" for his conference [journal, 10/5/94]). Most telling was the frequency with which he gave me his work to read at the end of the day, let me know what he'd written at home the night before,¹¹ or, as I've mentioned, said "good-bye" to me at the end of a difficult day.

One week in November illustrated this seeking, probing, withdrawing, questioning--in a word, doubting--stance particularly well. On Monday, at sharing time, C.J. reminded me that I'd promised him he could continue a turn begun the previous week--and asked me to read his story for him, which

¹⁰ The students were arrayed at seven rectangular tables seating 3-4 each, not at individual desks, with, when I was teaching, great (but not total) freedom to sit where they chose once the beginning meeting was over. Additionally, there was a slightly threadbare carpeted area bordered by (equally threadbare) couch and upholstered armchair, two adjoining study carrels (added late in the fall), a table holding three computers, one private desk facing the wall (and another outside the door in the hall), a round table near the door and the computer stations and, diagonally opposite, Jane's desk. I stationed myself at the round table, held what conferences I held there, and made it clear students could choose to work there.

¹¹ For which no "extra credit" or other such external inducements were available from me. I gave, in fact, no homework.

I did. The next day during sharing time, he reduced Candy to silent, near to tears rage--apparently he'd chastised her for being "white" (true) and ridden with "lice" (almost certainly not true)--and this ordinarily tough, resourceful and vocal girl had shut up in a furious discomfort. I'd taken C.J. to task, received no denials or excuses, and told him I was "extremely disappointed in him" for being cruel. The following day, a Wednesday, I had (as usual) not been at school. On Thursday, he'd written--in response to the "Stormy Monday" assignment--that "Wednesday is good because we don't have writing workshop" (journal, 11/14-11/18/94; I go on to note, with an embarrassment I will later judge misplaced, that he had succeeded in "hurting my feelings" by writing this). Long after the fact, it seemed reasonable to suppose we had had a moderately trusting or trustworthy exchange on Monday, followed by my expression of disappointment in C.J. on Tuesday, followed in turn by my scheduled absence on Wednesday, culminating in his statement of anger at me on Thursday, a statement which could also be interpreted as his being glad there was no one around to be disappointed in him, and as a pointing out to me that I'd been gone, unavailable--a complex, but quite human, stew of mixed feelings and mixed statements, all sensible in the context of a testing inquiry. My final journal entry for the week (Friday's) begins:

C.J. the other day threw away "Pit Bulls," tearing & crumpling it, telling me (typically) as he did so. Later I asked him...if he'd thrown it out 'cause he was mad (at me?) or 'cause he really didn't want to work on it anymore--[He replied that there were] "no books (i.e., to look up stuff)"--"what [, I asked him,] are teachers for?..." "...help?" "yes--next time I could [help you find books, etc.]..."

(Journal 11/18/94)

As "typically" indicates, this was not the first time C.J. had thrown away, hidden, or otherwise deprived me of access to his work--an act always, I think, drawn deliberately to my attention. The journal entry continues--in a little duet of conflicting and hesitant expectations so familiar that, even several years after the fact, it's easy for me to miss its special salience in the context.

Yesterday [i.e., the day of his "Wednesday's good...no writing workshop" writing], on the rug [i.e., at the end of sharing time], leaning against couch, 'can I get my name off board'¹²--'stand up'--'huh?,' puzzled, about to be indignant--'stand up, turn around, look...you're already off...' A smile, though Jane says, rightly, he seldom does.

He asks, then, for a good favor, as if I might possibly bestow it, begins to misinterpret my response, prepares to "be indignant," and then accepts the "favor" already given, or earned, with an unusual smile, as if in recognition that we are joined together in some kind of game--perhaps an important one, perhaps not.

Finally, re-reading my journal I discover, to my dismay, times when it was certainly I who warranted mistrust. Even on these occasions, though, C.J.'s active consideration of the *possibility* that I might be trustworthy can still be glimpsed. (Again I want to point out that for some time I was at best barely responsive to that consideration--"glimpsed" is a good word--though it now seems to me almost incontrovertible.) To illustrate this, and to continue the portrayal C.J., I take a slight detour. As I have said, I regularly gave the

¹² With extremely mixed feelings--as if trying to demonstrate Waller's gloomiest findings about the incompatibility of exercise of teacherly "authority" (force) and the promotion of student "authority" (self-initiative)--I was employing a variant of an "assertive discipline" approach (see, for example, Charles, 1992)--something quite out of character, except to the extent that low level pragmatism becomes characteristic over time. I often kept two lists on the chalkboard, one for "the group," one for "individuals." I'd put names and/or tally marks in each column when unruliness or other misbehavior became excessive, with each tally mark indicating something like a minute of lost recess time. --And then I urged people to "earn back" this lost time, often looking for every opportunity to erase a tally mark or a name.

group brief assignments, often no more than literary versions of finger exercises. One of my favorites was stolen from Kenneth Koch (1971, pp. 156-174). The pattern is to alternate phrases beginning "Once I was" with ones beginning "But now I am"; the invitation is to play with metaphor. I gave the following examples (the material in parentheses was notes to myself, possible ways of explaining the imagery).

Once I was...	But now I am...
a lion (proud, on top of things, angry)	a moth (wimp, at the bottom of the food chain)
a boy	a girl
a root	a tree (growing older)
water	ice
underground	[_____?]

Several weeks later, I assigned a variant on this theme, with the first phrase now containing two openings (alas, my suggestions were trite).

My _____	used to be _____	But now...
family	just my mom & dad	all of us
whole world	[_____?]	[_____?]
dream	bright blue barracudas	silent stars

Here is C.J.'s response to the second assignment:

11-7-94
 My teachers at my old school were nice. But now at my new school they are mean.
 I yous to live with my brothers dad But now I do not.
 A long time ago white people yous to get there butt kicked
 But now they still do.
 A long time ago the prinsible be beating people now kids get guns.
 I yous to be small but now i'm not.¹³

¹³ In this and in other samples of C.J.'s writings (except where noted otherwise), I have

The piece seems to demand an initial psychologized, or "autobiographical," interpretation. We can easily suppose, for example, that it expresses the wish for greater size and strength on the part of this exceedingly small (though wiry and pugnacious) child. And, this being an assignment and I the principal, perhaps only, reader, it is easy to read in it C.J.'s suspicion of, or anger at, his new, white, writing teacher (in this still new school). Certainly it can be taken as a provocation. Going a step beyond the personal, we can also see something quintessentially American in C.J.'s invocation of violence across lines of color, age, and authority.¹⁴ At the time, that's as far as I went in considering the piece as possibly a pretty direct communication about current events in C.J.'s life, or in the classroom intersections of our two lives,¹⁵ and turned my attention to other aspects of the piece (which I will address shortly).

preserved the original spelling or corrected it visibly in brackets; I have left punctuation intact; and I have tried to respect line breaks, though these are ambiguous: sometimes they seem dictated by reaching the margin of the page, other times they fall more or less into phrases and probably come where they do as a strategy to meet my length requirements for the "focus words"--rarely, they may reflect a self-conscious attempt at "poetry," of which we had done some study and which others--but definitely not C.J.--declare that they are writing.

¹⁴ An invocation to which (speaking of "trust," or bad faith), his quite calm and unthreatening elementary school has unwittingly contributed by the recent--mistaken, I believe--proliferation of posters offering \$500 rewards for information about weapons in the building. (No recent events in the school or the district warranted these posters; this was before the rash of schoolyard shootings by children. Also see Chapter 2, footnote 36.)

¹⁵ I had provided each student with a bound notebook (the classic school "Comp Book"), and the classroom was well supplied with loose writing paper (and moderately well supplied, with my encouragement, with drawing paper). The notebooks were intended for assignments (such as the "used to be/now" pattern pieces and the focus words) and for rough drafts of choice writing. Everyone used them for the assignments; only a few used them for rough drafts--mostly, as I see it, because they seldom thought of what they were writing as a "draft" at all and preferred to write on paper that could be put directly into book or display form. Furthermore, besides requiring revisions for display purposes a few times a year, I did not in this class much stress the language of "drafting," "editing," and "revising." Many times children would in fact produce a second and final version of their work, usually on the computer, and usually with more interest in producing neat and mechanically correct copy than in substantive revision. Some, like C.J., wrote in pencil and preferred to make mechanical corrections as they went along.

A consequence of all this was that I was usually the only reader of the work in notebooks

In reviewing my journal, though, it becomes clear that such a generalized reading of C.J.'s "anger" is inadequate. He had in fact been angry at me that entire afternoon. And, though I failed to fully appreciate it then, he had a very obvious reason for being so. During the group meeting (the time when I introduced the assignment), C.J. had been drawing--something ordinarily prohibited at that time. I had overlooked it, however, as it was a welcome change from his then habitual scoffing and rude interjections, and as no students were complaining. It's something Jane Boyd felt strongly about, though, and she was still in the room. Jane reprimanded C.J., and I was drawn into the exchange. C.J. was indignant: "*he* let me do it before"; I replied that he knew it was "not allowed during meeting even if it helped (him) not be rude," and told him that he had to stop. I am confident C.J. *knew* I had been aware of the drawing and had chosen to overlook it, and was now contradicting myself--in effect, going back on my word. On this, and surely other occasions as well, *I* was presenting myself as unreliable--inviting mistrust--in quite specific ways.

(the only exceptions I am aware of were a handful of girls who also used the notebooks to write notes to each other, and that Jane or Barb would sometimes ask to see someone's notebook). In a way, then, the notebooks were classic school fare: work produced at the behest of and for evaluation by the teacher, rather than at the students' initiative. Nonetheless, of particular interest to me--and important, I believe, to a number of children--was the way in which the notebooks became a vehicle of communication between individual students and me. I took the notebooks, and any other work students chose (or, occasionally, were required) to give me home most nights. I wrote brief responses--comments, further questions; occasionally, chastisements; rarely, an enthusiastic, or disappointed, comment about something else that child had done or not done that day outside of the notebook--and returned the work the next day. A number of children came to count on this exchange, pointedly remarking, if they found no comment in their notebook, "you didn't read our work!"; some made the exchange explicit, asking me questions (sometimes followed by, "answer _____"), or responding in turn to my comments. C.J. was one of these. He made clear by commenting to my comments (see below) that he read them. That activity, coupled with my being the primary and almost certainly only reader of his notebook, in conjunction with the *kinds* of writing the assignments elicited (more on this later in this chapter) makes me believe it is reasonable to assume that *everything* in his notebook (certainly including "My teachers at my old school were nice") can be read as part of an on-going communicative exchange (sometimes direct, sometimes oblique) with me.

C.J. and I had several more exchanges which may be read as variations or further installments on this theme that same day. Earlier in the week, he had brought in a letter to me (presumably written at his mother's behest) saying that he was "sorry" and would "try to improve." Though it would not be my custom to solicit such a letter, I thought it deserved response,¹⁶ which I wrote in his notebook. He responded in turn, though not in kind. Where I wrote, "thank you for the letter," he wrote, "So"; where I wrote, "I believe you can improve," he again wrote "So," and there was somewhat more in this vein.¹⁷ I came upon these responses as I was looking at "My teachers at my old school were nice..." That evening in my journal I wrote, "...in questioning him about these comments, I put my arm around him and tried to be very slightly humorous, not angry, while commenting to the 'rudeness' of 'so'... He didn't seem to mind this--how to understand that?" (journal 11/9/94). In retrospect it seems clear that this was a case of C.J. "giving active consideration" to the possibility that I might after all be reliable in some sense. (And there is an irony, though I think not an oddity, that I might with one hand, as it were, intuit that the time might be right for a certain kind of gesture and tone--and not only intuit it; my journal for these months is full of explicit ruminations on the issue of "trust"--and at the same time be puzzled that the gesture and the tone are not--at that moment--rejected.) A few lines further on I note,

¹⁶ Both in respect of the possibility there was some genuine intent to the letter and out of appreciation for his mother's consistent responsiveness whenever a complaint (periodically made by Jane, often with me unaware) was made from school to home.

¹⁷ Sometimes I seem to have positively invited these sarcastic and challenging ("testing") responses. For example, part of my response to "My teachers at my old school..." was, "Do you want people to hurt each other...?," to which C.J. rather triumphantly responded, "Yes!!" At first--and perhaps last--glance, my question seems no more than remarkably naïve; there is an outside chance, though, that it might fairly be described as ingenuous, even as a sort of testing of my own (--there will come a time when a different response to the same question is conceivable).

Finally, he had, under pressure, "promised" to put the latest version of the ghetto story¹⁸ in my box at day's end,¹⁹ so I could catch up. I know he knows I want to read it, I know that he wants me to, most times (e.g., many days he tells me he 'got more done,' 'finished,' etc.) But at afternoon end he was angry again, denied the promise, and refused to put it in the box...

(Journal, 11/9/94)

I will return to issues of trust, mistrust, and doubt. I want now, though, to re-approach them through a more extended consideration of C.J. as a writer.

Looked at from a formal point of view, two aspects of "My teachers at my old school were nice..." caught and catch my attention. First, C.J. has made sure to fulfill the minimal requirements of the assignment--that he write five phrases--while also apparently feeling, correctly, free to interpret and change the pattern as he sees fit, not to follow it slavishly. Most interestingly, he has taken up a portion of the larger invitation offered by the task: though he is not exploring metaphor *per se*, he is using the figure of temporal change to represent change of more than temporal, more than literal significance. As for time--as a setting and almost as a player, certainly as a medium through which C.J. as a narrator moves with remarkable confidence and fluency--it will be a noteworthy element in his fiction writing.

And it is as a writer of fiction that C.J. becomes increasingly visible in the classroom, beginning in early September and continuing throughout the year. I have tried to depict him through the traces of his covert activities, in moments of anger, and in a characteristic pose, head tilted to one side, staring coolly at a skeptical teacher, as if to say, "So? What's it to you?" I have I hope begun to portray him as a *doubter*, a person testing the limits of trustworthiness and possibility in the space of the workshop. Please with this

¹⁸ Shortly to be introduced.

¹⁹ A cardboard box I used to cart children's notebooks and other writing, and a clipboard containing my plans and notes to myself, back and forth between home and school.

in m
with
often
storia
storie
specu
real

closely
factua
has fa
be pri
perhap
factua
argum
to be r
one is
fundar
acknov
in C.J.
choices
specula

in mind picture him also as the proud possessor of a red leatherette folder with brass corner protectors, a Christmas gift from his mother, in which he often carries the fiction he is working on to and from school. He takes his stories very seriously indeed. I have made passing reference to a few of those stories. I would like now to venture into their world, and to hazard some speculations about how fictional possibilities might be seen to illuminate "real life" possibilities for C.J., and for others.

"What kind of place is this?": Fictive adventures, live themes

And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river...

(Exodus 1:22)

Any piece of classroom life, like any piece of a person's life, examined closely enough, presents virtually infinite complexity. A chief difficulty of factual writing, as opposed to fictional, is that the writer (me, for example), has far too much material; in fictional writing, the principle of selection will be primarily aesthetic: What is shapely, what pattern pleases, provokes, perhaps instructs? Where shall we have our beginning, middle, and end? In factual writing some other principle is supposed to prevail--What serves the argument?, for example--and the very idea of a beginning, middle, and end is to be resisted. This attractively rational distinction founders at once when one is trying to discern pattern in "real life": My search is itself a fundamentally aesthetic act. --This little authorial intrusion is by way of acknowledging that I am here on a search for patterns and themes--meanings--in C.J.'s work and life in the classroom, a search that involves me in making choices out of the voluminous data available, a search that takes me into speculative waters. I do my very best to ground the meanings I perceive in

evidence, but it is still the case that another observer might identify different but equally valid themes; as for C.J., he may already have carried his interpretation and presentation of self as far as he wishes. However, the themes I propose, and their contexts, have, I believe, an honest claim on our thoughts and willingness to be convinced. Two broad thematic lines are suggested. One is the line of "trust and doubt," words and ideas that I bring to the story, whose pertinence I have so far tried to sketch in a preliminary way. The other "line" is summed up by a question habitually asked, in one form or another, by C.J.'s fictional protagonists. The question is, "What kind of place is this?"; associated with it is the idea or assertion, or threat, "You are getting ready to be a new person."²⁰ These words and ideas are presented by C.J. and his characters, though I have selected them for the pertinence I feel in them. Ultimately, I see the theme of doubting and trusting and that of interrogating your surround and transforming the self as two branches of one theme (perhaps the oldest one there is, the quest).

At the end of the September day when C.J. made his provocative remark about Erika and Anthony Y.'s marriage and their "mixed" babies, he read a story to the group at sharing time. The story is called Gang War;²¹ here is the beginning.

A long time ago on the west side. Little kids did not like them self. Because there parent was on drugs. So one day a little baby parents died from drugs. The baby was threw in the river. It traveled for two weeks. He ended up in LA. So two men came and got it. And took it home. They

²⁰ A sub-theme, or unifying theme, which I do not develop, may be learning and practicing--activities perhaps necessary to answer the question and achieve the transformation. See, for example, "...football[:] It is a hard sport so it's got to have detail because [y]ou got to learn how to play" (assignment, 9/6/94).

²¹ Like all of C.J.'s stories, this one is accompanied by drawings. Not simply "illustrations," they typically precede the verbal composition, and often contain information not present in the text itself. The cover for "Gang War," for instance, shows a brown skinned youngster--presumably, the protagonist.

already had a little boy. He was a gangster. He named the baby Warren-G. Tyrone²² and G liked it.

10 years later

Now he is ten years old. So him and Snoop²³ went to a dangerous place called gang war. This is where I grew up at said Snoop. Warren you have to take a test. What kind of test said Warren. A test that you have to take if you want to be hard. After he got his test they gave him a tour around the gang war. After Warren took his test they went to robb a store....

A skilled writer is at work here. (His grasp of punctuation may be weak--though it's possible the hesitations in the first few lines are not entirely wrong or unintended; in any case, if you read these passages aloud with the natural inflections and rhythms of speech, as C.J. did, and if you supply, for example, the missing apostrophe S in "baby's parents"--as C.J. almost certainly did--it is clear that the underlying sentence structure is fine, and mistakes of grammar and usage are few.) The narration is assured, taking immediate hold of the audience's attention, steering it directly into the "meat" of the story. (Though C.J. has recently written, in an assignment, that "lots of detail" is one of the characteristics of a "good story" ["What makes a story good," assignment, 9/6/94]--a notion often advised by well-intended teachers--the complete *lack* of distracting detail is one of the things that's noteworthy here. Every word counts, in moving the story forward and establishing the emotional tone.) Also noteworthy is C.J.'s attention to time and his narrative command of movement through time. He does not fall into the trap, common to inexperienced writers, of assuming that he cannot take us from

²² Spelled "Tyron" at some places in the text, but I feel confident Tyrone is intended. C.J.'s story appears here almost as he wrote it. I have, silently, made a very small number of changes to ease reading: changing lower case to upper case in names (which C.J. remembers to do inconsistently) and a few times when I am positive a new sentence is beginning/a different character is speaking. A complete, modestly and visibly edited, photocopy is appended.

²³ That would be the "little boy" that Tyrone and G "already had," "a gangster."

point A

particu

notice

salience

proper

long tim

standar

happen

incredib

greater

of the s

courtesy

times.

times, c

time ag

did not

thing th

function

is set in

the past

anything

again, or

squarely

the river

will fail;

the baby

especially

point A to point B without telling us about intervening events that have no particular relevance to the story. He simply steps out of the narrative to give notice that ten years have passed (and then, making sure we don't miss the salience of this for his protagonist, he repeats the point within the narrative proper: "Now he is ten years old"). C.J. begins his story in a classic way, "A long time ago...", a device that ordinarily serves to alert the reader that strict standards of realism will not apply in the story to come--things that have happened "A long time ago" or "Once upon a time" may be marvelous or incredible: *those* times are not *our* times, the imagination thus is granted greater freedom. Simultaneously, though, the imputed ancient provenance of the story, and the fact that it is nonetheless being told *now*--or, by artistic courtesy, re-told--promises that it holds some kind of value for us in our times. Indeed, this story seems to find itself both in old times and current times, or in a space hovering between them, as it locates its events "A long time ago *on the west side*," and as it borrows "self-esteem" speak, "little kids did not like them self"--a feeling that might be of now, or might be a bad thing that used to happen but no longer does. The reference to drugs functions similarly. It could bring us into the present; it could be--if the story is set in an imagined future, relinquishing our actual present--a shadow from the past, a reminder of bad things "little kids" are free of "now." In story, anything that makes psychological and aesthetic sense *can* happen, which is, again, one reason we have story. And then C.J.'s fable seems to locate itself squarely in the far-off of Biblical times or fairy tales: "The baby was threw in the river." This, we know, invariably means that an effort to thwart destiny will fail; great things will come from an infant so treated. "Two weeks" later, the baby, and we, are "in LA" (itself perhaps a place more mythic than real, especially for a midwestern child-writer very fond of movies, crediting

Menace II Society as the inspiration for his story [journal, 9/27/94]). Still only a few lines long, "Gang War" has already woven together several different diction's and has raised disjunctive expectations. (And one way readers sometimes simplify their lives--are teacher-readers especially vulnerable to this?--is by not feeling the full range of the expectations and possibilities an author sets up.) The multiple references are both familiar and in some tension with each other. Narratively speaking, we are in an ambiguous situation.

The baby is rescued--in effect adopted--and named "Warren," no longer an "it." (Oddly, perhaps, he is named by his adoptive brother not his adoptive father. But the paternal figures appear pleased with the boy's choice.) This all-male family may or may not reflect an all-male society into whose adult ranks Warren is deemed, at ten (a year older than his author), ready for initiation. He is "to take a test...a test that you have to take if you want to be hard." We are told nothing of the test itself (as is appropriate for the mysteries of initiation). We proceed immediately into the conduct of a robbery (and can be forgiven if we momentarily thought *that* was the "test," rather than an activity made possible by the test). As the story continues, Warren shoots a man in the head, the cops come and apparently arrest him, though he protests his innocence, we gather he is jailed (it's all highly compressed), and the father figure, G, somehow rescues him.

[Warren says,] thanks for geting me out. You are stupid said G. What did you do to get in jail. Robbed a store. I shouldna got you out of the river. Now we got to leave. Come on said Tyrone. What kind of place is this Now you are tryna get high. Put your hands behind your head. Run bang bang bang Tyrone Snoop G was dead. Warren was lonly. But he saw this African man. Him and Warren was talking. In two weeks Warren was not a gangster. The guy gave him a home. He got married.

He had a baby boy. I don't want Dre to grow up like me.

We understand now that the society into which Warren was inducted is *not* the society of the father figures who have rescued him, though it *is* the society of the "little boy (Snoop) they already had." In any case, while expressing misgivings at having pulled Warren from the river, G takes him with them as the family hastily leaves town. The narration here is even more radically condensed: neither the journey nor the destination are described; we know they have arrived somewhere because someone--presumably Warren--asks, "What kind of place is this?" It is--once again--a dangerous place. There is shooting (by "cops"? by "gangsters"?--we aren't told), G seems to give Warren a last bit of assistance ("run!"), and the family is killed; Warren is orphaned for the second time--perhaps because his very human question was taken as impertinence, which would make him to an extent responsible for these deaths.

Into his loneliness comes a figure identified only, but surely not accidentally, as an "African man"--a benevolent figure who fills a pastoral role, setting Warren on the right track, providing him what he precisely needs, a *home*. This in turn seemingly leads to a proper adulthood and the establishment of his own family--a woman is at last present, fleetingly, not yet named, though titled ("wife")--complete with a son (named) for whom Warren has a version of the hopes entertained by parents everywhere, a better life for the offspring--hopes that are expressed in the first person, as if the reader is being addressed directly by the character. The reform does not take. With absolutely no explanation, nor even a paragraph break, the story continues (and concludes) as follows:

Warren went to jail The African man came to visit.
He said I will never help you again.

Warren's Wife took Dre to day care. There were a
car coming it start shooting Warren was dead

THE END

What do we have here? Despite his having abandoned gangbanging, Warren goes back to jail. Because he's reverted to his "old" ways? Because past bad acts have caught up with him? We aren't told, but the African man's response makes it sound like backsliding is the case. Warren can't help himself, perhaps; anyway, his rescuer gives up on him.²⁴ Salvation isn't in the cards. And Warren is shot dead (again, we're left to guess at reasons, if there are any,) in verbal proximity to a setting devoted to looking after young children, a day *care* center. Destiny is, after all, not thwarted (this is neither Exodus nor a fairy tale, despite the hopes it shares with these, but, in its own way, something closer to tragedy).

"What kind of place is this?" The question lingers, not exactly unanswered--it is "a dangerous place"--but somehow unresolved. This baby might after all have been better off "threw in the river" and never plucked out. But he was, and so a story is initiated but not satisfactorily concluded, and we're left wanting something more. Apparently C.J. felt the same way, and his classmates too: he had written a continuation, *Gang II War*,²⁵ which he'd initially promised to read as well (described by him as one story, they appear physically as two separate "books"). We were running out of sharing time, though, and he declared *Gang II War* "not done." The group pressed

²⁴ But has he perhaps managed to release Warren from jail first?

²⁵ Borrowing from *Menace II Society* as he is, the title may mean *Gang War Part Two* and something like *Gang Goes to War*.

him to continue, I urged him as well, telling him "they really want to hear this," Jane graciously allowed us to run over schedule, and he continued:

When Lori got home she saw Warren was shot up. She cried and cried. The ambulance came. Im sorry he's dead. Warren had a funeral There was over 2 million people there.

Now Dre is 7 years old. Mom do I have a dad yes said Lori. Where is he he died when you were 5 months old. Don't cry mom. I loved him very much said Lori. Can I go out side and play yes.

Warren's wife is now named, an unidentified figure--paramedic? policeman? African man? narrator?--expresses sorrow, and there is a fantastic turnout for the funeral. The passage of time is as usual indicated without fuss, and the boy asks, as children will, questions about his origin. The question is answered after a fashion, and Lori cries (again it's worth noting that not every writer, certainly not every young writer, would have *shown* us this, not *told* us, as writing teachers used to say). And then a neat bit of psychology is deftly handled: the boy, Dre, takes an adult role, offering words of comfort to his mother, who responds with feeling--to which Dre responds, like a child, with a request to go outside and play. Told yes, he does so, and a friend tells him to take a look at a car.

Dre went to look. Someone snatch em. Help called Dre. who are you I'm the guy who killed your father. Why do you want me. So you can work for me Do I get money. Yes you get money. What kind of place is this This is where your dad yous to come all the time. Wy he was a ganster. What is a ganster Something you are geting ready to be....

"What kind of place is this?" The recurring question, echoed here by insistent "why's," may symbolize the stance youth takes as consciousness grows. It is a not necessarily grateful challenge to the older generation, perhaps; in these stories, it is specifically the uncertain, doubtful, inquiry of a

youngster repeatedly thrust into threatening new circumstances. Dre appears to be in the "dangerous place called Gang War" all over again, a place perhaps for education, testing, initiation: "a gangster (is) something you are getting ready to be." *Why* Dre is getting ready to be a "gangster," and why his father was one, is unanswered. Unanswered, or incompletely, unsatisfactorily answered questions abound here. As the story continues, the "guy who killed (his) father" gives Dre a gun ("for what?") and sends him to shoot an unnamed man, which he does, "twice in his head."

Good job. Her 2000 dollars. Dont !*!* up or you will die. Hi mom were have you been I been out you got a problm. Yes bang Dre shot his mom in the rib. Dre ran. I shot my mom in the rib. Good now you are a ganster. What does that meen You can do eny thing you want. You meen I have to live on the streets. Yea wy you scared. Wy should I be working for you if you killed my father. Because If you dont the same thing will happen to you.

There's a suggestion of childish or adolescent fantasy here--parent asks where you've been and you tell them off--but we are quickly made aware that this is a dark and unwelcome fantasy. Dre doesn't just tell his mother off, he shoots her, and somehow the detail of shooting her *in the rib* adds a poignant specificity. Dre is congratulated, welcomed into the ranks, initiation accomplished. He asks what this means and is told, "you can do anything you want." He seems to know that this fantasy is a fake and a lie: "You mean I have to live on the streets?" It doesn't sound like the life of a romantic outlaw. Rather than rising to the bait of "are you scared," he poses the question the reader has likely been waiting for--*why* should he do this?²⁶ He is answered with the threat that he, too, will be killed.

²⁶ As, in discussion at sharing time, C.J.'s classmate Gideon asked *why* a kid would shoot his mother, protesting, "it's not *likely*..."--a comment that could have been a wonderful starting place for discussion of the idea of fiction, but I failed to seize it. (C.J.'s reply seemed to be that a kid who would shoot his mother was "stupid" [journal, 9/27/94].)

Bold, or foolhardy, Dre responds, "I got to go somewhere...to see my mom, now let me go." He goes to his mother, apologizes, but is rebuffed ("get out of my room"), promises her that when she gets home (?) she "will be surprised"--by a making-amends gesture, perhaps?--and returns, we gather, to the gang.

You been gone for two hour. So what thats my mom.
Come on lets beat him half the death. Now how do
you feel Like this bang bang. He shot the 2 guys.

And then is free to go. The story continues and concludes:

Dre grew up and had a little bit better life than
his dad. He got married to a gril named Wendy. He
had twin boys. After he got out of college he died
from canser.

And that's the end, except for a drawing which may show Dre contemplating his father's grave. "What kind of place is this?"--one of only marginal progress it seems, of unmitigated threat.

Earlier, I proposed that *to doubt* is, or can be, *to seek*; specifically, I argue that C.J. as a child and a student in the context of the writing workshop I taught was engaged in a search for reliability, security. His actions and tones seem to say this, especially the repeated actions of giving me his work to read at night or informing me of his progress, of coming to the round table to work in proximity to me, of bidding me good bye, and--in the months after the stories I've just presented--asking me to read his work for him when it was his turn to share.²⁷ All of these actions, interspersed as they are with occasions of extreme rudeness, anger, and untrustworthy--dishonest, mean, sometimes physically aggressive--behavior with classmates, taken all together, can be "read," I propose as asking the question, "is this workshop a

²⁷ Again, attendance at sharing was required but sharing itself was never required. I occasionally put a bit of pressure on individuals to do so, but never on C.J.

reliable, a secure, even a good, place for me?," and, "is this teacher trustworthy, someone I can count on?"

To this I add that C.J. the writer of fiction can be seen repeatedly to depict a protagonist who is also engaged in a search, specifically--as is common since literature began--a search for identity and perhaps for meaning. A personal identity--a more or less harmonious constellation of life purposes, accepted roles, sense of meaning, stance in the world--is not a given, either in life or in literature; it is made, or "made up," we might say--though what it is made up *out of* is to a great extent given. (Hence, tragedy.) All this is clear in C.J.'s stories: A gangster "is something you are *getting ready to be*," Warren is told: an identity is achieved with effort, it requires education, and evaluation--others' acceptance or recognition of your right to it.

Reviewing "Gang War" and "Gang II War" from this perspective provides something like the following:

The story begins with an infant cast away in the river, his birth parents dead and his own birth as it were repudiated. He is then rescued--"adopted," re-born even--and given a (new?) name--in another place (not "the west side" anymore), "in LA." At ten, he is told to take a test, "a test that you have to take if you want to be hard." (It seems to be assumed that Warren does want "to be hard"; the test itself is apparently mandatory.) He passes, apparently achieving that "hard" identity, as a gangster. His "adoptive father" (as I see him) calls that identity seriously into question, though, telling Warren instead that he is "stupid." Because of his "hardness," or his "stupidity," the "family" has to go to a new, but again dangerous place. In this place, the protagonist is promptly orphaned again--and is in a way responsible for this fate--and becomes "lonely." Yet another father-like figure, the "African man," appears on the scene and seems to achieve, by talking, a further transformation in the protagonist's identity: "in two weeks Warren was not a gangster anymore." Indeed, with the help of the African man's gift of a home, Warren seems to become what in another story (shortly to become part of the one I relate) C.J. will call "a regular man with kids," and a wife. This apparent transformation does not take; the protagonist is killed.

All places are dangerous ones. Indeed, we can say that a secondary task of these stories is to explore trust and its dangers in a world of risk--not only, in "Gang War," for Warren, but for those who seek to care for him. After initial pleasure, G suffers first disappointment and then death in his efforts to care for Warren; the African man merely has his trust, or hope, betrayed. Alternatively, we can say that *no* adult--not the birth parents who died of drugs and sent the infant into the world not liking himself, not G who tries and fails, nor the African man who apparently succeeds but in fact fails, and refuses to try again--is capable of nurturing this child and sustaining him into healthy adult-hood; none can underwrite a worthwhile transformation of his identity. They cannot even make his survival possible.

There is however "one child left to carry on," sort of. Dre also begins life without a father who can sustain him; he has a mother but as soon as he leaves her side he is kidnapped by his father's killer, and no one answers his call for help. The killer wants to hire Dre, and to transform *him* into "a gangster" too. (We note that the relationship of employer to employee is not that of parent or parental figure to child.) The boy seems properly skeptical about this transformation: he does not embrace *this* identity. However, he shoots (but does not kill) his mother (for not responding to his call for help? No reason is given). The unnamed killer/would-be boss declares that by this act Dre has achieved the transformation into "gangster," but Dre questions this. He is, in a word, doubtful. He returns apologetically to his mother, who rebuffs him. Thus, having rejected the identity of "gangster," he is not allowed to resume the identity of son/child. He returns to the gang--again we're not told why; like so many events in these stories, it is as if the protagonist (like Brendan's) has no choice in the matter--and they punish

him for having left in the first place (that's in effect his second punishment for a leaving). He kills them, leaves, and "grows up." Like his father, he becomes a "regular man with kids," and a college graduate as well. Unlike his father, he does not "slide back." Still, he too dies young, of cancer, and is also unable to see his sons through to adulthood. His transformation hasn't taken him all that far. The world is still "a dangerous place."

C.J. continues, with something bordering on obsession, to reiterate these themes--the need, perhaps forced on one by others, to achieve a different identity; testing; the dangerous passage into an adulthood which may itself provide no safety--for most of the school year. These stories give a world in which males predominate, sometimes exclusively;²⁸ the image of the "gangster" informs the plot until mid-winter, when a transition to basketball begins to take place. As a writer, C.J.'s craft continues to be marked by a certain economy and a confident narrative flow. The following excerpt from a story written in November--the same story he first "promised" and then, angry, refused to show me, (only to relent, under pressure, a day or two later)--is not great writing but it is interesting writing and it does articulate C.J.'s central fictional themes with precision and clarity.

*from Boyz Living in the Ghetto*²⁹

Once in Long Beach Compton there was 7 boyz they were regelar kids. [Until]³⁰ one day a man named Pimp came and said Hey, let me show you something. The boyz said OK. Pimp snatched em. You are getting ready to be a new person. Pimp had to beat

²⁸ In *Menace II Society*, in partial contrast, sanity and hope are represented by the central female character--who, however, is not able to rescue the central male character, whose last act after being fatally shot is to embrace/shield her five year old son.

²⁹ The text is taken from my journal (11/14/94) into which I had transcribed part of the story (once he did give it to me to read). I have made a number of silent changes to ease reading but, as with all transcripts of C.J.'s writing, I have retained the majority of his errors so that the interested reader can get an accurate sense of his mechanical skills and their gradual improvement over the year.

³⁰ "Into" in the text.

them first. So he did. But they could not feel it. Soon all of them looked different, they was gangsters. Now that they are gansters they could kill someone... [So they were allowed to do "a drive-by"; Pimp went to jail, not them, because they're juveniles.] ...They went to see there mom. There mom didn't like the way they looked. So they shot her... [There is quite a bit of shooting, Pimp is rescued from jail.] ...He had a lot of girls for each of them.... [Each gangster and the girl each one "had" are named. Time passes, indicated by headings such as "2 years" and "7 days later." They go on another "drive-by" but "O.G."³¹ gets shot out of the car, they can't go back, they shoot him.] They knew O.G. was dead so they spreyc painted on the wall, The memory of O.G.... [They decide to quit Pimp's gang because he beat them at the start, they decide to kill him.] When he got in they was gonna shoot him up. Where's everybody? I'm!!not!! playin!!with!!you guys. Pimp hi. It was over.

they was regalar men now with kids.

THE END

In its way, this is an effective and well constructed story. Its opening sentence contains a form of the classic beginning, crisply provides necessary information--we're in "the ghetto," ("Compton," the setting for both *Boyz 'N the Hood* and *Menace II Society*), the story is about children--and establishes the social fact on which the moral drama of the story turns: "they were regular kids." They start out that way, anyway, and then are kidnapped ("snatched," like Dre, again lured by the promise of something to see); their kidnapper tells them, "you are getting ready to be a new person"--a curiously ambiguous message. It has an attractive sound to it, yet there is, as usual, no hint of choice or volition on the youths' part. A beating is mandated as part of the transformation, but they are spared the pain (--again this is a curious formulation: the need for the "beating" announces that the transformation entails pain, but this announcement is coupled with the appealing fantasy of

³¹ In the fall of 1994, it is conceivable that OJ was intended.

a pain-free growing-up). The accomplished transformation is signaled by a change in appearance; their mother, predictably, does not approve, and they shoot her. The identity of "gangster" carries with it license to kill and--no longer "kids"--license to "have girls." There is no suggestion of pleasure (or "desire," though, certainly, "emotion") in this new identity, though, and one of their number dies ambiguously. He is memorialized (in writing) and the rest decide to quit the gang, on account of that ostensibly painless beating. Quitting appears to require shooting Pimp (and note the assurance and economy with which this narrator handles that: Pimp is shot, and dies, in the space between "Pimp hi" and "It was over"). We then come full circle: The boys *have* grown up, they are now free to be "regular men," with children of **their own**. This may be progress of a sort (relative to Warren and Dre), but **the** passage from the story's first sentence to its last seems, finally, devoid of **meaning**. They have been diverted from ordinary life for, it turns out, no **purpose**.

Now consider a story C.J. worked on towards the end of the year, in **April**. It is called "Street Ball"; it begins as follows.

Once there was a boy. He thought of a word. And the word was street ball. And he wonderd what does that mean. So he made something called a basket ball. He went out side and said, "streetball" "I need a street." And he found a street and said, "How do I play street ball?" And He saw something on the ground and he named it a chain.

And he saw a lot of wood and built something and named it a rim. And he took his ball and shot it and it went in the rim.

50 years later

"Hey ya'll want to play some ball?"...

C.J. displays here an enviable narrative confidence: There are no false starts, no hesitations, no superfluous explanations³² in what is at once a decidedly unconventional beginning to a piece of fourth grade writing and a sort of ur-text of the creative imagination, in which the path from inspiration to creativity, straight through language, is clear and unencumbered. This is the signal transformation of the protagonist: He is no longer a locus of *destructive* power but is rather himself a *creative* force. The operative words coursing through the passage announce and enact this force--he *thinks*, he *wonders*, he *makes*, he *finds*, he *names*, he *builds*--and when he shoots, he *does* so with a ball, and he succeeds, and *playing* is as it should be for a boy, a central activity. Language here precedes concrete fact, as if language calls the world into being. The boy has a word--we don't know where it's come from, so we call it an inspiration--before he has a meaning or an external referent (and it will turn out to be a complex referent: not an object but an activity, a game); flowing from that word are the construction of objects--making-up and making--the finding of objects, the naming of objects, and eventually the activity itself. Why not call this (with Cavell, 1994, pp. 36-37) "the self-theft of culture"? It is, finally, with some relief that we note the protagonist is just "a boy," not a "gangster," not even "a regular man." Though "a coach" will appear later in the story, there is essentially a parental absence--perhaps the hero is self-created as well?

Pediatrician and psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott has taught us, among other things, to think of "the antisocial tendency (e.g., "stealing [to which I would suggest lying is the verbal equivalent] or being a nuisance") as an expression of hope in a child (who has experienced)...a break in the continuity

³² The mechanics, too, are virtually flawless in this "first draft" text. I have made no changes in the passage quoted here; subsequently, as the narrative voice largely disappears and dialog takes over, I have made changes (see below).

of his or her life-line" (1986, pp. 216 & 219; also see 1971).³³ From this perspective, it is like doubt, an active investigation, a sense of *potential*. For much of the school year, C.J.'s protagonist has been caught up in a sometimes failed, sometimes forced, essentially futile search for a sustainable and a sustaining identity. He has been at times suspicious, skeptical, of the world he finds himself in, and increasingly skeptical of the identity the world seems to expect of him. He has mostly been lost to the experience of childhood. Now we find a protagonist, a child, who is a kind of author, one who initiates meaningful transformation in the world around him. Here is Winnicott again, quoting a patient at a critical point in the analysis: "in trying to achieve being myself I have had to use artificial props, and these are no longer necessary. I feel just now aware of a much more positive hope.... I used to feel there was no prospect that I would *actually* start to exist" (1987, p. 151). Just so, C.J. has succeeded at last in creating a character--a hero--who is capable of "achieving himself" without "artificial props" (though artfully). This character has an affirmative "right to speak" and no longer, perhaps, a need to "break his word." Surely as his readers we are now "aware of a much more positive hope."³⁴

*

*

*

The intelligence can only be led by desire.
Simone Weil

One of the satisfactions reading and writing share with each other but **not** with "real life" is our freedom there from the relentless forward motion

³³ Also see, e.g., "Naturally, the fountain pen stolen from Woolworths is not satisfactory: it is **not** the object that was being sought...*the child is looking for the capacity to find, not an object*" (Winnicott, 1986, p. 93, emphasis added).

³⁴ The reader who mistrusts symmetry and tidiness will perhaps be relieved to hear that C.J. **did not** altogether abandon violent content, nor did he become at all times a model citizen.

of time. We can of course re-read (and, as C.J. does, write *out* time as well as into it), and, while I cannot insert my present understandings of C.J. into my actual time-past dealings with him in the classroom, I can apply these latter day understandings to his writings when I re-read them (indeed, it becomes difficult not to do this). I spoke earlier of "much violence" and "an apparent lack of affect" in C.J.'s fiction; while teaching, I often worried about an apparent "coldness" in C.J. himself. Other teachers also thought they perceived these qualities. However, re-reading "Gang War," "Boyz Living in the Ghetto," and other stories in light of the identity quest interpretation, and in light of "Street Ball" (and other writings I will shortly introduce)--a process of re-reading that I began at some point during the year I was teaching C.J.--what I am increasingly impressed by is the sense of a tremendous amount of feeling just beneath the surface, pushing at the skin. Then, however, the sense of coldness predominated, although I had my eyes out for other qualities, a search instigated in part by Dewey's remark--in *The Child and the Curriculum*, in the course of discussion of "the logical" and "the psychological"--that "affection and sympathy are the keynotes of the child's life" (1956b, p. 5).³⁵ Here are some traces of that search.

...re: C.J., my worries about "coldness"--"well guarded, but inside the stockade the campfire is very low" [is how it occurred to me to put it]--& talking with [a friend] about "passion & care," qualities, with their eliciting objects/foci, you can almost always find in someone--well, you can see at least "care" in the sense of "careful craft" (in the choice writing, the drawing/drawing

³⁵ The remark was at the front of my mind because I was using the book in an introductory education course in which the major project was an intensive, semester-long child study. I had suggested to students that they might test the assertion and gain a useful focus for some of their observations by looking for these characteristics in their "study children," and, if found, contemplating in what ways, if any, they might be said to be "keynotes." The suggestion was not, as far as I could tell, a fruitful one for most of the students; I, however, eventually found it so in my thinking about C.J.

"Sympathy" here would be the deep quality exhibited by Brendan's classmate when he illustrated "The Moral Is Pay Your Taxes or Else" with a crucifixion.

studies now going on; in the dress; in the speech?). I don't know about "passion," although there can be a form or mirror image of passion in the intensity of his insults/derisive tone & look. Very little affection, it's true--though I liked to think the humorous cock of the eye/upward glance/part grin of "did you see *Boyz 'N the Hood* last night [i.e., on TV]?" suggesting pleasure that I had & that he had guessed correctly this was the inspiration for the day's focus word--might have had some affection in it. It had, anyway, it's safe I think to say, *interest* in whether I, "Mr. Roosevelt," had in fact seen this important-to-C.J. movie....

[As for what he wrote about it:] "I saw that movie and Rickey got shot and he died. And Trey and Ice Cube killed the dudes that killed Rickey. And Trey was getting readdy to get marreid but he did'nt. And my favorite part is when Ice Cube shot that dude at that resterant."³⁶

...Note C.J., Gideon, Michael, Lincoln, & Marcus working on a basketball book together, with Anthony Z. & Jon C. working at the same table--this sprung out of the "learning how to draw basketball players" stuff [a few weeks previously, C.J., Jon C., and another classmate, Cameron, had been laboriously engaged in copying, and modifying, a drawing of a basketball player by Lincoln,³⁷ a highly skilled and practiced draughtsman; now, I speculate, this activity--this little school of masters and apprentices--has expanded both in number of participants and in the range of activity (writing as well as drawing is being taught and learned)]--can think of this as a sort of "community of skill & interest," I think. I don't think it has so much to do with liking each other first & finding stuff to do together second, or the two simultaneously; I think it has to do with: admiring Lincoln's skill at drawing & wanting to learn how; admiring Marcus's too?; Anthony's getting the tracing book & trying to teach himself with that; (somewhere in the background Ralph's similar efforts, & Ralph brother's skill at drawing--R brought in a stunning Spiderman drawing by his brother); maybe admiring C.J.'s skill with a story line & ease with the physical/mechanical

³⁶ Indeed, violence does not disappear from the writing nor rudeness from the child--but they diminish greatly. And their function always calls for interpretation--this, for example, could be an investigation of what it will take to provoke me on this day (not this), or, somewhat differently, a deliberate, willed, refusal to appear to share anything with those who, in the course of our class discussion, found "sadness" in this movie (for that would be to acknowledge vulnerability).

³⁷ Like C.J., Gideon, Michael, Marcus, Anthony Z., and Cameron are black; Lincoln and Jon C. are white.

acts of writing (they should admire these, anyway). I don't know that there's all that much affection in here, except maybe from Michael to (who? Gideon?), but there are various currents of admiration, I think. cf "affection & sympathy are the key notes of the child's life"--there is "sympathy" here, I think, in the sense of "sympathetic vibrations,"³⁸ a being attuned to each other's interests, to the whatever it is in this material (basketball/current basketball heroes & teams/drawing basketball mascots--Lincoln & C.J. showed me yesterday a striking picture of their "mascot," a Rottweiler headed & pawed human figure, with the ball in flames, and tear marks drawn on the page from his claws)--*they* know, without having to ever articulate it, what attracts them to this stuff, even if I don't, or don't readily, automatically. Obvious, maybe, this fact of their attunedness, but important....

Affection may, probably will, come, of course--but Lincoln & C.J., most obviously, are not obvious objects of affection, far less givers of same. [They both seem to me to be respected for their talents, but not particularly liked.]

They started this joint story as an official project on Thurs...
(Journal, 3/10, 3/14, & 3/18/95)

Several years later, that meaning of "sympathy"--being "attuned" to **each** others' interests and standards of value, including aesthetic value, **participating** in a somewhat shared world view not requiring of (perhaps not **sturdy** enough for) articulation--still seems right to me. As for "affection," I **was**, possibly for good reasons (i.e., to ward off some form of complacency or **self-congratulation**, as I myself was plausibly an object of occasional affection **at this point**), underestimating some signs of that--but I would catch up with **these** pretty soon.

Here, however, I want to return (which is to say, in the real time of **these** events, to move forward a month past the initiation of the "joint story" **referred** to above) to "Street Ball" and the "community of skill and interest" **surrounding** its making. In doing so, I will continue to run a risk I have been

³⁸

See "Education as Growth," (Dewey, 1966), another reading for my TE class.

running for a while now: that of being careless (at best) or disingenuous (at worst) in failing to be clear about when and why I might want things I say about C.J.'s fictional protagonists to reflect on C.J. himself, confusing the real (changing) boy with various fictional ones (committing the "autobiographical" fallacy I have previously [in Chapter 2] criticized). This risk is compounded when I attempt to borrow hints and insights from psychoanalysis--something I will attempt again. Now, I want only to acknowledge these risks; later, I will address them directly. Returning to "Street Ball," "50 years" after the boy's inspiration and invention, the diction changes radically. The Adam-like boy and his exceptionally calm narrator are gone, the action opens out and the tempo steps up.

"Hey ya'll want to play some ball?"

"Yeah, what teams?"

"You, Shorty, *C.J.* and *Michael.*"

"OK What we going up to?"

"15. Ya'll take ball."

"OK"

Michael passes it in to Shorty and Shorty shoots a three. "All chain fool."³⁹

Formerly we had a solitary unnamed "boy" wondering, naming, building: setting the stage. We move from his meditative perhaps silent (internal?) monologue to the external, to dialogue, and to co-operative action (foretold by the nature of the boy's activity, a game requiring players). No Protagonist dominates the story the way Warren and Dre dominated theirs,

³⁹ From here on, all of "Street Ball" appears in an edited text. I have edited primarily in an effort to clarify the dialogue, laying it out conventionally in paragraph form and occasionally removing what I have taken to be superfluous quotation marks. Obviously this procedure is subject to error. A complete transcript of the story, specifying some of these editorial changes and alternative possibilities, is appended.

Many of the proper nouns in "Street Ball" are recognizably names of C.J.'s classmates, beginning with his own. It will be noted that these are the same boys just described in my journal as "working on a basketball book together" (*not* this book, which dates from about a month later) or at any rate sharing table space and conversation. I have given these characters the same pseudonyms as their, as I take it, "real life" correspondents, and I have drawn attention to the substitution by putting the classroom-character pseudonyms in italics.

though "C.J." is certainly featured a good deal of the time. The story continues.

"It's winners give me the ball." Shorty goes up for a dunk but he throws it back to *Michael* and *Michael* dunks the ball.

"The score is 4 to a big Fat zero." *Michael* throws ally to Shorty and Wesley packs Shorty's mess.

"Now we get ball."

Gideon throws it to *C.J.* and *C.J.* hits a three. The score is 0-7. *C.J.* passes the ball to *Michael* for a ally but it is packed by *Jon* and the score is 7-0. *C.J.*, *Michael*, *Gideon*, Shorty is leading. *Gideon* takes it out shoots a 20 feet jumper and now the score is 9-0. They need 3 more p[o]ints to win. *Gideon* passes it in to *Michael* and he passes it to Shorty. Shorty passes it and *C.J.* shoots a three. The game is over. *C.J.*, *Gideon*, *Michael*, Shorty wins the game. A man was coming up to the court...

I quote at length for several reasons. In the first place, *C.J.*'s narrative confidence, his willingness to dispense with needless explanation or connective tissue, here gets the reader into some difficulty. It is hard, at least for one who is not a basketball aficionado, to follow the action and to determine who is speaking--though it would be easy--it appeared easy, at sharing time--for the children whose names are incorporated into the story to do so if, as I believe, the game on the page enacts the verbal play they were having as they contributed to *C.J.*'s construction of the story, now suggesting an incident, now negotiating a better deal for "their" character, now borrowing an idea for a different story, and so on.⁴⁰ Second, while "C.J." gets plenty of action, other players are given their share of the limelight--a

⁴⁰ This depiction is somewhat hypothetical, as I was never able to listen in on these conversations (if I could understand them from where I was, the table was being too loud), and didn't think to tape record them until too late. The hypothesis is reasonable, though, on the basis of other observations--of some of these students, and others--on the basis of the internal evidence of the story, and on the basis of some of these same players' participation when "Street Ball" was shared (see below). Also see Dyson's excellent account of these kinds of negotiations (and more) in (Dyson, 1997).

tendency that will be elaborated in interesting ways as the story progresses.

So, the "man (who) was coming up to the court,"

said, "Is any of ya'll any good?"

"Who are you?"

"My name is Corey. I'm a coach in Long Beach California."

"Yeah Im pretty good"

"You ain't no good Shorty."

"forget you."

"what is your name"

"C.J."

"And who are your friends here?"

"This is *Gideon, Michael, Shorty, Wesley, Lincoln, Jon and Marcus.*"

"Who is the 4 best people?"

"Me, *Michael, Gideon, Jon.*"

"Do ya'll wanna play in California in a 4 on 4 tournament."

"I don't know man but I'll think about it."

"My number is 394-4835. Call me"

"Hey Hey I changed my mind, I will play."

"I will too" said *Gideon. C.J., Gideon, Jon and Michael* decided to play in California in the tournament. Who ever wins will be drafted to play in college or NBA. *C.J.* allways wanted to play for Indiana.

2 weeks

Later...

It is not clear why "Shorty," who seemed pretty good at the beginning of the story, is brushed off here,⁴¹ but C.J. the narrator again displays a good sense of psychology when he has "C.J." the character at first play it very cool in his response to the obviously desirable invitation, only to turn around and "change his mind" right away. And the patient reader can now figure out that one of the original teams was made up of "*Gideon,*" "*Shorty,*" "*C.J.,*" and "*Michael,*" the other of "*Wesley,*" "*Jon,*" "*Lincoln,*" and "*Marcus*" (see Appendix IV). As the story continues, "C.J." and his team, named the

⁴¹ Perhaps, at the table, to make room for Jon to become "*Jon.*" (If "Shorty" has a real-life counterpart, he is not part of this class and not, as far as I know, part of the school.)

Hoopers, meet with good success, playing a team named the Hogs, whose individual players are not named.

The Hogs passes it in way down court it is stolen by *Michael* He takes it down court and dunks it the Hoopers take a 5 point lead.

2 minutes later

The Hoopers win 15-0. *Marcus* and the other guys that did not make the team made there own team and signed up to play. Their team's name is the Spurs. *Marcus, Lincoln, Shorty* and *Wesley* are a team....

So the ones who got left out don't get left out after all. In fact, "if they can go undefeated for two games straight," they will play the Hoopers in the tournament, and the team that wins *that* match "will be drafted to a college basket ball team." We watch as the Spurs beat their first opponents, the Warriors. Then,

2 weeks later

The Spurs went underfeated For two game and they beat Suns they are [in] the champion chip with Hooppers today. *C.J.* comes in to shoot he makes it. *Shorty* come into shoot and he misses. So The Hoopers get ball. *Michael* passes it in way down court to *Gideon* and he dunks Hooppers lead 2-0. *Marcus* is driving down court and passes it to *Lincoln* and *Lincoln* shoots it. And it gets blocked by *Jon* and *Jon* runs down court and throws a alley oop to *C.J.* and *C.J.* makes it.

3 minutes Later

It is tied at 13 and Hoopers get ball. *C.J.* passes it in to *Gideon* and it is stolen by *Anthony*⁴² and *Anthony* passes it to *Marcus* *Marcus* dunks the ball. The Spurs win the tounement! They will get drafted!

1 Month later

⁴² This would be Anthony Z. (not Anthony Y). He seems to have displaced "Wesley."

Marcus gets drafted to North Carolina. Lincoln get drafted to Oklahoma State. Anthony get drafted to Purdue. Shorty gets drafted to Arkansas. C.J. went to the NBA in the year 1999 and played for San Antonio Spurs.

THE END

It seems to me that the "community of skill and interest" that I thought I observed in the classroom--a large handful of boys working on joint or similar projects, drawn together by shared interests (whether those would be called "basketball," "drawing," "writing," or indeed, "co-operation") and the admired skill of several (C.J. centrally)--can be seen here to be dramatized and perhaps idealized in the story. (Out of the shared interests, mutual admiration, and cooperative work, friendship and indeed "affection" may arise; they are not what gets the work going.) It is an inclusive sort of story in which everyone gets to be seen doing well at one point or another and the only ones who might be thought of as being (quite tamely) "put down"--"Shorty" and "Wesley"--do not have classroom analogs. This inclusivity or communality was both signaled and noted during sharing time. For C.J. did not read the story himself, nor did he ask me to--he asked Marcus instead. (He did a fine job: It was far easier to follow the story *hearing* it read by someone who knew it from the inside out than it is to follow it on the page.) And in the discussion, Gideon remarked, "usually when people put themselves on teams, they make themselves win [but] you didn't: how come?" (a touch I certainly had not picked up on hearing but then, I was not implicated in the story⁴³). To which C.J. responded to the effect that he didn't want to always do the same old (predictable) thing (journal, 5/11/95). Finally, I am told by those who know the game better than I do that it is not far-

⁴³ "C.J." however, does go straight to the NBA, leaving "Gideon" and his other teammates behind, while "Marcus'" team goes, less glamorously, to college.

fetches to see the basketball being played in the story as a particularly cooperative version of the game.⁴⁴

Wondering and hurt: A further look at trust

Also in April--very possibly on day when he began writing Street Ball--C.J. wrote in response to an assignment:

When I grow up...⁴⁵
I want to play for
the Indiana Hoosiers.⁴⁶
And when [I] get to the
NBA I will play for
the Orlando Magic
I want to be number
1. And if I don't make it
I wonder what will
happen to Clarence.

I said I needed one more sentence; I gave several possibilities, one of which was "something you're scared about about growing up" (journal 4/24/95). I received:

The thing I am scared about
growing up is getting hurt.

Details and contrasts, both obvious and less obvious, deserve noticing. Of course we notice that Clarence (C.J.) resembles "C.J." the character who "always wanted to play for Indiana" and ends up going straight to the NBA. The plainness, and the plaintiveness, of "I want to be number 1 and if I don't make it I wonder what will happen to Clarence" is, however, a different voice

⁴⁴ The maneuver called the "alley oop," for example, is described as a two person scoring effort in which the two players must know and be able to "read" each so well as to virtually anticipate each other's moves while yet concealing these from their opponents. (D. Carroll, personal communication, June 16, 1997) for enlightening me on this point.

⁴⁵ The phrase "When I grow up" was one of three prompts given by me; the other two choices had been: "If the wind took me away..." and "Tell about the end of the world (made-up)."

⁴⁶ i.e., Hoosiers.

fro

ack

pre

de

na

W.

za

P

d

th

S

c

h

.

s

D

h

.

from that which narrates the bulk of "Street Ball." C.J. the child seems to be acknowledging to himself that, except in fiction, he is unlikely ever to play professional, or even college, basketball.⁴⁷ And there is something deliberative, even solemn in his referring to himself formally, by his full first name, as he sometimes signs his stories, though he is never addressed this way in school. "I wonder what will happen to Clarence" can in any case be taken to be *the* underlying question for virtually all of his writing. From this point of view, one job of fiction is clearly to explore negative as well as desirable possibilities--to get to know them in the imagination, to objectify them, to put them aside if they will let you. "Wondering," in any case, is the special job of fiction--and is sometimes said to be the salient characteristic of childhood. In "Street Ball," wondering is the seminal activity from which follows the construction of meaning, of objects, and of the activity. In fiction, "wonder" can evoke creativity; in the "real life" of "When I grow up," it can seem to mean waiting on fate. One task of the imagination is to make this not completely true, to bring intentionality and hope into "real life." Is C.J. learning this? And then there is the simple, unguarded declaration: "The thing I am scared about growing up is getting hurt." Recall "My teachers at my old school were nice," and my ("naïve"?) marginal comment, "do you want people to hurt each other?," and C.J.'s ("triumphant"?) "yes!" Much seems to have changed since then: C.J.'s range of expression is far greater, as is his capacity for vulnerability, that is, trust. --On which more shortly. One final thing to contemplate here is that in evoking the act of *wondering*--close kin to imagining, and the root of all philosophy--on the one hand, and being *hurt* on the other, C.J. is identifying the full and polar range of human

⁴⁷ He and Gideon have both recently seen the devastating *Hoop Dreams*, which may have aided this recognition.

sentient experience. Pain, that is, locates a person fully in the fragility of the body (and in extreme cases renders one inarticulate); wondering and imagining are the activities which take us farthest beyond the limits of the body (and are the sources of verbal and all other creativity).⁴⁸ Pain is perhaps the most isolating of experiences, whereas imagination and its relatives--not only wonder, but sympathy and compassion--are the experiences, or qualities, which join.⁴⁹

And "joining" seems to be going on for C.J. in several ways this spring. In March and April, as I have indicated, he is a central member of a sort of writing and drawing workshop within the larger "workshop," a small "community of skill and interest," and he is dramatizing a similarly joined community in Street Ball. Also in March, he seems to attribute to me a kind of sympathy and affection in respect to his writings. He remarked⁵⁰ that he "feel(s) good when there's a story he's [i.e., Mr. Roosevelt is] proud of--that he tells us he likes" (audio tape, 3/21/95). Similarly, a week or so later, an undergraduate student of mine--one of several who were observing and helping out once or twice a week for much of the semester--an African American woman who'd taken a special interest in C.J.--asked him, "Why do you write these stories?," meaning, the "violent" ones, the "gangster" ones, (wishing he wouldn't write them). "Mr. Roosevelt likes to read them," he

⁴⁸ See Scarry's, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (1985) for a fascinating, extremely challenging, discussion of these relationships. This book has influenced my thinking about these topics in ways I cannot yet specify. Though of course I cannot hold it responsible for my confusions and errors, it must share heavily in the credit for any insights I may achieve.

⁴⁹ Scarry asserts that pain means certainty for the one hurt, and doubt for the observer (and indeed pain has been one of philosophers' favorite topics when they ponder "the problem of other minds"). Rousseau similarly, argues that needs separate human kind while desires join (see, for example, 1966, pp. 11-12). "Compassion," though, would seem to deconstruct the pain-imagination polarity. Understood as the beginnings of an effort to relieve the one in pain from that pain, the continuity is restored (see Scarry, 1985, p. 306).

⁵⁰ In an interview with a colleague of mine. Colleagues interviewed most of the class, in pairs or threesomes, in March and April.

told her (journal 3/25/95). I suppose that is to rest partial responsibility with me, but in a reversal of the usual teacher-student relationship: I am not responsible because I dictate the product; rather, I am responsible because I *accept* the product, and am said to *like* it. Indeed, I am said to be *proud* of C.J.'s stories--a curious choice of words which seems to put me, let's say, in an avuncular relationship to their author. --Or at least, it is as if to say that I am *granted* the right to be his teacher, to share authority for what he does in the *classroom*--as if it is now *our* classroom...

I think C.J.'s identification of *my* pleasure and pride in *his* writings--*this* what I take to be voluntary or accepted co-responsibility for his work, this *apparent* belief that I am in some sympathy with his project--can be *understood* as a provisional decision to trust, or an acceptance of finding *himself* trusting. I will have more to show of this development, but want *first* to do a brief examination of the concept of trust. I have said that C.J. *seemed* early on to implicitly pose the question, "How much trust is necessary or *desirable* in an educative relationship, how is it to be obtained when *cond*itions militate against it, and in what directions must it flow?" (When I *first* began to articulate that question for myself, I was primarily concerned *with* my ability to trust C.J. but, as I hope I have shown, the movement in the *other* direction gradually assumed greater interest and significance. --Not, of *course*, to suppose that they are unrelated.) And I have said that I came to *understand* C.J. as *doubting* the worth and reliability of the writing workshop and me as its teacher, proposing doubt as an active search for the thing *desired*, namely, security or trustworthiness, (and, ultimately, value or meaning in activity). That is of course as well to say that he did not as a *matter* of course "trust" his (new, white) teacher. Early on, I suggested that a common, perhaps "natural," teacherly expectation is to think that maximal

trust of the teacher by the student is a good thing, perhaps an essential thing, a thing--if not at once present--to be obtained as quickly as possible. I believe this is what I assumed.⁵¹ I have since come to think that it is, quite straightforwardly, not necessary for the student to "trust" the teacher as a matter of course--*doubt*, in fact, may be (ontologically) inevitable if not always announced--and it is indeed intelligent to doubt. (Later, I shall return to the question of whether we can go further and say that doubt of the teacher can be seen to have positive *educational* value.)

Feminist philosopher Annette Baier offers an elegant definition of trust.

Trust...is reliance on others' competence and willingness to look after, rather than harm, things one cares about and which are entrusted to their care.

Trust and Antitrust (1986, p. 259)⁵²

On each side of trust there lies danger. On the one side, we live in a world of other people and are not self-sufficient;⁵³ thus, we cannot, single-handedly, adequately look after all the things we care about all the time: "Without trust, what matters to me would be unsafe" (p. 231). On the other side, trust itself by definition entails danger: It is "*accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) toward one*"

⁵¹ More accurately, perhaps, this is, I think, what I *thought* I thought--but when I found myself explicitly questioning the assumption, it may have turned out that I was not actually operating on that assumption for some time. For C.J. is certainly not the first student to have mistrusted or doubted me. In hindsight, I can see that such teacher-student relationships have often been of particular vigor and interest.

⁵² The essay I quote from and related essays can also be found in (Baier, 1994). I have found Baier's work on trust immensely helpful. This chapter as a whole, not just this portion of it, has been influenced by it.

⁵³ Dewey thinks, however, that we often speak as if we are or can and should be. He counsels that this is a "form of insanity," a widely circulating one (1966).

(p. 235, emphasis added). Of particular significance in the context of student teacher relationships, "trust alters power relations" (p. 240)--in classrooms we could say at the very least it accentuates them--the entrusted one gains power over the one trusting, obviously a liability if the trust is misplaced. In this connection, Baier argues that contracts and promises, which are often taken to be our best and perhaps only needed models for trust, only make moral sense between equals. "(They are) device(s) for traders, entrepreneurs, and capitalists, not for children, servants, indentured wives, and slaves" (p. 247). Hence, her emphasis on accepted vulnerability as the criterion for "trust," rather than enforceable bond. Baier weaves all of these strands together in a passage with direct bearing on classrooms in general and the writing workshop--as a place dedicated to children's making of artifacts--in particular. "Why," she asks, "(do) we typically...leave things that we value close enough to others for them to harm them(?)"

The answer...is that *we need their help in creating, and then in...looking after the things we most value...* The one in the best position to harm something is its creator or nurse-cum-caretaker... Since the things we typically do value include such things as we cannot singlehandedly either create or sustain...(including) intrinsically shared goods such as *conversation, its written equivalent, theatre and other forms of play...we must allow...other people to get into positions where they can, if they choose, injure what we care about, since those are the same positions they must be in in order to help us take care of what we care about.*

(p. 236, emphasis added)

The repeated use of "care," "take care," and the near equivalent, "look after,"⁵⁴ is crucial to Baier's explication of "trust" and to my use of her work here.⁵⁵ "Affection and sympathy" (the "keynotes of the child's life") are

⁵⁴ All of which are, of course, also near synonyms for "attend."

⁵⁵ Baier goes on to assert the "Socratic truth that the human soul's activity is *caring* for things" (p. 236), a comment similar in spirit both to Dewey's remark about "affection and

intimately and inextricably bound up with the activities of caring-for, whether as cause or as by-product, and "vulnerability" is--again, intimately and inevitably--implied by care and caring-for. To this we should add, by way of reiteration, that the child in school is there by compulsion.⁵⁶ Finally I want to stress Baier's proposition that trust has material as well as psychic content: some *thing* is cared for, is *entrusted* to another; her examples of such "things" include "conversation, its written equivalent [perhaps C.J.'s notebook entries are a form of this]...and...play [of which, I have argued earlier (Chapter 2), fiction is an instance]."

From these perspectives several points become much clearer, especially if we hang on to the idea that trust has content, a cared-for something put in the way of harm we hope and believe will not come to it, but about which we can have no absolute certainty beforehand. For one thing, it is obvious that in wanting to trust C.J. I occupy ground wholly different from his: the vulnerability I will experience in trusting him is simply not comparable to that he will experience in (if) trusting me. My position as adult and teacher alone ensures this; my being white presumably ups the ante; being male probably does likewise. What "goods" of mine may come to harm if I trust C.J.? My sense of authority or peace of mind or professional pride will be harmed if he works to earn or re-earn his reputation for "lying and denying," but this is an occupational hazard and one I willingly took on: a modest risk. As a teacher, I have faith that the child's "investment of effort and care" (e.g.

sympathy" and to David Hawkins' assertion that "(t)he soul is not contained *within* the body but outside, in the theater of its commitments" (1974, p. 51).

⁵⁶ The fit between "compulsion" and "care" seems at first a poor one, but it grows more complex upon examination. See, for example, Baier's acknowledgment that unequal power relations are by no means necessarily wrong or inimical to trust, the relationship between parent and infant being the most obvious example (e.g., p. 249); also see Cohen's analysis of Waller, e.g., "If all learning requires some trust, it also may entail some resistance [or doubt?] and thus some compulsion from another source" (Cohen, 1987, p. 35).

in a writing project) betokens value and worth, even if I cannot confidently articulate what the value is, and I need to believe that what *looks* like "an investment of effort and care" *is* an investment of effort and care. I also need to continue to believe that writing does provide an avenue for each child to clarify his relationship with the world, gain some self knowledge, make some connections to larger experiences, and exert some imaginative power. These pieces of pedagogical faith are surely vulnerable--I would indeed be pained to find them completely undermined, or abused--but again, this goes with the territory.

C.J., though, is not operating in territory he has freely chosen. And the childish "goods" of his which would be subject to harm if in any way entrusted to me are far more tangible, and yet more delicate, than my adult, teacherly ones. I mean his writings, in which he demonstrably invests time, care, energy, effort, and attention--and "writings" here must be taken to include the meanings of those writings. The fragility of these objects and the power differential between the child and teacher (enhanced as it may be by factors of color and gender and the intersection of all these with the past history, in and out of school, of the child and the teacher) are, I believe, sufficient to show why it would be reasonable, self-interested, and smart for C.J. to be slow, at least, in trusting me and in sharing the care of his writings with me. It is natural for children to be vulnerable to adults; it is not natural--or is perhaps not "natural" in our time and place--for them, especially as they grow up, to *choose* that vulnerability and to unilaterally extend it outside the family circle. (Indeed they are usually taught not to. It is perhaps no longer the case, if it ever was, that the teacher is, or should be, a special case of the "stranger."⁵⁷)

The playing out of doubt and trust and vulnerability to harm can in fact be observed quite directly in one several times repeated action of C.J.'s--the crumpling up and throwing away of his work, or the hiding of it: denying me access--and in his twice repeated affirmation that I "like" and am "proud" of his work. A likely interpretation of the denying me access to his work is that he is actually *protecting* his investment. He hurts it before I get a chance to; specifically, he hurts (or hides) the material object so I can't get access to the imaginative one.⁵⁸ His doubt or, rather, at that moment outright mistrust is expressed most plainly. But if we take the earlier actions in conjunction with the later statements that he writes his stories because "Mr. Roosevelt likes to read them," we can go a step further (if we are willing to take him at his word--which may be our duty). That is, if he perceives, correctly, that I do like to read his work--that I care about it, perhaps even care *for* it, in some

the desirability of quick and easy trust from students to teachers I posited earlier. Baier in her context finds an assumption not only similar to mine but directly relevant to our context: "The few discussions of trust that I have found in the literature of moral philosophy assume that trust is a good and that disappointing known trust is always *prima facie* wrong, meeting it always *prima facie* right. But what is a trust-tied community without justice but a group of mutual blackmailers and exploiters?" (p. 253). Waller makes one of many complementary and characteristic assertions when he says, "Teacher and pupil confront each other with attitudes from which the underlying hostility can never be altogether removed. Pupils are the material in which teachers are supposed to produce results. Pupils are human beings striving to realize themselves in their own spontaneous manner, striving to produce their own results in their own way" (1965, p. 196).

⁵⁸ In Baier's terms, the "creator" protects the object by keeping it out of reach of the "caretaker." It is worth noting that the more usual procedure in schools seems to be that children work on material of no particular importance to them, which the teacher can have almost unlimited access to without trust ever becoming a serious issue viz a viz the work. (This is complicated when the [all too often] intrinsically unimportant work of school becomes, for some, important on account of the adult approval registered through grades, smiley faces, and the like. Thanks to Kara Suzuka [personal communication, Jan. 1997] for clarifying all this for me.) Waller again makes a complementary observation: "Whatever the rules that the teacher lays down, the tendency of the pupils is to empty them of meaning. By mechanization of conformity, by 'laughing off' the teacher or hating him out of all existence as a person, by taking refuge in self-initiated activities that are always just beyond the teacher's reach, students attempt to neutralize teacher control" (1965, p. 196, emphasis added). One way of describing the teaching I report is as an effort to bring children's "self-initiated activity" into the center of the classroom. Whether such a move can survive or confound the entanglements, conflicts, and contradictions of authority referred to here and earlier is yet to be developed.

way--then he hurts me when he hurts or withholds the work. He hurts his relationship with me at the same time that he asserts its existence. (Of course he does not want to be conned any more than I do: If there is any danger I might withdraw my apparent offer of acceptance of his work, might go back on my word again, he will get out of the way first.) If the basic gesture combines protecting the object from possible harm by me *and* hurting me (the one from fear, the other from anger), then a kind of test is going on and the question must be: Do I get hurt? If yes, I pass--but only if I stay within bounds. The hurt must be proportional, understated, for we both know that *he* not I threw away (or hid) the work; we both know I probably had *some* degree of right in whatever I did to cause the mistrust, fear, and/or anger (certainly, if I was "extremely disappointed" in him for driving Candy to tears; plausibly, if I found myself momentarily unable to negotiate the gap between my response to his drawing during meeting and Jane's). And the next question will be: does C.J. get to resume his writing, do we get to try again?⁵⁹ If *yes*, we both pass. So, not only the writing and the child, but the teacher and the relationship between the three of them are vulnerable. But also they are *sustainable*: the surround does not crumble, the teacher does not turn away, the child will write again, the teacher will read, and enjoy, again. I have suggested that *mediation* of faith and doubt may be one way to characterize (part of) the teacher's role. I will not develop this fully here, but

⁵⁹ This is critical. The child *must* not be allowed the power to deprive himself of the thing he cares about; the consequences of his actions must be *contained* and if necessary meliorated by the adult if he is to be enabled to grow. (See for example, Winnicott, "the child *absolutely requires an environment that is indestructible in essential respects...*" (1986, p. 94). This is not "only" a psychological matter; it holds true of inquiry in general. Imagine if the initial failure of an inquiry was taken to be once and for all. Hawkins remarks, "There are going to be several misses for every hit, but you just say, 'Well, let's keep on missing and the more we miss the more we'll hit.' The importance of this in the 'I-Thou' relationship between the teacher and the child is that the child learns something about the adult which we can describe with words like 'confidence,' 'trust,' and 'respect'" (1974, p. 56).

want to point out how this idea may be accurate. Definitions of "mediate" include (according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*): "To occupy an intermediate or middle place or position; to be between; usually, to form a connecting link or transitional stage between one thing and another...(and)...to intercede, or intervene for the purpose of reconciling."

C.J.'s possibilities of mistrust, of doubt, and of faith or trust⁶⁰ meet, in a sense, in me.⁶¹ I respect, or tolerate, his mistrust of me and his anger, while looking, hopefully, beyond those states. Most important, I believe, is that I am not expecting him to make whatever it is he has, carries around, puts into the writing, totally vulnerable--accessible to me--all at once, or even ever.

"I still need a key": Creating a voice

Moral philosophers, teachers, and of course parents, are not the only ones properly concerned with children's abilities to trust, or rather, with what happens when that ability is somehow (sometimes mysteriously) damaged. Winnicott, for instance, developed the concept of "holding" to describe the process by which infants are brought from a state of absolute dependence (including the speechlessness literally meant by "infant") to a state of healthy "living with" and, ultimately a healthy state of independence (or, I would prefer, following Baier and Dewey, adult inter-dependence) and full-voicedness (having successfully "stolen language from one's elders," being now one of its proprietors as well as one constituted by it). It is a simple but fruitful concept that can suggestively deepen our sense of the meanings of

⁶⁰ I take "trust"--other than the original trust of infant for parent--to be in part based on experience, and "faith" to be more of an affirmation of what will come, not *necessarily* as vulnerable to experience as trust is. When I speak of the child, trust is the more appropriate choice; when I speak of the teacher, I incline more towards the idea of faith.

⁶¹ And of course in deeper senses altogether in the most significant adults in his life, e.g., his mother who gave him the folder with which to protect his writings.

"trust" and of C.J.'s (as I see it) *achievement* of trust. "Holding" certainly and indeed "especially" "includes the physical holding of the infant, which is a form of loving" (Winnicott, 1960, p. 591) but it also includes "the total environmental provision" (p. 588), that is, the anticipation of and attendance to all of the infant's physiological and psychological (originally not differentiated) needs: the fact, we might say, and the sense, of security. The alternative is obviously the possibility of being dropped (literally or figuratively). The concept of holding extends itself in several ways. For one, it extends to the *possibility* of being held *if need be*. Here, a paradigmatic image is that of the parent sitting or squatting, knees apart, with hands outstretched, as the toddler attempts to walk--she will be caught (held) if need be, but only if need be; she is on her way. Directly following from these senses of being held is the idea that, if the infant/child is not properly held, there is no possibility of breaking away, of healthy individuation occurring. Finally, if one is not held, one must hold oneself--an isolating but not autonomous position into which therapeutic or quasi-therapeutic interventions may be called for (the analyst, for example, takes over the "holding" function).⁶²

⁶² I have mostly used my own words to sketch out this theory of "holding" because it is not altogether clear to me where I may have taken liberties with Winnicott's concept for my own purposes. The primary resource for the concept in his own words is "The Theory of the Parent-Infant Relationship" (1960), on which I have drawn heavily. (For instance: "The term 'holding' is used here to denote not only the actual physical holding of the infant, but also the total environmental provision prior to the concept of *living with*. It refers to a three-dimensional or space relationship with time gradually added" (pp. 43-44); and "(In) a holding environment, the 'inherited potential' (of the infant) is becoming itself a 'continuity of being'. The alternative to being is reacting and reacting interrupts being and annihilates. The holding environment therefore has as its main function the reduction to a minimum of impingements to which the infant must react..." [p. 47]). He also elaborated on the theory throughout his career. One such site which I have found useful is *Holding and Interpretation: Fragment of an Analysis* Winnicott, (1987) (for instance, "If people fail to hold a child in the early stages, then the child has to take over holding himself" and "You hardly believe that I could find you childish and still allow it, and in fact you have never been able to do this here" [pp. 112 & 117]). Finally, I believe I owe the image of the toddler (among so much more) to Lillian Weber

This works for me, here, as follows. C.J. doubts because he wishes to trust--or, in Winnicott's terms, he wants to be held but is afraid he'll be dropped; so, he has to hold himself, so, he can't be a child and he can't become himself either. In his fiction, C.J. depicts protagonists--e.g., Warren and Dre--who have been "dropped," who fail to become; in "Street Ball," however, he depicts, first, a protagonist who seems to successfully "hold" himself and then, in a crucial development, a whole cast of protagonists who seem successfully to "hold" each other.⁶³ The first protagonist in "Street Ball" seems almost to create himself; the subsequent ones may be said to "become themselves" when they are (just, only) "boys" who then, fictionally, grow up. The quest had been for an identity as a child who can be safe and grow up safe (not be "hurt"), for an identity located in the realm of creation not destruction. In the day to day life of the classroom, as he doubts--prods and tests--the workshop and his teacher, C.J. seems over the course of the year, to move generally--not uniformly--from a "hard," sarcastic, challenging posture to a more vulnerable, "soft," young posture. He seems in some ways to become a child. This tendency can be traced in his notebook writings and in my journal. I present this material as "Exhibits" and "Commentary"--almost as a slide show--in the hopes that, at this point, not much commentary is needed and we may move briskly along. We begin back in January.

(see, for example, "The posture of 'let's assume capacity [on the part of every child, at first "in a purely exploratory and 'faith' kind of way"]" was visualized in the gesture she once pointed out...: a gesture of her hand aligned with and following closely behind the child, but not actually touching;) (t)hat small palpable space between hand and child was alive...with the child's capacity and the teacher's recognition and fostering of it..." (Alberty, 1996, p. 4).

⁶³ The stories being fiction, it does not matter that Winnicott says these--or, rather, the first of these--is not in the long run sustainable "in real life," as one point of fiction is to transcend the sorry state of real life.

It may be that I have underestimated the role of the coach: he may symbolize the "good enough" adult.

Exhibit A, Peeing on the bathroom floor; interpretation--

In the bustle of transition into writing workshop, C.J. sidled up to me and said Erika had gone to another school. I crouched, a bit lower than eye level. He said "good" or words to that effect. I looked at him; he gave a bit of a smile; I pulled him towards me, a hand around his waist--'what would I say if *he* left?' Someone nearby said "good," I think, or did he?--anyway, I said, no, I'd be very sad. Another smile. Standing up, I acknowledged that he and Erika *had* fought a lot. He also made contact with me one or two other times, including asking if he'd had his turn to share his book yet, then recalling he hadn't. And, was continually in squabbles during meeting, with Jennifer....

...And it took a hell of a long time to get a satisfactory silent 10--I got angry (loud, flushed) several times. In the midst of this I was told (first by Diamond, then by Anthony Y.) that someone had peed all over the bathroom floor, Diamond assuring me it was C.J.. I made an announcement at one point, acknowledging [that the floor had been peed on], insisting it should not be a subject of giggling and finger pointing (while also saying I believed I knew who but was not announcing it publicly), comparing it to "cursing, but secretly," saying they should know "only a person who was scared would do a thing like that." [I also requested the custodian's help. I did not, in fact, charge or question C.J.--or anyone else--with the act privately, either.]

(Journal, 1/5/95)

Commentary--

Compare: "The patient knows Winnicott knows more of him than he **ever** interprets. This is one shared secret between them." (Khan, in **introduction** to [Winnicott, 1987, p. 17].) (This would have been one of the **only** times, almost certainly *the* only time, when I ventured such an **interpretation** of C.J., towards him or to anyone else about him.)

"The question for the teacher and the student (or the therapist and **Patient**) is what the apparently more-knowing one chooses to interpret and to **share**" (D. Ball, personal communication, 7/5/97).

C.J.'s inquiry regarding Erika is perhaps open-ended. I would be **surprised** if, at this point in the year he expected me to react with outrage,

though I suppose that would always be an outside possibility. *Why* did he in any case draw my attention to Erika's leaving and his pleasure in or approval of that fact? Just to find out how I would react--an exploratory gesture? Did he *seek* correction, disapproval, whatever? Certainly he would not have expected me to say, "yes, isn't it great she's finally gone." --Not, at least, on the basis of the kinds of things I do say; but fear need not be logical; the intuition--if it was that--that what really concerned him was the kind of thing that might be said behind *his* back may have been on the money. In any case, he was finding out a little about me. It would be nice to say it was a successful inquiry: he got affection, a correction of his negative comment wrapped up in a positive comment about him, proof that I paid at least some attention to details of his life (that they had fought a lot). And he seemed, by his expressions, to be acknowledging all of this, taking it in not rejecting it.

However--there was the peeing on the bathroom floor, later that afternoon. Here he very conceivably does something which I publicly interpret--perhaps correctly, and most unusually--as an expression of fear. Assuming this was C.J. and assuming my interpretation and its internal assumptions (e.g. that the act was intentional) are more or less correct, *doubt* manifests itself here as constricting, and as straining hard to be self-confirming: piss on the world, piss off the world, in anticipation of how it will piss on you (not so different from throwing away or hiding your story before you're rebuked for it, or simply not praised).

Exhibit B, Self-initiated honesty--

...C.J. asked me to read his story for him (his turn to share)--VL's vs. Geez, very bloody, though "peace" is last word, after "the end." Showing pictures--many, dramatically bloody (& effectively...--there was a lot of giggling, especially Diamond, A'dona, Ralene, Jennifer--I finally got smart enough to remember to say that we'd do one more page--if people couldn't

be serious enough, we'd quit; if they could be, we'd do another, & so on. Got through 3 or 4 this way, but then Diamond & someone burst out with giggles again, & I stopped us. This to the intense annoyance of several--not however directed at me but at each other. A step of sorts, I hope....

A really great occurrence: at end of sharing meeting, I asked for hands of people who had *not* done today's half page of focus word--[three or four hands went up] and, at first, C.J. I wrote [these names] on board [as a reminder to myself & to them, not in connection with any extraneous "consequences"], saying on Thurs. I would choose where they sat and insist on them doing focus words first thing. Then Candy, sitting next to C.J., told me he *had* done it & he, I think, nodded, so I took him off the board. After meeting, he came up to me & said, "is that for *today's* focus word?" "Yes," I said, and he said he had *not* done it--and went to put his name on board (I may have asked him to do this--if so, he did it without demurral--but I don't think so). And I got to call him back & thank him for being honest, for which I thought I got a small nod of the head....

(Journal, 1/11/95)

Commentary--

I came to think of this as C.J.'s moment of "self-initiated honesty." He went somewhat out of his way to find out his (in my eyes, but perhaps today in **his** as well?) obligation and to take responsibility for it. This was, in my experience--and other teachers' as well--a first.

This seems to me to have signaled trust. It is safe to be honest. Mr. Roosevelt won't spurn the gesture (e.g., by scolding him for not having done the work already). It would be excellent if it were fair to say that he was indeed showing some acceptance of the focus word assignment as (at least partly) rightfully his responsibility. For if this were true, it would be a relatively small step to say that on some level he credits that structure with providing something that is good for him--whether a chance for a particular kind of communication with me, to do a (worthwhile) kind of writing that he wouldn't initiate on his own, or both, in the privacy of the notebook space.

Certainly he does make interesting, startling, use of the focus word over the remainder of the year.

Exhibit C, "I"--

1/31/95 I
I do not know what
this word means but
I think it means I
do not know what
it means.

("Focus word," from C.J.'s notebook. The alternative choice was "game.")

Commentary--

I take this to be an instance of living with a special form of doubt, *self* doubt, rather than running from or disguising it. (I would not be so confident in interpreting it this way--which is, essentially, to take it literally or at face value--to take him "at his word"--were it not for the identity theme in the fiction, and *Exhibit F*, below.)

Exhibit D, The Valentines' Day Episode--

Jane organized a Valentine's Day party, complete with cupcakes and punch, to which I was invited. The children brought cards--one for each member of the class was the rule--and candy. I brought cheap ball point pens I'd found on sale, and stickers. It was not going well: Several children have written nasty notes to each other on the cards.

After distributing my tokens, I go to the office to fetch C.J. and another student to join the party. When we return I find some of the pens and stickers have been pocketed: there are now not enough to go around (C.J., for example, will not get one).

Jane is exceptionally angry. She summarily ends the party, requiring those who have received pens and stickers to give them back to me. It is, to say the least, an unpleasant afternoon.

I miss the next several scheduled workshop sessions, having to go out of town. When I return I give an assignment: Last time we had writing workshop the day ended really badly--Write me a letter: tell me any thoughts you have about that, tell me if anything *good* has happened for the class since then. I specifically direct that they are *not* to assign blame.

C.J.'s response--not an actual letter--was to vaguely cast blame on someone who wasn't even in the class and to say "it was really nothing."

I wrote back telling him why I did not think it was "really nothing," telling him he had to write me a real letter back. He wrote:

Dear Mr. Roosevelt.
Nothing have been going good sins you were gone
because Mrs. Boyd was still a little mad and I hope
you find you pens.

from Clarence

A handful of bold arrows were drawn pointing to the letter so I'd be sure not to miss it. Contrite, merely aiming to please, whatever--the tone was different and he'd made a gesture. I certainly could *take* it as a softer more generous response if I wanted.

Then, off in the margin (but in no danger of being overlooked) he writes,

NOW you happy?

Commentary--

A colleague found the marginalia rude; I found it funny, and clever: he communicates in two different rhetorical modes, thus animating the contents of each message. They seem to vibrate. Also he retains his independent right not to care, or not to seem to care, as much as I would like him to about the Valentine's Day events--and the ability to have the last word. And he gives me a choice of messages to reply to and tones in which to

reply. I let him have the last word on this one, while making sure to let him know that I *did* read them.

C.J.'s initial response is thoroughly skeptical, dismissive: it wasn't an important event, and anyway so and so probably did it, no I won't bother to abide by your guidelines (make it a *letter*, don't cast blame). This is a rejection of the spirit and the form of the assignment. I do not accept that; I disagree on the matter of spirit, and on the matter of form, I direct him to *do* the assignment: write Mr. Roosevelt a letter. He writes back, perhaps in a mode of flattery, in any case, in what I am certainly entitled to take as an improvement of tone; contriteness even if feigned is a gesture meeting me half way. But he also makes his wonderful marginal comments, thus retaining his independence or detachment. He can still be skeptical about all this sentimental stuff.

Exhibit E, I always wanted to know--

4/25/95 Cry
when some one
cry tears come out
of your eyes. I always
wanted to know what
the[y] are made of.

(Focus word, from Notebook.)

Exhibit F, A key?--

5/23/95
My Self is me C.J., and I am a he not a she.
That's me. Remember the he?
I need a key to look at other people.
Is "me" my self and I? And you--
are you a he or a she?
You are a he like me.
I still need a key.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ I have punctuated and reformatted this piece in an effort to extract its meaning as fully as possible. The original was laid out and punctuated as follows.

5/23/95 My Self.
is me C.J. and I am

(Focus "word," from Notebook; the alternatives were "other people" or "choose your own" [i.e. write about any word you wish to].)

Commentary--

Based on C.J.'s previous uses of the notebook, I identify myself as the "you" being addressed. This "speaker" no longer needs to "hold" himself, is thus free to be a child, an undeveloped potentiality, who will be able to leave the holding situation behind and risk individuation. He has here achieved a certain ability to tolerate, to live with, indeed--importantly--to *play* with some self doubt. (The rhyming is a form of serious play--"key" at first occurs, I assume, fortuitously, but then takes meaning from and returns meaning to the context; "me, myself, and I" is a venerable form of serious play with the mysteries and instability of "identity.") He has certainly "given form to feeling," has articulated a distillation of the identity questions I see running throughout the fiction. But the lack of a narrator, the occurrence in the notebook space, and perhaps the tone announce that this is not a piece of fiction. C.J. seems to be speaking directly to me--but "speaking" is a misnomer: C.J. "himself" would never actually *speak* (out loud) like this. It's a piece of writing, an artifact, and the "voice" is an artifice, though not exactly a fiction. A name for this might be "first person conjectural."

Exhibit G, Trust?--

The other day, C.J. asked if he could carry the box⁶⁵ (a first, he said), which reminded me I wanted to call his mom. After

a he not a she thats me
remember the he? I need
a key to look at Other
people is me my self and
I and you are you a he or
she you are a he like
me I still need a key.

65

The box I used to ferry the writings and other odds and ends between home and school.

leaving off the box, I told him to follow me, went to office & asked [the secretary] for [the] number, & called--tone friendly but restrained, I never told him *what* we were doing or *why* I was going to call. He was impassive, as so often. Trusting? Watching & biding his time? Not protesting or querying, anyway. Told [his mother] I was calling because earlier in the year had had to call several times with concerns, wanted to call now & say, overall, how well he was doing...he should be proud of his writing--its order/organization, his play with/command of time, [etc.]. She said that was nice to hear, she'd have to commend him that evening.

(Journal, 5/25/95)

Exhibit H, Things can really happen--

5-30-96

1 *What kinds of writing do you like to do? Why?*

The kind of writeing I like to do is about sports because I like sports a lot.

2 *What are you good at in writing.*

I am good at makeing long storys and draw good.

3. *What is hard in writing.*

Nothing is hard about writing to me because im good.

4 *What helps you write.*

my head helps me write my stories.

5 *What things do you learn from other people.*

That things can really happen.

(Year end self-evaluation--an assignment--from Notebook. The italicized questions were posed by me, written on the chalkboard, and copied into the book, though C.J. copied them down after having responded to them.)

Children often asked, at the end of the workshop--or, sometimes, well in advance--if they could carry the box from the classroom to the professional development space down the hall where I parked my belongings before and after workshop. Apparently this was something of a treat.

Commentary--

"That things can really happen" is a key insight, I believe. I will return to this. Meanwhile, I propose that the tone of this self-evaluation is one of confidence, earned confidence, rather than arrogance or bravado.

Exhibit I, More fear--

6-1-95

I hope for 10000,2106
dallar.

I hope for a high drolik car
I hope for that the
dentis was never evented.

Afraid of big dogs

Afraid of cats

Afraid of your grangpa

Afraid of the basement

Afraid of Halloween

Afraid of people.

(Focus words--"hope for" and "afraid of"; the third alternative was, as always at this point in the year, "choice," i.e., write about any word you wish to. This is C.J.'s final notebook entry, opposite a farewell message from me, written earlier in the day.)

Commentary--

It seems reasonable to say that C.J. is here taking some responsibility for his own fears, as the first protagonist in "Street Ball" takes responsibility for the world, while C.J. here, speaking very much *as* a child ("I wish for that the dentist was never invented") is in a sense meeting the world.

*

*

*

He has become a child--not a "natural" child but a child in the voice he has successfully created for expressing the doubts and fears of childhood. In the context of creative activity--the fictional stories, the cooperative writing and drawing, the "first person conjectural" writings--he has taken

respon

of the

his ow

writin

after a

strikin

has m

one v

child"

"made

made

from

fully

more

autho

happ

cared

subje

creat

space

const

responsibility for his fears (of being hurt) and doubts (of what he will become, of the suitability of the world for his becoming). That is to say, he has become his own authority.

As a teacher, I have misgivings, retrospectively. I worry that these writings are perhaps too vulnerable, too exposed, that this trust is unwise after all. Then I remind myself that--in "My Self" at least, and most strikingly--C.J. has created a voice which is *not* his own speaking voice. He has maintained a distance, both a space of potentiality and a possible shadow, one voice masking the other.

Valuing doubt: Further speculations

The poem of the mind in the act of finding/What will suffice...
Wallace Stevens

Why do I say that C.J. has "become a child" though "not a 'natural' child"? I might as well say he has become a writer, a natural writer. He has "made language his, found his voice, his *consent*, his right to speak"--he has made for himself several voices, in fact. He has--still echoing the passage from Stanley Cavell with which I began this chapter--begun to show more fully his capacity to be educated, that is to say, drawn out into the world, thus more visible and vulnerable in the world, but also in a position to be authoritative in that world, to make his mark, to show "that things can really happen." One thing he can authorize is that the creation and care of his cared-for objects, his stories for example, will be shared. This makes them subject to harm, but, as Baier points out, it also increases the possibilities of creation and sustenance. Another thing he can authorize is, within the small space of the notebook, a limited sharing of the childish voice he has constructed, the one which comes ever closer to being unmediated by artifice

of any sort. There is now every "prospect that (he will) *actually* start to exist." He is perhaps himself "getting ready to be a new person"--not because of some imagined other's wish as to who he should be, but by force of his own "accepted vulnerability," his increasing capacity for "affection and sympathy," his ability to speak in a variety of registers appropriate to the varying modes--imaginative, guarded, naked, solitary, in company--in which each of us struggles to form an acceptable self, personally authored, recognized and accepted by others.

What part has *doubt* played in these accomplishments? Certainly it has ensured that they have not come lightly and that the workshop environment has had to prove its capacity to "hold" C.J. and to accept his marks upon it. That which is earned--"stolen"--through struggle and scrutiny carries with it a degree of assent, or consent, a degree of reliability. Both the qualified trust C.J. eventually permits himself and the teaching he to some degree accepts are sturdier than they would have been without some struggle. But--granting that, granting too that the child's doubt of the teacher is understandable, intelligent, and perhaps ontologically necessary, arising properly from the disparity in power, position, and potential vulnerability, and from the intimacy of vulnerability *if* genuine cared-for goods are at stake as, here, they are--is there however any *educational* benefit, any gain in *learning*, to be attributed to this doubt? It would make a certain kind of sense if *there* were, given philosophical traditions asserting that doubt, skepticism, is *the* path to surer knowledge--or to surer understandings of the fragility of *knowledge*. But doubt of what I "know" of the world is not identical to my *doubt* of another person's trustworthiness or of the value of a particular *setting* for me, though it would be strange indeed if they had nothing in *common* as attitudes or strategies. In C.J.'s actual case, in any event, can we

see any ways in which his doubting may have contributed directly to his learning?

There are at least two cases where "learning," understood in part as an increase in power to be authoritative, can be observed emerging in a context of doubt, a context which, far from smothering the learning, seems to enhance it. In the case of the weekly and daily assignments, including the focus words, C.J. is cautious at first. He seldom rejects outright the invitation proffered by the assignment, but he maintains a degree of distance and always makes room to withdraw himself further, a non-committal or doubtful posture captured by the actual or implied "So?" which crops up--in the notebook and in the classroom itself--so frequently in the fall. The larger context is his active doubting of me as the teacher who established the workshop and made the assignments. He tests my interest in his work (the "choice writing"), my reactions to his assignments (e.g., "My teachers at my old school..."), and my willingness or ability to hold the situation together (to prevent temporary damage from becoming permanent damage). Certainly he observes me attempting to trust him (as with Ralph), which is to say both that he knows I am reserving some residual right to mistrust him and that I am taking a risk which he can see as a risk (though it is smaller than those he will come to take: mine can not be commensurate with his). He can see me respecting, tolerating, or rejecting his behavior--these stories in which bad things happen: mothers get shot by sons, these marginal comments and assignments containing rudeness to me, his mistreatment of Eric or Candy--and he can see me respecting the differences amongst them: Outraged banishment from the classroom for his treatment of Eric, calling him on verbal rudeness without attaching punishment, reacting calmly, sometimes coolly or skeptically ("I'm noticing women and girls get badly treated"), but

with curiosity to the stories, willingly reading them to the group, taking them home to read myself. He sees, of course, my mis-steps and omissions as well (breaking my word--my silent approval--over the matter of drawing during meeting, for instance). As Baier says, "tact" and a certain willingness to forgive are necessary parts of a trusting relationship (1986, e.g. p. 238)--though here we may say that the teacher's share is far larger than the child's, just as a consequence of the fact that the child's vulnerability must be greater.

In January, I have argued, C.J. can be understood (in his "moment of self-initiated honesty") as accepting some of the responsibility for the focus words,⁶⁶ a move that will soon be paralleled or complemented by what I have interpreted as his assigning to me a share of the responsibility for his stories. This also is one signal--more than that, an instantiation--of some achieved trust, some possible security. And from roughly this point on, C.J. can be seen, increasingly often, to quite fully accept the invitations of the focus words (the most basic of which is simply to vary genre, tone, and subject).⁶⁷ One invitation is, as he interprets it, the possibility of creating ("learning") voices suitable for a different kind of--a less mediated, less guarded, more personal and direct--expression of appropriate childhood fears and doubts. I want to reiterate that, most of the time at least, this "voice" is nonetheless an artifact.⁶⁸ There is an indefinite but important distance between C.J. the

⁶⁶ Perhaps at that moment he accepted it primarily because he was coming to some acceptance of my authority rather than for any sense that the expectations in and of themselves might be worthwhile for him (though presumably these would not be unrelated).

⁶⁷ We can also trace a trend in the focus words themselves, one I don't think I was conscious of at the time, towards less and less "safety"; e.g., in the fall I might offer *winter* and *pride*, in the spring I might offer *hope for* and *afraid of*--though at that point I was also, quite deliberately, saying that students could choose their own focus word. At the time I thought of this as a move to make the assigned quality of the focus words virtually disappear, leaving behind only a tool for those who wanted one.

⁶⁸ A word with a different valence from "artifice" as used by Winnicott's patient. The one suggests a made object of value and meaning, the other, a sham, or at best a crutch no longer needed.

"re

key

spe

wit

exp

(He

of t

the

mis

han

may

con

his

now

Thu

mod

a gr

arou

doul

with

more

with

surre

vulne

been

simpl

"real," that is speaking, embodied boy, and "My self...C.J....(who) still need(s) a key," the conjectural, written, verbal trace of a boy, objectified thought and speech of a boy. The self that faces the uncertain world without and the fears within is a *created* self, an achievement. (Again, this achievement can also be expressed as taking responsibility for his feelings and his place in the world.) (However, when we reach C.J.'s last notebook entry, concluding with the list of things to be "afraid of"--"people," finally--the written voice is so close to the natural speaking voice of a *younger* child that, as I have said, I have misgivings. A little more art would perhaps protect him better. On the other hand, the fact that this is the *last* entry is either entirely coincidental or, maybe, a generous acknowledgment of trust to me. Either way, read in the context of the rest of his work, there is probably no reason to fear that C.J. lost his capacity to create masks. What is to be hoped is that he maintained his now greater capacity to choose the figure of and the occasion for those masks.) Thus, what C.J. *learns* here is a significant increase in the range and modalities of voice; this learning not only represents but occurs in and enacts a greater responsibility for the instabilities of one's feelings and the world around one; a more authoritative self, confident enough to own its own doubt, has been created. Faith and doubt are now mediated, to over-simplify, within C.J., or by him in his verbal artifacts, whereas earlier he had relied more on me to perform that mediation. It seems reasonable to suppose that, without the prolonged and active doubting of me and of the whole workshop surround, efforts to achieve security, C.J.'s leap backwards into childhood and vulnerability, forward into responsibility and multi-vocality, could not have been so bold.

Another slant on learning emerging from a context of doubt is both simpler and more complicated. This requires us to take C.J. at his word. He

announces that he has learned, *from other people*, "that things can really happen." This implies a previous state in which he did *not* know this (--this what? this piece of knowledge so humanly fundamental as to be virtually invisible--like original trust--until, unless, it is called into question?). I imagine the earlier state as being one in which, below consciousness, the world exists as simply *given*, while the new, learned, state is one in which the world is understood as malleable, as something I can perhaps *add* to. This is a shift in perception that would be aided by the imaginative actions of fiction--we could say this perception is fiction's *purpose*--and it is a shift that may at first seem to make fiction itself less necessary but, on closer examination, will make it still more necessary, as hope, the impetus for world adding-to or transforming action, requires imaginative *content*.⁶⁹ But this new perception also requires or may even be re-described as a *separation* from the world, a holding of it at arm's length as it were. --Which is precisely what Descartes, having "once been deceived by (his) senses and resolving never fully to trust them again," and all skeptics since then, has done. I am not proposing that C.J. is a budding epistemologist--no more, that is, than all children are⁷⁰--but, having found *doubt* a useful concept in trying to understand him and his actions--trying now to press a little harder on that concept--I am wanting to use some (more) of the language of philosophical doubt to see what it may yield in terms of ordinary human doubt (is there a difference, other than

⁶⁹ I develop the idea that hope requires content further in Chapter 4, "Unsuspected Literatures," next.

⁷⁰ A two and a half year old looks at a much admired four year old. The four year old stands on the other side of a fence over which he has just climbed--an action not yet part of the universe of possibilities of the younger boy. A moment ago they were standing side by side, no fence intervening. The younger boy looks at the older as if to say, "how can this be? A moment ago you were here and now you are almost here but there is something in between..." Not having any idea *how* this could have happened, nor being sure *what* has happened (it is as likely that something has magically intervened as that the four year old has magically gone slightly but also enormously elsewhere), he must, I imagine, be more or less in the position of wondering what he "knows" and wondering how it is that he thinks he "knows" it.

ex

da

re

"u

ca

ou

Ep

19

giv

po

cer

the

wo

not

ma

wo

resi

(int

fun

be?

"you

com

up.

71 A
"epi
firm
Psych

expertise?).⁷¹ The skeptic, then, is described as one for whom the world is in danger of being lost: Having found his knowledge of the world to be less reliable than he had thought, he endeavors to achieve certainty. In this he is "unsuccessful...because the presentness achieved by certainty of the senses cannot compensate for the presentness which had been elaborated through our old absorption in the world... (P)resentness was threatened, gone. Epistemology wished to make knowing a substitute for that fact" (Cavell, 1976, pp. 323-324). But knowing is not a substitute for immersion in the given, which is one reason trust is not essentially a cognitive act. C.J.'s position resembles the skeptic's in two ways: In his active doubting (quest for certainty or security) of the trustworthiness and value of the workshop, and the teacher; and in that he is subject to loss of the "old absorption in the world." Standing apart from it now, as someone who can act *on* the world not just a participant *in* it, he is a critical spectator, someone who can act and make decisions (an authority). And this process of detachment or holding the world at arm's length echoes the process of individuation--the ultimate *resistance* to being held--that marks the creation of an autonomous (interdependent) self. The doubt he now experiences and must live with is fundamental, profoundly human and profoundly open: Who is this self to be? What he *knows* is that "things can really happen" (which is *not* to say, "you can do any thing you want"). Selves can come into being, language can come into being, new things can be made, sometimes, situations *do* hold you up.

⁷¹ And philosopher Richard Kuhns, writing in tribute to Winnicott, finds that "(e)pistemology has developmental roots that must be exposed if knowledge is to be put on a firm footing" and that "the problem of skepticism is readily viewed as having both a psychological and a philosophical aspect" (1992, pp. 205 & 198).

To recapitulate, then, early on I posited *doubt* as an active search for security. I developed this as not only an inquiry into the reliability and trustworthiness of the teacher and of the writing workshop as a surround but, furthermore, as an inquiry into the possible meaning and value of that surround and of the teacher as an attentive reader and observer and as an authority, a giver of assignments. Finally, I see doubt as metamorphosing into a recognition and provisional acceptance of *self*-doubt coupled, still and most broadly, with doubt of the "suitability of the world as a context for coming into being." That development, I propose, entailed the achievement of some degree of security--of trust--along the way, without which the successive stages would have been, if not impossible, far more constrained and encumbered. This is both to speak very specifically, indeed personally, of "C.J.," and to speak, I suggest, of a kind of potentiality which may exist, in some form, for all students in their capacities (existence's) as children, as learners, as creators of artifacts, as self-creators.

To speak from the point of view of the teacher, from my own point of view as the teacher in this instance, I tried to show some reasons why my doubt of C.J. as an actor in the classroom was provoked and some of my efforts to offer trust in spite of that--because of that. I have left mostly implicit ways in which I might doubt him as a writer, but I should specify that many teachers, perhaps most, would tend to find the writings he spends much of the year on--the "gang" stories--of limited value at best, more likely, objectionable. I have only touched on this in part because I address that general issue directly elsewhere (e.g., in Chapter 2), in part because much of *this* chapter offers a reading of those stories which proposes their value,⁷² and

⁷² Not quite as literature *per se*, but as doing literature-like things (seeking, questing, objectifying the internal), doing what Winnicott describes as an essential function of play, "display(ing) the ideas that occupied his life" (1971, p. 41).

in part because I develop the idea of *faith* in "the child's investment of effort and care" in a project, at greater length elsewhere as well (Roosevelt, 1995). Two other points should be acknowledged: One, I am writing, obviously, in hindsight, writing myself ever more firmly into a position of confidence regarding C.J.'s writings, and I would have to make a special and peculiar effort to recapture doubts about those writings which I may have experienced at the time (there are traces of these, seldom strong, in my journal). Second, and directly related to the last point, I was during the year in question, confident enough in my own teaching that I could live reasonably well with my own doubts and, more significantly, with the doubts of my colleagues Jane and Barb.⁷³ Another point, which I do not fully understand but want to mark down for future reference, is that somehow C.J.'s doubting of me contributed to my willingness and ability to "take him at his word," that is, to take his notebook writings "at face value," even "literally." I have several times alluded to the importance of this, of which I am convinced. But the issue remains to be developed.

What does C.J. doubt?

That "Mr. Roosevelt" is reliable--trustworthy--fair--will *take good care of his writing*;

That he, C.J., can grow up without getting "hurt";

That this world is a suitable context for coming into being;

That he, C.J., knows or will be able to figure out who he is (what his "real self" is, what sustaining and sustainable identity he will achieve, or that any of these are possible).

⁷³ . I did, as scattered comments indicate, give credence to those doubts by periodically saying that no one should write about the same thing--"gangs," "violence," or anything else for that matter--*forever*.

The purpose of doubt for the child has been to make the teacher prove himself, and to establish the kind of relationship--caring, attentive, tending to, human and thus humanly vulnerable, but "larger" or "longer lasting" than the child's anger or mistrust--that exists between them. The teacher must show specifically that he is trustworthy, that is, that he can and will take good care of the cared-for things of the child, specifically, the verbal artifacts (including the feelings, meanings, and tendencies bound up and objectified in these). The process has been one of testing, pushing back, withholding, offering: Does "Mr. Roosevelt" let you down more than he holds you up? Is he appropriately vulnerable (can his feelings be hurt, showing that you matter and your actions have significant human consequences?) but not inappropriately vulnerable (he is the adult, he must not over-react, for that would show he has not enough strength for the job)? Does he protect the cared-for thing? Does he give you space in which to explore, find out, "elaborate" what is of interest to you? Do the things he requires you to do turn out to have value or are they essentially in conflict with you? Is the placement of feeling, doubt, and meaning into verbal objects in fact a safe transfer? --And then, if and as the child achieves trust, he can regain a certain childishness, and can begin to create a healthy and reliable autonomy or interdependence.

In the fictional world, meanwhile, danger is constantly present for most of the year; someone is regularly driven to ask, not with pleasure, "what kind of place is this?" Destructive disorder seems to prevail. Eventually, in "Street Ball," a creative order emerges, the imagination conjures language and a world into being. This world does not drop away, it is reassuringly solid.

The student must have *both* faith, or trust, *and* doubt in the teacher. Without some element of faith--that the teacher can see something you cannot, has been someplace you have not, has something that is good for you, perhaps even necessary for you--the student could accept no guidance of any sort. (If that were the case--as Waller at his gloomiest thinks it is--there would be no *instruction* in teaching; teaching would consist only in the issuing of commands which would variously be obeyed, evaded, subverted, and so forth.) And without some element of doubt in the teacher, the student could never become himself, never do work that was his own. If a student accepted and absorbed *every* idea, criticism, appreciation, evaluation, direction, etc., of the teacher, there could be neither independence nor interdependence, no self-definition at all. Both faith and doubt are necessary: All of one leads to loss of vigor and autonomy, all of the other leads to sterile isolation. An implication of this is that *the teacher must give the student cause to doubt* as well as to trust. (Thus, my "naïve" comment to C.J., "do you *want* people to treat each other badly" can be reinterpreted as intuitively correct.⁷⁴) In the course of doubting--probing, testing, assessing--the student reaches towards becoming an authority, the author of his own life; in the acts of faith--accepting the other's guidance, attributing to the other some authority for your own work--the student is led where he could not go on his own.

⁷⁴ Recalling that the occasion for this query was C.J.'s invocation of a world in which "white people get their butt kicked," I want to acknowledge a line of interpretation I have tried to leave available to the reader but have not actively pursued, namely the racial and larger socio-cultural dimensions of C.J.'s relationship, not only to me, but to his "universe of possibilities," both fictional and actual. Viewed from this perspective it is entirely plausible to read his stories as making a rather limited journey: from one widely available cultural image of black youth, the "gangbanger," to another, more socially acceptable but, as I have acknowledged, no more realistic one, the "basketball player." Thanks to Thea Abu El-Haj (personal communication, 11/25/97) for helping me to clarify and urging me to draw attention to this line of interpretive possibilities.

Earlier, I said that "C.J.'s possibilities of mistrust, faith and doubt...meet in me..." That is perhaps to say that as a teacher I am a live occasion for those possibilities and I must be willing to handle them all at once, to store up the future possibilities, as it were, while the student enacts one or another of them. That is one meaning of the idea of "mediation." The dictionary tells us that to mediate is "to be between...to form a connecting link or transitional stage between one thing and another...to intercede, or intervene for the purpose of reconciling...to be the intermediary or medium concerned in bringing about (a result) or conveying (a gift, etc.)..."; *mediation* is described as "the state or fact of serving as an intermediate agent, a means of action, or a medium of transmission; instrumentality" (*OED*). This stress on *being a medium* is for me one of the attractions of the concept of mediation--again the image is almost of the teacher as a *site* on or in which certain explorations and developments will take place. After which the student, naturally, moves on. Similarly, we could say that for the child, the teacher is "an instrumentality"; though the child must never be that for the teacher.⁷⁵

"Reconciliation" may at first seem an unlikely pedagogical task. In the context of faith and doubt, however, it is clear: The teacher must reconcile the two within himself, and faith must always prevail. More importantly, we move here from the side of the teacher to the side of the student. C.J. must acknowledge (I must acknowledge for him; I may even have to "intervene" for this purpose) the claims of both faith and doubt; the setting must permit him to move between the two. There must be no hurrying and no forcing.

⁷⁵ In sociological terms, the teacher-student relationship is a "secondary" relationship, not a primary one. It is by definition a temporary relationship. However, once again, it is clear that the relationship looks different from each end: though the teacher is an instrument or medium for the student; the student must be treated by the teacher as (in Kantian terms) "an end in himself." Thanks to David Labaree (personal communication, 1997) for these clarifications.

Afterword: Attention as accepting doubt, having faith, and "taking him at his word"

I proposed at the outset of this work that the concept of "teaching as acts of attention" can shed light on what I called "the interior life of the teacher." More recently, I have invoked the idea of "authority," claiming that *authority* as the "right to speak"⁷⁶ (and, crucially of course, to be listened to, heard, *heeded*), and authority in the sense of *author*, maker of texts, are profoundly linked. I have gone as far as to argue that we can see C.J., not only developing both these kinds of authority, but as authoring for himself a kind of self, one capable of living with both trust and doubt, including self-doubt. I have called this, and continue to call this, an achievement. I believe it is also right to say that we can understand the comedy--of good and questionable intentions, of tests given, passed, and flubbed, of understandings and misunderstandings--enacted by C.J. and myself as a partial reconstruction of *my* authority as his teacher. Central to that undertaking was the acceptance of *doubt* as an intelligible and intelligent, proper and educative, attitude on C.J.'s part, an acceptance to which I will return. Coming *to* that acceptance (idea, confidence, belief), however, was to a great extent an activity of "the interior life of (this) teacher." Signs of that activity during the year of teaching C.J. have been visible both early and late, in, for example, remarks such as these: C.J. "cocks his head to the side and gazes at you as if in assessment--curious, *as I come to imagine him...*," and, "...*as I think about C.J. in September--and indeed all year...*," and, "*my journal for these months is full of explicit ruminations on the issue of 'trust'...*" (Here we can note a parallel between

⁷⁶ To refer again to the Cavell quote (1994, pp. 36-37) with which I opened this chapter, in the passage in which "finding the right to speak" is identified as essential to "the education of humans," which requires "making language mine...finding my voice (my consent, my right to *speak*, to promise, to break my promise," also called, "the self-theft of culture"--the journey I see C.J. making.

the partial or shared privacy of "the notebook space" for C.J. and the journal as a private or only voluntarily shared space for me--the right "space," as was also the case with Brendan and "The Garbage Can Seller," rather than the classroom, usually, for *me* to do *my* doubting in.) Internal teaching activity is of course also visible, and to an extent visibly consequential, albeit incomplete, when I discuss (and am at pains to render "visible") the making of "...an internal teaching 'move'...: I had to be vulnerable to real doubt, at some risk of having my trust abused, for my gesture to count as 'trust' at all..." Indeed, the starting point and the ending point of attending here could be translated as something like *letting the child and the child's work preoccupy the teacher, the thoughts of the teacher*. Thus, perhaps inevitably, the figure of *space* is raised again, as it was so centrally in the analysis of the effort to teach Brendan "attentively." That is, again, in the immediate context, the making of "inner space" in the mind of the teacher, the sense of readiness and expectancy I have, with help from Simone Weil, spoken of, making the mind into an abode in which the workings and possible meanings of the child and the work of the child can be meditated upon, turned over, recalled, is a central part of how I understand teaching as the activity of attending here. (And the journal--and other written forums of the teaching/inquiry process, e.g., email exchanges, analytic memos, etc.--become extensions of the mind.) Visible in this account of C.J. and the effort to learn how to be his teacher is another kind of interior work that was not particularly evident in my account of work with Brendan. --That is to take, in addition to "the child and his work,"⁷⁷ a key *idea*--in this case, the one initially indicated by "trust" and "confidence"--and letting it preoccupy, inhabit the mind. That developing cluster of ideas, as suggested in the

⁷⁷ And of course, the *other* children, their work, and their interminglings.

quotations above (e.g., "explicit ruminations about 'trust'"), becomes a sort of magnet or framing device for observations and recollections, speculations and interpretations too, of the day's or week's events. Then the idea and the child--both sometimes emerging into greater clarity, at other times seeming swathed in shadow--take up a mutually informing, mutually interrogatory relationship in thought. Here, in other words, I note there is a tendency of the idea and the live object of interest to play off of each other, and there is *attending* in the conscious and deliberate fostering and following of this play. As in the case of Brendan, as ever, "thinking" continues, to have to do with the activity of the *imagination*, with the "sharing in the consequences" spoken of by Dewey. Indeed, my entire discussion of "trust," with Baier's help, can be read as an exploration of the *possibilities* and *limits* of such sharing, a different, though complementary, approach from reading Brendan's work as fiction, which asserted the moral as well as the epistemological *necessity* of such sharing.

As I consider and re-consider all of these "inner" goings-on, what keep coming into view are the psychological dimensions of teaching (and of course learning), and psyche's meaning, *soul*. The topic looks ever more daunting. And this for at least two reasons: The venture feels riskier than the account of Brendan, for it does seem that many reaches of my life as a teacher, my inner life trying to teach, *are* exposed here; and there is often a speculative quality--both leaping and precarious--to my interpretations of C.J., his work, his life and relationships in this classroom. Also, "the soul" is not something one wants to talk about casually or crudely. I do not want to abandon the notion of interiority, at all--nor do I want to leave it sealed off. Certainly, having set out to discuss it and make it visible, I do not want to mystify it. Therefore I want for a moment to take up directly some of the challenges

posed by the idea of the psychological dimensions of teaching. Doing so, I am both reassured and alarmed to recall Dewey's frequent pairing of "mind" and "soul," his self-conscious reference to "the psychological" in teaching and learning (I mean, with full recollection that *psyche* = *soul*), and his bold claim that "insight into soul-action" is "the supreme mark and criterion of the teacher" (1974, p. 319), that "how mind answers to mind" (p. 324) is something we can learn to *see*. What is reassuring of course is the thought that Dewey should maintain that, in some sense, these are, a) matters of observation, and, b) matters of education--things we can learn to do (the original context for his assertions is his recommendation that we make learning such powers of observation the foundational task for learning to teach⁷⁸).

But the question of *how* we are to see and understand on these levels remains, for a moment, mysterious. An answer, part of an answer, is the activity called *introspection*, no less real for being, indeed, mysterious. But there is also a more accessible set of paths, already pointed out in passing, that I want to re-insert here. Discussing trust as (in Baier's terms), "accepted vulnerability," I was aiming to focus on the idea that "trust (in any case, very often) has a *material* as well as a psychic content," that *something* is typically entrusted, as stressed by Baier in phrases such as "we need (others') help in creating, and...in looking after the things we most value," such "things," she continues, include, prominently, "intrinsically shared goods such as conversation, its written equivalent, theater, and other forms of play" (1986, p. 236).⁷⁹ Along the way, I noted her adjacent remark "that the human soul's

⁷⁸ While the *immediate* context for Dewey is learning to distinguish between the "giving of inner and of outer attention..." (pp. 318-319).

⁷⁹ I think of the exchanges in the notebook, including the texts I have thought of as written in the "first person conjectural," as "conversation (or) its written equivalent"; the stories, as fictions, are a kind of "theater...(or) play"--as indeed "My teachers at my old school..." is

activity is *caring* for things," which in turn brought to mind David Hawkins' assertion that "(t)he human soul is not contained *within* the body but outside, in the theater of its commitments" (Hawkins, 1974, p. 51). For "insight into soul-action," by these accounts, we will want to see in what objects care is invested and how care is maintained, we will look to see where and how, to what and to whom, commitment is expressed; curious (still) to learn about "the interaction of mind...how teachers and pupils react upon each other--how mind answers to mind" (Dewey, 1974, p. 324), we will wish to look at what objects people entrust to one another, at what objects they shield from each other (and when and why and how), at what actions they undertake with respect to each other's cared-for things.

These emphases on the objects and worldly activities of care should make the "psychological dimensions" of teaching feel much more available to study; "insight into soul-action" should indeed feel like something we can both learn and teach something about without calling on powers any more or less extraordinary than the human ones of imaginative observation and reflection. "Attention," in turn, should come into view as what it must self-evidently be, a *line* of thought and action, a continuity and a reciprocity between "inner" and "outer." It is now clearly reasonable to expect that, when teaching takes the form of "imagining" and "ruminating" some traces of those activities will be visible in how objects are handled--including centrally for these purposes, those "verbal objects" I keep wishing to characterize as both "frail" --as the voice is frail, as it is easy for C.J. to crumple up and throw out his story, and as understanding and re-creation, which stories and poems require, are hard won and tenuous--and "enduring"--for the ways in which themes and questions of importance will recur and

another kind of drama.

modulate themselves under at least minimally hospitable conditions, for the ways in which these artifacts linger and grow in the mind of the attentive reader-listener. (From this perspective small details will grow in importance--for instance, the box in which I carried students' notebooks and often other writings back and forth from home to school--to me something of an embarrassment as somewhat shabby and cramped, a place all too easy for work to get folded, wrinkled, and torn, but also I see now more clearly, a way of saying "these things in here matter and they won't be out of my sight," which would also add some nuance to the apparently popular ritual of carrying that box out of the classroom and to the professional development room with and for me at the end of each workshop.⁸⁰)

I have shown that C.J. cared a good deal for his stories and that he sometimes entrusted them to me, an act made visible precisely by the small drama of the occasions when he withheld them. The question then arises, How did I handle them? What actions did I undertake with respect to them? The obvious answer, that nonetheless has consumed many a word, is that I *read* them--at home, and also, at his request, at sharing time. Less obvious to me, apparently perceptible to C.J., was that, as he said, I *liked* to read them. Perhaps the remark was made cannily, as if to say, "You don't approve, because they're violent? Well, *he's* the teacher, and he doesn't stop me: don't blame me, blame him." But it is also reasonable to assume--at the very least, keeping in mind that he made comments like this more than once, keeping in mind the issue of "taking him at his word"--literally, even, in fact, when he is *not* "writing stories"--that to some degree he either felt this to be

⁸⁰ Note as well the teacher *writing on* the student's work: experienced sometimes by the student as disrespect or desecration, sometimes experienced in the opposite way by the teacher, as attention, as he has since high school valued books by underlining key passages, writing marginal comments, and so on, perhaps with images of Talmudic scholars or medieval monks in mind.

the case or wished it to be the case, that is also to say, that the comment was made with some warmth.

In fact, it was the case: and I would almost like to go so far as to say that for his assertion that "Mr. Roosevelt likes to read them" to be true *is* what "teaching as acts of attention" means in this chapter. That would perhaps be extravagant--but it would fit with my surmise that C.J. began to wonder if (or even "recognize" that) "we are joined together in some kind of game--perhaps an important one, perhaps not," and it would be in keeping with another of Hawkins' seminal assertions, that we are or should be or should understand ourselves to be "all in *it* together" (1974, p. 62). In any case, what I want briefly to highlight is that I had to *learn* to like to read his stories. I believe I both did and did not know this at the time. I "knew" it in the sense that, as a teacher, as I have previously said in connection with Brendan, I had already made a deliberate decision to generally "give the benefit of the doubt" to "investments of effort and care," to presume they denoted something of value. C.J.'s investment was pronounced and visible. I knew also that in seeking to apprehend something of that value one strategy I could employ was to make myself pay attention both to formal or craft elements and to thematic or content elements and to deliberately shift from one focus to the other. I have now discussed the themes, content, possible meanings that a "sympathetic reading" of C.J.'s stories may yield at length. However, at the time, the first thing I was aware of being able to appreciate in those stories was his apparently effortless assumption of narrative authority as demonstrated by his easy and fluent handling of the passage of time--something that causes many young writers a good deal of difficulty.⁸¹ What I did not know, or know

⁸¹ By contrast, in Brendan's stories, early learning to like to read came in the noticing of his use of number--something I have mentioned but not developed because only recently did I understand that noticing that was noticing, and beginning to appreciate, something of the

well--and this seems odd--is captured in that simple verb *to like*. I was aware of something drier--respecting, or valuing (activities I of course don't want to denigrate in any way). A trace of my verging on understanding that something warmer was called for can be found in my use of the line from Simone Weil, "the intelligence must be led by desire"; the aptness of this thought for C.J., in turn, must have been prompted by those appearances he gave of "coldness" (combined with those suggestions of "intelligence" given by his almost every gaze). But--as with the issue of whose doubt was salient, to which I will shortly return--I had my thoughts, it seems, directed in the wrong place. While I was wondering about, and lamenting how few were the in-school signs of "affection and sympathy, the keynotes of the child's life," in C.J., it now seems that the *provision* of "affection and sympathy" in school was what was called for. In particular, the verbal objects, the cared-for-by C.J. things needed my provision of affection and sympathy. It was indeed important for it to be true that "Mr. Roosevelt likes to read them"; that *is* at the heart of the ambition to teach attentively as understood in this chapter; that was indeed part of the reconstruction of my authority as C.J.'s teacher.

Here it seems desirable to stop for a moment to note that Baier speaks, surely correctly, of "tact" as a necessary part of a trusting relationship. I would like to think that the efforts to attend I have described in my work with C.J. have involved some degree of tact. Certainly it is easy to identify some of the places where tact is called for. Though I see instructive parallels between C.J. and his fictional protagonists, for example, I must try to avoid conflating them (not wanting to commit the "literalistic," "autobiographical" fallacy

quirkiness and individuality of the writer. It never yielded much literary meaning for me--though it might do so for another reader--but it was an important early step in appreciating his writing. Noticing his fondness for "literary diction" was of course another, slightly subsequent, more obvious one.

myself); though I borrow some ideas and language from psychoanalysis, I must remember it is not my job to psychoanalyze C.J.⁸² Likewise, though my interpretations of the meanings of the shifts and modulations of C.J.'s voice in his notebook writings become quite ambitious, I must somehow exercise restraint. Perhaps this is one reason I hold fast to the idea that in some senses I do want to read *those* writings "literally," to refrain as far as possible from interpretation, or, to put it in the way that seems most apt, to "take him at his word"--when he says "I: I do not know what this word means" or, "I still need a key" or, "I wonder what will happen to Clarence (and) the thing I am scared about growing up is getting hurt." As Scarry says, "body and voice...are among the most elementary and least metaphorical categories we have" (p. 182). When the body is referenced in this way, when the self is called into question and thus conceivably into existence, when the voice takes on these registers and these tones, how else are we to take them but as if they fully mean what they say "on their face"? Why would we *not* take them that way, unless we had somehow shielded ourselves from the possibility they would have meaning?⁸³ The poet Howard Nemerov, not exactly meaning what I am meaning, I think, but in a spirit so closely related that I wish to bring him in here, remarks that "a poem is not so much a thought, or a series of thoughts, as it is a mind... And...in the presence of an attentive human mind a poem will recognizably think..." (1978 , p. 103). Consider the possibility that

⁸² On this point, it is important to underscore that my discussion of C.J. is concerned only with his life in school: I had no reason to venture beyond that, in thought or deed, except on the few parental and the far more frequent cultural occasions I have mentioned or alluded to.

⁸³ Also consider from Scarry in conjunction with C.J.'s work and my analysis of it, including the analysis of "Street Ball," the notebook writings just referenced, and skepticism as "losing one's absorption in the world while finding it malleable": "(T)o have a body is to be describable, creatable, alterable, and woundable. To have no body, to have only a voice [i.e., like the God of Moses] is to be none of these things: it is to be the wounder but not oneself woundable, to be the creator or the one who alters but oneself neither creatable nor alterable" (p. 206).

in some sense C.J.'s notebook writings "I" and "My Self" are poems of a certain childlike sort, and that they are thinking.⁸⁴

Returning to the main path of the discussion, though not perhaps unrelated either to the need for tact or to the possibility of small poems thinking in our presence, if held in our presence with sufficient care, is the simple importance of *providing time*. For C.J., clearly, (even more than for Brendan), "making space" has meant making temporal space: letting work, thoughts, responses, develop over long periods of time, time, that is, within the normal provisions of the school year, not to mention research time afterwards. I do not think this time is just the time needed for the teacher to get around to interpretations, accommodations, revisions, readings of a "sympathetic" sort, though it is these: I think it is also time gradually felt by the student as opportunity to pursue the themes that feel like they matter, as they matter, time for repetitions, accruals, revisions--and sometimes the stepping into, the authorizing of, a new possibility. I observe, in contrast, how often we are in a great hurry in schools.

Finally, the idea of "attention" as making space, of teaching as centrally including "determining the environment of the child," is further extended in this chapter by the conception of "the holding environment." "Holding" has meant the provision of a secure, stable, responsive but not overly responsive emotional surround in which, indeed, "affection and sympathy" have their place, as do the detachment and dispassion necessary for stability. The key discovery entailed by paying attention in the course of teaching to the provisioning of that environment and the student's demeanor and activity

⁸⁴ And enjoy, if so inclined, the fact that Nemerov is discussing George Herbert's poem "Prayer," while for Weil, "prayer *consists* of attention" (1977, p. 44, emphasis added).

Nemerov's idea, meanwhile, will take on even more resonance in a few pages, encountering the poem "Quiet Eye."

within it has been the significance of C.J.'s active doubting. My early concentration on how *I* was going to provide and manifest trust, "give the benefit of the doubt," both obscured the importance of C.J.'s doubting (because I was focused on myself and my actions), and ultimately helped reveal that importance (because the terms "confidence," "trust," "mistrust," and "doubt" were in the air, in mind). Attending thus has meant a kind of *stepping past or aside from the self of the teacher*--seeing the teacher as not necessarily the key actor but as an occasion--and a willingness to interrogate that (teacherly) persona and let it be interrogated (tested, doubted) by the student. It has meant accepting that my offering of trust, while worthwhile, was far less significant than my proving myself, up to a point, trustworthy. This has meant accepting that the teacher is necessarily and properly an *object* of attention, doubt, and judgment, as well as an acting subject. More visible, now, is a kind of duality in teaching and the teacher-role: At the same time that the teacher goes about making decisions and taking actions, that whole panoply of behavior is itself a kind of text being read and interpreted by students. As with any reading, the more actively the student engages, the more meaning is likely to be produced. This, I have suggested, raises the intriguing possibility that the teacher *ought* to occasion doubt.

Chapter 4

"Unsuspected Literatures": Public School Classrooms as Laboratories for the Creation of Democratic Culture¹

*Work, culture, liberty--all these we need,
not singly but together, not successively but together...*
--W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1961, p. 22)

Overview

In this chapter I aim to further develop the practice of "sympathetic reading" and to extend its work--and thus the idea of *attentive action* as an important part of teaching--more clearly into the social and political domains. The narrative focus on the chapter is on the *interaction* of a number of child-writers with each other and each other's products, and with me, and, in the discussion that is this chapter, with the products of some mature writers. The setting is twofold: There is the writing workshop and there is, again, the interior space of the teacher reading and thinking. The chapter opens with some thoughts about the relationship of culture, democracy, and education, and concludes with an expanded and, I hope, enhanced, treatment of those themes.

¹ Warmest thanks to Barbara Acker, Jane Boyd, Jay Featherstone (to whom long life, not to mention what he has in abundance, "work, culture, liberty"), Susan Melnick, and Margery Osborne for their contributions to this chapter. Further in the background, but to me equally essential, are the contributions of Pat Carini.

This work was supported in part by the Department of Teacher Education and the Professional Development School initiative, College of Education, Michigan State University. The opinions expressed are my own.

An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 1997.

That paper in turn was revised as an article in a theme issue of *Theory Into Practice*, "Constructing a Liberatory Practice in School Subjects." 37 (4) (Roosevelt, 1998, Autumn). This is a further revision of that article.

Art and democracy as related works

Consider two assertions by John Dewey:

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.

In the end, works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication...in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience.

In the first quotation (*Democracy and Education* [1966, p. 87]), Dewey interprets "democracy" as a way of living in deliberate relationship with others; what is distinctive about this "mode" is that in it, we choose to *have* experience in connection with others and to *communicate* that experience with each other. In the second quotation (*Art as Experience* [1934, pp. 104-5]), reminding us of the existence of numerous "gulfs and walls"--both natural, let us say, and humanly constructed barriers--lying between us and the achievement of a democratic mode of life, he offers *art* as a paradigm of the "conjoint communicated experience" that would characterize and announce this mode of life, should we in fact achieve it. Certain that we have not realized democracy, he proposes the experience of art as both a conceptual model for better understanding what democracy requires of us (as well as what it would provide) and as a kind of site or tool for working towards it. Gloomily aware of "gulfs and walls" (including ones between those who own and employ, those who produce and are employed, those who are unemployed) he nonetheless has the audacity to dream of "complete and unhindered communication" between what he will elsewhere call "moral equals."

I attempt here a first-hand, concrete, exploration of how works of art may in fact function in these ways--as media of deep communication between human beings otherwise separated by "gulfs and walls," as promises or emissaries of the democracy we have not achieved. My context is the reading and writing of poetry (both one of the most ancient and one of the most fragile of arts), once again in Jane Boyd's fourth grade classroom, the same year and class in which C.J. was to preoccupy many of my thoughts, my second year as a guest in this room. I present instances of students' poetry

and responses to poetry. I accompany these vignettes with my readings of the children's work, and I trace "correspondences" between their work and that of some well-known adult poets, playing all of these texts and readings off of one another.² I propose, in this company--in keeping with previous chapters, but with a perceptible increase in the stakes--that the children's work can demonstrably be seen to be undertaking linguistic and imaginative "moves" of the same type and tendency as the adult artists'. I claim that this necessarily small set of stories, writings, and readings is indicative of a larger set of actualities and possibilities: I argue that it powerfully suggests the possibility we might achieve *the creation of democratic culture*--and that that creation is a key task and a realizable goal for public school classrooms. This proposition entails, for me, two subsidiary hypotheses: that public school classrooms be places in which children have occasion to exercise real choice over the disposition of their intellectual energies, and that they be places in which children are engaged in the creation, not just the reception of "culture."³

² As I proceed, I make liberal use of italics in the text, in an effort to represent the reading and the re-reading which, in between the activities of teaching and of addressing the reader directly, are the main "method" by which the correspondences emerge.

³ I have spoken a bit about "democracy," and will have more to say. For my other "keyword" here, I rely on Raymond Williams (1983) who points out that the word "culture" is fraught with history and arguments of value. I want to use the word without losing sight of its origins in the senses of "cultivating" or "tending to"; it is, then, a word connoting the activities of living, growing, and caring-for (and thus of course has much in common with "attention"). Beyond that, I use it largely in one of the senses given by Williams, as an "independent and abstract noun (describing) *the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity*" (p. 90, emphasis added). I want as well to accept that the considerable *range* of meanings associated with "culture" "indicates," as Williams says, "a complex argument about the relations between general human development and a particular way of life [e.g., for my purposes, a democratic one], and between both and the works and practices of art and intelligence" (p. 91). Finally, there will be moments when senses derived from anthropology--culture as a set of beliefs and practices, often tacit; as "a particular way of life...of a people, a period, a group..." (p. 90)--will also apply. In a more extended treatment of these themes I would, no doubt, elaborate further upon this and other core pieces of vocabulary.

Instance of what a child's poem can achieve

In the midst of a typically gray and chilly January, I introduced my students to a poem:

Quiet Eye

A winter wind blowing
through a snowy field.
The deer is standing
there motionless, but to
quiet eye she is springing
in a field of joy.

by (Iris)⁴

Line breaks work here as so often in poetry, as a form of punctuation, variously underscoring and interrupting both rhythm and sense. The slightest of pauses between the first two lines evokes a contemplative mood that a prose sentence wouldn't have time to create; the line break also seems to serve the animating purpose of the missing "helping verb." So too, the barest of pauses between "standing" and "there" is unnatural; combined with the absent comma after "there," the phrase as a whole imitates the "motionless" state it reports. Then the break between "to" and "quiet" accents the first syllable of "quiet," so spilling into the two final lines, an arcing, wave-like shape which well captures the sense of "springing":

...but to
quiet eye she is springing
in a field of joy.

Hear also how the last line resolves itself into a firmly iambic rhythm--in English, the most natural of all, truly a felt resolution.

These formal elements help to establish the haiku-like sensibility of the poem:⁵ a still, contemplative, space is created; an "ordinary" (undramatic,

⁴ © The Prospect Archive & Center for Education & Research, North Bennington VT. Used with permission. Parentheses around a name--as in (Iris)--are a convention adopted by Prospect to indicate the use of a pseudonym.

⁵ Haiku comes immediately to mind because I read an "authentic" haiku with the class in the weeks after discussing "Quiet Eye," as we continued our--my?--exploration of poetry. But

"natural") but evocative image is given, and given time to be absorbed by the attentive reader. And then a counter-image is overlaid or elicited, the hitherto "motionless" deer now "springing in a field of joy." One of the great pleasures of this final image, for me, is that it is essentially verbal: I don't initially see a picture at all--"a field of joy" is an idea, not a place--a high poetic accomplishment.

Other readers might indeed see a field; many of my students did, I think, conjure up at once a clear image of one. I'm led to think this, though, by their having gotten an idea out of the words as well: They heard the season "spring" in the verb "springing" (*which then I imagine leads very easily--as it does to me now--to an image of a meadow in springtime*). The sense of spring, after the invocation of winter, makes perfect sense, but I had certainly missed it.

*

*

*

I had been wanting to work on poetry with this class for some time, understanding poetry to be, from one perspective, a special kind of pleasure in pattern, form, and order, as well as concision (or, we might say, "focus"). Over the course of the fall, I had found the assignments I was most interested in were those that aimed to expose students to, and ask them to play with, issues of structure or pattern in writing (as I touched upon in the previous chapter). Though occasionally deemed "stupid" (i.e., confounding or obscure?), and though the issue of *structure* was not necessarily what turned out to be the thing that "got across," in general, these kinds of assignments had met with satisfactory responses: They seemed to be taken as curiosities of at least moderate interest, they often led to work that was interesting in its own right; sometimes--most pleasing to the teacher--traces of these assignments could be found in choice writing. An early example (related to one presented in the course of discussing C.J.) of the kind of assignment I mean can be illustrated by the following chart, which I presented to the class.

the more apt referent here might be the early 20th century English language genre or school of Imagism, to which poet William Carlos Williams--soon to come into this story--was for a while an adherent.

Beginnings	Things to bring	Things to find
Once upon a time...	A knife	Gold Treasure
It was a dark and stormy night...	A chair	A true friend
In the old days, when wishing still helped...	A magic blanket	A pet lion
In the days when the animals talked...	A bottle of water	A mother or father
A long time ago on the west side, little kids did not like them self...	Seven League boots	Heart's desire
	A Radio	
	A magic feather	
	A knapsack	
	Food	
1	3	1

(Journal, 9/19/94)

I presented both the categories and the examples of each as "ideas to borrow, experiments," and thought of them myself as "ways to shape stories"; the assignment was to write a story with one "beginning," three "things to bring," and one "thing to find." Students could choose from among the examples offered, or come up with their own--but they were asked to specifically identify their choices for each category (planning notes, 9/19/94). As for the sources of the examples: The last offering under "Beginnings" will be recognized as coming from C.J.'s story "Gang War," a fact I pointed out to the group; "When the animals talked" is taken from a book (versions and analyses of the Brer Rabbit tales) of the same name (Faulkner, c. 1993); "When wishing still helped" is a classic Grimm beginning; the first two are of course familiar. In the category of "Things to bring," the chair and the jug of water came directly out of a story, *The Seven Ravens*, that I had recently read to the group (Grimm Brothers, & Zwerger, 1981).⁶ The "magic feather" is also from Grimm (from a tale echoing in my head, not one I had read to the group); "Seven league boots" (from childhood stories by Howard Pyle that I had much loved) were planted in the hopes someone would ask about them or better yet--as I seem to recall in fact happened--guess roughly what they meant; "Food" was added to the list at a student's (Michael's) suggestion. "Heart's desire," in the category of "things to find," was provided, like

⁶ In that story, an infant girl is the innocent cause of her brothers being turned into ravens. Finding out about this, also by accident, when she is older, she goes in search of them: "She took nothing with her but a little ring as a memento of her parents, a loaf of bread for hunger, a little jug of water for thirst, and a little chair for weariness" (1981, not paginated). She does succeed in rescuing her brothers, at the cost of one of her own fingers.

"magic" before it, in order to indicate that *anything* was possible, a point I made some effort to draw out in discussion of what those two words meant. (I trouble to give the sources of some of these examples as the examples themselves become significant in various ways as this story continues.)

In November, a similar assignment offered:

Beginnings	Characters	Desire or Need	Things to Bring	Trouble
In the bad days...	...	A lost brother or sister	Matches	A storm
In the future, when everything is free...		A horse	A magic feather	A liar
...		Heart's desire	Bottle of water	A bear
		...	\$5	A big mistake
		

(Classroom charts, Fall 1994)

(The "lost brother or sister" were also prompted by *The Seven Ravens*; the horse I think was prompted by Thoreau's famous catalog of losses.⁷) On this day I spoke about the categories as "rules" and as "patterns to help people get ideas"; I further specified, "no guns, no Mortal Kombat, not *more* than five dollars," this last because someone had suggested that with enough money all problems could be solved.⁸) The assignment was to choose an element for each category (again, from the suggestions or "from your own imagination") first, and then to write using them; I then complicated this rather rigid attempt to get them thinking with me about these "patterns" or "rules" by going on to say that, as they wrote, they might change their minds and replace the chosen "thing to bring," for example, with a more appropriate one (planning notes, 11/28/94). One student--Lincoln, who had written a well-received poem not long before--asked, "Can we do a poem instead?" to which I'd said yes; shortly thereafter another student, Cameron, asked, "Can we do a rap," to which the answer, agreeing that "a rap...is a special kind of poem or song..." was again yes (journal, 11/28/94).

⁷ "I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail," he announces early on in *Walden*, in a passage that has caused much scratching of heads from its first publication (Thoreau, 1968, p. 10). The point--and it is an obscure one--in saying this is to suggest that some quality of loss was in my head, maybe in the atmosphere, on this day.

⁸ Which is perhaps no more than to say "magic" in other words, which would make my objection seem rather Puritanical. I mention the other restrictions as evidence for earlier claims that my tolerance for "objectionable content" was not endless, nor always the same. Indeed on this day I note, "I am not happy with a lot of what they are writing--a definite problem"; I also wonder, "More *poetry*. No violence now till (winter vacation)?" (journal, 11/28/94).

By January, a number of students were doing work--sometimes as a way of addressing an assignment, often in "choice writing" time--that they and I called "poetry." I wanted now to respond directly to and build on this emerging interest. Thus I first introduced them to "Quiet Eye" in mid-January, as material for conversation, conversation that I wanted to steer--with thoughts of pattern, form, concision, and rule (or "discipline") in my mind--in the direction of "what *makes* a poem a *poem*?" The initial response to "Quiet Eye" was strong, and I decided to return to it on this day several weeks later, while further plans for working on poetry simmered in my head.

*

*

*

The class was interested to hear that "Quiet Eye's" author, (Iris), had once been a student of mine as well, in Vermont. I'd been her teacher when she was six and seven, at the Prospect School; at the time she wrote "Quiet Eye"--ten years before my Lansing Michigan fourth graders encountered it, at about their age at the time of this story--I was the school's principal.⁹ My students were curious to know if I "still knew (Iris)"; finding that I knew *of* her, they wanted to know where she went to college; shortly, a number of them would choose to write to her, letters that were poignant in their immediacy and insistence. First, though, many were eager to discuss the poem. With notions, as I've said, of bridging from the work on patterns and structures to some study of poetry, I gave a stupid--at least, untimely--question, "What makes it a poem?" The group utterly ignored this; eventually, I too had the sense to abandon it. They wanted to talk about what the poem *meant*; the fact that it was "a poem"--a thing that looks different on

⁹ The poem was available for my use because Prospect created and maintains an "Archive of Children's Work," a collection of every school product--writings, drawings, paintings, mathematical exercises, and some photographs of three dimensional work--which children chose to leave with the school, accompanied by teachers' narrative records. (Iris's) file alone contains approximately 1400 items, spanning the entire 8-9 years of her attendance at Prospect. Without the Archive, I very possibly would never have read (Iris's) poem, which I don't believe I encountered until after her graduation; in any case, I should not have had ready access to it ten years later. --Democratic culture would presumably be "of the people, by the people, for the people," of whom public school children could be representative in several senses. Honoring their work by preserving it in this way, and by using it as source material for subsequent generations of children--as I have in other years used work collected by Koch (Koch, 1971) or Richard Lewis (1966)--could be *one* element of such culture.

the page, a thing that's kind of song-like, or rap-like--was duly noted and, as it turned out later, deeply appreciated, but the puzzle of meaning was what sparked discussion and thought. They wanted to know "who 'Quiet Eye' is," and "who 'she' is." They wanted to know "what the answer is"--to these specific questions, and to the poem as a whole.¹⁰

Several people supposed that Quiet Eye and (Iris) were one and the same. Candy "noticed something," that gender is specified--"she' is a...is a *girl*..."--but was confused about whether "she" referred to (Iris), to Quiet Eye, to the deer, or to all three. Anthony Y. clarified, by way of a somewhat convoluted analysis of the syntax, that "she" must refer specifically to the deer. And, referring back to our first discussion of the poem, Cameron proposed,

...I think she [Quiet Eye] still is Mother Nature, because she is "springing in a field of joy," and she...she goes into winter, and like...when *we* go into winter, she goes--she keeps on going ahead of us and, like, "she is springing in a field of joy," that probably might be like she's...in one place where...nobody has discovered or something.

(Audio tape, 1/30/95)

That was, altogether, a fairly long speech, with many pauses to search for words. The class, which had been noisy--sometimes clamorous to get into the conversation, sometimes restless and distractible--was remarkably silent while Cameron spoke.

¹⁰ I think it would be a mistake to too quickly dismiss "seeking the answer" as a naïve approach to reading poetry, though to an extent it is that. I suggest that the desire, the almost urgent desire, for an "answer" was primarily reflective of two things: my students' sense of a personal connection, through me, to the real child who wrote the poem and whose identity might thus be supposed to be found *in* the poem, *and* the sense that there was mystery and meaning in the poem--and meanings are often enough--certainly in schools--located in "answers." I think, in fact, in our present context, that I'd rather have students take a somewhat literal minded approach to literature--one which assumes there is something like an "answer" to be found in it--think again of, "But was Hercules *real*?"--then to take the exaggeratedly relativist approach which says in effect, "it's all interpretation...opinion...it means whatever you want it to mean..." Too many of my undergraduate teacher candidates seem to have absorbed or constructed the idea that, if there is no certain or single "right answer," then there are no standards of reasonable or unreasonable interpretation at all: anything goes. Such a view--for which I do not hold them primarily responsible--trivializes both literature and the mind.

I am unsure, now, how to proceed. I want to linger on the "one place...nobody has discovered," thinking of Hamlet's "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns." The tone is different--or does Cameron, too, have an idea of death, or after-life, on his mind?--the sense of mystery just over the horizon is complementary. But I couldn't linger then, nor did I think of Hamlet.

I responded with an interpretation.

That's a beautiful idea. It reminds me, Cameron, of the time [earlier in January] when we were talking about what makes New Year's "new year" and we talked about the calendar, and Gideon and some other people were helping us to see that it goes around in a circle, from winter to spring to summer to fall and then again... I kind of like the idea that Mother Nature is always just one season ahead of us, like sort of getting ready for us to come to the next season--is that partly what you were thinking?

(Audio tape, 1/30/95)

Was this an engagement with his thought, or a muddying of it? The class was less attentive to me than to Cameron, but he nodded, accepting my reading.

His extraordinary thought is perfectly in keeping with the tone of the poem, yet goes a large step beyond the text. (I wonder what (Iris) would think.) (Iris) takes us with a single image, and leaves us with an idea, or an idea nested within an idea. Cameron grabs the idea and runs with it, supposing it to have a whole cosmology immanent within it--we've gone from a lyric to an epic mode. I think of William Wordsworth, high Romantic poet, celebrator of childhood and of common experience rendered in, as he maintained, common language. In his work he fashions ideas of the mind's power from his experience of nature--surely he would recognize the spirit of Cameron's thought. In his autobiographical poem, "The Prelude," Wordsworth (1965), recounts a walking trip through the Alps. He and his companion have been hoping for some kind of epiphany, and are bitterly disappointed to discover that they have actually crossed the Alps, with no epiphany achieved. He feels "lost," abandoned by "the leadings from above"

he has come to count on. In retrospect, though, he finds in this experience an affirmation of the power of mind or soul:

But to my conscious soul I now can say--
"I recognize thy glory:"...
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
(Bk.VI, ll. 599-608) (p. 268)

Cameron imagining a spirit in the natural world solicitous of human beings' journey through time, imagining an endless cycle of such care and "joy," is himself dealing with "infinitude" and "hope." He is recognizing the "glory" of mind, its constitutive and re-constitutive power, demonstrating to us by his speculation that the human mind or soul is the author of the idea of infinity, the only author of the idea and the practice of hope.

And indeed, Jon L. names the power at work here as Wordsworth and other Romantics named it: "I think that Quiet Eye is *imagination*," he tells us. Candy agrees, pointing out that the deer *in the field* is "motionless" ("still"); thus, the place where she is "springing" ("jumping") is *in* Quiet Eye, in her imagination (audio tape, 1/30/95). Candy's confirmation makes the point that imagination *transforms*. We can go another step and see that without it, hope is not only impossible, it is *inconceivable*; so too, then, would be "effort, expectation, and desire." --This is one reason why "the works and practices of art," including literary art, must be so important to us in schools: they are the breeding grounds for the imagination, without which hope has no content, without which, then, we could learn neither aspirations nor skills for change.¹¹

Hope, effort, expectation, and desire, all made possible by the lively imagination, point outwards, into the world of action (as Wordsworth

¹¹ This is a traditional argument that I am glad--without being sanguine, recognizing that my argument is not, taken altogether, the same--to abide with. See for example, Northrop Frye: "The ethical purpose of a liberal education is to liberate, which can only mean to make one capable of conceiving society as free, classless, and urbane. No such society exists, which is one reason why a liberal education must be deeply concerned with works of imagination" (1957, p. 347).

pointed to the early hopes of the French Revolution and, later, to the revolution in Haiti, then to turn--more modest, or more ambitious still?--to the revolution in consciousness he hoped his poetry would inaugurate). Actions my students took subsequent to discussion of "Quiet Eye" were slight, even humble, but nonetheless noteworthy. Some of them wrote poems and many, as I've mentioned, wrote *letters* to (Iris). In one of the most striking of these, A'dona takes the idea of imagination and, in particular, an incipient idea of consciousness (though she does not as far as I know yet have a word for it), and uses this as humans usually, sooner or later, do: to construct the experience of simultaneously occupying one's self, or body, and standing aside from oneself; simultaneously knowing oneself and being a mystery to oneself. She writes:

Dear Iris,
 I want to know what does your poem mean. I like
 your poem, Quiet Eye. I don't know what the eye
 is. Is it a deer? Is it winter outside? Is the
 deer imagining the inside of his head is joyful and
 i hope i can be your friend?

your friend,
 A'dona

Arising, as good interpretations so often do, from an apparent misreading (see, for example, Bloom, 1975)--that the deer and Quiet Eye are one--A'dona asks a startling question, "is the deer imagining the inside of his head is joyful...?" I find this suggestion of consciousness as a hall of mirrors irresistible: the creature imagines--an act "from the inside of the head," we commonly suppose--what the inside of his head is like, or what it could be like--but then where is he doing the imagining from? And is he working his way to a picture of the current state of "the inside of his head," or is he working his way to a transformed future state? Does everyone suppose that "joyfulness" is something residing "inside the head"?¹²

*

*

*

¹² If A'dona is inventing or re-inventing the idea of consciousness, as I take her to be, then she is doing a version of what Wordsworth had to do in reflecting on and *changing the meaning of* his experience of unwittingly crossing the Alps.

I began by adopting Dewey's proposition that *art* and *democracy* are related works, related needs or ambitions or ideals; in particular, I am wanting to work with the proposition that they are connected on the thread of the possibility of "complete and unhindered communication...in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience" (Dewey, 1934, pp. 104-105). The larger proposition, then, is that such communication is what art enables and what democracy requires, or will be--and that, in small ways we can here begin to glimpse flashes of such audaciously imagined communication, and thus, in turn, the possibility of "community of experience," in the responses engendered by (Iris's) poem, "Quiet Eye." That proposition re-surfaces the main argument of the chapter, namely, that with "democracy" understood as "a mode of associated living, of conjoint *communicated experience*" (Dewey, 1966, p. 87, emphasis added), that public school classrooms can be envisioned as sites for the creation of democratic culture: A culture of communicated experience of the kind that the art of poetry for example can be--and because it is *democratic* culture, that that communal joining in and around the making and re-making by reading of the poem will be something that *all* people can do. In order to show how large I conceive the interior space of (Iris's) very small poem--and other verbal artifacts that gradually come into the discussion, such as Cameron's vision of Mother Nature and A'dona's letter to (Iris)--to be, I have brought in the idea or phenomenon of "correspondences" amongst these and other works. These correspondences are readings of different works that reverberate, echo, inform each other; they are complementary meanings found in disparate works across time and other "gulfs," complementarities that suggest each thinker is responding to some element in the world, in human life, with a degree of harmony of insight, mood, and depth of feeling that is simultaneously surprising and unsurprising, that suggest we can indeed discover ourselves to be "all in *it* together."

The need for "democratic culture"

Keeping A'dona's letter in mind, I want now to address directly this larger issue--the creation and meanings of democratic culture--and to trace correspondences of a different sort than those so far proposed (between Quiet Eye "springing/in a field of joy" and the creative imagination as understood

by the Romantic poets, via several fourth graders; between Cameron's idea of infinity and Wordsworth's; between A'dona's idea of consciousness and anyone's). I stole the title of this chapter from Walt Whitman, an American "Romantic." Here, I acknowledge my debt and bring him directly into the story. Like Wordsworth--but inflected with "a special resonance by the American experiment,"¹³ and by Lincoln's recent "re-dedication" to that experiment in the face of the "test" at Gettysburg--Whitman understood the quest for liberty and the search for a democratic culture "of the people, by the people, and for the people" to be linked, indeed, interdependent. Soon after the War, he wrote a strange, rambling, provocative essay, *Democratic Vistas* (1974). In it, he raises a challenge atop a set of related problems.

I say we had best look our times and lands searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of the States are not honestly believed in (for all this hectic glow, and these melodramatic screamings), nor is humanity itself believed in.

As a poet and as a citizen Whitman is distressed and angered--while yet hopeful--about the lack of culture, particularly literature, fit for and fruit of democracy. "These states," he asserts, "have assumed the task to put in forms of lasting power...the democratic republican principle, and the theory of development and perfection by voluntary standards, and self-reliance" (pp. 317-318). The qualifying phrase, "in forms of lasting power," is critical: these, he is certain, we have not accomplished.¹⁴ He continues:

¹³ The phrase is Jay Featherstone's (personal communication, 1998). From him also come these understandings of the big word, "Romantic," that I have again invoked: "It means, as Isaiah Berlin put it, that truth is multiple, not single, that truth is made, not found; it places a special value on the conjoining of will and desire made possible by human imagination, and on the power and worth of ordinary people's visions and dreams, and thus wants a people's culture in which as Keats put it humankind would become a democracy of great oak trees; it asks, What would it take to sustain the value of *live experience* over time, to keep alive the vitality of childhood experience and add to it the effective powers of adulthood...?" (taken from my notes of Featherstone's talk at the North Dakota Study Group annual meeting, Woodstock IL: February 1998).

¹⁴ One of the more obvious and recognizable of those forms, many of us hope and have hoped, ought to be public schooling.

Admitting...the priceless value of our political institutions, general suffrage (and fully acknowledging the latest, widest opening of the doors [i.e., African American voting rights]), I say that, far deeper than these, what finally and only is to make of our [America]¹⁵ a nationality¹⁶ superior to any hither known...must be *vigorous, yet unsuspected Literatures*, perfect personalities and sociologies, original, transcendental, and expressing (what, in the highest sense, are not yet expressed at all) democracy and the modern.

(p. 319, emphasis added)¹⁷

A major burden of this chapter is (at least) to demonstrate that these "vigorous," too little suspected literatures are available, if only we will tend to them. (They may be all around us.) I mean, for example, that "Quiet Eye" is such an "unsuspected," unexpected, piece of literature,¹⁸ and that it and the facts of the responses it engenders signal the possibility of the "democratic culture" I am interested in. I hope as well--perhaps vainly, if Auden is correct that "poetry makes nothing happen"¹⁹--that such literatures, and the circumstances of their creation in public schools, may amount to instances of the "forms of lasting power" into which democratic principles and theories of development must be placed, by which they must be enacted. *Habits* are "forms of lasting power" (not the only kind, of course): I am proposing that the possibilities and patterns of communication that (Iris) and Cameron and A'dona are exhibiting here, by means of the art object (poem), could, if regularized (which is not to say routinized) become a kind of habit of expected

¹⁵ "Western world" in the text; I believe, taken in context of his whole essay, my substitution is warranted. "I shall use," Whitman has said in the immediately preceding paragraph, "the words America and democracy as convertible terms" (p. 318).

¹⁶ *Not* a "race" but a "citizenry."

¹⁷ While "perfect personalities" (and even "transcendence") sound odd, even jarring, to our ears--and I considered subjecting them to ellipses--the ways in which Whitman does *not* sound contemporary are often as big a part of his relevance and his challenge as the ways in which he does.

¹⁸ What does a work have to do or be to count as "literature"? I claim it has to have the realized possibility of certain kinds of effects, efflorescences, in some readers--no more, no less. My claim is not singular--see for example Northrop Frye, "(T)he question of whether a thing 'is' a work of art or not is one which cannot be settled by appealing to something in the nature of the thing itself. It is convention, social acceptance, and the work of criticism in the broadest sense that determines where it belongs" (1957, p. 345).

¹⁹ Though William Carlos Williams, still en-route to this story, has thought (as Adrienne Rich reminded), that "men die miserably every day/for lack/of what is found there [i.e., in poetry]" (1962, p. 161).

fellow-feeling and commensurable meaning that would support and in small but vital ways enact the democratic hope. Towards such ends, I return for a moment to a statement of Whitman's just quoted, a statement that for me captures the underlying idea and challenge, the premise of the whole argument about education, culture, and democracy. Acting as a doctor "diagnosing some deep disease," (a role the Civil War had taught him too well), Whitman baldly states, "the underlying principles of the States are not honestly believed in...nor is humanity itself believed in."

Nor is humanity itself believed in: That is for me the key, the "Open Sesame," the secret behind Bluebeard's forbidden door. It's true the *principles* are not believed in, but they are not believed in because their foundational premise, *faith in humanity*--in the profound capacity of *all* humans--for self-government--for mutual tending to a common good--"to add worth to the world," as Patricia Carini puts it, repeatedly and tirelessly (1995)--is not honestly held.²⁰ Such faith can only be held in patience and in action together; it requires daily practices of "effort, expectation, and desire," a belief and a struggle for "something evermore about to be." In classrooms, faith in *each* human being not only can but must be held in patience: salutary achievements, epiphanies, if you will, are not easily found nor do they always appear at the times and in the garb we expect--but such patience is not passivity or resignation; it expresses itself in attention, in action, and in detail.

One "detail" will involve significant choice: (Iris) could be commanded to write a poem, to write a haiku even--and conceivably she was--but she could in no sense be commanded to write *that* poem, and a poem of such calm and distinctive personality will only come about when there is a natural rightness in the fit between writer and her subject; thus, any "assignment" behind it will have been experienced as a justly chosen instrument for furthering the *student's* purposes or vision. (As Simone Weil insists, "the intelligence can only be led by desire" [1977, p. 48].) That "natural rightness" may well mean the writer feels chosen by the subject rather than vice versa, but there will have been freedom to refuse the wrong subject, freedom for reverie, and freedom over the years to choose and abandon many

²⁰ For a useful and insightful discussion of the different parts played by adherence to *principle* and to *faith* or morals, in our centuries-long argument about race, racism, and democracy, see "What Jefferson Helps to Explain" (Schwartz, 1997).

different verbal forms and topics. All of these freedoms are part of what is meant by "significant choice." Though "choice" here could nearly be rewritten as "high expectations," in the sense of genuine faith in the capacity of each individual to "add worth to the world"--a faith which means providing (Iris) lots of different media and occasions to find and develop her capacities, to fashion her voice, being available to her work, responding when it has "spoken." *Democratic culture* in this sense is both expecting contributions from her and participating in the meanings of those contributions--those objectified lives we call poems--*with* her.

What, then, of A'dona and her letter to (Iris)? "Is the deer imagining the inside of his head is joyful and i hope i can be your friend?," she asks. The effort of faith in her human potential, which she is *entitled to*, if we are to take Whitman and by extension the "founding fathers" seriously, is in a way so easy, here, that it is no effort at all. She has, after all, just sketched a version of the epiphany offered by the actions of art in life. A'dona, the imagined deer, the deer of Imagination, and the reader are joined here in a flash of speculation about the mystery of consciousness, and--and this is what makes the moment so tender and so "common"--we are simultaneously present at a gesture of human companionship, an impulse towards the most ordinary, not symbolic, not metaphorical, desire for human connection and friendship. Sounding both the poignant and the transcendent, A'dona makes it impossible not to have faith in her humanity. She inhabits--in these very few and I think hard-won sentences--language as a medium of unquestionable power. Whatever "intelligence" might be, it is surely glowing here. Whatever good might be expected from our social tendencies is surely here exemplified. What, then, is to be doubted?

Well, her future. To be a child in mid-nineties America is itself, statistically speaking, no very hopeful thing (Children's Defense Fund, [1996], e.g., pp. 6 & 82), (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, [1990], e.g., p. 31), (also see [Herbert, 1996]). And to "be" A'dona, from the perspective of demographics, is to be on the wrong end of the curve (CDF, [1996], e.g. pp. 5, 37, 49), (Natriello, et al., [1990], e.g., pp. 17ff, 21ff, 23). Usually, when I write about my teaching and my students, I provide little or no demographic information about individuals. Such data too often leads to reductionist interpretations; given our limited and clumsy vocabularies of class and our obsession with race, providing it for individuals may constitute an unwarranted set of

assumptions and intrusions into children's and families' privacy. Here, though, these markers are so pertinent to the political points I wish to make that I am, with reluctance, including them. At the time of these stories, then, A'dona is one of those marked for failure, deemed "at risk": a black girl, living in a "non-traditional" family, labeled a "special education" student, receiving free or reduced lunch, over-weight, somewhat halting of speech when she entered our school in September, writing and reading at a level that probably tested about first grade though this is a fourth grade classroom. That she is female not male is deemed a point in the plus column, or at least not a minus; all the other factors are, as school and society now go, definite strikes against this nine year old child. Like Cameron, Candy, and most of the other children I discuss, A'dona is unprivileged, marked by color, class, or both, one of those children widely regarded as a drain on the economy and a threat to the future if something isn't done about them. (She has since gone on to do very well in middle school, for which she, her devoted grandmother, and her special education teacher of several years, Barbara Acker, deserve the credit.²¹)

It is also relevant to say that A'dona had somehow to get to the point of writing her letter to (Iris). The letter was essentially spontaneous--a response to a suggestion of mine, which had in turn been prompted by a student question--not to mention the big question, "What is the answer?"--that I could not answer. But the context was not spontaneous or casual. Acts of faith may be said to have played a part in it. A'dona was in a classroom where the possibility of a meaningful encounter between her and that least useful, least economically productive of the arts, poetry, was assumed to be a possibility. She was in a classroom where the connection of personal meaning to personal meaning, mediated by cultural products and human relationships, was offered. She was in a classroom in which the imagination, so seldom important in the official curricula we try to live by, became a topic of serious conversation. And she was in a classroom where a teacher, Barb Acker, was available and willing to help her write a thought too big for her mechanical skills.

²¹ Barb Acker gives all the credit to A'dona, and mentions that "her self esteem increased as she became a real part of a learning community" (personal communication, 1997).

"Sometimes it makes you go insane": Further correspondences

I will return explicitly to the idea of exercising "faith in humanity" in public school classrooms, and to the connection of that faith to the creation of democratic culture, but I want for now to let that idea stand as context and to pick up the trail of poetic correspondences prompted by "Quiet Eye." In class, and in retrospect, comments by Cameron, Candy, and Jon led to consideration of imagination and its powers. Those considerations--especially Cameron's vision of "Mother Nature"--brought Wordsworth, his sense of imagination, and his democratic address to consciousness to my mind, several years after the class discussion. Wordsworth in turn recalled me to A'dona's letter and *its* calling on ideas of imagination and consciousness. And the equivocal location of the imagination--in or out of the body, mind, or "self"--in her letter, and the fact that Cameron was very much in my thoughts, reminded me of a startling piece he'd written a month or so before our discussion of "Quiet Eye."

12-6-94 What Is an idea

a idea is a thought

it is in yo[ur] Brain.

sometime it makes you go inasaine.

it's a thing of the Body.

Pausing briefly to consider an idea as "a thing of the body--wondering (with Elaine Scarry again in mind) if that is to make an idea vulnerable, subject to hurt as well as capable of causing hurt (the hurt of insanity for example)--I am struck by further correspondences. I'm reminded at once of the lines, "the pure products of America/go crazy...," though it is a while before I can place those lines in William Carlos Williams' poem "To Elsie" (1968, pp. 28-30).²² When I re-read the poem, I am in for several more shocks, compelling echoes between the themes and images of his poem and the themes and images and, to quote Winnicott (1971b, p. 43) again, "the ideas that occupy (the) li(ves)" of Cameron, A'dona, (Iris), among others. The poem begins:

²² © 1938 by William Carlos Williams. Used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

*The pure products of America
go crazy--
mountain folk from Kentucky*

*or the ribbed north end of
Jersey
with its isolate lakes and*

*valleys, its deaf-mutes, thieves
old names
and promiscuity between*

devil-may-care men...

and young slatterns...

*...succumbing without
emotion
save numbed terror*

*under some hedge of choke-cherry
or viburnum--
which they cannot express...*

The pure proletarian products of Williams' America go crazy, unable to express the deep emotion of "numbed terror." Williams here seems joined in spirit to Whitman's project, urgently wishing for the people a culture--a literature, let us say, a repertoire of language, symbols, words, images--fit to express deep emotions, and the deep aspirations that may emerge when form is put to feeling.

Cameron in his way is a "pure product of America"--a young African American male, a member of the so-called "underclass," already having had serious encounters with the legal system, removed by the state from his home. The "correspondence" between *his* invocation of an idea that could make you lose your mind and Williams' lines asserting a general American descent into madness is not, I think, trivial, not "merely" verbal.²³ The linkage may even be heightened by an important contrast between Cameron and Williams' subjects: Cameron speaks quite well for himself, he *does*

²³ We could remember here, too, Dewey's important reference to "insanity" (1966, Chap. 4).

possess "a repertoire of language, symbols, words, images fit to express deep emotions," including terror. Consider for example another short poem of his (written in response to "focus words," presented as he typed it).

FEAR

FEAR IS HERE, AND THE GREAT BIG BEAR.
HE ONLY STRIKES ONCE.
SO DON'T BE AFRAID IT'S JUST HIM!

IT'S JUST HIM GOING ON THE OUTRAGE.
IT'S JUST ANOTHER BIG BEAR.

I was close to Cameron and cannot pretend to read his poem with detachment. But I do have some evidence that it can function as a piece of "culture" in the sense of being an artifact that can become semi-independent of its original context, occupying a public space where it may mediate, express, and transform the thoughts and feelings of disparate individuals. I read this poem with some undergraduate teacher candidates, deliberately telling them nothing about Cameron except that he was a former student of mine, eight or nine years old at the time he wrote this (journal, 5/24/96). As intending teachers, many of these students--like so many of their elders already in the schools--were inclined at first to try and read the poem as a simple piece of autobiography (--the tendency I discuss in Chapter 2 in connection with Brendan). A number of them imagined a menacing father-figure beating a child. This supposition, as I later told them, was in fact near to the truth. However, as we talked, we found that others had interpreted the poem as being about confrontation with and the effort to survive, or overcome, fear more generally. They recalled some of their own experiences of fear--ordinary ones as well extreme cases--and remembered that the first fearful anticipation of something not yet undergone is so often far worse than the experience itself (even when that experience is truly fearsome). They tied these understandings to the lines, "he only strikes once" and "it's just *another* big bear." As we talked, more and more of them came to recognize *that, whatever* autobiographical roots Cameron's poem might have, the poem is far more than simply a record of those sources. In its extreme condensation, in its invocation of "the great big bear" as a well-nigh

universally accessible totem of fearful events, in its starkness, in its contemporary sounding but mysterious "going on the outrage," the poem is an icon, if you will, of the universal human experience of fear and of the effort to make oneself into a being who can look fear in the eye and stare it down--in the acts of imagination at least, and first; in "real life" next, maybe, we hope. The poem, like (Iris's), is a *meeting place*, a space for encountering feelings and ideas, emanating from others, which turn out in a real sense to be our own, and to offer us, thereby, hope both for communion and for the survival and perhaps transformation of our own experience. For the poem is itself and by definition--if it "works," that is, holds pleasure and meaning for a listener or reader other than its author, independent or partially independent of personal knowledge of the author--an *overcoming* of experience, a transformation of life-facts into something they were in no way pre-ordained to be, a creation of the unpredictable, the lasting, and the connecting out of the otherwise mute and transitory facts of personal experience.

There is more to be said about "correspondences." (Iris's) poem, "Quiet Eye" led, among other places, to our class discussion of the "motionless" deer "springing/in a field of joy," to Cameron's idea of "Mother Nature" going on ahead of us, season by season, "in one place where...nobody has discovered," to A'dona's speculation about the deer "imagining the inside of his head," to Cameron's effort to say something about "what is an idea" and his proposition that an idea can "make you go insane," to the lines, "the pure products of America/go crazy." As I read Williams' poem for the first time in many years, I continue through his imagining of the birth and meaning of the child resulting from the rape under the hedges, "a girl so desolate.../that she'll be.../reared by the state" (like Cameron):

*voluptuous water
expressing with broken*

brain the truth about us...

*as if the earth under our feet
were
an excrement of some sky*

and we degraded prisoners

*destined
to hunger until we eat filth

while the imagination strains
after a deer
going by fields of goldenrod in

the stifling heat of September...*

As if (Iris's) deer has gone, in Cameron's way, from winter to spring to summer to autumn, to meet me in a poem written long before their births and their several poetries. It gives me a shiver to come across this deer in this field, to find the "imagination strain(ing)" in these same ways across these differences in age, gender, color, location, and time. The correspondence between Williams' deer and (Iris's) is not, in the most profound sense, an accident, though no plan of biology or economics could ever have predicted or brought it about. Both express the fundamental human ability to recreate inner experience in image and symbol, both express the deep need we have of our imaginative capacities. We notice that "the imagination strains," works--it neither succumbs to the apparent destiny of imprisonment nor idly awaits inspiration, but works, as A'dona and Cameron have worked--and as we, as teachers, must work--to broach the field of possibility.

Williams' great and terrible poem concludes,

*It is only in isolate flecks that
something
is given off*

*No one
to witness
and adjust, no one to drive the car*

The lack of a final period is not a typo; the lack of witness is not an accident.

I do have a witness. I reported earlier that in the fall, in response to the assignment calling for "Beginnings," "Desire or need," "Things to bring," and so forth, Cameron had asked if he could write "a rap." Here is what he wrote.

In the ghetto Days

In the future, when everything is free
I want to get a chance to learn about me.

I only have an house, and five dollars.
I had a magic feather that does not flee.

But one day it went away from me.

Several days before our second "Quiet Eye" discussion (the one in which Cameron had said that he "still thinks" Quiet Eye "is Mother Nature...in one place where...nobody has discovered or something"--a "place" that, years afterwards, made me think of Hamlet's "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns"), and a few weeks after our first discussion of it, Cameron added to his poem:

and then I got mad. and nobody was glad it Flew,
and soared th[r]ough the sky
and it got high and I said Fly, Fly, shed, shed
and then I was Dead.

"Shed, shed"--yes: "Off, off you lendings," King Lear's bitter rejection of the trappings of a corrupt civilization, and a death wish, (the clothes adorning, concealing, or encumbering the body, the body doing likewise for the soul) comes inescapably to my mind. Not that Cameron's poem needs any unsolicited correspondences to strengthen its voice. In any event, it now seems perfectly probable that Cameron had death on his mind this day--reminded perhaps by his own recent thoughts of it, prompted somehow by the image of Quiet Eye "springing/in a field of joy," an image that led to Cameron's vision of Quiet Eye as "Mother Nature (who) keeps on going ahead of us--'she is springing in a field of joy,' that probably might be like she's...in one place...where nobody has discovered..."--for surely no one in this life has discovered "a field of joy." And so, though I am first (in November) silent, and then (in January) "mad" at the prospect, I seem to pray to set my soul free, to urge it away from this present in which all things--and all people?--are not free. This also is a present in which I do not "get a chance to learn about me."²⁴ As if, indeed, "the earth under our feet/were/an

²⁴ In a well known passage, W. E. B. DuBois depicts the black person in this country as "born

excrement of some sky." The imagination here takes on the awful duty of wishing the self permanently out of the body, out of time: an imagination which has at least momentarily given up on the world. Is the promised immortality of the soul a fair exchange?

Cameron returned to his poem, "Ghetto Days," a third time. In the spring, I encouraged him and Lincoln, the other boy with a notable interest in poetry (also the respected draughtsman of the account of C.J.), to assemble a booklet of their poems, which they did. Cameron included both "Fear" and "Ghetto Days" (subsequently including both of these in the year-end anthology of the whole class's work as well). Here is the final version, almost as he presented it.²⁵

GHETTO DAYS

**IN THE FUTURE WHEN EVERYTHING IS FREE
I WANT TO GET A CHANCE TO LEARN ABOUT ME.
I ONLY HAVE A HOUSE AND FIVE DOLLARS.
I HAD A MAGIC FEATHER THAT DID NOT FLEE.
BUT ONE DAY IT WENT AWAY FROM ME.
THEN I GOT MAD. AND NOBODY WAS GLAD,
IT FLEW, AND SOARED TH[R]OUGH THE SKY
AND IT GOT HIGH. AND I SAID, FLY, FLY.**

I cannot be positive that the omission of "shed, shed and then I was Dead" was a deliberate decision, given the very severe and painful distractions Cameron was suffering at this point in the year. Several small

with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world,--a world which yields him (*sic*) no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world." His history is in a sense made up of "this strife,--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. And "the end of his striving (is) to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture" pp. 16 & 17). A "longing to attain self-conscious manhood," coupled with a sense that may be impossible in this present, is certainly compatible with Cameron and the persona he offers in this poem. But is he not already "a co-worker in the kingdom of culture"? I thank Susan Melnick for sending me back to *The Souls of Black Folk* (a book, after all, almost entirely about education) and the idea of life behind "the Veil" after her reading of "Fear" and "Ghetto Days," though I can't hold her responsible for the use I have so far been able to make of that suggestion.

²⁵ He in fact used an extravagantly large, bold face, outlined font; also, he was deeply distracted in the spring and worked on this only intermittently and with constant urging. All of this made it difficult to determine where he saw the line breaks in the poem. The lines as given here are my reconstruction, based on a structural analysis of the poem which makes it look as if it is made up of 9, 10, or 11 syllable lines, with possibly one 12 syllable exception. (If the stresses, most of them pronounced, establish a pattern, I have missed it.) The punctuation and the words are exactly as Cameron had them.

things point in that direction, though: He has changed "*an* house" to "*a* house," and he has changed "magic feather that *does* not flee" to "magic feather that *did* not flee." (Note too the insertion of a comma after "and nobody was glad," subtly re-directing the sense of the phrase to refer back to "I got mad" rather than ahead to "it flew.") These tellingly exact substitutions suggest that he was able to concentrate on revising this poem--indeed, that the poem created a relatively safe space *in which* to concentrate.²⁶ That being said, I feel entitled to hope that this more ambiguous ending--sounding *hopeful*, even though interpretation surely still suggests death as the route to or price of the soul's freedom--was deliberate.

"The work of creation...always has at its center the work of rescue," Scarry asserts (1985, p. 276). And Winnicott says, "*Ideas are like breath; also they are like children, and if I do nothing to them he feels they are abandoned. His great fear is of the abandoned child or the abandoned idea or remark, or the wasted gesture of a child*" (1987, p. 191). Which would be a case of, "*No one/to witness/and adjust, no one to drive the car.*" And if "*ideas are like breath*" they are like the soul, they are its manifestations. With what responsibilities are we confronted, against what incalculable losses must we contend?

Culture-making: "No contact of this human sort is replaceable"

Cameron, (Iris), A'dona--and Brendan in his way; even C.J. in his--and many others can and do produce "vigorous, unsuspected literatures," at times prodigiously, more often, perhaps, "in isolate flecks." Their work addresses some of humanity's oldest concerns--how to live in this world, for example, being afraid; mortality. Most importantly, it demonstrates in practice the workings and the powers of human imagination. We can see the imagination as having two essential functions: It is *generative*, and it is protective or consoling. (Both sense meet, as Scarry says, in "the work of rescue.") Imagination is expansive, seeks to go beyond limits--especially the

²⁶ And, when he could summon them, his powers of concentration were formidable. Consider his own definition of the word, offered during a discussion of the purpose of "focus words," in which one student's suggestion had been, "to concentrate." "'It's like you have the words in your mind'--[here his] hand gestures and furrowed brow, slightly down-cast [or] inward-looking eyes, vividly convey[ed] concentration--'and there's a tube from each letter...'" (i.e., to the page, is how I have always imagined his meaning here; he went on to refer some what vaguely to getting "unconnected" "if it gets noisy") (journal, 10/4/95).

limit called "the here and now" or the one called "the body"; imagination shelters, works out of sight and hearing of others, shields one's gaze from the present. Finally, though, imagination connects: connects a person's inner and unrealized potential with other lives, other interiors, other selves. In so doing, it transforms. The artifact--the poem, for example--is the vessel through which the transformation occurs, both a sign and an agent of potentiality reaching towards fact. These ("ordinary," unprivileged) children have, then, been working in the realm of culture-making: creating artifacts, verbal objects, connections, *expressive of common experience in uncommon ways*, capable of *renewing that experience as the property of all*. And the site for this creativity has been public school classrooms. Call this some steps towards the work of *creating democratic culture*.

Pressing on, we might refer to the criteria of Whitman cited earlier: How are (Iris), Cameron, and A'dona's "vigorous [I feel]...yet unsuspected [I claim; I observe] literatures" "original, transcendental"; how do they, if they do, "express democracy"? They are original in their unmistakable individuality, the distinctive "voice" in each of them, their qualities of freshness or vitality--"vigor," in fact; they are "transcendental" in their capacities to transform experience, to propel the deer of Imagination across boundaries of time, age, class, color, and gender. They "express democracy"--exude or overflow with it or the spirit and hope of it--in that, as the work of "ordinary," unprivileged children they answer democracy's claim that "faith in humanity" is justified. They prove its implied claim that each ordinary person is capable of moments of transcendent insight; they *meet* (with each other, with us, with the past) in those moments. Their achievements are in some respects small--but they are big with implication, rebuke, and promise.

These claims are brought to the fore in another of Dewey's musings on the meanings of "democracy."

(T)he word democracy...denotes *faith in individuality*, in uniquely distinctive qualities in each normal human being.... (Democratic) equality is moral, a matter of justice socially secured, not of physical or psychological endowment.... Moral equality means incommensurability, the inapplicability of common and quantitative standards. It means intrinsic qualities which require unique opportunities and differential manifestation.... Our best, almost our only, models of this kind

of activity are found in art and science. There are indeed minor poets and painters and musicians. But the real standard of art is not comparative, but qualitative. Art is not greater or less, it is good or bad, sincere or spurious....

Upon reflection, it is apparent that there is something academic in confining the models of moral equality to artistic and intellectual pursuits. Direct personal relationships, *the affections and services of human companionship*, are its most widespread and available manifestations.... No contact of this human sort is replaceable; with reference to it, all are equal because all are incommensurable, infinite. Democracy will not be democracy until education makes it its chief concern to release distinctive aptitudes in art, thought, and companionship.

Individuality, Equality, and Superiority, (1969, pp. 174 & 176-177, emphasis added).

Recall:

Dear Iris,
I want to know what does your poem mean. I like your poem, Quiet Eye. I don't know what the eye is. Is it a deer? Is it winter outside? Is the deer imagining the inside of his head is joyful and i hope i can be your friend?

your friend,
A'dona

Dewey's humanity and wisdom in locating "art, thought, and human companionship" on the same moral plane--the place where we are, if we will secure justice--that is, be democrats--all equal and all distinct, "incommensurable"--is here confirmed by a nine year old girl who, at once, ponders the meaning of a poem, conjures up a mighty image of imagination and of consciousness, and hopes to be a friend. "*No contact of this human sort is replaceable; with reference to it, all are equal because all are incommensurable, infinite,*" says Dewey in a Whitmanesque moment. Cameron, (Iris), A'dona are *infinite* in those moments when the mediating imagination leaps all boundaries and borders and joins them with Wordsworth and Williams and anyone else who cares to listen in on the human quest for itself, for the heart of humanity.

And here we return to perhaps the deepest meaning or significance of *democratic culture*--this capacity for connection. When Dewey attributes *both* "incommensurability" *and* "infinity" to each human being, democratically understood, he takes in the essential paradox: on the one hand, each of us is distinct, individual, unique (as, say, "a voice"); on the other hand, *as* individuals, there is no determined limit to our potential (for, say, "the affections and services of human companionship"). Because we are both unique and "infinite," we are capable of being "in agreement or harmony" (co-responding) (as well as capable of but not fated to be in isolation--muteness, or inaudability--or conflict). This should feel, I think, like an unexpected consequence of uniqueness. A democratic consciousness or education, as I read Dewey and as I see it, is one that recognizes this paradox, understands that it means "moral equality" (while requiring, for practical equality, the work of "justice socially secured"), and seeks to cultivate in its members that recognition and, in that, the full extension of both branches of the paradox, in each. Or, as Dewey puts it:

Democracy will not be democracy until education makes it its chief concern to release distinctive aptitudes in art, thought, and companionship.

A "*distinctive aptitude in...companionship*" is a warm way of stating the paradox. "Education" understood in this way is essentially a matter of *cultivating*, of *culture-making* in all the varied senses of the word. That is to say, it is a matter of eliciting the "distinctive" capacities for "the works and practices of art and intelligence" (Williams, 1983) from each individual, finding and sheltering the habits, skills, dispositions, "ways of life" conducive to the display and development of those capacities and conducive to the nurturance of "the affections and services of human companionship": conducive, then, to the mutual recognition and correspondence of incommensurable human beings. "I think Quiet Eye still is Mother Nature," "I think Quiet Eye is the Imagination," "I like your poem, Quiet Eye...Is the

deer imagining the inside of his head is joyful and I hope I can be your friend..."

Democracy, then, is "a mode of living" in which people choose to participate in each other's experience--so, to share responsibility for each other's experience, to be obliged to be responsive to each other's experience--in particular, to communicate experience to one another. In so doing, the experience is transformed--patterned, enriched, signified--as are both parties to the communication. The paradigm for such transformative "communications" is art. But "art, thought, and companionship" are morally equal--as, democracy claims, are all "incommensurable, infinite" individuals--and equally indispensable to "the work of rescue." (What is to be rescued is meaning, compassion, the sense of "something evermore about to be"--"joy," perhaps; what is to be translated is isolation, fear, inaudibility, and hurt.)

Democracy is the practice of hope; public school classrooms--as sites for culture-making, communication, correspondence--must be laboratories for that practice (must be places for Cameron and A'dona to hope, to create, to rescue). These are unfashionable sentiments; like most large pronouncements they are in danger of becoming pure surface, empty of all content. For these reasons, I have tried to be *concrete* and *specific*, to show how a tiny number of verbal objects--a few slips of poetry, a letter a couple of lines long, some remarks rescued from conversation ("ideas are like breath...")--contemplated with an open mind, have in fact a kind of infinite fruitfulness and potential for connection. I have tried to point to what Scarry calls "*the generosity of the artifact*" (1985, p. 318).

Finally, I recognize that to stipulate hope and correspondence is not to stipulate a world without conflict. Dewey proposes, both sarcastically and seriously, that an education for democracy will be one from which a "person

[i.e., an "ordinary" person] might grow up to be a conscientious objector or a social innovator, or to be inclined to demand social recognition for activity in free scientific inquiry or in art or some other luxurious and ornamental calling" (1969, p. 173). --We can agree with him that an education in democracy is an education in dangerous desires, desires that would lead to the *demand* for participation in, and recognition in, essential human callings so long regarded as privileged, even effete and expendable: a demand to write and read the "vigorous, unsuspected literatures" of hope.

Afterword: Teaching--attending--"forms of life" and the existence of a fragile community of sentient readers

I have previously (repeatedly) invoked Dewey's interest in teachers' learning "how mind answers to mind"; more recently, I have borrowed Winnicott's remark that "ideas are like breath; also they are like children, and if I do nothing to them he feels they are abandoned."²⁷ I have proposed that one important meaning of the idea of "teaching as acts of attention," or an aspect of teaching that that idea calls to the fore, is "making space," in several senses of the phrase, including: "creating conditions and opportunities (constraints, expectations, invitations) for children to write," and making room in the mind of the teacher for the meanings of the children's writing to emerge and gather. "Sanctioning the content of the children's writing" and "Being an audience for the children's writing, being *interested* in the writing" are two aspects of the attentiveness of teaching related to that internal space-making, calling for interpretation and re-interpretation which finally manifests itself as--and continues long after the fact, as it were--the work of "sympathetic reading."

²⁷ The "I" here is a psychoanalyst, the "he" is his patient. However I can see no harm--but considerable benefit--to thinking of the "I" in this statement as a *teacher* and the "he" as a stand-in for a *student*--let us say, for example, Cameron.

Here, I want to continue using and examining these ideas about teaching, and to extend their reach, through a revisiting and re-describing of some of the material in this chapter. This, in turn, should prepare us for the next and final chapter.

The project of sympathetic reading is continued and demonstrated in several ways. In the first place, there is the tracing of correspondences. This enables me as a teacher (and writer and reader) to continue talking with texts I care about, to continue "playing them off against each other." Hearing resonance's, echoes, and correspondences²⁸ enlarges--or rather, reveals the size and scope--of the children's texts; it keeps, or makes, the children's texts *present* long after their actual physical presence has moved on. This then may even be a way of attempting to keep faith with those students. Convening these texts--bringing them into each other's company (which has been done not by seeking the correspondences but by hearing them, and then pursuing them)--is also an effort to expose some of the meanings and possibilities of "democratic culture." I mean this in a way no larger or more complicated (nor less) than something like this:

Great and famous writers (Wordsworth, Whitman, Williams), address and express certain themes and ideas in forms that are granted the status of "art." Certain children ("ordinary, unprivileged," virtually by definition not famous) address and express the same or similar themes and ideas in forms that I find to deserve the status of art (on account of their capacity to mediate experience, to connect people through exploratory engagement in the meanings of the created objects, to inform and inflect the feelings of readers--and this is perhaps just to begin to recapitulate the list of reasons for granting them, no for finding them to have, to deserve and to "demand," this status). If "*democratic culture*" can translate as something like "*artifacts, art objects or art-like objects of the people, by the people, and for the people,*" then I make the immoderate claim that (Iris), Cameron, and A'dona are members of "the people," that they can be shown to have

²⁸ "Sympathetic reading" as catching "sympathetic vibrations."

made these objects, with these kinds of power, and that these objects--the object called "Quiet Eye," for example--can be shown to have had power in their several lives, to have been "for" them in significant ways. And I further claim that (Iris), Cameron, and A'dona while certainly "unique, incommensurable" are also (besides being "infinite") *representative*--that "their capacities to contribute," as I said of Brendan's at the beginning of this work, are *not* unique. "Unsuspected," indeed, these capacities can be sought, elicited, read. They can be taken to prove the rightness of some of the claims I feel, with Dewey, are central to democracy's footings, and its promises, e.g., "faith in individuality, in uniquely distinctive qualities in each normal human being," in "moral equality." That "moral equality" is also, or requires, *demands*, "justice socially secured" is also the case. These children's poetries are *not* offered either as demonstrations of that security, nor as means of achieving it: they are offered as part of the demand for it, and in the fragile hope their tiny weight might help move that demand closer to fact.

Sympathetic reading takes another and more pedagogical form in this chapter: that of the reading and learning to read that we do in the classroom together. "What makes it a poem?" *was* an untimely question--ironically so, I suspect: for I think one motivation for that question was the teacherly anxiety I have spoken of, the need to feel that I was "really teaching them something"²⁹--the class wanted, quite rightly, to talk about what the poem meant, what it was saying to us, what "the answers" were. (At this juncture, then, they were teaching or reminding *me* how to read.) Collectively we read the poem, that is, we interpreted it, we began to find ourselves in sympathy with it, we "shared in its consequences," with Candy, Anthony Y., Jon L., A'dona, and of course Cameron playing central roles in that reading. "Teaching" here encompasses the activities of attending to a text, something we practiced in the context of the Monday assignments and in sharing times.

²⁹ And, to ask a question I recommend to my undergraduate teacher-candidates, "Had I thought through--imagined--some of their possible responses?" I can find no evidence that I had performed this elementary act.

The teacher's role here includes eliciting responses, readings, questions; re-stating responses; juxtaposing one comment to another, asking if or how they relate; connecting comments to other conversations and other texts we have encountered together; offering paraphrases, or responses of my own, that in fact become interpretations. Instances and traces of these aspects of teaching are visible in my response to Cameron's "text" about "Mother Nature," a response where it becomes necessary for me to imagine my way into the meaning he is after, to take a stab at making that meaning with him. Cameron reads "Quiet Eye," I "read" Cameron, we both--to echo Dewey's remarks about thinking that I introduced while re-reading Brendan's texts--share to an extent in the consequences of (Iris's) imaginative act.³⁰ (This teaching as reading and teaching and learning *how* to read can also be seen in the anecdote of my undergraduates' encounter with Cameron's "Fear.") Here, the "answering of mind to mind," the "giving of the mind without reserve or qualification to the subject in hand...the first-hand and personal play of mental powers," "in the minds of a group of persons who are in intellectual contact with one another," is all actually visible in the discursive space of the classroom (Dewey, 1974, pp. 324, 318, 325); it is hoped too that we can see, at least for a brief span of minutes, ideas that are not altogether "abandoned."

I return now to the idea of making space for children to write, creating conditions and opportunities--including *constraints, expectations, and invitations*--for them to do so, and also to the idea of "helping to make the writing, co-participating" in it, (which I have touched on briefly in connection with Brendan and the genealogy, and in connection with C.J.'s attribution to

³⁰ And part of the weight I feel writing this is that my sharing in the consequences for Cameron of the idea of "a field of joy" falls far short of his need.

me of "pride" in his stories). I want to look at the commonly teacherly activity of giving assignments, activity that can and often has been described in terms of the teacher's effort to impose his will on students. That is certainly one appropriate way to characterize making assignments, telling people what to do, but it need not be a complete account of that activity, that "telling" and "requiring." I have deliberately made my giving of assignments quite visible in this chapter, partly because it seems incumbent on me to do so when I also assert that "something called genuine choice" ought to be part of children's intellectual experience in school, especially when I make assertions such as the following.

One "detail" will involve significant choice: (Iris) could be commanded to write a poem, to write a haiku even--and conceivably she was--but she could in no sense be commanded to write *that* poem, and a poem of such calm and distinctive personality will only come about when there is a natural rightness in the fit between writer and her subject; thus, any "assignment" behind it will have been experienced as a justly chosen instrument for furthering the *student's* purposes or vision.

Only the reader, exercising some degree of tact, can estimate whether the product of any given assignment has in fact--in the end, shall we say--been "experienced as a justly chosen instrument for furthering the student's purposes or vision."³¹ What I can do--besides offer my own readings of some such products--is to try and show how some element of choice is bound up with the assignments I have reported, and to say a little more about how I

³¹ And in making that estimation, the reader will be practicing exactly what Dewey calls for (in the oft-herein-cited *Relationship of Theory to Practice*) when he asks us as teachers to learn to distinguish between children's "inner" and "outer" attentions, calling "inner attention...the giving of mind without reserve or qualification to the subject at hand." Making these distinctions, he insists in his usual ambitious way, "means insight into soul-action, ability to discriminate the genuine from the sham" (1974, pp. 318-319). The morally charged nature of teaching is everywhere and inescapable.

think these assignments worked (some of the time, for me, for some of the students, which is all I hope to do throughout³²).

If the reader will mentally revisit the assignments I referred to as dealing with "structure" or "pattern" or "rule" with these issues in mind, a few things will be obvious. *Constraint*, to begin with, is visible in the fact that students were told they had to do something in writing with these categories ("Beginnings," etc.) and in the various specific stipulations as to use of each category, how many instances to use of a given category, and to *list* the instances, not just incorporate them in the fabric of the story. Within the boundaries set by the constraints, choice is also visible in several ways. In the first place, the structure of the charts of examples, as well as the articulation of the assignments, makes clear that it is up to the student to decide what to do with each category and that the instances on the chart are exemplary--possibilities, "invitations" as I will get back to momentarily, but not themselves required. In the second place, within those examples there was, as I noted in passing, deliberately expansive provision: Yes, you had to make your story include a "thing to find," but one suggested instance of a thing to find was "heart's desire," which is in a way to say, *anything you want*.

(I would not, of course, rest my case for the importance of providing something recognizable as "genuine choice" on the rather heavily constrained "choices" just referred to, no matter how much good may come out of them. Indeed my whole purpose here is to explicate something about the process of setting *constraints* as well as *invitations*--constraints that may also become invitations--making assignments, into which a limited degree of

³² Because I am trying to get at *promise* and *potential*, I have mostly selected work and incidents that in one way or another show the kinds of promise and potential I am interested in in teaching. A *representative* account of teaching or even any one teaching episode would be a different thing.

choice enters. The big case for choice rests in the provision of ample amounts of "choice writing time" and the concomitant willingness to "sanction the content" of that writing.)

The assignments that I refer to for shorthand purposes as "pattern" assignments were intended to help students notice some of the possibilities of design in constructing their stories. Of perhaps greater importance, they were ways for me to experiment with an issue I found somewhat vexing, that is, just how much conscious attention to such matters *is* helpful for child-writers, or, for these particular fourth grade writers. (I have often thought--as an instance of why this issue was and is for me "vexed"--that I have noticed that when "revision" becomes a very fixed part of the workshop routine that the tendency is for successive revisions to become ever more conventional, often stodgy, sometimes also taking on extra baggage in the way of needless and distracting "description.") They were also ways of assuring myself (and any on-lookers who may have needed the assurance) that I was doing something that looked like teaching. And, certainly, it was often helpful, interesting, and reassuring to see traces of assignments in choice writings, which did suggest that occasionally the assignments were approximating their broadest purpose, which was simply to expand the universe of possibilities. The assignments were also useful in helping me to structure and assure continuity in my journal, which was an important--crucial, for me--site for thinking about the teaching as it transpired.

On reflection and further examination, though, the most important aspect of these assignments--certainly, the most visible, traceable--did *not* have to do with pattern, structure, design, etc.; what was most significant, I have come to think, were the *specific words and phrases* offered as examples of the possibilities inherent in the structures. I now understand the

assignment process here to have been one of proffering *evocative words* (taking "evocative" literally). Choosing these words and phrases was often a nearly subliminal process, though not always, nor entirely. Certainly I offered C.J.'s variation on the classic fairy tale openings ("A long time ago on the west side...") quite deliberately, and drew the class's attention to it deliberately: The intended message was, of course, "This group of people is one resource for all of you in your writing--a classmate might very well have an idea good enough to steal--go ahead and steal..."³³ That C.J.'s line was a *good* one--that it was a rich, suggestive use of language--earned it a place with the others. And in the column of "Things to bring," I was conscious (as with focus words) that I wanted a *range*: objects suitable for use by a range of sensibilities or moods on a given day, from the mundane and practical ("a knife," "a knapsack," to which the class sensibly added "food") to the magically instrumental ("seven league boots," "a magic feather") meant, as I have said, to symbolize "anything is possible." And I knew I was calling on recent experience with *The Seven Ravens* when I chose "a chair" and later when I suggested "a lost brother or sister" as an example of a "Desire or Need." But to a considerable extent, I seemed just to be drawing on the verbal lumber room in my head. Or, if any deliberative thought went into giving, say, "In the future, when everything is free," there are now no traces of it. And yet that interior space where linguistic traces of all the texts one has ever encountered are to be found is, as I have argued, both an expectant, hopefully "ready" space, and a very active space--and the feelings I had about my students, their writing, the states they were in--both known and accessible feelings, and those as yet fugitive and unvoiced--and likewise feelings I had about myself--would seem to have entered into the selection of words and phrase that had the potential

³³ It would have been my custom to ask C.J.'s permission before using his phrase in this way.

to be evocative, to call out other voices. Thus the representation of freedom as distant (but also conceivable) may be an echo of some other thoughts and feelings occupying my mind; likewise the faint suggestions of "loss" in the "Desire or Need" column--including even Thoreau's horse and dove and hound--may have echoed some such feeling in the air of the classroom, and named it, or have introduced the flavor of some such feeling (while, similarly, Weil's teaching that "the intelligence can only be led by desire" may lie behind the very selection of "heart's desire").

On the one hand, just these kinds of echoes and traces must be some of what we mean when we speak of a word, phrase, or line as having the capacity to be "evocative" or "suggestive"; on the other hand, my suggestions of these particular possible interplays are, clearly, quite speculative. This line of thought became insistent, though, when I really took in the fact that Cameron's to me very evocative bit of poetry, in its last version simply titled "Ghetto Days," (a response to the assignment given on the day when I may have had loss on my mind, or sensed loss in the air or both, or neither) took its first line ("In the future..."), its central image or symbol ("a magic feather") and a subsidiary item ("five dollars")--a high proportion of the language in an eight line poem--from the charts used in giving the assignments. (And in his notebook, in making the required--to him objectionable, I should add--listing outside of the text of the elements, for "Character" he has identified "Cameron," while "feather" is listed both as a "Thing to bring" and--in a duality, or consequentiality, so characteristic of Cameron's thinking--as "Trouble" [notebook, 11/28/94].) It seemed noteworthy that I had in effect given to Cameron such a large portion of the language with which he then made up the poem--a poem energetically propelled, let us notice in the context of what's "evocative," by its many and accelerating rhymes. (And

there are a good many other places, in his and others' writings, where these borrowings, not always so liberal or so powerful, but often as titles or first lines which seem to initiate an idea, are visible). This is a place where the teacher's activity can be seen to be a kind of co-participation in or under-writing of the children's own writing.

Finally, it comes to seem entirely elemental to think of all of this as *sharing language*, remembering that "language" is not itself absent its images and meanings. Sharing words, sharing specific words and particular phrases (as all families do)--sharing a language: What could be more fundamentally, recognizably human? --The exchange and reciprocity of vowels, of images, of strings of sound, of phrases, that suggest fields of meaning larger and more plural than any one speaker can know. As "specific words and phrases" necessarily translates as "entailed or evoked, ideas, images, and potentialities," it would clearly make a difference what those words were. Why will some be more evocative than others? How much will that have to do with contexts in which the language users have already jointly encountered them, and how much to do with the invisible histories those users bring to them? As this sharing of language seems almost too obvious to call anything at all (other than, say, "natural") and too profound to even try and understand, I realize that I must have in mind Wittgenstein and his well-known characterization of a language as "a form of life." I have him by way of Stanley Cavell's discussion of him ("Excursus on Wittgenstein's Vision of Language" in [Cavell, 1979]), from which I will quote fairly extensively, for I find (re-discover) a number of echoes or resonances--call them "correspondences"--to some of the themes and ideas I am working with (harking back to the story of C.J. as well as to the stories that comprise this chapter). Informed by Freud as well as Wittgenstein, Cavell proposes:

When you say "I love my love" the child learns the meaning of the word "love" and what love is. *That (what you do) will be love in the child's world; and if it is mixed with resentment and intimidation, then love is a mixture of resentment and intimidation...*

(p. 177)

And shortly thereafter:

To summarize...: In "learning language" you learn not merely what the names of things are, but what a name is; not merely what the form of expression is for expressing a wish, but what expressing a wish is; not merely what the word for "father" is, but what a father is; not merely what the word for "love" is, but what love is. In learning language, you do not learn merely the pronunciation of sounds, and their grammatical orders, but the "forms of life" which make those sounds the words they are, do what they do.... Instead, then, of saying either that we *tell* beginners what words mean, or that we *teach* them what objects are, I will say: We initiate them, into the relevant forms of life held in language and gathered around the objects and persons of our world.... "Teaching" here would mean something like "showing them what we say and do," and "accepting what they say and do as what we say and do," etc.; and this will be more than we know, or can say.

(pp. 177-178)

"Accepting what *they* say and do as what *we* say and do" strikes me as another way of describing an important part of sympathetic reading and its purposes. But what this Wittgensteinian account of language and life--of culture-- brings most strikingly to fore is the very simple and obvious fact³⁴ that "mind answers to mind" *in some form* and *in some place*, not nowhere, not anywhere. The answering--the responding, the corresponding--is *mediated*: in conversation, certainly, but more importantly here, in *products*, in made things, specifically, in writings. From this vantage point, these "pattern" assignments--little lexicons, little plots of language--are sites for that

³⁴ I was once told by someone who should know that Wittgenstein, in fact, declared that philosophy *is* the rediscovery [recovery, rescue?] of the obvious.

answerability. The particular words and phrases, with all their feeling-tinged colorations and inflections, with whatever residue of their earlier textual homes they brought with them, with whatever suggestiveness some had perhaps acquired through centuries or millennia of use by English-speakers were potential tools, bridges, for achieving that answerability. When they were so used, they then made the assignment itself into something approximating a "justly chosen instrument for furthering the students' purposes or visions." But also, more fundamentally, when these kinds of correspondences are achieved, the need for and the possibility of a fragile community of sentient readers is announced. And what will happen in such a community, and what webs of meaning it will put out, "will be more than we can know, or can say."

Chapter 5

Conclusion with respect to teaching

An immodest recapitulation

"Interest," Dewey advises, "requires continuity of attention and endurance"; "Ideas," Winnicott observes, "are like breath; also, they are like children, and if I"--the teacher now, also a listener by vocation--"do nothing to them(,) he"--she, the student, the child, the thinker, the speaker--"feels they are abandoned." (And the "greatest fear is of the wasted gesture of the child." How much repetition does it take to establish that our duty is to stop that waste, to complete and redeem the gesture?) Attention then is the precondition, the ground, for interest. There is much that may grab one's attention involuntarily, but not enough of that upon which to build teaching; so, a *chosen attitude* of attention--of readiness and expectancy, of seeking, cultivating, reading and re-reading words and gestures--will be part of what a teacher manifests for children within the frame I am trying to develop. For what we originally *do* with ideas is precisely *to be interested* in them (or, of course, to be indifferent to them, or deaf to them; actively rejecting an idea, on the other hand, can be a form of interest, a sign of engagement). I mean "interested" in the senses of being invested, of sensibly "sharing in the consequences of what is going on," of being in "sympathy" or "attunement" with; I also mean "interested" in the senses of being curious, of inquiring, and of seeking to "re-create," in Dewey's words, the gesture or idea we observe in *our own* interpretive words or gestures, even going so far as to be, in Scarry's words, re-made by an idea oneself. "Interest" sums up all of these acts that create meaning and the possibility, however fragile, of communication (--I ask again, "is there any other way that thought proves itself *as* thought *except* in the answerability of one mind to another?"). Endurance is doubly called for: in that *what* is of interest will not necessarily appear quickly, easily, or comfortably--indeed, the teacher's right and ability to

be interested may be, perhaps should be, as I have suggested, doubted; secondly, in that "ideas are like breath," verbal objects such as poems and utterances are, despite the "generosity" that may be found in them, "fragile." They may require the enduring, the patient, the holding quality of the human setting--the audience, the teacher--to preserve their capacity for meaning over time. They may also, through their very generosity--their capacity to give, to re-create the feelings and the perceptions of the teacher-audience (and others) --*teach* something about endurance. Imagination--"the sense of something evermore about to be"; the acute perception, rendering of a hope, a need, a possibility, a terror, in an image, which is also to say the having of an idea; the deer, the object of desire,¹ "going by fields of goldenrod," the deer "springing/in a field of joy"--"imagination," a name for the human capacity to see, to hope, to connect, to feel with, to *rescue*--imagination, the capacity whose understanding, Scarry proposes, will assist us in the necessary "project of understanding the nature of human responsibility"--imagination, finally, is the site, the ability, the boundary condition, the essential undertaking for both students and teacher within this view of teaching. That view, again, embraces a set of assertions about aspects we could, I argue, *choose to make central to teaching*. Imagination is the capacity depended upon here as the ground for education. I understand "education" to include, for example, the transformation of "desires and emotions" into stable forms perceptible by others, forms that are able to enter into and change the desires and emotions of others. The cultivation of the imagination, in both students and teacher (who otherwise are unavailable to anything approaching "complete and unhindered communication"), is an object, even the central object, of an education "in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience."

¹ Thanks to Jessica Howard for reminding me how very far back, in Western culture at any rate, we can find the deer symbolizing that what is sought, the object of the quest (personal communication, August 1998).

In this chapter, I seek to re-state and stitch together some of the key claims, hopes, and suggestions about teaching that I have raised in the foregoing pages. I schematize those claims within a deliberately plain framework of four "aspects" of teaching drawn out of the myriad of thoughts and interpretations of teaching and trying to teach laid out in the Afterwords to Chapters 2, 3, and 4. I then conclude by acknowledging both what I have tried to do for or about teaching and what is as yet insufficiently done.

Four aspects of "teaching as acts of attention"

I have framed this dissertation in terms of a view of teaching that concentrates upon those aspects of teaching I call "acts of attention," actions I should like to call both psychological and pragmatic, and also, both detailed, concrete, particular, and large, expansive, and necessarily incomplete. I have offered accounts of several children's writings and the worlds those writings show--Brendan and the "kid" who is "stranded," and "the teenage boy the last of the family still living," and the classmate who re-creates *that* boy as crucified; C.J. and the unsustaining, unsustainable world in which his lost protagonist asks repeatedly, urgently, "what kind of a place is this?"--like that of Brendan's characters, it is "a dangerous place," a place where destruction rules--C.J. also and a protagonist who seems to author his own identity, a creative child-hero, and finally C.J. and his tentative, fragile artifact of a voice that does not know itself, that "need(s) a key"; (Iris) and her Quiet Eye imagining a deer "springing/in a field of joy," an image that seems to lead Cameron to think that the only place *he* can "get a chance to learn about" who he is, can have "a key," is in "some place where...nobody has discovered or something," some place perhaps where the soul is free, some place of death perhaps; Quiet Eye and her author also meeting A'dona on the ground of a reimagined, perhaps renewed consciousness and promise of human companionship. These are writings I call "unsuspected," writings that do and set out to do some of what art and literature do, writings that speak to me of the truth of the faith in the universal capacities of human beings that I take to

be one of democracy's central premises. I have attempted, that is, what I call "sympathetic readings." I have along the way tried to make visible some of the thinking, feeling, decision-making, and other actions that appear to me central to the kind of teaching I am trying to do and to understand, specifically, to those aspects of teaching I call "acts of attention." I want now to reassemble some of those acts, to be plainer and more compact about what parts--gestures, ambitions, preconceptions, workings--of teaching I want to place in the foreground with the idea of teaching as acts of attention, and to reiterate some of the conceptual, moral, and ultimately political benefits such a perspective might afford us.

Although I have obviously used my own teaching as the site for this inquiry (and thus made that teaching susceptible to critique) I do nonetheless want to make my focus here be on aspects of teaching as such, aspects that might comprise a greater or a lesser part of any teaching, aspects of anyone's teaching that might well or only roughly--but still recognizably--be described in some of the terms I use. I am, that is, trying to understand, show, explicate, and move into discussion aspects of teaching that I think many of us could stand to give more thought to, make more important. *This* work is situated in writing and the teaching of writing, however, and, though my hopes for the practice of education go well beyond writing pedagogy, I will necessarily restrain my discussion more or less to that area--with the proviso that the larger field of which writing is a proximate part is the human activity of *making*, specifically of *culture-making* and the making of *art* or *art-like* objects. This being said, there are four aspects of the work of teaching as I have been thinking about and reporting it in these pages I wish to highlight (each of them having been mentioned in passing in the previous chapters):

- Creating conditions and opportunities (constraints, expectations, invitations) for children to write;
- Sanctioning the content of the writing;

- Being an audience for the children's writing, being *interested* in the writing;
- Giving editorial help on the writing, or, helping to make the writing, co-participating, sharing responsibility.

These four points do not, of course, amount to an exhaustive or inevitable synopsis of the manifestations of attentiveness I have been trying to draw out. They suit me because they have, I believe, a certain tangible, down-to-earth, in some ways simple quality, because there is logic to their selection and their ordering, and because they fit well with the constructs I have variously referred to as "making space," or, with Dewey, "determining the environment of the child."

Creating conditions and opportunities

Creating conditions and opportunities for children to write is, as I have said, in many respects convertible with the architectural metaphor of *making space*--for it is, in this image at least, not only the room to move, work, play, come together, be alone, that "space" implies, but also the boundaries and enclosures that make of *this* place "a space" set apart from other spaces. "Space" implies at once opportunity, protection, and limits. And, importantly for me, what the idea of *attention* does to *space* is to invite the theatrical metaphor, the attitude that says, "into this space something or someone of importance or interest will emerge," those persons or things being of course the children and their writings. Concretely and literally, the space made--the conditions set--is, in the first place, temporal: the setting aside of six or more hours a week (in Jane Boyd's classroom) for writing workshop, with the bulk of that time devoted to "choice writing" and "quiet work time," that is, time when children were responsible for selecting themes and forms and were free to work cooperatively, to consult with each other or me, and so on. The opportunity here extended *over* time as well, in that, as I have said, I permitted a great deal of repetition within any child's body of

writings, not only permitted but encouraged the borrowing of ideas from others, and in general did not, as I think of it, make a fetish out of "originality"--but rather allowed near endless re-workings even to the point of obsession. In this context, "choice" operated both as an opportunity, an invitation, and as an expectation and a kind of constraint. For choice is by no means always easy. It was often a challenge for Cameron, for example, to settle upon a theme or idea that absorbed him for more than a few moments, and, while I provided help, including individual help coming up with ideas, and certain escape hatches were available (e.g., if it was fairly close to the end of the session and you were "stuck," you could read a book), the basic forces were simple: Either you found or were found by an idea or image that absorbed your energy and led you on, or you kept experimenting, seeking such an idea--or you were, simply, bored, a decidedly unsatisfactory state.

The opening meeting, sharing time for much of the school year, and, of course, the assignment structures, all operated as both constraints and, much of the time, as I have endeavored to indicate, invitations. The sharing time, meetings dedicated to discussion, and the regular display of student work on the walls of the classroom and on a bulletin board in the hall, are all also readable as efforts to create a kind of public space for, ideally, by no means always, the vigorous and visible answering of mind to mind, for the formation of a "fragile community of sentient readers" in which texts are jointly engaged, entering into and transforming the experience of the readers. --Thus we have the discussions of "Quiet Eye," C.J.'s gradual move from asking me to read his stories to asking Marcus to read "Street Ball" in which he is a player, and we have Lincoln's comment to how well and "musically" Cameron read his poems, for example, and as well my anonymous interpretation of C.J. peeing on the bathroom floor, and my "reading" of Cameron's "Mother Nature" comment. All these are instances of actions that make sense only as public gestures witnessed, potentially, by the whole group, not just the individuals directly concerned. The aim with all of these structures and actions was, of course, to make the classroom "hospitable for

imaginative activity," "safe for dangerous ideas," understanding (trying to learn to understand) the risk that "an idea can make you insane." An integral piece of those efforts was, as I have said at length, recognizing the "play space" of fiction, honoring both its claims and the distinctions between it and "real world" action (you may write stories in which you shoot your mother in the rib; you may *not* hit Eric with all your might; you may include a classmate or teacher in your story if they consent, not otherwise; etc.). A contributing element to this effort to create a kind of safety in order to entertain a kind of risk-taking--to create a setting in which "desires and emotions" are displayed, formed, shaped, and re-worked, not walled off--has to do with evaluation and the forms it did and did not take. I did not grade any pieces of writing, ever (though I did, at Jane's request, participate in the end of semester grading, a bit of work I kept as unobtrusive as I could, though certainly not secret); however, I often evaluated the writing in written or oral comments ("I like how you just *told* us it was later without having to tell everything that happened in-between," "I'm noticing the girls and women don't get treated very well in your stories," "I think it's a sad poem," "That's a beautiful idea," once, "I do not want to be killed and you may not include me in your story," etc.). So, while I strove to make the workshop a site in which children could explore the pleasures, possibilities, and dangers of the imagination, a setting in which they learned and exercised a significant degree of genuine authority and authorship in their encounter with those possibilities, with each other and others' imaginative possibilities, and with me, it was also a setting in which I exercised many of the traditional, authoritative, direction-giving and limit-setting roles of the teacher. That is almost certainly to say that *ambiguity* was one important feature of the workshop (and its place within the larger context of the school and of schooling).²

² An element of attending that I believe I often shortchanged, was being conscious of and sensitive to those qualities of ambiguity, being aware at once of the ways in which what I offered and expected did and did not map cleanly on to the students' usual experiences of school and of teachers.

Sanctioning the content

Sanctioning the content, a crucial move in the teaching I am attempting to do and to understand, can in fact be understood almost as a way of *declaring* ambiguity. This is the move I discussed at some length in connection with Brendan, the giving of "the neutral, apparent non-response" amounting to a "tacit (provisional) nod of...acceptance," "addressing the behavior surrounding the text rather than the text itself." Ambiguity is signaled by the still somewhat mysterious matter of how Brendan intuited that he might "get away" with the story of "the Garbage Can Seller" and "the kid (who) killed two guys" in the first place. We can observe C.J., better documented, exploring and testing the scope of acceptable or tolerable written activity from the start. In any case, "sanctioning the content," which might also be expressed by Coleridge's well-known phrase, "the willing suspension of disbelief," is an essential move, and not merely a negative one. It is not merely the deferral, for example, of a negative judgment; it is rather the "effortful patience" characteristic of attention, the holding faith with the child that "something of importance may emerge." It depends on, as already suggested, but exceeds the reach of, the acknowledgment of fiction as a "play space," (as C.J.'s work, in particular his notebook work, illustrates). And, as I have recently suggested, although the reach and willingness of this move is great, it is not without limits of its own ("No, you may not include me in your story if I am going to get killed;" "No, you may not use her name without permission freely given;" "No, no swear words, though you may use asterisks and exclamation points"). This is again to notice that ambiguity is a feature of what is going on in the workshop. Nonetheless, at root, the sanctioning of content is important precisely because of the possibility of distress: Brendan's, and even more, C.J.'s, stories *disturbed* many people, including my colleagues and hosts, and teacher-education students.³ I was

³ And there are of course many ways in which children's writing and other behavior can disturb, as Lensmire so skillfully relates. Doubtless I walled some of this off, and was deaf to

under some pressure to limit the amount of "violent" writing. On the principle of not getting "stuck in a rut," I occasionally did impose such limits, though on the whole I was fortunate in the skeptical forbearance of my colleagues on this score.

Sanctioning the content is, finally, a key early move in the effort to teach attentively: Allowing something to happen--to appear, to transpire--that might not otherwise happen in the space of school, or at all--something that might disturb, unsettle, be dangerous. This gesture, though it is space-creating, necessarily entails teacherly activity of a special sort: "effortful patience," waiting, watching, having faith, not concluding prematurely. Interested in potentiality, possibility, and imaginative range, it is, then, a gesture and a stance that necessarily entails some risk for all concerned.

Being an audience, being interested

The step that immediately and necessarily follows is what I have referred to as "letting the child and the work of the child preoccupy the mind of the teacher, that mind also being a made space, the space that was made "empty, detached, and ready" just in order to be so occupied. This preoccupation is a step in the process of becoming, of *being an audience for the children's writing, being interested in that writing*. The capacity for interest is what the attentive stance in general and sanctioning of content in particular presuppose; "interest," again, identifies the conditions "*where faith in a fact can help create the fact*"; it must be assumed, offered in advance. Interest is the predicate on which the whole structure rests. It is, as I have said, the teacher's job within this framework to cultivate the answerability of *his* mind to the mind of the student; it is the teacher's job to learn how to *provide* as well as to perceive "the inner attention...the giving of the mind without reserve or qualification" of which Dewey speaks. Just so it

some of its manifestations. I am reminded, too, of the black fourth grader--not a player in these accounts--who, on a field trip to a reconstructed 19th century village, observed a horse whip on the wall of a "general store," and, interpreting it differently, confided to me, "that's why I

turned out that the teacher is needed to provide as well as seek out "affection and sympathy, the keynotes of the child's being," just so it turns out that the *teacher's* handling of the cared-for objects--those possibly dangerous or simply discomforting verbal objects--is centrally at issue in the matter of faith and doubt and trustworthiness. "Learning to *like*" the children's writing, as I have discussed with C.J.'s observant help and interest, is the formative activity of attention (and affection). That, in turn, is the activity that leads into the more extensive project of *sympathetic* reading, all the while, as I said at the outset of this dissertation, being a critic of the sort that artists in all fields want, one willing to be guided by the traditions, conventions, and prejudices the writer subscribes to without promising, finally, to acquiesce in every particular: but *taking the chance* of doing so, "sharing in the consequences" as far as imagination permits, making meaning *with* the child-writer/maker. I want to repeat that we may well, with Cavell and Wittgenstein, call this the gestures of "treating what *they* say and do as what *we* say and do"--that is, live, see, try to render sight in speech, conjure up the possible--for better or worse--from the actual, make and re-make the world into a habitable one, into a home of sorts. That will not be a place where "you can do anything you want," but it will be, at the least, a place where "things can really happen," a place where we might dare imagine ourselves "springing/in a field of joy," a place where all speakers can author themselves and the dangerous desires of art, of democratic culture deeply understood.

Giving editorial help, *helping to make the writing*

The place we are trying to establish and inhabit then is one where we are joint makers and thinkers, where the thinking activity of the student and the teacher--one's imaginative projections reciprocated in the other--struggle to find and answer each other. That is to say it is a place where the work and the satisfaction of *each* is to be transformed by the educative encounter of

hate white people."

mind with mind mediated by cultural product--that poem, for example, that is but "the midpoint in the total action," the fulcrum by which the maker seeks both to relieve herself of the "burdens of sentience," to "rescue" herself, and to transform the eye and the soul, the sentience, of her audience. It will be appropriate and desirable, finally, in this setting, with these ambitions, to see one task of the wishing-to-be-attentive teacher to be *giving editorial help on the writing, or, helping to make the writing, co-participating (sharing responsibility)*. This activity would include what I have described as the "meddlesome" response to a text (pressuring Brendan to create a genealogy) and the more extensive job of co-editing I describe more fully elsewhere (see Roosevelt, 1995). Most substantially this sharing of responsibility for making of the objects is evident when the assignment structure works, when it justifies itself by, in fact, as far as we can tell, having "been experienced as a justly chosen instrument for furthering the *student's* purposes or vision." This is what I believe we confront when the "forms of life" suggested by such slight phrases as "In the future, when everything is free," "magic feather," "heart's desire," even the one word "I," are taken, inhabited, re-invested with meaning by the child writing, thinking, imagining. Finally, this set of gestures is announced--is said to have arrived, to have found what it was seeking without knowing this is what it was seeking--when C.J. announces that he writes his stories "because Mr. Roosevelt likes to read them," is indeed--as if he shares responsibility, or at least fortune--"proud of them."

Coming to closure

What is at stake here; what possibilities of teaching are we trying to grasp--not pigeonhole, not reduce, but begin to locate and to value--with the idea of "teaching as acts of attention"? It is of course to address and to call upon the vulnerability and the subjectivity of the teacher, it is, borrowing Dewey yet again, to ask of the teacher that she or he become a *mind* capable of receiving and answering other minds, a *soul* willing to engage in and seek to foster "soul action" in the lives and imaginations of young makers who may

or may not find that *this* world is "a dangerous place," a place that is, or is not, suitable to their coming into being, their theft and gift of voice, their capacity for responsibility unfolded by others'--elders'--capacities for being responsive, responsible, that is, in sympathy, imaginatively and practically active in the seeing to, the making of, and the care for objects--here, verbal ones--they value, need, entrust, and, in deep senses, give. "The art product is finally what *the work of art does in and for experience*," as Dewey teaches, "the creative act always has at its center the work of rescue, as Scarry similarly teaches, also advising that "the project of understanding the nature of human responsibility will be assisted by coming to understand the human imagination" (for which we need a new, an expanded, vocabulary--which is to say, an expanded "form of life," a new way of living). There is *danger* here, as well, danger of "whim," of "ideas (that can) make you go insane," of desire, of "unsuspected literatures" "fit for and fruit of democracy," of the impudent actions of and demands to participate in "art, free scientific inquiry, and human companionship." What we are engaged in is no less than making, re-making, *here* on the ground of our common experience a community of hope, of possibility. Surely this is an insupportable set of questions to pose to teaching? Yes. Except for this: teaching knows only two faces: It can be an act of despair (an effort to civilize the savagery native to humankind) or an act of hope (an effort to rescue the warmth, the possibilities of "affection and sympathy" native to humankind). Each of us must choose a stance; a personal danger in this will be this discovery: "The anxiety in teaching, in serious communication, is that I myself require education" (Cavell, 1979, p. 125). How will I learn to be this teacher, to choose hope?

Only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual. The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art.
Dewey, *Art as Experience*

"Interwoven within the texture of the actual" is the *possibility* of becoming, of authoring an identity, a self "capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts," (Keats, 1959, p. 261), that is too, the possibility of learning to become human (cf Oakeshott, 1990), for none of these are given, they must be taken, ("stolen"), and made into fact. What is at stake here is simultaneously the child's possibilities and needs of coming into being and the teacher's possibilities and needs of becoming *the teacher that the child needs*, the teacher, for example, who "likes to read" the texts of the child. "Attending" is offered here as a trope for the effort to become that teacher--efforts that will necessarily be incomplete but that are, as gestures of the imagination reaching out to re-make the world into an hospitable home, humanly demanded of us. Like the rhetoric of this piece as a whole, the figure of attention is, I suspect, both tactful and excessive: for obviously the teacher is *not* in certain basic senses "necessary" at all; *this* teacher is a voluntary construct, one small set of gestures in the larger human effort to avoid "waste," "to rescue." At the same time, accepting these responsibilities, striving to be present in the theater of the child's becoming, nothing less than an excess of human ambition is called for. I have discussed at length how the teacher I am trying to imagine, to will into being, is a maker of "space," one who "holds" and "sanctions," one who "determines the environment"; what I have perhaps not stressed sufficiently is the "effortful" nature of the activity and indeed the *struggle* of that teacher to become, to engage, to be interested, to *help* the child come into being directly by responding, refusing, rejecting, accepting, interpreting, directing, sharing responsibility for and helping to make the work that enacts the child's needs and desires to, again, relieve him or herself of the burdens of sentience and enter into the sentience of others. Like reading and "sympathetic reading" these efforts are "transactional" not solitary; they initiate as well as respond; as "attention" says, they "stretch towards" as well as await. If I have not adequately *described* and conceptualized the effort they call for from the attentive teacher, I have

perhaps at least begun to dramatize them in these pages. In different and complementary ways, the child and the teacher on this stage, are, as Cameron envisions, "going ahead of us...in one place...where nobody has discovered or something." On the plane of possibility always residing somewhere amidst the sometimes desperate, sometimes beautiful, "texture of the actual," there is a job of instructing--*re-shaping the interior*--and of educating--*leading forth*--to be done.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Notes on Method

How the study emerged

To name a starting point, this study began, we will say, in 1991-92. The selection is not exactly arbitrary, as that was the year I taught Brendan, whose writings are central to Chapter 2 ("There the kid was, stranded in a car': Reading the Fictions of Children as if they Mattered"). On the other hand, I did not at that time think of myself as being occupied with a research project, far less a dissertation, so it would not be unreasonable to be asked, "How can you have begun a study without knowing you were conducting a study?" An answer to such a question would include the thought that my whole education and development as a teacher has been organized around the idea or principle of conceiving of *teaching itself as a kind of inquiry* (and certainly, to state the lesser claim, to conceive of teaching as *entailing* inquiry into its own practices and "objects," and into its subject matters--all of which for some temperaments, such as my own, will necessarily mean, into its presuppositions and ambitions or purposes). When I would first have *said* that my pedagogical upbringing was organized around such a principle, I am not sure (though I was content enough with the phrase I learned at Prospect School, "examined practice"¹)--but I say it with conviction now. I will return to this idea from time to time as I proceed.

At this juncture, the main consequences of the idea of inquiry in teaching as part of teaching are as follows. To begin with, though I did not think of myself as undertaking a study while teaching Brendan, I did maintain a teaching journal that included notes about individual students and the group, curriculum plans and thoughts, musings about what I was doing and why and where I thought it might be going wrong or right, occasional quotations from things I was reading that seemed relevant to children in that class or to me as a teacher, etc. I also kept most of the more ephemeral traces of my teaching such as charts and posters, planning notes, notes to me from students or my colleague and host, Alyjah Byrd, and the like. I saved photocopies or typescripts of a large proportion of the children's writings; and, certainly, I saved the "Fable Book" produced by the class. So there is a good deal of data arising directly from my teaching of this class. The collection of that data is explained by the preexistent assumption that teaching entails inquiry in two ways.

One, my education prior to certification and as a novice at Prospect set in place (and my continuing work there confirmed, challenged, and elaborated) two key practices: the collection and preservation of children's work products in order to allow study of individuals' modes of thought,

¹ See for example, (Prospect, 1984), and its reference to "an emphasis on reflection and discussion as vital to the role of the teacher" (p. 2).

characteristic imagery, and the like (see, for example, Alberty, 1987; Carini, 1987, 1991, & 1995); Prospect, 1984 & 1985); the regular maintenance of narrative records on each student and on each group (mixed-age group combining several "grades"), in order to document and appraise learning and the curriculum. These were two habits I valued deeply--a valuation largely due to my experience with "Descriptive Process" as developed and practiced at Prospect by Patricia Carini and other colleagues (see, e.g., Carini, 1975; *Changing Minds*, 1998; Prospect, 1986), about which I will have somewhat more to say subsequently--and it is hard to imagine that I would not have continued them in one way or another under any circumstances.

Two, the school in which I taught Brendan was a professional development school (see, e.g., Holmes Group, 1990 & Navarro, 1997); also see [Roosevelt, 1993a & 1993b] committed to practice-based research and to on-going dialogue between school and university based participants in the partnership. So, part of the context for my work with Brendan was my regular conversation with Alyjah Byrd about students, writing, evaluation, writing across the curriculum, and other topics of interest to each of us. Thus a dimension of publicness--"reflection": the looking at and talking about teaching that is so often not a part of teaching--was deliberately built into this setting. It was, in turn, logical for me to seek to work in such a place upon entering graduate school: having made a commitment to not stray too far from actual classrooms, having the commitment to "examined practice" as a critical element of teaching (and as a necessary part of school reform), and having the related idea of teaching *as* inquiry latent and developing, all of this enhanced by being in a doctoral program, a place where "research" is the institutional norm and desideratum.

In addition to the data just referenced, available data concerning Brendan includes an interview with a former teacher of his ("LG"). This is data of two kinds: One, it is data I use to support some of my statements about how Brendan's writing is "likely" to strike some or many teachers (and it gives evidence that I was not alone in judging Brendan to have made significant progress, substantively and technically, as a writer); Two, it is part of the trail of signs that something I will recognize as a research project is taking shape: A proposal to AERA for a paper about "distressing content" in children's writing, taking Brendan's as the focus of the discussion, in the summer of 1993; the interview with LG in the fall of '93, followed by a paper (unpublished) analyzing that interview; the presentation of the proposed paper at AERA in the winter of '94 (Roosevelt, 1994); subsequent submission of that paper for publication (Roosevelt, 1998); etc. My key themes were emerging with greater clarity *and* complexity over this process--this now quite lengthy process--of re-visiting the same material repeatedly, re-reading and re-writing, with all the accruals of relevant fragments from the rest of the life that is going on at this time. (With Brendan always in mind, when I come across letters by Elizabeth Bishop in *The New Yorker*, they speak to me about Brendan and the process of revision, how his texts relate to each other, as if they have been waiting for me; several years later, her phrase, "you have

worked hard and felt deeply" comes back into mind as a description, for me, of the inquiry process itself--in the moments when it seems to be making or to have made any progress.) This entailment of most of the themes of a life in an on-going and expansive writing project is, for me, itself an element of the research method.

Conceptualizing the study, data collection and analysis

By the time I taught C.J., Cameron, A'dona, and others discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, in 1994-95, I not only knew that I had a study project in motion, I knew I was working on a dissertation. My procedures for collecting data then properly became more systematic, and my strategies for analysis also became more systematic and more deliberate. It is true, though, to say that *this* dissertation wasn't then envisioned: it grew out of a process of reiteration, a discursive process of bouncing between the need to figure out what to do tomorrow or to get a grip on today, the need to admit or acknowledge but not be overwhelmed by the often emotional fluctuations of teaching and critically reflecting on teaching, the need to give the mind room to follow fancies and hear allusions in the effort to gain some grasp of the meanings of the inexhaustibly rich field that daily teaching presents. All these needs were brought into sharper focus by the decision to ground the dissertation in that year of teaching and data collection--though I'd argue, with Wilson (1995, November) that the conjunction of the teaching and research, while it complicated life for me in some ways, benefited both activities. (Indeed, this research could not have been conducted in any other site *but* my own teaching.)

Data I collected, then, begin with my journal--as stated earlier, "the journal was for me a *recording* space (my major way, in addition to collecting work, of keeping track of what children were doing, what plans and agreements we had made and so forth), a *reflective* space (a place to raise questions and to critique my practice; sometimes, a place to let off steam), and a place where I did some but not all of my *planning*."² There are approximately 200 pages of such data; I'll have more to say about the uses of the journal in a moment. Additionally, I collected student work (generally in the form of photocopies) amounting to about 1000 pages (which is virtually the entire workshop output of those students featured in the dissertation, the same for a good many others, and a large sampling from everyone in the class). Liberal use of both of these data sources is evident throughout the dissertation. I also made something close to 60 hours' worth of audio tape of

² I do not have "fieldnotes" as such, though the journal includes many passages that are equivalent to them. The journal is both a means of documenting and, as I will further develop below, a place for hypothesizing, seeking patterns and linkages across events, framing and re-framing issues of concern or interest--beginning the analytic process, in other words, while continuing to accumulate material. In Erickson's terms, the journal was one place for "converting documentary resources into...data" (1986, p. 149).

classroom discussions (generally, of the beginning meeting; occasionally of sharing time and some conferences), and I have approximately 25 hours' worth of interviews with students, conducted by colleagues, outside of my presence. These data sources have been used more sparingly, generally, to enhance, corroborate, or correct information gleaned from other sources. Finally, the data set includes a modest amount of video-tape, occasional interviews with colleagues, and observation notes by outside observers.

My teaching journal is a repository of significant data about what children did and said and how they appeared and sounded, about colleagues' remarks and opinions, about my actions, my thoughts and plans and misgivings and moods. More even than these, though, it was itself a conceptual-analytic tool, a way not only of registering but of trying to *use* self-consciousness, a place to work--in rough and unfinished, preliminary, tentative ways--on identifying, using, re-casting central ideas. (A set of procedures about which my consciousness was certainly heightened by the knowledge I was in fact conducting "a research project.") As Erickson put it in his seminal essay on qualitative method:

In fieldwork, induction and deduction are in constant dialogue.... (T)he researcher pursues deliberate lines of inquiry while in the field, even though the specific terms of inquiry may change in response to the distinctive character of events in the field setting.... (T)erms of inquiry may also be reconstructed in response to changes in the fieldworker's perceptions and understandings...

(1986 p. 121)

Ideas that shaped and in turn were shaped, repeatedly, discursively, by my project are held in key "terms of inquiry"; the often subtle changes in this vocabulary, and the changes in the objects of the key words, record much of the history of the inquiry and illustrate something of the "dialogic" method spoken of by Erickson. Consider, for example, this excerpt from my teaching journal of the year before I taught C.J. et. al. It was late May, I was looking back over the year, and over my journal for the previous few weeks, and looking ahead to 1994-95--a year in which I wanted to improve my ability to create for myself a teaching "space" within the larger environment, the year that would be my principal year of data collection.

I think there are a couple of big issues troubling me about this year: It's been a lousy year in many respects, very little feeling of accomplishment, little to show for it, and still unable to count on a modicum of quiet, decency, and concentration...

...Weds., I said something to K_____ about needing to do the writing part of the collaborative assignment³ (he'd been out Mon.,

³ An unsatisfactory assignment in which everyone in the class had to make a drawing and/or

eager on Tues. to do the drawing/directing part)--interrupting him while he was, as usual, drawing *Mortal Kombat* type stuff--he was near to tears [at being diverted from what he was doing]--"but remember, you just have to work *some* of the time today on the assignment, not the *whole* time" [I said]--which is not a new rule and has often been stated before (though as suggested in Descriptive Review⁴ it may be he doesn't think of it as applying to him unless he and his situation are specified, named). Again,⁵ I thought of that, not really as a lack of trust in me, but a lack of trust in the situation to be workable, sustainable, maybe pleasurable for him...

Also on Weds, T___ complained to me that N___ was on the computer (they are to be sharing one of them) and he hadn't had a turn for a while. I asked if he'd talked to her about whose turn it was, asked if it could be his turn now, etc.; he hadn't, I urged him to do so, to make an attempt--"No," [he said,] "she'll just say no..." again a little teary/whiny, as he gets--frustrated with me. I didn't do it for him; I did say something about how he had to trust that sometimes things could work out, and at least to try. Next day, he did--on his own?--talk to her, "N___, can I have a turn tomorrow?" "Sure." I said something to him/looked questioningly at him--he to me, with his most babyish (but real, and really doubtful), winning smile, "...sometimes things do work out."⁶...

I think the incident with K___ marks the point of going from having started to explicitly perceive the issue in terms of "trust" to using trust as a way of *interpreting* something (K___'s tears); the T___ story is another one of using trust to interpret, and to perceive, but comes as confirmation that trust *is* the (an, a major) issue.

It took me a few more days to realize that, of course, if they can't "trust in the situation," the way they then act--act in constant

write a set of "instructions," all of these going into a box, and everyone then drawing one out, and composing a story to go with the drawing/instructions made by a classmate.

⁴ We had conducted a "Descriptive Review of a Child" (one of the Propect Center "Descriptive Processes," see below), on K___ several weeks previously.

⁵ I had just been reflecting on an incident, too long to quote here, but sadly symbolic: There had been a partial eclipse of the sun a few weeks earlier. To my amazement, school district policy was that children could not be outside during this time and all blinds had to be drawn--no attempt was made to employ safe methods of observing the eclipse, it was just to be shut out. I had planned to have the class write about the eclipse; failing that, I meant at least to *say* something about it--and to see if there was a way I could bend the rules a bit to take some advantage of the remarkable occassion. While I was writing something on the board, right at the beginning of the workshop session, lots of students had jumped up and "snuck" over to the window to peek out. This had seemed to me to reflect a lack of trust--less a lack of trust in me as an individual than a conviction that the setting, the situation as a whole, would not be in any way responsive to their interest in the phenomenon occurring right outside the windows.

⁶ A statement eerily anticipating C.J.'s conclusion "that things really do happen."

anticipation of things going wrong/unremedied/etc.--will make it extremely difficult for me to trust them...

(Journal, 5/26/94)

The reference to "trust in a situation" is to the following comment of Dewey's which I had been turning over and over in my mind for some time.

Confidence is a good name for what is intended by the term directness. It should not be confused, however, with *self*-confidence which may be a form of self-consciousness--or of "cheek." Confidence is not a name for what one thinks or feels about his attitude; it is not reflex. It denotes the straightforwardness with which one goes at what he has to do. It denotes not *conscious* trust in the efficacy of one's powers but unconscious faith in the possibilities of the situation. It signifies rising to the needs of the situation.

(1966, p. 114)

In the journal entry, I am trying out the usefulness for me of an idea about "trust," having some time previously thought that "confidence" would be a key word. (The difference may appear slight, and the "faith" which is at the heart of "confidence" will reappear; however, the shift from confidence to trust was also a shift away from the word that so readily takes "self" as a prefix--thus to focus on me as the teacher--to the word that points a little more generally to the totality of a situation and the interactions within it. I was not entirely clear on this at the time, though I was much absorbed with the idea that the students needed to feel "faith in the possibilities of the situation," needed, in fact, to feel, as I sometimes put it, that "the situation would rise to meet them.") Thinking back to observations and perceptions that have been troubling me, looking ahead to working in similar circumstances with a new group of fourth graders--similar but changed circumstances, as I will be conducting the dissertation--I am both *sensitive to manifestations of the idea* that has been "occupying my life" (in Winnicott's phrase)--trust in one variant or another--and attempting to *use that idea to interpret, to further my understanding* (and perhaps that of the boy who wanted to use the computer) of situations. There are many more such instances, and examples of efforts to use the Dewey quote; here, I am not trying to trace their entire history, but to give the reader a view of one important way I used the journal--specifically, and other writing occasions (analytic memos, email correspondence, proposals, papers)--for conceptual-analytic purposes. (This usage was furthered by and examined in the many important conversations that were also very much a part of the method of designing and doing the dissertation. I will return to these.)

Over the next five to six months (and beyond), still thinking about "trust," and picking up in connection with that questions about the teacher's

need, as I saw it, to be "responsive" (a term key to my initial thinking about my actions and obligations in connection with Brendan's writing⁷), wondering how we learn to be responsive and how we judge the obligations and limits of responsiveness, I was focusing particularly on an idea that had at one point been in the title of a draft of a dissertation proposal, the teacher's "construction of a necessary self" (see Goffman, 1959). This focus was continuous with the interest in "self-confidence" mentioned in passing above: that is, I asked, how did I, as someone who often thought of himself as lacking in self-confidence, create a persona or "self" displaying enough confidence to (sometimes) get the job done? (Was this a matter of "straightforwardness" or what Dewey in that same context--a chapter titled "The Nature of *Method*" [1966, emphasis added]--refers to as "wholeheartedness"?) And how might learning about this illuminate other ways in which I, and other teachers, shaped or constructed a self, identity, persona, suitable for the work, work in which one's personal preferences, needs, etc., are by definition are not primary? Noting that Dewey seemed to be cautioning *against* prefixing "self" to confidence, I took some support for this line of inquiry from another educational philosopher, Israel Scheffler, who argues that "the teacher is not reducible to the operations he performs..." going on to propose that:

The teacher in a free society...influences students not only through his [sic] activity, but by his *identity*... (C)ommitted to honoring the student's quest for understanding...the teacher is...forced to a heightened self-awareness.

(1967, pp. 86-87, emphasis added)

Ideas about the construction of self in teaching continue to be of interest to me, and they have to some extent reappeared, in changed form, towards the end of the dissertation work, as I find myself more and more dwelling upon children doing a kind of work deserving of the name "artistic," with *art* implying--entailing--transformation both in the self of the maker and in the self of the viewer/reader, one of whom in this context is the teacher.⁸ However, *for the very reasons* that the construction--and the stepping aside from--self is of interest, it was not a suitable--nor even a possible--focus during the teaching, precisely because if teaching becomes too self-referential, solipsistic even, it fails as teaching--instrumentally, as well as morally. Aligned to this fact is another: When teaching, if afflicted by self-doubt, the most important remedy I have found is to concentrate your

⁷ The version of Chapter 2 which I presented at AERA was subtitled, "Dilemmas of Teacher Responsiveness in a Writing Workshop."

⁸ And this has recently prompted me to ask, to be the kind of teacher I aim to be, to do the kind of teaching I aspire to do, do I have to know, from experience, that art *can be* transformative? And what kind of knowledge, short of religious experience, is that? (And how would such knowledge be verified, "validated"?)

thoughts, powers of observation and description, *not* on self but on the students and their workings.⁹ The time to "interrogate" the self of the teacher is not when it is altogether hesitant and unsure (though that position may usefully *prompt* interrogation), but when some quality of robustness is present in the teaching-learning relationship(s).

Indeed, even in the context in which I quoted Scheffler, a proposal to the Spencer foundation, the question of investigating the construction of teacherly identity is so clearly only accessible--only of interest, certainly--in the context of the relationships, that it is in retrospect clear I had at that time no very clear idea of a method for that investigation--a method that now seems to me must be, at least initially, one of indirection. In the proposal, in the early stages of teaching and trying to figure out how to teach C.J., I describe his "violent" stories, and his "cold" demeanor, his reputation for "lying and denying," his apparent untrustworthiness, etc. I ask,

How am I to read (C.J.'s) stories? What kind of an audience--disturbed, skeptical, patient, critical, curious--ought I to be? What kinds of commentary, or silence, might be constructive, towards what end? What degree of understanding must I achieve to be the right reader--hence, teacher--for these texts?

Spencer Proposal¹⁰ (Nov. 1994, p. 3)

These are in fact good questions, ones which helped clarify some of the available teacherly choices and their entailments, and they're certainly related to questions about "constructing a necessary self"--however, the last question clearly takes me away from introspection and *into* the texts themselves, and *there*, not at the entire expense of introspection and self-conscious fashioning of an attitude or persona but as their context, is where, as the reader has seen, I spend a good deal of both my pedagogic and my analytic energy.

In the same essay, I continue as follows:

...(T)here is the child with a reputation for lying and the teacher explicitly confronted with questions of when to present trust or good faith, when to manifest doubt, when to disbelieve. Here, I face, in a small arena, a moral choice akin to that identified by Václav Havel when he distinguishes between *optimism*, "the conviction that something will turn out well," and *hope*, "the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out" (1990, p. 181).

(1994, p. 3)

⁹ This in turn--this form of attending--is to be open to the possibility of "transformation" I have just mentioned, the same possibility both Scheffler and Dewey in their ways speak of as a *necessary* possibility.

¹⁰ "Constructing a Self: Studying Trust and Responsiveness in Teaching."

Here I am visibly using a good deal of the vocabulary that will indeed come to dominate this work; equally clearly, in choosing "hope" as characterized by Havel, a preoccupation with self is likely to interfere (in that hope is an attitude towards the world, in that it is a choice, if it is a choice, like the choice of "wholeheartedness"). As I have attempted to show, in choosing hope of this sort, in focusing on C.J. and his texts, I eventually come across the idea that it is *his* doubting of *me* that is centrally at issue here. Coming to that realization, with the journal as a vital tool for the arrival (cf. those "frequent ruminations on trust" earlier referred to and the many journal entries cited in telling of C.J.) and trying to make something of it, in turn become for me the idea of "teaching as acts of attention"--work in which "using the self" is indeed very important, but no more so than "stepping aside from self."

Although the last several extended quotations have not come directly from my teaching journal--these being more accessible and ready to use than relevant passages in the journal--they are illustrative of the larger point I am trying to make, which is simply that certain key words and ideas were regularly turned over in my mind, the journal, conversations with others, and various formal writing projects along the way--papers, proposals--being the sites for that turning over, a turning over which was always checked, prodded, obscured, helped by the daily activities of teaching and of data collecting or documenting through descriptive journal entries and through early readings of the children's work.

As *data*, per se, the children's work is self-evidently the most significant resource for the dissertation. From it, and from my attempts to engage with it, the central narratives, images, and themes--e.g., of morally effective action, of identity, of self, of hurt, of consciousness, of transformation--are drawn, and the most crucial evidence for my arguments and suggestions is always to be found in the children's actual words, usually their written words ("objectifications," "artifacts"). Obviously, I have tried to make some of my readings of that work visible, and to invite the reader into that activity conceptually (through the idea of "sympathetic reading") and practically (e.g., through the tracing of "correspondences").

But I should say a little more about some of the "schools" in which I have learned "how to read." One way is through my high school and college education as a reader of English and American literature (as well as a person with aspirations to write literature, specifically, poetry). My teachers--in particular Robert Pack (see for example, Hall, Pack, & Simpson, 1957; Pack, 1980; & Pack & Parini, 1991), who was not only my teacher, adviser, and thesis director in college, but also the teacher of my most influential high school English teacher, Kurt Heinzelman--were for the most part direct and largely undogmatic, slightly conservative, adherents of "new criticism" (see, to cite only a sample, Brooks & Warren; 1943 & Brooks, 1947); sometimes, as in the cases of Pack and Heinzelman, they were poets themselves. From these people, and others too numerous to mention here, I learned a great deal about how to do "close readings" (also see in respect of this, for example,

Abrams, 1971; Booth, 1988; Frye, 1957; Kermode, 1983; & Nemerov, e.g., 1978) and was almost entirely ignorant of the heavy winds of "theory" then beginning to blow in this country. I have tried to apply much of what I learned from them, for which I am deeply grateful, to my readings of the children's writings. Another place of learning to read was Prospect, and the methods of close description initiated by Pat Carini (1975, 1979, etc.) who cites the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty in particular as one of her primary influences, and developed by her in association with others. These are methods--attentive ones, I should like to say--that emphasize patience and taking care. Acknowledging that of interpretation there is for humans no end, they nonetheless begin by attempting descriptions--of pieces of work for example; the process originated in processes for the description of children and their modes of engagement in the world--that stick at first as close to the literal and the "merely descriptive" as possible, a process which urges the observer to be as immersed as possible in the "facticity," the present actuality, of the work, before entertaining, and as a means towards entertaining, the more imaginative and evocative activities of interpretation. One way of doing some of this with writing is by copying it, transcribing it, a process I will touch upon later. My continued efforts to "learn how to read" have also benefited from Dewey (e.g., 1960 & 1966), Rosenblatt (1938 & 1978), and Scholes (1989). Finally, a school from which I have benefited greatly is a now long established custom of wandering the museums and galleries and once in a while artists' studios of New York City with my friend, the artist Steel Stillman, looking at and *talking about* the art--a process that has educated my eye and helped my tongue make better connections with eye and ear.

What kind of a study is this?: "First-person" inquiry in teaching

How can we know the dancer from the dance?

W. B. Yeats, *Among School Children* (1956, pp. 212-214 [VIII, 64])

My study, then, belongs to and is informed by a broad family of interpretive work in "the human sciences"--which is certainly not to claim that the study is informed by *all* members of that now very large family: a small subset only.¹¹ A particularly clear and concise characterization of a fundamental way of thinking about inquiry in this tradition is offered by Clifford Geertz when he distinguishes between "experimental science in search of *law*" and "interpretive science in search of *meaning*" (1973, p. 5, emphasis added). Geertz's work and his Wittgenstein-influenced emphasis

¹¹ I am by no means attempting to review or do justice to the many fields of research within this family; I am trying, rather, to identify those resources which, by dint of long exposure or engagement, or by virtue of timeliness or serendipity of encounter, have been especially important to me; at the same time, I maintain that the resources I cite are significant members of this "family."

on "finding our feet with others" (in 1973, p. 5)--which necessarily includes finding our way about in the language which lies between us, the language in which we make some kind of abode--as an essential ingredient of the inquiry--inquiry not, as it is perhaps no longer as necessary to insist upon as it once was, for the purposes of prediction and control, but for the purposes of understanding and relating--has been an important source of conceptual reassurance as I have worked on this project, not to mention a source of inspiration for the quality of his writing and the bold tactfulness of his insights. And "thick description" is a practice I hope now and again to have performed. But the fundamental challenge and the risk in this sort of work is not of course, as Geertz knows and repeatedly reminds, strictly procedural: it is, rather the desire and the willingness to go after "meaning, that elusive and ill defined pseudo-entity" (1973, p. 29). Patricia Carini, trained as a psychologist and philosopher rather than an anthropologist, a student of children and childhood, will say, in a similar spirit, "...meaning is not a *thing*, an *object*, or an *entity* itself. Rather, meaning designates the experience of relatedness which enhances and makes more vivid each of the events or persons it joins. For meaning to arise, there must be recognition. Hence, meaning addresses an underlying *unity* among persons..." (Carini, 1979, p. 15); she goes on to make the important qualifying statement that "(t)he effect of recognition is to articulate the *distance* of the person from the thing... That is, *unity is not identity*" (p. 16).

The reader will hear echoes of my earlier discussion of "sympathetic reading" as, for example, entailing being "vulnerable, subjective," and of it and "thinking" as requiring a "sense of sharing in the consequences," and being dependent upon "recognition." Certainly reading and re-reading have been important methods of study--of seeking meaning--in this project. In addition to reading the children's work, though, there is the reading and re-reading of my teaching journal. For its existence and usefulness I am again indebted to Carini (see, for example, 1979; 1982; and Prospect Center, 1986)--who has taught me just about everything I think I know about observation--and to the tradition of "interpretive fieldwork research" in education, in particular, to its ways of working and its theoretical and epistemological assumptions and ambitions as articulated in Erickson's seminal essay--taking, for example, "the nature (and content) of the meaning-perspectives of teacher and learners as intrinsic to the educational process," as I do, locating a "central research interest in human meaning in social life and in its elucidation and exposition by the researcher" (1986, pp. 121, 120, 119, etc.). Carini speaks of and instructs "the reflective observer...(one who is) simultaneously receptive and evocative," going on to reiterate that "(a)ll observation...is an act of interpretation" and that "the [i.e., written, represented,] observation is necessarily and always a narrative, or a fiction, which, no matter how well buttressed, is one among many such possible accounts" (1982, pp. 7 & 8). The observer Carini depicts, to be a human being engaging in other humans' possibilities of meaning, must try to practice looking as "a devoted immersion and concentration..." in the persons and activities of interest (p.

18). This is a tricky stance, in which the self must be quite fully invested, yet also disinterested: seeking to learn and to "recognize," not seeking to benefit, taking care not to project one's own actualities and acuties onto those observed. As Carini writes, observation of this sort "is to discover what you recognize in the world, and, in discovering it, to find a part of yourself and your thought mirrored back through the world" (p. 15)--a great benefit for the observer and indeed a kind of validity check, but not the *purpose* of the observation; again: "The effect of recognition is to articulate the *distance* of the person from the thing... That is, *unity is not identity*" (1979, p. 16). And, in terms echoing the Kantian imperative that persons be regarded as ends not means: "(F)amiliarity is, generally speaking, a block to visibility.... To the degree...that people are viewed as familiar objects, interesting only in terms of what they have to offer in fulfillment of personal need, they cannot truly be recognized or seen" (p. 26). Thus the methodological requirements of observation are at root ethical as well as practical: the repeated injunction to oneself as an observer to *describe*, to be patient, to try and defer the more active forms of interpretation, and to subsequently go back and describe the interpretations themselves--all these, and the familiar strategy of "triangulation," (see, e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), juxtaposing and challenging any one observation with other data (an outsider's observation, an interview, a piece of child work, a subsequent observation by me)--the reapproach through re-description and re-interpretation to open up possibilities of meaning rather than to close them down or seek to fix them unshakably--all of these are, of course, efforts to do justice to the integrity and indeterminacy of the other, to assert distance and open-endedness in the midst of seeking recognition and relatedness. One word for summing up these requirements is to say they call for "tactfulness" (van Manen, 1990; also see 1991); another--a way of trying to enact tact through process--is say they call for being "as deliberative as possible" (Erickson, 1986, p. 140), for instance, through the "dialog" between data collection and terms of inquiry earlier discussed, for "the central issue of method is to bring research questions and data collection into a consistent relationship, albeit an evolving one" (Erickson, 1986, p. 141).

All of this is to identify some strong individual strands in the broad field of interpretive inquiry into human affairs and meanings, strands or voices that provide me theoretical context and methodological direction--particularly, perhaps, with reference to shaping and disciplining the *attitudes* with which data is collected, pondered, and asked to speak. All of the scholars just cited discuss ways of thinking about and conducting inquiry into human affairs--however, it is clear that there is a branch of this research family not yet mentioned, a branch that more immediately locates my project, the branch concerned with inquiry that is itself a doing larger than inquiry alone, an inquiry *within* "doing." I am referring in general terms to the body of first-hand, first-person accounts of teaching from the practitioner's point of view, a still-emerging genre that encompasses a large array of works over the

past 30-40 years,¹² many of which are increasingly interested in identifying themselves as forms of "research": that is, among other things, to claim a rightful place in the arguments of theory. This "first-person" work--sometimes journalistic or autobiographical, sometimes akin to "qualitative case study," sometimes in the manner of an essay, sometimes polemical--that looks at practice "from the inside" (Ball, in press) proposes that understanding of teaching and knowledge about its premises and possibilities can singularly, distinctively (but not *solely*) be generated from a point of view interior to the design, execution, and perusal of that practice. Within this genre, in turn, are bodies of work that is not only retrospective, work that, as inquiry *in* teaching," is, in Ball's terms "planful," (p. 4)--here, we hearken back to the traditions of the "lab school" and other deliberative settings designed to learn from and about and to improve practice while simultaneously conducting, documenting, and studying it (see for example, Mayhew and Edwards, 1936; DeLima, 1942; Pratt, 1990, and, again, Carini and the Prospect School, as well as the professional development school initiatives previously referred to). Shulman spoke to current scholarly interest in this particular part of the family at the 1994 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association when, honoring the work of Deborah Ball, he characterized her research as, in Dewey's terms, "experimental" (in the sense of being rooted in questions and investigations, while involving real purposes and genuine interactions amongst participants) and "naturalistic" (occurring in authentic settings, reported in congruent ways) (Shulman, 1994). Ball herself speaks of "an epistemology of practice which structures and examines the work [of teaching] from the inside" (in press, p. 17)--thus (framing it in this way) to draw attention to the teacher-inquirer's opportunity to "design--not just...the methodology but...the phenomenon and its context as well" (p. 34); her statement also repeats the proposition that knowledge generated from within this intimate nexus of pedagogical aim and act and intellectual curiosity and study will have a particular character, a particular claim on its audience, not to be found elsewhere. Research of this sort--perhaps because it is aware of, and unashamed of, its contingency; perhaps because it knows it will only begin to find its way, its voice, in the act of relating itself--finds itself favoring narrative modes of representation, Shulman suggested, a point taken up by Jerome Bruner later in the same AERA meeting. Echoing Geertz's distinction between the search for "law" and the search for "meaning," Bruner proposed that narrative is especially apt for inquiry in the human sciences because it seeks *understanding* rather than *explanation* (I do not look to say *why* C.J. writes as he does but rather to *enter in* to the worlds and the meaning-

¹² See, for instance: Ashton-Warner (1986), Ayers (1993), Ball (e.g., 1993), Ball & Wilson, (1996), Branscombe, Goswami, & Schwartz (1992), Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993), Duckworth (1987), Goswami and Stillman (1987), Heaton (1994), Hoffman (1996), Howard (1989), Kohl (e.g., 1967), Lampert (e.g., 1985, 1990), Lensmire (e.g. 1994a), Paley (e.g., 1995), Richardson (1964), Streib (1985), (Suzuka, 1996, April), Traugh et. al. (1986), Wilson (e.g., 1993).

structures offered by those writings) (Bruner, 1994). It is in the spirit of these ideas about what constitutes viable first-person inquiry into the human processes of teaching and learning that my own project is conceived, and that my choice of "story" as a mode of representation--as a form both of reporting and of analysis--is defended. Finally, though, the "ways of seeing" I find myself relying upon most heavily are underwritten by Dewey (as far as I read him) and by the Romantic tradition (as far as I know and read it).

I suggested, of first-hand inquiry in teaching, that "knowledge generated from within this intimate nexus of pedagogical aim and act and intellectual curiosity and study will have a particular character, a particular claim on its audience, not to be found elsewhere"--what are some facets of that character? Most obviously, as the researcher within the practitioner, I have access to *intention* in a way that an "outsider" could not. In a related point, as Ball stresses, I am in the position of designing my own practice--albeit within the constraints of familiarity, that is, the far more extensive practices around me in which my students are most of the time immersed--and thus can pursue questions, interests, and purposes (deeply personal, deeply practical) that unmistakably belong to the practice, rather than, as an "outsider" bringing those questions, interests, and purposes to a practice which they likely would not fit. It is not *pure* access that I have to my purposes and interests, for I can be as dishonest with, or blind to, myself as anyone else; still, I *live with* these intentions as the teacher--and my hopes, fears, disappointments, pleasures--in a way no other researcher could. Indeed, *duration* is a key factor: As the teacher, I live with the practice and the students more intensely, over a longer period of time than any other observer, no matter how dedicated, possibly could; as the researcher, I choose to "live with" the students, their work, my records, my thoughts and moods and efforts, long after the "real time" of the teaching is over. Cochran-Smith and Lytle maintain that "teacher research makes accessible...*unique* perspectives on teaching and learning" (1993, p. 23, emphasis added), and in this sense they are surely correct: no else can live "in-there," nor see from the vantage point of "in-there." I do not, however, wish exactly to claim a *privileged* position for my study "from the inside." There are sound political reasons for doing so (again see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; & Traugh et. al., 1986) with which I am entirely in sympathy, but--perhaps naïvely--those do not seem to me to be at issue in this work.

So, I claim that the perspective provided by my location on "the inside" is *different*--superior for some purposes, inferior for others, it does not take the place of other perspectives, other ways of generating knowledge and understanding about teaching; it does, finally, provide and stem from the personal in ways other research cannot. And yet the study is not intended to be about me as an individual, no matter how much it draws upon particular, concrete, actual moments of my teaching life, and this in two ways. First, while I have special access to my "interior" states of willing, fearing, seeking, intending, attending, and so forth--I can "interrogate" these differently from an outsider; as a researcher choosing to live with them over time, I can shape

and name and re-name and seek to understand those states in way no external observer could--*but*, I am trying to learn about, and learn how to represent and speak about, such states as ones which any teacher inhabits, inevitably, versions of, and I am trying to understand, represent, and illuminate "attention," for example, as an aspect of teaching that I argue many teachers and students of teaching could benefit from understanding better, thinking about, being more conscious and deliberative about. Thus my "self" and my "interior" are tools or means for getting at those issues, not ends presumed to be of interest or significance in themselves. Second, every argument I make or speculation I hazard is, to the fullest extent of which I am capable, contextualized, bounded, and governed by representations of the children and their work. *They* are the point and the boundary condition; "the Case," as Dewey concludes *The Child and the Curriculum*, "is of Child."

Ball, echoing or mirroring Carini's statement that "unity does not equal identity," stipulates that "this kind of research requires...an unusual concentration on and use of self, combined with an almost unnatural suspension of the personal," going on to ask, "(h)ow can distance and insight be composed in...this genre of research such that the inside view is coupled with analysis, that belief and conviction born of intimate involvement is threaded with skepticism and critical perspective?" (in press, pp. 46 & 60); Heaton points out "the *fragility* of studying one's own practice" (1994, p. 58, emphasis added). The "suspension of the personal" and the "composition of distance," echoing Keats on "negative capability" (1959) and Kohl on "the suspension of ego in teaching" (1984), point to special challenges and possibilities of this kind of research and, not surprisingly, bring us again to a juncture where the vocabulary of inquiry and the vocabulary of pedagogy merge: for the effort to "step aside from the self" is necessary equally to teaching that treats students as "ends in themselves" and to inquiry that has the possibility of coming upon the unforeseen, unanticipated, and even the unwelcome. At the same time, the self is the lens through which any seeing is done at all. Heaton's comment speaks to the two-ended vulnerability here: on the one hand, the inquirer working "from the inside" is subject to self-regard in all its thousand variations, always in danger of trimming the evidence to suit the self and so on; on the other hand, this self is also exposing itself to others' gaze, seen as well as seer. Two traditional means of mitigating these vulnerabilities are, one, to collect and present plenty of plausibly "clean" data--descriptions, quotations, work samples, etc.--in sufficiently generous manner that the reader has some opportunity to reject interpretations based on that data, to test interpretations against the data, and to begin to devise alternative interpretations or hypotheses. Two, there is the qualitative research strategy of "triangulation": providing multiple vantage points on any particular phenomenon, for example, mine in the "real time" of teaching and reflecting on the teaching, a child's (through quotation, through work sample, even, more tenuously, through my description of demeanor, etc.), an outside observer's or colleague's, mine in retrospect. Acknowledging both that I could have made greater and more deliberative

use of, especially, the second of these, and that no measures will guarantee the soundness of the work, I will say that I have attempted all of these safeguards, I have searched my data for disconfirming material and "discrepant cases," and I have deliberately tried to make my processes of interpretation visible in the text itself. Finally, of course, the reader will have to do what she or he can to judge the internal as well as the external validity of the work.

Verbal activity in general, writing in particular

In the book sub-titled "the anthropologist as author," Geertz, finding himself usefully irritated by Foucault, tries to talk sensibly about what kind of a text a piece of ethnography is.

Two questions, or perhaps the same one doubly asked, immediately pose themselves: (1) How is... "the author"...made manifest in the text? (2) Just what is it--beyond the obvious tautology, "a work"--that the author authors? The first question, call it that of signature, is a matter of construction of a writerly identity. The second, call it that of discourse, is a matter of developing a way of putting things--a vocabulary, a rhetoric, a pattern of argument--that is connected to that identity in such a way that it seems to come from it *as a remark from a mind*.

Works and Lives, (1988, pp. 8-9, emphasis added)

Without a signature, there would be no warrant offered for the work, no reason to listen to it as if it were indeed another mind (abstracted and then embodied again in the text); without discourse (a way of going back and forth to arrive somewhere, a way of being in language, a way of being in-between), there would be no particular promise of anything actually to hear. For the reason given--not, I hope, in my hands a mere rationale--I have allowed myself the idiosyncrasies of style, not randomly or aimlessly, but in an effort to find a tone and a rhetoric suitable to what I am trying to say, and minimally adequate to the children whose voices I call upon so liberally.

As for "discourse" and the etymologically identical "discursive": I could without much exaggeration say that the entire method of this dissertation has been verbal. I have already spoken of how I used my teaching journal, and various other writing opportunities (e.g. AERA proposals), as a discursive tool, as sites for the "dialog of induction and deduction" recommended by Erickson. It remains to expand somewhat on the role of writing and to re-insert writing where it belongs, in an often erratic, wobbly, cycle of reading, writing, and conversing. I am fond of quoting Forster's rhetorical question, "How shall I know what I think until I see what I say?," and have long taken it to heart; in a recent appropriation of

that line, I added some remarks of my own, that "writing is not first of all a tool for *recording*, or *representing* thought so much as a tool for *sparkling it* and *bringing it to the surface*; speech then is a way of expanding, clarifying, and/or muddying further; writing then builds upon talking and listening, and upon itself--or perhaps it would be better to say writing *delves deeper* in the space made by the preceding literacy activities."¹³ The dialogue then involves many speakers:

- Children, colleagues, and myself in actual talk in the classroom (found on tape or in observer notes);
- Children, colleagues, and myself in remembered talk of the classroom (found in the teaching journal);
- Children in actual talk outside of the classroom (in taped interviews);
- Colleagues and friends in talk (mostly not recorded) outside the classroom--most particularly Deborah Ball as my director and Jay Featherstone as a member of my committee;
- Colleagues via email, analytic memos, and various drafts of the dissertation proposal--again, Deborah Ball figures most prominently in these;
- Myself at earlier moments,¹⁴ as captured in the journal, to a much lesser extent in my planning notes and self-made classroom materials (charts, etc.), and also in the writings just mentioned, as well as others recently referenced (e.g., AERA proposals, Spencer proposal);
- Children, through their writings;
- The particular authors in whom I have been engrossed, who have seemed most to speak to what I was trying to do at various times, such that I have--doubtless more than I am aware--appropriated shadings of their speech (e.g., Dewey, Scarry, Winnicott);
- Myself, developing accruing, growing, and forgetting, through the many drafts of most portions of this dissertation;
- Colleagues and friends through written and oral comments on many of those drafts--again, Deborah is the author of most of these comments, she and Jay being the longest term participants in this "conversation."

My first and most important, perhaps too obvious to need making, point is that all of this verbal activity constituted an effort to make sense out of what I and my students were doing and saying; the many, many layers of my writing were all efforts to grasp hold of, to portray, and to understand those

¹³ In a memo for teachers in a professional development summer institute ("Writing for understanding: a few suggestions," 6/98).

¹⁴ I have in mind here--though I am not making of it the elegant use that she did--Ruth Heaton's (1994) distinctions between herself at different times in the history of her teaching and her analysis, captured by the device "Ruth 1, Ruth 2, Ruth 3." It is the striking usefulness of this device in her hands that encourages me, with far less clarity or precision, to lay out what might seem obvious.

doings and sayings. The journal is in many respects the foundational layer (though the work with Brendan preceded the journal on which I rely most heavily; though a goodly number of the emails, analytic memos, proposal drafts, and actual conversations referred to preceded 1994-95, the year of the journal)--it was at once a form of writing where the stakes were low--no particular entry would necessarily ever be read by anyone else--and a crucial site, both because it was a major source of documentation--I would have been highly poor of data without it--and because the on-going work in it of hypothesizing, speculating, trying out interpretations, using and shifting key "terms of inquiry" was directly influential both on the teaching and on the argument(s) of the dissertation. At many times, it was important to direct myself towards highly descriptive, minimally interpretive recording in the journal; at many other times, it was important to direct myself to engage in interpretive play--often very serious play--with the material I was collecting.

Emails, analytic memos, and actual conversations were the least high stakes, in that no permanent commitment seems to be made in those venues --or rather, conversation being potentially a very deep commitment indeed, it is expected that the verbalizing that goes on in those venues will likely be exploratory and tentative, necessarily and properly full of mistakes, false starts, promising trails abandoned for no reason other than the on-going press of circumstance. Exchanges in person and via email etc. provided often crucial moral support; more to the point here, though, they were forums for developing and testing key ideas, they were structural elements of the intellectual, analytic work of the dissertation (elements too easy to slight when confronted with another basic truth, the pervasive loneliness of writing, such that it seems like a long solitary wrestling with oneself and with the ghost-inhabited language). One example will have to stand for a multitude here: I had many conversations and other exchanges with Deborah as I was developing my thoughts about not only the reasonableness of *doubt* but of its possible educative value. Those exchanges--and this of course is not to hold Deborah in any way responsible for the inadequacies and flaws of my argument--were essential to the development of the ideas. Of course this was in part because the effort to put an idea (or for that matter, an observation) into words inevitably involves a certain amount of defining, of fixing in place, of holding still (with both the advantages and the weaknesses of that "fixity"), so that I can *look at* "what I think"--but it was also because over time the conversational "space" acquires a certain sturdiness, a *reliability* if you will: It becomes known as a dependable laboratory for ideas. As a researcher, I can anticipate--in, in this example, the exchanges with Deborah--certain kinds of questions, eventually can almost predict certain questions, and I also know there will be questions, comments, and observations I cannot anticipate. I can know that my thoughts will be both appreciated and challenged. Over time, as this site becomes itself ever more layered with its own history, I can be sure I will exit from it knowing or seeing something I did not know or see before. At the same time, I am not using "conversation" lightly: Of course I was student and learner in these exchanges; but they were

also truly exchanges of ideas, experiences, guesses, observations, and recollections, sometimes sticking closely to the text I was working on, sometimes moving far afield from it. In the course of the work on "trust and doubt," we eventually began to contemplate our relationship as director and student through the lens of "doubt." It was in the course of this contemplation that Deborah became enough persuaded there might be something to the notion that the doubting is an active search and potentially productive--and began to try the idea out for herself; this, in turn, greatly helped me in persevering in what was in several ways a risky and vulnerable-feeling part of the project. I suppose I could simply say what people generally say in the "acknowledgments" section of a dissertation, that I have managed to get many people to help me in my analysis--to my benefit when it works, in no way to their discredit when it does not. But I think I mean that sufficiently fully to make it deserve saying here. Perhaps because this is work entailing so many "themes of a life" that conversational setting and activity have been essential, as if I myself have had to test that setting repeatedly in order to give the ideas breathing space.

Related, perhaps, to the last comment, is the role of *time and repetition* in the doing of this dissertation. I have referred earlier to a certain obsessive quality in writers, and of the need, as I see it, to grant some room for that quality in child-writers if we wish to allow them the potential of doing writing that seeks and achieves some of what art generally seeks and can achieve. I must also have been referring to myself--for indeed the endless revisiting of some of my themes, the allowing or even developing of a style which re-uses key words repeatedly, often juxtaposing them--for dimension, for effect--with like words that are not exact synonyms, has something of that quality. All of this is perhaps most easily seen in a small matter of method that I have not mentioned, and that is the transcription of the children's works. Each piece of child writing that I have included (and many that I have not) has been transcribed and transcribed again by me, repeatedly--sometimes, as in the case of Brendan, in the course of teaching; always in the course of working on drafts of various parts of the dissertation itself. (I have also transcribed the small amount of interview data that I have made significant use of--that incorporated into the dissertation and some lying just outside its margins.) Repeated transcription, another technique learned from Pat Carini, enables those words to enter into the transcriber, to be absorbed so that it is as if in transcription I am re-speaking (and re-thinking and re-feeling and re-meaning) them for their original speakers. That process, like all the process of re-writing and revising that have gone into this, is of course a way of rebuilding and restructuring the memory and the mind of the writer so that in the vicinity of doing this work *these* become the essential features or inhabitants of mind and memory--these, that is, many "speakers" I have alluded to. This perhaps makes clear--if clarity is needed--why it is important that there be a goodly number of speakers, as there have been, and not just multiple versions of the writer's own voice.

Another way of illustrating time, repetition, process, and method--"interest," Dewey says, "requires attention and endurance"--is this: The children I discuss are now to me most vivid in their pseudonyms, not their birth names. When I first noticed that this was happening, it alarmed me; I now accept and indeed welcome the fact, for it reminds me that I am not and am not attempting to offer a full and just portrait or biography of the actual, individual children.¹⁵ I am offering the most just account of which I am capable of those places where our lives and potentials for meaning connected which is, for the purposes of this work, largely in *their* work. I could not do or aspire to do justice to their full lives; I can and do aspire to doing justice to some dimensions of their lives in company with others' lives and works. So when I am reminded as I write that "Cameron" is not that young man's birth name, the reminder is salutary: "Cameron" is the assemblage of his words, inflections, gestures, suggestions, and meaning-potentials that I have attempted to grasp and to narrate. I have done that as honestly and truthfully as I know how, but the actual person is of course larger and more other than that. Those occasions when we may approach some of that "unhindered communication" of which Dewey speaks are *vital* and *necessary*: they cannot be *total*. To quote Carini again: "The portrayal of the child that emerges from the repeated reworking of this material according to a systematic procedure is a story, a fiction, a narrative, complex but also unfinished--and deliberately so" (1982, p. 20).¹⁶ "Unfinished" to remind us that *this* narrative must try and resist all of what "fiction" entails; in particular, it must resist as best it can "beginning, middle, and end-ness," leaving the reader to know and believe that a "real life" continues on beyond these pages with whatever degree of privacy and integrity it can manage (as Carini also says, "The person's life is never complete nor is it incomplete..." [p. 19]--which is, again, one reason we have stories, for this fact is at once a promising one and a tragic one).

If "method," then, understood as processes and procedures, techniques and habits, underwritten by a deliberately shaped attitude and by accepted ways of seeing, conversation--discursive, retentive, and repetitive--can accomplish anything in the way of honesty and validity--truthfulness, even--then it may not be unreasonable to hope that the work sometimes succeeds in coming "as a remark from a mind," interested as the work is in attending to--encouraging, investigating, illuminating--"how mind answers to mind."

¹⁵ To remind the reader of this same fact is doubtless why Prospect adopts the convention of placing the pseudonym within parentheses, as in (Iris).

¹⁶ She continues in words especially apt for my readings of Brendan's work: "Finally, the individual portrait is placed in the context of the larger myths and stories which most fully illuminate its meaning....the myths are placed as reflectors, mirroring facets of the child's destiny in their largest and least particular terms, and therefore, their fullest and most collective terms" (1982, pp. 21-22).

I should also say that my procedures are not as "systematic" as the ones Carini refers to.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Brendan's final version of "The Garbage Can Seller," March.

part 1. the garbage can seller

Once upon a time in a very small take out store there was a man selling garbage cans. The man that owns it is poor. He lives in a small box. He is rich compared to his friends. He has a wicked step brother that is rich. He owns a store that sell's everything, even boxes. That's where henry got his box. It cost \$5.99. He could afford it because he owns a business. He has no employees because he is very poor. One day he went to his brothers store to buy some thing for his wife. He had no money until he got his half time job at McDonalds. His pay is \$4.69 an hour. He worked a week so he has 25.99. He bought a can of beans and 2 boxes of cheese. He went home and when he got there it was all wrecked and on the side of the box it said, "your mean brother ha ha ha!" He dropped his groceries and ran to his shop and it said the same. He ran to his brothers store to get him back but, when he got there they got him instead.

Henry got slaughtered and his wife got killed. Before Henry's wife died she delivered a baby.

chapter 2

14 year's later their son was fourteen and he went to the police office to find out who killed his mother and father. He lived with his relatives. It was his mother's sister and her husband. When he got to the police station they gave him the files. It was a small mug shot. The boy said "this is my next door neighbor!" 18 hour's later after asking lots of questions the police followed him home. They went in to the neighbor's house and found him dead on the floor the boy yelled, "grand-pa!" The boy said "are you the dead man's dad?" The old man said "yes." The boy asked "why did the dead man kill my dad?" The old man said, "because he was jealous. He had no friends and your dad was married." Then the boy asked, "why did he kill my dad?" The man said, "I told you he was jealous!" So, the old man said "come on let's go to my house you can live there. Thank you Margerie." the old man was talking to the boys aunt. It was a twenty hour drive on the way there the old man told the boy that "the man that I killed had a gang it was called the maaaaahb"....(sigh) It was the mob they killed the old man. There the kid was stranded in a car with a dead guy on the driver's seat. The kid moved the guy in the back seat and tried to drive the car first he went backward then he went forward and there was blood all over the windshield the kid put on the windshield wipers and said "I killed 2, guys!" the kid yelled he didn't know how to drive. the car was a Lamborghini so he went as fast as the car could go he got there in 6 hours.

the garbage can seller chapter 3, the Final Fight

They brought the dead guy to the hospital but they took the police car and forgot the car that the dead guy was in so they went back and the car wasn't there so the police man said "the mob took em." It took hours for the police to find the mob's hide out. And when they did find it they peeked in and saw the mob having a feast the police man said "they're eatin em" and the boy said "no they're not stupid he's over there," he was tied to a wood cutter the police man said "it don't matter he's dead," the police man pulled out his walkie-talkie and was guna call the other police men. the boy snatched it away and called in backup. They got there in an hour and crashed the party some police men got killed and some didn't but they got the mob. And locked them up for 2,240 years without bail or parole.

The End

(Part 2 with a different family)

Once upon a time in Chicago 1947, on the very poor side of town was a little store owned by a man named Joey Wilcox. He lived in a very small house with his wife. That night he dreamed that a bunch of ruthless bandits came and burnt his house down. They were hired by his brother Brian. Joey woke up with sweat all over him he was scared to death. He was so scared that he went everywhere with his wife, even to work. But they didn't care he needed an employee.

Chapter, 2 the funeral

That night they came home and Joey opened the door and BOOM Joey got burned down to bone. When his wife got home she ran to the neighbor's house and called the Fire department and then the cops. When the police and the fire department got there they saw a bunch of guys carrying Joey away in a van.

One week later Elinor wilcox was in the hospital with the doctor's delivering a baby.

25 years later, in 1972 the baby was all grown up. He had a job at the power plant, he worked there for a year but then he remembered what his mom had told him about his dad, then he retired and became a cop. 4 days on the job but then BOOM. 4 days later his funeral was arranged 7 days later his mom got married but they didn't go on a honey moon. that night Joey jr's ghost came back and went into his mother's body and when her husband came home she was talking she said: "I KNOW WHO MY SON'S KILLER IS GO TO THE POLICE AND TELL THEM that," instantly her

husband pulled his gun and shot the woman in the head BANG but the woman still was talking the man said im outta here. when he left he threw a match and burnt the house down. the next day the woman was investigated

Chapter 3, Fire place,

The Fire Engines rolled in like 1,000 horses running through the wild west.

One of the fire chief's on the scene was fire investigator Bill Morgan. He pulled up and said, "Okay what's the disturbance," A police officer ran up to him and said "no sir this house was burnt last night and a lady got shot in it. The man that shot her was friends with Henry's brother," "Whose Brother?" "Henry's sir." "Oh Henry's brother, who's Henry?" "He was a garbage can seller sir, and he was homeless."

Meanwhile in the alley.

"Come on stupid rrrrh. Help me with this lady." "Uuuuuuuh, God, what does this lady eat."

"Come on it's only a little way to the garbage can then we can split to Saudi Arabia or Iraq we can dress like nuns and join the Iraqi army after that grow a beard and escape then go back to New York and appear on America's Most Wanted."

Chapter 4, the Chase

Once the fire department put out the blaze they sent the police and the detectives, the swat team and the undercover cops the way that the husband and his friend went. They chased them to the middle of china town and then the two friends got on a criminal boat that was just leaving to the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on a very small island with more criminals to kill. Or maybe to kill them.

The End

Appendix 3

Appendix 3
C.J.'s "Gang War" Story (in two parts)

[Sept. '94]*

[title p.]

GANG
WAR

[illustration: *boy w/ brown skin, in red shirt, green (baggy) shorts, black high tops, black cap, gun (?) in waist band, seemingly waving.*]

by C.J.

[p. 1] A long time ago on the west side. Little kids did not like them self. Because there parent was on drugs. So one day a little baby parents died from drugs. The baby was threw in the river. It traveled for two weeks. He ended up in LA. So two men came and got it. And took it home. They already had a little boy. He was a gangster. He named the baby Warren-G. Tryon[e?] and G liked it.

10 years later

Now he is ten years old. So him and snoop went to a dangerous place called gang war. This is where I grew up at said snoop.

* Brackets = My insertion. I have occasionally made non-italicized but still bracketed in-text insertions when I am virtually positive insertion leads to phonetically or otherwise more accurate readings. Otherwise, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are C.J.'s. Spacing throughout is approximate. Page breaks are where he made them (leading to line breaks unlike those in his text). This text, like most of C.J.'s, is semi-corrected by him.

Warren you have to take a test. What kind of test said Warren. A test that you have to take if you want to be hard. After he got his test they gave him a tour around the gang war. After Warren took

his test they went to robb a store

[p. 2] Put your hands up. OK! OK! said the man take it BAM. Warren shot the man in his head. Their the cops. Put your hands up. I didnt do eny thing. Get in the car thanks for geting me out. You are stupid said G. What did you do to get in jail. Robbed a store. I shouldna got you out of the river. now we got to leave. Come on said Tryon[e?]. What kind of place is this now you are tryna get high. Put your hands behind your head. Run bang bang bang bang Tyron[e?] snoop G was dead. Warren was lonly. But he saw this African man. Him and Warren was talking. In two weeks Warren was not a gangster. The guy gave him a home. He got married. He had a baby boy. I don't want Dre to grow up like me. Warren went to jail the african man came to visit. He said I will never

help you again.

[p. 3] Warren's Wife took Dre to day care. There were a car comeing it start shooting Warren was dead

THE END

[p. 4]

[illustration, full page: house (blue), pockmarked with lots of bullet holes (pencil holes through page), boy lying on ground, clouds.]

[p. 5]

WARREN-G
1984 - 1999

shot 3
times
1 in the leg
2 in the heart

*[illustration: the words are written in what looks like a
grave stone, at the bottom of which--on it? in front of it?--
-are 4 flowers, the right hand one lying down.]*

[title p.]

GANG II WAR

*[illustration: little brown baby, white diapers, red cap, gun
in hand.]*

[page 1]

Clarence

When Lori got home she saw Warren was shot up.
9/22/94 She cried and cried.* The ambulauce came. Im sorry
he's dead. Warren had a funeral There was over 2 million
people there.

Now Dre is 7 years old. Mom do I have a dad
yes said lori. Where is he he died when you were 5 months
9/22 old. Don't crie mom. I loved him very much said Lori.
9/23 Can I go out side and play yes. Dre had a friend named
Michael. He told Dre to go look at this car. Dre went to
look. Someone snatch em. Help called Dre. who are you im
the guy who killed your father. Why do you want me. So you
can work for me Do I get money. Yes you get money. What
kind of place is this this is where your dad yous to
[page 2]come all the time. Wy he was a ganster. What is a
9/23 ganster something you are geting ready to be.
Heres a gun for what. Come out side see that guy go shoot
him OK. Oh no said the guy he ran after him. Dre ran up
stairs of the building the man kept runing. bang bang. Dre
shot the man twice in his head. Good job. Her 2000 dollars.
Dont !*!* up or you will die. Hi mom were have you been I
been out you got a problm. Yes bang Dre shot his mom in the
rib. Dre ran. I shot my mom in the rib. Good now you are
9/26 a ganster. What does that meen you can do eny thing
you want. You meen I have to live on the streets. Yea wy
you scared. Wy should I be working for you if you killed my
father.

[page 3]Because If you dont the same thing will happen to
you. I got to go somewere. Were to see my mom now let me
go. Hi mom I'm sorry I shot you. Get out of my room. OK
when you get home you will be suprised. You been gone for
two hour. So what thats my mom. Come on lets beat him half

* Alignment of marginal dates & text is approximate.

the death. Now how do you feel like this bang bang. He shot the 2 guys.

Dre grew up and had a little bit better life than his dad. He got married to a girl named Wendy. He had twin boys. After he got out of college he died from cancer.

[page 4]

[illustration, crayon: boy (?) leaning over wall (possibly, looking down on to floor), seemingly holding a kind of banner reading "WARREN-G." (Could this be the kind of silhouette drawn on the sidewalk--in movies & on TV anyway--after a killing?) In bottom third of page, either a door or a grave stone, with a female (?) figure, pencil, looking at it.]

Appendix 4

Appendix 4
C.J.'s "Street Ball"

STREET
BALL

[*illustration: large basketball almost coming at the viewer, with, probably, by marks indicating motion & speed streaking behind it.*]

Clarence
James Dawson

[April 1995]

-1-

Once there was a boy. He thought of a word. And the word was street ball. And he wonderd what does that mean. So he made something called a basket ball. He went out side and said, "streetball" "I need a street." And he found a street and said, "How do I play street ball?" And He saw something on the ground and he named it a chain.

-2-

And he saw a lot of wood and built something and named it a rim. And he took his ball and shot it and it went in the rim.

50 years later

"Hey ya'll want to play some ball?" [Wesley?]
"Yeah, what teams?" [Gideon?]
"You, Shorty, C.J. and Michael." [Wesley?]
"OK What we going up to?" [Gideon?]
"15. Ya'll take ball." [Wesley?]"

i This is an edited text. I have laid out the dialogue in conventional format (the only discernible paragraph-like interruptions in C.J.'s text are his usual markers of time passed, and page breaks, which may or may not serve this function, some or all of the time--I have indicated these), I have shown in brackets my best estimate of who the speaker is, and I have sometimes added or omitted quotation marks when I believe C.J. has used a pair too many or too few. In all of this, of course, there is room for error. Many of the character's names are recognizably those of C.J.'s classmates (& it seems quite likely *all* the characters have real life referents: one character, for example, bears his younger brother's name)--when I can identify a character as a member of the class I have given him the same pseudonym used elsewhere in the dissertation, and have put the name in italics.

"OK" [Gideon?]
Michael passes it in to Shorty and Shorty shoots a three. "All chain fool." [Shorty?]

-3-

"It's winners give me the ball." [Shorty?] Shorty goes up for a dunk but he throws it back to Michael and Michael dunks the ball.

"The score is 4 to a big Fat zero." [Michael?] Michael throws ally to Shorty and Wesley packs Shorty's mess.

"Now we get ball." [Wesley??] **something wrong here?**

Gideon throws it to C.J. and C.J. hits a three. The score is 0-7. C.J. passes the ball to Michael for a ally but it is packed

but this "but" makes Wesley seem correct after all but then is there an action by his team missing?

-4-

by Jonⁱⁱⁱ and the score is 7-0. C.J., Michael, Gideon, Shorty is leading. Gideon takes it out shoots a 20 feet jumper and now the score is 9-0. They need 3 more p[o]ints to win.^{iv} Gideon passes it in to Michael and he passes it to Shorty. Shorty passes it and C.J. shoots a three. The game is over. C.J., Gideon, Michael, Shorty wins the game. A man was coming up to the court

-5-

And said, "Is any of ya'll any good?"

"Who are you?" [Shorty?]

"My name is Corey. I'm a coach in Long Beach California."^v "Yeah Im pretty good" [Shorty]

"You ain't no good Shorty." [C.J.?.]

"forget you." [Shorty?]^{vi}

"what is your name" [Corey]

"C.J."

"And who are your friends here?" [Corey]

ii For example, C.J. punctuates what I have just rendered as two lines like this: "OK" "What we going up to?" "15" "Ya'll take ball." This could be correct, but it would mean that Wesley, or whoever the first speaker is, suddenly switches from taking the initiative to following Gideon, or the second speaker's, lead. Over-punctuating dialogue is common in C.J.'s work at this point (and indeed in many young writers' work)--still, my rendering is conjectural.

iii Jon C., I presume.

iv Why not 6?

v And C.J. punctuates this as: "My name is Corey" I'm a coach in Long Beach California"

vi Alternatively, "You ain't no good Shorty, forget you," [C.J.]

"This is *Gideon, Michael, Shorty, Wesley, Lincoln, Jon*
and *Marcus.*" [C.J.]

"Who is the 4

-6-

best people?" [Corey]

"Me, *Michael, Gideon, Jon.*" [C.J.]

"Do ya'll wanna play in California in a 4 on 4
tournament." [Corey]

"I don't know man but I'll think about it." [C.J.]

"My number is 394-4835. Call me" [Corey]

"Hey Hey I changed my mind, I will play." [C.J.]

"I will too" said *Gideon.* C.J., *Gideon, Jon* and *Michael*
decided to play in California in

-7-

the tournament. Who ever wins will be drafted to ~~te~~ play in
college or NBA. C.J. allways wanted to play for Indiana.

..2 weeks

Later

The first team they will play is the Hogs. And their team is
called the Hooppers. "There are no calls in this game."
[Corey??]

The teams had to shoot to see who got the ball.

-8-

C.J. will get to shoot first and he makes it. Now it will be
the Hogs turn to shoot and they miss. The Hooppers will take
the ball. *Jon* passes it in to *Gideon* and *Gideon.* [sic] And
he drives down court and passes it to C.J. a[nd] C.J. hits a
three now the score is 3-0. The Hogs passes it in way down
court it is stolen by *Michael*

-9-

He takes it down court and dunks it the Hooopers take a 5 point
lead.

2 minutes later

The Hoopers win 15-0. *Marcus* and the other guys that did not
make the team made there own team and signed up to play.
Their team's name is the Spurs. *Marcus, Lincoln, Shorty* and
Wesley are a team. And the first team they will play is the
Warriors.

-10-

The team that wins the tournament will be drafted to a college basket ball team. The spurs will play the hooppers in the finals. If they can go underfeated for two game straight. The spurs will play the Warriors in the first round today. *Marcus* comes [in] to shoot for the ball. He takes the shot and misses. Here comes Little John to shoot and he makes

-11-

it. The Warriors will take the ball. Reshaud passes it in to Anthony^{vii} and And tries to pass it to John but it is stolen by *Marcus*. He take it down court and slams it in the hoop. The crowd goes crazy. Spurs lead 2-0.

8 minutes later

Spurs beat warriors 15-4. The Spurs need to win one more game to play Hooppers.

-12-

2 weeks

later

The Spurs went underfeated For two game and they beat Suns they are [in] the champion chip with Hooppers today. *C.J.* comes in to shoot he makes it. Shorty come into shoot and he misses. So The Hoopers get ball. *Michael* passes it in way down court to *Gideon* and he dunks Hooppers lead 2-0. *Marcus* is driving down

-13-

court and passes it to *Lincoln* and *Lincoln* shoots it. And it gets blocked by *Jon* and *Jon* runs down court and throws a alley oop to *C.J.* and *C.J.* makes it.

3 minutes

Later

It is tied at 13 and Hoopers get ball. *C.J.* passes it in to *Gideon* and it is stolen by Anthony^{viii} and Anthony passes it to *Marcus* *Marcus* dunks the ball. The Spurs

-14-

win the tounement! They will get drafted!

1 Month later

vii The perils of assigning pseudonyms at many different points in time. This Anthony is neither of the "Anthonys" who were in *C.J.*'s class.

viii Not to be confused with the Anthony on *C.J.*'s p. 11.

Marcus gets drafted to North Carolina. *Lincoln* get drafted to Oklahoma State. *Anthony* get drafted to Purdue. *Shorty* gets drafted to Arkansas. *C.J.* went to the NBA in the year 1999 and played for San Antonio Spurs.

THE END

[p. 15]

[illustration: *boy (young man?) looking up at basketball hoop which may be in flames at base, or may have a very thick thicket of tall grass growing there, or..., basketball at his feet.*]

References

References

- Abrams, M. H. (1971). *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition*. New York: Oxford. (Original work published in 1953.)
- Alberty, B. (1987). The Child's Stance as Artist. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association, Boston.
- Alberty, B. (1996). *Lillian Weber: An ample view of teaching*. New York: City College Workshop Center.
- Armstrong, M. (1980). *Closely observed children: The diary of a primary classroom*. London: Writers and Readers Publishing/Chamelon.
- Armstrong, M. (1998, Spring). The leap of imagination: An essay in interpretation. *Changing Minds*, 13, 33-40.
- Ashton-Warner, S. (1986). *Teacher*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (Original work published in 1963.)
- Ayers, W. (1993). *To teach: The journey of a teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Babbitt, N. (1975). *Tuck everlasting*. Boston[?]: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Baier, A. (1986, January). Trust and antitrust. *Ethics*, 96(2), 231-260.
- Baier, A. (1994). *Moral prejudices: Essays on ethics*. Cambridge: Harvard.
- Ball, D. L. (1993). With an eye on the mathematical horizon: Dilemmas of teaching elementary school mathematics. *Elementary School Journal*, 93(4), 373-397.
- Ball, D. L. (in press). Working on the inside: Using one's own practice as a site for studying teaching and learning. In A. Kelly & R. Lesh (Eds.), *Research design in mathematics and science education*. Amsterdam: Kluwer.
- Ball, D. L., & Wilson, S. M. (1996, Spring). Integrity in teaching: Recognizing the fusion of the moral and the intellectual. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33(1), 155-192.
- Barrs, M. (1983, October). The new orthodoxy about writing: Confusing process and pedagogy. *Language Arts*, 60(7), 829-840.

- Bateson, G. (1972). Metalogue: About games and being serious. In *Steps to an ecology of mind*, 14-20. New York: Chandler/Ballantine.
- Beckett, S. (1995). Texts for nothing (1-13) (author, Trans.). In S. E. Gontarski (Ed.), *Samuel Beckett: The complete short prose*, 100-154). New York: Grove. (Original work published in 1950-52.)
- Benjamin, W. (1969). The task of the translator. In H. Arendt (Ed.), *Illuminations*, 69-82. New York: Schocken. (Original work published in 1923.)
- Bettelheim, B. (1977). *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales*. New York: Random House.
- Bishop, E. (1994, March 28). Annals of literature: The art of losing. *The New Yorker*, 82-89.
- Bloom, H. (1975). *A map of misreading*. New York: Oxford.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Bok, S. (1998). *Mayhem: Violence as public entertainment*. Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Booth, W. C. (1988). *The company we keep: An ethics of fiction*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.
- Branscombe, N. A., Goswami, D., & Schwartz, J. (Eds.) (1992) *Students teaching, teachers learning*. Portsmouth NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann.
- Brooks, C., & Warren, R. P. (1943). Letter to the Teacher. In C. Brooks & R. P. Warren (Eds.), *Understanding Fiction* (pp. xi-xx). New York: Appleton-Century Crofts.
- Brooks, C. (1947). *The well wrought urn: Studies in the structure of poetry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge MA: Harvard.
- Bruner, J. (1994, April). *Four ways to make a meaning*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

- Calkins, L. M. (1986). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.
- Calkins, L. M., with S. Harwayne (1991). *Living between the lines*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.
- Calkins, L. (1994). *The art of teaching writing: New edition*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.
- Carini, P. F. (1975) *Observation and description: An alternative methodology for the investigation of human phenomena*. Grand Forks, North Dakota: North Dakota Study Group/University of North Dakota.
- Carini, P. F. (1979). *The art of seeing and the visibility of the person*. Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.
- Carini, P. F. (1982, August 26). Interpretation, ambiguity, and the art of observing. Paper presented to the Philosophical Division of the American Psychological Association, Washington DC.
- Carini, P. F. (1987). Another way of looking. In K. Jervis & A. Tobier (Eds.), *The Cambridge School Conference on Progressive Education*, (pp. 176). Weston MA: Cambridge School.
- Carini, P. F. (1991). The study of works: A phenomenological approach to understanding children as thinkers and learners. In Himley, M. (1991) *Shared territory: Understanding children's writing as works*, 17-56. New York: Oxford.
- Carini, P. F. (1994). Dear Sister Bess: An essay on standards, judgment, and writing. *Assessing Writing*, 1(1), 29-65.
- Carini, P. F. (1995). *Poets of our lives*. North Bennington VT: Prospect Center.
- Cavell, S. (1976). Must We Mean What We Say? In Cavell, S., *A pitch of philosophy*. Cambridge MA: Harvard.
- Cavell, S. (1979). *The claim of reason: Wittgenstein, skepticism, morality, and tragedy*. New York: Oxford.
- Cavell, S. (1994). *A pitch of philosophy*. Cambridge MA: Harvard.
- Changing, Minds*. (1998). Teachers looking closely at students and their work. (13). E. Lansing MI: College of Education, Michigan State University.

- Charles, C. M. (1991). The Canter model: Assertively taking charge. In *Building Classroom Discipline* (pp. 93-110). White Plains NY: Longman.
- Children's Defense Fund. (1996). *The state of America's children: Yearbook 1996*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Chukovsky, K. (1963). *From two to five* (M. Morton, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press. (Original work published in 1925 and 1959.)
- Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cohen, D. K. (1987, October). Willard Waller, on Hating School and Loving Education. Paper presented at a conference on the work of Waller, Penn. State University, State College PA. Scheduled to appear (1988) in Willower, D. J. and Boyd, W. L. (Eds.), *Willard Waller on education and the schools: A critical appraisal*. Tempe AZ: University Council for Educational Administration.
- Crowder, B., Eckstine, B., & Hines, E. (1988). Call it stormy Monday. On *T-Bone Blues*, New York: Atlantic Recording (source of my transcription) and Wells, J., *It's My Life Baby*, New York: Vanguard Records (source of full credits). (Original recording issued c. 1943 [?] [Hines, et. al.] and 1954/1989 [Walker, Smithsonian Institution/Atlantic; 1966/1988 [Wells/Vanguard].)
- DeLima, A., and the staff of The Little Red School House. (1942). *The little red school house*. New York: MacMillan.
- Delpit, L. D. (1986). Skills and other dilemmas of a progressive black educator. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 379-385.
- Delpit, L. D. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280-298.
- Delpit, L. D. (1992, Autumn). Acquisition of literate discourse: Bowing before the master? *Theory into practice*, 31(4), 296-302.
- Descartes, R. (1971). Discourse on the method. In E. Anscombe & P. T. Geach (Eds. & Trans.), *Descartes: Philosophical writings* (pp. 5-57). Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs-Merrill. (Original work published in 1637.)
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Minton, Balch.

- Dewey, J. (1934). Having an experience (Chapter 3). In *Art as experience* (pp 35-57). New York: Minton, Balch.
- Dewey, J. (1956a). *The school and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago. (Original work published in 1900, rev. ed. 1915.)
- Dewey, J. (1956b). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago. (Original work published in 1902.)
- Dewey, J. (1960). Context and Thought. In R. J. Bernstein (Ed.), *On experience, nature, & freedom* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. (Original work published in 1931.)
- Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education*. New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1916.)
- Dewey, J. (1966). Education as Growth (Chapter 4). In *Democracy and education* (pp. 41-53). New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1916.)
- Dewey, J. (1966). The nature of method. In *Democracy and education* (Chapter 13, pp. 164-179). New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1916.)
- Dewey, J. (1966). Interest and discipline (Chapter 10). In *Democracy and education* (pp. 124-138). New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1916.)
- Dewey, J. (1969). Individuality, equality, and superiority. In J. Ratner (Ed.), *Education Today* (pp. 171-177). New York: Greenwood Press. (Original work published in 1922.)
- Dewey, J. (1974). The relation of theory to practice in education. In R. D. Archambault (Ed.), *John Dewey on education: Selected writings* (pp. 313-338). Chicago: University of Chicago. (Original work published in 1904.)
- Dressman, M. (1993, Fall). Lionizing lone wolves: The cultural romantics of literacy workshops. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 23(3), 245-263.
- Dressman, M. (1995). Under the umbrella: Resisting the reign of rationalized educational reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 27(3), 231-244.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1961). *The souls of black folk: Essays and sketches*. Greenwich CN: Fawcett. (Original work published in 1903.)

- Duckworth, E. (1987). *"The having of wonderful ideas" and other essays on teaching and learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dyson, A. H. (1997). *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Elbow, P. (1973). *Writing without teachers*. New York: Oxford.
- Elbow, P. (1986). *Embracing contraries: Explorations in learning and teaching*. New York: Oxford.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.
- Faulkner, W. J. (1993). *The days when the animals talked: Black-American folktales and how they came to be*. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press. (Original work published c. 1970?)
- Freud, S. (1995). Creative writers and day-dreaming. In E. S. Person, P. Fognay, and S. A. Figueira (Eds.), *On Freud's "Creative Writers and Day-dreaming,"* 3-13. New Haven: Yale University Press. Also in J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.) *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 9, 143-153. London: Hogarth Press. (Original work published in 1908.)
- Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of criticism: Four essays*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Stanford CA: Stanford University.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life* (Revised ed.). New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday.
- Goswami, D., & Stillman, P. R. (Eds.). (1987). *Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change*. Upper Montclair NJ: Boynton-Cook.
- Graves, D. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.

- Graves, D. (1994). *A fresh look at writing*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.
- Grimm Brothers, & Zwerger, L. (Illus.) (1981). *The seven ravens* (Elizabeth D. Crawford, Trans.). New York: William Morrow. (Original work published c. 1840?)
- Hall, D., Pack, R., & Simpson, L. (Eds.). (1957). *New poets of England and America*. New York: World Publishing Co.
- Havel, V. (1990). *Disturbing the peace*. New York: Knopf.
- Hawkins, D. (1974a). I, thou, and it. In *The informed vision: Essays on learning and human nature* (pp. 48-62). New York: Agathon. (Original work published in 1967.)
- Hawkins, D. (1974b). On living in trees. In *The informed vision: Essays on learning and human nature* (pp. 173-195). New York: Agathon Press/Sshocken. (Original work published in 1965.)
- Heaton, R. (1994). *Creating and studying a practice of teaching elementary mathematics for understanding*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, E. Lansing MI.
- Herbert, B. (1996, Dec. 16). One in four. *New York Times*, p. A15.
- Hoffman, M. (1996). *Chasing hellhounds: A teacher learns from his students*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.
- Holmes Group. (1990). *Tomorrow's schools: Principles for the design of Professional Development Schools*. East Lansing MI: Author.
- Howard, J. (1989, May). On teaching, knowledge, and "middle ground." *Harvard Educational Review* 59 (2), 226-239.
- Jackson, P. W. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Jackson, P. W. (1986). *The Practice of teaching*. New York: Teachers College.
- James, W. (1984). The will to believe. In B. W. Wilshire (Ed.), *William James: The essential writings* (pp. 309-325). Albany NY: SUNY. (Original work published in 1896.)
- Keats, J. (1959). To George and Thomas Keats (1817, Dec. 21, 27). In D. Bush (Ed.), *Selected poems and letters* (pp. 260-261). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Kermode, F. (1983). *The art of telling: Essays on fiction*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kidder, T. (1989). *Among schoolchildren*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Koch, K. (1971). *Wishes, lies, and dreams: Teaching children to write poetry*. New York: Vintage. (Original work published in 1970.)
- Koch, K. (1974). *Rose where did you get that red: Teaching great poetry to children*. New York: Vintage. (Original work published in 1973.)
- Kohl, H. (1967). *36 Children*. New York: The New American Library.
- Kohl, H. (1984). *Growing minds: On becoming a teacher*. New York: Harper.
- Kuhns, R. (1992, Summer). Loss and creativity: Notes on Winnicott and nineteenth-century American poets. *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 79(2), 197-208.
- Lampert, M. (1985). How do teachers manage to teach? *Harvard Educational Review*, 55(2), 178-194.
- Lampert, M. (1990). When the problem is not the question and the answer is not the solution: Mathematical knowing and teaching. *American Educational Research Journal* 27, 29-63.
- Lampert, M. (in press). Studying teaching as a thinking practice. In J. Greeno & S. G. Goldman (Eds.), *Thinking practices* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Lensmire, T. J. (1993, Fall). Following the child, socioanalysis, and threats to community: Teacher response to children's texts. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 23(3), 265-299.
- Lensmire, T. J. (1994a). *When children write: Critical re-visions of the writing workshop*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lensmire, T. J. (1994b [Winter]). Writing workshop as carnival: Reflections on an alternative learning environment. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(4), 371-391.
- Lewis, R. (1966). *Miracles: Poems by children of the English-speaking world*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- Mayhew, K. C., & Edwards, A. C. (1936). *The Dewey school: The laboratory school of the University of Chicago 1896-1903*. New York: D. Appleton-Century.
- Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Navarro, J. J. (1997). *Reaching beyond the boundaries: Two teachers' collaborative experiences with change and learning in a professional development school*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University.
- Nemerov, H. (1978). Speaking Silence. In *Figures of thought: Speculations on the meanings of poetry & other essays* (pp. 100-114). Boston: David R. Godine.
- Oakeshott, M. (1990). A Place of Learning. In T. Fuller (Ed.), *The voice of liberal learning: Michael Oakeshott on education* (pp. 17-42). New Haven: Yale. (Original work published in 1975.)
- Oxford University Press (1971). *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Compact ed.). Oxford, England: Author.
- Pack, R. (1980). *Waking to my name: New and selected poems*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pack, R., & Parini, J. (Eds.). (1991). *Writers on writing*. Hanover NH: Middlebury College Press.
- Paley, V. (1995). *Kwanzaa and me: A teacher's story*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Park, C. C. (1991). Rejoicing to concur with the common reader. In *Rejoining the common reader: Essays, 1962-1990*, 1-19. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published in 1973.)
- Partridge, E. (1983). *Origins: A short etymological dictionary of the English language*. New York: Greenwich House. (Original work published in 1958.)
- Pennac, D. (1994). *Reads like a novel* (D. Gunn, Trans.). London: Quartet Books. (Original work published in 1992.)
- Power, B. M. (1995, November). Bearing walls and writing workshops. *Language Arts*, 72, 482-488.

- Pratt, C. (1990). *I learn from children*. New York: Harper & Row. (Original work published in 1948.)
- Prospect School. (1984). *Statement of Philosophy*. No. Bennington VT: Author.
- Prospect Center. (1985). *Introduction to The Prospect Archive*. No. Bennington VT: Author.
- Prospect Center. (1986). *The Prospect Center documentary processes*. North Bennington, VT: Author.
- Rees, E., & Gorey, E. (Illus.). (1988). *Brer Rabbit and his tricks*. Birmingham AL: Hopscotch Books. (Original work published in 1967.)
- Rich, A. (1993). *What is found there: Notebooks on poetry and politics*. New York: Macmillan.
- Richardson, E. S. (1964). *In the early world*. New York: Pantheon/Random House.
- Roosevelt, D. (1993a [May]). "Who's a hero?" *Spartan Village Elementary Professional Development School News*.
- Roosevelt, D. (1993b [June]). "You a girl entering the contest, I don't think so..." *Spartan Village Elementary Professional Development School News*.
- Roosevelt, D. (1994, April). "There the kid was, stranded in a car": Dilemmas of teacher responsiveness in a writing workshop. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- Roosevelt, D. (1995, April). "We can't use *is* in 'Da Ghetto'": Doubts about responsible teaching in a writing workshop. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.
- Roosevelt, D. (1996, April). "I used to be small but now I'm not": Mediation of faith and doubt in a writing workshop? Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York City.

- Roosevelt, D. (1998). "There the kid was, stranded in a car": Reading the fictions of children as if they mattered. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 28(1), 81-111.
- Roosevelt, D. (1998, Autumn). "Unsuspected literatures": Public school classrooms as laboratories for the creation of democratic culture. *Theory into Practice*, 37(4).
- Rose, M. (1989). *Lives on the boundary*. New York: Macmillan.
- Rosen, H. (1982, April). The nurture of narrative. Paper presented at the convention of the International Reading Association, Chicago.
- Rosen, H. (1986). The importance of story. *Language Arts*, 63(3).
- Rosenblatt, L. (1938). *Literature as exploration*. New York: The Progressive Education Association/Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1966). Essay on the origin of languages. In J. H. Moran (Trans. & Ed.) *On the origin of language* (pp. 1-83). New York: Frederick Ungar. (Original work written and published c. 1749-1755; 1852.)
- Scarry, E. (1985). *The body in pain: The making and unmaking of the world*. New York: Oxford.
- Scheffler, I. (1967). University scholarship and the education of teachers (Chapter 7). In *Reason and teaching* (pp. 82-94). New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Scheler, M. (1970). *The nature of sympathy* (P. Heath, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published in 1912 and 1954.)
- Scholes, R. (1989). *Protocols of reading*. New Haven: Yale.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schwartz, B. (1997, March). What Jefferson helps to explain. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 60-72.
- Sexton, A. (1971). Rapunzel. In *Transformations*, 35-42. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

- Shulman, L. S. (1994, April). Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Silberman, A. (1989). *Growing up writing: Teaching children to write, think, and learn*. New York: Times Books (Random House).
- Sizer, T. R. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Stotsky, S. (1995, October/November/December). The uses and limitations of personal or personalized writing in writing theory, research, and instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(4), 758-776.
- Streib, L. (1985). *A (Philadelphia) teacher's journal*. Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota (North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation).
- Suzuka, K. (1996, April). The impossible role of the teacher educator. Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
- Thomas, L. (1990). Children and language. In *Et cetera, et cetera: Notes of a word-watcher* (pp. 93-97). New York: Penguin Books.
- Thoreau, H. D. (1968). *Walden*. In W. Harding (Ed.), *The variorum Walden and the variorum Civil Disobedience* (pp. 1-324). New York: Washington Square Press. (Original work published in 1854.)
- Tobin, J. (1995, May). The irony of self-expression. *American Journal of Education*, 103(3), 233-258.
- Traugh, C., et. al. (1986). *Speaking out: Teachers on teaching*. Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota (North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation).
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany NY: State University of New York.
- van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. Albany NY: State University of New York.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1976). Play and its role in the mental development of the child. In Bruner, J. et. al. (Eds.) *Play--Its role in development and evolution* (pp. 537-554) New York: Basic Books. (Original work published in 1933 and 1966.)

- Waller, W. (1965). *The sociology of teaching*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. (Original work published in 1932.)
- Weil, S. (1977). Reflections on the right use of school studies with a view to the love of God. In G. A. Panichas (Ed.), *The Simone Weil reader* (pp. 44-52). Mt. Kisco NY: Moyer Bell Limited. (Original work published in 1951.)
- Whitman, W. (1974). Democratic vistas. In M. V. Doren (Ed.), *The portable Walt Whitman* (pp. 317-382). New York: Penguin Books. (Original work published in 1871.)
- Williams, W. C. (1962). Asphodel, that greeny flower. In *Pictures from Brueghel and other poems* (pp. 153-182). New York: New Directions. (Original work published in 1954.)
- Williams, W. C. (1968). To Elsie (XVIII of "Spring and All"). In *Selected Poems* (pp. 28-30). New York: New Directions. (Original work published in 1949.)
- Williams, R. (1983). *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society* (Revised Edition, 1983 ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published in 1976.)
- Wilson, S. M. (1995, November). Not tension but intention: A response to Wong's analysis of the researcher/teacher. *Educational Researcher*, 24(8), 19-22.
- Wilson, S. M., with C. Miller and C. Yerkes. (1993). Deeply rooted change: A tale of learning to teach adventurously. In D. K. Cohen, M. W. McLaughlin, and J. E. Talbert (Eds.), *Teaching for understanding: Challenges for policy and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1960, November-December). The theory of the parent-infant relationship. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 41(6), 585-595.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and reality*. London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1986). Delinquency as a sign of hope. In C. Winnicott, R. Shepherd, & M. Davis (Eds.), *Home is where we start from* (pp. 90-100). New York: Norton. (Original work published in 1967.)

- Winnicott, D. W. (1987). Holding and interpretation: Fragment of an analysis. In M. M. R. Khan (Introduction & Ed.). New York: Grove. (Original work published in 1967.)
- Wordsworth, W. (1965). Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. In J. Stillinger (Ed.), *William Wordsworth: Selected poems and prefaces* (pp. 445-464). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (Original work published in 1800.)
- Wordsworth, W. (1965). The Prelude. In J. Stillinger (Ed.), *William Wordsworth: Selected poems and prefaces* (pp. 193-366). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. (Original work published in 1805.)
- Yeats, W. B. (1956). Among School Children. In *The collected poems of William Butler Yeats* (pp. 212-214). New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1928.)
- Yeats, W. B. (1956) The Second Coming. In *The collected works of W. B. Yeats*, 184-185. New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1921.)

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293017879804