

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Experiencing Silence

by

Ruth Linda Westland

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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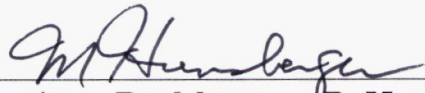
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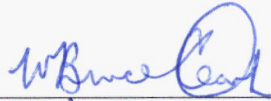
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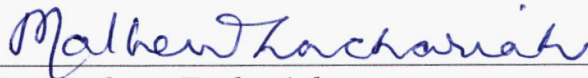
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Histoire générale	0578

Ancienne	0579
Médiévale	0581
Moderne	0582
Histoire des noirs	0328
Africaine	0331
Canadienne	0334
États-Unis	0337
Européenne	0335
Moyen-orientale	0333
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Loisirs	0814
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Généralités	0615
Administration publique	0617
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Physique	0494
Polymères	0495
Radiation	0754
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Physique	
Généralités	0605
Acoustique	0986
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ABSTRACT

Through conversations with five teachers, poetry, literature, metaphor, and qualitative analysis the lived experience of silence emerges in this reflective study as an essential, intimate, and interactive space. This space invites us to move ever deeper and wider in our "seeing" and in our response to humanity and the world. The space of silence is seen as enfolding, but not restrictive, for as it deepens and widens, we find ourselves opening to ever increasing possibilities unfolding in our personal and pedagogic lives. Metaphor plays a central role in this research, inviting our experiencing of the more implicit aspects of silence and helping to move our understanding beyond preconceptions to the fullness of silence. The interwoven metaphor of a Japanese tea ceremony, becoming in the closing chapter a comparable Canadian ceremony, provides a framework for such experiencing and understanding.

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Special recognition is due to the five teachers who so willingly shared their experiences of silence as this research would not exist in its present form without their commitment.

DEDICATION

To those with whom I share “tea”

With thankfulness

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
 TEA CEREMONY	 1
 SPACE	 9
Intimate Structure	11
Layers	16
Motion	21
Rhythms	26
Sensuousness	29
 INVITATION	 35
Seeking	36
Speaking	38
Inviting	39
Stopping and Being Open	42
 DEEP SEEING—DEEP ACTION	 56
Folds of Thought	58
Deep Seeing	65
Deep Action	80
 ANOTHER CEREMONY	 89
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 113
APPENDIX	117

TEA CEREMONY

As far as the eye can see,
No cherry-blossoms
No crimson leaf:
A thatched hut by a lagoon,
This autumn evening.

Fuji-wara Teika (1964, p. 239)

There is silence. As I sit seiza style opposite my host on the tatami there is an absence of sound save the gentle boiling of the tea kettle on the brazier and the rhythmic swishing of the tea brush against the bowl. My host and I are together in silence while he prepares the tea.

No sooner is the caddy lid lifted than the tea appears in the bowl, the water is ladled, and the whisk is taken, briefly breaking the silence. The sounds are gone as quickly as they came. One moment flows steadily and quietly into the next drawing me in. As we begin to sip our tea the silences are at times interspersed with talk.

There is no talk just now and we sit silently sipping. My host excuses himself and invites me to look at the scroll in the alcove which was said to be obtained from a descendant of one of the respected Tea Masters of Japan. He returns carrying a plum branch from the garden and quietly refills our bowl. He begins to translate the scroll for me. The poem speaks of an absence of blossoms and leaves and of autumn at nightfall in a straw thatched tea hut. He explains to me that the scroll is traditionally chosen to reflect the season. However, he continues on, even more importantly it is chosen with the particular guest in mind and therefore although it is not autumn he considers this scroll is the correct choice for our ceremony. He is interested in my reaction to the poem and I explain that it speaks to me of the fullness I have found in our silences. He waits.

I continue. I explain that because there are no blossoms I am able to appreciate the lines of the tree and the spaces between the branches more fully and I remind myself that although there are no blossoms just now they are in the next stage of their naturally developing beauty. There is no absence, then? he asks. I sit quietly. It does not

predominate, I reply.

My host excuses himself and returns from the alcove with a rather large burnished gold bowl which he fills with water and sets between us. He hands me the plum branch and invites me to arrange the blossoms. We continue to sit across from one another as I take the blossoms from the branch and float them in the bowl between us. I pass the branch to my host and he adds several blossoms, stopping before the last are removed. There is no need for talk just now. Gently I begin to blow on the blossoms in the bowl causing them to flow into new spaces forming a kaleidoscope of ever changing patterns on the surface of the water. My host appears consciously unconscious of the activity of the blossoms and I notice that the natural light in the hut is shifting. As I look across at him I am struck with the simultaneous effect of both harmony and contrast in the pattern the shadows have cast across his white kimono. The crimson blossoms encased in the golden bowl are stilling to a shimmer on the surface of the quieting water. Overhead the sun has been partly obscured by clouds. Silence surrounds and encompasses our hut and resonates through our very being.

The introductory poem by Fuji-wara Teika doubtless arouses varied responses. Some may sense the poem speaks to a kind of absence or perhaps incompleteness and some may even sense this absence as oppression. My response which is recounted in the imaginary tea ceremony reflects the sense not of absence but of presence. Thus I find that just as the imagined responses to Fuji-wara Teika's poem can be variously portrayed as ranging from absence to presence so the actual views of silence in the literature encompass a comparable range.

Just how silence is portrayed varies widely across contexts, cultures, and disciplines. In the field of education silence is seen variously as, for example, oppressive, efficient, and space-granting. Freire (1970) and Belenky, Clinchy, Tarule and Goldberger (1986) link silence with oppression and speak of the oppressed as being effectively silenced or lacking voice. "Silent women have little awareness of their intellectual capabilities. They live—selfless and voiceless—at the behest of those around them. External authorities know the

truth and are all powerful” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 134). In the traditional paradigm, silence is implied as a sign of efficiency, as reflected, for example, in Kliebard’s production metaphor (cited in Schubert, 1986) which signals a smoothly functioning well programmed machine humming along carrying out the pre-specified task with an absence of glitches. In the phenomenological paradigm silence is seen as a space or gap that allows for both inner and outer participation. As Van Manen says, “There is the granting of silence that leaves space for the child to come to him-herself . . . it is the silence of patiently waiting, being there, while sustaining an expectant, open, and trusting atmosphere” (1991, p. 177).

Within even this cursory look at various educational paradigms we find silence is perceived in disparate ways. On closer examination of the various views of silence we see the beginning of the seeds of possibility in silence for pedagogy. Silence moves from being portrayed passively as an absence of voice in the paradigm of critical theory, to efficient action in the traditional paradigm, to the granting of space for becoming which encourages not only outward action but inward reflection or contemplation in the phenomenological paradigm. It is within this granting of space for both outward action and inward contemplation that I find the hope for pedagogy. This brief overview of the ways in which silence is variously portrayed in the educational paradigms with which I am most familiar nevertheless barely scratches the surface of the many layers of possibility I find in silence for pedagogy as I move beyond the educational literature to the literature in other disciplines such as the arts, aesthetics, and philosophy and to contemplating my personal experiences of silence. There is so much more that makes me passionate about the topic of silence.

How do I understand silence? I begin by organizing the array of literature into a conceptualization of silence as: physical, positional, interactive, appreciative, and consequential. *Physical* silence begins with the definition of silence as absence of sound, but is very often relative or analogous. For authors such as Dauenhauer (1980), Merton (1985), and Picard (1988), speaking of silence even in its absolute form becomes more than just referring to an absence.

These authors portray silence as a complex autonomous phenomenon rather than merely the negative condition that sets in when the positive is removed. *Positional* silence is often a temporal relating of silence to sound. Dauenhauer and Picard concur on a discontinuous intervening, fore, and after silence, and a continuous deep silence of, for example, intimates, liturgy, and the to-be-said. As to this deep silence Picard says, "Man does not put silence to the test but silence puts man to the test" (1988, p. 134). *Interactive* silence can occur in uncommunicated or communicated, receptively experienced or deliberately sought forms. Hammarskjöld raises implications for pedagogues when he says, "What happens during the unspoken dialogue between two people can never be put right by anything they say" (1964, p. 78). Van Manen (1991) in discussing tact in pedagogy, sees a need to seek silence as does Ihde (1976) when he says, "The deepest and most profound listening hears not only the voices of the World, it is a waiting which is open to the possibilities of silence" (1976, p. 184). *Appreciative* silence refers to the negative, positive, secondary, and essential views of silence. Merton speaks to both the positive and negative: "Negative silence blurs and confuses our identity. . . . Positive silence pulls us together and makes us realize who we are" (1985, p. 39). Sheridan writes of an essential pedagogic concern when he reflects on the view that "literacy puts an onus on people to make sounds in order to be considered wise; silence is unworthy" (1991, p. 28). *Consequential* silence refers to potential effects of silence in personal, social, environmental, and spiritual areas. Merton finds "silence makes a whole [of life] if we let it" (1985, p. 43). Picard agrees and addresses the social aspect of language, saying that silence allows forgiveness. Writers on Eastern thought, such as Yanagi (1972), also explore vital relations between self development, action, desire and silence which appear to be largely ignored in Western thought.

As I dig deeper I am continuously "struck" with the possibilities of silence for pedagogy. I find myself wondering how other teachers experience silence and yet there is little in the literature that specifically addresses these wonderings. My conceptualization of silence shows seeds of possibility for pedagogy but does not explicitly address this aspect of silence. My wonderings become more specific. How do teachers experience silence? What are the pedagogic

implications of their experience of silence? What are the implications of teachers' experience of silence for educational paradigms? My desire is to examine these unexplored questions.

Getting past preconceptions of silence as absence, or as efficiency, or even the more positive view of granting space for becoming has considerable potential significance for pedagogy. Teachers may find in the experiences of their colleagues the seeds of widening and deepening positive personal integration and transcendence. In turn the teachers will have more to bring to, and find in their students. Teachers may also find that a deeper understanding of silence provides a useful, perhaps even necessary, counterbalance to the emphasis in so much of contemporary society to push information and sound (or noise) together as a way of knowing, as though sounds make the information more exciting and somehow more valuable. In particular I see the possibility of this research helping teachers and in turn their students, to be more open to and appreciative of mystery in their lives. Our world, for all the knowledge this century has certainly built up using words, still contains so much which people cannot put into words readily if at all. Closer understanding of silence should prove valuable in balancing that knowledge built with words, by increasing the ways in which we may relate more fully and positively to the things in life for which we may have no words but which are, even so, full of wonder, potential and opportunity.

The question then becomes how or by what method or techniques do I understand teachers' experience of silence and the pedagogic implications of that experience. The research techniques which harmonize with my need to set aside preconceptions of what silence "surely is" by researching the actual lived experience of silence are those of phenomenology. "Phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or theorize about it. Phenomenology aims to come to a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (Van Manen, 1984, p. 37). But there is an even deeper harmony that exists between my research questions and the techniques of phenomenology. Phenomenology is a "poetizing project" as Van Manen says (1984, p. 39).

Phenomenology seeks a speaking which originates in the silence from which words come and the silence to which they flow back. Such a speaking is what this research topic calls for.

In order to understand teachers' lived experience of silence and the implications of that experience I not only read about silence but I begin to talk to teachers about their experience of silence. The connections between the actual lived experience of silence and the interdisciplinary literature I have read begin to emerge. These connections in turn lead me to even broader reading which not surprisingly includes novels and poetry for where better to research lived experience. But it does not stop there as I begin to see connections beyond even literature to other forms of art such as movies, music, graphics and so many others. I find I am not alone in this way of understanding silence as it begins to emerge that this, too, is the experience of the teachers I speak with.

The five teachers I speak with all had some affiliation with the department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Calgary. To speak of one's experience of silence is to share one's inner world with another. I am deeply appreciative of the willingness of these teachers to share their experiences with me and it is my sincere hope that this thesis will honour that sharing. The names of the teachers occur in the thesis as pseudonyms. All of the teachers but one were enrolled as graduate students and we shared classes together. I speak with four of the teachers on three different occasions and the fifth teacher twice. Each conversation, which is approximately one and a half hours, is taped and transcribed. Follow-up notes on each transcription are helpful in suggesting considerations for the next conversation. During our third conversation the teachers are asked to respond to excerpts of prose, poetry and a variety of art work in terms of silence. (See Appendix for examples of the prose and poetry.) Poetry and art images are a natural means of stimulating conversation about silence as silence plays a recurrent part in art forms.

A researcher is continuously analyzing at one level or another from the moment a topic is chosen. I began my analysis with a conceptualization of silence based on my preliminary literature review. However, conversations with the teachers reveal that although silence could be analyzed according to

my conceptualization it would be an imposition rather than a reflection of the actual lived experience of silence. It therefore becomes readily apparent that although this conceptualization served me well in the initial stages of the research it is time to leave the conceptualization behind. Once again I find myself asking how do I understand silence? Or more specifically, how do I understand the lived experience of silence? The answer to such questions involves analyzing the conversations, literature, and wealth of information gleaned about silence in terms of themes. I particularly like Van Manen's description of a theme as "knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus experienced as meaningful wholes" (Van Manen, 1984, p. 59). Perhaps it is the word *knot* that appeals. Knots to me are stubborn and have a mind all of their own!

My search for themes begins by highlighting the main points I find as I read and re-read the transcriptions. I then move to line by line analysis of the transcriptions noting the main points in the margin. At this point I begin to understand the value of exact transcription of conversation. I am amazed at the significance of a simple phrase which had seemed merely like a snippet of conversation as I sat at the computer transcribing. At the end of this process I have analyzed the conversations into a variety of wide ranging ideas. Each idea is commonly mentioned by all of the people I spoke with but are any of them themes? I choose the idea which occurs with most frequency in the transcriptions and begin to analyze it in more detail. As part of my analysis I begin to write the idea. Phenomenological writing is thought-ful writing, writing which allows things to speak for themselves. Thus writing becomes an intimate part of the analysis process which has at its very heart thoughtfulness. As I am writing, the idea begins to take form and to draw in some of the other ideas that are identified as common to silence. I now know that the idea of space is a theme. It becomes the first theme which is chapter two. Along with this first theme of silence as space a metaphor of enfolding emerges. The process is similar for the second theme of silence as invitation, and the third theme of silence as deep seeing-action, which become chapters three and four respectively. Surprisingly, the metaphor of enfolding which emerged in the theme of space emerges in

expanded form in the second theme. Even more surprisingly it emerges yet again in the third theme in an even further expanded form. Chapter five serves as a conclusion by reviewing and discussing, in narrative form, the themes and significances found in this research.

SPACE

Talking with one another,
 Enjoying a bowl of green tea.
 Flowers shrouded in mist
 Bloom amidst the clouds.

Nishikoribe no Hikogimi
 (cited in Mori, 1982, p. 57)

Receiving the thick green bowl of tea, I think of the great tea master, Rikyu, seeing all of nature represented in its green colour and finding when he closed his eyes the green mountains and pure water within his heart. Sitting quietly, sharing a bowl of tea, and sensing the inviting space of the garden beyond which seems to flow into the tea room, I begin a small understanding of Rikyu's experience. As if he had entered my thoughts, my host suggests that I may wish to explore the garden.

I bend in order to exit through the small guest entrance. The sun, which had emerged between the bamboo slatted blinds to form ever changing patterns on the aging cedar walls of the hut, is now quite low in the sky. The heat of the day has mellowed to a gentle warmth and is held by the green shrubbery and the moss into which the roji stepping stones have been inlaid. On either side of the entrance pale green bamboo trees softly frame the first dark stone of the roji. Leaves are artfully piled beside the freshly swept path which guides me past the ritual washing basin and a small granite lantern to a smaller path leading to a recess in the garden. The small path arrives at a wooden waiting bench enclosed in pine trees. No sooner do I notice the small bench than a solitary bird in the distance begins a song which moves in and out of the silence.

Sunlight flows through the spaces between the tree branches to warm my small retreat. Sitting comfortably, surrounded by branches, looking out at the garden and the tea hut beyond I notice that the careful pruning of each tree has given structure not only to the trees but to the space surrounding the trees. The space created between the lines of the branches only exists because of the space that is beyond the branches. As I continue looking at the trees I begin to notice that the strong vertical and horizontal

lines suggest serenity. Expanding into reverie I see the Japanese of medieval times shaking the leaves from the trees in order to enlarge the space between the branches and then gently sweeping the leaves from the surface of the pond and the path.

"Space gives me the impression of silence" (Meg, conversation three). "Oh [silence] is just a space . . . a blank space, you know, a comma, or whatever you may think of it as" (Mike, conversation one). "You can look at it [music] as spaces of silence framed with sound" (John, conversation three). "I like Joseph Campbell's idea of having a sacred place where you don't know who your friends are, what your responsibilities are" (John, conversation one). "[Silence is] space to go. . . . A lot comes in here [her principal's office]. . . . I choose to go out there [for a walk during lunch hour]. Probably in my own protected little place" (Anne, conversation two). "Silence is room to be. Room to grow if you want to or to remain the same if you want to but it is space" (Meg, conversation two). "One is a silence . . . that opens a door . . . another one is what fills the space once the door is open" (John, conversation two). "I think of the silence in nature and that space as refreshing" (Elaine, conversation one). We see from the conversations that again and again silence is described as space.

Various authors have described silence similarly. For example, Picard says, "Silence contains everything within itself . . . and it completely fills out the space in which it appears" (1988, p. 2). Valles finds, "Space has always reduced me to silence" (cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 183). Bosco states, "There is nothing like silence to suggest a sense of unlimited space. . . . we are seized with the sensation of something vast and deep and boundless. It took complete hold of me and, for several moments, I was overwhelmed by the grandeur of this shadowy peace" (cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 43). Donnell finds silence is a substitute for actual space, saying, "I work out of silence, because silence makes up for my actual lack of working space" (cited in Maggio, 1992, p. 292).

Silence is described explicitly as a space in both our conversations and the cited literature. Yet it does not stop there. As we explore questions such as what kind of space, or space for what, we find that silence begins to unfold,

albeit with varying degrees of explicitness and implicitness, as a space with structure.

Intimate Structure

Sitting on the small waiting bench surrounded by warmth I notice that this friendly refuge has been designed around three particular pine trees. The gentle leaning of the trunks and the swooping of the branches toward one another, as if in an embrace, serves to create a small space of intimacy.

Silence as a space with structure is the first of three themes found emerging in this thesis. We turn now to Meg's words to pursue this theme.

The metaphor of silence as wrapping, enfolding and comforting is the one that comes of my mind. The isolating in a way but comfortable isolation. So it's silence wrapped around me. I don't think of other metaphors. No, the encompassing, the embracing, is the one that I think of when I think of silence.

Covers, wrapping, enfolding, and encompassing all involve space of some sort, an action or an object that relates dimensionally outward from ourselves. These words suggest an enclosing action through space. However, for Meg this space involves much more. Meg's use of words such as "wrapping" which involves protecting with coverings, "embracing" which suggests clasping in the arms, "encompassing" which suggests enclosing as, for example, in the folds of a cloak, "enfolding" which involves surrounding as if with folds, again, for example, in a cloak, "comfortable" which refers to physical or mental ease and "comfortable isolation" which suggests a congenial setting apart—all are words which bring to my mind the image of a comforter or a quilt. Silence is wrapped around Meg and she eagerly embraces it, much as we wish for each person to begin life protectively wrapped in the warmth of a comforter which has been especially made or chosen to welcome their being in the world. We like to think that life begins with a sense of well-being enclosed, protected, and warm within a comforter and embraced by loving arms. Thus I believe we intuitively

understand the gentle warmth of enclosed regions as an original indication of intimacy, and the gift of a comforter is seen to be a gift of intimacy, a desire on the part of the giver that we be surrounded with warmth and love. The folds of a comforter shape intimacy into a heart.

Imagine a folded comforter tossed casually over an easy chair. How small and insignificant it may seem! How taken for granted. Yet once unfolded it expands to take up a larger space and as we gaze at it fondly we realize that the silence of a comforter moves two ways. It is within us just as we are within it. Surrounded within the folds of a familiar beloved object such as a comforter we may find such happiness that we experience a deepening of our intimate space. We give our comforter the images of our inner selves nurtured within its surrounding folds. This two way movement of our inner intimate space is a deepening of self understanding. As part of the understanding process we give our comforters our images, and our comforters in turn deepen our intimate space. For as Donnell says,

My focus on silence is to be understood as an intrinsic part of the body's search for meaning amongst the noisy assaults of everyday life. . . . What quilts have brought to the viewing of art generally is this intervening layer of silence, of collected thought and concerted attention. (cited in Maggio, 1992, p. 264)

Perhaps you are beginning to smile at my enthusiasms for the image of the comforter. I shall resist the temptation to disclose further images and blessings that I find tumbling forth as I sit enfolded in my comforter on a cold Canadian evening.

Mike strikingly underscores the previous discussion of the intimacy of silence in reference to the grey drizzling weather on the day of our second conversation:

I want to go and wrap myself in something a little bit warmer and then go and experience the silence. So it is nice. It is the kind of day you want to go and wrap up in a blanket and go and hide somewhere, you know.

When we seek refuge in a blanket or near a fire on a drizzly day we feel a kind of contentment. "Thus, well-being takes us back to the primitiveness of a refuge. Physically, the creature endowed with a sense of refuge, huddles up to itself, takes to cover, hides away, lies snug and conceals" (Bachelard, 1964, p. 91). So we find that silence has the comfort of a refuge.

Meg also talks of isolation which clearly involves space—space between oneself and something else. However, Meg speaks of comfortable isolation which suggests a cozy space. Implicit within this cozy space is the sense of room needed to be comfortable when one stretches out either mentally or physically; space free of the crowding of others' expectations and insistings. Thus although Meg does not use the word "space" for silence in her metaphor of wrapping we can see that silence is not seen as either absence or nothingness but rather as a space with structure.

This idea is underscored in a later conversation when she says,

Silence is an enveloping, a whole world as well. It wraps you round. . . . It also isolates you to a degree. Now whether that is part of its charm for me I've never really come to a conclusion. Uhm, it's certainly absorbing!

The word "enveloping" is quickly recognized as a spacial term closely related in meaning to the words "encompassing," "enfolding," and "wrapping" used by Meg previously. The word "world" has spacial connotations as well. We may think of our planet earth which clearly occupies space or we may think of the earth's surface where we live our lives which again is clearly dimensional. Or we may think of our inner world, a cognitive realm, the space of thoughts inside our heads over the years. So again we are speaking of space. Then Meg says "wraps" which brings us back to the sense of being enclosed in a protective layer or covering and the sense of intimacy that implies. Elaine echoes Meg's notion of silence as a protective cover when she says, "I think of the silence of nature and that space as refreshing but I think that inner silence is more comforting and in comforting there is the sense of being enfolded or enclosed."

Before we begin to further unfold the teachers' experience of silence as a

space with structure, let us pursue additional quotations which point to silence as an intimate space. In response to my question "Do you find silence with other people then?" Anne replied,

Yes . . . that there is such a comfort level there that you don't even have to talk. Yes, with special ones. I don't have that many, that you don't have to converse that there is just an understanding. I mean that is a unique situation isn't it?

Again we have the idea of silence and comfort—mental and/or physical ease—linked by Anne but now extended beyond comfortable space by oneself to include comfortable space with special others. Her words "special" and "unique" suggest that this space can be extended to include particular others in whose company, as she says, there is "understanding." "Understanding implies intimacy and equality between self and object. . . . Understanding . . . entails acceptance. . . . the purpose is not justification but connection" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 101). "Understanding" is a word that is alive with implications of intimacy. We also see in this quote the idea of silence as a space with structure beginning to emerge when Anne refers to a comfort level—level being a structural term.

John also finds intimacy in silence, saying, "Just the other day I was talking with my friend. . . . We talked about sitting with your friend or somebody you're close to in quietness. And you have to have a really special relationship with the person to be able to do that." The definition of the word "close" includes "intimate or confidential; dear" (The Random House Dictionary of The English Language, 1987, p. 389).

That Mike experiences silence similarly is seen when he refers to walks with his wife.

Ah, the more I say hey, you know, I feel comfortable not saying anything the more she can feel comfortable not saying anything. And, I think that when it really hits home is, sometimes we'll go for a walk together, and we'll begin to talk and then there'll be a silent space.

I find Mike's word "home" in this quote is revealing, as to me home implies both the sense of spreading out and deepening of the original intimate space we

inhabit in a comforter. A home is considered a space of love, a space that should protect and nourish intimacy. We extend our inhabiting from our comforter to our home and eventually more and more into our world. Not only we do extend our inhabiting outwards but we go ever deeper and deeper in our inhabiting. For as Rilke says, "The world is large but in us it is deep as the sea" (cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 183). Again we see the structure of silence emerging with this notion of spreading out and deepening.

Elaine comments,

David [her husband] and I often spend time together that we don't talk, that is not tension filled, that is comfortable. I think that's why my own sense of silence is in comfort rather than tension or loneliness and yeah, I know I need it myself.

This explicit comment on the intimacy of silence serves to underscore previous quotations. The word "time" in this context has spacial implications as it suggests an interval or space of time.

Another observer of silence is Graham Greene. He points out silence as usually but not always comfortable in *The Human Factor* where he describes the silence between his character Castle and Castle's wife Sarah.

He sat down in his usual chair and the usual silence fell between them. Normally he felt the silence like a comforting shawl thrown around his shoulders. Silence was relaxation, silence meant that words were unnecessary between the two of them. . . . But this night . . . silence was like a vacuum in which he couldn't breathe: silence was a lack of everything, even trust, it was a foretaste of the tomb. (1978, p. 235)

Castle sits in his customary or "usual" chair and the commonly experienced or "usual" silence falls between them. Greene's choice of the word "falls" intrigues me as it could suggest, on one hand, something drawn down by gravity and descending to a lower level, a structural spacial term, in a sense foreshadowing the ominous silence referred to later in the quote. On the other hand, it could suggest a sense of intimate enveloping, also a structural spacial term, found, for example, when a hush comes over a crowd or night falls. Since

he goes on to speak of silence as normally like a comforting shawl it is quite likely that he refers to falling in the intimate sense of enveloping as a shawl envelopes.

As Castle goes on to contrast his customarily experienced intimate silence with Sarah to the unusual silence of his ruptured relationship, we see that his experience of silence becomes one of an empty space "vacuum" in which he experiences silence as a void. Even the air has been partially removed necessarily resulting in the heaviness and exhaustion that comes with trying to breathe in a vacuum. Lack of air is experienced as a physical "foretaste of the tomb" and parallels the emotional "foretaste of the tomb" implied in the lack of hope experienced when trust between intimates is ruptured. From this rather poignant description of silence gone awry we can conclude that Castle normally experiences silence, similarly to the teachers in this study, as intimate space.

Layers

The pond glistens half visible past some distant trees. Some time later I leave my small waiting bench and walk over to the water. As I kneel to peer into the pond, I notice that the reflections of the ferns and the other greenery on the quivering water appear to move over and under the lily pads and that beneath these layers there are fish and, further down still, light pebbles. As I peer down I catch my own reflection dancing. My imagination takes hold and I observe myself standing back watching myself peer at my reflection. As I continue observing myself, I notice I am also looking at the reflection of the tree tops and the hills borrowed from beyond the garden. A glint of gold brings my eye back to the fish and I raise my head to look at the distant trees and hills.

As we uncovered the teachers' experience of silence as an intimate space the notion that silence was a space not only of intimacy but also of structure began to emerge. But what kind of structure? Is the experience of silence just a homogeneous, undifferentiated space? Mike, for one, would say no.

In other words we are all surrounded by silence. My brother would tell me that I have a bunch of layers. Right, and it's all been studied. So these layers are a wrapping thing. . . . You know, it's definitely expressed by the aura.

Once again we have the word "wrapping" with its implied intimacy. However, Mike extends the idea of wrapping by making explicit the notion that structurally there are several layers surrounding us. He experiences these layers uniquely as an aura.

The aspect of wrapping again appears in a metaphor of a spinning top used by Meg to interpret her world. Her metaphor employs the image of a still centre wrapped by the outside world, similar to Mike's metaphor.

We see the world from our point of view essentially egocentrically and I can think about this, the metaphor that comes up with the stillness at the centre to the encircling world—now it is essentially an old metaphor of course—and the one that springs to mind is the spinning top with the still centre and everything going on around it. You get so involved with these things that are whirring past that sometimes it is hard to remember that there is a still centre.

When Meg refers to the encircling world I wonder if we feel on the circle of the planet, or in it, or on the pole, or perhaps multiple circling with us on the surface with life spinning around our personal pole, and all that and us spinning around the planet's pole. If so do we find calm via our personal pole or by moving ourselves somehow to the world's actual pole? Meg goes on to say that it is essentially an old metaphor which suggests that silence is of eternal interest, which causes me to ponder how silence has been viewed during various periods of history and how it will be viewed in future periods.

I also begin to wonder who or what sets the top spinning? I think of Frost's couplet, "We dance round the ring and suppose. But the secret sits in the middle and knows" (1968, p. 495). Meg speaks of the tendency to be drawn into the things whirring past and then goes on to suggest that remembering has a part to play in silence or our "still centre." What exactly are we remembering—

our past, our cultural past via myth perhaps, our sense of eternity or what? Meg's metaphor of the spinning top and the wondering that arises from it are indicative of my experience with silence. Silence causes me to wonder.

This still centre experienced by Meg is also experienced by Hammarskjold, as he explores what experiencing reality involves.

To have humility is to experience reality, not in relation to ourselves, but in its sacred independence. It is to see, judge, and act from the point of rest in ourselves. Then, how much disappears, and all that remains falls into place. [He continues, in what might be an extension of Meg's metaphor now with the stopping of external whirling, saying,] In the point of rest at the centre of our being, we encounter a world where all things are at rest in the same way. . . . It opens us to a book in which we can never get beyond the first syllable. (1964, p. 148)

As I read Hammarskjold's journal I was continually struck with both his frequent reference to silence and the openness with which he shared his innermost thoughts. The sense of humility flowing throughout his journal we see comes from "the point of rest at the centre" of his being where he experiences reality in its sacred independence. Perhaps part of experiencing this "still centre" involves silent remembering, for him, just as it does for Meg, and in remembering or reminding himself of the sacred independence of reality his humility is both deepened and expanded. Once again "at the centre" are words relating to physical position and "point of rest" suggests both a cessation of motion and mental or spiritual calm. At the "point of rest" Hammarskjold finds "much disappears" and what remains "falls into place." The words "disappears" and "falls" intrigue me as they suggest two different images of how the still centre is experienced by Hammarskjold. Does the disappearing occur gradually as when the colour fades in our favourite comforter or is it a sudden dropping out of sight, and when the rest "falls into place" is it the soft intimate enveloping felt, for example, when our comforter falls around us? Or is it the more sudden dropping over under the force of gravity that occurs when it falls over and off

the bannister? From reading his journal I sense that Hammarskjöld, like many of us, finds his still centre is elusive at times and that surface distractions fall away slowly. However, it is clear from his journal that the heart of the centre is deep communion or intimacy.

The external world settling to rest in connection with inner rest is also experienced by John. "What's really nice is that there is a space—and I try meditation exercises. But just clear the slate sort of thing and let the mud settle if you will." Both the image of the clearing the slate and the image of letting the mud settle raise the image of layers in the metaphorical space of silence. When I think of a slate I imagine the flat surfaces of childhood my brothers and I used to amuse ourselves with on rainy days. Ours was the type of slate made of waxed cardboard with a plastic overlay that we marked with the accompanying stick. When it came time to clear the slate rarely did we yank the bottom up to the top and watch the creations on the top layer suddenly disappear. No, it was a gentle slow lifting so that we had the sense of the beloved creations slowly fading off the surface; the sense of slowly letting go. I understand from John's explanation of meditation that it too is a slow letting go.

The image of letting the mud settle implies a previously whirling or churned up mixture of water and earth slowly stilling with the mud gradually sinking to a deeper level resulting in clearer water above. We now have the dimension of depth added to our layers. Many meditation postures, although upright, involve sitting on the floor, ground or earth. One is close to what one is rising above, the earth—from which all growth stems. As one stays close to what one rises above, in this image, so maybe we could say human activity stays close to stillness.

Picard's likening of silence to a prehistoric creature builds on John's images of layers.

Like some old, forgotten animal from the beginning of time
 . . . it lies in wait, and we can still see its broad back sinking
 ever deeper among the briars and bushes of the world of
 noise. It is as though this prehistoric creature were gradually
 sinking into the depths of its own silence. And yet sometimes
 all the noise of the world today seems like the mere buzzing of

insects on the broad back of silence. (1988, p. 22)

Here we have the image of the broad or vast back of a creature endowed with superability, with the “noise of the world today [seeming] like mere buzzing of insects on the broad back” deepening its inner intimate self or becoming more intense “sinking into the depths of its own silence.” One can almost sense the suffering and the strain as the creature withstands the pressure of human aspirations. Thus we find in this image the spacial dimension of vastness or broadness may be a spreading out of space beyond us or an infinity of deep intimate space within us. This illustrates a principle of correspondences or parallel action which Bachelard describes as “to receive the immensity of the world, which they transform into the intensity of our intimate being” (1964, p. 193).

Although this next remark by Bachelard may cause you to smile because it deals with fine nuances, thought by some to be reserved solely for poets, I include it for your consideration. The word “vast” is a poetic word. When spoken our mouth enlarges and “we take infinity into our lungs, and through it, we breathe cosmically, far from human anguish” (Bachelard, 1964, p. 197). The word “broad” when spoken has a similar effect. If you are still smiling I invite you to stand in front of the mirror and watch yourself say both “vast” and “broad” and see if you experience as do I a comfortable, expanding space.

That Elaine also experiences silence in its vastness, in the sense of spreading out, and deepening in the sense of inner intensity, is evident from the following remark:

I think of the silence in nature and that space as refreshing but
I think that inner silence is more comforting. . . . In refreshment
there is vastness and in renewal there is pulling into yourself.
So I think they would be different.

Like Picard, Anne’s experience of silence involves a deepening of her inner being which she links to her experiences.

Know thyself is a lifelong project and at the end of our lives I
don’t know if we’ll really know ourselves—who we are. So
my level of silence has changed. Maybe there is a deeper level

I will get to from experiences. I think maybe the level that you reach in silence and meditation depends on the experiences you've had.

Since knowledge relates to experience, and as we live, more and more layers and levels of experience settle around us, so both understanding, previously discussed in terms of intimacy, and knowledge of self can be expected to involve increasing numbers of levels. However, levels can go up or down or both. Anne several times throughout our conversations referred to going down or deeper. Perhaps this originates from foundational religious metaphors or from a practical orientation to silence, for example, getting down to work or getting down to earth.

What would an experience of limitless depth be like? I imagine myself as a diver, going ever deeper and deeper into the water without the ordinary constraints of space and time. There is silence and serenity within this immensity. The sense of vastness within and vastness without begin to blend. There is no sense of weight here, only bright fluid movement open to possibility. I begin to wonder if Picard's prehistoric creature had a similar experience as it began to sink into the depths of its silence?

Motion

As I kneel quietly by the pond the song of a solitary bird enters the tranquil garden and resonates to the hills beyond as it gains power. My imagination expands with the bird's song and I begin to extend the rhythm of her song to her life. My heart quickens as I sense the pattern of her return to this spot year after year to fashion a nest with the movement of her breast. The echo of the bird's song contrasts with the silent solitary work of building a nest and serves to remind me of my host in the tea room. I return to the tea room with a deeper understanding that the silent movement, rhythm, and pattern of both nest building and the tea ceremony is part of a larger order.

When Picard speaks of the prehistoric creature sinking, or John speaks of the mud settling, or Meg speaks of the top spinning, we begin to see not only the layers

of silence but also sense movement within the structural space of silence. This sense of movement is explicitly referred to by Anne when she says, "I think silence is a number of doors you have to unlock." She revisits this idea in conversation two, saying, "Maybe that's what I was talking about the hierarchy of silence to get through the locked doors, through the emotion, the pain to the spiritual, the peace . . ." indicating she experiences silence as movement through a series of doors which must be unlocked. But is the person who locks the doors the person who unlocks them also? As we think about this we realize there are two beings at a door. We become aware that both security and freedom are based on a profound sense of inner immensity or depth of being.

Once again with Anne's image of silence as a "series of doors" we return to the layered structure of silence. Doors imply walls, generally a vertical surface or layer, save the horizontal hatches one may have fortuitously experienced that lead to the cellar of great reveries or the attics of lofty thoughts. The image of silence "as a number of doors" involves a shifting from the downward direction of depth upwards towards the vertical, or upward rising, of a house—with its implied intimacy. Anne inhabits the space of silence intimately using such words as "emotion" and "pain" and with movement. Her doors open towards "the spiritual" and "peace." This inhabiting suggests all the intimacy of the word "home." There we undoubtedly experience emotion, inevitably some of which seems to be painful, but what we hope for one another ultimately is a sanctuary. We hope to move beyond any seeming pain to the peaceful inhabiting Anne finds when all of the doors have been unlocked and she is at "peace" or rest—motionless—reminiscent of Meg's top, or Mike's "passing through," or John's "clear water."

It seems the silent spaces we cherish are unwilling to remain permanently enclosed. John extends the image of silence as movement through a passageway when he refers to the silent space once the door is open, saying, "I think there are two kinds of things that you are talking about. One is the silence that opens a door or something and another one is what fills the space once the door is open." John raises the image of silence at the place of entry when he speaks of "the silence that opens the door." Who among us has not stood solitary on the

silent threshold of a door sensing its hesitancy, its beyondness. Who among us could not add or take away from the images of security, uneasiness, freedom, confinement, temptation, desire and invitation on the threshold of a door?

The following excerpt from Merton's poem *Song: If You Seek* provides an expanding image of movement through a series of open windows.

If you seek a heavenly light
 I, silence, am your professor!
 I go before you into emptiness
 Raise strange suns for your new mornings
 Opening the windows
 Of your innermost apartment. (1977, p. 340)

Merton's image of silence "opening windows" suggests expanding movement, as unlike a locked door, a window, even if locked, allows us visual movement through even before it is opened. In previous images of silence, for example, John's image of the mud settling, the notion of earth could be considered a foundational image of the ground necessary for growth. Above that ground is the sky with sun, light, stars, and the "heavens" Merton refers to which again suggest verticality or upward rising. Silence "goes before," guiding the rising movement. As our movement extends to include an upward direction, still we do not leave the deeper foundation behind, as an "innermost apartment" implies both intimacy from which the word "inner" is derived and the grounded foundation of a building. There is an aerial lightness to Merton's terrestrial apartment. He speaks of "open windows," "light," "sun" and "mornings." Yet Merton speaks of going into "emptiness" which for him was an unbounded openness, not an absence, and raising, not of the familiar sun but "strange suns," not for routine mornings, but for "new mornings." There is in these words a sense of the familiar being made strange. One may think making the familiar strange is a lovely notion, but query just how this could be done. I suggest we look to the deep foundation of the apartment and the source of its foundation. Could its source be in the ground of the world, or in the "world" of life—of the depthful inhabiting implicit in Superville's poem where the "inner apartment's" welcome is so genuine that even what is familiarly seen from its

windows is seen to belong to it and is held in fresh wonder?

The body of a mountain hesitates before my window:

(How can one enter if one is the mountain,

If one is tall, with boulders and stones,

A piece of Earth, altered by Sky?)

(cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 66)

That Mike experiences silence similarly in relation to movement is evident when he says, "I think of silence as something you go through and when you are passing through it just seems to me like everything stops." I wonder if Mike experiences "passing through" as if through a layer. He experiences the sensation of having everything stop at the same time he is passing through. This suggests to me that the passage is so smooth and effortless, indeed eurhythmic, that Mike is lulled into the sense of motionlessness characteristic of peace. The movement in his silence is uniquely expressed as travelling along a trail:

I would equate it [silence] to if I were travelling on a trail and there were many different types of trees in the forest and I was going to an aspen grove and it would be equated to that particular spot—the aspen grove within the forest. That spot would be silence. The aspen grove on the road to where ever I was going.

In this image of travelling along a trail the intimate silence of our inner apartment with its doors and windows and vertical movement has now drawn us out beyond the window to the immensity of a forest. The two kinds of space interior and exterior encourage each other in their growth. Rilke expresses it poetically, saying,

Silently the birds

Fly through us. O, I, who long to grow,

I look outside myself and the tree inside me grows.

(cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 201)

Inner immensity is characteristic of reverie, of peace, of motionless man. Most people would agree that a forest could be described as vast, and yet as Meg says, "Talk about *Tales from the Vienna Woods*; those Vienna Woods aren't very

big and yet you feel quite remote in them."

When Mike equates silence to travelling along a trail in a forest we sense the inner immensity of silence becomes the immensity of a forest. For have we not all experienced the sense of going deeper and deeper into the mossy bed of a forest with its dense trees and filtered light that conceals all boundaries and encloses us in never-endingness. I wonder if you catch yourself, as do I, whispering and walking gently so as not to disturb anything. It is as though everything which is there had been there forever. As I ponder Mike's image I think of his comment about the kind of life he chose when he perceived a choice, "a dynamic life, an interesting life, and uh a knowledgeable as well as experience, experience, experience." It is not surprising that his silence involves movement along a trail, for as George Sand says, "What is more beautiful than a road. It is the symbol and the image of a varied active life" (cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 11).

Yet, I sense there is so much more to be found within the image of a road or a trail or a path. My mind turns to the *roji* or path in the Japanese garden I travel in my imagination. This path symbolizes "the way" into the realm of the spirit. We are invited to take our time as we travel along the gently curving path so carefully prepared for us with the leaves swept clear and arranged artfully in piles by the side, the water basin freshly filled, the trees shaken so that the spaces between the leaves appear to have grown along with the tree. The garden borrows the hills and trees from beyond, so that as we travel along we have at once both the sense of an enclosed intimate space and a vast space. Just as our eye is invited to the space beyond the garden so too are we invited to go beyond the garden. "To walk along this garden path is to discard worldly title, position and means" (Sen, 1987, p. 45). Thus a path or a trail becomes more than movement, or an "active varied life"; it becomes "a way" to realize "tranquillity of mind in communion with one's fellow men within our world" (Sen, 1987, p. 9).

Mike begins the road to silence on a trail and passes many types of trees until he reaches silence—the aspen grove where the trail then becomes the road to where he is going. An aspen grove lets more light through than, for instance,

a spruce grove and a grove is of a noticeable size as opposed to one or two trees. Could it be that Mike finds silence to be of a certain minimum size, or thickness or duration? When he shifts from the trail to a road, has the grove changed his mood or outlook widening his perspective possibly by showing him “the way” and making the travelling seem somehow easier? Might not different destinations on different trails involve different groves?

Anne began conversation one describing silence as the passageway through a series of locked doors and ended conversation two exploring the notion that silence is fluid movement through spaces.

I think silence has to be a fluid movement now that I think about it. When you say the word silence it's not one space, it's the movement through spaces to get down to where it is to its true essence. . . . but when you say silence there are so many levels or degrees.

In contrast to Mike who sees silence as one space, an aspen grove, Anne sees silence “as movement through spaces.” Within Anne's description of silence as “movement through spaces” space enlarges to take on the additional quality of movement. Space is seen specifically as “fluid movement.” Could this fluidity originate, at least in part, with Anne's Catholicism where fluid may suggest baptism or the flight of a dove or spirit? We take a clue from another conversation when Anne was asked if she had any other metaphors for silence and responded, “When you said that, I was thinking of a dove or freedom or peace or something with wings.” Anne then speaks of “movement through spaces to get down . . . to its true essence” and we find ourselves revisiting the foundational image.

Rhythms

My host wipes the ceramic tea container and bamboo tea scoop with a silk cloth before the hot water is drawn from the kettle with a bamboo ladle and poured into the tea bowl. After the bamboo whisk is rinsed carefully the water is poured out and the bowl is wiped with a damp linen cloth. The fragrance of tea intermingles with the stillness in

the room and the steam from the kettle. A rhythm sets in as my host measures the powdered tea into the bowl, adds some hot water, blends the tea with the whisk, adds a bit more water, blends it again and passes it to me.

As I reflect on Anne's image of silence as "fluid movement" to get "down to its essence" I contemplate further my tea ceremony. Again I see the thick green liquid tea which my host pours into the bowl for us, and I think of the great tea master Rikyu saying that the green colour represents the green of the forest and the rivers which flow into his heart as he drinks the tea. My understanding of these words of Rikyu has deepened as my research unfolds, as I now see that in silence the vast infinite space of nature corresponds to the infinite immensity of our inner selves. I think of the simple ritual of pouring tea and the time my host has spent over the years silently perfecting the ritual so that our ceremony will be a simple open meeting of heart and mind. As my host prepares the tea even his breathing seems to have become harmonized to his rhythmical movements. Our conversation flows freely in and out of the silent space and his preparations. I think of Anne's words that silence is "fluid movement." Fluid movement is not fixed or rigid. Fluid movement changes shape readily; it flows in and out of space freely, silently, beautifully, just as our tea ceremony.

Reflecting on the rhythm of the tea ceremony I recall Anne's words when she was asked what brought her into silence. "When I first went to my husband's parents' house . . . there was just a rhythm among the people there." I thought of John saying, "So rather than looking at music as a flurry of sounds with spaces between you can look at it as spaces of silence framed with sound. . . . I think that the rhythms of poetry are more under the surface." When asked what happens during the spaces he responded, "Well, I don't know, it depends I think, um, it's just a moment and you soak it in. . . . I would describe it for me as more of a mood sort of thing. You just have a feeling for something and it sort of has been created out of thin air."

My reverie expands from the tea room to the surrounding garden. The bird that sang earlier is silent just now. In the branches I imagine the silhouette

of its nest, and I sense the quiet rhythm of nest building with Michelet's words. "On the inside the instrument that prescribes the circular form for the nest is nothing else but the body of a bird. It is by constantly turning round and round and pressing back the walls on every side, that it succeeds in forming this circle." He continues, "The house is a bird's very person; it is its form and its most immediate effort, I shall even say, its suffering" (cited in Bachelard, 1964, p. 101). A bird is made slowly, lovingly, and quietly from the inside out, just as we are. Just as we discover C.S. Lewis is made, when he shares that he is "a product of long corridors, empty sunlit rooms, upstairs indoor silences, attics explored in solitude, distant noises of gurgling cisterns and pipes, and the noise of wind under the tiles" (1955, p. 17).

I recall Yanagi's words. "The maker of a pattern draws the essence of the thing seen with his own heart beat life to life" (1972, p. 114). What a beautiful image of this we have in nest building. I realize that the essence of a pattern, of which rhythm is a part, lies much deeper than the surface appearance. Again I think of a bird fashioning her nest with the pressure of her body, grass blade by grass blade, circular motion by circular motion, heart beat by heart beat, we may even wonder if palpitation by palpitation. I think of Meg saying, "Blake's lark [in Milton] provides the outline to a pattern of sounds." I recall Elaine speaking about the saying on a Hallmark card, "'Life is a tapestry of things we have done and said.' And it's almost like that isn't it? You're part of something more complete. . . . There is no way to express the sense of there being some order."

Elaine begins by speaking of a tapestry which is a familiar pattern in which coloured threads intermingle rhythmically to create a design. She ends by saying that there is a sense of order to pattern. Meg also refers to order when she speaks of the lark providing an outline of sound to the silence; outline suggests an ordering. John speaks of order as well when he says silence is framed with sound; frames may be thought of as ordering a picture. Anne speaks of the rhythm she found at her husband's parents' house which suggests a sense of order.

Patterns tend towards symmetry which originates in nature. The symmetry of nature suggests order and standards. Therefore when something matures

into a pattern, for example, a tapestry, the rhythm between a couple, the return of a bird year after year to the same spot to build a nest, a tea ceremony, order is realized. The maker of a pattern observes strict principles otherwise confusion and ugliness arise. As Yanagi says, "Whenever I consider the question of beauty, I return to this subject [pattern] so close I feel is the relationship between the transformation into beauty and the transformation into pattern (1972, p. 113). *The Random House Dictionary* concurs with the relationship between pattern and beauty defining beauty as "the quality present in a thing or person that gives intense pleasure or deep satisfaction to the mind, whether arising from sensory manifestations as shape, colour, sound etc., a *meaningful design* or *pattern*, [my emphasis] or something else (a personality in which high spiritual qualities are manifest)" (1987, p. 1423). Thus we see that the patterns created by man are the imaginative summing up of the rhythms and the beauty found in nature. To understand the beauty of pattern intuition is more of the essence than intellectual perception (Yanagi, 1972).

Sensuousness

My host inquires whether I hear the wind gently blowing through the pines in the soft simmering water of the kettle? We sit listening to the silence. The silence of the tea room garden is filled with sensory impressions: the smell of pine carried in through the window, the fragrance of tea, the scent of the charcoal burning on the brazier, the feel of the tatami, the contrast provided by the shadows and so much more. I sense a hint of moisture from the waterfall in the distance. Overarching all of the details of the tea ceremony is a profound sense of calm.

As I think about rhythm, beauty, symmetry and order within pattern I remember that beauty is also found within sensory impressions. I think of Mike saying,

Sometimes I like to listen to silence. It's very earthy. It's peaceful. You know the Don Juan thing and he talks about

not looking at the leaves but through the leaves or looking at the spaces. It's silent here and I can hear the silence between the ticks of the clock, between the dog barking.

In another conversation when asked what triggers silence he replied, "Pine and spruce." Another time he said, "For me it [silence] is quite often a warm soft darkness."

That Elaine experiences silence similarly is revealed when she says, "At the same time that there is a warmth, there is a coolness that is the refreshing side." She continues, returning us to the intimacy of silence, saying, "I know the space and the enfolding are both there. . . . Yes, space and sometimes darkness."

In contrast to the darkness both Mike and Elaine experience in silence, Anne speaks of focusing on positive white light in silent spaces. "If I'm going to be silent in here [her principal's office] it's just focusing on something and maybe prayer is the easiest way for me to get into it. Focusing on goodness and often the positive white light."

It is curious that both Mike and Elaine associate silence with darkness, and Anne with light. In our society darkness is often associated with death, nullity, hopelessness and the inertia that goes along with it and light with the opposites. We see that Anne calls it "positive white light." Could it be that silence somehow has the potential to focus on the positive side of darkness which is often overlooked by society? We see this is the case for Rilke who associates darkness with depth when he says, "My God is dark and like a hundred / matted roots that drink in silence" (cited in Jephcott, 1972, p. 47). Could it be the same for Mike and Elaine who often seem to speak of God, nature, and specifically forests in almost the same breath? Rilke finds that darkness, unlike light, does not restrict the sphere of possibility to the area it illuminates and that it holds everything to itself (Jephcott, 1972).

Further, Elaine speaks of the sensory impressions she finds both in simple line drawings and in the sky, saying, "In those simple line drawings [Benjamin Chi Chi drawings on her office wall] I find there is a sense of silence and I really find it in the sky too. Both in the brilliant blue of the sky which I always think of as quiet and in a really starry sky." Within this description we see that Elaine

has experienced silence holistically or in a simplified way, in the sense of being free from division into parts. "To make symmetrical and to simplify have the same significance. Without symmetry simplification cannot be achieved" (Yanagi, 1972, p. 116). When Elaine refers to the "simple line drawings," the "brilliant blue of the sky," and a "starry night" we see that she is blending or simplifying the details of immensity together to form a whole.

My mind returns to the simple arrangement of flowers in the alcove of the tea room. I recall the flowing movement of my host's arm as he traces the organic line of the arrangement in the air and explains that all of the unnecessary elements have been removed so that the essence of the flowers come to the fore. He explains that the lines of the flowers only exist because of the space beyond or outside of them. I realize that Elaine is removing the unnecessary elements from her silences so that the essence comes to the fore, as a brilliant blue or a multitude of stars.

In another conversation Elaine provided a contrasting image of silence involving detailed sensory impressions.

I think it [the silence experienced at the camp site at six o'clock] was very much acquiring the specific things and it had a lot to do with smell. Smelling the forest, the water was still, and you could hear the birds and you could hear the traffic on the highway a bit which always seems to emphasize how quiet it is. So I think it's the detail . . . so yeah, there's times when it's detailed and sometimes when it's a wash.

Elaine's experience of silence as sometimes "a wash," or overall impression, and sometimes detailed is underscored again and again by the other teachers. Anne experiences church holistically as a feeling of peace and visual reflections, saying, "At times at church I can go into another space . . . I think it's just peaceful there and the feeling of, uh, I don't know, quiet and peace and let everything go . . . and you see the reflections through the glass."

In another conversation Anne reveals a contrasting account of silence as a detailed sensory experience, saying,

I know for the first four or five months I'd listen to the birds or

watch the birds or the new snow or even in the fall I'd sit on the hill that goes down to the playground and the smell of the leaves all around you know. It was a lovely lunch hour.

Meg also referred to detailed sensory impressions in church. "Churches have a distinctive odour. The odour of sanctity perhaps? (laughter) I don't know, I think it is from being shut up all week." (heartier laughter) Meg continues, saying,

The church board planted trees rather too close to the building and one of the things I would always notice was the tree branches rubbing against the side of the church as a sort of adjunct to whatever was going on.

In another conversation while looking at pictures and reading poems Meg revealed sensory impressions are also experienced holistically, saying, "I tend to look at the whole thing. The general impression, sort of let it happen and then you can go back and say oh this is this; I like that."

Thus we see silence may be experienced as detailed sensory impressions or more holistically as a wash or a blend as seen previously, for example, in the blue of the sky or in certain types of weather. Speaking of weather that blends, Mike says, "Yesterday when it was raining . . . I think I slowed down a bit just to experience it to let it run over me . . . that was a calming effect and that was nice." He continues as noted earlier, saying, "I want to go and wrap myself in something warmer and experience the silence . . . and go and hide somewhere you know" with the concomitant implication of intimacy. Elaine speaks of the neutralizing effect of snow and drizzly weather when she proclaims,

Snow storms, or maybe just falling snow and sometimes, not always, not when you are sick of the rain, but on a cloudy drizzly day after hot days . . . I think those kinds of times become contemplative times. . . . Even the cars don't make as much noise. Especially we notice that with snow. Nothing seems to make as much noise on the street so it is more conducive to getting inside yourself.

Anne in responding to a picture of snow falling on a farm addressed the

blending that creates an overall mood—one of peace—saying, “This is an opportunity of experiencing some of nature—not a vicious storm but the silence and peacefulness of the storm too.”

Sitting quietly with my host I begin to wonder what our ceremony would be like in winter. It seems so strange at first as I have watched the leaves bud, the plum blossoms arrive and eventually fall to be followed some time later by the autumn leaves but never before now have I seen snow weighing down the branches. And yet once I begin imagining, how readily a Canadian can conjure up images and feelings of winter. Many of us would laugh and say it comes far too easily! Looking out on the wash of white I am struck with how quickly the tea house has become a refuge. I cannot just step through the door without some preparation and so I begin to draw more into the room. Wrapped in its folds my happiness deepens and I begin to gaze out at winter. Snow muffles all sound, covers all tracks, blurs the garden path, conceals all colours and blends everything into a universal white. I turn the vastness of the wash of white inwards. My host gently enters the space of my thoughts when he asks me quietly which season I find to be the oldest? I know what I will answer but I sit quietly waiting on my further understanding. In time I answer winter and my host nods, saying he too has found it so. We begin to share our understanding.

It strikes me that winter is old and vast, just as silence is, just as Picard's prehistoric creature is. Like silence it is often experienced holistically as atmosphere—the entity of life, often taken for granted, in which we move. It occurs further that both winter and silence can so easily be dismissed as a form of cosmic negation and yet look at how the teachers link the two and the benefits that we are beginning to see flowing from silence. We notice that the effect of certain weather tends to nullify sensory impressions creating an overall atmosphere and yet that very nullification is conducive to a deepening of our inhabiting. Admittedly there is a receptive element involved in experiencing the benefits of silence, just as there is in experiencing those of winter, and although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into the benefits of winter

I should not be surprised to find there are a good many. Ah, there I find you smiling again.

How beautifully Hammarskjöld summarizes the first theme of silence as a space—of intimacy, layers, movement, order, and sensory impressions—in his following dream description:

In a dream I walked with God through the deep places of creation; past walls that receded and gates that opened, through hall after hall of silence, darkness and refreshment—the dwelling-place of souls acquainted with light and warmth—until, around me, was an infinity into which we all flowed together and lived anew, like the rings made by raindrops falling upon wide expanses of calm dark water.

(1964, p. 105)

INVITATION

The tranquillity of the tea hut and the garden has displaced the noise of the traffic, the bustle of the busy street, and the routines and insistings of the day. With the lengthening of the shadows comes a heightened awareness of all that has been left behind and all that has been added. As I extend the bowl to my host it occurs to me that we have gone beyond host and guest becoming merely two sharing a bowl of thick green tea. Yet who could explain exactly how it occurred? I notice my host's hands gently framing the tea bowl, his eyes gazing at its contents. After a time he raises the bowl to his lips and sips. He returns the empty bowl to his lap and continues looking quietly, head bowed. What does the silence invite him to? What does he see in the space of an empty tea bowl that so engages him?

He raises his head and begins to speak of a long ago tea master who was preparing for his guest and went out to oversee the sweeping of the garden. The tea master noticed a spider's web in the corner of the garden and ordered that it be left exactly as it was. I nodded smiling. He continued to talk and spoke of the great tea master Rikyu who was given money by a wabi tea connoisseur and was asked to purchase some tea utensils. My host explained the wabi aesthetic, saying it was quiet and simple taste—the ideal of the tea ceremony. Rikyu, my host explained, bought chakin—the linen cloth used to dry the rinsed tea bowl—with the money instead of tea utensils and sent back the change to the connoisseur explaining that as long as the chakin was clean wabi was preserved and tea could be enjoyed. My host paused for a small time to replenish the kettle from the fresh water vessel and then continued on, telling me of Rikyu's famous morning glory tea ceremony.

Silence listened while we talked quietly. It was as though our words came from the silence and then fell back into it. It was as though silence welcomed both our words and the spaces large and small between our words—indeed it seemed to be inviting these spaces. I wondered out loud if my host also experienced this invitation. This prompted one of his rare smiles. There was no need for further talk just now. Silence was seeking us.

Stories recounted by my host derived from Stories From A Tearoom Window by Chikamatsu Mori (1982).

Seeking

We see that Elaine experiences silence as an invitation when she says, "You know how we talked about inner silence being enfolding. I think the way into that is a beckoning, sort of come in and feel the surrounding. I think it is invitational just as the vast silences are invitational." John, too, experiences silence as an invitation. "Maybe there is a moment where there is nothing and you are invited to something and you notice the leaves and you are watching them blow in the wind and you start to think about things." He continues with the invitational aspect, saying, "So that space has invited you to another space."

When Elaine explains that at times she feels the need to be alone and so she "draws into herself" we find that she seeks silence. At another time, however, she explained, "You just accept [silence]" or "let it wash over you" and we discover that not only does she seek silence but that silence seeks her. For Mike, who observes, "When I was younger I had to stop and search for silence and now I think that silence can overtake me," we find that the invitation is experienced also as a seeking by him—and by silence.

There is the idea emerging that silence is active; it seeks, and we see the second theme in this thesis— silence as invitation; in the previous chapter we saw silence experienced in terms of space, and now, here, in terms of invitation. At times it is a gentle seeking, an invitation to come and feel the surrounding warmth of our comforter, such as felt when we—"draw into ourselves," "it washes over us," it "overtakes us"—or such as must be felt when the quiet materials of the nest invite the bird to shape them into the comfort and completeness of a home.

However, this seeking of silence is not always gentle as seen in both the following poem by Merton and in Anne's and Elaine's responses to the poem.

Silence is louder than a cyclone
In the rude door, my shelter.
And there I eat my air alone
With pure and solitary songs.

(1977, p. 197)

Anne responded, "Yes. Motivating you. Driving you . . . in your thoughts, it's very loud because those thoughts are a form of silence. It's not a level that is soft, Ruth. Maybe you have to go through this type of silence to get to the peace and the softer more gentle silence." Elaine responded similarly, "Sometimes silence is darn noisy pounding at your door." In the book, *The Chosen*, by Potok, we find Danny's father responding to the loudness of silence in kind—"He seemed to be shouting down the silence with his work" (1967 p. 27). Thus we find that silence seeks us in two quite opposing ways.

Picard finds that "silence puts man to the test" (1988, p. 17). A test seeks to determine the presence, quality or genuineness of something. It seeks to understand something so it questions, and we are invited to respond, to interact, to share our understanding and hopefully to grow. The teachers spoke specifically of the testing of silence with regard to such things as: understanding one another, using difficult teaching experiences to reach a deeper level of understanding, knowing what to do with silence as you get older, using contemplative experiences such as nature and art to bring forth sacred moments, and finding silence when life is pressured. We see in the following image of silence as a cloak that the test of silence for Picard is one of faith. "It is a mark of divine love, that a mystery of the Faith always spreads around itself a kind of cloak of silence" (1988, p. 12).

In this image we find the intimacy of our comforter has expanded to include the openness and mystery that surrounds a cloak or a cape. At this juncture I will restrict our exploration to the openness found in the image. A cape contains all of the surrounding warmth and protection of our comforter but it encompasses even more as it invites us out into our physical surroundings. Indeed, it is an opening to the world. As we stop to ponder a cape we realize that it is malleable; it flows. Although a cape is enclosed, it is spacious and its surrounding folds hang loosely, freely, open to the movement of the wearer. Within the surrounding folds of a cape we sense a free spirit, a spirit who prefers undefined boundaries and desires infinitely extensible folds. We sense as boundaries fall away there is an opening to possibilities. The heart of a cape is possibility.

Speaking

We have seen silence as an anthropomorphized being beckoning, inviting or welcoming, and testing, or, as I prefer to say, questioning. So it is not surprising to find this anthropomorphization extended by the teachers to include giving silence a voice. "I guess that silence isn't always silence. It's got some other voices coming somewhere" (Elaine). "Let [silence] have its freedom. Let it have its voice if you can use silence as having a voice" (Anne). "[Silence is] saying something that I feel, it's the speaking to you that is just right" (Meg). "I think if you want to be in charge of your life you have to be in charge of the inner voice of your mind somehow" (John). At this point I should like to be able to give you my experience of the voice of a cape. I could point at it by saying it is experienced as the exciting feeling of a powerful strong calm but that is just the beginning of the unfolding of the voice of a cape.

Turning to the literature we again find that silence is given a voice. "You have to want to listen to it. It has a strange beautiful texture. It doesn't always talk. Sometimes it cries" (Danny, in *The Chosen*, 1967, p. 262). Another example of silence being given a voice is noted by Picard.

When two people are conversing with one another, however, a third is always present: Silence is listening. That is what gives breadth to a conversation. . . . But not only that: the words are spoken as it were *from* silence, from that third person, and the listener receives more than the speaker alone is able to give. Silence is the third speaker in such a conversation. (1988, p. 25)

However, the following words of Mortley may cause us to wonder as they seemingly raise a contrary view of silence. "Silence is the absence of speech. The mind functions, but in a nonverbal way. It assumes a mental activity which is not speech-like. . . . The meditative act of silence can produce a form of knowledge which transcends [the limitations of speech fragmentation]" (1986, p. 250). How do we reconcile this with so many previously saying silence *does* have a voice? Rich gives us a clue as to a reply, when she says,

but there come times . . .
 when we have to pull back from the incantations,
 rhythms we've moved to thoughtlessly,
 and disenthral ourselves, bestow
 ourselves to silence, or a deeper listening.

(1978, p. 74)

Inviting

We begin to sense when Rich speaks of a "deeper listening" that the dialogue and voice of silence may be experienced differently at different levels. Ryan suggests that this is so when in speaking of Holderlin's silence he states,

[Silence] is a stillness eloquent of something: man, if he is attentive to nature, perceives in her the language of a higher order. . . . As listener and speaker, nature is perceived above all as communing with inner man—the heart, the soul, the feelings, those faculties whose functioning beyond speech constitutes somehow a higher order. (1988, p. 130)

We sense that Merton experiences the invitation of silence in this "language of a higher order" when he says, "Silence rises up in wordless gentleness and flows out to me from the roots of all created being, welcoming me tenderly" (1977, p. 363). Here we have all of the movement, depthfulness, vastness, and intimacy of silence that emerged in the previous theme of silence as a space now experienced as an invitation. This invitation comes from the depths of creation, rises up, and flows out wordlessly—seeking. We sense the continuousness of this intimate invitation with its "tender welcome." It flows forth in an ongoing way, at times perhaps almost imperceptibly. Surely this intimate invitation is of significance! A profound invitation!

Pondering Merton's experience of silence I think of the sincere invitation of my host to come and share a bowl of tea and his quiet preparations and warm welcome. His invitation is rooted in *koro ire* which is written with two characters, the first, *koro*, representing "the heart spirit and mind," and the second, *ire*, "to

put in" (Sen, 1987, p. 40). This invitation flows from "the heart spirit and mind" of generations of tea masters who have carried on faithfully a rich tradition that invites us through sharing a "simple" bowl of tea to "the way of tea." The "way of tea" sees that the single plum blossom floating in the bowl represents all of the plum blossoms naturally occurring on the trees, it sees that the quiet rhythm of the ceremony flows from and into the larger rhythm of all of creation, it sees that a spider's web has an underlying implicit beauty, that in sharing a bowl of tea there is hope for a deeper humanity. All of this is seen and yet this is only the beginning of what it sees. The tea ceremony is a routine or a ritual, and yet, paradoxically it invites us past daily routines. We note in John's response to my admitted habit of gazing at students' faces during quiet working times that silence has the effect of inviting him past routines as well.

The inwardness of silence invites you outside of yourself in the sense of outside of your daily routines etc. and when you [Ruth] look at your students' faces in a moment of silence that causes you to wonder about them. . . . It invites you outside of the daily routines of business as usual and I think that art forms do that as well when you stop.

At times silence invites us past something far stronger than our daily routines. It can invite us to the deeper listening both Rich and Ryan speak of, as seen in the following words of Elaine:

There is a silence in feeling that you're not getting an answer [from God about her mother's illness involving an inability to talk]. . . . Maybe the silence is to say you still have something to learn or to grow or to learn from this. The strength comes back and the easing of that feeling [of not getting an answer] comes back again in the silence because you hear [her] internally.

In an earlier conversation she recalled one of her mother's favourite expressions—"the chickens are coming home to roost." She said that recollection had been encouraging her as she was pondering how to guide her daughter through teenagehood. She remembered some of the things she had put her own mother

through and when this light-hearted expression popped up, it was heartening to her. We find that although there is now silence between Elaine and her mother, she senses her mother in a different way; silence has invited Elaine past suffering to comfort.

Sometimes the suffering we are invited past is the suffering of alienation. Dauenhauer finds that silence is fundamentally interrogative, not in an alienating, antagonistic way, where for example one side *insists* on an answer from the other—where people and the world are at odds—but rather in a dialogue. One finds oneself inhabiting a world that engages his or her interaction (1980, p. 168). As we don our cape we begin to wonder about the invitation. How genuine is it? What will it be like? Why was it given?

How beautifully the old man in Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*, models his silent interrogation of the world. The old man is sitting on a porch in a rural setting, talking to his former wife:

Anyhow , he say, you know how it is. You ast yourself one question, it lead to fifteen. I started to wonder why us need love. Why us suffer. Why us black? Why us men and women? Where do our children really come from? I didn't take long to realize I didn't hardly know nothing. And if you ast yourself why you black or a man or a woman or a bush it don't mean nothing if you don't ast why you here, period.

So what you think? I ast.

I think us here to wonder, myself. To wonder. To ast. And that in wondering about the big things and asting bout the big things, you learn about the little ones, almost by accident. But you never know more about the big things than you start with. The more I wonder, he say, the more I love. (1982, p. 27)

Quite simply the old man's silent intimate questioning of the world invites him past suffering and alienation to love. We have seen both the vastness of the invitation of silence and the possibility. It invites us past a range of concerns, from the mundane "business as usual" routines to the more profound matters of pain and alienation, but how open are we to receiving the invitation? How

open are we to receiving the heart of a cape?

A small bird wreathed in silence hovers at the open tea room window. It persisted there, looking in at me. The very air itself seemed to stop and hold the moment, linking bird, host, me, tea room and garden in a single unity. I realized after a long moment that I had been holding my breath, taking in the weightlessness of the bird, its softness, its openness to us.

Stopping and Being Open

Anne acknowledges this need for openness, saying, "It's a journey . . . and maybe at certain times we only get so far because that's all we're able to open ourselves up to." Mike, too, in speaking about inner silence acknowledges the need for openness when he says, "Transcending for me raises up . . . I don't think I'm raising up [in silence] . . . there's a 'trans' in there, and I'm not certain." We continued talking and I asked him if he was allowing himself to be open. He responded, "Yeah." Elaine adds to this, saying, "[Silence] isn't only having the opportunity but it is being open to take the opportunity."

John gives us insight into how we may be open when he describes hiking with friends in the Kananaskis.

We walked to the top of a big trail and when we got there we just lay down in the grass and we could look up at the sky and not realize each other was there for a few minutes . . . Let the wind go by and feel the sun . . . So it [silence] can come to you but you also have to receive it. Let it come to you and if you *stop* [my emphasis] sometimes it will.

Within John's words we feel the warmth of the sun and the gentleness of the wind while revisiting the paradox of silence, seen in our first theme of silence as a space, as both intimacy and in Meg's words, "comfortable isolation." After the ascent by foot the friends lie in the grass and continue the ascent by eye and mind looking up at the sky. Despite the fact that the friends are close they forget each other is there, becoming isolated and receptive—individuals—perhaps

hypnotized by their own solitude. Perhaps moved to isolation by what each uniquely sees and feels. When John speaks of the necessity of receiving silence we are brought back to the idea that something is given. We have interpreted this “something” which is given to be an invitation and John reminds us that in order to be open to the invitation we must *stop*. Mike also refers to this need to stop, saying, “Silence right now is being rejected by too many people. . . . And nobody is *stopping* [my emphasis] to smell the roses.”

So we find emerging the idea that being open to silence involves stopping. But what are we stopping? What do we stop or leave behind when we don our cape, opening ourselves to its infinitely extensible folds? Each of the teachers spoke of the necessity of stopping society’s routines in order to be open to the invitation of silence. John puts his concerns about “daily routines and things” this way: “I get so preoccupied with the goals or those things that I have to do, that there is no room left for me. . . . That just fills up who I am. There’s a me that has to go out and do all these things and has to be at this place at this time and has to accomplish these objectives and everything.” He indicates there is something essential beyond, adding, “but then there is a me behind that.”

Anne, too, speaks of the concern of being filled with routines and the importance of moving to the more essential humanness beyond the routines when she recalls, with considerable humour, her several attempts at writing a letter of suspension after her sabbatical.

The zone superintendent called two or three times on it and then I thought now hold on here. Let’s look at the sensitivity of the situation and forget the t’s crossed and the dots. We went through hell on earth here and let’s get things in perspective.

Anne ended her story by bringing us back to the deeper humanity that lies beneath surface routines, saying, “Ah we’re only human,” and then added the superintendent had phoned back to say everything was all right. Elaine points out that the children she sees as a specialist are experiencing difficulty in school and are full of the “knowledge” that they are “disasters academically.” She sees her role as helping them go beyond this routine assessment to see that their

worth shouldn't be measured in their marks. It seems that we are aware of the boundaries that surround our routine serviceable coats and that we sense the need to stop wearing these coats at times and open ourselves to the possibilities of an unbounded cape.

Meg smiled as she quoted her grandmother: "Now if you would just do it my way dear everything would be lovely," and we are reminded that society's insistings that we wear our routine coats attempts to fill our lives at a young age. Meg then goes on to speak of the need to stop and use silence to get away from "the things"—we could say including routines, even her grandmother's ways—which she "had been trained to think."

Merton also speaks of the need for a certain amount of solitude to nourish our personal perspective, saying, "When a man is lost in the wheels of a social machine he is no longer aware of human needs as a matter of personal responsibility" (1972, p. 53). John expresses the same concern, saying, "I think a lot of the things we do are almost pre-programmed. I hate the idea." Merton's criticism is clear as to the effect of society mechanically filling our lives: "A radical ability to care for all beings . . . is destroyed by a loss of perspective" (1972, p. 53). John's criticism is parallel: "Now we have the computer so we are re-programming ourselves for success. It's almost like you have no soul."

As we continue we find it is not only general routines we must stop in order to accept the invitation of silence but the more specific routine of certain forms of talk. Mike recounts the guilt he sometimes experiences when he is sitting silently with somebody he doesn't know well and then he thinks, "I should politically say something." The problem is that this is not the kind of talk he wants; maybe it is all right, this neutral talk, to get some conversation going, if it proceeds to what he calls "more natural talk." Meg finds similarly that "a lot of small talk is just that, small talk" and yet she sees it as purposeful because "you wouldn't really want to share everything with everyone." Yet she cherishes the more natural and depthful talk found in friendship.

Political talk and small talk remind me of the form of talk which Hammarskjold metaphorically calls a blown egg.

A blown egg floats well, and sails well on every puff of

wind—light enough for such performances, since it has become nothing but shell, with neither embryo nor nourishment for its growth. 'A good mixer.' Without reserve or respect or respect for privacy, anxious to please—speech without form, words without weight. Mere shells. (1964, p. 52)

Yes, a "good mixer," a good beginning. When strangers, for example, get together, political or small talk helps make them comfortable. But what if that were all conversation ever was? Wouldn't it, like the empty egg shell, just be surface, with nothing underneath? Thinking of comfort, my mind turns to my comforter, but that is not the image portrayed here. The image is more like a windbreaker, a thin covering perhaps, yet sufficient to stave off the winds of initial discomfort between strangers. Although this thin covering has its place it does not provide the deeper satisfaction found within the surrounding quiet folds of a comforter or the possibilities of a cape. With political talk or small talk silence is being avoided, it seems, not let in, as though it is a call for guilt. The quiet surrounding warmth of the comforter or the possibility of the cape can't even begin to exist in these problematic forms of talk. It is only later if the strangers have become comfortable enough, maybe even to the point of trust and respect, to let silent spaces into their conversation that the comforter can even begin to be knitted. It is only later when the comforter is knitted that a more comfortable, we might say gentle atmosphere, which allows silence, surrounds the conversation.

Two particular aspects of talk that emerged as particularly troublesome were labelling and jargon. John speaks about the necessity of "losing all the tags" and of "erasing the preconceptions" that allow you to "slip by things." Elaine also speaks about labelling which can unwittingly fill our conversations: "The more you think about it, the more there is not a here and a there, there is a this, and you need to be silent sometimes to figure that out." For Elaine we see that the word "this" implies the wholeness of things, and she does not want us to miss that wholeness by divisive labelling of things into "here" or "there." Anne speaks of the need in education to look at things less routinely using labels and jargon. "Too many people in education are so heavy" [and] "the use of language [jargon] in that work! . . . The finest writers can write something . . .

simple that can touch someone and they can say God I felt that too." Just as Elaine does not want us to miss the wholeness of things by our use of particular words, so, too, we see Anne does not want us to miss communications that touch us at a deeper level. Within their words we find a parallel concern to stop and move beyond labels or jargon to the essence, to the "this." Their words so quietly invoke the image again of my host, whom I see reflecting the "this."

Elaine's response to Hammar skjold's "In order for the eye to perceive colour, it must divest itself of all colours" (1964, p. 111) is instructive as to what this stopping and going beyond to the "this" she explicitly refers to could involve. She observes,

In order to see the whole spectrum, you have to forget about one colour in particular. And so in order to see a whole of somebody's being, I guess, you have to forget for a little while about the little parts.

This shows us that for Elaine going beyond labels or jargon to finding the essence involves a holistic kind of looking. In forgetting about the "little parts" Elaine is consciously opening herself up to finding the vastness that we have seen is experienced in silence. She relates this holistic looking specifically to pedagogy, saying, "What I'm wanting to do is allow the teacher to stand back and take a look [at the student] so I have to think very carefully about what I'm allowing them to see instead of directing them to see something." Here we discover a teacher who is consciously seeking to expand her own vision so she in turn can expand her colleagues' vision.

Jephcott indicates what this going beyond labels or jargon could involve.

As general notions vanish and each object begins to appear unique, so too that object appears more interesting, more valuable. The paradoxical truth emerges that things seem to have more meaning, not less when they cannot be recognized [through the usual direct perception process]. (1972, p. 19)

A beautiful illustration of the stopping of the usual direct perception process is found in Rilke's description of the eternal stillness of cathedral statues: "only rarely, out of the fall of folds, / steps a gesture, upright, steep as

they" (cited in Jephcott, 1972, p. 116). We sense that within the stillness of Rilke's image a deeper looking is being composed. Yet how open are we to seeing this way? How often do we *stop* and allow this kind of perception?

Picard's examination of the role of silence in the world of in-dwelling helps us understand the process by which labels and jargon become dangerous.

In the world of immanence, silence is the impulse that gives its all-embracing quality to the human eye. When the eye concentrates on but a single aspect, it tries to compensate itself by artificially enlarging that aspect, making it absolute. . . . By this quantitative expansion of the phenomenon a pseudo breadth is achieved which is a sign of the human desire for the All-Comprehending, for the whole. (1988, p. 73)

Once something is labelled there is the danger that the eye which seeks an "all embracing" seeing will attach itself to the label which is only a part of the whole, indeed I would add a small part, and artificially enlarge it until it becomes the whole. Perhaps we see our wind breaker as the whole and forget to stop and consider the warmth of our coats, or we see our coats as the whole and forget to stop and be open to the possibility of our capes.

Elaine acknowledges this tendency in pedagogues to focus "on but a single aspect." "You [referring to her role as a specialist] start to get pretty narrowed and focused and say: can they read this page, can they write this story and can they do this math problem." What aspect a pedagogue focuses on is often driven by current fashion which comes as a package complete with ready-made jargon. Elaine carries on to acknowledge the seeking "for the whole," saying, "You need the reflection time. You have to keep going back to saying: but what else are they as people." We are encouraged to stop focusing on a single aspect and broaden our vision.

Meg, too, implies a need to stop and be open to silence and within her following brief eloquent sentence we discover a practical turn to this openness. "The city is full of little pockets of silence." I might add our cape is full of little folds of possibility. Unless we are aware that silence is sometimes found in "little pockets" we may miss opportunities. Mike finds these pockets of silence

during one conversation, “between the ticks of the clock, between the dog barking.” Although he acknowledges in another conversation that one can reach silence using short durations, he seems to want longer stretches, saying a short duration “is not as effective.” If one has enough time, he continues, “silence is a stepping stone to creativity. It changes your perspective.” Yet, elsewhere, he speaks of people needing small silences, saying, “Silence right now is being rejected by too many people . . . not taking enough time [*stopping*] for a little bit of silence . . . just going crazy.”

One begins to wonder if we get too preoccupied and busy, too filled up, with daily tasks and surface routines to stop and notice the “small pockets of silence all around us.” John seems to suggest that this is the case. “I mean do you contemplate yourself or think about things in a spiritual sort of way while you do your income tax form or playing with the kids or making dinner? Not usually—you are busy—so there has to be a quiet time.” Further, we recall Mike did not find “small pockets” of silence totally effective. However, we could ask if maybe we could *learn* to stop and be open to these small pockets of silence.

Anne speaks to this possibility, saying, “You have to find silence in the humdrum of the day to find the peace . . . then you can bring the peace to others in all things.” The humdrum of the day brings us back to routines and Meg’s metaphor of the whirling top. However, if we are open enough to stop and accept the invitation of silence we may find, as Anne does, inner silence in the routine of the day. And if we retain what we find in our silences, we may find, similarly to Anne, that we return to routines in a different way, through the active component of silence. Elaine points this out, saying, “I think that [retaining inner stillness and insight is] a thing that you really have to learn and discipline yourself to.”

Not only must we stop certain general routines and more specifically certain forms of talk to be open to the invitation of silence but we must also stop the devaluation of silence. John finds that society thinks that “a rational being . . . should always run around and put the puzzle together.” Putting the puzzle together is another way of expressing the activity of Meg’s whirling top, in

contrast to silence, which for John involves stopping and letting “things settle out and be clear,” and this to many seems mere inactivity. Meg also ponders society’s emphasis on activity which she relates to the difficulty she finds in instruction at the undergraduate level of university, which concentrates on the practical at the expense of the contemplative. “They [students] are not willing or able to see that contemplation has a place.”

It seems that the tension with regard to the practicality of silence infuses our lives and takes on different expressions. Mike felt guilt as a child deep in reverie in front of the living room window watching the cars go by: “I was guilty for sitting around not doing things,” as his mother was adamant, “that’s being useless.” Meg, too, felt guilty for reading as much as she did because her husband “took a dim view of it.” However, in another conversation when she laughingly says, “I feel at my stage of life I can pretty well afford to do as I please,” we find her feelings of guilt assuaged. That the strong flavour of guilt seeps into pedagogy, too, was revealed in Elaine’s response, “Yes, I think so” when asked if there is a tendency to feel she should be openly “doing something” whenever she was just sitting thinking in her office. She went on, “And there always is something. There is that big pile of reports. . . . But I think that you need to have that [reflection time].” Later in the conversation the feeling of guilt resurfaces when she asks, “If I sit and think about this child for half an hour what am I going to write down on the stats sheet? What am I going to say that I did?”

Buchmann addresses the guilt acknowledged by some of the teachers when they stop and open themselves to the invitation of silence in a defence that understands society’s view but goes on to show that view is misguided.

To speak of contemplation and practicality in one breath is to be guilty of a contradiction in terms or so it seems. Practicality is commonly associated with usefulness and work, while contemplation is a careful attention that suspends willing and doing in favour of a quiet absorbed kind of looking. . . . [Yet] Aristotle and Aquinas saw . . . thinking about the ends of action . . . as practical from beginning to end. (1989, p. 40)

McNamara underscores Buchmann's call for the practicality of a "quiet absorbed kind of looking," saying, "We are not really practical . . . life will escape us, unless we learn not to be always bustling about—unless we learn to be still, to let things happen around us, to wait, listen, receive, contemplate" (1974, p. 153). We must still the "whirling top," "let the mud settle," travel to the "aspen grove," surround ourselves with our "comforter" and open ourselves to the heart of our "capes," open ourselves to new possibilities.

Merton helps us consider an additional point, that it is not silence overall that either is or should be criticized, but rather certain kinds of silence.

Negative silence blurs and confuses our identity, and we lapse into day dreams and diffuse anxieties. Positive silence pulls us together and makes us realize who we are, who we might be, and the distance between the two . . . in the long run, the discipline of creative silence demands a certain kind of faith. (1985, p. 39)

When Merton refers to a certain kind of faith needed for positive silence one implied aspect of that faith must surely be a freedom from guilt as without this we lapse into diffuse "anxiety"—by definition, negative silence.

At times we see, as in the following poem by Wordsworth, that the devaluation of silence is rooted in fear and this, too, is something that needs to be stopped in order to be open to the invitation of silence.

What are fears but voices airy?

Whispering harm where harm is not.

And deluding the unwary

Till the fatal bolt is shot! (1932, p. 564)

This fear takes on different degrees: for Wordsworth it is "airy voices" but the teachers have noted it is much stronger. Elaine, for example, observes, "People who have a need to say what they think or what they understand and aren't given an opportunity—I think silence seems loud to them." Byrnes also uses strong terms for the fear in silence with regard to pedagogy. "To many children, silence is tantamount to rejection, and solitude reflects avoidance, since such punitive contexts are just about the only ones in which they encounter these

experiences" (1983, p. 96). Anne gives us the strongest term when she refers to the silences that people use against one another "[as] a whole different thing ... that's closing up, that's not opening up, that's *dangerous* [my emphasis]." Thus we see that the soft expansive folds of our cape are replaced by a protective metal shell into which we retreat, looking out warily through slitted vision. Stiffness sets in and we will each tiny movement. For every person who survives this protective metal shell we wonder how many dead ones are found trapped in there. Hopefully this is not the common experience of silence. Yet who among us cannot identify with the "airy voices" of fear found in silence?

Fear of the unknown was experienced by Meg when she found herself at an early age isolated from her familiar life and beginning a new life on a homestead. "I found it [silence for long periods on the homestead] frightening at first." But we see when Mike says, "Ah, they [people] fear where it [silence] will take them," that fear does not always stop at the unknown and may become fear of the suspected. Anne extends Mike's idea of fear of the suspected, saying, "There's a fear of it [silence] coming up too because can you deal with what's coming out as you unlock the doors."

Picard gives the fear associated with silence a positive turn by deepening our understanding of how fear can be reinterpreted in terms of possibilities for re-creation.

The basic phenomena [of which silence is one] take us, as it were, back to the beginning of things; we have left behind us what Goethe called "the merely derived phenomena" with which we normally live. It is like death, for we are left on our own, faced with a new beginning so we are afraid. "When the basic phenomena are revealed to our senses we feel a kind of shyness and even fear itself," Goethe said. In silence, therefore, man stands confronted once again by the original meaning of all things: everything can begin again, everything can be re-created. (1988 p. 21-22)

Thus each time we put on our cape Picard shows us that there can be a sense of anticipation, of hope, an opening to new beginnings. While our cape is

surrounding us lightly, providing protection, it is gently and sometimes not so gently inviting us to move, to flow with its folds, to open ourselves to the vastness which we discovered in the theme of silence as a space corresponds to our inner immensity.

We see Mike has experienced this positive turn Picard refers to, which allows him to be open to the invitation of silence when he adds, "I've lost that fear," to his previously quoted words that people fear where silence will take them. Anne speaks also of the possibility for this positive turn which she links to a need to practice silence. In her response to my question as to whether she finds silence to be intimate she said, "Yes, yes, I think it is, if you practise it and aren't afraid of it." At another time she says, "I've learned to stop it [internal conflict] and be silent or just to meditate or to pray." We recall Meg found silence on the homestead frightening only "at first" carrying through this positive turn. Indeed as we concluded our last conversation she said that she used to think that many of the years on the homestead were wasted years but through the course of our conversations she came to realize that "those solitary years gave me time to become an adult and for better or for worse the kind of adult I am."

An interesting form of Picard's positive turn is eloquently explored in Potok's novel, *The Chosen*. In this story a Hasidic Jew makes the decision to raise his highly intelligent son "in silence." The father pulls a tradition of silence out of the long-ago past when he sees a risk that his son's genius may dominate his spirituality. He does talk with his son during religious lessons which he leads as Rabbi, but virtually not at any other times, a routine spread over five years, which he hoped would teach his son the depths of compassion. At one point in the story, the son, Danny, is talking to a friend who can't accept the father's silent treatment towards Danny. Danny says of his father, "I respect and trust him completely, which is why I think I can live with his silence" (1967, p. 202). It is through the sense of trust and respect that Danny finds he can not only bear silence but that he can be open to the invitation of silence and all its possibilities. As he says, "You can listen to silence and learn from it. It has a quality and a dimension all of its own. It talks to me sometimes. I feel myself alive in it" (1967, p. 262).

Another aspect we need to stop in order to be open to the invitation of silence came to mind when the teachers spoke of needing to get away and have solitude for their times of silence. Meg says, "I can watch myself interacting with them [the near and the dear] and enjoy it but it can't go on for too long. I want to be alone [for awhile]. Anne speaks similarly. "I do try to get away [from the staff,] in the van and go to Glenmore park. I'm sure they think, 'ump' but I just need time to be on my own." Or as John says, "I like to have time alone and I like to have quiet moments with myself." Elaine recounts the same desire, saying, "This is what I've been needing [as she walked to the edge of a mountain lake] this smell and this quiet." The desire for the quietness often found in solitude comes alive with Mike's words. "I am looking forward to . . . my shop. . . . It actually gets really warm there and it feels good. I find it a little bit of an island." At the edge of our wonderings the thought may be suggesting that perhaps silence is merely an escape. Yet is this the experience of the teachers? And is their pursuit of solitude just a selfish thing or is there something more?

Anne starts to give us an answer to the question of whether these silent experiences are escapism, selfishness or something more.

I don't think that people can sometimes give you the support that you need. If you've found that loneliness where nobody has been able to comfort you and you've found it at another level you go back to that, because you know that is an all powerful level . . . beyond what this human world is about.

When Anne speaks of finding comfort and support at a level other than the human level we find ourselves poignantly returned to the idea explored in the space theme of silence as an infinity of deep intimate space within us. We take the small silences we find between the folds of our cape and turn them ever deeper and deeper into ourselves until we touch our depthfulness. At times we may even find as Anne did when she taught at a high needs school and didn't find any answers "out there," that "the answer is inside you" and that you have to "have enough confidence to believe in yourself." Thus we find that Anne uses silence not to escape but to move to a deeper level of self understanding.

John, too, uses silence to get to a deeper self further answering our question. "You can be teased out of yourself [by rituals associated with silence]. And I put quotes around self. That self is the material self—the self that interacts with society." We note that Anne also uses silence to be teased out of an aspect of self when she refers to "getting rid of the expectations often I put on myself." We recall Meg also used silence to get away from "what [she] had been trained to think" to her own thoughts.

Drake and Miller are helpful as well in answering our question, advocating the use of silence not as mere escapism but more importantly to let go of a particular aspect of self that they refer to as "ego chatter." They suggest ego chatter focuses on such issues as "how to acquire material possessions, achieve promotions, or control interpersonal relationships" and they claim, "it forms the main barrier to our hearts, our Being" (1991, p. 237). This "ego chatter" is reminiscent of Hammarskjöld's "blown egg talk."

Buchmann, helps us, too, calling for an important letting go in silence, but a letting go that goes beyond just self and social expectations to include letting go even of the will which may be shaped by social pressures and "common" ways of seeing things.

Teaching calls for contemplation in which one is not possessed by one's will or ideas. (p. 56) . . . weakening links to the choosing will (action and utility) and "hard-headed" expertise . . . suspending common ways of seeing, predicated on the centrality of human purposes. (1989, p. 42)

Anne so simply gets to the heart of the above affirmations, saying: "Silence is a way of putting aside selfishness."

John points to yet one more thing we may consider stopping in order to be open to the invitation of silence. "[Silence is] really an emptiness of something, like a vacuum almost and it draws you outside of yourself to a different thing. Outside inside." In another conversation we gain insight into John's experience of this emptiness. "I think there is a hub at the centre of who you are that you can sometimes fill up too much. So it's a Buddhist thing—the empty rice bowl." The association of the word "emptiness" with silence could definitely be

problematic if our mind turns to the nihilistic implication of emptiness as nothingness or non-being. Yet, John uses the word “emptiness” in the Buddhist sense of *shunyata* which is more accurately translated by Lief as “unbounded openness” (Walker, 1987, p. 134). *Shunyata* is the opening of the mind which comes when we shed our uncomfortable metal and slitted vision and don our capes to gaze at the vastness within and without. Rather than the sense of throwing everything out until all that is left is a blank kind of nothingness there is the sense of the comfortable feeling that comes with opening the doors and the windows and inviting the fresh air, sunlight, view and activity of the outside world in.

From conversations with the teachers I sense that they would find a kindred spirit flowing from both the words and the silent spaces between the words of the poet Ono Takamura. Takamura sees:

Masked by the snowflakes,
The colour of your petals
May well be hidden:
Yet still put forth your scent
That men may know you flower.

(1964, p. 71)

This small but profound poem nicely summarizes the second theme of this thesis, silence as invitation. Using simple but deep words Takamura invites us to stop our routine way—the way that could tempt us to devalue snow—or silence—as a cosmic negation or nihilistic emptiness. If we stop this routine way and open ourselves we see in a new way and become aware of the scent or the “small pocket” of possibility which in turn leads us to the essence of the flower or the heart of our cape.

DEEP SEEING—DEEP ACTION

My host and I sit, enfolded by dusk, listening to the gentle sweeping of the pines against the tea hut and the cicadas echoing into the expanding evening. Knowing that I will be leaving in a short time I feel at once an intertwining of sadness and joy. The waiting bench nestled amidst the pines where I sat earlier in the day is becoming more difficult to see through the tea room window. After a time the quietness blends into talk as my host recalls his grandfather's garden. He remembers walking through it regularly as a young child and then later as an adult, and explains how it had continually unfolded, how with each visit "a deeper seeing" evolved. He describes the garden in a quiet passionate way, choosing his words carefully, moving his arms rhythmically as if to re-create its form—the positioning of the trees and the pond, the angles of the sunlight and so much more. His explanation flows in and out of silent spaces as if it were gaining clarity and insight from these spaces. All that was within the garden had flowed into him and he was now bringing it to me, inviting me to experience it in my own way. He describes the feelings the garden had evoked, the sounds, the smells.

After a small silence he comments that although his grandfather was blind from birth he was considered to have the most visually beautiful and creative garden of his time. His grandfather, he explains, saw no use in simply copying some traditional garden. After a time, sensing the question in my mind he explains that his grandfather had designed the small space himself and had continued to oversee each and every detail of the garden throughout his life—the pruning of the trees to leave only strong lines, the selection of irregular, slightly rounded stones for the gently curving roji to suggest softness, the arrangement of the pond and its surroundings to promote reflection. He continues blending his inner and outer landscape of the garden with his words, his silences, and his movements. He recalls his grandfather saying that he wanted to create a garden of powerful calm, one that would visually represent his favourite symphony. A symphony that evoked strong ecstasy. Again my host quietly enters the space of my silent wondering, stating that his grandfather was a man of "deep seeing."

How readily I can fit into the teachers' recollections of times of inner silence, times when silence invites and wraps itself around one like a cape.

Times at kitchen tasks or getting outside, of reading or writing in a journal. For Elaine inner silence can approach through “ordinary routines like washing dishes or walking.” For Mike silence approaches through the methodical patterns of cross country skiing or the rhythms of a squash game. He speaks of “a certain amount of doing something methodical where there is a chant or a walk or something and then you shut off. That’s internal silence.” For John music ironically can bring silence with “its rhythmical quality that takes away other noises.” When Meg speaks of “falling into reading,” and “never remembering being taught to read” we sense a life-long reading routine used to move into inner silence established very early in life. And to both Elaine and Anne journal writing brings inner silence, to Elaine who says, “You sort of draw into yourself,” and Anne, who says, “I can go back over the three year time of how I have written in it . . . and reflect on now compared to where I was.”

I think back to the routines from which silence is inviting us away that emerged in the theme of invitation. Routines such as society’s expectations, its “political talk,” its superficialities which we set aside as we move to a deeper level. Ironically it seems to be also through routines—walking, skiing, reading and writing for example, and even washing the dishes—that people find ways to stop the wheels of everyday living from whirling about them like Meg’s top. Sensing the invitation to move to a deeper level, I welcome the thought of my cape being quietly placed around my shoulders.

I ponder—how a cape draws around one, as though helping define the person. I ponder more deeply—I discover a cape goes beyond defining the person to creating the person, the “real” person, the inner person, the depths—how it provides an en-couraging space where one’s inner thoughts, reflections and memories, perspectives, reveries, meditations are safe, where they can be explored and created and re-created, where they can widen and blend—where one can see anew, and deepen their being. I turn to the teachers now and see that they too find in this space of inner silence room to form their thoughts, to be and to unfold, to be and to create new folds, and then to return to create these folds yet again, to re-create. I feel the movement of the process so keenly.

Folds of Thought

Each fold expands with the unfolding allowing us to see into it with greater clarity. In the first fold we find thought. *Important* thought. As Elaine says, "In silence you find some chance to say or think the things that are ultimately the most important things for you to think about for yourself. And *plans*, for as John says, "You can be in the mode where you are walking and you are quiet and you are following a line of thought and you are thinking about what you're going to do with the day, but it's a quiet way to do it." Thoughts that seem to *flow forth*, as with Meg who says, "Remember we were talking about walking, how you are not conscious of actually walking. To my mind silence is like that. You think and you do this work and you are not really conscious of it."

Then there is the fold where reflections are found. *Strengthening* reflections. Anne in her silences thinks back to when she was a six year old and with her grandmother when she died at home. "When you think back now it happened there, but now at my age I'm starting to think what a really powerful experience that was. I didn't really realize that for a long time." *Moving* reflections. "I think maybe the level that you reach in silence and meditation depends on the experiences you've had," as Anne says. Moving to new levels, sometimes beyond the past where one might find, as Anne did, "buried pains, wrongs, hurts," to where they can say, as she did, "when I started to unleash them I started to become free to become my own person." Moving to the level of "forgiveness and the nearness of love, for the natural basis of forgiveness and of love is silence" (Picard, 1988, p. 32). *Opening* reflections. Meg uses silence to "reconsider and think about what has happened," and "possibly change your response or consider different responses you could have had . . . to think of the possibilities there are and sort of mentally role play." Opening even into timeless worlds, as with Mike, whom we saw before, reflecting on when he was a child sitting in front of the big picture window day dreaming as he watched the cars go by. *Guiding* reflections. As Meg says, "How can you live without examining and stopping to think about things. Doesn't that just leave you

living on the surface all the time? . . . You have to stop and reflect if you are going to come to terms with your life and develop a philosophy of some kind." She goes on with a caution, "If you don't have a philosophy one is going to get you isn't it?"

Guiding reflections, *from within*, there are, too, that move us beyond the surface level of society's expectations, beyond society's "pre-programming" of our self images. As John says, "Why the *hell* [his emphasis] would I want to let these guys [politicians] program me? I mean it's just our images of who we are." Rilke's prodigal son finds, as does John, that the people and things surrounding an individual's life are incapable of reflecting its true reality: "they mirror us tremblingly and the image breaks" (cited in Jephcott, 1972, p. 125). *Guiding our learning*. Elaine, thinking about how her inner thoughts have changed since the start of these conversations, says, "I think I've thought a lot more about [silence] being reflective, that you need to learn from the silences too . . . before it was always . . . simply aesthetic . . . but now I think that I think more about the need for silence to be a learning time too."

In another fold we find the mental process of standing back. *Observing ourselves*. "Maybe we would all be better off if we stood off and observed ourselves a bit more," as Elaine says. Could this in part be what Mike is doing when he "stands away" or "steps back from" in silence? *Observing our thinking*. Elaine sees it important to "bring some of that [thinking] to a conscious level about why you're thinking about what you're thinking" and refers to it as "being more metacognitive." When John says that goals are fine but when they are the predominant focus "you tend to go by things in the day without any notice of them," we wonder if standing back is not the answer or at least part of the answer? We wonder if this may also be the answer for the people Meg refers to who tend to go on in a certain way forever and "think this is the way it's been and it has to go on being that way or my world is finished." *Observing our pedagogy*. As Van Manen says, "One cannot adequately observe children without reflecting on the way one looks at them" (1986, p. 18). *Allowing creativity*. Mike finds silence "is a stepping stone to creativity." My mind moves quietly to the stepping stones of the *roji* path in the tea garden and the whole sense of standing

back from society that allows one to see things with fresh and yes, even creative eyes. For Mike part of this creativity involves a change in perspective. *Opening to possibilities*. Elaine finds this creative standing back appears as an openness in making decisions allowing her to see possibilities. *Opening to the spirit*. Picard finds that "the creative activity of the spirit" works silently to bring forth speech (1988, p. 24). To me the spirit works quietly, unnoticed, standing back as it were. The image of the comforter enters my silent world and I find the spirit exists as the white background which serves to intensify the colours. And yet when we unfold a comforter perhaps we gently run our fingers across to feel the texture, or admire the pattern, or are drawn to the intensity of the colours. How often do we focus on the background of the comforter? It remains mostly unnoticed standing back as it were. As we begin to think about this we realize the white background is the essence of the comforter. Everything is contained in it and issues forth from it.

In the next fold we find reverie. *Daydreaming*. Mike refers to daydreaming as the bridge to silence causing me to wonder whether thoughts are focused in daydreaming. *Daydreaming creating*. Trollet writes:

I wait
Everything is repose,
Then innervated future
You are image within me
Everything is dreamed first.

(cited in Bachelard, 1969, p. 160)

The fold of reverie creates even our future. In Trollet's words we have an image of the still movement of reverie taking us beyond the routines and insistings of society to a deeper more creative level. Was this the case for Mike as a young child quietly watching the cars go by in front of the picture window, his childhood creative reveries reaching forward into his adult years now, emphasizing creativity in our conversations? Was it similar with Meg and Anne—the reveries of childhood creating the adult? In our conversations, Meg recounts being four years old, in the long grass composing poetry, and I see her now as an adult, regularly returning our talks to the essential thinking, reading

and writing that infuses her silence and indeed her very being. Anne recalls sitting in church with her grandmother watching the sunlight on the windows and sensing her grandmother's strength—"I really appreciate what she gave me . . . that strength and courage . . . she always had that strength of who she was." I see Anne now as an adult, earnestly returning our conversations about silence to the need to get to our soul where we find the strength of ourselves and the answers. I see the teachers as children in reverie creating their futures—what they are today.

Transforming us, too, this reverie. For as Green finds, "It is a strange disposition of my mind, to believe a thing only if I have dreamed it. By believing, I do not mean simply possessing a certainty, but retaining it within oneself in such a way that the being finds itself modified because of it" (cited in Bachelard, 1969, p. 160). We find Green in the quietness of reverie creating a soul. We know that is not without great effort that a soul is created. We recall Michelet's image of a bird building its nest, its very person. We sense the seeming ambiguity of both profound stillness and movement in the creation of a soul in reverie. Reverie *expanding us*. "The man of reverie is always in a space which has volume. Truly inhabiting the whole volume of his space, the man of reverie is from anywhere *in* his world, in an *inside* which has no *outside*. . . . He has a soft fragrant dough beneath his fingers and proceeds to knead the substance of the world" (Bachelard, p. 167, 1969). *Relaxing our thinking*. The fold of reverie flows forth finding no need to think with the mental divisiveness of practical logic but as Baudelaire finds, "musically, picturesquely, without quibbles, syllogisms or deductions" (cited in Jephcott, 1972, p. 20). In other words, the imaginative awareness involves a relaxation or easing of the mental divisiveness of "practical" logic. *Blending*. We begin to find that our selves become a part of the blend of the overall harmony not the single note from which the harmony originates. Thus we are returned to the idea that silence is "a way" as Anne says, "of setting aside selfishness." *Blending uniquely*. Rilke finds, "for all my twigs / lie deep below and only wave in the wind" (cited in Jephcott, p. 54). His blending ceases to distinguish not only between the functions of roots and branches, the directions up and down, but between his identity and the identity of a tree.

It is difficult to imagine a more selfless response! He relaxes, reposing in the tree as completely at home as the bird in the nest which it has made. As completely at home as I am within my cape moving quietly from the tea room into the lengthening shadows outside.

Then we have the fold of non-thought. *Calming*. Mike, in contrast to Meg and Elaine, is quite definite that his inner silence does not involve thought. Inner silence for Mike is a way of stopping what he referred to several times as "mind storms." However, I wondered if silence really meant *total* quieting for him. When I asked if he was in thought in inner silence he responded, "No but when I come out I'm thinking." At another time when I asked, "So when you're active mentally you don't call that silence?" He responded, "No, I wouldn't. Because I'm not talking doesn't mean I'm silent." Within the following excerpt of conversation we find John's experience seems to be in agreement with Mike's:

- R. What is the outer [silence]?
- J. When you're not talking to someone or listening to something.
Just sit back and let your mind wander.
- R. Are you still in words and thoughts?
- J. You could be, yeah.
- R. The inner silence is not then words and thoughts?
- J. No, it's where you quiet all those things and let it rest.

Comforting experience. John's words suggest that inner silence is found in our still inner centre or in other words in the depths of our inner immensity. He reminds us of the intimacy of this space when he goes on to use the word "comfortable."

Another aspect of non-thought: meditating. "If you are meditating, you just close yourself off and you don't need a view or anything, you just need a *comfortable* [my emphasis] place," as John says. The fold of non-thought surrounds us comfortably, perhaps even intimately and protectively as did the folds of our comforter in the first theme of the thesis, silence as space. Could this be a space beyond blending? *Quieting experiences.* As John says, "I meditate in my place. . . . I like to have quiet moments with myself where I can lie down on

the couch, close my eyes and not think of anything. And as Anne says, "[Walking] is more of a prayerful time of clearing the mind. . . . It's got to be practised. When I go I usually take my rosary. . . . I'll just pray in that way and saying the chant gets me out of where I am into some place else." However, Meg finds meditation "quite difficult" because as she says, "I was used to using silence to think and it was quite hard to cease thought and concentrate on the mantra." Elaine helps us see another reason meditating could be difficult, when she finds "there is almost a sense of fear in thinking about [getting away from thought in mediation] . . . what if you couldn't think?"

Then we have the fold where there is both thought and non-thought. *Co-existing processes?* Elaine comments, "I don't think there's ever really complete silence. I think there's always that sort of internal thinking that goes along. Listening closely to Mike we find silence is closely, if not absolutely, equated with inner silence.

You get into a grind [skiing] and you are just plugging along and there'll be spaces of silence . . . suddenly my mind will go into *thought* [my emphasis] . . . It'll be creative thought quite often, so you'll jump out of the silence . . . and the thought will come and then that thought will progress . . . once you've worked that thought through, my mind tends to shut off again.

He underscores this close association of silence and thought in another conversation, saying, "I take time to re-create and the re-creation leads me to the silence . . . I'll go for a long run, I'll go for a long ski . . . and begin to meditate on the thought and I find silence and then bingo, I have an aha." He underscores the connection yet again, saying, "[Silence is] an *automatic* [my emphasis] thing that your mind does just before it becomes creative." Mike's use of the word "automatic" suggests the possibility that the lines may be more blurred between his silence and thought and silence and non-thought than he is aware of. *Relaxing process.* When Mike says, "the relaxation concept gets you into silence very quickly," we see that for him there is a connection between the creative component of thought associated with silence and relaxation. We are beginning

to see that silence, relaxation, and thought closely infuse each other. Mike acknowledges this close infusion again when he rhetorically asks, "Do I look at sleep sometimes as silence? I wonder. Yes, I do, I think. It's subconsciously I don't think it's silence but consciously it's silence." We interpret this remark to mean that for him there is thought in silence. And when Anne expands on her experience of meditating during her walks as she chants using her rosary we again find the close association of thought, silence and relaxation.

I need reminders, I guess, because if I'm walking and I know I have them [her rosary] then I can just pray them or say them and it takes me somewhere away from the thoughts I have. . . . a true meditation would certainly clear the mind and stay there but I find you have to keep going to clear them out.

We begin to see that the fold of thought and non-thought are closely interwoven, indeed so closely that as we begin to move they flow gently one into the other.

Finally, we have the fold of vertical or relaxed thinking. Curiously as we begin to peer more closely into this fold we gain insight into the implicit question as to whether there is thought or not in inner silence. McNamara's following insight helps us reach a tentative answer.

How shall an adult, after so many years in the logical stratosphere, come home? He must stop thinking. . . . No-thinking has been the crucial guideline of the oldest spiritual tradition of mankind. . . . But it is not exclusively an oriental insight. . . . Since what we are after is a relaxation of mental powers rather than a repudiation, *vertical thinking* . . . might be a better term than *no-thinking*. Vertical thinking, a simple intuition of truth, does not embroil us in the logical and laborious procedure of discursive knowledge. . . . we need one unselfing, insightful experience . . . inscape and landscape converge. (1974, p. 77-78)

As we don our capes in acceptance of the invitation of silence we will each experience the blending of the folds uniquely. Enclosed within its folds we will find a place of "being"; a place where we think variously, imagine freely,

remember lovingly, contemplate timelessly and so much more. We wear our cape rhythmically reaching back across the years, cherishing the present, and hoping to the future. Although we see from the research that we wear the cape uniquely we see further that we share in common, a direction in the wearing that moves beyond "logical" or "practical thinking." This beyondness does not suggest that practical thinking is left behind but rather added onto.

Deep Seeing

Marcel observes that this kind of thinking is present in the philosophy of Max Picard. In the preface to Picard's book, he states, "One should make it clear that his is not a thinking which moves methodically from premises to conclusion but rather, if I may say so, *a thinking which sees*" (Picard, 1988, p. 13). We see the start of the third theme of this thesis: silence invites us to an inner space of thinking which sees. (As the thesis unfolds we will find this theme of thinking-seeing extends to action.) Marcel is not alone in speaking of a thinking which sees. Buchmann presents a case for "wonderstruck thinking . . . an attitude of pure attention . . . and incorporeal 'gazing,'" rather than "thinking which emphasized goals and objectives" (1989, p. 36). McNamara also refers to a combination of seeing and thinking as a "special kind of eyesight" (1974, p. 31). He then goes on to comment, "Without this special kind of eyesight we shall never discover the *inner* [my emphasis] splendor of things or their important connections" (1974, p. 31). When Buchmann speaks of "'incorporeal' gazing" and McNamara speaks of "inner splendor" we see the idea emerging that this thinking which sees has an inner depth that goes beyond the corporeal or material surface level tangibles. Merleau Ponty helps us understand that the invisible which lies beneath the surface and requires a deeper seeing is not the correlative opposite of the visible but rather "the depth of the visible" (cited in Dauenhauer, 1980, p. 183). Anne's answer to my question "What feelings do you associate with silence?" explicitly links silence with this dimension of depth and seeing. She responded, "Depth, a depth of being, of looking and searching."

As we continue looking into the metaphor of silence as deep seeing we

find a dimension corresponding to depth emerging. Mike, John, and Elaine find that silence changes their perspective. Meg in reflecting on a course she took from author/teacher James Britton recalled, "he opened a vista," and attributed this vista to the fact that he was, "an adept user of silence." We note another occasion where Meg experiences this widening when she makes another visual observation. "Do you ever come across a poem or something where people are talking and then you go away by yourself . . . the meaning expands. You may have had a glimmer of it while you were busy with something else or talking to other people." Proust, speaking in terms of painting, finds each artist has a unique perspective, and that if we seek new landscapes they may be found not by going to literally new places but having *new eyes*: "Le seul véritable voyage . . . ce ne serait pas d'aller vers de nouveaux paysages, mais d'avoir d'autre yeux" (cited in Chernowitz, 1945, p. 179).

Thinking of the above ideas of perspective, vista, and landscape we realize that our deep seeing thought is expanding outwards or widening. As in the theme of silence as space, where the image of the *downward* movement of depth expanded into the horizontal image of *outward* movement into a wider landscape, so again we have a similar development of the depth in "deep seeing thought" to include a horizontal image of widening thought.

I begin to ponder Proust's notion that real discovery does not seek new landscapes but rather new eyes. Most days when we find our cape silently placed on our shoulders we are being invited yet again to our every day landscapes.

My host sits quietly looking at the tea bowl encircled by his hands, and I try to imagine what he "sees." It is a common place bowl, a bit rough, not perfectly symmetrical, part of the everyday household "landscape." Yet from his rapt gaze, I sense he is somehow finding great depths within that roughness, within that ordinary item. What does he see; I try to look with his inner eye. Does he see the craftsman who made it? The many people who have drunk from it, those he has had as guests, and even further back, to guests of previous owners of this old bowl? Does his "seeing" expand to "hearing" bits of their conversations, to ponderings of their dreams and hopes? So much he seems

to be finding, as I watch him sitting there, "just looking" at that old, rough, seemingly ordinary bowl.

Is he thinking about the surroundings, too, like the tea room itself, or the garden where perhaps he walked earlier today, instructing the preparations for our ceremony, seeing to the sweeping of the path and the filling of the water basin? Or maybe his "seeing" brings in other senses: perhaps he is hearing the call of a distant bird from across the valley. What does he see? Then I tell myself, maybe he is seeing all of these things, the whole of them. Yes, perhaps that is it, perhaps that is why his attention is so long and so full seeming—he is somehow seeing it ALL.

Anne comes to mind, and she is talking about another "landscape." She is thinking about a sunset, its colours, and getting beyond the colours themselves, to "sense it at another level," to "stand back to now look at things in *wholeness* and with *deeper* seeing [my emphasis]." With those words I recall my host finding the whole within a bowl of tea. Then I recall Picard, too, and realize my host's all-embracing gaze exemplifies Picard's "eye that comes from the broad surface of silence [which] sees the whole" (1988, p. 79). I remember, also, asking Elaine what she saw "at the core of silence." Her reply was so straight to the heart. "I guess it's wholeness."

I wrap all these thoughts around me, like my cape and ponder further this aspect of wholeness. Teilhard de Chardin, in talking about intuition, speaks of being confronted with "the interdependence of the parts" where "each element of the cosmos is positively woven from all the others" (cited in Drake and Miller, 1991, p. 325). Like my cape, his interwoven cosmos, he says, must be taken "as a whole." Or we might say in one piece: after all, my cape is one continuous form, unlike, say, a coat made up of separate parts. Yet, while the cape of silence is a single, interwoven entity, still the experience of it was sometimes seen by the teachers in terms of the individual threads that make it up.

One of these threads was the experience of strengthening. As Elaine said, "I come out of silence a little bit stronger, a little more confirmed." Anne spoke of silence as empowerment, where a person can find the strength of self. At the

same time, she says we may also experience how fragile we are, but "from that fragility can come strength." Both Anne and Elaine spoke of the need to build up inner reserves. "You have to find some way to build the reserves," Elaine comments, "to give out and I think that is what you do in inner silence." "Once you are restored [through silence] you can go back out again," says Anne. Mike details the way he has found to build up his reserves: "Silence gives you a chance to stop what you are doing, calm yourself for awhile, energize, reorganize and reform some new ideas as you come back to reality again." For John the way is meditative: "If I can just sit down and meditate for an hour or even half an hour then the rest of the day I feel like I have energy." Picard shows how such strengthening can apply on another scale, as well, where silence builds up strength in the individual that grows into strength for society:

Man is better able to endure things hostile to his own nature, things that use him up, if he has the silent substance within. That is why the peoples of the East, who are still filled with the substance of silence, endure life with machines better than the peoples of the West . . . life with machines is not injurious unless the protective substance of silence is absent. (1988, p. 67)

The cape of silence, for all its comfort and flexibility is actually stronger than a coat of steel. And more enduring.

Another of the threads was the experience of refreshment. John finds in the silence of meditation "new kinds of energy," where he still has the things he had before but now he "can react in a different way . . . see it in a different way . . . be open to it in a different way." He also speaks of putting aside routine things: "Just lay them aside for a while and feel refreshed. And I think that is what silence does, it refreshes us." Anne finds silence helps get rid of "the clutter" so one can come "back refreshed to a task." Meg, too, seems to find silence gives refreshment in the following delightful observation. "It's—you know how luxurious it feels when a day you had to work, a snow day, and you had yourself all planned and ready to go and the notice comes **sorry the school is CLOSED!** What a lovely feeling! Well, silence does that for me you know.

Oh it is a gift from the Lord! A lift of the heart!"

Still another thread is the experience of having a sense of control or being in charge. We find the sense of being in charge emerging when Anne says in one conversation, "[a silent walk] is a way to put yourself back together again" and at another time underscores the idea, saying that in silence "you are empowering yourself to take charge." John speaks similarly of using silence to give yourself time to reflect "rather than just reacting to things," which he finds leads to "seeing yourself in a way that you are in charge." Part of taking charge for John involves organizing himself inwardly so that all of the pieces of the puzzle which he likens to "the different things you do" are connected. Picard suggests that the person who has the basic substance of silence within him will find that much is ordered by the power of silence without his conscious knowledge (1988, p. 66). Meg suggests that as one gets older one gets better "at thinking or sorting things out" in a sense taking charge and one is less likely "to think around in a circle" and then carry on to decide "oh I can't do anything about it anyway." At another time she suggests that as one gets older one becomes more tolerant.

Freedom, openness, being without boundaries, is also one the threads found in the cape. When Anne says "[Silence is] a way for me to find freedom in narrow situations to go back into myself . . . [where] you feel you are in a box or a cage," we see that depthful insight is not just foundational for her but spreading outwards as well, unlocking and going through the doors she spoke of earlier, and getting past the imprisoning walls, the boundaries. Mike also sees silence involves overcoming boundaries. He drew a diagram using circles showing silence, and the experiences he visualizes reaching through silence, layered around him and wondered aloud if there was any limit. "I don't even know if there is that boundary there."

The freedom Anne and Mike find brings me back to my cape as I feel it moving freely around me. Far from constricting, I imagine I could even raise my arms as if to fly free, and Anne's words come back to me. When asked if she had any metaphor for silence she had replied, "I was thinking of dove or peace or freedom or something with wings. . . . Free." And in that image I sense a

lightness rising up, even a liberated joyousness. I hear Anne saying, that one can come out of silence “and find laughter . . . You go into it and you are frustrated and you can come out with another view and lighten up.” She adds the pedagogic implication: “I think too many people in education are so heavy.” I wonder how many teachers feel weighted down and long to fly freely and yet how elusive that freedom can seem.

Then I think of how the role which silence plays in terms of freedom can be overlooked. Meg reflected back on how she saw silence differently as a result of our conversations, finding silence’s previously unrecognized role. She pondered, “the silence that enwraps you . . . frees you to act as you thought. Yeah. I didn’t really realize it until I thought about it. Yeah.” Sometimes it takes time to see silence’s role. My thoughts turn to other, sometimes-overlooked ideas on silence and freedom. I think of Hillman’s thoughts, whose words caution us against underestimating the role of silence in relation to rights:

All other rights require, first of all, an imagining someone who can consider alternatives, improvise actions, express values, and fantasize outcomes. . . . If silence invites the imagining agent on whom political freedoms depend, then weakening the imagining agent weakens the roots of freedom without attacking the freedoms directly. (1988, p. 147)

I see that if one attacks the right to silence, by, for example, devaluing or prohibiting silence, the imagining agent that Hillman considers the basis of all other rights is weakened, even though not attacked directly. I think of my cape and see the vulnerability of all that is found within its threads and folds, all the depthfulness, the mystery, the possibility. It takes time, though, to see how much could be lost. It is only just now that I realize the privilege of my cape.

Yet another thread is that of the sense of being in another reality. How often a cape seems to be made up of many such threads; I can easily imagine a cape as the way into unexplored new realms quite apart from the everyday life. An adventure into a new world! But although I may speak of imaginings, the teachers seem to find a similar experience that is quite real for them. “I could spend too much time there,” says Anne, of her bedroom retreat where she goes

for silent moments. We see her awareness of reality and otherness as she continues, saying "I don't want to come out in the real world." Meg, too, speaks of silence experience as taking her into another space. "It [reading] builds a world and I'm in it." Anne speaks similarly, saying "At times at church, I can go into another space." Mike likens the silence experience to a holiday, and observes, "You become disjointed from your normal life's reality." He adds that after silence "you come back into reality again." And John finds this sense of other reality in the students in his class during a writing assignment. "It's intriguing to watch them. . . . I think people are in a different world when they do that."

Anne takes us deeper as she philosophizes, finding through silence "at another level . . . a whole being beyond what this human world is about." Picard, too, looks at the matter of level, observing that what he calls primary silence adds another layer or life to man (1988, p. 129). Meg, as well, speaks of getting beyond the present reality. She read an excerpt from Rilke's *The Bowl of Roses* (1986, p. 21). "Using space without taking space from that space . . ." she repeats a line aloud, then says, "The general feeling of moving through the seen object to an area of your own making or an object that exists just for you . . . you sort of go through what is there to get beyond it in a sense." I commented the word "transcendence" is used so often. "Well," she replied, "I was trying to avoid it." She continued on to observe that others may dismiss the found realm as just thoughts, but concluded with the important point that "the place you go when you transcend the present is nonetheless real for not being perceived by everybody." The found realm cannot be dismissed, as Chernowitz points out. He is discussing Proust and the worlds artists create but what he says applies equally well to any "other reality": "Once our eyes have been opened to the wonders . . . we cannot go back, we must inevitably see what we could not see before" (1945, p. 179).

A particularly interesting thread is the deepening of one's insight into their soul. I think of the space which my cape in-forms, helping create and expand my being, informing me of who I am at a deeper level. I feel the stillness, yet at the same time there is a movement through that stillness, the expanding as the folds of my cape spread outward to encompass more. I think

about this seeming dichotomy, movement-expansion combined with stillness, and as I do another quote from literature comes into mind with another seeming contradiction. I read Weinsheimer who writes about spirit and metaphor and he talks about a movement "by which something is alienated from itself and yet in that very process becomes itself more fully" (1991, p. 73). I come full circle back to the matter of soul, and recall the verse, "For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life shall find it" (Matthew 16:25 KJV). In the drive to find who we are at the centre of our being, it is as though we have to set aside, even lose, those parts of us that whirl around us like Meg's metaphoric top and find in the centre—almost like Frost's secret that sits at the centre—to find what all our whirling world, our existence is actually about. At that still centre, at that space of stillness, no longer with, as Meg says, "vertigo," we can see more clearly.

Still thinking about how soul and silence fit together in our experiences, I note Bachelard speaks of reverie as "an hour which knows the plenitude of the soul" (1969, p. 64). However, it is not a fixed quantity, this fullness of the soul, but an expanding quantity, expanding even in the stillness of silence, as noted, for example by Meg. "I'm quoting my grandmother again. 'You know dear, lovey; the older you get the more like yourself you become.'" I see by age we can mean the increasing years of experiences of silence building and blending together to help us find who we are at the centre. Anne's words gives us another view on Meg's words: "Maybe the level you reach in silence depends on the experiences you've had." What kind of experiences she means could mean the quality of them, certainly, but it could also mean the increasing layers giving ever growing depth of perspective over ensuing years. As well, it is not just the level inside ourselves, or becoming more like ourselves, that silence helps us reach, but reaching—extending—out to others, even we might say to the soul of others. "For a truly discerning knowledge of the soul of the other," Van Manen says, "we need to refine our ability to see" (1986, p. 48). This refined ability or deep seeing we find to be related to the buildup of experience over the years—through many moments of silence added one on one, as though the more we wear our cape the more we come to know it.

The more we wear our cape of silence, the more we can see deeply into what this life whirling around us is at the centre—or what many might call *the Answers*. I think again of Anne who said “the answer is inside you,” of Potok’s *The Chosen*, where Danny said his father told him to look through silence into his soul for the answers, of answers addressing a deep and wide perspective. So indeed we can become more like our real selves—might I say, truly find our souls? But without silence . . . ? I wonder; I think of John’s contention that “without silence you don’t have a soul.” My thinking expands to include Rilke: “My soul dressed in silence, rises up / and stands alone before you: can’t you see?” (1982, p. 3)

How often does a teacher look at students and ask all sorts of questions in her or his mind? Then I think about Van Manen’s words about refining our ability to see. To be able to find the answers about the student in front of me, I find I need silence. To find out why students are sometimes seemingly contradictory, for example, to help them understand that contradictoriness even in themselves, I cannot find it just through the sound of words. A passage from Tolstoy illustrates:

Often Platon Karatajev said the exact opposite of what he had said earlier, and yet both the one and the other were right. . . . When Pierre was sometimes taken aback by the meaning of his words he asked Platon to repeat what he had said. But Platon was unable to remember the words he had spoken only a minute before. . . . Platon did not and could not understand the meaning of the individual words torn out of their context. Every word and every action of Platon was the expression of an activity which he himself did not understand yet which constituted the whole of his life. Platon’s life was meaningless as a single individual life and received its meaning only as part of the whole life which he felt flowing ceaselessly around him. (cited in Picard, 1988, p. 130)

No more can we understand students sometimes than we can Platon without silence to get past their words to the deeper, vaster connections and reality

within them. No more can we fully reach our minds around the many seeming contradictions in our lives, in the classroom and outside, without letting our cape extend out and around them and ultimately help us to see the wholeness.

I ponder my cape as to the ways I can try to describe it, and I think of pattern. I see past to its shape, or form. I think of the way philosophers see form as essential nature and my reverie thus brings me 'round to asking if my cape, as it extends, has limits like a cape made of cloth or if perhaps it can reach infinitely outward, encompassing ever more in an endless process. What will I find within its compass as wholeness seems to come into view? Does its outward reach then cease? Is there some point at which we could say, 'now all is complete'? I look at what the teachers say, what the literature says, to see what others experience—a limit, a boundary—or something else.

"[Silence is] a way of saying 'There is more in heaven and Earth, Horatio, than you and I have seen' [*sic*]. That there is more there and we can't do anything except be silent about it because it's beyond our imagination to have made or figure out how it got there." In Elaine's words we sense the feeling of awe in the face of something without boundaries. Her word "more" returns us to the infinitely extensible folds of our cape. The extending out into the unknown. The cape itself, and the cape-wearer take on an aura of mystery. Anne muses on the sense of mystery she finds surrounding a cape wearer: "I don't know if we know ourselves totally by the time we leave this earth or other people." This sense of the unknowable is carried on by Steindl-Rast: "We shall know God as the unknown" (1991, p. 102). He uses the analogy of friendship, "The more you know a friend, the more you know that friend as unknowable, as a mystery. This concept of mystery . . . refers to what we can never grasp because it is inexhaustible" (1991, p. 102). Within our cape there is always going to be a little pocket left unaccounted for. So here we have another thread making up the wholeness found in the experience of silence, this thread of mystery—this strange incompleteness-within-completeness.

Rachel Carson encourages us to see the value in remaining open to this sense of mystery.

Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties

and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Whatever vexations or concerns of their personal lives, their thoughts can find paths that lead to inner contentment and to renewed excitement in living. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for the spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter. (1956, pp. 88-89)

The migration of birds, the tides, the bud—yes, things all around us that are full of wonder, full of “more” than just what the physical eye sees on the surface, inviting the cape wearer filled with deep seeing. And how important that invitation is! Einstein certainly sees it that way. He finds, “The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who no longer pauses to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead” (1993). But to find this mystery, this refreshment and strengthening, we must remember that our cape is not a cloak of confinement but of reaching out towards ever more beauty. We must not miss what Carson and Einstein find, by ceasing in our discovery and thinking, “Ah, all this wholeness, this completeness, we need go no further.”

We may also miss the invitation into mystery if we let ourselves—or part of ourselves—hold us back. Anne sees this sort of hazard. She quotes Dag Hammarskjöld, “The life of simplicity is simple but it opens to us a book in which we never get past the first syllable” (1964, p. 148), and responds, “We have the control to free ourselves to go beyond that, but we get stuck there.” Although our cape is made of a thousand folds of wonder it seems we sometimes get stopped at the first fold. Hammarskjöld in discussing mystical experience gives a clue why this getting stuck can be so, when he says,

Always here and now—in that freedom which is one with distance in that stillness which is born of silence. But—this is

a freedom in the midst of action, and stillness in the midst of human beings. The mystery is a constant reality to him who, in this world, is free from self concern. (1964, p. 108)

The concerns of the person caught up in daily routines may be so prevalent in one's contemplation as John pointed out in one conversation, that person cannot hear silence's invitation into deeper things, let alone into mystery. Caught up with other things he cannot feel the cape upon him.

Yet, when the self-concerns *are* set aside, how much opening into realms of the beyond there can be. As Bachelard tells us, "Every new cosmos is open to us when we have freed ourselves from the ties of a former sensibility. . . . We do not change place, we change our nature" (1964, p. 206). Bachelard also puts it this way as he looks into reverie:

When a dreamer of reveries has swept aside all the 'preoccupations' . . . that dreamer feels a being opening within him . . . He opens himself to the world, and the world opens itself to him" (1969, p. 173). [Elsewhere, Bachelard says experiencing the immensity of the world the dreamer] sees himself liberated from his cares and thoughts, even his dreams. He is no longer shut up in his weight, the prisoner of his own being. (1964, p. 195)

So as the former sensibilities are put aside we see there is not only an opening of the cape wearer to the world, but also an opening of the world to the cape wearer. The wearer of a cape and the world begin to move to and fro, to intermingle, to interweave. The mystery of the world flows into the cape wearer and the mystery of the cape wearer flows into the world. We recall that Elaine used the saying on a card, "Life is a tapestry of the things you've said and done," to express her sense of the interweaving of the cape wearer with the world. She continued, "You're part of something more complete and you have a role in making that completeness." Yet we have seen that part of the sense of completeness is incompleteness or mystery. Just as there is mystery in the creation of a cape so too there is mystery in the creation of a tapestry, in the vastness of an imagination that opens up freely to images and ideas and the

hands that follow faithfully, carefully, interweaving thread upon thread to fulfil the spirit of the artist. But the mystery does not stop there for a beautiful pattern invites the imagination of the viewer. Just as a tapestry or a cape is never complete because the "seeing" we bring to them is continually deepening and expanding to include layer upon layer, "more" upon "more," if we are open to it; so, too, are we never finished, for as Meg says, "We are all a work in process." She goes on to say that silence accepts this.

As our cape unfolds we find it expanding beyond mere acceptance of our incompleteness. Look at the mystery, the beauty, the wonder that our cape of silence has tenderly woven around us—comforting us, seeking us, receiving us, in-forming us, and yes, ever expanding us. Could we not say that silence honours us, indeed that it reveres us? Moffitt reminds us that in order to understand this honouring and revering of ourselves by silence it is not enough that we see this cape of silence. We must move, yet, further.

To look at a thing
 If you would know a thing
 You must look at it long:
 To look at this green and say
 "I have seen spring in these
 Woods," will not do—you must
 Be the thing you see:

 You must enter in
 To the small silences between
 The leaves,
 You must take your time
 And touch the very place
 They issue from. (1971, p. 149)

In order to know our cape of silence we must not see it as otherness but rather we must become it. We become the cape by shaping or plying its folds into form or into its essential nature, our essential nature. Dauenhauer finds that the world plies its path, its form, in such a way that it invites us to reply.

Man in re-plying the world's path forms or plies the path of the world as his own (1980, p. 168). Interestingly the words "ply" and "reply" etymologically have the sense of folding or pleating and refolding or folding back. In a sense a path folds back or opens a space so that we can move more freely into the unknown, the mystery, in essence becoming part of the unknown, the mystery.

Elaine finds that poetry "in its very form demands more space," and when she says that "You can fill [the gaps in poetry] with your own prior experience and make those connections with your own individual meaning," we see that she is becoming part of the creation, she is freely entering into the mystery of her tapestry. John sees an example of this process occurring in Rilke's poem, *The Bowl of Roses*, when he comments that "the objects go into the background and the person comes up and fills the emptiness left." The person comes up and begins to create in the unlimited emptiness which we recall John sees in the Buddhist sense of unbounded openness. Picard finds similarly to both Elaine and John that poetry invites the reader to become part of the mystery, suggesting poetry is not "rigid and fixed but has a hovering quality," and "leaves a space clear . . . [that] allows another to take part in the subject" (1988, p. 145).

Yet it is not poetry alone that invites us into mystery for as Yanagi says, "All works of art . . . are more beautiful when they suggest something beyond themselves than when they end up being merely what they are" (1972, p. 150). For this reason bowls which were considered complete or those mass produced with quantitative precision were not used as tea bowls; such bowls were seen as cold and rigid. Rather, the Japanese sought bowls whose silence had a genuine heart beat or spirit. Perhaps the bowl had belonged to a previous tea master, or had served a special guest, or had an *unplanned* [my emphasis] oddity—an uneven glaze, an interesting crack, an asymmetrical form. Such bowls were felt to be inviting and warm because they suggested rather than commanded; they left, as Yanagi said, "a little something unaccounted for" (1972, p. 121). These bowls were associated with "irregular" or "rough beauty" not in the sense of contrast to regular and refined beauty but rather in the sense of just being, of existing outside such distinctions (Yanagi, 1972, p. 121). The beauty we find in the tea bowl, the tea ceremony, our cape, the path, the world and so much more is "not

a beauty displayed before the viewer by its creator; creation here means, rather, making a piece that will lead the viewer to draw beauty out of it for himself. . . . [It] is beauty that makes an artist of the viewer" (Yanagi, 1972, p. 124). Just as poetry and other works of art invite us into mystery and creation, so too do the people around us—our students, our colleagues.

The above ideas of incompleteness or unfinishedness, invitation, genuineness, and "rough" beauty with inner implications is nicely encompassed by the Japanese term *shibusa*. Harada Jiro defines *shibusa* as "a quality which is quiet and subdued. It is natural and has depth, but avoids being too apparent, or ostentatious. It is simple without being crude, austere without being severe. It is that refinement that gives spiritual joy" (cited in Sawada and Young, 1989, p. 275). These words return us to the subdued but nonetheless powerful silence of our cape with all of its inner implications. We recognize its *shibui* nature and are reminded that our cape does not assume a shape until we become a part of it, begin to wear it and venture forth.

One of the inner implications of *shibusa* points us to yet another thread in our cape for we find in its seeming incompleteness an opening to possibilities. Is this opening to possibilities not the essence of hope? Van Manen suggests this is so when he observes that adults who wish to be young again but still know what they know now are longing "to recapture a sense of possibility and openness—a confidence that almost anything is possible," associated with childhood (1986, p. 29). He sees this openness to possibility as the "presence of hope" in children and suggests that this is "what each child can teach us" (1986, p. 29). Anne speaks of this opening to possibilities as hopefulness in quoting Hammaraskjold, "'Then a tree becomes a mystery.' I like this part: 'a cloud, a revelation, each man a cosmos, of whose riches we can only catch glimpses' (1964, p. 148). Yes . . . I think it is hopeful. I think when people can let go there's hope. When they allow themselves to open up, and to listen to one another."

The Japanese tea ceremony encourages just such an opening up, an opening to the possibility of peace through the sharing of a bowl of tea. Flowing through the rhythm of the ceremony is a quiet implicit hope that the encompassing atmosphere of warmth and beauty will open the spirit and allow it to unfold

freely. Hope *opens* us to the dialogic process, a process of possibility, but as Elaine says, "Hope is a silent thing. It is not something you know how to express to other people or even yourself. It is a sense inside of you." Emily Dickinson expands on this sense inside one with the following image:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers –
 That perches in the soul –
 And sings the tune without the words –
 And never stops – at all – (1960, p. 116)

Hope is part of our inner mystery, our ineffability. As we unfold we find bright full moon beams, and moon beams partly obscured by clouds, *shibui* moon beams, moonbeams made all the more alluring because they are implicit. We find our inner imaginative self, our hopeful self, our self that believes that anything is possible enlarging. (We see this process occurring for Meg when she reads poetry. We recall she spoke about the meaning of poetry expanding through silent reflections. As our deeper imaginative self keeps enlarging or becoming more open to possibilities so, too, we find the meaning of poetry expands.) It seems that silence is essential to the nourishing of a free wheeling imagination, an imagination that finds hope in expanding meanings and possibilities. I think of both the tea ceremony and my cape, overlapping experiences, where I find the sense of intimacy and possibility, both expressing hope.

Deep Action

Night so softly approaches. My host excuses himself to light the garden lantern. The charcoal in the brazier glows gently in the quiet room. With the lengthening of the shadows each carefully selected object in the tea room seems to have taken on a deeper intimacy. For one motionless moment that seems to expand forever into the future and the past I sense the heart beat of generations of revered tea masters. I see so clearly in this expanding moment the thought-ful attention, the koro ire that added layer upon layer, 'more upon more' to what some may see as the mere drinking of "hot flavoured water."

My seeing continues to expand in this tranquil space which unfolds so beautifully, so infinitely, and I see the depth of vision which compelled my host's grandfather to

create a garden which represented his favourite symphony. A garden of ecstasy. I see my host's grandfather reflected in my host's commitment to bringing me the essence of the tea ceremony. I see other tea masters in other times and places and their attention to detail—the selection of flowers for the ceremony to suggest warmth in winter and coolness in summer, a scroll to evoke contemplation, the design of space to draw the eye beyond. With my expanding reflection comes a better understanding of the depth of action that flowed from the determination, the faithfulness, and the deep belief in the way of tea of these tea masters. Action which flowed so naturally and freely from their deep seeing and transformed the sharing of a cup of tea from what is in some traditions a form of entertainment or momentary relief from the routines of the day to an aesthetic and even further to a “way” or a path, a direction in which to move based on spiritual beliefs.

To these long ago tea masters there was no doubt about the practicality of the ceremony for after all the way of tea was none other than a deeper response to humanity. Still I wonder how a cultural outsider would judge the practicality of the Japanese tea ceremony? How might even many present day Japanese evaluate this old tradition? My wondering expands to include wondering about the judgement of others about the practicality of my cape of silence which surrounds so lightly, even now, encouraging my thoughts and reverie. Might some dismiss it along with the tea ceremony as impractical, an old fashioned tradition suitable for at most an esoteric few?

The following words of Yanagi leave us with little doubt as to the practicality he finds in the tea ceremony.

But seeing was not the sole merit of the Tea masters. They did not stop there, for merely to see is not seeing completely. Seeing led them to using and using led into seeing still deeper. Without using there is no complete seeing, for nothing so emphasizes the beauty of things as their right application.
(1972, p. 178)

We sense a rhythm in the deep seeing which flowed into action, could we not say deep action, and the action which then flowed back into an even deeper

seeing and so on. Much as way flows on to way, one flowed into the other, dissolving the boundaries, interweaving with one another, to in-form one another, to make a wholeness, a form, an essential nature. With Yanagi's words we see the rest of our third theme, of silence as deep-seeing, now flowing into deep *action*.

This wholeness began with the ability of the tea masters to find beauty and meaning in the seemingly routine sharing of a bowl of tea, to fully experience the sense of *ichigo ichie* or "one time, one meeting" (Sen, 1987, p. 41). They understood and lived each tea ceremony as a unique opportunity not because of its extraordinary splendour but rather quite the opposite because of its ordinary splendour. The evidence of the depth of their seeing and acting was reflected by the "profound, unassuming, quiet feeling" of the ceremony and by implication I would say the masters themselves (Yanagi, 1972, p. 184). For who could create such an atmosphere without a corresponding inner depthfulness? Within these tea masters we find an example of the type of man Picard speaks of in whom "the substance of silence is still an active force," and who is "not paralyzed by the quietness . . . for the quietness is related to the silence and the silence extends the frontiers of his life" (1988, p. 64).

Just as we find the quiet deep seeing of the tea masters flowed into action so, too, we find a similar development of deep seeing flowing into action in the teachers. For as Meg says, "[Silence allows you] to act rather than just take the stimulus and react." We recall her earlier observation that the silence which enwraps her frees her to act as she thought. And John says, "Much of it—the contemplation—is not separated from acting." Further, Aquinas refers to the need to communicate contemplative silence, a form of action, when he states, "Just as it is better to illumine than merely to shine, so it is better to give to others the things contemplated than simply to contemplate" (cited in Buchmann, 1989, p. 51). With these teachers and the literature we find deep seeing flowing "freely" into action but with Meg's words we are reminded that our freedom in silence arises from deep seeing thought. This, too, is the freedom we find in our cape, the freedom to act in accordance with all of the depthfulness and expansiveness found between its folds. John expresses this idea, saying, "If you

have a clearer vision of yourself as a person then maybe you have more of a basis to be an actor.” However, he reminds us of an important political reality when he says, “I think in a way people would be prepared to act but they don’t have the avenues.”

We have seen the interweaving of deep seeing and action. What form, I wonder, might deep seeing flowing into deep action take, and I reflect for a moment. I recall Van Manen who talks about atmosphere in the classroom (1986, p. 31), so my thoughts turn to with what sort of atmosphere we might surround our students. Then my remembering turns to several of the teachers commenting that we have to have something in ourselves, we have to have experienced it, before we can give it to others. So in turn I wonder with what sort of atmosphere a teacher might first surround her or himself. We have spoken of silence inviting us to wear our cape; so too we might say silence invites us to let it help build the atmosphere around us and around our students.

I consider how atmosphere relates to my cape and I think of the wholeness. Within atmosphere—the actual atmosphere—we have elements, of course, like oxygen, nitrogen and so forth, and within my cape we have the folds and the threads. But atmosphere, in the lived-experience sense, is felt holistically, just as my cape is. We need oxygen, yes, but if that were all the atmosphere around our world was made of we wouldn’t be able to live in it—we need the whole of it. I think of the movement in atmosphere. Atmosphere is fluid, not something rigid, stopping us from moving forward at every turn, like some stiff suit of steel, but full of freedom, allowing us to move as far as the horizon if we choose, with the all freedom of our cape. Reflecting further on the wholeness of the atmosphere I realize that the atmosphere in its fluid continuity is not only spread over each and all of us but it extends *into* each of us, taken in inspiration by inspiration. So it is not just external, but also internal—the external and internal atmosphere are not really separate. So, too, I find the cape around me, seemingly outside me, is at the same time, within me. The metaphor of our cape which began as a comforter we find has continued to expand taking on an atmospheric quality—we might even say has become the atmosphere.

What might an atmosphere informed by deep seeing be like around (and

in) a teacher? We would find a wholeness there where our thoughts, our tasks and our actions all interrelate. Rather than our tasks seeming to exist, as they can, in fragmented isolation from each other, demanding isolated attention and energy, in such an atmosphere the refreshment and strengthening we have found in deep seeing wholeness spreads throughout our thoughts and work helping us to find an overarching integration. Rather than breathing the limited air just around this student's assignment or that report—as we have recognized before, in wholeness things are not isolated this's and that's—we experience the refreshment that comes with having the vastness of the atmosphere to draw upon. How much stronger at a deeper level we are for the daily tasks in this fuller atmosphere. Instead of feeling fragmented by the diverse demands of others to say or see things precisely their way we find a vital wholeness in our own views, words and actions. And instead of feeling divided into separate compartments of internal retreat and external work, in this atmosphere that is both around and within we build a strong bridge between our deep reflections and our outward action.

What else might that atmosphere around a teacher be like? A space of freedom, of openness, a surrounding not of barrier after barrier, but of ever-expanding horizons and possibilities. How different from an atmosphere filled with endless walls of fixed presumptions grasped for the sake of quick-and-easy certitude. How different, say, from the atmosphere in which pre-packaged knowledge is to be poured into the students. Rather than that restriction, that burden, the atmosphere which deep seeing helps us build frees us and draws us forth into possibilities, wonder and hope. Our actions in the face of our daily tasks turn from being those of a person constrained to those of a person who can expand and grow, where being has the infinite room to unfold, create and become. In such an atmosphere the teacher recognizes and cherishes the mystery and possibility in her or himself, in turn choosing ways to search and explore, enjoy and share out to the open horizons in the endless discovery that education can be. The invitation and the horizon draw one forth continuously. The warm air of a spring of discovery invites each of us out into this deep vast space of being being created, and our steps, metaphorically

inward or physically outward show themselves in the path we ply through our thoughts and actions.

What, too, might the atmosphere informed by deep seeing be like around and in the teacher and students together? Again there would be wholeness, an integrated sense of all things flowing and weaving together with people growing and becoming, of both close intimate yet vast space where people are exploring the possibilities of life together. And in that togetherness the students will naturally learn about one another, wonder about one another and hopefully deepen their understanding of the unity or universality of all people. Perhaps their wondering will lead to love as we recall it did for Alice Walker's old man.

Openness and freedom would also be part of our shared atmosphere. The "sensitivity to the inner lives of students" which John refers to, and the words, questions, and even silences we share help the student become more and more open to what is inside them; with such communication we open doors into the depths and open vastness unfolding in them. In such an atmosphere the process of discovery is open to the student helping create that discovery, the student freely being an active part of the learning process, in a quite *shibui* way. Letting-learn deepens. With the openness, instead of us saying how students should think of some particular thing, we may let the thing itself invite as it were the student into its many possibilities, or as John says, let it "evoke" response. Mystery, found as open horizons within, instead of being maybe treated as something to remove in a student, becomes something evocative, and cherished, opening one further into wonder and possibilities, and with these possibilities deep hope opens and unfolds as well.

In such an atmosphere, too, the discovery process is open through dialogue—between student and teacher, between student and student, between student and class materials. And, especially, the dialogue reaches through the opened doors into the spacious *internal* silent reality of the student, so that what is inside can inform the outer language, and the language outside can help inform the inner realm. Through those opened doors the silence of the internal and language in the external can work together, as Picard points out. "Language becomes emaciated if it loses its connection with silence," he says at one point

(1988, p. 15) then reveals the reverse as well, saying, "Silence is fulfilled only when speech comes forth" (1988, p. 29). He explains this assertion, saying, "Space [associated with love and silence] is unrestrained and uncontrolled, there is room in it for everything, even for the things that do not belong to love. It is language that first makes love clear and well defined, that gives it only what belongs to it" (1988, p. 98). To more fully understand love—and numerous other, related things—we need both silence and language.

Here, in this atmosphere, the open doors are often questions—"have you thought of this"—or even silences letting the students raise their own questions. Questions are often what are needed for the doorway rather than declarations or assertions, or "Answers" which Van Manen points out can often stop questions (1986, p. 40). In this atmosphere there is even surprise—surprise for the teacher at how much there can be found within students, as Meg points out. In it also we find the strengthening that enables us to resist the temptation to always rush in to help, we might say with the "Answer." Instead it is often better to remain silent and leave the student open to being part of the discovery process. We are rewarded as the student becomes an intimate part of her or his own growth (some would say to "own" their own learning). Not always polishing the dialogue with a logically symmetrical ready-made answer but leaving it somewhat rough and irregular, like some *shibui* tea bowl, leaves the way open for the student to find multiple views.

I reflect further on atmosphere and Van Manen who earlier led us into thinking about deep seeing and deep action in terms of atmosphere. I think of another point he emphasizes, and that is what he calls "presence," of being present to each student not just on the level of being present in the classroom but present at a deeper level. I think of the on-going creation of a being, unfolding in the depth and vastness of each of us being directly present to each other. It is like the atmosphere that in its continuity reaches directly into each of us. Van Manen speaks of presence in terms of the teacher "seeing" the student and my thoughts move to deep seeing. He says, "Being seen by the teacher . . . means being confirmed as existing, as being a person and a learner" (1986, p. 21). In other words, we see them in their depthfulness, recognizing and

confirming that part of them that goes much beyond the surface.

Still contemplating the words “presence” and “present” I think of Jantsch who speaks of “present” from another angle, that of time (cited in Wheatley, 1992, p. 74). He speaks of being fully engaged in the present but also of flowing into new things at the right time. I think of the atmosphere that flows around me, around my students, even within us, how it flows at just the right time, keeping all in dynamic balance. Then I recall Jantsch speaking of being “engaged” which brings me back to Van Manen speaking of the teacher who is “simultaneously engaged and reserved, close and distant” (1986, pp. 18-19). Yet, that “distance” I see is part of being present. As one stands back to take in the wider perspective, to see the whole, the distinction between distance and presence dissolves. In this way we move to a deeper presence. When deep seeing informs deep action, the teacher through being present to the student at a deeper level sees more clearly the time to speak and the time to remain silent.

In an atmosphere where there is this continuity of the internal, teacher to student, student to teacher, the teacher begins to rely on intuition. Yanagi finds: “There are many ways of seeing, but the truest and best is with the intuition, for it takes in the whole, whereas the intellect only takes in part” (1972, p. 114).

The atmosphere with this way of being directly present inner person to inner person through timing and intuition opens the way for students to look past the surface, past the labels into the very heart of many things. It opens the way for them to get into the very soul of things—even into their own souls. Into love and hope that reaches down deeper than we can imagine, out to horizons vaster than we can know.

My cape reaches out and includes the students in its wholeness and wonder, and I am glad for that invitation that waits within silence, inviting us all, as I see it, to the wonderful unfolding at the heart of education, and even more, at the heart of life.

The bench among the pines no longer can be seen, and the time has come for my host and me to say good-bye. We bow deeply and slowly to one another. Our bows seem to linger on, as if unwilling to sever the connection of our shared silent space. As I leave

I feel again the overwhelming interweaving of profound joy and sadness. Once at the bridge I hesitate for but a moment, turning to look toward the tea hut. Darkness surrounds and I am unable to see my host. As I look back I see the soft glow of the garden lantern. I think of the heart of this day. A smile emerges. Overhead the cloud-veiled moon reaches through the branches. A mist is rising. Strong calm fills my being. There is total silence. Then I hear muffled voices further along the bridge, the sound of gentle laughter, and I see lights twinkling in the distance. I feel the quiet excitement of new thoughts that have filled me, and I move forward welcoming the chance to take them to the other side.

ANOTHER CEREMONY

Look there—the places we stream toward,
pushing into the scant surface
all the waves of our heart,
pleasure, weakness,
and to whom do we finally offer them?

(Rilke, 1986, p. 32)

Interwoven throughout this paper are my imaginings of a Japanese tea ceremony. "Imaginings" though they may be called, they nevertheless arose along with and out of the data as a useful metaphorical counterpoint that helped ever increasingly to draw out and blend the essence of the conversations and literature. These narratives became an integral part of the analysis, helping to open the exploration of the many subtleties of experiencing silence, inviting and adding layers. The narratives also provided a lived experience framework for recounting the sense of intimacy and vastness found in the experiences of the teachers and in the literature. As I reflect on the many aspects of silence that have been unfolding I find my imaginings expanding to consider ceremonies in other times and places. A Canadian equivalent to the Japanese tea ceremony begins to unfold in my thoughts.

Several women are gathered around a large wrought iron and glass table in the modernistic kitchen of a restored coach house close to the heart of downtown Calgary. Some are pouring decaffeinated coffee from the glass pot, others are allowing the herbal tea a "few more minutes," and still others are pressing the cappuccino machine into use. One reaches her hand out as if to touch the red tulips in the centre of the table.

Life without sound, opening without end,
using space without taking space from that
space the objects all around diminish,

scarcely outlined, like a blank not yet painted,
 and nothing but inwardness, strange and delicate
 and self-illuminating—up to the rim:

Do we know anything at all like this?

(Rilke, 1986, p. 21)

She touches one gently making the connection and then stands back slightly, quietly looking, her hand resting in the folds of her skirt. She then moves toward the flowers reaching out to change the line of one in relation to the others. The activity takes but a moment and it is as though she is consciously unconscious of it.

The talk and laughter flow freely. Receiving their beverage they drift slowly off to the living room where two women are already engaging in an animated conversation. One of the women waiting on the tea wanders over to the large window that looks out to the city centre. The skyline of downtown Calgary with its large blocks of light and the north hill with its multitude of twinkling lights waits open before her. A friend comes to stand quietly beside her, looking, too. After a time the friend asks if she thinks one eventually takes the encompassing vista for granted. She asks if it becomes so familiar one just goes by without noticing, without taking the time to stop and look, to wonder. They stand together, quietly looking. Laughter flows from the living room and they are drawn to the others.

The women are discussing the suggestion that arises occasionally that they should take turns writing an account of the evening so that as time passes they have a written record of what went on each month. They wonder what it would be like to read ten years from now what transpired tonight. The heart of the night was what they cared about and some feared that might get lost or misrepresented in the writing. The conversation somehow drifts on to other things without any conclusion.

The hostess requests that the women come through to the dining room. Coffee and dessert are arranged on a black linen cloth which is anchored in the middle by one long stemmed white rose surrounded by small clear glass marbles in a simple crystal vase. The vase is sitting on a mirror surrounded by seven

small flickering candles which serve to light the room. One of the women peers into the mirror and catches her shimmering reflection. The table is very striking—dramatic and the strong calm of the flower penetrates the room.

Once everyone has gathered in the living room with coffee and dessert they draw their chairs in close to the sofa across from the gently burning fire and begin to visit. After a while they stop talking and sit watching the fire, listening to the silence. In time the conversation resumes and they talk at times as a group and at others to those sitting nearest them. At times the talk is lively, animated, at others it seems softer, more gentle somehow. Eventually the women sitting on the sofa begin to speak of the thesis one of them has completed recently. They have read their friend's thesis and they are curious about her topic—silence.

Sandy: I particularly liked your Japanese tea ceremony, Ruth, and as I was getting ready to come this evening I had the feeling I was off to a tea ceremony. Although our gatherings do not seem to be as quiet. . . . There is the faithfulness, the commitment to reaching a deeper level of understanding of one another. It seems we bring not only our words to these gatherings but also our silences—the small and large silences that we have accumulated over the month. I didn't realize before now that I was bringing you my silences but I am.

Diana: A kind of gift. (laughter) The gift of our unfinished selves! What is your word, Ruth?

Ruth: *Shibusa*—or *shibui*, which is the adjective.

D: An interesting, strange word . . .

R: I find it is a fascinating word—it has multiple meanings and levels of meaning. So our unfinished self is our *shibui* self. Actually it does sound rather strange and yet as you begin to think about it you realize it takes trust to reveal your unfinished self. When you see my unfinished self what sort of a creation are you going to make of me? I never really thought about it exactly like that until this moment! What kind of a creation do our minds make of our students, our family, our friends?

- S: Yeah, and what kind of creation do their minds make of *us*? The idea that the *shibui* beauty of the Tea ceremony is a beauty that makes an artist of the viewer really struck me because it is so interactive. So hopeful too, I guess. Also the opportunity to be an artist is appealing. Well, more than appealing—penultimate.
- D: Penultimate?
- S: Next to ultimate. Anyway, Ruth, I'm wondering if *shibui* beauty is what you find in silence? Is that the reason for this particular metaphor?
- R: Yes, I would say I find silence to be very *shibui*, very beautiful. When silence and I come together I find the same experience of "being alive in it" that Potok's Danny has. Together we create something, myself and the silence become something more than we were separately. I face in the direction of making it a deeper seeing although many times I fall short and have to redirect myself. *Togetherness* with silence however, is essential to the process. Letting the silence create us—
- S: —and test us?
- R: Oh yes. Not just create us as though we are just the passive recipients of the creating process. It does test us, asking us what creating we put back into the dialogue. This makes me think of my cape. We weave our cape of silence—we select the threads to chose and those to lay aside; we chose how to interweave our present with our past and what we hope for. So part of the *test* of silence is what threads we see and choose among the many possible ones it presents for us, and how we interweave them.
- S: It certainly does require togetherness with silence, being a person—a creative person, I can see. I am seeing that silence has a lot of surprises in it.
- R: When I first became excited about the possibility of researching silence I had not encountered the word *shibusa* and knew little about the actual Japanese tea ceremony. As I began to read about it I found an ongoing unfolding of aspects of the ceremony that corresponded to what was emerging with the teachers' experiences and the literature as well as my own experience. Also it helped set the atmosphere for me as I was writing. I consumed enough tea sitting at the computer visualizing myself at a tea

ceremony that I felt it was beginning to replace the blood flowing through my veins. I really learned something though.

S: It sounds like you got right into it. What did you learn?

R: Well, for one thing I found visualization is a good way to go beyond reflection to what I consider the deeper level of contemplation.

D: What is the difference between them?

R: In one of my classes we were assigned the book *Reflection In Action* by Schon. In brief he advocates on-going reflection-in-action for professionals for each unique situation at hand. He weaves together practise and theory at an intuitive level. The professional becomes a flexible on-the-spot researcher able to see and meet the needs of the unique situation at hand. In other words this professional is doing exactly what we commonly expect of a professional. They are getting into deep seeing.

S: Oh, only getting into?

R: Well, I hope for more. I want more. I see there is more. I want my professional to strive for the deepest level of deep seeing. This research shows that deepest level acknowledges that there is a 'moreness', a 'beyondness', a larger reality, a 'transcendence', a soul that we associate with silence. Some will think of transcendence and the spirit in a non-religious way and others in a religious way; for still others the lines between the two will be blurred. I think of Rushdie, a professed atheist. He spoke of transcendence as the flight of the human spirit out of the boundaries of its material physical existence (Drake and Miller, 1991). And, yes, he did use the word "spirit."

S: I think the word "spirit" has a broader context than the word "spiritual." Although both have a religious connotation I think spirit more readily flows beyond the religious context. Think of a person with spirit—optimistic—up-beat.

D: Whether or not they have a religious connotation they seem to point to the deeper hidden dimensions of life, the mystery. We gain inspiration from reading about people with spirit. But I think we were talking about the difference between reflection and contemplation.

- R: Oh right, reflection-in-action as getting into deep seeing. In Schon's reflection-in-action the two threads of theory and practise are interwoven tightly but we can still discern them. In contemplation, however, the duality disappears and we see just the one thread, one colour which represents the spirit, the being, the soul. For me it is a white thread because white reflects all of the hues completely and diffusely. Part of completeness of white for me includes incompleteness, the *shibui* or the unfinished, and the diffuseness gives the image of spreading out to horizons which we also know is deepening. So I visualize the colour as white . . .
- D: Is your contemplation also contemplation-in-action?
- R: Well, yes just as I'm speaking about it in comparison to Schon's reflection-in-action and teaching specifically. I'm saying that we have to be committed to the deepest level of seeing which this research finds is a seeing which goes beyond the level of reflection to contemplation.
- S: You were telling us before that visualization was a good way to go beyond reflection to contemplation—I'm curious as to how that worked for you?
- R: Visualizing myself at a tea ceremony gets me to the level where I feel an increased sense of awareness. I see myself in my mind's eye wandering through the tea garden and I have the same connected sense I have when I am in a forest or the woods, a sense of oneness. I feel the wood of the small waiting bench, the water on my hands as I touch the lily pond, the aching of my legs from sitting *seizu* style on the *tatami*. I see the shadows, my host's hands in detail and so much more. I find the sense of awe and wonder that seems inherent in quiet contemplation. I always come away from my tea ceremony feeling honoured by the invitation. Perhaps this is a form of meditation. I think we use this process of visualization in relationships almost unconsciously. —Perhaps if we could use the process of visualizing our students more at the conscious level we would find ourselves more consistently open to the mystery in them.
- S: Did your teachers also find the *shibui* sense of beauty in silence?
- R: The teachers and the literature in the main focused explicitly on the depthfulness of silence like that seen in the tea ceremony. The inner

depthfulness that corresponds to outer vastness, rather than the *shibui* aspect of making an artist of the viewer—although that certainly was an underlying implicit thread running through the conversations. There was the strong sense that the moreness and the beyondness which the teachers found in silence invited them to a deeper and correspondingly wider vision.

D: I noticed you also used the metaphor of a comforter which turned into a cape. I'm wondering if you have any other metaphors for silence?

R: Yes. Where the cape takes on an atmospheric quality. Any other metaphors? Umm . . . What about you?

D: Well, I have one but you must hear me out before you start to laugh. Curiously enough, while I was thinking about your metaphors for silence I started thinking about the Friendly Giant—

R and S: THE FRIENDLY GIANT.

D: Yes, none other than the ubiquitous friendly giant of our children's youths. Now I'm not certain just why but I began to see the friendly giant as a metaphor for silence. It persisted and so the other morning I watched the program at nine.

R and S: Good for you!

D: Yes, I even prepared a tea tray for the occasion.

R and S: A real ceremony.

D: I didn't recall it having a great deal of silence in it when I used to watch it first with my brother and then with my children and yet I was amazed. It is an extremely quiet contemplative show. A show with actually noticeable gentle silences where the characters are "just being."

R and S: UMM HUMM

D: Well, actually I'm quite serious. It is a depthful show. Your research spoke of the core of silence as wholeness didn't it?

R: Yes.

D: Well, I had very much the sense that the silence in that show is in large part responsible for the sense of wholeness I experienced while watching it.

S: Maybe you could set three cups on the tea tray—

R: — and we'll watch it tomorrow morning with you. (much laughter)

D: Now I didn't say I watch it every morning and tomorrow is a working morning but we'll set a time for next week.

S and R (together): I think she's serious.

D: I am. Now what was I saying?

S: Wholeness.

D: Yes, the show had the sense of wholeness silence brings that allows everything to exist. After all, you spoke of stillness and movement in the same breath, of distance and nearness, the all-embracing didn't you? Well, I found all of that within the show and more. One thing that particularly stood out in the character of the giant that I found within your research on silence, Ruth, was the strong combination of power and humility. Perhaps this is part of what you find in your tea master? This idea seems to be very much between the lines of your participants' experience of silence also.

R: Yes, I agree. I think of Hammarskjöld as an example of that combination. Throughout his journal the sense of humility was so predominant and yet we know from his life he was also a powerful person. One of the teachers noted this combination in the character of Joseph Campbell. He represented to her a person who had a lot of silence and she referred to it as wisdom. This teacher found he opened a door or a window for her and she actually said she wished we had wise people like that in our culture that we could take our wonderings to.

D: It would be nice. Well, we have each other. The three wise women! (laughter) Actually I'm serious. Anyway, I didn't really pick up on the idea of power and humility in silence until I read your thesis. I think I saw the humility but I didn't consciously use that word. I had to think about that word. It is not an often used word these days. It is a good word though. It seems to me a humble person would be able to see that what is useful to him may well be useless to somebody else. A good quality for a parent or a teacher.

S: Frye would be the person I would think of as that combination. A deep

seeing person who spoke from silence and was able to help others give shape and direction to their silence.

- D: But speaking of Joseph Campbell, he was on T.V. recently which caused me to dig out and re-read his book, *The Power of Myth*. Reading the book reminded me that mythology is metaphorical like poetry and I began to think it would evoke contemplation. Campbell sees it as a good bridge to our "inner vastness," our soul. Anyway, I've made a vow to read a myth to my son every night.
- S: I saw parts of the show. I know Campbell sees mythology as a way for teachers and parents to increase "spiritual consciousness." Through mythology he says we become aware that the wonderful images are not out there but exist within us.
- D: Yeah, I seem to have the same synthesizing potential that you found in visualization, Ruth. I personally use poetry for that but I can see how children would like myths.
- S: Most of them do but some find them just plain "stupid." I stick with it though and have them write personal myths. I always believed at some level they were internalizing the myth and that it was in-forming them or possibly even transforming them. Hopefully they may even begin to live the myth, to embrace its mystery. I promote the ones where the final step for the heroes is to share the new found knowledge or serve others.
- D: I see there is nothing hidden about your agenda! You mentioned hope as part of the process. Do you find yourself like I do simply going on hope a lot of the time?
- S: Absolutely. With some students you sense they are beginning to live the myth, with others you wonder and with others you just hope. You mentioned silence in relation to hope in your research, Ruth. I recall one of your participants said hope is a silent thing, and it stuck with me because the two are so intimately intertwined in my own mind.
- D: I find that there is a lot of just hoping involved in being a mother too. You wonder if you are having any impact sometimes. But every so often something surfaces when you are least expecting it and you think AH.

Timing is something I struggle with. So often I find myself just going on faith. I can't see anything happening but I know that doesn't mean anything isn't happening.

S: Perhaps it is not the time for it to surface.

D: Right. I think that was one of the things your ceremony reminded me of, Ruth. There seemed to be a willingness to let things unfold in their own time without imposition. I find I have to keep resisting the notion that the whole world is school and that things should happen in a specified sequence and time. There are so many pulls and one can't afford to be naive either.

S: At least a mother has the opportunity for a longer run perspective. The student moves on and you are not often certain just how they are and what they did internalize. You do find yourself going on faith.

R: Just as you mentioned the word "internalize" I began to think about one of the teachers who said she loved to feed her mind on myths. One of her favourites was about a flower who was bound in a garden and wasn't allowed to leave. She took the risk and left and the other flowers destroyed her being as punishment. Next spring she spread her seeds and grew again free in another space.

S: She must have been a cape wearer!

D: Thinking about myths deepening our seeing leads me to realize that my practice of reader response theory in the classroom is another application of your thesis. The students form an individual "seeing" of the text and then by stretching and sharing their individual "seeing" through talk in a group they achieve an even deeper "seeing"— which expanding takes them to where they can see, as a group and later individually, the wider social context and thus the significance of the text and their dialogic relation to it. I see how silence is vital to the process, taking them beyond labels and jargon to the 'moreness', the transcendent, the spiritual or whatever you wish to refer to it as.

R: Yes, we find a "we" amongst our differences, a commonality. We begin to realize that we can separate ourselves and recognize one another through our differences but we also realize that we share an underlying humanity.

We begin to realize as I heard on the C.B.C. Massey Lecture Series: *Democracy on Trial* that we cannot be different all by ourselves—

- S: —There is the idea that two eyes see differently yet together they give us depth. I was thinking about seeing with new eyes and by the way I enjoyed your Proust quote. As I thought about it I began to realize that seeing with new eyes applies not only to the present and our hopes for the future but also to seeing our past with new eyes. Both our personal past and our collective past, our history. We can begin to see these in a new way and once we learn how to do this for ourselves we surely can do it for others. We can begin to find possibilities not just in the future but also in the *past* if we get beyond preconceptions. We begin to enlarge our being and move toward larger horizons through history part of which is mythology.
- R: Remember you read that book on Vygotsky you borrowed from the professional library for me. He speaks of tying instruction to ripening rather than ripe functions, to the buds and flowers rather than the fruit. Well, wouldn't on-going mediation with the myths of history across cultures and with the history of democracy itself provide a continuing challenge to our eternally ripening inner immensity. We hopefully begin to see the commonality that lies beyond the diversity.
- S: Yes, and the *responsibilities* to each other, too. As I find in your thesis, for individuals to have a deep presence for each other. To find that within.
- D: I think as we mature we are more able to mediate for ourselves. That is part of what looking inside for the answer must be.
- R: Perhaps this is part of what one of the teachers meant when she said as you get older you know more what to do with silence. One of the main things I saw the teachers doing with their silence was seeking the whole or the commonality rather than concentrating on the diversity. One of them spoke about moving beyond getting caught up in a particular paradigm, for example quantitative versus qualitative, or gender differences—men versus women. Others spoke about moving beyond limiting jargon or political talk.
- S: It seems this mediation which leads to self understanding—let me try to

recall how Lakoff and Johnson expressed it—requires unending negotiation of the meaning of our experiences to ourselves. I can see how myths and poetry would be an invaluable aid in this process of negotiation as they have that element of limitlessness. So the tea ceremony is your metaphor for silence. I'm wondering if it is also your metaphor for yourself, I mean, how you see yourself in relation to all of life?

R: Well, it is the most appropriate so far. It, like silence, is continually unfolding. It has both vastness and depth. But it isn't perfect. There is always a little pocket left unaccounted for in each metaphor I find. I keep seeking though I don't really expect to find the perfect metaphor. The seeking is part of the fun, the adventure, the challenge.

S: I see the importance of metaphors and yet I also see that your research suggests that the core of silence is wholeness. A wholeness that goes beyond, as you said, labels, that is not fragmented by labels. Isn't that right?

R: Yes

S: But aren't metaphors a kind of label?

R: Yes.

S: Just yes?

R: Well, there is more. Myths and poetry I find are invitations to the invitation of silence. It seems to me the rich imagery in these genres help us get beyond the labels to the essence more readily than in some other genres. Certainly the teachers mentioned poetry had this effect not only for the rich imagery but for its spaciousness, its gaps which invited them in. They specifically mentioned poetry I think because I selected excerpts of poetry for them to respond to in the third conversation. Also we can remember to surround our metaphor with a layer of silence—to flow from silence and return to it and that will certainly help take us beyond the labels.

S: It may sound unusual but I've met people that seem to speak and listen from silence. Haven't you?

D: Yeah, the friendly giant. (hearty laughter) Actually I'm quite serious. The friendly giant to me represents people who do speak and listen from silence.

No one spoke for a moment. It sounded so quiet, this moment in the midst of their lively conversation. Even the background of talk from elsewhere in the house had paused.

D: It seems we've been abandoned in here. Where are the others?

S: Oh, remember they said they were going to sit out on the verandah and enjoy the rain for a few minutes.

D: Is it raining?

S: Just gently, you can see through the opening in the front drapes.

D: Would anyone like more tea or coffee? I'll bring it through as I'm going to help myself.

The two remaining women sit together quietly looking into the fire. One of the women is framing her cup with her fingers, gazing down into and past the surface, as it were into another space. The other woman notices and starts to watch. The fingers gently framing the cup begin to slowly trace the pattern discovered there. After a time the moving fingers have found the blank side of the cup and have begun to create. The woman continues to watch, and wonders if her friend's fingers are following what she sees as she gazes intently into her cup. As she watches, her wondering expands to other images of her friend's hands moving in different times and places, and at last she holds the image of her friend quietly introducing her new son, unwrapping the comforter that enfolds him. The women continue "just being" together wrapped in silence. The tick of the clock rhythmically enters the silent spaces between the movements of the fingers seen in the inner eye. In the distance a dog begins to bark.

Her eyes move from her friend's hands to the bouquet of red tulips on the coffee table which she had contemplated earlier in the kitchen and had suggested they bring through with them to the living room. The flowers carried her mind to the flowers in a different time and place. She was back in her resource room, the school day drawing to a close. In the middle of the round table where she and her five students sat earlier was the ubiquitous bouquet of "dandy lions," so renamed by the students to reflect their exceptional strength and endurance.

Beside the “dandy lions” was a tray complete with sparkling glasses and a clear glass pitcher of water which floated star-shaped ice cubes. Sunlight streamed in through the open window creating warm bright patterns on the table. It was a soundless world. They sat rereading Lionni’s *Frederick*. It was the story of a family of field mice who spent their days and nights gathering food for winter—all but Frederick who sat silently storing summer memories of words and colours to warm the colourless winter days that lay ahead. The students had previously responded to the book on a personal level and each held an opinion about Frederick. The more they talked the muddier Frederick seemed to become. Their talk was starting to move beyond their personal opinion to the wider social context. How do we get along in the world with a limited food supply? And was Frederick, who gathered images rather than food, a lazy mouse or a gifted poet? Perhaps he was both. Perhaps he was neither. Was Frederick ultimately a help or a hindrance? Did he “see” things the others didn’t see and was he standing up for it? Did his “seeing” ultimately make any difference? Is there really room for different types of “seeing”? Are some types of “seeing” better than others? The students had moved into the world of ambiguity with all of its possibilities and challenges. The strange intertwining of the strength of their lion hearts and their vulnerability penetrated the room. They were off in another world as they read, surely creating themselves—what they would become.

She sat gazing at them in wonder of the process, appreciating this small pocket of silent opportunity. Two little girls sat angled in toward one another, their knees touching, consciously unconscious of one another. To her amazement one boy began to negotiate his way over to his new soccer ball and return it to his spot at the table with his foot without lifting his eyes from the book once. He was definitely off in another world but which one? He sat relaxed at the table head bent over the book moving the ball around with his left foot. She had the impression he was going to be at least half surprised when he found it there. One little girl sat holding her book at arm’s length squinting her eyes, as if to unfocus them, to gain a new perspective on the illustrations. Yes, that must be it, for now she has centred the book so that the patch of sunlight falls on the

illustrations. She begins to trace with her fingers the textures and patterns created by the rounded stones of the mice's refuge as if willing the illustrations to reveal the mystery of their creation. Is there an almost imperceptible hesitation before her eyes move to the last student? He is so still in his sitting, so square to the book, so upright. She first notices the slight tremor in his hands which is soon followed by his soundless tears. Silence begins to cry too. The folds of the room begin to draw in closely, intimately. The soccer player has reached out to put his arm around his friend's shoulder. Two of the girls begin to pour water for everyone. Each reaches out in their own way to enfold him. All of these activities take but a moment and are completed in silence. They are a community who have shared their inner worlds with one another and they now share the grief of one of their friends watching his mother die. They have moved to a deeper level of commitment to one another and he no longer leaves the room on the rare occasions when he cries. Silence is seeking them. For a moment they sit quietly together sipping, turned in to one another. What must it be like for him each day as he pauses at the front door before he calls out softly, Mum, I'm home from school? After a small time of silence they turn to words and they are able to talk with him about his mother. In time the talk moves on to *Frederick*.

The third friend returns from the kitchen with the coffee pot and quietly begins to refill their cups. After a time she explains that she took a few moments to make a fresh pot for the others. The conversation resumes.

D: You know how your research finds that we use silence to get beyond things like labels, cliché talk, presuppositions and assumptions and so on? Well, while I was waiting for the coffee and watching the rain I started thinking again about people who speak and listen from silence—and particularly the friendly giant in the children's show . . .

There is no laughter this time as her friends see how earnest she is. She is bringing them the gift of her contemplation.

D: I don't know if I made it clear before that when I say I find their talk, and I

guess even they themselves, are surrounded by silence I don't mean their conversation is "profound."

S and R: UM HUM

D: I mean—would you say that speaking of a train and its fading whistle and making the actual spaces between the clickety clack sound of its wheels on the track enlarge and gradually fade away to the horizon is profound?

S: It *could* be. I guess I would say it is if it goes beyond surface superficialities.

D: Yes it does—and it is at the same time unassuming so I would say simple. Simple and profound—at a deeper level. Not cliché "profound."

S: Well, then I can see how it appeals to you. It invites you to a deeper response or seeing. It sounds to me from your description that the silence and reflective component must have been a conscious decision on the part of the producers. It has been around for years, that show, and I'm wondering if such a decision has been made lately for children's programs? I guess I'm wondering what we as a society think of children's silences or do we?

D: I thought I might like to teach preschool or E.C.S. for a change as a way of keeping myself open and a friend recommended I read Harste, Woodward, and Burke's book *Language Stories and Literacy Lessons* (1984) and Denny Taylor's book *Family Literacy* (1983). I was amazed at the assumptions about emergent literacy that these authors managed to unsettle.

S: Like what?

D: Well, that oral language has supremacy over reading and writing, that emergent literacy is predominantly school related, or that children master form after they learn to read and write. In a nut shell, they seem to feel that the traditional paradigm with regard to emergent literacy in focusing on controlling the conventions of language is seeing the act but missing the main event, to roughly paraphrase. Children's emergent literacy engagements are real literacy engagements not pseudo ones and they are further along in their engagement than the traditional paradigm admitted. I'm thinking that if we can have our assumptions unsettled so dramatically about emergent literacy, could we not possibly have our assumptions unsettled about *emergent silence* and its possibilities likewise unsettled and

later silence as well? I think we do have assumptions; whether they are conscious or not is another thing. Children's experience of silence would make a good research topic for someone.

- S: Yes, and I also think of older people and their experience of silence or younger versus older teachers or teachers with graduate degrees versus teachers without. Those are more possible topics. Your participants—teachers—seemed very contemplative. I wonder if in part that is the personality that returns to university or would you get the same results with other teachers? That would also be an interesting research topic for the right person.
- D: But I wanted to get back to unsettling assumptions about silence in different paradigms for a moment because paradigms are very much in vogue these days and didn't you relate silence to paradigms at the beginning of your thesis, Ruth?
- R: I mentioned just at the beginning that the traditional paradigm sees silence as efficiency, critical theory sees it as oppression and phenomenology as granting space for being.
- D: Are the silent knowers in *Women's Ways of Knowing* an example of critical theory?
- R: Yes. Anyway, this research shows that silence is more than efficiency, certainly more than oppression and even more than granting space for being. I knew before I started the research that the phenomenological view was closest to my own view of silence, and that has not changed. I found out from the research that it was closest to the teachers' views as well.
- S: Maybe the teachers have phenomenological leanings and that is why you were drawn to them?
- R: Well, I never thought of that. I picked them because they were the ones I felt would say yes. Well, yes, also I liked them! Anyway, I find this research extends the phenomenological view of silence as it begins by analyzing silence and then moves to thinking about silence transformationally. It addresses the question, how does silence affect the

way we live our life? It shows the space-granting is active. Silence does not just provide a space for becoming, it SEEKS our becoming, and we seek it in order to become. It is an interactive space. A space for creativity. More importantly a space for re-creation. We do not simply un-fold in this space or develop, we create ourselves and thus there is the possibility for our re-creation. There is a mystery to the process. This needs to be acknowledged and emphasized because it changes our seeing, our way of interacting with our students. It opens us up as teachers and gives us hope. We begin to realize that neither we nor our students need to just mirror life but that we can mould it.

S: Well?

R: Well, what?

S: Well, what about the other two paradigms. *Those* I know something about.

R: Well, as for the traditional paradigm notion of silence as efficiency I would have to say that *true* efficiency pushes us beyond the known, the expected, the merely possible. True efficiency to my mind does not make "a straight-cut ditch of a free meandering brook" as Thoreau cautioned when he wrote what education often does (1968, p. 83).

S: I know what Thoreau is saying there. My experience of the traditional paradigm as a student was that it was quite the opposite to an invitation. It was a sentence, a confined space, an imposition. Yet I have, as an adult, spoken with some classmates who "served" with me and found they had quite the opposite experience. Some of them even spoke of it poetically. I could hardly believe it. My lord, I felt like a product, not a creation, an unseen one at that. The silences I experienced were ones of being controlled or being on the hook. I understand it though and even forgive it. I started out teaching that way, too. That was considered good teaching. Now I have a different philosophy. Perhaps I will reach the stage where I can look back on it with new eyes.

D: Well, I know I was educated in the traditional paradigm and I sure didn't feel confined. Some of the women in *Women's Ways Of Knowing* experienced their silence as oppressive, though, I know. These different views show

me that the world we SEE is not the world but a world which we create *together*. To me this is hopeful as we can create a new world if we create a new seeing. I find in your research confirmation of my belief that the world is going to be different only if we begin to see differently and then take the next step and commit ourselves to acting differently. Now I started off talking about silent women and I forget my train of thought.

R: Well, it sounded like it was going in the direction of silent women could begin to see their silence differently.

D: Oh yeah. It's almost like they seem to feel unless they are making a noise or having a voice they don't exist.

S: Well, they're not the only ones. I sometimes feel our whole society feels that way. We are a noisy society. I especially noticed how noisy we are while I was reading your tea ceremony excerpts, Ruth.

D: As I was saying, and I saw this in your research, Ruth, I recall it was the women teachers who mentioned it, you have to listen to your inner voice. Didn't one of them talk about finding the answer inside and knowing where you are inside before you can focus on the work, and another about getting a philosophy before one gets you?

R: Absolutely.

D: Well, I think oppressed people have to start by acknowledging and revering their inner voice. Sometimes I think we get out of balance and revere only our exterior life, our exterior voice.

R: It seems to be part of our Western tradition. We seem a bit suspicious of a silent or non-verbal response to the world. Remember how foreign you found the quiet of my tea ceremony. The Oriental tradition I find to be more mystical. They seem to want to break through the walls of language to silence to gain a more complete or holistic understanding. It almost seems that we want to break through the walls of silence to language to gain understanding.

D: Yes, I can see the difference. I'm still thinking of the interior voice. If we don't revere and acknowledge our interior life and voice it seems to me it is negated and it is almost as if it doesn't exist because it can't be seen or

heard. Yet look what your research finds going on in the silent interior life of people. We have to begin revering this in ourselves so we can “see” it in others and revere it in them. Having an exterior voice is only part of the picture.

- R: I agree. We need to also make sure it really is our voice, not some pre-programmed paradigmatic voice. However, it is not only the exterior voice that oppressed people feel silenced.
- D: No, I suppose not. I think we as teachers and parents can start to address this inner voice in children by having them look inside for answers to their wonderings and questions and as you mentioned by not always stopping their questions with the answer. Keep the subject open, the curiosity going, the wonder alive.
- S: I agree but when I hear talk of listening to your inner voice I think of how self indulgent and individualistic that voice can be and of how our culture tends to sell that voice. The voice of “freedom to do your own thing.” I was relieved when your research posed the question about silence and selfishness and found that for the teachers silence was not selfish but quite the opposite.
- D: Yes, they seemed to be preparing for a deeper response to humanity. As we talked about earlier, a freedom that comes from embracing that which one is given to do in one’s own time and place.
- R: And sensing that timing, the rhythm for it—and the *tactfulness*. The word “tact” I read came from the German music word *takt*, equivalent to our word “beat”—the heart beat of the music—to me, the heart of the timing. So, yes, freedom includes that kind of tact.
- S: This talk of inner voice reminds me of something I was wondering about. It seemed that the gentleness of silence, the *yin* was noticeably dominant. This occurred not only in your interpretation which I realize was in part your metaphors but also in the teachers and the literature. Why do you suppose this was? Is silence essentially yinly?
- R: Yes, that is what my research suggests. Even before I started the research I personally felt silence had much gentleness to it—yinliness, as you called

it—but I was surprised in the conversations that when a less gentle aspect emerged, it was as though that wasn't the main thing about silence for them.

S: Yes, I noticed that.

R: Yes, they kept bringing it back to the gentleness. The insistence on quickly returning it to the yin surprised me. But as I think about this I realize the research also shows silence goes beyond categorization—beyond yin and *yang*. That kind of categorization is precisely what the teachers tried to get away from. Silence was seen to be holistic. Beyond dichotomy. It is a space that invites and somehow makes a whole of everything, even contradictions, if we allow it. So possibly the yin we both see is a movement toward the whole, a seeking for the balance. Our society I feel to be somewhat unbalanced. We tend to reward the yang—competition and so on. In our silence perhaps we tend to the yin as part of a necessary balance. Remember the dark shadows falling across the white kimono of my host?

S: Of course, the yin and the yang. I just realized it this instant. The seeking for the whole.

D: If that is the case it would be interesting to see how silence has been perceived throughout various periods of history. I mean if we have a yinly period in history does silence seek the yang for balance?

R: Well, I don't know. I know one author, Bachelard, who finds silence to be essentially feminine. I think we have to keep bringing ourselves back to the wholeness of it though. Remember we found that it can be felt as a gentle seeking, but at other times as a not so gentle seeking—a pounding. I keep coming back to the idea that silence is beyond dichotomy, that it accepts contradictions, that it seeks the whole. Perhaps what you interpreted as yinlyness had to do with the atmosphere in the conversations, my response to the conversation and so on. After all I did use poetry and pictures in my third conversation. That will certainly have an impact. A yinly impact some might say.

S: I've been much more aware of silence lately and wondering how to nourish

it in my students. I see the possibility in it for both a deeper private and public response. I keep coming back to the idea that expressive writing is important to nourishing silence. It seems to me this type of writing allows us to “see” ourselves because it is the form of writing closest to listening and speaking to self.

D: Yes, it certainly seems so. Look at the variety of disciplines promoting journal writing as a way to inner awareness. What we don’t seem to be as aware of, it seems to me, are the possibilities for nurturing all that is found in silence by opening up and giving students more control over form in their writing. Form and ideas are so closely linked in my experience that it seems contrary to say we are encouraging reflection, creative thinking and so on and then control the form of writing or even the form of expression in general. . . . Perhaps writing will not always be the chosen form of expression. Some will compose a piece of music.

S: Or create a sculpture. Or choreograph a dance—

D: —The forms of expression that some don’t consider basic. The forms that go when funds get cut back?

S: Could be. And yet cutting them could be exactly the wrong thing.

D: I guess again we need to use contemplative silence to overcome our limiting assumptions about what is actually basic.

R: Right, be open. Flow into new forms and structures. It is important to keep silence from getting hardened into a schema or paradigm which congeals and no longer reveals. I noticed on a bulletin board at the university a notice informing graduate students of a talk on multi-disciplinary graduate study. This to me is hopeful. Part of what I find in silence is people putting things together in their own unique way—silence is the path to a deeper vision which leads to a deeper action. This deeper vision is going to necessitate interdisciplinary study for some students. I see over and over again that silence is a reality, a surrounding presence, a moreness that seeks us and that we seek. It is moreness that has the potential to take us beyond fragmenting groups to the essential wholeness that defines our humanness. That defines our hope for a

deeper response to each other.

D: You obviously have deep feelings and beliefs about the possibility of silence based on both your own personal experience and your research. I guess I'm wondering if you see barriers to silence reaching its possibility in education?

R: Quite simply, that some in education will not have the eyes to see its benefit. On the other hand some will and they encourage one another.

S: When you first mentioned your topic to me I must admit I found it unusual.

R: Perhaps you were even thinking so what?

S: Perhaps. But no longer.

There is a quiet pause.

S: So, what was it like?

R: What?

S: Writing your thesis.

R: Very *shibui*, in the complete sense of the word.

They sit quietly looking at each other, entering the space of one another's understanding, expanding it.

The time has come for the women to leave their ceremony. As they prepare to leave, the hostess lightly places the raincape which one of the women had brought over her shoulders, commenting that she must have sensed the rain. The women all gather on the verandah giving each other final farewell hugs and wishes and confirming their plans for the next meeting. Their words linger on, as if they are unwilling to sever the connection of their shared space.

I find myself yet again on the familiar path home. It is an unending mystery how a simple sidewalk that one has walked since childhood can be such a constant source of unfolding. It is late and I can tell from the lighting in

the houses on either side of the street that the early risers have turned in for the evening and that the stay-up-late folk are settled deeply into their favourite part of the house, where the lights glow softly. It is a still night with a gentle rain. I see the gas lamp in my front yard gently glowing in the distance, keeping watch, inviting me home. Beyond I can see the spire of the church far down the street, reminding me of the sacredness of all space. I draw closer into my raincape and begin to move through the silence embraced by the overhanging branches on either side of the street. Glancing down, I see the branches repeated in the pools of water, here and there rippled by drops, rings expanding outward taking my thoughts with them. There is no sound save the gentle shush of the cars in the distance. My thoughts expand further. I feel my childhood home just up the street with the light in the den glowing softly, keeping watch. I sense other parts of the city with their gently glowing lights keeping watch. So many homes. In the branches overhead, past the vague silhouette of a nest, I see the moon starting to emerge, watching down on us, those at home in their houses and those at home on their paths. My host quietly enters the space of my thoughts. I see so clearly now the flower unfolding in his eyes. Reflected back to him. There is silence.

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APPENDIX

The Bowl Of Roses (Third Stanza)

Life without sound, opening without end,
using space without taking space from that
space the objects all around diminish,
scarcely outlined, like a blank not yet painted,
and nothing but inwardness, strange and delicate
and self illuminating—up to the rim:
Do we know anything at all like this?

(Rilke, 1986, p. 21)

Excerpts from the Journal *Markings*

The extra-human in the experience of the greatness of Nature. This does not allow itself to be reduced to an expression of our human reactions, nor can we share in it by expressing them. Unless we each find a way to chime in as one note in the organic whole, we shall only observe ourselves observing the interplay of its thousand components in a harmony outside our experience of it as harmony. (p. 79)

The light died in the low clouds. Falling snow drank in the dusk. Shrouded in silence, the branches wrapped me in their peace. When the boundaries were erased, once again the wonder: that *I* exist. (p. 102)

The 'mystical experience'. Always: *here* and *now* - in that freedom which is one with distance in that stillness which is born of silence. But - this is a freedom in the midst of action, and stillness in the midst of other human beings. The mystery is a constant reality to him who, in this world, is free from self-concern, a reality that grows peaceful and mature before the receptive attention of assent. (p. 108)

Understand - through the stillness,
Act - out of the stillness,
Conquer - in the stillness.
'In order for the eye to perceive colour, it must divest itself of all colours.'
(p. 111)

In the point of rest at the centre of our being, we encounter a world where all things are at rest in the same way. Then a tree becomes a mystery, a cloud, a revelation, each man a cosmos of whose riches we can only catch glimpses. The life of simplicity is simple, but it opens to us a book in which we never get beyond the first syllable. (p. 148)

(Hammarskjöld, 1964)

Excerpt from *Milton*

Thou hearest the nightingale begin the song of spring.
The lark sitting upon his earthly bed, just as the morn
Appears, listens silent; then, springing from the waving
 cornfield, loud
He heads the choir of day. Trill, trill, trill, trill:
Mounting upon the wings of light into the great expanse,
Re-echoing against the lovely blue and shining heavenly shell.
His little throat labours with inspiration; every feather
On throat and breast and wings vibrates with the effluence
 divine.
All nature listens silent to him; and the awful sun
Stands still upon the mountain looking at this little bird
With eyes of soft humility and wonder, love and awe.

(Blake, 1982, pp. 129-130)

Excerpt from *Tintern Abbey*

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And the mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

(Wordsworth, 1961, p. 69)

Song (Stanza One)

When rain, (sings light) rain has devoured my house
And wind wades through my trees,
The cedars fawn upon the storm with their huge paws.
Silence is louder than a cyclone.
In the rude door, my shelter.
And there I eat my air alone
With pure and solitary songs

(Merton, 1977, p. 197)

Excerpt from *Hagia Sophia*

There is in all visible things an invisible fecundity, a dimmed light, a meek namelessness, a hidden wholeness. This mysterious Unity and Integrity is Wisdom, the Mother of all, *Natura naturans*. There is in all things an inexhaustible sweetness and purity, a silence that is a fount of action and joy. It rises up in wordless gentleness and flows out to me from the unseen roots of all created being, welcoming me tenderly . . .

(Merton, 1977, p. 363)