

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

**Small Puppetry Steps:
Challenging Student-Teachers**

by

Dahlia Beck

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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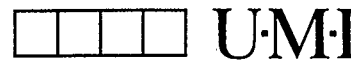
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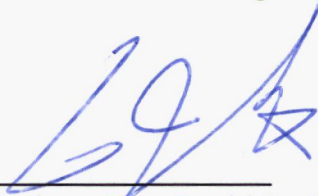
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Small Puppety Steps: Challenging Student-Teachers" by Dahlia Beck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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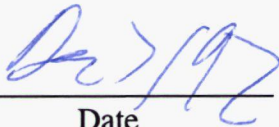
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Abstract

Engaging in Gadamer's hermeneutics, I make the claim that hermeneutics is a pedagogic endeavour. The first seven sections branch out and interweave a supporting fabric, whose texture is reminiscent of (Ravel's) *Bolero*, a musical composition "characterized by sharp turns, stamping of the feet, and sudden pauses in a position with one arm arched over the head" (Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary 1988). The various turns and positions realign and re-collect, repeating, stamping, and adding themes, thus, allowing something new to erupt. The themes explored entail our shared concern and responsibility regarding the fact of natality, indeed, of novices, of student-teachers in particular, the task involved in experience, tradition, and understanding, and conversation as encouraging affinity, belonging and revitalization to emerge. This leads to the realization that asking and interpreting constitute the core of pedagogy, and, *conversely*, that refraining from interpretation is betrayal of the new, which could kindle the death of tradition.

As one arm is arched over the head, the Other is ushered in, with attached strings: responsibility, discourse, participation, revitalization. Sudden pause, transposition, making way for, foregrounding language, poetry. Gadamer's hermeneutics, its ethical-pedagogic connotations in particular, need supplementation. Gadamer (1989, 482-483) argues forcefully for letting light in, for

without light nothing beautiful can appear, nothing can
be beautiful. . . . The beauty of a beautiful thing
appears in it as light, as a radiance. It makes itself
manifest. . . . Light is not only the brightness of that
on which it shines; by making something else visible,

it is visible itself, and it is not visible in any other
way than by making something else visible

Similarly, pedagogy is challenged, hence, opened up by the *encounter* with the Other, as is portrayed by Levinas, and Wiesel. Pedagogy needs the Stranger, in his/her particularities, visage and voice, to recover "a deep sense of the familial."

Acknowledgements

Inspired by A.M. Klein's "Psalm XXXVI: A Psalm Touching Genealogy."

In conversation with Klein, Gadamer, Levinas, and Jardine.

Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:

For to Hans-Georg Gadamer and Emmanuel Levinas, this

Essay is address. Corpuscular, challenging,

You dwell in my vein, you eavesdrop at my ear,

You *enchant* and confront, facing, appealing, contesting,

In judgment and taste you order and ordain me,

Demanding response -

And there look generations through your eyes.

Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:

For to the student-teachers and the Committee members, this

Thesis is voice. In dialogue and support,

You dwell in my veins, you eavesdrop at my ear,

You inquire and teach, caring, engaging, participating

In making tradition and culture,

In opening up theory, creating affinity -

And there look generations through our eyes.

Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:
For to the super-visor that begat me, David Jardine, this
Dissertation is midrash. Speaking with a
Boneless tongue, with integrity,
You've kindled fecundity, you've engendered embroidery,
Entrusting me with filaments of light and weighty veins,
Do I merit to be in the chain? -
And there look generations through my eyes.

Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:
For, close behind us and far ahead of us, Rafi,
Are our two challenging promises. My
Body was your residence, Ephratte and Allon,
You dwell in my veins, you eavesdrop at my ear,
Your faces, the source from which all meaning appears,
Affirm that being is enacted in the relation between -
And there look generations through our eyes.

Special thanks to Eliezer Segal, Margaret Latta, Jim Field, and Jill Watson
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Chapter I

Introduction

Many interwoven dee(d)s partake in the following dissertation: delight and dream, despair and despondency. What says despondency? I am discouraged by the frequently erupting prospects of not being able to fulfill the promise to write tastefully, appropriately, and in good judgment, which, as I was writing, I discovered the topic demands. I had imagined making claims and meticulously substantiating them with themes emerging from interviews with student-teachers and the pertinent literature, that is, I thought I would develop a method that would support, validate, and verify the posited arguments. As the dissertation, however, was taking shape, a different design was emerging: the claims made insisted on coherence and sense that method alone, albeit careful and thoughtful, could not provide or elicit. This issue is explored here, constituting one of the dissertation's unplanned topics, which, I was finding out, is significant in making sense of the planned topic.

My interest was to understand and make sense of how student-teachers shed the hyphen, the division, and become teachers. I drew data from classroom work and the literature, yet, the more data I 'had' -- the more discouraged I became. Much of the pertinent literature seems to be concerned with either, or both, general and abstract laws and principles, and, with personal, idiosyncratic almost, stories and anecdotes, that, tedious or amusing, were courting the query 'so what?' Classroom data and the literature seemed to be in mutual resistance. Engaging in the nature of that resistance had a "better claim" on me, to paraphrase Robert Frost (1971, 223), and similarly to what happened to Frost, way led on to way. I didn't, indeed, couldn't will and control it.

The present work is about becoming a teacher; however, it focuses on the strings, the traditions in which student-teachers find themselves, that are, partly at

least, over and above their wanting and doing (Gadamer 1989, xxviii). It is the topic and the character of the work that opened up the issue of 'beyond one's personal will,' which, eventually, became itself a topic of concern, challenging me to probe it.

"Despondent implies a deep dejection arising from a conviction of the uselessness of further effort" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary 1988). Dreams and fancy, visions and fantasy, frenziedly, at times nightmarishly, swirling, initiated and faithfully accompany the work. The 'so what?', however, is persistent. Why is it important? What's the point? Who cares? Leonard Cohen (1988, "Everybody Knows") baiting, teasing me, discloses:

Everybody knows that the dice are loaded.
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed.
Everybody knows the war is over.
Everybody knows the good guys lost.
Everybody knows the fight was fixed:
the poor stay poor, the rich get rich.
That's how it goes.
Everybody knows.

Everybody knows,
Everybody knows,
That's how it goes,
Everybody knows . . .

the oud ornately wails. So why bother?

Despair is creeping, but the dream resists erasure. What are student-teachers to do in the midst of the inevitability of "that's how it goes?" How are we to act, practise, and live, indeed, be, if all is fixed and already known and clear? If the expert pedagogue (Berliner 1986) is deemed possible, then further effort is useless. But wait, Auden (1966, 221-226) invokes,

The sons of Hermes love to play,
 And only do their best when they
 Are told they oughtn't;

Despair and despondency breed speculation and delight, the delight of resistance, of not having heeded the second commandment of Auden's (225) Hermetic Decalogue: "Thou shalt not write thy doctor's thesis on education;" resistance generated by the "fact of natality," by the bare fact that the world is constantly replenished by new children and novice student-teachers, each of whom is significant, and unique. The significance and uniqueness of each is manifested in how the old and new connect and, dialogically, make sense of their life, together, so that it can go on (Smith 1991). The mutual need between the old and young, between the others and myself, becomes evident as I write, which prods me to continue, hesitantly, despondently at times, yet, like William Carlos Williams' "Poor Old Woman" (1985, 97), attempting to give myself to the one half sucked out [plum] in my hand.

Giving oneself, allowing oneself to be led and seduced, to re-member through past, present, and future souvenirs, this is also part of the work. The munched plum is double-edged; it is both poisonous and sustaining, intoxicating and edifying. Where can the line be drawn? I am constantly fearful of not doing my best, of being unjust or unfaithful to my conversation partners. I am afraid to play, to give myself. In writing and trying to understand, in translating and interpreting, I am learning to be attentive to and cautious with Hermes, the ludicrous, the relentless. One never learns this lesson well enough. Practice, however, doesn't make perfect. It makes munching of more succulent (or otherwise) plums:

"To a Poor Old Woman"

munching a plum on
the street a paper bag
of them in her hand

They taste good to her
They taste good
to her. They taste
good to her

You can see it by
the way she gives herself
to the one half
sucked out in her hand

Comforted
a solace of ripe plums
seeming to fill the air
They taste good to her

The Hermetic encounter with student-teachers and the literature was teaching me that the old woman and the plum, the father and the Four Sons from the Passover Haggadah, the student-teacher and theory, are "not simply a series of finished events" (Levinas 1985, 24), but an immediate actual relation with what goes on around us. The student-teacher and theory, the father and sons, like the old woman and the plum, are always in the midst, between the past and the future, between what has been handed down to us and what will become of us, between illumination and concealment, between the familiar, the strange . . . and the stranger.

The term 'stranger' is linked to a promise, the undoing of which gives rise to despondency, in the biblical story of the covenant between God and Abraham. Why is that so, Elie Wiesel (1990) wonders? That too is addressed in the following pages.

Who is a stranger?

What is a stranger?

How should we treat the stranger, the other?

The other half of the plum can seduce only to be sucked, digested and absorbed, then disappear. Yet, it can also offer what we don't have, and thus challenge and revive us, 'kindle' in the sense of light, arouse, illuminate, as well as act graciously, with courtesy and goodwill, and also, bear, bring forth young, which is related to 'kindred.' The etymological swirl is unrelenting. Like the experience of encountering a stranger, it is important and creative, "provided we know when to step back" (Wiesel 1990, 73).

How do we, can we, then, know when? I've tried to respond to that.

Each stranger has a face, and cannot be impersonalized. The student-teacher, the newborn child, the recently arrived immigrant, the foreigner, each is a particular individual that has something to say to me, that addresses me as he/she regards me. Thus, the other places demands on me. In this in-between, the other and myself, ethics happens: It "occurs . . . in the demand for response" (Levinas 1985, 12). The other's face, evokes my, always my responsibility to respond. Conversation, then, is an ethical responsibility. It is neither silent nor anonymous, but rather, like pedagogy, it is confrontational, challenging, and particular.

Pedagogy constitutes our relationship with children, a relationship in which "face and discourse are tied" (Levinas 1985, 87), that is, the face speaks, thus rendering possible and beginning all discourse. In other words, the telling and the response are obligatory, indeed, inevitable. "It is discourse and, more exactly, response or responsibility which is this authentic relationship [with the Other]," Levinas (1985, 88) expounds. Cain is already condemned (Cohen 1986), which is manifested by his question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). As pedagogues, the answer is an unequivocal "Yes," or, like Abraham, again and again, "Here I am" (Genesis 22:1, 7, 11), assuming responsibility,

what is incumbent on me exclusively, and what,
 humanly, I cannot refuse. This charge is a supreme
 dignity of the unique. I am I in the sole measure that
 I am responsible, a non-interchangeable
 (Levinas 1985, 101)

Which foregrounds another dee(d) that stands behind this dissertation, and unfolds in front of it. Desire. The powerful motivation that made dream and delight imaginable, that rendered the work, despite despair and despondency, alluring, and of which more was generated as the thesis was composed. Yet, like the plum, like the stranger, and like Hermes, desire has its treacherous edges. In "Fire and Ice," Robert Frost (1971, 212) poignantly illustrates desire's destructive bent:

Some say the world will end in fire,
 Some say in ice.
 From what I've tasted of desire
 I hold with those who favor fire.

Current events in Somalia and in, what until recently was known as, Yugoslavia, confirm Frost's experience. Iago (*Othello*, I:iii) is also credible when desire and destruction are concerned. His words foretell the ruin originating in fiery desire that is (?) beyond our wanting and doing. In word, Iago announces his faith in "the power and corrigible authority" that lies in human will and reason, which can balance desire, "the blood and baseness of our natures [that] would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions." In deed, however, "raging motions," "carnal stings," and "unbitted lusts" prevail. Laertes (*Hamlet*, I:iii), too, is aware of desire's potential havoc, and urges his sister, Ophelia, to beware of it in her relationship with Hamlet:

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it my dear sister,
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.

Laertes further warns Ophelia that Hamlet's will "is not his own; for he himself is subject to his birth." Hamlet (III:i), a bona fide connoisseur of desire, seems aware of the truth in Laertes' words; he shows verbal insight into the possible outcome of imbalanced desire, and suggests that that is the common condition, namely, that being "passion's slave" is prevalent and is beyond our wanting and doing. At the same time, Hamlet desperately longs for a reversal of such a condition: "Blest are those whose blood and judgement are so well commingled."

I wore Hamlet's words "in my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart," attentively heeding Wiesel's (1990, 73) words concerning the knowledge of when to step back, and Green's, about the teacher's posture of the pilgrim, "the capacity *within limits*, to tolerate an increasing measure of alienation, to be free to wander in the world" (1968, 50; emphasis added). However, the subject matter was conceding that it wasn't just up to me to decide what the limits of desire are, and when to step back. Traditions and other participants, the student-teachers and the readers, too, would have to determine whether the desire fueling the thesis is within limits and mindful of what is over and above our passion and action, of what history, the birth we are subject to, has handed down to us. As the work was unfolding, it gradually became clear that I, as a participant-observer, could not decide on my own about drawing lines and limits.

We inherit tradition and language; we are subject to them, but as such we have a personal and collective say in where they will go. Moreover, it is our duty to say. In trying to translate what it means for student-teachers, for example, to practise in the midst of tradition, I am living out the binary (at least), yet, tightly interwoven roads the affiliated roots of 'translation' and 'tradition' are following. As Levine (1991, 14) points out, "one of the first puns Freud ponders . . . is the

well-worn *traduttore, traditore* . . . This pun is the meeting point not only of two meanings but of two intimately related linguistic processes, wordplaying and translating."

One route, that is consonant with Frost's 'the-world-will-end-'cause-of-desire,' interprets the idea of transfer and handing over (from *tradere*) as entailing betrayal, treason. Namely, without limits, without knowing when to step back, I would be a traitor, subject to, ruled by, and helpless in the face of my birth and heritage, indeed, desire. The other interrelated course, "as just as fair," implies transformation and tolerance, and involves generativity. The wordplay *traduttore, traditore*, meaning "translator, traitor," Levine (1991, 14) elaborates, "forces the translator to transloot, to be a traitor." The translator "intends fidelity but perpetrates infidelity," for, like criticism, translation makes choices (Levine 1991, 34). In other words, a valid, coherent, and acceptable translation or interpretation, a careful and convincing one, seeks out and stresses "the common but hidden bonds that may exist between two languages, two cultures, two poems, two puns" (Levine 1991, 14). Good translation entails creativity and change, "the sudden discovery of desire" (Kott, in Levine 1991, 46), as is deliciously demonstrated by Bottom's metamorphosis into an ass (Levine 1991, 46), in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (III:i). When Quince sees Bottom's new ass-head, he cries:

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated

Though all his friends are running away from him, Bottom, undaunted, sings vigorously, and wakes Titania, Queen of the fairies, up. "I love thee," she declares upon first view, to which Bottom responds:

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for
that; and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep

little company together now-a-days; the more the pity
that some honest neighbours will not make them friends.

Hermeneutic translations, methinks, such that engage love and reason, desire and action, wanting and doing, can help us see or create the specific limits, and know when to step back, on the spot. It is not up to each of us to make that decision; however, without each one of us, without facing each demanding student-teacher, without addressing each newborn child and the challenging strangers in our midst, the encounters with whom are the source of discourse and communication, we risk rendering tradition, the half plum sucked out in our hand, un-bearable, having no bearing upon a particular person and situation, that is, untranslatable, uninterpretable, and incoherent, hence, treacherous, incapable of creating affinity, of serendipity -- chance discoveries of desire.

Hermeneutic work can hardly be premeditated, hence, it cannot be purely descriptive. It is complex, multi-layered, and densely textured, constantly diverging, with way leading on to way. Like translation, it is a critical act. As my experience above attests, hermeneutic writing is not like other forms of writing. It needs the reader in order to continue to/and survive; it is, as Levine (1991, xi) appropriately dubs the world of writing, the "Living Dead." Thus, it demands to be read in a certain way; it should be read carefully, for the reader, to whom the doubt-ridden and doubt creating, the ambiguous and question posing text is handed over, further translates and interprets, altering and recreating, trying to make sense of, thus reviving, allowing the rebirth of the text. In other words, the reader is also responsible for the text, in participating in its making.

Hermeneutics entails "a return to the essential generativity of human life, a sense of life in which there is always something left to say, with all the *difficulty*, *risk*, and *ambiguity* that such generativity entails" (Jardine 1992, 119; emphasis added). The same is true for hermeneutic reading. Like hermeneutics and hermeneutic inquiry, "while recognizing its own embeddedness in the very life of

which it is the expression" (Jardine 1992, 119), hermeneutic reading involves the reader's attending to the topic's ambiguities, to the occasional sense of loss and bumpiness, which are not, indeed, cannot always be anticipated by the author. The reader, rather than follow a predetermined map, moves among signposts which he/she is required to take up and read, thus, engaging in hermeneutic reading. The hermeneutic reader, the pedagogue, like the good translator, "performs a balancing act, then, attempting to push language [tradition, theory, this thesis] beyond its limits while at the same time maintaining a common ground of dialogue between writer and reader, speaker and listener" (Levine 1991, 4).

The latter encounters offer opportunities for serendipity to erupt. One such 'hap' (Weinsheimer 1985, 8), which has given the present work tremendous impetus, is the, yet again, reading of the Haggadah (1987) on the eve of Passover, two years ago. The traditionally youngest participant's query, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" (Haggadah 1987, 10) initiated a quest, a deliberation, and multiple connections, the outcome of which is this dissertation.

What happened that night that delivered the Haggadah from forty years of bondage-to-boredom to freedom-to-frolic? As a recent immigrant to Canada I glimpsed similarities between my situation and the Wicked Son's. For the first time, I sensed affinity with the Haggadic prescription, "In every generation one must look upon himself as if he personally had come out from Egypt" (Haggadah 1987, 32). That night my foreignness regarding Canada, English, and things Christian, and closer to home, my sanguine roots -- Israel, Hebrew, and things Jewish, stood out, and demanded exploration. The alienated Haggadah, its estranged incantations and melodies, the lengthy, and usually tedious reading-cum-eating ritual, were facing, beckoning me, demanding to be addressed. Thus, the following text is also personal and particular, as hermeneutic work, so I found out in the course of writing, is. The stranger, especially in English, attunes me constantly to my native language, "the baggage the displaced [person] takes into exile" (Levine 1991, 20), its strings and traces, and to the constantly emerging

mysteries of the foreign tongue. In the in-between pores am I, I think, and not alone.

Chapter II

Fore Words

Fiddler on the Roof, the story of Tevye, the milkman, and his five daughters, is a story of upheaval and uprooting, of a world rapidly changing, of traditions and their bearers trembling. They are trembling because of fear and bewilderment, skepticism, incredulity, and helplessness at the sight of old and sacred traditions' unrecognizable faces, and the pace at which these faces alter.

Tevye's eldest daughter, Tzeitel, refuses to marry the man her parents have matched her with. She wants to marry the man she loves and with whom she had exchanged a pledge the previous year. Tzeitel and her husband-to-be summon courage to tell Tevye about their love, and ask for his permission to get married. Tevye responds, singing (I:vi):

This isn't the way it's done,
Not here, not now.
Some things I will not, I cannot, allow.
Tradition -
Marriages must be arranged by the papa.
This should never be changed.
One little time you pull out a prop,
And where does it stop?
Where does it stop?

Tevye finally grants the couple permission. Shortly afterwards, the second daughter, Hodel, decides to marry a young man. The couple approach Tevye, tell him of their intentions, and ask for his blessing. Tevye, still singing, responds (II:i):

But now, if I like it or not,
 She'll marry him.
 So what do you want from me? Go on, be wed.
 And tear out my beard and uncover my head.
 Tradition!
 They're not even asking permission
 From the papa.
 What's happening to the tradition?
 One little time I pulled out a thread
 And where has it led? Where has it led?

Tevye gives Hodel and her young man his blessing. The third daughter, Chava, asks for neither permission nor blessing upon her marriage to a non-Jew; she asks her father for acceptance. Tevye is not singing any more. With his eyes toward heaven, he responds (II:vi):

Accept them? How can I accept them. Can I deny everything I believe in?
 On the other hand, can I deny my own child? On the other hand, how can I
 turn my back on my faith, my people? If I try to bend that far, I will break.
 On the other hand . . . there is no other hand. No, Chava. No-no-no!

The relation between grown-ups and children in general concerns us all, Arendt (1954, 196) says, "and cannot therefore be turned over to the special science of pedagogy." She further explicates: "Our attitude toward the fact of natality: the fact that we have all come into the world by being born and that this world is constantly renewed through birth," is a shared concern. We 'turn,' that is, converse and dwell in this shared concern, together. No member of society can be exempt from participating in the conversation of life, of human relatedness. Indeed, it is not up to each and every one to make such a decision; participating in the cycle, in the game, "happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" (Gadamer 1989, xxviii).

Arendt's contention calls to mind the well known Talmudic image of God studying and interpreting his own Torah. Fishbane (1986) reads that image as a tradition's realization that "revealed teachings are a dead letter unless revitalized in the mouth of those who study them" (19). In other words, regeneration (of society, tradition, revelation) is impossible without the concern with and participation in the fact of natality and the re/interpretability of customs, (sacred) texts, theories, by all members. As Gadamer (1984, 58) points out, both the text's and its interpreter's function involves the "preservation of life."

Moreover, our attitude toward the fact of natality, like play and the work of art, "is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself" (Gadamer 1989, 102), which, as such, points to "a deep denial of desire" (Jardine 1992, 118). Chris de Villiers' (Brink 1988, 130) haunting reflections about separation and denial come to mind:

How did we ever get into this mess of "us" and "them"?
 For God's sake, we're all in it together. We're all "us".
 It's like being deprived of one's own shadow: we of
 them, they of us. You know what really happens
 when one loses one's shadow? - it means the sun has

set, the light has gone out. We're all groping in the dark. Will we ever find each other again?

In "Inner Biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel," Fishbane (1986) traces a particular tradition's response to the fear of losing one's shadow and of groping in the dark in order to find each other again. The Hebrew Bible, Fishbane explains, "not only sponsored a monumental culture of textual exegesis but was itself its own first product" (21). The tradition received by Biblical scribes is not always the one transmitted by them. This is evident by the scribal intrusions that poke disruptingly out of the text. The intrusions are a reaction to the copied texts' ambiguities and oddities, and an attempt to render the received text more comprehensible, resulting in "re-awakening the text's meaning" (Gadamer 1989, 388), in old revelations and traditions being brought to life.

The tradition that scribal exegesis transmits is "the bearer of multiple authorities for that generation of readers: the privileged voice of divine Revelation and the human voice of instruction have become one" (Fishbane 1986, 23). The speaker of a later text constitutes "a new-old voice: a voice of the present hour, but also a voice which verbalizes older language for the sake of the reappropriation of the tradition" (33). This is made possible, indeed, demanded, by the very form and structure of the Bible, which, according to Levinas (1989, 190), "emphasize the polysemy and ambiguity of the message, obliging reader and scribe to become an active interpreter, within the context of history's reading." Each reader is invited to be a scribe, as a fragment of verse 11 of Psalm 62 proclaims:

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this;

that is, "God's Word contains innumerable meanings" (Levinas 1989, 194). Midrash prescribes and invites the reader to seek and decipher, which "already

marks the reader's participation in the Revelation, in the Scriptures. The reader is, in his own fashion, a scribe" who receives the word of the Revelation from elsewhere; at the same time, the word lives within him (Levinas 1989, 194).

Ancient Judaism, then, responds to "the fact of natality" and to "this mess of 'us' and 'them'" by revising and even reauthorizing its sacred texts during the course of many centuries. Thus, "the received text is completely compacted of teachings and their subversion, of rules and their extension, of topoi and their revision" (Fishbane 1986, 36), allowing older traditions to foster new insights which, in turn, "thickened the intertextual matrix of the culture and conditioned its imagination" (20).

From the depth of the thick imagination, Gadamer (1989) plays out what might happen in the midst of "this mess" if we take our groping in the dark seriously: The play, the work of art, our attitude toward the fact of natality, "has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it" (102). Each such instance/experience, constitutes a confrontation with our historic tradition, which, as such, is "a critical challenge of this tradition (Gadamer 1979, 108). Such experience, such true being, is not made possible "once the difficult play (*lude*) of life is denied or objectified into some dispassionate *fundamentum*" (Jardine 1992, 119), that is, once a new, clear method is devised as to how to find each other in the dark and how to fix the mess.

When life is deemed a mess that needs fixing, and its 'original difficulty' (Caputo 1987, 1) is flattened out by resorting to method alone while ignoring the 'old voice,' and when we deem ourselves masters of the game, rather than its late-coming players, the need for and possibility of a true conversation is sealed and "inquiry becomes deluded, unable to face its own liveliness, its own life, its own desire" (Jardine 1992, 119). The hermeneutic imagination can inform us here, for it "constantly asks for what is at work in particular ways of speaking and acting in order to facilitate an ever-deepening appreciation of that wholeness and integrity of

the world which must be present for thought and action to be possible at all" (Smith 1991, 197). It, thus, pokes disruptingly out of the text.

Not taking the game/the groping of our attitude toward the fact of natality seriously is tantamount to being a "spoilsport" (Gadamer 1989, 102). But even the spoilsport has no way out: The spoilsport cannot have the game by him/herself, nor can he/she control it, for "the movement of playing has no goal that brings it to an end; rather, it renews itself in constant repetition" (103), playfully, almost jokingly. Following Kugel (1986, 80), the evolution of midrashic explications is strikingly similar to Gadamer's characterization of play:

There is something a bit joking about midrash . . .
The ultimate subject of that joke is . . . the dissonance
between that book's [the Bible] supposedly unitary and
harmonious message and its actually fragmentary and
inconsistent components

Moreover, the actual emerging process and circulation of midrashic explications, Kugel (1986, 95) contends, resembles "that of jokes in modern society." Midrashic explications

were a kind of joking, a learned and sophisticated play
about the biblical text, and like jokes they were passed
on, modified, and improved as they went, until a great
many of them eventually entered into the common
inheritance of every Jew, passed on in learning with
the text of the Bible itself

Similarly, playing and its to-and-fro motion "follows of itself" (Gadamer 1989, 104), its fascination rooted "precisely in its being taken up into a movement

that has its own dynamic" (Gadamer 1976, 66). It happens beyond our willing it. "*It happens, as it were, by itself*" (Gadamer 1989, 105; emphasis added), that is, it involves self loss. Midrashic explications and play, like jokes and prayer, like poetry and teaching and the fact of natality, embrace the persons 'playing.' These processes are under way "when the individual player participates in full earnest, that is, when he no longer holds himself back as one who is merely playing, for whom it is not serious" (Gadamer 1976, 66). Midrash and play, like jokes, enjoy a similar constitution and spirit, that "of buoyancy, freedom and the joy of success" (Gadamer 1976, 66). Both play and midrash (and jokes) depend on *sensus communis* for their acceptance into the lore. It is not up to one person/authority to determine and predict their fate. "Neither is the mind of the interpreter [player] in control of what words [moves] of tradition [play] reach him, nor can one suitably describe what occurs . . . as the progressive knowledge of what exists, so that an infinite intellect would contain everything that could ever speak out [be played] of the whole of tradition [play]" (Gadamer 1989, 461).

As every parent and educator knows, our attitude toward the fact of natality (tradition, language), like ball games, "will be with us forever because the ball [like attitudes, etc.] is freely mobile in every direction, *appearing to do surprising things of its own accord*" (Gadamer 1989, 106; emphasis added). Nevertheless, every game, and interpretation, submits to a structure of movement that "has a definite quality which the player 'chooses'," for human play "plays *something*" (Gadamer 1989, 107). Namely, not anything goes. There are constraints and characteristics that determine the contours and spirit of the game and that unfold as the game is being played, as "the player loses himself in the play" (Gadamer 1989, 102). Similarly, not every interpretation is sustainable. Meaning, or "the plain sense of things," Kermode (1986) proposes, "is always dependent on the understanding of larger wholes and on changing custom and authority. So it must change; it is never naked . . . it always wears some fictive covering" (191). "The plain sense," Kermode (1986, 191) continues, "depends in larger measure on the

imaginative activity of interpreters. This is variously constrained, by authority or hermeneutic rules or assumptions, but it is necessary if the text is to have any communicable sense at all."

Kermode's notion of 'the plain sense of things' and its roots, resonates with Gadamer's (1979, 148-149) 'thing itself,' which, as Bernstein (1983, 137) explains, "is not to be misunderstood as suggesting that these 'things' exist *an sich* and that we must "purify" ourselves of all forestructures and prejudgments in order to grasp or know them 'objectively.' " On the contrary,

the meaning of the "things themselves" can only be grasped through the circle of understanding, a circle that presupposes the forestructures that enable us to understand

Kermode and Bernstein underscore the intrinsic link between what is handed down to us through tradition and understanding, that is, that "we are essentially beings constituted by and engaged in interpretative understanding" (Bernstein 1983, 137).

It is in the player's and interpreter's losing/forgetting oneself, in the serious conversation which constitutes experience and true being, in groping, in retrieving and facing the game's/inquiry's desire, that the movement of the game, the plain sense of things, indeed, our vitality and love of the world (Arendt 1954), is ordered and shaped (Gadamer 1989, 107). This course constitutes a living tradition, that running through history, "does not impose its conclusions upon us, but it does demand that we make contact with what it sweeps before it" (Levinas 1989, 197); as such, it "not only informs and shapes what we are but is always in the process of reconstitution. When tradition is no longer open in this manner, we can speak of it as 'dead,' or as no longer a tradition" (Bernstein 1983, 130).

Love of the world, its and tradition's vitality and, conversely, the world's and tradition's inevitable 'death,' ruin, or dissolution, meet and are determined in

education (Arendt 1954). Education means being responsible for initiating the young, for rejuvenating the world by facing and letting go of, at the same time escorting the new and protecting the young. "The child requires special protection and care so that nothing destructive may happen to him from the world" (186). Simultaneously, education also means being responsible "for the continuance of the world," that is, "the world, too, needs protection to keep it from being overrun and destroyed by the onslaught of the new that bursts upon it with each new generation" (Arendt 1954, 186). Each, the young and the old, alone, is defenseless, nude, destitute, and vulnerable. Mutual protection is needed to allow human relatedness to flourish as they face each other. As a grown-up, Rainer Maria Rilke (1981, 73-75), reminisces "from far away;" he sees

men and women, there's a man, one more woman;
 children's bright colors make them stand out;
 and here a house and now and then a dog
and terror all at once replaced by total trust
 (emphasis added)

Rilke sees children playing, "a hoop, and a bat, and a ball, . . . and not noticing, you brush against a grownup, *rushing blindly around in tag, half-crazed*" (emphasis added). Men, women, children, mutual terror and trust, side by side, together. The child -- immersed in, taken over by play, does not notice the adult, "but when the light fades you go with small puppet steps home, your hand firmly held --." The adult constrains the child and protects the world from the child's carelessness and inattentiveness, at the same time protecting the child from the world, from the terror that may erupt when the light fades.

Like hermeneutics, education is concerned with the question of "how we might make sense of our lives in such a way that life can go on" (Smith 1991, 200), and of how the universal characteristic of human existence, that is, "the

never-ending process of building a world" can be perpetuated. This characteristic rests on our capacity to preserve, maintain, and support human culture, a capacity, Gadamer (1986, 104) speculates, that rests "upon the fact that we must always order anew what threatens to dissolve before us." Vitality needs supplementation (Hartman 1986). Namely, natality, new teachers, novel interpretations, *the new kids on the block* are vital to our existence. Education then means allowing confrontations between the new and the old to erupt, that is, experiences to happen:

Because every experience sets something new against something old and in every case it remains open in principle whether the new will prevail -- that is, will truly become experience -- or whether the old, accustomed, predictable will be confirmed in the end
(Gadamer 1979, 108-109)

Experience "must either overcome tradition or fail because of tradition" (Gadamer 1979, 109). The call of tradition is not obedience but being confronted, wounded, outraged, and appealing and contesting through dialogue (Levinas 1981, 1985); it is a hermeneutic, a midrash. "The new," Gadamer (1979, 109) adds, "would be nothing new if it did not have to assert itself anew against something." Education, Arendt (1954) expounds, entails making such assertion, such confrontation possible, and constantly setting the world right anew to preserve it against the mortality of its inhabitants. "The problem is simply to educate in such a way that a setting-right remains actually possible" (192). "Our hope always hangs on the new which every generation brings; but *precisely because we can base our hope only on this*, we destroy everything if we so try to control the new that we, the old, can dictate how it will look" (Arendt 1954, 192; emphasis added).

Rilke's terror and trust are inherently interwoven. In other words, education means loving our children and our world, it means embracing, "your

hand firmly held," not expelling the children from the adult world and leaving them "to their own devices," their own "half-crazed" tag. Loving our children means not striking "from their hands their *chance* of undertaking something new, something *unforeseen* by us" (Arendt 1954, 196, emphasis added). It means preparing our children "in advance for the task of renewing a common world," which entails giving children a sense of membership in the human community (Smith 1988). Namely, allowing children to feel that they are kin, related, one of us, that they belong -- not only that they are part of, but also suitable, appropriate, at home, at home with

men and women, there's a man, one more woman;
 children's bright colors make them stand out;
 and here a house and now and then a dog
 (Rilke 1981, 73)

Such an attitude toward the fact of natality loosens up our desire to control and dictate the new. It "returns inquiry to the need and possibility of true conversation" (Jardine 1992, 124), conversation that arises from within "heavy lumpish time . . . such marvelous time" (Rilke 1981, 73), in other words, from what is handed down to us through tradition. The spirit of such conversation is similar to that of play, "the spirit of buoyancy, freedom and the joy of success" (Gadamer 1976, 66), which fulfills the participants who partake in play/dialogue in full earnest.

As in play, when we enter into dialogue with another person, it is no longer the partners' will that is determinative. Rather, "the law of the subject matter is at issue in the dialogue and elicits statement and counterstatement and in the end plays them into each other" (Gadamer 1976, 66). In conversation we encounter "what is at once alien to us, makes a claim upon us, and has an affinity with what we are" (Bernstein 1983, 129-130), which allows us to be responsive to, that is, to

risk and test our prejudices. John Wild (1969, 15) elaborates on the ethical implications inherent in conversation, according to Levinas:

Speaking becomes serious only when we pay attention to the other and take account of him and the strange world he inhabits. It is only by responding to him that I become aware of the arbitrary views and attitudes into which my uncriticized freedom always leads me, and become responsible, that is, able to respond

However, such conversation must be conducted in public, Gadamer (1985, 141) reminds us, for only then "is it a real discussion with real questions and real attempts at answers." As Arendt (1954) supportively argues, our attitude toward the fact of natality is a shared concern.

Chapter III

Our Duty To Tell The Story

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hassidism, used to go to a certain place in the woods and light a fire when he was faced with an especially difficult task and it was done.

His successor followed his example and went to the same place but said, "The fire we can no longer light, but we can still say the prayer." And what he asked was done too.

Another generation passed, and Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov went to the woods and said, "The fire we can no longer light, the prayer we no longer know. All we know is the place in the woods, and that will have to be enough." And it was enough.

In the fourth generation, Rabbi Israel of Rishin stayed at home and said, "The fire we can no longer light, the prayer we no longer know, nor do we know the place. All we can do is tell the story."

And that, too, proved sufficient.

Swados 1982, 10

Arendt's (1954) exercise is concerned with an issue that preoccupies Smith (1988, 1991) as well. It has to do with the question of "what it means to be adult in our relations with children," with "what, in fact, children *are* for us" (Smith 1988, 26), and with our adult perceptions of the future. Like Arendt, Smith (1988, 28) reads the separation of children from grown-ups as leading to destruction:

To separate the voice of the young from the center of
our planning about the future is singularly perilous
. . . [because] our future is morally linked to the
question of how we respond to new life in our midst
here and now

Similarly, the narrator in André Brink's *States of Emergency* (1988) ruminates on the revenge that "must come from the denial of the fluid oneness of things in favour of the principle of isolation" (196). He captures something essential about the principle of isolation, about "the deep denial of desire" (Jardine 1992, 118):

To keep things apart, distinct, separate (man and
woman; life and death; beginning and end; the inside
and the outside of a text; life and story), to define
them in terms of their exclusivity rather than in terms
of what they have in common, must end in
schizophrenia, in the collapse of the mind which tries
to keep the distinctions going (Brink 1988, 195)

Arendt and Smith are not formulating universal rules followed by a set of techniques on how to educate children. Nor are they just intimating their personal

opinions on that subject. Each of them understands pedagogy in a particular, yet not dissimilar way; each, situated in and affected by history, sees it *as* something, for each belongs in traditions and speaks from a context and pre-commitments.

"The person who is understanding," Gadamer (1989, 323) proposes, "does not know and judge as one who stands apart and unaffected but rather he thinks along with the other from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging, as if he too were affected." This very spirit underlies the Haggadah (1987):

In every generation one must look upon himself *as if*
he personally had come out from Egypt . . . Not only
 our forefathers whom the Holy One . . . redeemed,
 but also us whom He redeemed with them
 (32, emphasis added)

In other words, the bond of belonging implies that "no one can save himself without the others" (Levinas 1987, 149), neither stranger nor slave. Indeed, the opposite is true, namely, the condition of being strangers and slaves (in the land of Egypt) is what makes proximity possible, what brings "man close to his neighbor. . . . The memory of this servitude assembles humanity" (Levinas 1987, 149). The bond of belonging, hence, understanding, are brought about by "the traumatism of my enslavement in Egypt [which] constitutes my very humanity, that which draws me closer to the problems of the wretched of the earth, to all persecuted people" (Levinas 1989, 202).

Similarly, from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging, Arendt and Smith are reading their world to us as they understand it, they are translating it and their understanding of it via their texts, which "are not in themselves" (Kermode 1986, 192). Arendt and Smith are engaged in mediating meaning, interpreting "what is at work" (Smith 1991, 187), presupposing that their readers share assumptions and social meanings -- what Gadamer calls 'prejudices' -- and would,

hence, understand, though not necessarily agree with, these authors' respective theses. They exemplify a 'reflexive posture' towards tradition, what Gadamer (1979, 111) calls 'interpretation,' which constitutes the hermeneutic task, namely "to clarify . . . understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning" (Gadamer 1989, 292. See also Gadamer 1979, 147).

Arendt, Smith, and others, who are in mutual embrace with Hermes, imply that not *any* interpretation of pedagogic understanding will make sense. As Warnke (1987, 217) argues, "We may differ in our interpretations . . . but there will nonetheless be limits to the positions we can take and still remain intelligible" to others (cf. Kermode 1986, 191). We may take different views of a given text, event, or social practice, yet, "we will also share a vocabulary that makes it possible for us to describe one another's perspectives and argue with them" (Warnke 1987, 217).

For Arendt, Gadamer, Smith, and Jardine, as Warnke astutely points out, the relevant question when faced with or when offering an interpretation, is not whether it is "uniquely correct" or whether it is "the only possible interpretation of our social meanings," but whether it is "one that we would like to adopt," whether there is truth in that interpretation. Sketching the contours of the hermeneutic task, Warnke (1987, 217) elaborates on the criteria for engagement with and acceptance of an interpretation: "How well does a specific interpretation cohere with other values, norms, and self-interpretations we hold? How well does it suit our conception of what we are and would like to be?", and, how a particular interpretation reveals "a totality of meaning in all its relations" (Gadamer 1989, 471), namely, how the particular can be read in relation to the whole. This illuminates the translator-as-transliterator (Levine 1991, 14), the interpreter's situation as being "torn between his belongingness to a tradition and his distance from the objects which are the theme of his investigation," for the hermeneutical task is premised on the tension between "the 'familiar' and the 'foreign' character

of the message transmitted to us by tradition" (Gadamer 1979, 155). It is this tension that characterizes the hermeneutic task and which renders it pedagogic.

Arendt and Smith forcefully point to the inevitable interrelatedness of hermeneutics and pedagogy. Hermeneutics is concerned with the question of "human meaning and . . . how we might make sense of our lives in such a way that life can go on" (Smith 1991, 200). Midrash is concerned with a similar issue and exhibits a similar spirit; both the hermeneutic and midrashic interpreters stand "in a position of desire" (Boyarin 1990, 546), the desire "to distrust the myths which force upon us the *fait accompli*, the grip of custom and of terror" (Levinas 1989, 202), the desire not to reconstruct messages handed down to us nor "to get behind the visible text to its invisible meaning" (Boyarin 1990, 549), but to relive, or recover experiences, as the Haggadah (1987, 32) instructs us to do:

In every generation one must look upon himself
as if he personally had come out from Egypt

In other words, the present participant must attempt to recover not only the meaning of freedom from bondage as related in the story of the Exodus, but its concrete and corporeal meaning for him/herself. The Talmud emphasizes the voice of the person listening to the prophets and the Revelation. That person is not "a mere receiver of sublime messages," but also "the person to whom the word is said, and the one through whom there *is* Revelation." That person receives, "but also subjects what he receives to scrutiny" (Levinas 1989, 205).

To enable the scrutiny, the reliving, or the appropriation of past experiences, midrash addresses linguistic difficulties and internal contradictions in the Bible, what Patte (1975, 2) calls 'significance,' that is, the system of signs which constitutes the object of the text, such as language, forms, and structures. These difficulties are addressed by means of 'pure exegesis' (Vermees 1975, 62). Midrash also responds, via 'applied exegesis,' to the text's 'signification,' that is,

to the meaning a text had "for the community in which it emerged" (Patte 1975, 2), as well as to changing historical conditions and ever-changing political and social circumstances, namely, to issues of relevance for the present time, and "the failure of covenantal tradition to engage its audience" (Fishbane 1986, 34). Applied exegesis is concerned primarily "with the discovery of principles providing a non-scriptural problem with a scriptural solution" (Vermes 1975, 62), aiming "to meet the challenges of drastically varying circumstances" (Heinemann 1986, 43). The point of departure for applied exegesis is not the Torah itself but "contemporary customs and beliefs which the interpreter attempted to connect with Scripture and to justify" (Vermes 1975, 80).

Jack Kapica (1992) reports on a major document titled *The Authority and Interpretation of Scripture*, recently released by the United Church of Canada, following a four-year study, which attempts to address a need similar to the latter one. Church authorities launched the study as a response to disagreements on scriptural interpretation. "For years," Kapica writes, "the church has entertained a variety of approaches to Bible study, ranging from rigid adherence to loose interpretation. But differences of attitude started becoming nettlesome in 1985, when both supporters and detractors of the ordination of homosexuals found biblical bases for their conflicting arguments." Similarly to midrashists, the United Church leaders must have realised that "to be durable, sacred texts must be flexible enough to be interpreted usefully by unforeseeable generations who can adapt the sacred word to their particular circumstances" (Kapica).

Midrash and the United Church document approach tradition pedagogically, that is, hermeneutically. Hermeneutics reveals a pedagogic concern for "how we shall proceed pedagogically after we have given up the presumption" (Smith 1991, 188) of univocity and taken-for-grantedness. The latter two know it all in advance, they already have the correct answers and want to fix the world, "this mess," accordingly, without giving themselves over and opening themselves up to the world. They are founded on subject-object thinking, on clear divisions, which

bring about homelessness (Crusius 1991), schizophrenia and collapse of the mind (Brink 1988). They deny 'the original difficulty of life,' which hermeneutics attempts to stick with (Caputo 1987, 1), and ignore what is beyond our wanting and doing, which hermeneutics wants to recover. Unlike the hermeneutical experience which has its own rigor, "that of uninterrupted listening" (Gadamer 1989, 465), namely, it assumes that we have something to say to each other and encourages us to listen for the insights of the other, univocity and taken-for-grantedness are not engaged in conversation with the world, and do not attempt to bring about 'fusion' of different horizons "into a near understanding which they [the conversation participants] then hold in common" (Smith 1991, 193). Gadamer calls this dialogical process *Bildung*, which Warnke (1987, 173) characterizes as "the process through which individuals and cultures enter a more and more widely defined community." Univocity and taken-for-grantedness, on the other hand, possess a single, narrow, and static conception of truth, while

the truth that is realised in the conversation is never
the possession of any one of the speakers or camps,
but rather is something that all concerned realise they
share in together (Smith 1991, 198)

Such realisation is made possible because of the prejudgments that are constitutive of our being which make us respond to what is handed down to us through tradition, namely, works of art, texts, other persons or forms of life, that we are trying to understand. In order to hear "what they are saying and . . . the claims to truth that they make upon us," we must "participate or share in them, listen to them, open ourselves" to them (Bernstein 1983, 137). Moreover, we must learn to encounter and engage in them, come upon face-to-face with them, *envisage* them, look them in the eye. Like the midrashist and the Haggadah, we must "establish a concrete, historical moment in which to contextualize" (Boyarín

1990, 549) texts, works of art, other persons, so that we can recover their truth, their vision.

Belsey's (1980) understanding of how truth is realised in texts is similar to Smith's (1991). "Texts are plural, open to a number of interpretations. Meanings are not fixed or given, but released in the process of reading" (Belsey 1980, 20), as insights of the other are incorporated (Crusius 1991, 39). "No single figure within the text possesses a full grasp of the 'truth'," Belsey (1980, 96-97) expounds. Truth, then, is not independent of us, it is historical, and is thus relative to time and place (Crusius 1991, 31). It can be "argumentatively validated by the community of interpreters who open themselves to what is 'handed down' . . . to us" (Bernstein, in Crusius 1991, 49), in other words, it is contextual.

"The final authority of concepts, constructs or categories," Smith (1991, 197) reciprocates, does not reside in the concepts themselves but within the dialogically arrived at agreement of people to consent to them." Such authority, indeed, *creative* authority, emerges, "through the historical experience and conversation with others that are part of our self formation or *Bildung*" (Warnke 1987, 174). The presupposition at play here is that we become through our practices (teaching, reading) in which we enter into a dialogue with the past, a dialogue that "confronts us with a fundamentally different situation from our own . . . a 'foreign' situation" (Gadamer 1979, 112), that demands an interpretive/hermeneutic/mediatory approach. This process, by which I enter into a relation with the other, "cannot be exhaustively planned. I am never sure just what he [the other] will say, and there is always room for reinterpretation and spontaneity on both sides" (Levinas 1969, 14).

"The hermeneutic imagination," Smith (1991, 189) explains, "works from a commitment to generativity and rejuvenation and to the question of how we can go on together in the midst of constraints and difficulties that constantly threaten to foreclose on the future." The worst scenario Arendt and Smith can imagine is that of the future foreclosing, of sterility due to silence and dogmatic attitudes, resulting

in not paying attention to our relation with and responsibility for children and the world, which amounts to abandoning the young, hence, to abandoning the renewal of tradition, of our future, our 'life-stream' (Smith 1991, 193). The hermeneutic assumption is that we are already-in-the-world together, and that we are pluralistic in our togetherness, that is, that we understand our culture's place "within a larger world-community" and we can place our life and concerns "within a larger perspective or . . . horizon" (Warnke 1987, 173-174).

To prevent a 'Tower of Babel' state-of-being of humanity, and to enter a more widely defined community, the pedagogue faces the challenge of mediating meaning *in the midst of* and *across* cultural differences and boundaries (Smith 1991). Hence, the pedagogue's/midrashist's task is to lift dogma (tradition, theory, text) out of its flatness, which constitutes the state of affairs when we concede to the expert, for example, and speculate on it, make sense of it. Similarly, Shapiro and Sica (1984, 15) describe hermeneutics' "grander task" as "the attempt to understand ourselves through dialogue with history." This process involves others, that is, engagement with others via dialogue, interpretation, and translation, which can render dogma/tradition eventful. Thus, it is a communal process which embraces others and rests upon them the responsibilities that come with participation. We cannot detach ourselves from tradition for we are historical beings who constantly participate in it. Looking at an inherited culture authentically, Gadamer (1979, 134) argues, means viewing it "as a development [a cultivation] and a continuation of what we recognize as being the concrete link among us all." In other words, to prevent the death of a culture or a tradition, we are obliged to partake in its interpretation.

Such an understanding of the eventfulness and generativity of tradition and our belonging in it is manifested in the Haggadah (1987) through a conversation between the youngest child present at the Seder and the father. The child asks why the Seder night is different from all other nights, listing four differences to support the question. The father responds:

We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and . . . our God, took us from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Now, if the Holy God . . . had not brought out our forefathers from Egypt, then even we, our children, and our children's children might still have been enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Therefore, even were we all *wise*, all men of *understanding*, all of us *aged*, all of us *learned in the Torah*, it would still be our duty to tell the story of the departure from Egypt. And the more one tells of the departure from Egypt, that one merits praise
(Haggadah 1987, 11; emphasis added)

The hermeneutic task, as manifested by the father's response, is profoundly pedagogic: It sets out to affirm "the way in which present arrangements always border on and open onto the space of an Other whose existence contains part of the story of our shared future" (Smith 1991, 203), pointing to the reality of tradition constituting "a phenomenon of spontaneous and productive appropriation of the transmitted content" (Gadamer 1979, 134). As the father's response illustrates, in remembering the past and telling about it, "through an encounter with it" (Gadamer 1986, 49), we assume responsibility for the child's development and the world's continuance (Arendt 1954, 186). We become the past's present members, bearing the responsibility for scrutinising and renewing it, and thus making it relevant and connected to us.

A similar spirit is revealed, Vermes (1975, 59) points out, by the repeated emphasis laid by some of the authors of the Old Testament "on the obligation to meditate on, recite, and rethink the Law." Such emphasis reveals the authors' assumption that "there is no authoritative teaching which is not also the source of its own renewal" (Fishbane 1986, 19). The obligation that Vermes (1975)

discusses underscores the centrality of understanding, "a participation in the common aim" (Gadamer 1979, 147), in hermeneutical inquiry, and the Old Testament authors' realisation that "every understanding begins with the fact that something *calls out* to us" (Gadamer 1979, 157). It also implies that questioning is fundamental to such inquiry, for its essence "is to lay bare and keep alert for possibilities" (Gadamer 1979, 157), whose consequence is revitalization. In meditating on, reciting, and rethinking the Law, we engage in dialogue with it, which invokes interpretation; in other words, in rethinking or stating something, "a challenging relation with the other evolves, a response is provoked, and the response provides the interpretation of the other's interpretation" (Gadamer 1984, 63).

Appealing to traditional authorities such as wisdom, understanding, age, experience and learnedness cannot exempt us from the telling, from the conversation and the response to the child's question, for these authorities are finite and have to be constantly examined and renewed in order to be lest they become totalizing, dogmatic, and static, indeed, dead. The father assumes responsibility for the world (tradition) and for the child through his response, which is conducive to an 'occurrence' (Gadamer 1989, 461-462), or a 'hap' (Weinsheimer 1985, 8). This means

the coming into play, the playing out, of the content
of tradition in its constantly widening possibilities of
significance and resonance, extended by the different
people receiving it (Gadamer 1989, 462)

Something comes into being in the father and son dialogue, something "that had not existed before and that exists from now on; . . . as in genuine dialogue, something emerges that is contained in neither of the partners by himself" (Gadamer 1989, 462).

The Haggadah, which has a definite pedagogic intent and agenda, exemplifies a hermeneutic approach to understanding, wisdom, experience, age, and learnedness/knowledge: Accordingly, understanding erupts when one recognizes "one's own lack of knowledge and willingness to learn" (Warnke 1987, 102), and that understanding "does not depend upon a previously shared idiom but rather serves to create one" (Warnke 1987, 47). The father, in his response, doesn't utter a dogmatic script and exert his paternal power/authority, nor does he state his personal opinion regarding the tradition of telling the story of the Exodus. The father wants to achieve understanding, which he conceives "as part of the process of coming into being of meaning" (Bernstein 1983, 131). His aim is to acculturate the child, that is, he wants the child to "acquire the ability to acquire better norms, values, etc." (Bernstein 1983, 174). In other words, he aims to teach the child tact, taste, and judgment, thus cultivating "the experienced or nondogmatic person, open to exchange with others and aware of 'effective history,' the situatedness of one's own views . . . in the contingencies of time and circumstance" (Crusius 1991, 59-60). The understanding that will erupt, as Gadamer (1989, 379) points out, will result in "being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were."

Thus, the world is being protected from "the onslaught of the new" by the child's embrace by tradition (Arendt 1954, 186-196), "your hand firmly held;" at the same time, the world's continuance is being assured as the child's question is addressed in a way that allows for possibilities and transformation of the past to emerge. The past, in this light, is a "tradition of which account must be taken, a partner in dialogue the positions of which matter even as they are revised and integrated within a new understanding" (Warnke 1987, 104). A new understanding constitutes "a new stage of the tradition" (Warnke 1987, 104). That is why the obligation to tell the story is entrusted with the person of understanding, with an experienced person.

"The truth of experience always implies an orientation toward new experience," Gadamer (1989, 355) points out. The experienced person is so called not only because he has become that "*through* experiences" but also because he is "open *to* new experience" (Gadamer 1989, 355). The Haggadah, like Gadamer, rejects the view that "the perfection that we call 'being experienced,' " consists in the fact "that someone already knows everything and knows better than anybody else" (Gadamer 1989, 355), in other words, they do not regard experience (tradition, understanding) as a final achievement. Rather, as the father's explanation (for why *even* an experienced person should recount the story) demonstrates,

the experienced person proves to be . . . someone
who is radically undogmatic; who, because of the
many experiences he has had and the knowledge he
has drawn from them, is particularly well equipped to
have new experiences and to learn from them
(Gadamer 1989, 355)

Accordingly, it is the experienced person *par excellence* who is capable of telling the story again and again, of opening it up and engaging the young in it. For "experienced people are those who have learned from events in their lives ... they have learned because they were open to the possible refutation of their beliefs and prejudices and could therefore revise or supplement them in a productive way" (Warnke 1987, 157). For such people, experience (tradition, understanding) is a constant task, a task which involves risking and testing our prejudices (Bernstein 1983, 129).

Chapter IV

The Conversation That We Ourselves Are

Children are part of the experience, of the "conversation that we ourselves are" (Gadamer 1989, 378); they render the conversation productive by "the fact of natality" and by injecting the dialogue with questions, thus opening it up for revision and supplementation which allow it to become an event "that happens to us" (Gadamer 1989, 383). Indeed, children, like interpretations, are needed in order for tradition to be. "For any text to remain alive requires the attention and supplementation of commentary" (Hartman 1986, 9). Moreover, "any text [tradition, theory] . . . is also what Coleridge said truth is: a ventriloquist. Through this text other texts speak" (Hartman 1986, 12). The Haggadah's underlying assumption, similarly to Gadamer's, is that "we form ourselves historically," and that we become and continue to be "through a dialogue with others" (Warnke 1987, 166). "*To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete*" (Gadamer 1989, 302), namely, that knowledge and being are contingent, on the way, and achieved "with the dialectical interplay with the 'other' " (Bernstein 1983, 143).

Without mediation and conversation, without interpretation -- eventlessness, foundationalism, and taken-for-grantedness take root in a way that forecloses on formation (*Bildung*), on the future (Brink's collapse of the mind and schizophrenia). Hermeneutic pedagogy counters the desire to halt that conversation "which is never over, yet which also must be sustained for life together to go on at all" (Smith 1988, 27). This ongoing conversation points to and is a consequence of the "basic interpretability of life itself" (Smith 1991, 199). Namely, there is always more to be said, and heard, about our practices and conventions. That is so, as Arendt (1954) persuasively argues, because every generation brings something new. It is our joint responsibility to respond to the new in our midst;

doing otherwise, namely, acting dogmatically, "striving only to preserve the status quo -- can only lead to destruction" (192).

Midrash -- from the Hebrew root darash, which means to inquire, to search, to investigate, is such a response. It emerges as a dialogue "between tradition and its interpreter," constituting pedagogic "occurrence" (Gadamer 1989, 461). Midrash makes the occurrence possible "only because the word that has come down to us as tradition and to which we are to listen really encounters us and does so as if it addressed us and is concerned with us" (Gadamer 1989, 461). The occurrence that the father brings about is intended to elicit understanding and give the child a sense of membership, of affinity, "understanding is a question of 'affinity' " (Gadamer 1979, 144), of belonging in the human community (Smith 1988); for the father understands that "belonging is brought about by tradition's addressing us," and that "everyone who is situated in a tradition . . . must listen to what reaches him from it" (Gadamer 1989, 463). The hermeneutic event that occurs between the father and child consists, Gadamer (1989, 463) elaborates, "in the coming into language of what has been said in the tradition: an event that is at once appropriation and interpretation."

Hermeneutic pedagogy, like Midrash, speaks to us from within "the very life of which it is the expression" (Jardine 1992, 119), for it does not understand itself "as an absolute position but as a way of experience" (Gadamer 1985, 189). It allows us to relate to "what we have *in common* with tradition," which "determines our anticipations and guides our understanding" (Gadamer 1979, 147). Moreover, "it insists that there is no higher principle than holding oneself open in a conversation. But this means: Always recognize in advance the possible correctness, even the superiority of the conversation partner's position" (Gadamer 1985, 189). "This requires a readiness to recognize the other as potentially right and to let him or it prevail against me" (Gadamer 1979, 108). In other words, hermeneutic pedagogy views understanding not as putting oneself in the place of the other or as penetrating the other's spiritual activities, but rather as "grasping

the meaning, significance, and aim of what is transmitted to us" (Gadamer 1979, 147), as seeking and acknowledging "the immanent coherence contained within the meaning-claim of the other" (Gadamer 1979, 108). Hermeneutic pedagogy, Smith (1991, 198) interjects, requires "a giving of oneself over to conversation with young people and building a common shared reality in a spirit of self-forgetfulness, a forgetfulness which is also a form of finding oneself in relation to others." Our historicity "in its incessant movement of anticipation and forgetfulness is the precondition for our ability to revive the past" (Gadamer 1979, 132). Smith's 'common shared reality' is constituted by the revival of the past and its interplay with the future.

Thus, hermeneutic pedagogy's to-and-fro movement "returns inquiry in education to the original, serious, and difficult interpretive play in which we live our lives together with children" (Jardine 1992, 124), our lives, which Rilke's (1981, 73-75) painting of childhood shows to consist of "crazy mourning," heaviness, and "deepness without end," of "lights and colors and noises," of children moving in terror and trust through the world, in their short clothes whose bright colors make them stand out among men and women. Children, who "don't walk the way the others do," and who, when the light fades, go home with "small puppet steps," their hands firmly held by grownups which they, the children, will become. Childhood understood interpretively sinks away like "a tiny sailboat at a grayish pond" only to generate more dreams, marvels and loneliness, more children whose hands are firmly held and who go home with small puppet steps, and live their lives among men and women, houses and dogs, in terror and trust. Hermeneutic inquiry attempts to face up to Rilke's intricate study, not by answering all its questions but by keeping them open and visible, by letting them "waver and tremble a bit" (Caputo 1987, 6).

The serious and difficult interpretive play of life from the midst of which Jardine (1992) addresses us is messy, imprecise, and contingent, and filled with controversy and opinions. It belongs in earth and history, and is grounded in a

particular time, place, society, and language. Partaking in the play involves translation and understanding, which require mediation (the past with the present, the alien with the familiar), that is, making sense of an other's position through one's prejudices. "Making sense of somebody else's position," Warnke (1987, 111) points out, "leads to an expansion and refinement of one's own."

Two instances, one dealing with foreign language translation and the other with a traditional text, reveal the interpretive play that illustrates Warnke's 'expansion and refinement.' Both instances highlight the pedagogic nature and implications of 'play' that are conducive to 'hap,' that is, to the eruption of understanding. The Argentinean translator Alberto Manguel (1992) illuminates the difficulty and refinement involved in the interpretive play of foreign language translation. In the process of Manguel's translation of a short story by Jorge Luis Borges into English, a particular Spanish expression, *Pero che!* resisted translation. While recognizing the value of the alien character of the text and its expression, and feeling that he "must preserve the character of his own language [and] the language into which he [was] translating" (Gadamer 1989, 387), Manguel resigned himself to the idea that that expression was untranslatable, appealing to tradition and context for support of the latter claim:

It is one of those local expressions whose sense depends not only on the tone and the gesture with which it is spoken, but on a childhood spent in a Buenos Aires neighbourhood, on conversations in dusky cafés and on obligatory nostalgia

Manguel left the Spanish collocation intact in the midst of the English text, concluding that "the right word is often a stranger." Having thus 'refined' his position, Manguel muses:

I don't know if every text can be translated.

Translation is the art of re-imagining, in other languages and through other eyes, that which a certain text appears to be saying. Translation demands from a reader not only the apprehension of a text, but the construction of another text, a *different* text, that will allow another reader that same apprehension. At its best, translation is the art of understanding

Manguel attempts to do what hermeneutic inquiry does continually, that is, to bring "two diverse language games into productive relationship with one another" (Warnke 1987, 137). His hermeneutic understanding is pedagogic because it opens for him the possible truth and understanding of the subject matter, indeed, of language. In his decision and reflections thereon, Manguel is aware that "language as the medium of understanding must be consciously created by an explicit mediation" (Gadamer 1989, 384), and shows that in foreign language translation we can be somewhat limited to the premises of our tradition, though in conversation we have a better chance of revising them "in the [speculative] encounters with and discussions we have of them" (Warnke 1987, 170).

Foreign language translation is particularly informative of the process of understanding because "here the translator must translate the meaning to be understood into the context in which the other speaker lives . . . thus every translation is at the same time an interpretation" (Gadamer 1989, 384). As Gadamer (386) suggests, Manguel's translation is not simply "a re-awakening of the original process" in Borges' mind; rather, it is "a recreation of the text," a recovery of vision (Boyarín 1990, 549), guided by the way Manguel understands what it says. Lingis, who has translated much of Levinas' writing, forcefully implies that translation and interpretation entail an ethical dimension, namely, that understanding is not disconnected from ethics and the good. "Traduire c'est

trahir," which Lingis translates as, "all translation is unfaithful" (1981, xxxviii), evokes Levine's (1991) translator-as-translooter. Lingis problematizes Gadamer's concepts of interpretation and understanding, and their interrelatedness, an issue that I will return to later in a discussion of the limits of Gadamer's understanding of understanding.

Gadamer's depiction of the process of translation, as that of conversation, is similar to his presentation of play. Their meaning lies in the in-between, "in the to and fro of dialogue . . . in the to and fro of weighing and balancing possibilities" (1989, 386), in the "to-and-fro motion of play" (104). Regarding play, Gadamer points out, we say that

something is 'playing' (spielt) somewhere or at some time, that something is going on (im Spiele ist) or that something is happening (sich abspielt)

This linguistic observation seems to Gadamer (1989, 386)

an indirect indication that play is not to be understood as something a person does. As far as language is concerned, the actual object of play is obviously not the subjectivity of an individual who . . . plays but is instead the play itself

A process akin to that of the eventfulness of play occurs in translation, text interpretation and conversation. It involves reciprocity between the participants (text and translator, text and interpreter, conversation partners) who are bound by the common subject matter, which is brought by all into language and in which the participants then all share. Like the players' moves, the participants' horizons (in a hermeneutical conversation) are decisive, "yet not as a personal standpoint" that

they maintain or enforce, "but more as an opinion and a possibility that one *brings into play* and *puts at risk*, and that helps one truly to make one's own what the text says" (Gadamer 1989, 388; emphasis added). This is what Gadamer describes as 'fusion of horizons.' As in play, what takes place in conversation, namely, finding a common language/achieving understanding/reaching agreement, is an expression of something "that is not only mine or my author's, but common" (Gadamer 1989, 388). As Manguel has found out, "translation is the art of understanding;" however, the understanding, or horizon established is not solely the text's, the reader's, or the translator's. It is a shared, common understanding that emerges in the to-and-fro, reciprocal movement of the translation/conversation.

Similar reasoning lies in the Haggadah, behind the father's response to the young child's question concerning the differences between Passover night and all other nights. 'Showing his colors' (Gadamer 1989, 386) and thus assuming responsibility for the child and the world (Arendt 1954, 196), the father tells the child that even if we were all men of understanding, it would still be our duty to tell the story of the Exodus. The father apprehends that "the essence of tradition is to exist in the medium of language" (Gadamer 1989, 389), and that "*understanding occurs in interpreting*," namely, that it is in the to-and-fro movement of the conversation between the participants, rather than in a priori, static, and disconnected knowledge, that understanding happens, tradition is brought to life, and horizons fuse. The father understands the regenerative significance of the dialogue with the past, a dialogue that "confronts us with a fundamentally different situation from our own" (Gadamer 1979, 112), a foreign situation, which demands an interpretive approach. Gadamer (1979, 137) summarises the centre of the interpretive position:

It is indispensable that through practice and education
the listener may have already formed a *habitudo*
which he takes into the concrete situations of his life,

a *habitudo* which will be confirmed and solidified by each new action

Understanding, then, happens in the dialogue with the past; it "*never ceases* to be determined by the anticipatory impulses of pre-understandings" (Gadamer 1979, 153), in other words, understanding and the linguisticity of understanding is "*the concretion of historically effected consciousness*" (Gadamer 1989, 389), which constantly shapes us, and brings "to explicit awareness [our] historical affinity or belongingness" (Bernstein 1983, 142). Weinsheimer (1985, 8) calls the eruption of this awareness 'hap.'

'Hap' is what "happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" (Gadamer 1989, xxviii). It "makes its presence felt when one happens onto something, in the haphazard guess, the happenstance situation, in happiness and haplessness" (Weinsheimer 1985, 8). 'Hap' is the eventful character of understanding and of the meanings that understanding grasps. It is the lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of understanding. 'Hap' allows me, at times, requires me, to place myself and participate in a tradition, at the same time urging and provoking that tradition to speak to me, again and again, to make demands on me and thus revitalize. As such, 'hap' is historical and connected to the present; it is in a context and is a matter of relationship, as attested by Manguel's struggle and final choice. 'Hap' entails disclosure; indeed, it resists closure, which renders it inherently pedagogic.

'Hap' erupts when heritage and one's horizon encounter, that is, when one is placed in an attitude of openness to be addressed by tradition. "The attitude is one of expectancy, of waiting for something to happen" (Palmer 1969, 209). 'Hap', then, constitutes the linking between the past and the present, and the building and disclosure of the new; it is made possible by education, or *Bildung*, which Rorty (1979, 360) characterizes, as the project of finding "new, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking." New ways, however, do not emerge

ex nihilo, nor are they "'naturelike,' something 'given' that stands over against us" (Bernstein 1983, 142). Namely, the new is connected in some ways to the old, "it is always 'part of us' and works through its effective-history" (Bernstein 1983, 142), it is linked to the traditional and conventional. 'Hap' brings the latter to life eliciting rebirth of tradition by opening up what seems significant.

'Hap,' like education, Rorty (1979, 365) argues, "has to start from acculturation," that is, from having stood at another point of view. Standing at another point of view, or, placing myself in the other's point of view, allows me, Ricoeur (1981, 76) claims, to confront myself with my present horizon, with my prejudices. In other words, "the tension between the other and the self, between the text of the past and the point of view of the reader" (Ricoeur 1981, 76), allows 'hap' to form and emerge. This accounts for 'hap's' dynamism as well as its need to be constantly replenished in order to be, and in order to enable revitalization of being. Hence, children and novices are essential to the formation of 'hap' for they invest the world with potentiality. In the novices' encounter with tradition and prejudices, tension is created that nurtures the possibility of something new happening, which is poignantly highlighted by Manguel's inference that "the right word is often a stranger."

Chapter V

In Every Generation One Must Look Upon Himself As If He Personally Had Come Out From Egypt

I was thrown into a 'hap' recently. It happened on the eve of Passover as we gathered for the Seder to recite the Haggadah (and eat traditional food). The Seder is based on the injunction to parents to inform their children of the deliverance from Egypt; the Haggadah, which means 'narration,' 'telling,' represents the central commandment of the day:

And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying:
It is because of that which the Lord did for me
when I came forth out of Egypt (Exodus 13:8)

The injunction to tell, to say, to orally open up, pass on, and engage in the story, and to respond to and provoke questioning about it implies that in speaking, in conversation, something is disclosed and brought to light; thus, a sharing of world, hence, understanding are made possible. The saying and the interpreting "open to the as yet unsaid" (Palmer 1969, 147), that is, their concern "is not to discover an intention hidden behind the text but to unfold a world in front of it" (Ricoeur 1981, 94). "Let us be clear," Rabinow and Sullivan (1979, 12) emphatically declare. "What we want to understand is not something behind the cultural object, the text, but rather something in front of it." Rabinow and Sullivan, and Ricoeur, see the task of hermeneutics not as an attempt "to get behind the visible text to its invisible meaning" (Boyarin 1990, 549). Rather, similarly to midrash, it is "the stringing together" of parts of the language of various texts and people, "forming new linguistic strings out of the old, and thereby recovering" (Boyarin 1990, 550), appropriating, and reliving tradition.

The telos of the saying is not mechanical transmission nor is it "a conveying of pure interiority" (Palmer 1969, 139); rather, it is a sharing of world and partaking in something in which the narrator/reader belongs and which is demanding of him/her. The demand is to open inherited tradition up in such a way that the participants can see and understand it, and feel that they too belong in it, that they too are addressed, that it is their concern, and that it is significant for them, in the sense that it signifies, means something.

Underlying the repetitive annual reading of the Haggadah is the notion that it is a temporal event whose meaning for us "is a product of the integration of our own present horizon and that of the work" (Palmer 1969, 190). Through the narration and questioning we attempt to understand, to disclose what is real for us (cf. Smith 1991, 203). "To understand," Ricoeur (1981, 94) reminds us, "is not to project oneself into the text but to expose oneself to it." Moreover, "as a model of text interpretation, understanding has nothing to do with an immediate grasping of a foreign psychic life or with an emotional identification with a mental intention. Understanding is entirely mediated by the procedures that precede it and accompany it" (Rabinow and Sullivan 1979, 12). Palmer (1969, 10) adds: "Understanding a literary work . . . is an historical encounter which calls forth personal experience of being here in the world." Indeed, the Haggadah (1987, 32) tells us that

In every generation one must look upon himself
as if he personally had come out from Egypt

The implicit assumption at play here is that generativity and understanding are made possible through sustainable interpretation (Rabinow and Sullivan's 'what precedes and accompanies'), and that sustainability is achieved through interpretation, through conversation. The Haggadah, then, demands that its narrators engage in its interpretation and in dialogue with it, suggesting, as Palmer

(1969, 14) does, that "the task of interpretation must be to make something that is unfamiliar, distant, and obscure in meaning into something real, near, and intelligible, [for] only because a text has to be brought out of its alienness and assimilated is there anything for the person trying to understand it to say" (Gadamer 1989, 472). In other words, history and historical texts are rendered live, hence eventful, through interpretation and dialogue, by keeping the conversation about them going and personally relevant.

Four times in the Pentateuch (Torah) we find mentioned a man's duty to recount the story of the Exodus to his son on the occasion of the Passover. The midrashists, in their attempt to explain seeming biblical inconsistencies, and following the religious maxim that the Torah can contain *ex hypothesi* no useless duplication (God doesn't waste words; words are precious), discovered in the phraseology of the various texts allusion to four different types of a child (Haggadah 1987, 13):

1) The intelligent, or wise, who desires to learn:

What says the wise son? 'What are the testimonies, laws and behaviors, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?' [Deuteronomy 6:20]. Then thou shall tell him all the laws of the Passover, which though it concludes the meal does not end the celebration

The Wise Son is well versed in the commandments and customs of the Passover. He knows that there are testimonies, statutes, and judgments concerned with how the event is celebrated. The Wise Son needs filling in on the intricate mechanics of the festival; he wants more information.

2) The petulant, or wicked, who asks as though everything is a burden:

What says the wicked son? 'Of what use is the service to you?' [Exodus 12:26]. To you, and not to himself. By excluding himself from the nation, he denies a basic principle. Therefore, set his teeth on edge by saying: 'This is done because of what the Eternal did for ME when I went forth from Egypt.' For ME but not for HIM. Had he been there he would not have been redeemed

The Wicked Son is contemptuous of the testimonies, statutes, and judgments of Passover, and questions, even ridicules the traditional customs involved in celebrating the holiday. Perhaps he feels he no longer understands/belongs in the tradition. Thus, he separates himself from the community, an act that could result in death, death of the son and of tradition. The Wicked Son's disrespectful approach triggers a firm and threatening response.

3) The immature, who can do no more than inquire the reason for any unusual procedure:

What says the simple son? 'What is this?' [Exodus 13:14]. Therefore answer him: 'With a mighty hand the Eternal brought us forth from Egypt from the house of slavery

The Simple Son's question is not profound; his simple query gets a simple yet dramatic response. It's concerned with God's might and with how God redeemed us from bondage in Egypt.

- 4) The infant, who has not even got to the asking stage, and must have everything explained to him:

But the one who knows not how to ask -- It is for thee
to discuss it with him. 'And thou shalt tell thy son on
that day, saying: This is on account of what the
Eternal did for me, when I went forth from Egypt
[Exodus 13:8]

The Son who Doesn't Know How to Ask is understood to be that by the absence of a question. He needs guidance, so the father is instructed to start out and tell him the story of the Exodus and the reasons for the celebration in order to fulfill the Torah injunction, and to allow the child to uncover his place in the tradition, namely, to attempt to take upon himself "the meaning ("sense") of the text" (Patte 1975, 2).

Children are different, and hence frame their questions differently. The father, the pedagogue, interprets each son's question and adapts the answers accordingly. Asking and responding to questions, while constantly interpreting past and present discourse and events, constitute the core of traditional Jewish culture. There is an assumption at play here that tradition "is not over against us but something in which we stand and through which we exist" (Palmer 1969, 177). It is not "an object that stands over against a subject for itself" (Gadamer 1989, 102), namely, it is not Brink's (1988, 130) "mess of 'us' and 'them.'" We belong to a tradition, which, "through its sedimentation, has a power which is constantly determining what we are in the process of becoming" (Bernstein 1983, 142). Tradition is "the fabric of relations, the horizon, within which we do our thinking" (Palmer 1969, 182). It shows itself in traces that demand to be understood (Ricoeur 1981, 16); it is through questions and interpretations that we attempt to understand it and pass it on. As such, asking and interpreting constitute the core

of pedagogy, of how we conduct our lives with children and how we stand with them under/in tradition. This pedagogic process of inquiry implies no passive, dogmatic acceptance. According to a Halakhic prescription, he who celebrates the Passover alone must ask himself questions regarding the reasons for the celebration. He too must retell and reinterpret the story (cited by Kasher 1967, 9 (of Hagadah). 115b Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim).

Patte (1975, 4) explicates the hermeneutic assumption and intention that underly midrash and the scriptural prescription to tell and interpret the story every year. A text "waits for a reader . . . who will not only take upon himself" its argument; it wants the reader to interpret it, add to it a new argument, and thus prolong the text's discourse in a new discourse, what Patte (1975) calls a 'taking over.' "The reader by 'taking over' the discourse of the text discovers himself in a new light: the light which the text projects on him." "In this sense," Bernstein (1983, 144) adds, "learning from other forms of life and horizons is at the very same time coming to an understanding of ourselves." Through the process of taking over the discourse of the text, the reader, each of the Four Sons, appropriates it, in other words, it becomes his own, "it is meaningful to him." Thus, tradition can revitalize.

Each son, each reader, approaches the text from a particular perspective or prejudice. "But where do these prejudices come from?" Bernstein (1983, 140) inquires, and what is their function in our daily life? Following Gadamer (1989, 302-307), Bernstein (1983, 140-141) argues that "prejudgments and prejudices have a threefold temporal character: they are handed down to us through tradition; they are constitutive of what we are now (and are in the process of becoming); and they are anticipatory [or projective, according to Patte's (1975) depiction] -- always open to future testing and transformation." Prejudices, which constitute one's horizon, may be unique but they are at the same time shared. The shared horizon, which is "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (Gadamer 1989, 302), makes dialogue possible, and, it is

in dialogue that horizons can be enlarged and enriched, achieving what Gadamer (1989, 306) calls, a 'fusion of horizons,' that is, understanding. For Gadamer, "the medium of all human horizons" (Bernstein 1983, 144) and prejudices, and of understanding, is linguistic, which is what makes possible the understanding of alien horizons. Hermeneutically speaking, an alien horizon, a distant culture, a particular tradition or text, a different historical epoch,

always presents a challenge to us, a challenge that
requires learning to ask the right questions and
drawing on the resources of our own linguistic
horizon in order to understand that which is alien
(Bernstein 1983, 144)

This is exemplified by the midrashic creation of Four Sons, each of whom asks a different question, which triggers a different response. However, the Four Sons' queries, like the father's answers, embrace a shared concern. Gadamer's (1989, 301) notion of historically effected consciousness manifests itself here as an active element in the act of understanding in that it is "already effectual in *finding the right questions to ask*" (original emphasis). Midrash is aware of the hermeneutical situation, that is, that we are always within a situation or tradition, and that illuminating it can never be completely achieved, due to our historical being. With this awareness, midrash sets to achieve the hermeneutical task, which is "to find the resources in our language and experience to enable us to understand these initially alien phenomena without imposing blind or distortive prejudice on them" (Bernstein 1983, 141-142).

Through retelling and interpreting, the participants appropriate the historical experiences and texts, that is, render near and make their own what initially may have been far and alien. "Interpretation brings together, equalizes, renders contemporary and similar," Ricoeur (1981, 185) points out. Furthermore, through

interpretation, through the process of conversation with a text, and in facing the demands the text makes on the participants, one's belonging to transmitted tradition is interrupted "in order to signify it" (117); thus, the participants can become aware of the text's power to open up and disclose a possible world. In other words, via interpretation or translation, an event is released, 'hap' is made possible.

Chapter VI

'Widowhood' and 'A Psalm Touching Genealogy'

Translation from a foreign language is an extreme example of a process of conversation with a text, of "a giving of oneself over to conversation . . . and . . . finding oneself in relation to others" (Smith 1991, 198), and of the "serious and difficult interpretive play" (Jardine's 1992, 124). Though, as Gadamer (1989, 387) argues, "the situation of the translator and that of the interpreter are fundamentally the same," a translation that takes Jardine's (1992) "interpretive play" seriously "is at once clearer and flatter than the original" (Gadamer 1989, 386). Dan (1986, 129) elaborates: "A translator has to choose between all possible interpretations and present one of them, losing in this way the richness, as well as . . . the profundity of the original," and "some of the overtones that vibrate in the original," Gadamer (1989, 386) adds. Consequently, "the translator does not transmit the text, but one possible meaning of it, creating a new text which is much more flat and unequivocal than the original" (Dan 1986, 129).

Flatness and clarity render the text unambiguous, which lends itself easily to the formulation of dogma, namely, to stasis, and severance from history. "Dogmatic thinking," Dan (1986, 129) claims, "must rely on an unambiguous text." An unambiguous text takes no account of its prejudices and anticipations, thus flattening experience, which "inevitably leads to a betrayal of what is specifically 'other'" (Gadamer 1979, 153)

(Lingis' "Traduire c'est trahir," and Levine's 'translator-as-translooter' resound.)

As such, the text does not need interpretation for it is based on the premise that there is automatic accord between it and its reader. It thus divests the world

of potentiality, of belonging, of conviviality and intimacy. The poet Shulamis Yelin (1985, 173) laments this cold flatness, in "Widowhood":

Immigrant under cloudless skies,
I'm free to come and go -
can shop and pay for,
travel,
indulge myself in haute cuisine,
enjoy the galleries,
concerts,
observe the sports as natives do.

But I have never learned the language of the land,
attend but films sub-titled in my native tongues,
and plays for me are baffling pantomimes!

My days are plagued
with constant translation
from sense to sense,
from one tongue to another,
missing joke, nuance,
idiom and inflection -
coldly hungering for home.

A hermeneutical experience, on the other hand, speaks from within Manguel's obligatory nostalgia and Yelin's yearning for comprehensibility; it attempts to make the reader share in the text, indeed, it needs the reader, because it denies an a priori accord between text and reader, presupposing that the text "has to be brought out of its alienness and assimilated" (Gadamer 1989, 472). The hermeneutical relation to text, as the Four Sons' coming into being demonstrates, is a speculative relation whose task is to reveal "a totality of meaning in all its relations" (471). In other words, to make oneself understood means "to hold what is said together with an infinity of what is not said in one unified meaning", so that one's words "do not reflect beings, but express a relation to the whole of being" (469). The relationship a speculative thought asserts

is not conceived as a quality unambiguously assigned to a subject, a property to a given thing, but must be thought of as a mirroring, in which the reflection is nothing but the pure appearance of what is reflected, just as the one is the one of the other, and the other is the other of the one (Gadamer 1989, 466)

However, until that recent recitation of the Haggadah I had not read the Four Sons as mirroring but rather as representing unambiguous data. As we were reading that passage I wondered how I hadn't noticed or stumbled upon its obvious pedagogic message before. Clearly, my own understanding had not entered the event of the Four Sons; consequently, it did not become eventful and genuinely productive for me. "To understand a text is not to find a lifeless sense which is contained therein, but to unfold the possibility of being indicated by the text" (Ricoeur 1981, 56). In that sense, I had not understood the text. The Four Sons, up to this recitation, had not attacked me behind my back; I had not genuinely belonged with them nor had I let myself be told something by them; hence, I had not really shared/participated in making that history. I had not treated the Four Sons speculatively but rather dogmatically. As Gadamer (1989, 466) explains, "A speculative person is someone who does not abandon himself directly to the tangibility of appearances or to the fixed determinateness of the meant, but who is able to reflect or . . . who sees that the 'in-itself' is a 'for-me.'" I had understood the Four Sons' words and event literally, as reflecting being rather than, speculatively, as expressing a relationship to being. Or, as Greene (1988, 127) suggests, I had not done history "from the ground up;" I had not opened up new spaces for "speculative audacity" (Green 1988, 128; Dewey 1931, 12).

Opening up spaces for "speculative audacity" entails venturing out into the uncertain; it involves adventurousness. There is an element of adventure in every experience, Gadamer (1989, 69) says: "Every experience is taken out of the

continuity of life and at the same time related to the whole of one's life."

"Speculative audacity" and adventure involve a search. The Four Sons are undertaking such a search, a search that, I felt, I had no part in. The narrator in Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*, says:

The search is what anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life . . . To become aware of the possibility of the search is to be on to something. Not to be on to something is to be in despair (in Greene 1988, 123)

I felt some commonality with the Wicked or Contrary Son who excludes himself from his organic community; its traditions and horizons are not making sense to him and his own horizon, so he questions them. Unlike him I did not embark on a search; I did not question nor confront traditional mores and ways, thus, not allowing them to reveal themselves, to make a claim on me. An important part of my heritage, Passover, had become an occasion for mouthing platitudes, for acting as if I were a member of a tradition, a tradition that was not encountering me any longer, and that until that night had been making less and less demands on me. Like the Wicked Son I had excluded myself from my traditional community; but while he questions and probes, thus maintaining ties with his community; opening possibilities and keeping them open, through us, the readers, I, in my silence, passivity, mechanical conduct, and lack of engagement, had, in effect, lost touch ('hap') with and rejected my tradition, thus, divesting it of life and meaning, indeed, rendering it indecipherable, sterile.

Midrash "is the result of the inherent paradox which haunts a religion based upon a body of sacred scriptures," Dan (1986, 127) explains: "the conflict between the *wish* and the *need* to innovate" (emphasis added), that is, to speculate so as to be on to something, "and the religious maxim which states that all truth is to be

found in the scriptures." Two students' discourses offer further illustration of speculative and dogmatic thinking and their possible pedagogic ramifications:

Robyn's first assignment in a graduate curriculum course was to present to her class, together with another student, a chapter from Dianne Common's (1991) book on curriculum. Five influential thinkers meet in the chapter to converse about the importance of teaching; they are: John Dewey, A.S. Neill, Carl Rogers, R.S. Peters, and Aristotle. Initially, Robyn was wary:

Two weeks ago the names Aristotle, Peters, Rogers, and Neill were simply that - just names. I felt totally out of my depth (28.9.91)

Recognition of the names, like the child's ability to list the differences between Passover night and all other nights, and a literal reading of the Four Sons, does not open up the subject matter and does not allow the reader any sense of belonging in the traditions therein reflected. The names and attributes are unambiguous: apart, distinct, and separate (Brink 1988, 195), and oblivious to historically effected consciousness. Following further reading about the five thinkers, and conversations about their ideas with her partner, Robyn wrote:

I quickly realized that it was not difficult to attach these famous names to philosophies that I was already very familiar with. *I teach with Peters, Dewey, Rogers, and Neill. They are colleagues on staff at my school and they are the teachers that I encountered as a student in grad school.* The real eye opener came when I realized that *parts of each of these famous philosophies live within my own teaching style and philosophy* (emphasis added)

Robyn realized that the names, which were at first just names, are not disconnected from her life; rather, each name "in-itself" is a 'for-me,' and, as in mirroring, just as each one (philosophy/theory) is the one of the other, so is the other the other of the one (Gadamer 1989, 466). Namely, Robyn became aware of her being part of a genealogy, and of the reciprocal relationship that exists, and that was coming into being, between the five philosophers and herself. Like the father and his apprehension of his mediating role regarding the relationship between the story of the deliverance from Egypt and the four different sons, Robyn grasped that for meaning and understanding to emerge, the theories she was encountering need her, and she needs them. The occurrence, or 'hap,' with the five philosophers gives Robyn, and the philosophers, a sense of membership: "Belonging is brought about by tradition's addressing us" (Gadamer 1989, 463). Like the poet A.M. Klein (1985, 69), Robyn realizes that she embodies powerful strings that are not just up to her.

"Psalm XXXVI: A Psalm Touching Genealogy":

Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:
 For to the fathers that begat me, this
 Body is residence. Corpuscular,
 They dwell in my veins, they eavesdrop at my ear,
 They circle, as with Torahs, round my skull,
 In exit and in entrance all day pull
 The latches of my heart, descend, and rise -
 And there look generations through my eyes.

Klein, Robyn, and the father in the Haggadah recognize the past's being over and above their wanting and doing and its existence in the present. As such,

they assume responsibility for it, complying with Lingis' (1981, xiv) explanation of 'responsibility according to Levinas':

To be responsible is always to have to answer for a
situation that was in place before I came on the scene.
Responsibility is a bond between my present and what
came to pass before it

Robyn -- the teacher, the father-pedagogue, and the poet -- Klein, do not *choose* to assume responsibility; they find themselves in it and respond to it from the depth of their situation. They do not ignore it nor do they attempt to escape from it, or hide their faces. As Chalier (1991, 124) points out "Responsibility is not a choice but a calling." Peperzak (1991, 62) elaborates:

Although I never wanted or even accepted to be
responsible for another, I cannot escape from this
infinite responsibility. My devotion to the other is a
past where neither my consciousness nor my will have
been present, but this past determines all the presents
of my life

The present's gifts have long roots, "entire genesis." Not one father, but many begot me: Aristotle, Peters, Rogers, Dewey, Neill: "they dwell in my veins," look "through my eyes." I have a relationship with each, a relationship with alterity, which is "finding oneself under a bond, commanded, contested, having to answer to another for what one does and for what one is. It is also finding oneself addressed, appealed to, having to answer for the wants of another and supply for his distress" (Lingis 1981, xxii). The father is answerable to his sons, as Robyn is to her mentors, and Klein - to the corpuscular fathers residing in

his body, the generations looking through his eyes. This speculative relationship constitutes a universe, the whole weight of which rests on the shoulders of each of the participants, a burden they cannot shift upon anyone else. "This is my finding myself one without a double" (Lingis 1981, xxx).

Kay, a third year education student doing her second practicum, understands the place of theory very differently. Kay cannot see how the theories that are presented in her teacher education courses could be relevant to her teaching practice:

It's a name that they give you; it's nothing to tell you
about the kids, you know, or what they're like, or
how to deal with them, really (16.4.92)

Furthermore, Kay adamantly claims that theory has no value when problems arise with particular children in a classroom situation, that if it does -- she cannot consciously see it, and that she does not turn to theory for help. Rather,

I want to look at the child and see what they can do,
and see how I can get them to the next stage, instead
of expecting something, because everyone is different

Berliner, in his *Pursuit of the Expert Pedagogue* (1986), exemplifies an approach to pedagogy, particularly to educating teachers, whose spirit and consequences are similar to Kay's:

By engaging in research of the type that has led to the
building of expert systems in medicine, chess, or

physics we could codify, formalize, and systematize
the knowledge of expert teachers (6)

Furthermore, Berliner sees great value in inculcating in student-teachers automation of procedures as it provides great economy of effort:

The automaticity of certain processes apparently
enables people who have achieved eminence *to*
transcend their daily existence and to rise to creative
heights in their chosen field (7, emphasis added)

Though Berliner does suggest venturing out of the continuity of life, his flight implies severance from life rather than allowing life to be felt as a whole. Following Kay, the young students are rootless and disconnected from each other and from life, for "everyone is different," and it is up to the teacher (the expert pedagogue, presumably) to empathize with each student and link him/her with life 'out there.' The Son who is traditionally called 'Wicked' does soar, but his flight, or search, is inherently related to his and his community's daily existence. The Contrary Son attempts to understand; he probes the topic and questions it, thus opening it up. Consequently, the topic and the community are animated and intrigued, which elicits further conversation and understanding. Berliner, on the other hand, is attempting to locate and spell out a method so that the search for it and its ensuing understandings become the final ones, so that there will be no need for more. Furthermore, while Berliner seeks a clear and univocal answer, and Kay -- a unique one for each student, the father's approach entails ambiguity and multiplicity, which demand that the conversation continue. Berliner (1986) vows to continue the pursuit for the expert pedagogue despite the hardships involved in the process:

If we ever feel really *secure* that we have found a few of these *elusive beasts*, we will study them in great depth and share those findings with those who also await their capture. Like the search for the *Yeti* and for *Bigfoot*, we expect to have a good many false sightings and a good deal of fun along the way
(13, emphasis added)

"A true 'conversation' . . . is an extended and open dialogue which presupposes a background of intersubjective agreements and a tacit sense of relevance," Bernstein (1983, 2) puts forth. Clearly there is no conversation in the process of pursuing and replicating the expert pedagogue. It involves hard work, but of a technical nature: Formidable climbing and lots of sweat, exploring remote and isolated locales, and ensnaring a rare and unsuspecting victim who revels and thrives in its solitude, mystique, and fearsome reputation. Through the comparison of the expert pedagogue to the Yeti and Bigfoot, Berliner reveals the assumptions underlying his conception of a good teacher: The good teacher is a roaming and unpredictable monster, who has transcended the daily existence of regular human beings, and is, hence, removed, indeed, disconnected from the everydayness of life. The good teacher may be adventurous, speculative, and audacious, but in ways unrelated to the life of others. Once identified, captured, and thoroughly analysed, this *elusive beast* will, Berliner believes, yield plenty of data which will then be codified, formalized, and systematized, following which there will be no need to interpret, say, or ask more. There will be no unknown matter which will have to be brought to light, no hidden meaning, no further revelation, no disclosure, indeed, no need for natality.

Disconnectedness also colours Kay's view: accordingly, there is constant, indeed, relentless novelty in the classroom; each case of natality is pure and different from the other. Bernstein's (1983, 2) "background of intersubjective

agreements and a tacit sense of relevance" have no place in Kay's understanding of practice, so the teacher has to start anew with every child. Underlying such thinking is the notion that we are disengaged from our "messy embedding in our bodily constitution, our dialogical situation, our emotions, and our traditional life forms" (Taylor 1991, 102), and, to paraphrase A.M. Klein (1985), that each of us was born sole, not a part of an entire genesis.

Berliner's univocal understanding of pedagogy and Kay's approach of hyperactive fecundity, as opposed to the father's, whose responses to the sons differ but are, yet, similar, bring to mind Brink's (1988, 195) furious lament:

To keep things apart, distinct, separate . . . must end
in schizophrenia, in the collapse of the mind which
tries to keep the distinctions going

For Brink and Gadamer alike, practice means "conducting oneself and acting in solidarity" (Gadamer 1981b, 87). Gadamer regards solidarity as the mark of humanity "knowing that it belongs together for better or for worse and that it has to solve the problem of its life on this planet" (86). The Haggadah shares Gadamer's bias regarding parental care and conduct within a community. However, togetherness and solidarity are absent from Berliner's and Kay's fragmented world view, a world view that neither acknowledges nor touches genealogy and the bond with alterity, in other words, it is not haptic.

Not only do Berliner and Kay share a pedagogic outlook, but Kay and I, too, have (until recently) a similar view of tradition. Both of us are immersed in theory and tradition but neither of us sees it. We have, imperceptibly perhaps, rejected tradition by not engaging in it, not conversing with it, not questioning it, probably not experiencing it in depth (Gadamer's *Erfahrung*), hence, not understanding it, and not recognizing the fertile possibilities entailed in opening up things traditional, things that are under and above our wanting and doing. This

results in being detached from theory and disinherited from historical traditions, leading student-teachers to be disconnected from others.

Teacher educators that teach theory in a non-conversatory, non-interpretive fashion, namely, without engaging the new generation of educators in and opening up the subject matter/theory, render it fallow and closed, and undecipherable. Indeed, such an approach precludes self-understanding because it rests on the tacit assumption that heritage and theory are static, that we do not share nor do we truly participate in it. This assumption rejects Gadamer's (1989) explication of the Greek notion of *theoria*, which means "being totally involved in and carried away by what one sees" (125). An approach that views heritage and theory as static presupposes that a human being is not "dependent on constant interpretation of the past" (Palmer 1969, 118), that is, that he/she does not understand him/herself "in terms of interpreting a heritage and shared world bequeathed him from the past, a heritage constantly present and active in all his actions and decisions" (Palmer 1969, 118), and in which he/she is actively involved so that heritage and theory retain their vitality.

Not viewing human beings as "interpretive animals" can lead to widowhood, meaning, separated, deprived (from the Latin *viduare*) of "joke, nuance, idiom and inflection" (Yelin 1985, 73), which alienates and isolates, allowing neither personal nor communal threads to be drawn between the theoretical/ traditional subject matter and the teachers-to-be, for example. Without conversation and interpretation not only can we not know what we share, we also have no opportunity to find out and establish it. Moreover, without the conversation, without our infusing theory and tradition with life and renewed meaning, they will die. As the Greek God, Pan, in Tom Robbins' *Jitterbug Perfume* (1984, 52), explains to Alobar, a mortal running away from death, when the latter is surprised to hear that Pan himself is running from death: "Gods *can* die. We live only so long as people believe in us."

Teacher Education programs that do not promote engagement and do not open up theories, not only deny historical traditions portals and openings by not touching genealogy, they hardly acknowledge historical traditions, thus not allowing the eventful character of theories, texts, and understanding to emerge. In other words, such programs have not learned "how to wait and how to find the place out of which the being of the text will show itself" (Palmer 1969, 155). They do not conceive of understanding "as a part of the event in which meaning occurs" (Gadamer 1989, 164); thus, they prevent 'haps' from occurring. They do not let student-teachers speculate audaciously, venture out into the wild, and establish their belonging to/affinity with it, as well as assume responsibility for it. By 'wild' I do not mean severed from everydayness like the Yeti, but rather, fanciful, imaginative, aware of the possibility of a search, and *on to something*.

Teacher Education programs that do not open up heritage and theory do not allow student-teachers to build, or form, shared and personal associations with those very traditions and theories in which we are all immersed, which we embody and live out, and which are taught but not engaged in, in educational institutions. They deny what Gadamer calls 'fusion of horizons' and *Bildung*. They prevent 'a horizon,' "a background of intelligibility" (Taylor 1991, 37) from forming. Bart, a student-teacher I worked with during his practicum, expressed this idea following his first practicum. He had heard/read a lot about 'integration' in University courses, and had written lesson plans in which he attempted to make sense of this concept; however, only after he actually started teaching, did 'integration' become more meaningful to him. Initially Bart spoke about his cooperating teacher and 'integration':

My teacher was really trying to use this integrated program, not necessarily as successfully as it looks on

paper, but quite successfully in practice . . . but she
 was changing it to meet *her teaching style*
 (27.1.92; emphasis added)

Bart then poignantly reveals why he followed a similar process:

I was doing the same [as my cooperating teacher], *to
 make it more personal and make it my own, I guess*
 (27.1.92, emphasis added)

Bart understands 'integration,' for example, to be meaningful if personal affinity can be drawn and realized between it and himself. A pedagogic stance, is, similarly, exemplified by the father's response to the Son Who Doesn't Know How to Ask; it entails facing the son, offering him guidance, opening up the narrative and search, and loosening and conceding "the horizons against which things take on significance for us" (Taylor, 1991, 37). By staying away from conversation and inquiry, while leaving it in the hands of a select few, our pedagogic fabric is rendered fragile and dull. Moreover, such a scenario is framed by and restricted to *some* people's methodic wanting and doing. It does not presuppose a background of intersubjective agreements or a tacit sense of relevance (Bernstein 1983, 2), nor does it attempt to achieve understanding through dialogue with history (Shapiro and Sica 1984, 15). Thus, it is not conducive to the generation of 'haps.' Indeed, 'hap', under such circumstances, is inconceivable.

Furthermore, by allowing, indeed, encouraging such a disconnected state of affairs to exist, Teacher Education programs prevent student-teachers from taking on, contesting, and addressing what is over and above their/our wanting and doing. In other words, they deny the student-teachers' response-ability (Willis 1989), which implies that

I am responsible for processes in which I find myself,
 and which have a momentum by which they go on
 beyond what I willed or what I can steer.
 Responsibility cannot be limited to the measure of
 what I was able to foresee and willed. . . . I am
 responsible for processes that go beyond the limits of
 my foresight and intention (Lingis 1981, xiv)

The father, who interprets the Four Sons' conduct and horizons, and responds accordingly, assumes responsibility for the present and what came to pass before it, thus allowing 'hap' to emerge. He does not perceive himself as a "knower seeking an object, 'discovering' by methodological means what was really meant and what the situation actually was" (Gadamer 1989, 461). 'Hap' is made possible (for the father, the Four Sons, and the readers/participants) because "the word that has come down to us as tradition and to which we are to listen really encounters us and does so as if it addressed us and is concerned with us" (Gadamer 1989, 461). The father in the Haggadah is transmitting tradition through an encounter with it, by responding to and eliciting questions. He lets each son and reader sense being addressed by, hence belonging to the transmitted tradition, at the same time allowing what is transmitted to re-emerge "into existence just as it presents itself." As in genuine dialogue, what emerges "is contained in neither of the partners by himself" (462). Namely, something new can break forth, that is, 'hap,' thus, revitalizing and signifying tradition. Bart, the student-teacher, acts similarly. 'Integration' becomes meaningful and relevant for him when he feels personally addressed by it.

The father in the Haggadah assumes his paternal responsibility toward his offspring and tradition as he sees the possibilities of the other, of the Four Sons, as his own possibilities (Levinas 1985, 70). "Paternity," Levinas (1987, 91) argues, is the relationship with a stranger who, entirely while being Other, is myself. . . .

I do not *have* my child; I *am* in some way my child. . . . Paternity is not a sympathy through which I can put myself in the son's place. It is through being, not through sympathy, that I am my son." As such, the father-pedagogue is unique and irreplaceable, and his responsibility -- non-transferable. He challenges and responds to the sons, personally, in his and their uniqueness and non-indifference, by his saying, which is important to the participants "less through its informational contents than by the fact that it is addressed to an interlocutor" (Levinas 1985, 42). What matters to Levinas in the relationship between 'me and the Other,' the father and the Four Sons, is not speaking *of* or *about* the other, but speaking, if at all, *to* the Other, "not to inform him or to transmit knowledge to him . . . but rather to invoke him" (Blanchot 1986, 45). Levinas' idea of inter-human responsibility, which he discusses in terms of paternity and filiality, goes very far, and he is quick to point out that such a relationship need not necessarily be biologically based. Accordingly, responsibility is "the feeling that the other is not simply someone I've met, but that he is, in a certain sense, my prolongation, . . . that his possibilities are mine" (Wright, Hughes, and Ainley 1988, 180).

Hermeneutics' concern, similarly to that of Levinas, is with the question of "how we might make sense of our lives in such a way that life can go on" (Smith 1988, 22), holding that conversation "must be sustained for life together to go on at all" (27). Kay's words, in their ironic denial of shared and relevant traditions, and my own literal approach to the Four Sons, point to the urgent need to open up the conversation and to sustain it. To paraphrase Smith (1991), Kay may have found herself but not in relation to others. But is that at all feasible? Kay seems to think that with or without theory, what happens in the classroom is up to her willing and doing, that she and each of her students was born sole; she views herself and others as different, isolated and unique, in other words -- homeless, widowed, deceiving herself into believing that she, alone, can start anew (Gadamer 1986, 48). Thus, she does not heed Jardine's (1992) serious and difficult

interpretive, that is, pedagogic play, and is mindless of the hermeneutic task that sets out to affirm

the way in which present arrangements always border
on and open onto the space of an Other whose
existence contains part of the story of our shared
future (Smith 1991, 203)

By maintaining the separateness of each child, by not seeing the multiple links through which the students (theories, traditions) are mutually connected and dependent, Kay renders the latter, and thus teaching, uninterpretable, hence unintelligible. Thus, she denies the intrinsic connection between 'me' and the Other, the fathers that "dwell in my veins," that "eavesdrop at my ear," that "pull the latches of my heart" (Klein 1985, 69). This denial holds the danger of fragmentation, of "a people increasingly less capable of forming a common purpose and carrying it out," Taylor (1991, 112-113) points out, of people coming "to see themselves more and more atomistically, otherwise put, as less and less bound to their fellow citizens in common projects and allegiances." Kay's role is thus divested of its function in the preservation of life (Gadamer 1984, 58), in assuming responsibility for the Other.

Can Kay find herself *not* in relation to others? Taylor (1991, 47-48) responds:

My discovering my identity doesn't mean that I work
it out in isolation but that I negotiate it through
dialogue, partly overt, partly internalized, with
others. . . . My own identity crucially depends on
my dialogical relations with others

Kay (her students, theory) exists "in a horizon of important questions" (Taylor 1991, 40), which is not just up to her. Kay's quest for significance in her professional life -- "*I want to look . . . and see how I can get*" -- is ultimately self-defeating because, as Taylor lucidly explains, she concentrates on self-fulfillment "*in opposition* to the demands of society . . . which *shut out* history and the bonds of solidarity" (Taylor 1991, 40; original emphasis). In other words, when Kay looks, she does not see that generations look through her eyes, that history, "as the communal becoming and preservation of meaning, is a dialogue precisely because man cannot live by his own objectivity alone. I derive my meaning through my relationship with the other (be it the individual, communal, or ontological other)" (Kearney 1984, 128).

Chapter VII

The True Locus of Hermeneutics Is This In-Between

. . . she was past all concern
 . . . I said, "Lady, unfold me,"
 But she scorned me and told me
 I was dead and I would never return.

Leonard Cohen, "Lady Midnight"

The Other is central to understanding. Understanding, or fusion of horizons, is what hermeneutics strives to achieve within what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing, namely, with the awareness of the central role that effective historical consciousness plays in our lives. Understanding, then, is "*a historically effected event*" (Gadamer 1989, 300), a "*participating in an event of tradition*, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated" (290, original emphasis). The starting point of hermeneutics is that a person desires to understand something that addresses him/her, that he/she "has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks" (295). The process of being challenged, which provokes understanding, and which is embedded in tradition and language ("in all understanding . . . the efficacy of history is at work" (301)), involves tension. The tension arises in the play between familiarity and strangeness, between what is foreign to and distanced from us (text, tradition), and what is close and familiar. The tension, or polarity, is provoked as we become aware of our biases and preconceived notions in conversation. It is from the midst of this tension, in the process of conversation, of understanding, of allowing otherness in, that we learn to separate those prejudices that enable understanding from those that hinder it. "For Gadamer," Bernstein (1983, 144) points out, "it is not a dead metaphor to liken the fusion of

horizons that is the constant task of effective-historical consciousness to an ongoing and open dialogue or conversation."

Yinger (1987) draws our attention to the use of conversation to represent the central goal of education, "Participation in the Great Conversation," and even the central activity of life -- "The Conversation of Mankind" (Oakeshott, 1959). Yinger uses conversation as a metaphor for practice, foregrounding the importance of several interrelated aspects of conversation in pedagogic endeavour. "Conversation refers to the means by which social practices are conducted," and it also "expresses the multifaceted, give-and-take nature of human thought." A third aspect of this notion is alluded to in the etymology of the word 'conversation':

One of the Latin roots for the word is *conversari*, meaning "to dwell with." This suggests that conversation involves an entering into and living with a context and its participants. As such, conversation is not only means of interaction and a way of thinking but also a type of relationship with one's surrounding (Yinger 1987, 11)

Walzer (1990) elaborates on how conversation and real talk constitute a relationship, or what Polanyi (1964) calls 'indwelling':

Real talk is the conscious and critical part of the processes that generate our received ideas and reigning theories, and through which they become articulate. Arguing with one another, we interpret, revise, elaborate, and also call into question the paradigms that shape our thinking. So we arrive at some conception . . . through a conversation that is

constrained . . . by the ordinary constraints of
everyday life (Walzer 1990, 194-195)

Walzer's and Yinger's conceptions of conversation, similarly to Gadamer's, entail involvement and participation, a relationship. Gadamer, however, opens up a historical dimension to the notion of conversation which renders it more complex and dynamic: There is to-and-fro movement in his notion of conversation, a state of being in-between the past and the present, in-between what has been handed down to us by tradition and how we are living out this tradition in the present. In other words, our horizons, like our personalities, are dynamic:

Just as the individual is never simply an individual
because he is always in understanding with others, so
too the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a
culture is an abstraction (Gadamer 1989, 304)

It is because the movement of human life is historical that it can "never have a truly closed horizon" (Gadamer 1989, 304). Thus, we move into a horizon and it moves and changes with us. *"The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between"* (295, original emphasis).

This historical-pedagogic dimension is not abstract but intrinsically connected to particulars. Each of the Four Sons, for example, has a particular question and is in a specific context, or horizon. The father, in his response, addresses the particular son and his specific needs and circumstances, inviting the sons to interpret, that is, to actively participate in making and remaking their culture and tradition (Bruner 1986, 122). Similarly, Common (1991) does not select the five philosophers at random. Robyn, then, from within her situatedness, has to make sense of particular, not any, not incidental names and philosophies. Robyn interacts with the text in such a way so as to preserve its and her/our life.

She is always hearing -- "listening *to* something and extracting *from* other things. [She is] *interpreting* in seeing, hearing, receiving. In seeing, [she is] looking *for* something" (Gadamer 1984, 59; original emphasis).

The Haggadah and Robyn aim at achieving understanding in their conversations with texts. They realize that "only in the process of understanding them, is the dead trace of meaning transformed back into living meaning" (Gadamer 1989, 164). Berliner (1986), on the other hand, aims at automaticity, codification, and systematization in education, for the purpose, by his own admission, of reducing practice and thought, and providing economy of effort. Such an approach points to being limited to what is nearby and not being able to see beyond it (Gadamer 1989, 302); it is premised on disconnected horizons, on "some transcendental or ahistorical perspective from which we [think we] can evaluate competing claims to truth" (Bernstein 1983, 154). Furthermore, it is indicative of a desire for "performing spectators who play out their canonical roles according to rule when the appropriate cues occur" (Bruner 1986, 123), an approach that tacitly holds that individuals do not assume personal and collective responsibility for what we have inherited and are trying to recreate.

While Kay assumes that we do and can "miraculously create meaning out of ourselves" (Kearney 1984, 128), Berliner (1986) presupposes that the meaning that we do create is univocal. Neither realizes that meaning is arrived at through constant interpretation, "by entering into dialogue with the texts of a historical community or common tradition" (Kearney 1984, 128) to which we belong. Both Berliner's and Kay's approaches to pedagogy do not allow the participants to find out and establish understanding and shared meaning, what they have in common "beneath the infinity of our differences" (Ignatieff 1984, 28), thus leaving intact "the dead trace of meaning" (Gadamer 1989, 164), and thereby severing teachers, student-teachers, and theories from history and tradition, from "a heavy legacy of past attachments and commitments" (Ignatieff 1984, 138). Legacy and tradition do not persist "because of the inertia of what once existed." They need "to be

affirmed, embraced, cultivated" (Gadamer 1989, 281), which the Father and Four Sons, and Robyn, and Bart realize in their conversations.

Gadamer's (1981a) concept of conversation is rendered more complex by his foregrounding, and loosening, the topic of conversation that binds the participants, the community of conversation, thus, supporting Yinger's (1987) and Walzer's (1991) notion of conversation as constituting a relationship. A true conversation, like play, in which we forget ourselves and 'let it be' (Gadamer 1985, 49), "seeks out a common ground . . . in the midst of a recognition of difference" (Jardine 1990a, 188). It is the seeking, not just the seekers, that leads the conversation; in other words, it is not only up to the participants to will and control the conversation, which takes "its own twists." "The more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner . . . No one knows in advance what will 'come out' of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us" (Gadamer 1989, 383). Kay, the novice teacher, has no such expectations. She sees every child as new and unique, and her role as a teacher -- as that invested with authority and power to will and fix each particular child.

The intention of hermeneutics and of historical consciousness, similarly to Kay's, is to understand phenomena in their singularity, "how *this* man, *this* people, or *this* state became what it is; how each of these *particulars* could come to pass and end up specifically *there*" (Gadamer 1979, 116). The difference, however, is that Kay does not recognize the productive role that tradition plays in the formation, or horizon of these phenomena. For her, the particular child is accultural, namely, divested of heritage and of "a continuation of what we recognize as being the concrete link among us all" (Gadamer 1979, 134), in other words, the child has no strings attached, no 'hap.' Both Kay, in her dealings with children, and Berliner, in pursuit of the elusive expert pedagogue, according to whom he wants to educate student-teachers, close down the conversation, the horizon, the culture, namely, that is, etymologically, the possibility for a

relationship, for in-dwelling, for motion and wheeling, for care and cultivation. They shut previous generations out, not allowing "joke, nuance, idiom and inflection" (Yelin 1985) in, nor their creation, thus invoking widowhood. They do not pose the hermeneutic problem which can be defined by the question:

What can we make of the fact that one and the same message transmitted by tradition will, however, be grasped differently on every occasion, that it is only understood relative to the concrete historical situation of its recipient? (Gadamer 1979, 135)

For Berliner pedagogic expertise boils down to a formula, a sought-and-found code or law, general by nature, and unrelated to a concrete historical situation. He desires that the one and the same message transmitted by tradition stay intact and always be one and the same (Gadamer 1979, 136). This raises an ethical concern about "our real goal" in education, which, according to Aristotle (Gadamer, 1979), is always ethical being. As Gadamer carefully illustrates, "a law is always general and can never address itself to all the concrete complexities of a particular case . . . A law is always insufficient, not by reason of any intrinsic fault, but because the practical world as the field of our actions is always imperfect in comparison to the ideal order envisioned by laws" (141). Laws and general knowledge, Gadamer (1979, 136) argues, are "unmindful of concrete situations and their exigencies." Indeed, they even threaten "to obscure the meaning of the concrete exigencies which a factual situation could pose" to them. Stable laws prevail, following Aristotle, in the natural domain. However, human beings become what they are by the 'how,' or ethics of their actions, which is marked "by the inconstancy of human precepts" (Gadamer 1979, 136). Gadamer underscores the twofold essential characteristics of ethical being, which are the agent's general knowledge as to how to decide and what to prefer, and the agent's knowledge and

understanding of "how he ought to act in the given occasion" (137). The latter constitutes a responsibility that a person can never evade. The contours of Berliner's expert pedagogue pose an ethical problem because they concentrate on and emphasize the former, the logos, the general and precise law, not dwelling on the ethos at all.

For Kay, the concrete historical situation is irrelevant as is the "one and the same message transmitted by tradition," because "everyone is different": the message, the situation, the child. Thus, talk, rather than conversation, prevails; it is incessant and is concerned with particulars only, with getting into another person's head. It ignores the shared heritage and language in which the particulars are embedded. "Conversation is a process of coming to an understanding" (Gadamer 1989, 385), and what is to be understood is what is being said rather than the person saying it: Understanding, which "takes place in the medium of language" (Gadamer 1989, 385),

is not based on transposing into another person . . .

To understand what a person says is . . . to come to an understanding about the subject matter, not to get inside another person and relive his experiences (383)

Thus, Gadamer avoids slipping into psychologism, empathy, and mere personal opinions, on one hand, and authoritarian abstractions and generalities, on the other. Neither direction allows the participants "to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented" (Gadamer 1989, 367). The father and the Four Sons are concerned with an issue that is not just a personal and pure 'lived experience' that is 'in their head' and that is oriented toward the intimate relationship between them. The father-son relationship, similar to that which emerges between Robyn and the five philosophers, is mediated through a

subject matter of communal/historic relevance and importance, hence, of pedagogic significance. Gadamer's (1989, xvi) translators elaborate:

When we genuinely listen to another's insight into whatever we are seriously discussing . . . we discover some validity in it, something about the thing itself that would not have shown itself simply within our own limited horizon. But this gain in insight is only possible where both participants in a conversation grant what "is due" to the subject matter. In that sense, participants in a conversation "belong" to and with each other, "belong" to and with the subject of their discussion, and mutually participate in the process which brings out the nature of that subject

Conversation according to Gadamer, then, is inconclusive, unstable, and ongoing, indeed, it is never complete. "Real conversation with an other cannot be exhaustively planned. I am never sure just what he will say, and there is always room for reinterpretation and spontaneity on both sides," John Wild (1969, 14) points out. Like play, conversation "has a spirit of its own, and . . . the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it -- i.e., . . . it allows something to 'emerge' which henceforth exists" (Gadamer 1989, 383). It is experiential in the sense of undergoing something - *Erfahrung* - thus allowing its participants to form concepts through working out the common meaning, to reach shared understandings, and transform. "To reach an understanding in a dialogue is . . . being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were" (Gadamer 1989, 379). It is not confirmation that is sought but rather -- understanding, "entering into a relation with what is meaningful" (91). In other words, 'hap.' As Bernstein (1983, 139) argues, "Meaning is always *coming into*

being through the 'happening' of understanding." 'Hap,' or the eruption of understanding, Gadamer (1989, 164-165) stresses, is inextricably intertwined with meaning:

Understanding must be conceived as a part of the event in which meaning occurs, the event in which the meaning of all statements -- those of art and all other kinds of tradition -- is formed and actualized

Understanding, Gadamer (1979, 147) continues, is not a mysterious communication of souls, but rather a participation "in the common aim." It is a process of communication which entails "participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated" (Gadamer 1989, 290). This notion of understanding is compatible with that of ethical being. Cohen (1986, 5), in a face to face encounter with Levinas' work, forcefully claims that ethics "disrupts the entire project of knowing with . . . responsibility." In other words, ethics and responsibility are prior to cognition, and are manifested in the encounter with the Other. As Gadamer (1979, 143) explains, "in moral actions there is no 'prior' knowledge of the right means which realize the end, and this is so because, above all else, the ends themselves are at stake and not perfectly fixed beforehand." Means and ends are embedded in and framed by the concrete historical situation, by tradition, and language, and are further negotiated in conversation.

By tradition Gadamer (1989) does not mean a static transmission, "what lies merely behind us" or "what we take over more or less automatically". It is not "simply filing things in pigeonholes" (489). "We live in traditions and these are not a fragment of our world-experience, not a matter of 'cultural transmissions' emerging from texts and monuments . . . rather, it is the world itself that is communicatively experienced and constantly given over to us as an infinitely open

task" (Gadamer 1985,181). Tradition thus viewed means that "it precludes complacency, passivity, and self-satisfaction with what we securely possess," requiring "active questioning and self-questioning" (Gadamer 1989, xvi).

Tradition's significance for us is that what we encounter in it says something to us, connecting the past with the present, as Robyn eventually sees: she realizes that "there look generations through" her eyes (Klein 1985), that she actually *teaches with* Peters, Dewey, Rogers, and Neill, that they are *her teachers and colleagues*, indeed, that their philosophies *live* within her own teaching and philosophy: "Not sole was I born, but entire genesis" (Klein 1985).

At the end of his first practicum, Bart, a student-teacher, suggests (27.1.92) that tradition and theory in Teacher Education are not presented as part of an entire genesis, but rather, "they [University] are going with the new thing, the latest studies." Bart criticizes his courses for not dwelling on how theories in Education, for example, erupted, what changes and developments occurred over time, and why. He refuses to believe that "older stuff" should be thrown out:

I don't like to grant people who have been in the
system for twenty five years as people that are
practising old medicine, that are absolutely no good

In other words, Bart understands the past as something in which we are immersed and to which we are reacting, as something that demands attention and examination, for we are living it out.

A careful reading of Robyn's, Bart's, and the Haggadah discourse shows that "a living tradition not only informs and shapes what we are but is always in the process of reconstitution" (Bernstein 1983,130). The philosophers and their theories constitute, as Robyn implies, what the painter Kandinsky (1914/1977, 12) calls, the "lamp which sheds light on the petrified ideas of yesterday and of the

more distant past," evoking lightness, buoyancy, a "drawing together" (Kandinsky 1914/1977, 19). Gadamer (1986, 49) supplements:

The task involved in bringing together the petrified remnants of yesterday and the life of today provides a vivid illustration of what tradition always means: not just the careful preservation of monuments, but the constant interaction between our aims in the present and the past to which we still belong

The relationship with Berliner's elusive beast, on the other hand, reflects a 'no connections' view (Berlak & Berlak, 1987) that precludes constant interaction and a drawing together; it is that of filing and possessing, of technical understanding that is external to the one understanding: apart, distinct, and separate. It is what Yelin (1985) calls "widowhood" and "baffling pantomimes." Tradition, accordingly, is no longer open; as such "we can speak of it as 'dead' " (Bernstein 1983, 130). The Four Sons, their siblings and descendants -- Robyn, for example, cannot accept such an irresponsible and incoherent world-view. They exemplify a world-view that is contextual, dynamic, and particular, hence, changing and dependent on its varied participants, past and present. The Haggadah and Gadamer are concerned with *sensus communis* that is historically embedded, while Berliner -- with an ahistorical and fragmented *sensus singularis*.

Hence,

* Four Sons, but

one, solitary elusive beast:

"*Everyone is different*," Kay asserts.

* multiple and ambiguous

questions and approaches, but

a single, non-communicative mythical and isolated monster:

"It's nothing to tell you about the kids . . . or what they're like, or how to deal with them, really," Kay says about theory.

* dialectic relationships

about a common topic between family members who assume responsibility for it and each other, and attempt to understand, **but**

a monumental pursuit in search of correctness:

". . . and see how I can get them to the next stage," Kay declares.

Tradition as conceptualized by Gadamer and as exemplified by the father and Four Sons, by Robyn and Bart, suggests that "we already find ourselves within certain traditions" that have been transmitted to us; this transmission, however, "does not imply that we simply leave things unchanged and merely conserve them. It means learning how to grasp and express the past anew" (Gadamer 1986, 48-49), not by repeating but by encountering it. Kay, however, denies her/our already-being-in-the-midst, thinking that she can "turn away from the future into which [she is] already moving and program [herself] afresh" (Gadamer 1986, 48-49). Namely, she implicitly denies that she is immersed in and constituted by prejudgments, and hence, that there is need to examine/transform them. Prejudgments, however, according to Gadamer, is what allows understanding to emerge to begin with; they are the "biases of our openness to the world" (Bernstein 1983, 129). "Understanding always implies a pre-understanding which is in turn pre-figured by the determinate tradition in which the interpreter lives and which shapes his prejudices" (Gadamer 1979, 108), a stance that Berliner and Kay, albeit for different reasons, reject.

Kay's conception, then, imprisons us and closes down the conversation, while the awareness of being 'already-in' opens up, a process made possible through conversation, namely, through facing up "to the traditions in which we live along with the possibility they offer for the future" (Gadamer 1986, 48). Moreover, "it is only through the *dialogical* encounter with what is at once alien to us, makes a claim upon us, and has an affinity with what we are that we can open ourselves to risking and testing our prejudices," Bernstein (1983, 128-129) explains. Similarly, in the dialogical encounter, "speaking becomes serious," according to Levinas (Wild 1969, 15),

only when we pay attention to the other and take account of him and the *strange* world he inhabits. It is only by responding to him that I become aware of the *arbitrary* views and attitudes into which my uncriticized freedom always leads me, and become responsible, that is, able to respond (emphasis added)

"Conversation," Gadamer (1989, 385) reminds us, "is a process of coming to an understanding." However, "a person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said" (370). This is, essentially, what the Haggadah (1987) sets out to do and instructs its readers to do, year after year:

In every generation one must look upon himself as if he personally had come out from Egypt (32) . . .
Even were we all wise, all men of understanding, all of us aged, all of us learned in the Torah, it would still be our duty to tell the story (11)

Time and time again the Haggadah is read and interpreted. "When it is interpreted," Gadamer (1989, 368) argues, "written tradition is brought back out of the alienation in which it finds itself and into the living present of conversation, which is always fundamentally realized in question and answer." In other words, the process of establishing affinity with tradition, of bringing it back out of its alienation, is intertwined with that of becoming aware of our prejudices, which have to be provoked, for they operate constantly unnoticed. "The encounter with a traditional text can provide this provocation" (Gadamer 1989, 299), which evokes the fundamental suspension of our prejudices. However, for understanding to begin, that is, for the first condition of hermeneutics to be, the text must address and challenge us, make a claim on us. When this happens and our prejudices are provoked, we can begin to respond to them, examine and suspend them. We do that through questioning, through rejoinder and engagement. Berliner's elusive beast, on the other hand, neither asks nor is it asked any questions; it demands no interpretation and is dogmatically accepted. Therefore, interpretation does not take place, thus perpetuating our mutual alienation.

Gadamer's presupposition regarding written tradition is that its discourse, be it of Teacher Education courses or of the Haggadah, is intended to reveal something, "to 'burst toward,' to tear oneself out of the moist gastric intimacy, veering out there beyond oneself," Sartre (1939, 4) passionately argues. To find out the something it reveals requires "that that thing be broken open by the question" (Gadamer 1989, 363), for the question is what the text is a response to. Hence, "understanding a text entails understanding the question to which it is an answer" (370). Asking questions, then, as the youngest child in the Haggadah and the Four Sons do, and are encouraged to do, "means to bring into the open" (363), into the public sphere, "not in some hiding place," but with and among others, "on the road, in the town, in the midst of the crowd, a thing among things, a man among men" (Sartre 1939, 5), for only then, in public "is it a real discussion with real questions and real attempts at answers" (Gadamer 1985, 141).

It is in such conversation that each of us may find oneself "in relation to others" (Smith 1991, 198). After completing her first practicum, Lisa, a student-teacher, is struggling with finding herself, her teaching persona:

I have to find my own personal style because I can't
teach like, how I see other people teaching. I can't
teach like my cooperating teacher, I have to teach like
me

Lisa senses that University courses and assignments constitute encounters that continuously help her establish and become 'her,' but, like Oliver, she wants more, more engagement and conversation, claiming she has found it in the practicum:

I think the University should help you to discover a
bit more of yourself because that's what I discovered
out there [in the practicum], is a bit more, how I want
to teach and how I want to approach it (27.1.92)

The practicum encounters and conversations elicit more self-discovery; they seem more real and relevant; they are the Others that address you with urgency, that contest and provoke and demand response. Gord, a student-teacher who, by his own admission, found University assignments not very motivating, discovered the opposite in the practicum, and was thus able to relate to what it means for him to become a teacher:

You have low motivation writing something for
[University] teachers. Then you go out there [school]
and you actually have to teach this lesson . . . you
have all the enthusiasm and high motivation to

actually write it . . . *because it actually matters,*
because you're actually using it
 (27.1.92; emphasis added)

Lisa and Gord realize the importance of encountering Otherness that will challenge you personally and, thus, allow you to find yourself in relation to it. "Unfortunately, you don't learn a lot about yourself when you have someone stuff a theory or a philosophy down your throat," Bart (27.1.92) adds. You need to establish a personal, namely, challenging relationship with a theory or a philosophy, via conversation. Otherwise, as Gord notes, "the personal aspect of education is lost somewhere" (27.1.92). Bart doubts that the personal claim of theory is at all feasible at University: "There's no way that you can, in a University setting, capture it all. I just don't think you can. Especially when you are in the process of getting A's" (27.1.92).

The inevitable and significant pedagogic question that emerges is, how to create conditions conducive to conversation, and how to render texts (theories, traditions, otherness) challenging, thus causing us to become aware of our prejudices, to question and probe them. Regarding student-teachers, for example, how can University readings and assignments be personally demanding, real and relevant? Can, and if so, how can conditions be created whereby we do not refuse to see and listen to the claim of the Other?

Chapter VIII

The Right Word Is Often A Stranger

For God said to Abraham:

Know you that thy seed will be a stranger in a land not their own.

They will be enslaved there and will be oppressed four hundred years.

But that nation who will oppress them shall be judged.

Afterwards they will come forth with great wealth! . . .

This promise made to our forefathers holds true also for us, in every generation.

Haggadah of Passover 1987, 15-16

Who are the Others that partake in the conversation? And what is it about Otherness that allows us to find ourselves? One of Carol Shields' *Others* (1972, 9) is "A Woman We Saw in an Antique Shop":

The woman's hands

touch table tops, fingering the dark scars hopefully;
but there's no pulse here and nothing to tell anyway.

The woman's gloves

poke the plates and cups, wanting nothing, after all,
but a conversation piece.

Now the Other is animated -- the crest-fallen scarred furniture, the dust-filled dishes, and the anonymous and lonely woman whose protected haptic fingers are prodding and clinging, caressing and jabbing; the poet and the reader are enlivened too. The poem is the conversation piece. It throbs and tells, foregrounding Otherness, bringing it to language, and thus, pulling us in. In this

conversatory process, the distant, the anonymous, the strange, is granted its uniqueness as well as its familiar qualities and shared ties with others -- *the right word is often a stranger*.

A woman we saw in an antique shop becomes *the* woman, a particular human being, who, like Arendt's new and young and Smith's children, is one of us. Acknowledging Otherness and responding to it affords us the opportunity to shake our sensibilities "to forms of life, of being, other than our own," yet, not disconnected from our own (Gunn 1979, 202; see Schutz 1970, 28-29, quoted below). It allows us to be/come human, to explore what constitutes "Me" and my humanness. Encountering the Other empowers the "Me" to emerge. As Schutz (1979, 32) explains,

Only by comprehending my fellow-man as
apprehending me as a social human being, do I
become myself an I in my relationship to Others,
creating, thus, the constitutive possibility for the
"We," the community of all human beings which
includes me

From an Other, then, the woman in the antique shop becomes a participant. The poem does not allow her and the other participants "to withdraw back into the private sanctity of the self or to relinquish that sanctity in favor of fusing with All" (Gunn 1979, 178). In other words, the woman is neither an aberration of her species nor is she *any* woman. She is a particular woman in a particular context with whom we can relate. Through the relationship and language, we too, become. The poem about the woman "has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes" us, the readers (Gadamer 1989, 102).

The Other is contingent; it endows the participants with vitality, indeed, with existence. As Gunn (1979, 182) reflects, "However the 'other,' the 'not-Me,'

is conceived . . . it inevitably becomes that factor which . . . precipitates man's fall into existence." Our startling confrontations with Otherness opens up for us the possibility for wonder, a susceptibility to surprise, and a recovery of our capacity for awe, which allows the "Me" and the "not-Me" to resist stasis, to unfold, and hence, for something new to happen. For Gunn, the encounter with Otherness compels one into some new understanding of and relationship to oneself (cf. Coles 1989, 101; Gadamer 1989, 469-470; Greene 1988, 121-132; Ricoeur 1970, 16-18, for consonant characterizations of poetry).

When acknowledging Otherness, as Robyn does, teaching too can resist closure, be infused with life and novelty, and "refuse stasis and the flatness of ordinary life" (Greene 1988, 123). Namely, the encounter with Otherness can render teaching and pedagogic relationships eventful and allow self-understanding to emerge, for Otherness "contains part of the story of our shared future" (Smith 1991, 203). It entails prejudices, knowledge, traditions, cultural baggage, language, all of which are shared to some degree, yet, are not fixed; for by encountering and reflecting upon them, together with "readiness for self-criticism" (Gadamer 1979, 107), our understanding and perception of them, as well as of ourselves, is made possible and meaningful, and can be transformed. Otherness, like Gadamer's (1985, 181) conception of tradition, confronts us as a task, the task of understanding

the world itself that is communicatively experienced
 . . . It is not the world of a first day but one that is
 always already handed down to us. In all those places
 where something is experienced, where unfamiliarity
 is overcome and what occurs is the shedding of light,
 the coming of insight, and appropriation, what takes
 place is the hermeneutic process of translation into the
 world and into the common consciousness

Otherness, then, allows us to become experienced by opening up to new experiences, resulting in our becoming what Gadamer calls *gebildete*, that is, recognizing our/our culture's place within a "larger world-community." As we learn from others, we take a wider, "more differentiated view" which helps us acquire "sensitivity, subtlety and a capacity for discrimination" (Warnke 1987, 174). Schutz (1970, 28-29) traces the delicate contours of the common-Other affinity, elaborating on Warnke's thesis:

To be related to a common environment and to be united with the Other in a community of persons - these two propositions are inseparable. We could not be persons for Others, not even for ourselves, if we could not find with Others a common environment as the counterpart of the intentional interconnectedness of our conscious lives. This common environment is established by comprehension, which in turn is founded upon the fact that the subjects reciprocally motivate one another in their spiritual activities. Thus, relationships of mutual understanding and consent and, therewith, a *communicative common environment* originate.

Self-understanding is not confined to the private and personal. It is embedded in the public; it is rooted in and unfolds in the communal. "Self-understanding always occurs through understanding something other than the self [Sartre's (1939, 4) "veering out there beyond oneself"], and includes the unity and integrity of the other" (Gadamer 1989, 97). In other words, the self as being is made possible through encounters with Otherness. As Taylor (1991, 48) argues, "my own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others," and

only through others "do we gain true knowledge of ourselves (Gadamer 1979, 107). Understanding, Otherness, tradition, and their confrontation are intrinsically, indeed, haptically intertwined with the unfolding of the self. Gadamer (1979, 108) carefully sketches the process:

Understanding always implies a pre-understanding which is in turn pre-figured by the determinate tradition in which the interpreter lives and which shapes his prejudices. Every encounter with others therefore means the "suspension" of one's own prejudices . . . always something more is demanded than to "understand the other," that is to seek and acknowledge the immanent coherence contained within the meaning-claim of the other. A further invitation is always implied . . . a transcendental demand for coherence in which the ideal of truth is located. But this requires a readiness to recognize the other as potentially right and to let him or it prevail against me

The process of understanding, Gadamer (1981, 110) explains, "is a process of growing familiarity between the determinate experience, or the 'text,' and ourselves." Furthermore, "understanding another as a unique phenomenon . . . supposes that one is committed to a just cause and through this commitment one discovers a link with another" (Gadamer 1979, 144). However, for understanding and being to emanate there is the need to open up to the Other. Opening up, or 'hap,' occurs in a conversation (as characterized by Gadamer, Yinger, and Walzer), in which we both presuppose and aim to establish a common language with the Other (Gadamer 1989, 378). Opening up

allows the foreign to become one's own, not by
 destroying it critically or reproducing it uncritically,
 but by explicating it within one's own horizons with
 one's own concepts and thus giving it new validity
 (Gadamer 1976, 94)

The Other disrupts the familiar, that which is "so much part of the accustomed and the everyday that it escapes notice entirely" (Greene 1988, 123). It disrupts the unquestioned assumptions that constitute our world, "assumptions in which we are embedded in such a way that the very questioning appears unnecessary" (Jardine 1982, 74-75), namely, the basic assumptions that group members tacitly share, which the Stranger (Schutz 1964) does not. The knowledge correlated to these assumptions "carries its evidence in itself -, or, rather, it is taken for granted in the absence of evidence to the contrary," Schutz (1964, 95) acknowledges. The taken-for-granted holds authority over the group members but not over the Stranger, "because he does not partake in the vivid historical tradition by which it has been formed" (96). However, the Stranger, who desires acceptance by the group "becomes essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group" (96). By disrupting the in-group's familiarity and taken-for-grantedness, the Stranger constitutes the presence of possible evidence to contrary knowledge, which confront both the group and the Stranger as a task, or a struggle.

Such familiarity "must be deeply disrupted . . . but not to turn away from the familiar . . . rather, the disruption [the Other, the Stranger] allows us to begin to recover a deep sense of the familial" (Jardine 1990b, 116). In other words, the group's and the Stranger's encounter that causes both parties to question one's own and the other's 'recipes' (Schutz 1964, 95), allows them, at the same time, to seek and create "a common ground in the midst of a recognition of differences" (Jardine

1990a, 188), and to discover reciprocal links, thus enlarging and adjusting their mutual stock of experiences (Schutz 1964, 105).

Opening up in conversation is meant to be neither a consumptive nor an affirming process. It draws the Other in in order to be, in order for both to be; so the conversation is not a repetition, nor is it, supposedly, intimidating/threatening; its intent/*raison d'être* is generative, not annihilatory. However, annihilation can occur, the implied invitation when we encounter the other can be flatly refused, and the demand for coherence -- ignored; the link with another can be 'looked' or 'heard away,' as Gadamer's (1985, 76) own experience attests: After Hitler came to power in Germany, Gadamer was sent (in 1934) to the University in Kiel to replace a suspended Jewish professor:

I then learned from myself and from others how easily one makes illusions and is prepared to take the situation as not really so bad, as long as it is not one's own goose that is being cooked. One never learns this lesson well enough

Using abstractions, Gadamer is so very careful that he sounds almost 'neutral.' By reflecting on his own conduct, he problematizes the function of ethical decision, which is "to find what is just within the bounds of a concrete situation. In other words, the ethical decision for the just is there in order to "see" all that the concrete situation demands and to put the matter in some order" (Gadamer 1979, 139). By his own admission, Gadamer had not been able to "see;" he had acted unjustly, which, according to him means acting in blindness and being dominated by the play of passions so that one "is no longer oriented towards the good at all" (1979, 143). That, we can surmise, prohibits conversation and understanding, and hence, the discovery or disclosure of links with another.

How can pedagogues prevent such situations from happening, situations where Rilke's terror, crazy mourning, and rushing blindly half-crazed reign, without trust, without "your hand firmly held," without conversation and the hope for understanding? The implication is that without opening up, without the conversation in which attempt to understand the other and seek the immanent coherence contained within the other's meaning-claim, without our "readiness to recognize the other as potentially right" (Gadamer 1979, 108), without looking language "in the eye" (Gadamer 1985, 92), self-understanding and understanding the other, hence, affinity, are impossible. Moreover, without allowing the Other in, and in destroying the Other, degeneration and self destruction set in. Ecologists are nodding furiously, as is Freire (1970, 76), who holds that dialogue is a prerequisite for saying a true word, for "no one can say a true word alone," let alone a cooked goose.

Elie Wiesel (1990) probes the premises underlying Gadamer's 'cooked goose' metaphor, which reveals how a perception of the Stranger by the in-group, and the latter's approach to him/her leads to turning away from, objectifying, shaming, and dehumanising the stranger. It is this perception, which comes in different varieties, that pedagogues dread and that demands our collective attention, for, like the fact of natality (Arendt 1954, 196), it is a shared concern:

The STRANGER . . . is someone who suggests the unknown, the prohibited, the beyond; he seduces, he attracts, he wounds - and leaves . . . The stranger represents what you are not, what you cannot be, simply because you are not *he*. Between you and him no contact seems possible, except through suspicion, terror, or repulsion. The stranger is *the other*. He is not bound by your laws, by your memories; his language is not yours, nor his silence. He is an

emissary of evil and violence. Or of death. Surely
 he is from the other side
 (Wiesel 1990, 59-60)

The stranger thus perceived is rejected, isolated, and condemned for he/she is grasped as a bearer of an evil omen and hence, a threat to the approached group's unity and purity, to established order. The stranger, feared and hated, has "to be expelled. Or exorcised. Or even killed" (Wiesel 1990, 60). A more 'enlightened' approach demands total assimilation as the price for absorption. It requires that the stranger disarm, undress, transform, in other words, "he would be welcome to stay, but only after giving up his name, his past, his memories, his bonds with his own people" (60).

Cooking the goose and erasing the Other are made possible when understanding, and a commitment to a just cause, through which "one discovers a link with another" (Gadamer 1979, 144) are ignored. How, as pedagogues, can we prevent such gross inattentiveness? How can the stranger's otherness not be perceived as a threat, and hence, as something to be eliminated, in other words, how can we acquire "the right horizon of inquiry" (Gadamer 1989, 302) and avoid blindness? Can we, from within our historically effected consciousness, interrupt and change what may be beyond our wanting and doing, and induce affinity? Wiesel's (1990) interpretation of 'the stranger in the bible,' which is ethically concerned and conducive to understanding, namely, hermeneutically and pedagogically oriented, is thus illuminating:

The biblical stranger, who represents the unknown, holds the attraction of curiosity and fascination, of what he/she has and the in-group doesn't. As "man needs the other to be human - just as God needs man to be God," Wiesel (1990, 62) argues, "man can attain his ultimate truth only through other human beings." That is why the stranger is significant: "We hope to receive a fragment of his secret knowledge, a spark of his flame - a key to his secret" (63). The stranger

has a particular role, that of a mystery bearer who challenges the in-group's certainties and forces it to reexamine its own values and sincerity, or authenticity. The stranger represents the question, "but if and when he attempts to force his answers upon us, he must be opposed" (65).

Like Bernstein (1983) and Pan (Robbins 1984), like Robyn and the Haggadah, biblical authors value constant encounters and long-term relationships with strangers, for

a society without strangers would be impoverished; to
live only amongst ourselves, constantly inbreeding,
never facing an outsider to make us question again
and again our certainties and rules, would inevitably
lead to atrophy. The experience of encountering a
stranger . . . is important and creative, *provided we
know when to step back*
(Wiesel 1990, 73; emphasis added)

It is the stranger, then, the newborn child, the novice teacher, the newcomer, the foreign language, the fact of natality, that infuses us with Shields' (1972) 'pulse,' with possibility and vitality; it is the Other that allows us to move from the actual to the possible, and in-between, from the dogmatic, the literal, the familiar, to the speculative, in a to-and-fro direction, which means that "the community of conversation" carries heavy responsibilities (Arendt 1954) intertwined with possibilities. As Wiesel (1990, 73) alludes (above, in italics), there is tension, which, if relentless, can have tragic implications, in the experience of encountering a stranger, as there is in hermeneutic work; it is the tension between familiarity and strangeness, between prejudices illuminated and concealed. However, the prejudices are not free at the disposal of the participants, who cannot separate in

advance "the productive prejudices that enable understanding from the prejudices that hinder it" (Gadamer 1989, 295).

Engagement, interpretation, and conversation, listening and looking, and a desire to be thus challenged are required in order for the prejudices to be provoked and examined, for the encounter to be a creative experience, for context and world to be explicated (Rabinow and Sullivan 1979, 13). It is the desire for engagement with the other, together with action, and "keeping oneself open to what is other" (Gadamer 1989, 17), that will tell us "when to step back" (Wiesel 1990, 73), when to let go, and that will set our horizons in motion. The encounter with the Other constitutes, breeds, and calls for

a complex, many-levelled struggle, intellectual,
spiritual, and political, in which the debates in the
public arena interlink with those in a host of
institutional settings, like hospitals and schools,
[where] the interweaving of the different strands of
concern . . . are being lived through in concrete form;
and where these disputes in turn both feed and are fed
by the various attempts to define in theoretical terms
[the demands made on us, and] the shape of human
life and its relation to the cosmos
(Taylor 1991, 120)

The notion and place of Otherness, as depicted above, transforms our traditional understanding and conception of pedagogy. Pedagogy can no longer be conceived adequately in terms of "progress, of a continual advance from the unknown into the known," or "a linear progression from mythology to enlightenment." Rather, the movement of pedagogy, in the same way that Gadamer thinks about the movement of human existence, of tradition and play, of

conversation, translation, and understanding, can be seen as issuing "in a relentless inner tension between illumination and concealment" (Gadamer 1981a, 104). The task of hermeneutic inquiry is not that of dispelling that tension and looking away from it; rather, it is that of becoming conscious of our living and speaking from within it (Jardine 1992, 126), from within Yelin's (1985) immigrant living under cloudless skies, who is free to come and go, and/but whose days are plagued with baffling pantomimes, and widowed of "joke, nuance, idiom and inflection." Moreover, the task is of seeing that tension better, "within a larger whole and in truer proportion" (Gadamer 1989, 305). At work is a presupposition that the finite and co-present Other is making legitimate, and necessary demands on me through which (if I don't ignore them) we can discover links with each other, joke, nuance, idiom and inflection.

This is unthinkable from Berliner's perspective, who, via the rigorous process of selecting and training the expert pedagogue, aims at looking away from and dispelling that tension once and for all. Kay, too, would reject this approach on the ground that each individual student lives and speaks from within that tension differently, and that the teacher's job is to dispel it according to each child's unique needs and self-contained circumstances. The Haggadah and Robyn hold that it is the haptic demands, the haphazard passes and happenstance advances, to which we should pay attention, that constitute the condition of the possibility of understanding, and of life's renewal and continuity. 'Passes,' like mediation and interpretation, are speculative, a part of the whole that projects the whole. Such "a hermeneutic notion of understanding," Jardine (1992, 124) elaborates,

is centered on the dispossession of understanding
from its methodical, prepared self-security. It returns
inquiry in education to the original, serious, and
difficult interpretive play in which we live our lives

together with children; it returns inquiry to the need
and possibility of true conversation

Where do the 'difficult interpretive play' and the 'true conversation' originate? What makes the 'possibility of true conversation' feasible? What does the 'original' embody? According to Levinas (1969, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1989), and Berger & Luckmann (1966), the locus of meaning and understanding is in the face-to-face encounter. "The most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation" (Berger & Luckmann 1966, 43), for in such a situation, what the other 'is' "is ongoingly available to me. This availability is continuous and prereflective" (44). Alterity, or Otherness, rather than shared attributes, is the key to social life, Levinas' (1989, 51) translator argues, not in the sense of possessing, grasping, and knowing the other, which are synonyms of power. Rather, a relationship with alterity, with a stranger, invokes my irreplaceable responsibility for the other, thus making a true conversation possible. We live our lives together with children in the face-to-face encounter, "not a togetherness of synthesis, but a togetherness of face to face" (Levinas 1985, 77). In facing one another, our obligation to another, "the impossibility of indifference" (Levinas 1989, 180) toward children, toward each other, is invoked, making possible the 'serious and difficult interpretive play.' The midrashic understanding that there are Four Sons alludes to the responsibility parents and pedagogues have toward children, toward the 'fact of natality.' Despite the Wicked Son's provocation, the father does not ignore him. On the contrary, the Wicked Son elicits the longest and most detailed response.

The face-to-face encounter counters the 'methodical, prepared self-security' of dogma and anonymity, where "everything is absorbed, sunk, buried in sameness" (Levinas 1989, 245). The face, on the other hand, "orders and ordains me" (Levinas 1985, 97); it addresses *me*, it appeals and contests, it is an imperative, for which recognition and responsibility are the response; they stem

from and are directed toward a unique person. "Responsibility for the Other . . . is responsibility for the unique one" (Levinas 1987, 108), a situation that is never ending, "one is never quits with regard to the Other" (Levinas 1985, 105), and is always up to *me*: "It is always I who am responsible and I who support the universe, whatever happens next" (114). Furthermore, "my responsibility is untransferable, no one could replace me" (100), as is manifested by the father's conduct toward his Sons, and by Robyn toward the philosophers whose work she encounters. Berliner, on the other hand, collapses all individual student-teachers into a prototype, neither addressing nor responding to their particularities.

The particular person's very uniqueness, "the uniqueness of the I is the fact that no one can answer for me" (Levinas 1987, 97). Hence, "responsibility is what is incumbent on me exclusively, and what, humanly, I cannot refuse. This charge is a supreme dignity of the unique. I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable," Levinas (1985, 101) explains. Cohen (1986, 8), in *Face to Face with Levinas*, elaborates:

To be oneself is to be for the other

Lingis (1986, 228) adds:

What constitutes my existence as here, is not the
power to keep objects at a distance; it is the pain of
being afflicted with the demands of the other

Berliner, however, does 'keep objects at a distance.' The expert pedagogue constitutes a patchwork, a faceless and anonymous monster who never faces me and afflicts no demands on me, for it is remote and elusive. The expert pedagogue and I are not interdependent nor are we mutually responsible, hence, our relationship is marked by incoherence and lack of intelligibility. As the locus of

my untransferable responsibility for the unique Stranger, and the locus of my becoming an I, Otherness, or, the face-to-face, is where language is produced (Levinas 1969, 295), indeed, meaning and intelligibility, and ethics:

The epiphany of a face is wholly language

(Levinas 1987, 55)

The manifestation of a face is the first discourse

(Levinas 1987, 96)

Face and discourse are tied. The face speaks. It speaks, it is in this that it renders possible and begins all discourse

(Levinas 1985, 87)

'The face speaks' means that it imposes itself upon me "without my being able to be deaf to its call or to forget it, that is, without my being able to stop holding myself responsible for its distress" (Levinas 1985, 96-97). For Levinas language and face, indeed, meaning, are inherently linked: "The first intelligibility, the first meaning of all speech is the face. You could not speak without a face. One speaks to someone," Levinas points out (Wright, Hughes, and Ainley 1988, 174). He explains further:

I think that the beginning of language is in the face.

In a certain way in its silence it calls on you. Your reaction to the face is a response. Not just a response, but a responsibility. These two words [réponse, responsabilité] are closely related.

Language does not begin with the signs that one gives, with words. Language is above all the fact of

being addressed . . . which means the saying much
more than the said

(Wright, Hughes, and Ainley 1988, 169-170)

"Saying is a state of openness to the other" (Levinas 1989, 6), of mutual exposure. In the encounter with the Other, in the mutual and personal exposure, I find myself "put in question by and obliged to respond to the Other" (Bernasconi & Critchley 1991, xi). The obligation to respond to the other "whose face 'speaks' to me and demands a personal response" (O'Connor 1991, 230), is an ethical responsibility that cannot be evaded. The emanating discourse is an ethical act, in other words,

Ethics occurs . . . in the demand for response

(Levinas 1985, 12)

The responsibility to respond to the other is . . . the
ethical relation

(Levinas 1985, 12)

The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is . . .
an ethical relation

(Levinas 1969, 51)

"By speaking to the other I enter into a relationship with him" (Wild 1969, 14), that is, I coexist with the other by language. However, while the face-to-face encounter renders the interlocutors unique, language is universal, "because it is the very passage from the individual to the general, because it offers things which are mine to the Other. To speak is to make the world common, to create commonplaces" (Levinas 1969, 76), which Klein (1985) captures in his Psalm, and which is what the father attempts to do with the Four Sons, and Robyn, with her mentors; it is what Yelin (1985) yearns for. All four understand that "speech is

not instituted in a homogeneous or abstract medium, but in a world where it is necessary to aid and to give" (Levinas 1969, 216) by facing the Other, thus establishing and acknowledging each other's individuality as well as commonalities. "Our being-in-the-world," Kearney (1984, 127) argues, "is revealed historically in and through language as a dialogical being-in-the-world-with-others." Kay's world, on the other hand, consists of separate individuals only who are unique a priori, and who have no way of establishing commonalities for they do not face each other and do not have conversations.

'Hap' and the eventfulness of understanding, the awareness of effective historical consciousness and of the tensions between strangeness and familiarity, run the risk of refusing the claim of moral force. They can be reduced "to cognitive cogency, to acts of consciousness or will" (Cohen 1986, 5), and like Gadamer's (1985, 76) cooked goose metaphor, they can be looked away and ignored. Hermeneutic pedagogy cannot look or hear away.

Hermeneutic pedagogy is a hermeneutic endeavour for it insists that we listen to "what has already been spoken, in other times and places, before we can in turn speak for ourselves in the here and now" (Kearney 1984, 128). In other words, it sees meaning as "irreducible to the immediacy of the speaking subjects, coexisting in a homogeneous time or space" (128), as not being miraculously created out of ourselves, but rather, as inherited from others before us.

Hermeneutic pedagogy is a pedagogic endeavour for it embraces the fact of natality, each and every individual, with responsibility. Hermeneutic pedagogy faces the Other and responds to his/her command. It looks at and listens to the face, thus, invoking language, dialogue, conversation, not just involvement but commitment, a promise. Hermeneutic pedagogy is an ethical endeavour, which is "a trembling movement of the other person" (Cohen 1986, 4) who depends on me and moves me to discourse.

Chapter IX

Trans-Position

Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes
 From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i' the flint
 Shows not till it be struck; our gentle flame
 Provokes itself and like the current flies
 Each bound it chafes.

Timon of Athens I:i

In discussing the speculative structure of language, Gadamer (1989, 470) states that "everything that constitutes everyday speech can recur in the poetic word," and that poetry, like everyday speech, shows people in conversation. As such, the poetic statement is speculative, "in that the verbal event of the poetic word expresses its own relationship to being" (Gadamer 1989, 470). It does not reflect, signify, or describe being, rather, it "opens up a world . . . for us" (470). Exploring poetry as conversation, as coming to an understanding, can cast light on the hermeneutic phenomenon of the tension between illumination and concealment, otherness and familiarity, in which we, pedagogues too, are situated, and from the midst of which we speak. This tension demands that the father tell the Four Sons the story of the Exodus in order "to begin to recover a deep sense of the familial" (Jardine 1990b, 116), and to discover and create commonalities in, and through "joke, nuance, idiom and inflection" (Yelin 1985, 173).

The father's aim is not to bring about increasing illumination and knowledge in the spirit of the Enlightenment's notion of progress and rationality. Nor is it to transmit tradition as something to be accepted and followed blindly, or to persistently pose ultimate questions. Rather, the father hopes to elicit responsibility and understanding via dialogue and critical evaluation, which are embedded in and framed by past and present conditions, and via argumentation

"that seeks to warrant what is valid" (Bernstein 1983, 155) in a tradition to which we are appealing. Such conversation then becomes home, *ethos*, meaning custom, usage, dwelling, one's own place, rather than "baffling pantomimes," the plague of indecipherability, and the constant resort to subtitles, "coldly hungering for home" (Yelin 1985, 173). The father, the pedagogue, wants to instill the sense "of what is feasible, what is possible, what is correct, here and now" (Gadamer 1989, xxxviii), by mediating between sense and sense, one tongue and another, the Sons and tradition, and all that the tradition implies (Gadamer 1979, 147), that is, the tension between the familiar and the foreign.

In the light of Thomas Green's (1968) characterization of teaching, it becomes evident that poetry and teaching share the tension, that between illumination and concealment. Teaching, Green (1968, 50) says, is concerned with

the nurture of that state of being which we might
describe as the posture of the pilgrim, the capacity
within limits, to tolerate an increasing measure of
alienation, to be free to wander in the world

Namely, cultivating foreignness and the ability to regard what *is* as *terra incognita*, within limits (like Wiesel's (1990, 73) claim that "the experience of encountering a stranger . . . is important and creative, provided we know when to step back."), is deemed conducive to inquiry and conversation, to disclosure and understanding. Such a dynamic posture foregrounds the porousness of situations thus allowing, indeed, encouraging the interplay between the strange and the familiar, "which illuminates both the freedom and the boundaries of the self. Here ends the 'I;' here begins the you' " (Brink 1988, 23). In other words, 'I' evolves in relation to the Other whose existence "contains part of the story of our shared future," Smith (1988, 26) reiterates. Brink (1988, 200) elaborates on the indispensability and essential generativity embodied in the 'I'- Other relationship:

There is only one space which can be relied on
ultimately: this imagined space between you and me

The pilgrim's existence, the teacher's, and the poet's, like the puer's (Hillman 1979), is based on opportunities. The word *opportunity*, Hillman relates, derives most probably from *porta*, *portus*, which mean 'entrance,' 'passage through,' 'way,' 'means.' Portunus was one of the names of the Roman god Janus, who was the god of beginnings, of all doorways and gates, of departure and return, and of all means of communication. One of his functions was to open a channel for fountains. Under the name Portunus he was the god of harbours. Hence, opportunity is "what offers an opening, or what is in front of an opening and ready to go through" (Hillman, 1979, 152). This meaning of opportunity is associated with the Roman *porta fenestella*, "a special opening through which Fortune passed" (152), Fortune, the fickle empress of the world, which an earthy group of vagabonds consisting of de-frocked monks and minstrels addresses in what is known as *Carmina Burana*:

O Fortuna	O Fortune,
velut luna	variable
statu variabilis	as the moon,
semper crescis	always dost thou
aut decrescis;	wax and wane.

Furthermore, "cognate with *porta* and *portus* . . . is the Greek *poros* . . . *Poroi* are passages and connections in the body for its flowings (veins, ducts, etc.). 'Pores' are openings in our skin" (Hillman 1979, 152). What comes through the pores has roots outside them that cannot be easily severed. In other words, "opportunities are not plain, clean gifts; they trail dark and chaotic attachments to their unknown backgrounds, luring us further" (154), like the variable Fortune. A

multitude of possibilities/*opportunities* emerge from the pores, the mouth, and make demands on us as we yearn for the imagined space that can be relied on. The poet is capable of seeing and creating such spaces and eliciting truths and understanding. What Merleau-Ponty (1951, 95) says about truth might apply for poetry, namely, that it constitutes "that anticipation through which each spoken word or acquired truth opens a field of understanding" that contracts others into a new view, in other words, an opportunity, a 'hap.'

A philosopher and a poet characterize poetry in a strikingly similar way, which illustrates the openness and the power to reveal that poetic language, as Merleau-Ponty points out, holds. Aristotle (*On Poetics*, 9) tells us that

the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that
has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen

W.H. Auden (1966, 141-143) claims that

. . . poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making . . .
it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

Aristotle's and Auden's notion of poetry conveys the driving intention and claim behind Gadamer's concern with 'hermeneutics' in *Truth and Method* (1989). Gadamer's intent was not to produce a manual for guiding understanding nor did he wish "to elaborate a system of rules to describe, let alone direct, the methodical procedure of the human sciences." "My real concern," Gadamer (1989, xxviii) confesses, "was and is . . . not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing," in other words, 'hap,' the eventfulness of understanding and experience, what poetry, for example, makes

possible, "a kind of thing that might happen," "a way of happening, a mouth." Both Aristotle and Auden seem to regard poetry as non instrumental, as different from "all forms of motivated speech" (Gadamer 1986, 107), implying that poetry allows for porousness, for interstices that admit entry, exit, absorption, and passage, but that do not fully control these processes.

Poetry, like tradition, like play, does not merely transmit information nor does it constitute some form of communication of which we are recipients. "The poem does not stand before us as a thing that someone employs to tell us something," Gadamer (1986, 107) says. "It stands there equally independent of both reader and poet. Detached from all intending, the word is complete in itself." Gadamer seems to take an unsettling turn in supporting his claim regarding the nature of poetry, appearing to contradict previous claims he had made about it. On one hand, Gadamer points to the poem's detachment from all intention bearers and to its being complete in itself. At the same time, he points out (1986, 106) that as in genuine dialogue, poetry challenges and makes a claim on us, that it has something to say to us, thus binding us. Hence, in order for us to understand a poem and the truth claim that it makes,

there must be a readiness to allow something to be
said to us. It is only in this way that the word
becomes binding: . . . it binds one human being with
another

The apparent paradox is seemingly resolved when we realize that Gadamer does not separate poetry from language in general and other processes of linguistic communication, such as conversation or tradition. Indeed, he maintains that "poetry is language in a preeminent sense" (Gadamer 1986, 106). Nevertheless, I find Gadamer's notion of poetic conversation limited, particularly in its relation to pedagogy.

In *Truth and Method* (1989) Gadamer elaborates on language as experience of the world, of which poetry is an inextricable part. He emphasizes that "language has its true being only in dialogue, in *coming to an understanding*" (446, original emphasis). "Language is by nature the language of conversation; it fully realizes itself only in the process of coming to an understanding" (Gadamer 1989, 446). However, Gadamer cautions us against taking 'coming to an understanding' to be the purpose of language, a mere action, a purposeful activity, "a setting of signs through which I transmit my will to others" (446), "for language is not only an object in our hands, it is the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world" (Gadamer 1976, 29). Language is not a mere means in the process of coming to an understanding; in other words, 'coming to an understanding' is not an instrumental process. Rather, "it is a life process in which the community of life is lived out" (Gadamer 1989, 446).

Human language, Gadamer (1989) argues, is a special and unique life process since "in linguistic communication, 'world' is disclosed," or, as he says elsewhere, "whoever has language 'has' the world" (1989, 453). The world is the common ground that is recognized by and unites all who talk to one another. Our experience of the world, which is verbal/bound to language, reflects what is true for us. "Verbally constituted experience of the world expresses not what is present-at-hand, that which is calculated or measured, but what exists, what man recognizes as existent and significant" (Gadamer 1989, 456).

When Gadamer claims that poetry is language in a preeminent sense, he is, I believe, implying that it does not constitute a setting of signs, and that it is complete in itself in the sense that it is not a mere means or tool. Poetry, like Levinas' (1989) 'saying,' opens me to the Other. There is nothing beyond saying or the poem that constitutes the truth, no external standard against which it can be measured and to which it might correspond (Gadamer 1986, 139), be it the poet's intentions or some predetermined rules. The poem, in the claim it makes and the

dialogue it engages us in, in bearing witness to the other, is the truth, the testimony of the sayers responsibility for the other (Levinas 1989, 183), the sayers self-exposure to the other (Peperzak 1991, 61). "The poetic creation does not intend something, but rather is the existence of what it intends" (Gadamer 1986, 113). It does not express what is present-at-hand but what is already-at-hand, namely, in its linguisticity it is, as we are, historical, implicated, and contextual, hence, significant.

Gadamer (1989, 449-450) contends that poetry "often becomes a test of what is true, in that the poem awakens a secret life in words that had seemed to be used up and worn out, and tells us of ourselves." We seek the truth of poetry, in a similar way to that of tradition, which "consists in creating a 'hold upon nearness'" (Gadamer 1986, 113), what Levinas (1981, 139) calls 'proximity,' because we are finite and desire to make ourselves at home in the world (Gadamer 1986, 114). The poet's words allow this nearness or familiarity; they allow access "to a world in which certain special forms of human experience arise" (115), forms in the midst of which we are but which we hardly notice. "Because of their simplicity and familiarity," Wittgenstein (1968, 50, parag. 129) points out, "the aspect of things that are most important for us are hidden." "One is unable to notice something because it is always before one's eyes."

The poet, on the other hand, like the pilgrim, or the stranger, wanders and notices, enabling us to know in unique ways (Greene 1988, 131). Poets offer epiphanies; they "try to sharpen the sight, to nurture language carefully in the hope of calling upon it for an understanding of what is happening" (Coles 1989, 101). Poetry awakens us in that it begins with the overly familiar and transfigures it into something different. When we encounter the poet's account of an experience, our own world is somehow alienated, or defamiliarized. "Defamiliarized, it discloses aspects of experience ordinarily never seen. Critical awareness may be somehow enhanced as new possibilities open for reflection" (Greene 1988, 131). In other words, poetry -- "a mouth," evokes that which could be otherwise, "a kind of thing

that might happen." It constitutes an opportunity, a pressed and tense pore that allows an awareness of relations (Hillman 1979, 163) to grow, a pore that, occasionally, clouds the immigrant's skies, and that allows him/her the freedom not just to wander, to come and go, shop and travel, but also to learn the language of the land (Yelin 1985), and interpret or translate it, thus, tolerate its alienness, within limits (Green 1968, 50), that is, as long as it does not impede the immigrant's and the native's intertwined growth.

Chapter X

The Limitation of Gadamer's Hermeneutics for Pedagogy

Show me your visage, Let me hear your voice.

Song of Songs 2:14

A common metaphor for education is growth. The following four poems deal with growth, each in a unique, yet far from arbitrary way, for each "bears witness to our own being" (Gadamer 1986, 115), revealing a truth, thus, according to Gadamer, avoiding sounding false or empty. The poems exemplify our awakening as we encounter the provoked secret life of words. Heidegger (1971, 84) maintains that poetry owes its saying "to the manifold experiences with language, experiences which we have hardly noticed."

In view of Franta Bass' poem, "The Garden" (. . . *I never saw another butterfly* . . . , 1978, 50), it is ironic, and tragic, that Heidegger should characterize poetry so, in the light of his own grasp of and involvement with a 'path' that allowed blossoms to bloom and little boys to be no more.

A little garden,
Fragrant and full of roses.
The path is narrow
And a little boy walks along it.

A little boy,
Like that growing blossom.
When the blossom comes to bloom,
The little boy will be no more.

"When we read a poem," Gadamer (1986, 107) asserts, "it never occurs to us to ask who it is that wants to say something to us or why." Moreover, in his desire to break away from Romantic notions of understanding, such that glorify unique individual opinions, Gadamer (1989, 297) argues that "since we are now concerned not with individuality and what it thinks but with the truth of what is said, a text is not understood as a mere expression of life but is taken seriously in its claim to truth."

How can Gadamer's words be accepted in the light of the above poem, and of his own project of foregrounding dialogue and understanding?

How can we dare *not* ask who it is that wants to say something to us, or why?

How can we agree with the categorical separation of expression of life and individuality from their claim to truth?

If we agree that the poem expresses what is already-at-hand, namely, that it and its readers are implicated, we must be responsible enough, in the light of the poem's content and how it challenges us, and demand to know who it is that wants to say something to us and why. As Wild (1969, 18; emphasis added) adamantly claims,

In a living dialogue and even in a written monologue
of many volumes *it is more important to find out who*
is speaking and why, than merely to know what is
said

Does the concern with what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing entail not raising, or ignoring these questions? After all, or, perhaps, prior to all, we belong and are pulled together by what is over and above our wanting and doing, that is, by "bottom land" (Hillman 1979, 163). How then can we hope to have a dialogue and understand without such questions, without opening up the

contingencies of our life, digging up their roots, revealing their history, and uncovering their implications, through particularities?

The little boy in the garden, the Other, the Stranger, a particular individual, Franta Bass, is challenging and making demands on us, each and every one of us, thus binding us, through language, through his being no more, and our letting it happen, by being deaf and indifferent to his call, his distress.

P.S. "Frantisek Bass was born in Brno on September 4, 1930, deported to Terezín on December 2, 1942, and died in Oswiecim on October 28, 1944" (. . . *I never saw another butterfly* . . . , 1978, 79).

Is it a mere fluke of history, an unfortunate coincidence, or chance -- Fortune that waxes and wanes -- that sent Franta Bass, not me or you, to his premature and tragic death? No! Franta Bass was intentionally selected for extermination. Ignoring, refusing to hear that, hiding our face when Franta Bass does not hide his, renders our conduct unethical, for we are not there for him. "To be for the Other is to be good," Levinas (1969, 261) says. Being there for Franta Bass, assuming responsibility for him, means acknowledging his uniqueness, for "responsibility for the Other . . . is responsibility for the unique one" (Levinas 1987, 108), not just for an anonymous truth claim. "I am responsible," Reed (1986, 81) elaborates, "not because I cannot hide my face, but because the other person does not hide his." Indeed, Cain was cursed when he attempted to hide his face, denying his responsibility toward his brother (Genesis 4:9).

If we take language to be, as Gadamer does, the life process in which the community of life is lived out, don't we have a responsibility toward that community to keep it alive?

What is the point in writing poetry and recording experiences with language, experiences which we have hardly noticed, if the community of life, otherness, is disembodied and exterminated, if we 'hear' and 'look away'?

With whom will we then have a conversation, indeed, language?

When we read a poem, it never occurs to us to ask
who it is that wants to say something to us or why
(Gadamer 1986, 107).

Can dialogue and dialogical communities be fostered without taking the particularities of the individual partners in dialogue, and their circumstances, into account?

Can ethical principles emerge and be shared without the concreteness of a specific situation, "a given occasion" (Gadamer 1979, 137), and without the assumption of personal responsibility by each participant? Ethical know-how, Gadamer (1979, 138) claims, implies "a practical knowledge fashioned to the measure of the concrete tasks before" it. Is this possible without asking who it is that wants to say something to us or why? Can these questions *not* occur to us?

There is an inherent contradiction between what Gadamer says about hermeneutics, which he takes to be just and ethical, and the claims he makes regarding ethical know-how and decision. The function of an ethical decision, Gadamer (1979, 139) argues, "is to find what is just *within the bounds of a concrete situation*. In other words, the ethical decision for the just is there in order to "see" *all that the concrete situation demands* and to put the matter in some order" (emphasis added). Yet, at the same time he (Gadamer 1989, 297) points out:

Since we are now concerned not with individuality
and what it thinks but with the truth of what is said, a
text is not understood as a mere expression of life but
is taken seriously in its claim to truth

The problem lies in Gadamer's insistence on the separation between individuality, what it thinks, and how it constitutes an expression of life in its individuality, on one hand, and its claim to truth, on the other. He attributes prominence and gravity to the latter and 'mereness' or paltriness to the former. At the same time, he emphasizes the importance of the concrete situation in ethical conduct. "Ethical know-how . . . is the same knowledge which must respond to the *momentary contingencies of a factual situation*" (1979, 143; emphasis added). In other words, in his attempt to show the limitations of method for the Human Sciences, in translating truth into theory, Gadamer betrays the unique individuals among whom truth emanates. "Traduire c'est trahir."

If my understanding of Gadamer is correct, namely, that the individual and the truth of what he/she says are not interwoven, in other words, that the individual and what he/she thinks is not important, indeed, irrelevant for hermeneutics, then hermeneutics is not concerned with the just and the ethical, hence, it cannot claim to be pedagogic. However, I suspect that Gadamer's intent is far from 'killing' or ignoring the particular individual/author. He is, I believe, countering, albeit too strongly, perhaps even thoughtlessly, the traditional, Romantic notions of strict author-centered meaning of a text, whereby the meaning that the artist gives his/her work, sets the standard.

Barthes' (1989) reaction to that tradition, in a provocatively titled essay, "The Death of the Author," is even more extreme: "To give a text an Author," he asserts, "is to impose a limitation on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" (117). Barthes rejects the notion of the author-as-a-secret, or, ultimate meaning bearer, and calls for the liberation of texts, "and the world as text" from such theologian activity. Foucault (1984, 102-103) concurs: "Using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality. As a result, the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing."

Is Franta Bass' particular individuality, then, insignificant to understanding his poem and its repercussions? "Does this work equally well with all writers?" Walker (1990, 569) wonders, carefully demonstrating that it definitely doesn't.

I agree with Barthes' (1989, 116) claim that a text "is not a line of words, releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God)," and with Gadamer (1989, 193), who claims that "the artist who creates something is not the appointed interpreter of it . . . he has no automatic authority over the person . . . receiving his work." Accordingly, Walker (1990, 560) rightly argues for the need of "a new concept of authorship that does not naively assert that the writer is an originating genius, creating aesthetic objects outside of history." She promptly adds, however, that "the loss of the writer runs us the risk of losing many stories important to our history." She believes that the author, co-present with other agents and elements, has a significant place as a functional particularity.

Responding to Barthes (1989), who claims that writing is "the destruction of every voice," Walker (1990, 568) holds that writing is "*the proliferation of possibilities of hearing*" (original emphasis), one of which is hearing the author. Before reaching a resounding finale, Foucault (1984, 112) appears to be in agreement with Walker: "It would be just as wrong to equate the author with the real writer as to equate him with the fictitious speaker; the author function is carried out and operates in the scission itself, in this division and this distance. . . . All discourses endowed with the author function do possess this plurality of self," namely, the author's voice is one among many.

While Barthes, Foucault, and Gadamer, are countering the tendency to equate the multiple voices that emanate from writing solely with the author's and his/her (all three use the masculine pronoun consistently) intentions, thinking, psyche, and personal meaning, they nevertheless, Foucault and Barthes in particular, end up doing away with the author altogether. Foucault (1984, 117) says: "The relationship (or nonrelationship) with an author, and the different forms this relationship takes, constitute - in a quite visible manner - one of these

discursive properties." However, from 'one of several discursive properties,' the author, in a Barthesian manner (1989, 117), is seen as an agent limiting freedom, and like the Stranger (Wiesel 1990), he is feared. Parting company with Walker, Foucault (1984, 119-120) gradually eliminates the author, prophesying that

as our society changes . . . the author function will
disappear, [and] all discourses . . . would then
develop in the anonymity of a murmur [behind which]
we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of an
indifference: What difference does it make who is
speaking?

Barthes (1989, 118) acknowledges the multiplicity of writings that make up a text, and maintains that "there is one place where this multiplicity is focused, and the place is the reader, not . . . the author." The text's origin, then, cannot be personal, nor does its unity lie in its origin, rather, it lies in its destination, Barthes claims. "Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted." Assuming a prophetic stance, Barthes (1989, 118) expounds:

We know that to give writing its future, it is
necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the
reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author

In other words, the author's, and to some extent - the reader's particularity and personality are decapitated and eventually annihilated. Walker (1990, 569) agrees with Barthes and Foucault that full presence cannot be located anywhere,

"whether in the psyche, in history, in culture, or in the text." However, she forcefully rejects the impersonality and the elimination of the author:

Though there is no presence behind a text, there is an infinite number of presences, or traces, in a given text. One of these presences is the author, about whom we cannot know everything

In her article "Feminist Literary Criticism and the Author" (1990), Walker does not wish "to treat texts as the private property of their authors," but at the same time she is unwilling "to lose the sense of vital links between women that only a practice which preserves authors in some form can provide" (571), that is, though the text's meaning, or corpus, cannot be reduced to its author's body, personal life and circumstances, and though the text's meaning is, partly, over and above the particular author's wanting and doing, the particular author, none the less, matters. To erase the individual person (poet, fiction writer) as the author of his/her writing, "in favor of an abstract indeterminacy is an act of oppression," Walker (1990, 571) concludes.

The same can be said for classroom students and student-teachers. It does matter who says what. It does make a difference who is speaking. Robyn isn't any student, nor is Kay just any student-teacher. The Wicked Son possesses particularities that the Son Who Does Not Know How To Ask doesn't; Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry cannot and should not substitute for Shulamis Yelin's. Each one's particularity (albeit shared and multitextured) gives rise to particular words, questions, poems. Each is embedded in, marked by, and belongs in history and tradition, which is partly common and partly remote. The tradition and history that each embodies is inextricably intertwined with the personal. No clear dichotomy can be drawn between the individual and the truth of what he/she is saying, between *who* wants to say, and the *something* he/she wants to say.

Each individual's discourse, writing, poetry, and personal characteristics are significant for the educator and reader, for the translator and interpreter. As the writing, the subject matter, is opened up, affinity can be established between us, which constitutes experience (*Erfahrung*). It allows us to examine the truth claims the discourses make, which originate from a particular individual whose 'text' is as personal as it is multiple and "drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation" (Barthes 1989, 118). The author/student-teacher cannot, pedagogically, assume the role of the dead man, as Foucault (1984, 103) would have him/her do, because he/she is irreplaceable. The death of the individual brings about the death of tradition.

In their demand to be read, to lead and be led, to see and hear and be heard and seen, authors and student-teachers, their bodies and texts, are rendered vulnerable, helpless. They depend on us, readers and teachers, for their existence, for their interpretability. They implore us, via inscriptions and eyes, gestures and orifices, to let the blossom bloom, to replace total terror by trust, to stop the relentless plague of constant translation from sense to sense, from one tongue to another, but rather, to engage in joke, nuance, idiom and inflection, that is, to allow for opportunities. The novices demand that we not accept tradition uncritically, but that we confront it, via and together with their texts, as "a critical challenge of this tradition. . . . Every experience is such a confrontation" (Gadamer 1979, 108). Without the individual novice teacher, the particular new text, indeed, without the fact of natality, this confrontation would not be possible, for "the new would be nothing new if it did not have to assert itself anew against something" (109). Individuality is an inherent part of the new, as is the truth it says.

In the light of the above supplementation, if Gadamer's understanding of hermeneutics and poetry is significant for pedagogy, for how we live our lives with children, as I think it is, the individual poem then, should determine what questions should occur to us and need be asked. To put it more bluntly, by

ignoring who wants to say something to us and why, Gadamer risks rendering his hermeneutic project into self-reflexive, self-sufficient play, indeed, an illusion, that needs nothing but itself in order to be. Provided that the topic is play, tradition, art, texts, and so on, one easily "makes illusions and is prepared to take the situation as not really so bad, *as long as it is not one's own goose that is being cooked*" (Gadamer 1985, 76; emphasis added). In other words, when we deal with generalities and abstractions, illusions may suffice. But what about the individual student, poet, son, who is facing us, looking us in the eye, calling out to us, personally, rendering each of us irreplaceable?

Gadamer is silent here, his notion of conversation disembodied, and inattentive to the particular gaze that seeks trust, that seeks to be when the blossom blooms, "your hand firmly held" (Rilke 1981, 73), which is the essence of a pedagogic relationship. As pedagogues, we cannot wait for 'hap' and then ruminate on what we learned from it in the same way that texts are read and interpreted. Our pedagogic understanding must, inevitably, be associated with action, with remaining open "to the meaning of the other person," that is, with questioning, with not sticking blindly "to our own fore-meaning about the thing if we want to understand the meaning of another" (Gadamer 1989, 268).

Gadamer focuses on "foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices" (269) in the process of understanding; however, he is mostly concerned with understanding text, not a flesh and blood person who depends on you and for whom you must assume responsibility. Regarding text, Gadamer says (1989, 269; emphasis added):

A person trying to understand *a text* is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the *text's* alterity

Gadamer's notion of understanding text must be supplemented with what constitutes pedagogic understanding. The latter insists that a teacher, for example, be prepared to 'hear' and 'see' that a student is telling him something. However, the teacher, parent, spiritual leader, and so on, may be deeply entrenched in their prejudgments, "ignoring as consistently and stubbornly as possible" (Gadamer 1989, 269) the truth claim emanating from the Other, until it's too late and the goose is cooked. But, by attending to the individual, and by being sensitive to the Other's alterity and to his/her truth claim, then can particularity, which exposes the irreplaceability of the Other, of Me, and our mutual responsibility, be recovered in the midst of tradition, of being. As the Haggadah (1987, 32; emphasis added) instructs us,

In every generation one must look upon himself
as if he *personally* had come out from Egypt

In retelling the story, in engagement and interpretation, a personal relationship with others is made possible. It is through interpretation that understanding is provoked, that the act of understanding is realized, "not just for the one for whom one is interpreting but also for the interpreter himself (Gadamer 1989, 397). The same questions are repeated year after year; 'repetition,' however, "does not mean referring back to the original source where something is said or written. The understanding of something written is not a repetition of something past but the sharing of a present meaning" (392).

In the midst of "over and above our wanting and doing," the Other challenges us, "calls out to us" (Gadamer 1979, 157), thus provoking understanding and responsibility. Understanding, however, "is not a psychic transposition. The horizon of understanding cannot be limited either by what the writer originally had in mind or by the horizon of the person to whom the text was originally addressed" (Gadamer 1989, 395). At the same time, the particularities

of the specific text, poem, student-teacher, cannot be ignored, for it is these very specifics that create the bond, through language and re-membering.

"It is not this document [the Haggadah, the poem, the student-teacher's words], as a piece of the past, that is the bearer of tradition but the continuity of memory" (Gadamer 1989, 390). Moreover, "a text is not to be understood as an expression of life but with respect to what it says" (392). In other words, the task of hermeneutic pedagogy "is not to understand the subjective intentions, plans, and experiences" (Gadamer 1976, 103) of the participants involved. It is to understand through them, yet, without obliterating their individuality, something about pedagogy, children, student-teachers, and so on. The significance of classroom events, student-teacher conversations, and so on, "their connection and their involvements . . . leave the *mens auctoris* behind them" (Gadamer 1976, 103), but they should not ignore it; they should not leave the *oculi auctoris* nor the *os auctoris* behind. No one else but this particular individual, his/her eyes and mouth, could have provided us with an opportunity, a provocation for understanding and affinity.

"We cannot understand without wanting to understand, that is, without wanting to let something be said," Gadamer (1976, 101) argues. Attending to truth claims alone, severing them from their pore, their source, from the attached strings, and from the eyes that call upon me and plead, helps eviscerate, indeed, deny desire (Jardine 1992, 118). The desire to let something be said, the anticipation of meaning, or, what Gadamer (1976, 101) would like to call "surprise at the meaning of what is said," is invoked by the particular individual addressing me, personally, from which I cannot turn away, and which cannot erupt in any other way. The encounter with that particular student-teacher or poem "expresses something in such a way that what is said is like a discovery, a disclosure of something previously concealed. . . . Everything familiar is eclipsed" (Gadamer 1976, 101). The familiar can be eclipsed by the individual whose words,

challenges, and demands gather into themselves and express "the symbolic character that, hermeneutically regarded, belongs to all beings" (104).

In that sense, the individual is irreplaceable and cannot assume the role of a dead man. Without the authentic encounter with the individual -- the strange, the Other -- self-encounter, hence, understanding and self-understanding are impossible. Similarly to the encounter with a particular work of art, the intimacy with which the individual student-teacher's words touch us is (Gadamer 1976, 104)

at the same time, in enigmatic fashion, a shattering
and a demolition of the familiar. It is not only the
"This art thou!" disclosed in a joyous and frightening
shock; it also says to us; "Thou must alter thy life!"

Chapter XI

Pedagogy of Otherness

Oh take this longing from my tongue
and all the useless things these hands have done
Let me see your beauty broken down . . .

Leonard Cohen, "Take This Longing"

Franta Bass had language, hence, according to Gadamer, he had the world; however, he barely made it to 14! In this particular case, the young poet's personal somatic experience is of great significance, especially to those among us, like Gadamer (1985) himself, for example, who easily make illusions and ask no questions "as long as it is not one's own goose that is being cooked" (76), a lesson, Gadamer confesses, one never learns well enough.

Can asking the questions that never occur to us, as Gadamer maintains, help us learn? Furthermore, what are the underlying assumptions and the ramifications of not asking "who it is that wants to say something to us or why" (Gadamer 1986, 107)? And why does Wild (1969) insist that under any circumstances "it is more important to find out who is speaking and why" (18)? Following Levinas, Lingis (1986) suggests that asking these questions entails facing the other and taking a stand; it involves acknowledging otherness and allowing it to appeal to us, contest us. In other words, it means assuming responsibility for the other's words and fate. This is possible when the other's face is not anonymous, which constitutes an ethical situation, whereby the unique other faces me:

In turning to face me, the other signals me; his face,
his expression, his word is not indicative, informative
but also vocative and imperative. He faces me with
his eyes, unmasked, exposed, and turns the primary

nakedness of the eyes to me; he faces me with a gesture of his hand, taking nothing, empty-handed; he faces me with a word, which is not an instrument, an arm, which is the way to come disarmed and disarming. To recognize his move in facing is to recognize an appeal addressed to me, which calls upon my resources and first calls upon me, calls upon me to stand forth as I. And he appeals imperatively (Lingis 1986, 227)

Not being concerned with individuality (Gadamer 1989, 297), impersonalising the poet, does not genuinely expose me to the other, to his/her pain, appeal, destitution, and demand. Taking seriously only the claim to truth of what is said means avoiding, indeed, betraying the other's face, the face that is, Levinas says, "the frailty of the one who needs you, who is counting on you" (Wright, Hughes, and Ainley 1988, 171). Franta Bass does not and cannot count on us to interpret his poem in a particular way; however he does and should count on us to interpret and try to understand, to learn, that his and a million other children's personal doom is unethical, and that we are responsible, to paraphrase Reed (1986, 81), not because we cannot hide our faces, but because Franta Bass does not hide his. Hence, in response to Foucault (1984): **It does make a difference who is speaking.** Otherwise, the fact of natality becomes the fact of our indifferent mortality.

The individual student-teacher is intrinsic to the revitalization of pedagogy through his/her challenging it; the particular son that confronts tradition is essential to its comprehensibility and our belonging to it, and the specific poet is irreplaceable in his/her opening up certain ideas and engaging us. Their particularities alone do not authorize meaning, yet, they cannot assume an absent role, for their words and actions arise also from these particularities. Moreover,

by ignoring the student-teacher's, the son's, and the poet's uniqueness, their responsibility for their words and actions, indeed, for the Other, is dispelled. Without this responsibility, each of them, and those interacting with them (the pupil, the parent, the reader), is reduced to a concept and does not constitute a 'self,' for it is the Other that awakens my identity, Levinas (1989, 207) holds:

Through man's relation with the Other and in his
responsibility towards him, man becomes his 'self'
(moi), designated without any possibility of escape,
chosen, unique, not interchangeable

Ignoring my students' uniqueness means that I can shift my responsibility for them upon anyone else, while acknowledging their uniqueness invokes mine, "my finding myself without a double. And this predicament is founded on the relationship with alterity; it is being answerable without limits" (Lingis 1981, xxx). Franta Bass' poem puts me, my 'self,' in question, and obliges me to respond to it, to the Other. "The obligation to respond amounts to a responsibility that cannot be evaded" (Bernasconi & Critchley 1991, xi); it is an ethical, indeed, a pedagogic obligation, and responsibility, that arises "from the uniqueness of the moral situation itself" (Ciaramelli 1991, 85), and which "stop[s] the anonymous and senseless rumbling of being" (Levinas 1985, 52).

Can we, teachers, who are entrusted with the growth and well-being of children, ignore, or content ourselves with no particularities of individuals, with their disembodiment, and thus perpetuate "the anonymous and senseless rumbling of being?"

What is the distance between disembodied understanding (a contradiction in terms?), dehumanization, and annihilation?

In other words, can there be a future without the Other, without the uniqueness of each child, student, poet, the exposure to whom is "being exposed to

being wounded and outraged" (Lingis 1981, xviii), which evokes my responsibility for the unique Other?

The hermeneutic experience is unique in that it foregrounds the linguisticity of all experience, which binds us and to which we belong. It allows tradition to come down "to those now living" (Gadamer 1989, 463). However, tradition and language address us from particularities, not via abstractions. "The work of language cannot be confined to the theoretical, because life is not so confined" (Smith 1986, 63). By ignoring particularities, Gadamer is perpetrating losing sight of "the authentic conditions of human *praxis*" (Gadamer 1985, 184). Paradoxically, however, he is concerned with the guiding concepts of humanism: judgment, taste, *sensus communis*, and *Bildung*, concepts that are exemplified and upheld by particular people and actions. Gadamer is also concerned with the hermeneutical event, which, he claims, "consists in the coming into language of what has been said in the tradition: an event that is at once appropriation and interpretation" (Gadamer 1989, 463). As we interpret and appropriate what addresses us in tradition, we feel that we belong to it.

"Everyone who is situated in a tradition *must* listen to what reaches him from it. The truth of tradition is like the present that lies immediately open to the senses" (Gadamer 1989, 463; emphasis added). With Gadamer's emphasis on truth, not on particularities and on responsibility for the Other, a question that arises is how one becomes aware of one's situatedness in a tradition. As Greene (1988, 123) points out, that which is "so much part of the accustomed and the everyday" is obscured by the familiar and escapes notice entirely, so much so that questioning this familiarity, which is constituted by unquestioned assumptions, appears unnecessary (Jardine 1982, 74-75).

Poetry can pierce or disrupt this taken-for-grantedness, allowing us "to begin to recover a deep sense of the familial" (Jardine 1990b, 116). The poet, Ricoeur (1970, 16) says, "shows us the birth of the word, in its hidden form, in the enigmas of the cosmos and of the psyche." A poem, in its particularity, fulfills

the hermeneutic task by intending the whole, by being read into the ungiven totality of being, namely, its particularities are of significance. The poem may be a participant in the hermeneutic task of finding a common language (Gadamer 1985, 180); however, a common language can be found if the participants engage in conversation, if they desire to play, and reach out to surrounding life (Berman 1989, 102), if they are committed to responding to the Other.

"Everyone who is situated in a tradition must listen . . ." Of course, we must listen, but like Gadamer (1985, 76) and the cooked goose allusion, we might refuse to listen, and act as if we are severed from others, as if we do not belong; we might feel no affinity with tradition, and that nothing reaches us from it for it lacks individuality, distinction, and recognizability, indeed, name and face. When hearing is deemed superior, and when we refrain from asking who it is that wants to say something to us and why, as Gadamer urges us to do, the outcome is covering, rather than recovering "a deep sense of the familial," closing, not disclosing ties with others and belonging to tradition.

Gadamer's adherence to the etymological unpacking of the German word for 'belonging' -- Zugehörigkeit -- explains how his understanding of language and poetry can be construed as leading to disembodied inter-human relations:

If we are trying to define the idea of belonging
(Zugehörigkeit) as accurately as possible, we must
take account of the particular dialectic implied in
hearing (hören). It is not just that he who hears is
also addressed, but also that he who is addressed must
hear whether he wants to or not (1989, 462)

Why *must* the addressed person hear?

Can he/she not refuse to hear, in the same way that Gadamer did when he was sent to Kiel, while somebody else's goose was being cooked?

Can one indeed hear without being addressed?

Gadamer elaborates on the difference between seeing and hearing, stressing the superiority of the latter, explaining that you can look away but not "hear away," not substantiating this categoric claim satisfactorily. "This difference between seeing and hearing is important for us because the primacy of hearing is the basis of the hermeneutical phenomenon," Gadamer contends (1989, 462), invoking Aristotle for support of this claim.

In *On Sense and the Sensible* (437a, 5-15), Aristotle argues that "for developing intelligence, and in its indirect consequences, hearing takes the precedence [over seeing]." Pedagogically, I find making the meticulous distinction between the senses, and the preference for one over the other, conducive to insensibility and inattention, to impersonalization and disembodiment. It is, hence, unacceptable.

Do hermeneutics and pedagogy concentrate only on what Aristotle calls 'intelligence,' and the particular sense that, supposedly, contributes most to its growth? The answer must be negative. However, Aristotle makes an earlier claim (437a, 2) that foregrounds all senses equally. The senses "bring in tidings of many distinctive qualities of things, from which the knowledge of truth, speculative and practical, is generated in the soul." In *Metaphysics* (I, 980a, 21-26) Aristotle takes another tack:

All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer seeing (one might say) to anything else. The reason is that this,

most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to
light many differences between things

Gadamer (1989, 462) might interrupt here and argue that Aristotle's stance is non-hermeneutic, as "there is nothing that is not available to hearing through the medium of language," and that "hearing is an avenue to the whole because it is able to listen to the logos."

No, Herr Gadamer. Isolating hearing and the logos has not prevented somebody else's goose, the little boy in the garden, entire geneses, from being cooked. Those around not only looked away, they also 'heard away.' Teachers must listen to and hear the logos, as well as see the face, notice, and discern. Indeed, without seeing, hearing may be impossible. Levinas (1969, 299) explains why:

The Being of the existent is a *Logos* that is the word of no one. To begin with the face as a source from which all meaning appears, the face in its absolute nudity, in its destitution, as a head that does not find a place to lay itself, is to affirm that being is enacted in the relation between men

The logos, alone, is anonymous, and can lead to "hearing away." Furthermore, hearing, alone, does not constitute language, as Levinas' understanding of the face-to-face encounter, that produces language, illustrates. You, on the other hand, claim that "the language in which hearing shares is not only universal in the sense that everything can be expressed in it," but that "the significance of the hermeneutical experience is rather that, in contrast to all other experience of the world, language opens up a completely new dimension, the profound dimension from which tradition comes down to those now living."

Moreover, you maintain that "this has always been the true essence of hearing, even before the invention of writing: that the hearer can listen to the legends, the myths, and the truth of the ancients. In comparison, the written, literary transmission of tradition, as we know it, is nothing new; it only changes the form and makes the task of real hearing more difficult" (Gadamer 1989, 462-463).

What is puzzling is that while you foreground hearing and truth claims over individuality, you (1989, 38), at the same time, present a convincing state of "the fecundity of the individual case" ("like law, morality is constantly developed through the fecundity of the individual case"), and, as Bernstein (1983, 219) points out, you see that "the essential feature of the type of reasoning appropriate to *praxis* is the ability to do justice to particular situations in their particularity." As for real hearing being difficult -- seeing or imagining human faces as they say and tell may facilitate hearing and listening; it may bring home to us that we belong together, hence, compel us to engage in dialogue and debate, to listen, and to neither hear nor look away.

The etymology of 'belong' may illustrate my claim that assigning primacy to hearing over seeing, and equating language with hearing is limited and irresponsible, indeed, treacherous. That it so, I believe, because such an approach detaches the voice from the face, rendering the former distant and disconnected, thus, possibly, having no conviction, hence, no hold, on me. In other words, a voice alone may not address, or challenge me, and not elicit belonging.

If we are trying to characterize the idea of 'belonging,' we must take account of the particular dialectic implied in *longing*. Longing means feeling a strong desire or craving. It is associated with notions such as desire, yearning, fantasy, eagerness, lust, passion, love, attraction, temptation, seduction, hope, care, and something missing, lacking. When I belong, the strong need expressed in 'longing' is encountered. That need is not auditory only; it is visual/specular as well. However, when there is no longing, when "the art of longing's over and it's never coming back," Leonard Cohen (1977) intones, the result may be the Death

of a Ladies' Man. The English connotations of 'belonging' resemble Gadamer's (1986, 115) understanding of the word of the poet, which

stands over against this process [of *Einhausung*, or
"making ourselves at home"] like a mirror held up to
it. But what appears in the mirror is not the world,
nor this or that thing in the world, but rather this
nearness or familiarity itself in which we stand for a
while. This standing and this nearness find
permanence . . . in the poem. This is . . . a
straightforward description of the fact that language
gives all of us our access to a world in which certain
special forms of human experience arise: . . . the
poetic word that by being there bears witness to our
own being

Belonging has to do not just with hearing, but also with familiarity and nearness, with standing and experience, with allowing the Other in, thus binding the writer and the reader. Listening might come about if we understand -- see -- that the Other, the little boy in the garden, isn't, but could be, me, and if each one of us feels irreplaceable in our responsibility for the Other, that we are bound and *belong* together. "There is no Self without Other" (Berman 1989, 29), namely, our fates are intertwined. Listening can be made possible when we understand -- see -- that "the Other is a source of awe or excitement, not of fear; and it makes a deep sense of confidence in the body possible - an ontological confidence, one that is not going to develop into a need to 'purify' the world by destroying it" (Berman 1989, 102).

The translator Michael Hamburger's biographical notes regarding the poet Paul Celan (1959-1963) reveal the significance of paying attention to who it is that

wants to say something to us and why. The particularities of Celan's life, the existential extremity "of a poet marked for life by the loss of his parents and his community," and his "love-hate of the German language [which] places much of his later poetry at the extreme limits of the sayable, and so of the translatable," enable a flesh and blood understanding of Celan's poetry. Such corporeal understanding may elicit *insight* and assuming of responsibility for the Other, for the "Flower - a blind man's word," which will not let logos alone embrace and characterize it. If we were just to listen to the logos, our understanding would be limited. We would not be able to peek-not-peek and anticipate in terror the little boy's lifeless body lying in the open ground, where the hammers have swung. If we didn't see, we, too, would be accomplices to blindness, blindness to flower, to petals, to growth, in other words, we would be unquestioning, having no opening, creating no opportunity for light or passage. Logos alone limits the porousness of what is already-at-hand.

Blume

Der Stein.
Der Stein in der Luft, dem ich folgte.
Dein Aug, so blind wie der Stein.

Wir waren
Hände,
wir schpften die Finsternis leer, wir
fanden
das Wort, das den Sommer heraufkam:
Blume.

Blume - ein Blindenwort.
Dein Aug und mein Aug:
sie sorgen
für Wasser.

Flower

The Stone.
The stone in the air, which I followed.
Your eye, as blind as the stone.

We were
hands,
we baled the darkness empty, we found
the word that ascended summer:
flower.

Flower - a blind man's word.
Your eye and mine:
they see
to water.

Wachstum.
Herzwand um Herzwand
blättert hinzu.

Growth.
Heart wall upon heart wall
adds petals to it.

Ein Wort noch, wie dies, und die
Hämmer
schwingen im Freien.

One more word like this, and the
hammers
will swing over open ground.

The Salvadorean poet, Claudia Lars (1985, 40), paints an ironic and horrifying picture of what lies beyond our wanting and doing, and of the fertile corporeality of death, sending an ambiguous message of hope and warning that defies physical and verbal power. Perhaps the *logos* that is common to all (Gadamer 1981b, 87) is not conducive to "conducting oneself and acting in solidarity," or, is insufficient in creating solidarity which, Gadamer (1981b, 87) claims, "is the decisive condition and basis of all social reason." Perhaps "people behave as if each had a private reason" because the *logos* is not common to all, and is remote and disembodied. As such, it does not let the Other in, it does not assume responsibility for the Other. Under such conditions, are conversation and growth possible? Claudia Lars' poem implies that they are not, yet, that they are, that they are indispensable, perhaps even inevitable. Conversation, however, can be vicious, and growth -- abnormal or malignant:

Papa Justo, the Indian
lay sown among bullets and curses.
I believe that from his bones
a new corn is sprouting.

Growth in the fourth poem is still and subtle, yet, glistening. Wallace Stevens (1959, 94-95) calls his poem "Study of Two Pears" a minor pedagogic work:

I

Opusculum paedagogum.
 The pears are not viols,
 Nudes or bottles.
 They resemble nothing else.

II

They are yellow forms
 Composed of curves
 Bulging toward the base.
 They are touched red.

III

They are not flat surfaces
 Having curved outlines.
 They are round
 Tapering toward the top.

IV

In the way they are modelled
 There are bits of blue.
 A hard dry leaf hangs
 From the stem.

V

The yellow glistens.
 It glistens with various yellows,
 Citrons, oranges and greens
 Flowering over the skin.

VI

The shadows of the pears
 Are blobs on the green cloth.
 The pears are not seen
 As the observer wills.

Hearing alone will not allow the curvaceous and bulging pears,
 multitextured and glistening with different colours, to address us. Like the poet,
 who attentively observes the pears, gropes for and caresses them, devouring them,

almost, with his eyes, palette, and pen, we must use all our senses to imagine the pears, for the senses, as Aristotle tells us (*On Sense and the Sensible*, 437a, 2),

bring in tidings of many distinctive qualities of
things, from which the knowledge of truth, speculative
and practical, is generated in the soul

It would be irresponsible to do otherwise, for it is not strictly up to us to decide what pears, or children, are like, exactly. They burst with vitality and have multiple affiliations and characteristics that together, in ongoing encounters with the Other -- the poet, the reader, the teacher, allow belonging to emerge, 'belonging' meaning desiring, looking and hearing, hoping, seeing and (g)listening. What the pears, and children are, and what they are not, what they resemble and do not, forms a growing tapestry of familial and interconnected associations that show and tell us to pay attention, and not be blind to the delicate balance that constitutes life; it tells us that seeing is not willing, and that in the midst of what is over and above our willing, we are responsible for the Other, for the particular student.

It is not incidental that Stevens studies *two* pears, that the Haggadah introduces *four* sons, and that Robyn feels affiliated with *five* co-present philosophies. The uniqueness of each "carries the secret of the text," in other words, each one is "indispensable, [and] is necessary to produce all the dimensions of meaning; the multiplicity of meanings is due to the multiplicity of people" (Levinas 1989, 195). The Yeti, on the other hand, is single; Kay regards each child as unique, and wants to look at each individual child "because everyone is different."

Lisa, a student-teacher who recently received her teaching certificate, had a similar approach to Kay's until well into her second practicum. Throughout the two practica, Lisa (11.5.92) explains,

I thought it was all up to *me*. Whatever happened in the classroom was because of *me*. Consequently, control and management, which to me meant getting through the lesson, were most important. I was afraid to use the board, turn my back to the students, for fear of losing them

Lisa's fear and anxiety, and the sheer impracticality of this situation, induced gradual change in her approach to teaching. "The focus changed from *me* to the kids." From a scared and lonely 'expert,' that Lisa felt she had to be, and which she attempted to maintain via a variety of management techniques, the focus shifted to the subject matter, a process Lisa calls "the growing of understanding." As soon as the subject matter, that is, the world, facing the world, rather than Lisa herself and her students' faces and conduct, became the focus of attention, the students' and the student-teacher's particularities were allowed to come into play. They mattered. The subject matter engaged and challenged the participants and evoked commonalities, differences, and changing allegiances. From within tradition and language, each player, the Other, was allowed in.

As the focus of Lisa's teaching shifted, so did her sense of isolation decrease. Lisa became aware of the possibility of 'hap,' of things not being just up to *her* wanting and doing. Conversations with other student-teachers, with the cooperating teacher and practicum supervisor, and reflections on University courses and assignments, especially on the role of theory in teaching,

It doesn't make sense without kids, you have to see it working, brought to life; it makes more sense to do theory now, during the practicum

Lisa claims, helped her loosen up and realize that she alone was not the centre of her teaching, indeed, that teaching could not take place if she were the centre.

Lisa became aware, to paraphrase Stevens, that students/lessons/classroom events are not seen as the student-teacher wills. Like Stevens, Robyn, and the Midrash that bore Four Sons, Lisa has learned to assume the posture of a pilgrim, "the capacity within limits, to tolerate an increasing measure of alienation, to be free to wander in the world" (Green 1968, 50), which leads to the understanding that things might happen, that opportunities arise, and that we should be attentive, rather than in the impossible state of total control. Lisa has, thus, recovered 'a deep sense of the familial.'

Chapter XII

After Words

Three Daughters

When with luck, health, vitality
We give our first daughter's hand
Then I'll dance hup, hup, hup!
One less burden on my shoulders!

Play, musicians!
Play, with vigor!
We've given our first daughter's hand in marriage
We still have two daughters left,
Let us get on to that!

Play, musicians!
Pick up your instruments!
Let everyone rejoice with us!
Only God understands our joy
And, of course, he who has daughters too.

When at last I see my second girl
In her white wedding dress
I will drink and be merry
One more care off my chest!

Play, musicians!
Play, with feeling!
We're marrying our second daughter with joy!
There's still the youngest one to go
Let us get to that!

Play musicians!
For the in-laws!
Let even beggars celebrate today!
A child married off, dear God
And what's more, it was a girl!

When I hear music for my last one
I'll feel sad and say
"My last daughter has also gone"
What can I hold onto now?

So play, musicians!
Kiss the bride!
All our three daughters are taken!
It wasn't easy with all three
It'll be even harder without them . . .

Play musicians!
Bring tears to our eyes!
The last little bed will sit empty . . .
The whole room, their clothing closet!
Oh, what emptiness, what fear.

Gebirtig, M. (1985)

The difference between marrying off the youngest daughter, the last child, and wrapping up a dissertation, is that in the latter case, the clothing closet is not empty. The bed, however, is, and there is much fear, fear of provoking misunderstandings. The words of the fox who wants to be tamed by the little prince ("One only understands the things that one tames," he tells the little prince) ring loudly (Saint-Exupry 1945/1974, 67):

Words are the source of misunderstandings

Like children leaving their parents' home, we have little say or choice in the matter. We cannot but let our children go. We cannot but engage in words. Both acts are over and above our wanting and doing; yet, if the foregone words in previous sections have any truth in them, it is our letting the children go, and our discourse, that allow the continuation and regeneration of what has been and is. Misunderstandings, then, like the betrayal that faithfully accompanies translation, are inevitable. In conversations following a dissertation, we can further address, bear, challenge, defend, explain, and so on. Fear lingers. Fear of loneliness, of unkept promises and missed opportunities, of the light fading away, of terror, and "crazy mourning," "such a constant worry, such weight. . . . Oh childhood . . . going where? Where?" (Rilke 1981, 73-75).

Marrying your last daughter/dissertation off is indeed one less burden on one's shoulders, one more care off one's chest, but "what can I hold onto now?" Rilke, following Hannah Arendt, does not abandon us: "Your hand firmly held," he assures us, but not too firmly. The child needs the adult's protection from the world, while the world needs to be protected from the child's "rushing blindly around in tag, half-crazed." The child's, the student-teacher's, the foreigner's hand, then, is held by beggars and princes, by "men and women, there's a man, one more woman; . . . and here a house and now and then a dog." It is held by one's birth and heritage, and by what surrounds us. Communities and multiple

affiliations are thus created and recreated, consisting of many individuals up to each and every one of whom it is to hold hands, to face, and listen. In assuming responsibility, response is made possible, response that might, at times, involve misunderstandings. Yet, the Other is there to hold one hand or the other, and engage with the pupil, the novice, in the world, but, as Tevye cries out, sometimes "there is no other hand." The Other is there to interpret and translate, to kindle opportunities and promises, to dance hup, hup, hup! This is what maintains our luck, health, and vitality, indeed, pedagogy.

So,

Play, musicians!

Play, with vigor!

Play, musicians!

Pick up your instruments!

Play musicians!

Play with feeling!

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