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**The role of the transformative teacher: An interpretive inquiry
into the possibilities of personal awareness and praxis in
authentic educational reform**

Smith, Richard Wayne, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1990

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THE ROLE OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER: AN
INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY INTO THE POSSIBILITIES
OF PERSONAL AWARENESS AND PRAXIS IN
AUTHENTIC EDUCATIONAL REFORM

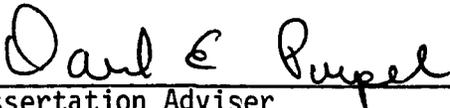
by

Richard W. Smith

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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1990

Approved by


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APPROVAL PAGE

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SMITH, RICHARD W., Ed.D. The Role of the Transformative Teacher: An Interpretive Inquiry Into the Possibilities of Personal Awareness and Praxis in Authentic Educational Reform. (1990)
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This investigation focuses upon the role of the teacher as an agent of change in public education by exploring different means through which the teacher might become both more aware and more responsible for his professional experience. By utilizing the methodology of personal inquiry, the study provides a framework and a theoretical grounding for greater agency in both the personal and professional domains (Pinar, 1974) by searching for a better understanding of self and world.

Chapter two functions as a direct example of currere (Pinar, 1976), an autobiographical investigation of the author's personal and intellectual growth as a public school teacher. This research notes three phases in the author's life which correspond to his developing vision and understanding of not only what it means to be a teacher, but also what it means to be a person-in-the-world who has the power to transform other lives to be more nearly what they might be.

Chapter three explicates those writers whose works speak to the issues of humane education and professional growth for the author. The diversity of these writers focuses attention upon the hermeneutic of the interior teacher, the private, existential being, and the educator in the public domain as he relates to his students and the larger world.

Chapter four serves as an aesthetic exploration through utilization of narrative as the mode of inquiry. By using a short story

about a teacher who deals with issues in public education, the study develops a dialogue about the nature of schooling and examines the power of fictive expression for understanding one's professional experience.

Chapter five draws conclusions about the effectiveness of the various lenses employed in the research and posits answers which relate to the original question of the teacher's perceived and envisioned role as an agent of authentic educational reform through greater critical consciousness and personal awareness. In addition, the last chapter demonstrates the language of poetry as another means by which the author explores and attempts to understand what it means to be a teacher.

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available, and who taught the author the true meaning of independence in a study of this nature.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recently I heard an author promote his latest book, a futuristic work which attempts to predict trends in western society in the twenty-first century. On the whole, he said, he was optimistic in an age of pessimists; he foresaw many desirable outcomes to many of our current problems. He was worried, he allowed, on only three counts. AIDS, he was afraid, would get worse, much worse, before it got better. And then there was the problem of drugs in our culture; the violence and the human destruction were obvious and perhaps worse than we imagine. Thirdly, he concluded, the American system of education is, and will become, an equal partner with the other two in pushing American society into greater and greater decline.

I was hardly astonished. One has but to pick up a newspaper any day of the week to be told of the plight of the public schools. Issues of teacher pay, low scores on standardized tests, teacher accountability, increased crime in the schools--all these and many others--have become the standard content of the debate on school reform.

Currently there is a move headed by former North Carolina governor Jim Hunt to bring about a national certification program for teachers within the next few years, a voluntary program which presumably would have the effect of installing national standards for

teachers. And in the same vein, one sees more and more public school systems providing quality assurance certificates to lend the weight of a warranty to counteract the trend of graduating less-than-prepared students.

As an English teacher at the high school level, who teaches five classes per day, coaches three sports, heads a department, and serves as a mentor teacher, I have observed at first hand a variety of strategies, as they come down to me, from the State Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh or from our own school board and central office. Very rarely do I feel that directives which affect me and my students will become part of any genuine, significant change in American education. Teachers who work with me often compare themselves to soldiers in a war, following orders from an absentee general, one who can or will not come to the front. Often these teachers are asked by these remote leaders to do more--with less. Quite often, they do.

My professional life alternates between ecstasy and despair; ecstasy, still, after twenty years, because I see and feel the genuine results of the creative act teaching can be, to help a student find direction in his own life through discussions of literature, athletic accomplishments, or perhaps even experiences which teach him to live more harmoniously with his fellow human beings. I feel despair when I realize that, in my finer moments, I am doing work, in a modest way, which has to be crucial to the future of our society, as well as to individuals. And yet if excellence on my part

is performed, it is not because the school system wants it or demands it as much as it would have the public believe because my work is not within a true profession. When I am evaluated, it is not by my peers, but often by someone less skilled in English than I, and someone who, as often as not, cannot teach as well as I.

Like the futurist, I feel the need for fundamental change, but for my part, I cannot sense its arrival in what remains of this century as long as the distance between resource decisions and resource implementation remains as great as it currently is and as long as basic change is superficial and subject to the latest trend. As long as that distance remains from my classroom, decision-makers have what is known as the morality of attitude which characterizes bombardiers when they don't experience the consequences of their work.

In my search for significant, genuine, and fundamental change in education, I have become interested in critics who see the need for a review of what education does. Principal among these are Maxine Greene and William Pinar, who see teachers, perhaps, as those same benumbed soldiers, shell-shocked from a brutalizing and impersonal system of education. These writers offer alternative approaches which begin with an inner-view, a close reckoning from the inside, of how one assesses the world of teaching as it is and as it has been experienced. In a conversation with Maxine Greene once, I identified myself as a public school teacher, and she exclaimed, "Well, then, you're a hero!" There's no question that in the same sense that we have heard of the "war" on poverty and the "war" against drugs,

education is a battleground with the teacher as foot soldier many times victimized by leadership as well as the putative enemy. Greene and Pinar look for fundamental changes through individual initiative, through teachers who reflect upon the actions and circumstances of their professional lives.

I have felt the isolation of being an adult among children, forced to speak only their language, if I am to speak at all, and I have wondered whether I, as an individual, as an adult, who is fond of thinking of himself as a professional educator, can, even if I understand my own situation as clearly as possible, by myself make any impact of the kind writers like Greene and Pinar think so crucial. In other words, I have wondered whether there is the possibility of genuine change without going beyond the sphere of influence of the individual teacher.

In my search, then, I want to study writers like Henry Giroux and David Purpel who call for larger, systemic changes if education is to have a chance. Theirs is, I believe, essentially an argument for larger strokes, which looks from the outside into the teacher's world and wants a more harmonious, less threatening and victimizing way of thinking about schooling, one which sees teachers evolving out of the culture rather than the other way around.

This study is more than an academic exercise. It is the reflection of my struggle with the essential meaning of teaching for me. If one recognizes the need for basic change in the way we think about teachers and schooling as a reflection of ourselves as a

society, then it does not seem a distortion to me to say that my study raises issues that are not in any way trivial. Teachers are often perceived as transmitters of knowledge and just as often see themselves that way, finding creative ways to do what they are told without a feeling of autonomy, freedom, or efficacy. I hope this study in some way finds its meaning in the language of a teacher by a teacher who reflects upon his world, seeks a sense of purpose in it, and helps in some measure to better define it. Of one thing I am fairly assured as I enter the study: As a teacher, I know I have the power of transformation in the lives of students, but I am constantly appalled by the manner in which our system of public education daily allows the mistreatment, in human terms, of both teachers and students who are asked to learn and grow in less than sufficient conditions with less than acceptable resources.

I do not understand yet how to bring about meaningful change or even if an individual teacher can do anything apart from what he already does, to have a significant impact on the present situation. I see teachers and work with them daily who do what they have to to satisfy the minimum requirements of their day, and then they wander home, often in frustration, often feeling unappreciated, demoralized, and just as often neither knowing or caring about alternatives. The distance between them and me is slight. An impulse in me wants to believe that educational reform starts with us, but cynically I sense that change on a larger, more profound level must occur for there to be any real hope. I sense I must take care of the short term, of what

happens in my classroom and even, perhaps in my school (though principals are very possessive of their power), but one needs the benefit of some larger agent of change than individual teachers can provide.

Because my mind is tipped toward the personal, I must begin my inquiry with a coming to terms of how it is I teach and why. For me, this type of investigation must necessarily be a humanistic rather than a scientific one, one which probes the particularity of a single life in search of clues, insights, and directions which address my central concerns. Part of me is an artist who believes in the necessity of subjective creation and who places a high value on the worth of the individual vision as integral to the quality of life.

This study will operate under the assumption that interpretive inquiry feels free to approach different means of understanding in pursuit of this individual vision. Accordingly, in an attempt to investigate the teacher subjectively, I will research through the means of autobiography and imaginative creation. To inform myself about the role of the teacher beyond my experience, I will study and rely heavily upon the arguments for fundamental change in education in the work of Pinar, Greene, Purpel, and Giroux and other authors to which this study leads.

My central concern is a deep and abiding need to understand better the process by which education can be the activity of human beings. I am distressed that educators on all levels often want to solve their problems with numbers and other statistical analyses.

Schooling is, for me, a human endeavor which has forgotten how to be human, has forgotten how to celebrate the diversity and the unpredictability of life. And in so doing, education runs the risk of depersonalizing all concerned. Rather than look for the replicability of results, I want to study the idiosyncratic nature of humans involved in learning. I thus make the case for that type of research which looks for meaning and understanding rather than for the thin austerity of statistical validity.

The work of Robert Donmoyer (1985) confronts the question of the suitability and appropriateness of what he calls "humanities-based" qualitative research. For Donmoyer all research, qualitative or quantitative, is limited by the language it employs; thus, researchers can never have direct access to "the facts," and knowledge of what happens is handicapped to the extent and powers of the words they use. Different theoretical languages express "the facts" in basically different manners which have the effect of coming to different value judgments.

Donmoyer (1985) further demonstrates that language is a mediating factor to any ultimate understanding of phenomena. He points to two fundamentally different types of research questions, questions of "truth" and questions of "meaning":

The first sort of question is the sort of question scientific researchers have traditionally asked and will continue to ask in the future. To be sure the term truth can no longer be used in any absolute sense given the fact that a human invention, language, serves as a screen through which phenomena must be filtered. (p. 4)

The question of "meaning" is for Donmoyer the motivation for humanities-based researchers. In this case, the observer, the researcher, looks at a particular case for a "detailed understanding" of its phenomenon and then looks more generally to see the implication for any universal understanding. Whereas scientific "researchers are concerned with assimilating or subsuming particular phenomena under general concepts so that testable propositions can be formulated," the "primary concern of humanity-based researchers . . . is not to subsume particular events under general categories but to alter general categories and constructs to better accommodate the novelty of particulars" (1982, pp. 5-6).

What Donmoyer calls "humanities-based researchers" are what I interpret as those interested in finding meaning in the human experience. Studying humanity, unlike quantitative research, is not really a question of verification. What means something to an individual may not be verifiable to another. Humanities-based research is, rather, a type of investigation which wants to bring about a language to express and communicate meaning, and languages, he notes, are neither true nor false; they simply are particular expressions.

Meaning is subjective. What Donmoyer (1985) argues for is a type of research which investigates the personal and through it makes possible an expansion of conceptualization but not generalizability in the conventional statistical sense:

Even when words sound the same, meanings may differ. A teacher influenced by Piaget, a school psychologist trained in the tenets of Skinner, a parent who supports the back to basics movement, and an art teacher interested

in promoting productive idiosyncrasy will probably all talk of the importance of learning, yet each will attach a quite different meaning to that term. Before a researcher can measure whether a particular program or pedagogical technique has promoted learning, a meaning of the term learning must be selected. The researcher's findings will be at least as dependent on meaning selected as on either the phenomena being studied or the quality of the measurement procedures employed. (p. 7)

What Donmoyer and other researchers like him are attempting to do is find a way to talk about the human educational experience in a way which will reflect rather than distance the humanity of the individual's experience while studying its relation to the larger world. He argues convincingly that when dealing with human beings one must be free to investigate whatever might yield greater understanding, "What I have suggested . . . is that the primary contribution of humanities-based research is not in the area of validating knowledge claims, and, therefore, the degrees of freedom accorded humanities-based researchers ought to be considerably wider than those researchers whose purpose and primary function is validating propositions" (1985, p. 9).

Donmoyer (1988) says elsewhere that social scientists' more conventional quantitative approach to research is restrictive for education because the nature of teaching lends itself to discourse about the impersonal student. There is, he says, "a need to expand the way of talking and thinking about a phenomenon" (pp. 2-3). By that, he means that studies of individual human beings should take into account the uniqueness of the person in such a way that our capacity to understand and interpret meaning can be broadened.

Education is, he suggests, a field where one should not be concerned with "aggregates" to the exclusion or diminishment of the individual:

Even statistically significant findings from studies with huge randomly selected samples can not be applied directly to particular individuals in particular situations; skilled clinicians will always be required to determine whether a research generalization applies to a particular individual, whether the generalization needs to be adjusted to accommodate individual idiosyncrasy, or whether it needs to be abandoned entirely with certain individuals in certain situations. (p. 9)

If one allows that meaning from a person's life can shed light on the larger school world, if an accommodation of "individual idiosyncrasy" is not only desired but needed, then it follows that meditations upon a particular experience, reflections upon a single life in education have the opportunity to come to terms with meaning in both that life and possibly in the larger context in which that life lives, works, and influences.

Central to this study is my inquiry into the process of (1) how the teacher becomes aware of the nature of his possible role, and (2) how one begins to think about change in some larger sense; how one can envision the morally engaged teacher as a working part of a school community which is itself a reenforcing paradigm of justice and moral authenticity. In the first case, my research leads to an investigation of subjective experience, while the latter points toward the insights a more theoretical level offers. What I seek is based upon one wide-ranging proposition: Meaning rather than truth can be approached through different media, different languages, and different sources. All of these differences evolve from a desire to explore

the varied expressions of the subjective world. Indeed, there is no objective experience in the world, only shared meanings through various languages.

What then is an appropriate language for a mediation and expression of meaning in an individual teacher's life? I begin with Socrates' injunction "the unexamined life is not worth living." But, even at that, I must draw a distinction between the common modes of reflection, journals or diaries, and a method by which an educational researcher can hope to find meaning in the experience of teaching.

William Pinar (1976) suggests such a method which seeks to express the relationship of the self to the world. He calls his method "currere" and puts forward the idea that the way one articulates the hermeneutic of one's professional life is to take "a greater interest" in one's life as it is lived:

Why? What role in this biography do these evolving intellectual interests play? In what way do they contribute to an understanding of the dominant themes of this biography? In what ways have they permitted biographic movement, that is, freed one from interests whose life has gone out of them, and drawn one on into areas that excite? What is the relation of these interests and concomitant professional activities to one's private life? I must be willing to objectively describe the relation between my professional work, not succumbing to popular attitudes, whether these insist the two must be connected or must remain separate. (p. 52)

Pinar's focus here is intended to confront the individual with his or her involvement in his or her own life and its relation to one's most current understanding of not only what one does but why one does it. Pinar says, "There are many related questions, but the predominant one is: what has been and what is now the nature of my

educational experience?" (1976, p. 52). Currere searches for different ways to stimulate awareness of one's own existence which is accepted as a "data source" which one can explore and then articulate in the language which best suits the fabric of one's lived life. For one to take responsibility for one's life one must first bring it up in memory, remember the actions one took and under what circumstances.

For Pinar (1976), the autobiographical experience is a dialectic between the preconceptual and the conceptual, what he calls a "middle ground" between thinking and being which eventuates in the dual preoccupation with aesthetic presenter and recorder of phenomena:

Writing from a biographic basis would capture (at least try to) the complex interplay between the two dimensions of human being, but to do so . . . requires taking on as it were, the role of artist and the epistemological posture of the phenomenologist. You see the task here is description. I want to paint a conceptual portrait of how it is I live now, and this includes the delicate balance or imbalance of the two realms. (p. 55)

Pinar wants educators to have a way, a method, of being more aware of what it is they do. He wants his method, currere, to stimulate an assessment of action and thus get more meaning in education. The need for such a reconceptualization presumes the movements and actions of educators are often disconnected from and therefore irresponsible for their dealings with the people who are their clients.

Currere involves four steps: Regressive, Progressive, Analytical, and Synthetical:

1. Regressive: A return to the past, regression demands recognition of the past existing contemporaneously with the present.

One gets his bearings for the present by looking onto the past through what "not ordinarily seen, at what is taken for granted." Looking into the past forces a clarification of the present by seeing more clearly how one came to be where one is, how one thinks and acts as one does. Regression makes the educator an observer with the focus of the method being "educational experience," and "one takes special notice of one's past life-in-schools, teachers, and one's past life-with-books and other school-related artifacts." One must "observe and record" as one includes "present responses to what is observed." Pinar's regression is an "enabling" method in that it makes it possible for the educator to juxtapose his past with his present, "the subject's life, specifically his educational life . . . exists still; one reenters it, one goes back; one regresses; it is there, present" (1976, p. 57).

2. Progressive: Pinar's second step suggests finding meaning by looking into the future of one's educational experience, career, and interests, "Perhaps you will begin to see something of the interdependent nature of your interests and historical situation" (1976, p. 59). This step becomes one's best guess of outcomes based on one's current life trends.

3. Analytical: The heart of Pinar's currere depends upon the looking back and forward to have attained the effect of liberation through expansion of awareness as well as through greater knowledge of possibilities and alternatives: "Bracketing what is, what was, what can be, one is loosened from it, potentially more free of it,

hence more free to freely choose the present, and future" (1976, p. 60).

4. Synthetical: Pinar's ultimate question seems to be this: "What is the meaning of the present?" And it seems crucial for him, for the authenticity of the subjective investigation, that the search for this meaning be in one's "own voice": "What is the contribution of my scholarly and professional work to my present? Do they illumine the present situation? Obscure it? Are one's intellectual interests biographically liberative, that is, do they permit, in fact encourage ontological movement? Do they point toward increased conceptual sophistication and refinement, to deeper knowledge and understanding of both one's chosen field of study and of the field's symbolic relation to one evolving biography? Do they . . . move one to enter new, higher levels of being?" (1976, p. 60).

William Pinar's method attempts to make possible a comparison of one's reality in what he calls the "biographic situation" and the ideas one has had and is having about reality. His goal always is to "reduce the distance between the researcher and his subject," that is, to put one in greater touch with and to accomplish a deeper understanding of one's everyday life: "The distance I have mentioned," Pinar says, "between the researcher and the subject: It is reduced because in this method the researcher leaves his laboratory and enters himself. He takes on the subject's role and performs experiments on himself, experiments which have as their aims wider awareness and integration of the subject as well as additional information regarding

matters of public interest. One takes one's existential experience as data" (1976, p. 61).

In the work of Maxine Greene one finds further rationale for the necessity of teachers exploring ways to lessen the distance between their educative acts and their understanding of those acts as a way of being more actively involved, more aware, as part of a process of empowerment. As in Pinar, Greene wants to combat teacher indifference, apathy, and numbness as a first step toward authentic professional responsibility.

In her essay, "Wide Awakeness and the Moral Life" (1978), Greene suggests that much of modern life, let alone the world of teaching, is characterized by a malaise of spirit and an anxiety of unfulfilled expectation that renders people less than totally conscious of their world, less than free to act in a manner which would transform their lives and thought to ultimate expressions of potential. Greene quotes Albert Camus' identification of the "why" that emerges in a form of discontent with one's existence, and then she explains:

The "why" may take the form of anxiety, the strange and wordless anxiety that occurs when individuals feel they are not acting on their freedom, not realizing possibility, not . . . elevating their lives. Or the "why" may accompany a sudden perception of the insufficiencies in ordinary life, of inequities and injustices in the world, of oppression and brutality and control. It may accompany, it may be necessary, for an individual's moral life. The opposite of morality, it has often been said, is indifference--a lack of care, an absence of concern. (1978, p. 43)

Any teacher or any observer deep within the public schools would attest to this lethargy in education as manifested in the frustration and feelings of helplessness of educators. Feeling oppressed by a system which makes constant demands while at the same time demeaning almost everyone associated with it, teachers often feel impotent to change a stratified system which barely knows or cares they exist as they do, let alone providing an environment of human dignity and professional prestige. In the end, indifference becomes the coping strategy of these individuals who might want to be a professional, a colleague, but who are reduced to clerk or worker.

What Greene suggests is that the rampant pessimism and burn out among teachers is very clearly not merely a case of fatigue or overwork; it is a moral issue in which teachers have to choose and ultimately have to be responsible for the very conditions which torments and represses them. As Viktor Frankl (1963) puts it, "As each situation in life represents a challenge to man and presents a problem for him to solve, the question of the meaning of life may actually be reversed. Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible. Thus . . . responsibility [is] the very essence of human existence" (pp. 172-173).

A human being's awareness of his world, then, corresponds to the degree he is conscious of his ability, not his freedom, to choose. Everything he reacts to is a choice with consequences. As certain existentialists have it, "man can not choose," in that even that inaction would constitute a choice. But if a person feels oppressed and dominated by a world which seems not to care about his welfare, this position of choice is not clearly seen; the man moves dimly from task to task, requirement to requirement, without feeling that he has any input or influence in the course of his own life. This perceived treatment leads to resentment, frustration, and inevitably, to indifference. Powerless, this man sees no way out, no choices.

Maxine Greene offers the way past this malaise through an act of will on the part of the individual to come to terms with his or her own situation by thinking about it, by putting it into sharper focus, by inquiry into possible alternatives, by interpreting "the experiences [he is] having day to day." Only then can the individuals whom this condition affects begin, "to make sense of what is happening," and only then, "can they feel themselves to be autonomous. Only then can they develop the sense of agency required for living a moral life" (Greene, 1978, p. 44).

A necessary part of the "awakening" process for Greene is the recognition of the notion that life as an ordinary person, a teacher, student, or administrator is not inevitably an immutable given. We find ourselves presented with a world, say, where public address announcements drown out a wonderful discussion of a poem, or a group

of individuals are unwittingly or absentmindedly discriminated against, but we often forget, if we ever knew, that that world does not have to be accepted or maintained or tolerated without protest. Many times simply accepting the unsatisfactory conditions of our world, "we do not realize that that reality, like all others, is an interpreted one. It presents itself to us as it does because we have learned to understand it in standard ways" (Greene, 1978, p. 44).

The perception of alternative methods of working in an environment is concomitant for Greene with "waking up," with accepting the power to choose and act that was always there, only dormant. The passive indifference which so characterizes many faculties in the nation's public schools is a way of withdrawal from the fray, to "do" minimally without involvement or risk, let alone passion or zest. To have "sense of agency" requires extension, perhaps to unpopularity with "superiors" or anyone else who resists inquiry into the "why" of the status quo.

Failure of teachers to become aware of what Greene calls "submergence in the habitual," failure to ask the "why" of their world, prevents those educators from having an authentic opportunity to educate for an "ethical existence." The choice of what is good or what is wholesome in one's life is an individual matter.

With my students I sometimes explore the nature and dynamics of the process of bringing about social change. Every year I assign an argumentative paper in which I urge students to write about some needed change at our school. As part of the preparation to write, I

stress the need for an accurate background survey, a sense-getting of the facts of each topic situation. I urge students to pursue ideas for papers which seek feasible change. Also, I try to teach them to find out the "why" of the situation as well as the "what." Many times they shrink from the realization they must interview administrators to determine causation or budgetary predilections. Just as often I have complaints from those same administrators who find a line of inquisitive students outside their office doors. One principal said to me, "I haven't got time for this junk." My reply to him was, "If you don't have time for these people, whom do you have time for?"

The environment of the teacher, the attitude he or she takes and then passes on to his or her students is not a curriculum of values but a climate of morality signaled by a courage and an impetus not to put up with the world as it is handed to him. I find students feel very out of touch, very frustrated themselves, without any means of input which would tend to speak for their lives. I also find them with the never-dying hope that if they can just escape the asylum, things will be different in the world of work or college. Perhaps it will be different, perhaps not. In any case they might be in jeopardy of simply changing the name of domination if they never learn the power of inquiry because they had teachers who, themselves, accepted the schooling world literally without question, and administrators who did not promote or welcome reflection or criticism out of a fear of losing some type of control.

To be human, Greene insists, is to be vibrant, exceptional, and imaginative. To be less than human in the actualization of one's life can be characterized by just this unawareness of self and the self's experience, fixed into a lock-step that points the finger of responsibility away from where it belongs. "If individuals act automatically or conventionally," she says, "if they do only what is expected for them (or because they feel they have no right to speak for themselves), if they do only what they are told to do, they are not living moral lives" (1978, p. 49).

Moral engagement for Greene is synonymous with making the choice of "doing it right" whether that is writing an essay, deciding who will be included in the National Honor Society, or suggesting to the principal his meetings are a waste of time. By consciously choosing, one creates, "value" and in so doing creates oneself and one's "more understandable life" (Greene, 1978, p. 49).

For Greene, teachers are particularly important examples because there is the possibility of their demonstrating a search for alternatives which has the effect of stirring others--students and even co-workers who are themselves suffering from submergence and lack of professional potency--to action through reflection of past action. This movement toward a consideration of one's self in one's world is necessarily constituted by a further consideration of others and their world. When we reflect upon our life experience, upon our choices, we are in part assessing how we affect the world and are thinking not only in individual terms, but also in communal ones.

Thus, in this study I am interested in an exploration of meaning and responsibility in the teaching profession, and I have said I want to do that, in part, by looking at my life as a teacher to see if there is any insight into alternative ways of viewing teaching, understanding it, moving on with it, changing it by changing myself. Beyond that, as I have also said, I want that understanding to include a greater awareness of how the larger units which individuals comprise can move more effectively and be positively conceptualized and realized. In other words, the study seeks to explore locally and globally, and to better understand the relationship between the two.

I am an individual teacher, but being human, I am complex, and I do not see the world, or feel it, or sense it, or understand it in only one way. There are different ways of seeing. A student in one of my classes, who that afternoon runs on my track team becomes separate individuals for me, and, I expect, I for him. Accordingly, I propose an examination of my teaching experience through several lenses.

As noted earlier, following Pinar, I want to investigate my experience in teaching through the medium of autobiography. After that, I want to study various critiques of teaching which search for alternatives in education. Thirdly, using the genre of fiction, I want to experience the aesthetic dimension. My reasons for wanting to include this section are many, not the least of which is my inclination to feel that whatever I am is somehow associated with the imaginative impulse, the compulsion to understand life through the

immediacy of narrative. More to the point, however, I want to see if, in the very act of creating characters, placing them into a setting, and giving them conflict with which they must deal, I can bring to the surface a communication of meaning and understanding which touch upon the issues in education as I have attempted to outline them. Seen this way, a piece of fiction becomes a different mode of data gathering, one which, as it imaginatively emerges, is basically autobiographical in the specialized sense Thomas Wolfe (1929) mentions in his note, "To the Reader," in Look Homeward Angel:

This is a first book, and in it the author has written of experience which is now far and lost, but which was once part of the fabric of his life. If any reader, therefore, should say that the book is "autobiographical" the writer has no answer for him: It seems to him all serious work in fiction is autobiographical--that, for instance, a more autobiographical work than Gulliver's Travels cannot easily be imagined.

Fiction is not fact, but fiction is fact selected and understood, fiction is fact arranged and charged with purpose. (Wolfe, 1929, preface)

Fiction as research suggests to me at least two avenues of pursuit. In writing fiction, the writer is a little ahead of the reader in observing the characters as they move and act. His observation is a way of understanding, and yet the analysis of that same fiction is another; the process of the creation and the ensuing reflection upon the process are two circles of investigation: action, assessment, and reaction.

In his seminal work, A Rhetoric of Fiction, Wayne Booth (1961) draws distinction between didactic fiction, fiction intended for propaganda or instruction, and non-didactic fiction, or that writing

which is intended as "the art of communicating with readers, the rhetorical resources available to the writer of epic, novel, or short story as he tries, consciously or unconsciously, to impose his fictional world upon the reader" (1961, p. xiii). Booth is interested in how the writer goes about "helping" the reader understand the work, overtly and covertly, the rhetorical devices which intend to persuade the reader to accept one meaning or interpretation over another. The Rhetoric of Fiction narrows itself to a focus of these techniques and an analysis of how communication is effected even though the reader may be consciously unaware of the implementation of these rhetorical devices.

A central question, then, as I contemplate including and using an original work of fiction in this study addresses the possibilities of meaning understood through both rhetorical and didactic art. I want to find out how my imaginative creation can speak to these issues of meaning and responsibility by mixing, as T.S. Eliot says, "meaning with desire." It is of great interest to me to express my imaginative impulse to see what the characters "do," and secondly to analyze what I learned from that, while, thirdly, making a decision about what these characters "need," in terms of revision, to meet my artistic needs for didactic and/or rhetorical purposes.

Central to this entire section of the study is my deep interest in the ontological possibilities of the narrative, the compelling nature of characters reacting to situations as a means of learning about our lives. Kiernan Egan (1989) identifies the narrative impulse

as an indispensable tool for providing, "a measure of order and stability to human societies for uncounted millennia." Narrative communicates meaning by its ability to trigger responses in its auditors or readers, "Stories work by embedding their contents into vivid events and images that carry strong emotional coloring." Narrative also, "almost incidentally evokes, stimulates, and develops the imagination" even though the characters might be outrageously improbable; in fact, their vivid and perhaps exotic nature often make them memorable" (1989, p. 457).

It seems to me that fiction offers a form of discourse unavailable in, say, autobiography in that it offers an opportunity to involve the imagination in a more universal way which is not tied to the author's particular set of causally-related events but rather to his larger conclusions and reflections. Fictive expression can draw upon the totality of one's experience in a search for meaning, the selected fact Wolfe mentions.

In her essay "Teaching History: A Definitional and Developmental Dilemma," Linda Levstik (1985) examines the appeal of narrative as a vehicle for linking emotion to reflective thinking. This process of reflection, she maintains, begins with "conflict or discomfort," and although "problems, whether literary or historical, may be more easily considered without reference to emotion, they are also less real. Narrative, the mode of discourse most comfortable, combines historical incident with emotion and conflict" (1985, p. 74).

What storytelling does, it seems to me, is give a way in which both the author and the reader can come close to the actual emotions of a character. And while there are those who prefer to examine the human experience without emotion, that is, objectively, it is precisely the emotional experience that defines humanity, and it is my goal in this study to investigate the characteristics of schooling which tends to have the effect of reducing the human experience from its potential. Any investigation which enables the author and the reader to empathize more fully with other human beings would tend to speak to questions of justice and quality more sensitively, and, I think, more humanely.

A Multi-Perspective

In this study I investigate the world of the teacher by recognizing the value of the subjective realm as a means of moving from the specifics of living to the generalities of human endeavor. Toward this end, I am making the assumption that human beings can learn about themselves and their world by moving beyond a strictly scientific observation. I want to gain different kinds of insights by looking through different kinds of ontological lenses. For me, the dissertation process will be an investigation of the individual teacher in relation to his larger world, the community in which he finds himself and of which he wants to be a successfully functioning member.

The different layers and textures of the study will mirror the complexity of living, which, I believe, cannot be fully studied through the empirical, quantitative lens. As stated earlier, it is the assertion of this exploration that any attempt, however modest, to study a human experience must involve and may well hinge upon what living and expression means to the person, the human being, who seeks to come to a clearer understanding of what transpires in him and around him. As Donmoyer states, meaning depends upon the language used to describe the experience. In that sense, I want to use a multifaceted approach, to look for meaning, as it were, in several neighborhoods of the city. Merely counting the streets, or noting their many characteristics does not successfully speak to what I feel about the place.

The Intention

Chapter II. An Autobiographical Inquiry

I am more than a teacher; I am a human being who feels he has important work to do and has felt that way in recent years but who has never quite sorted out the paradox of education in America, which, on the one hand, dwells endlessly on the importance of education but which, on the other hand, bestows little wide-ranging prestige upon its practitioners. And more than that, education exerts little energy in encouraging its public servants to reflect upon their professional lives, to assess the process and their place in it. I wonder more and more if teachers are not encouraged to reflect upon

what they do because no one "in authority" wants them to think in a recreative sense. One thinks of American slaves and literacy; one thinks of peasants in the middle ages. Maxine Greene says, "If learning focuses upon lived life, it should enable persons to recognize lacks in the situations through which they move. Recognizing lack or deficiency (infringements on personality, exclusion, or neglect), they may learn how to repair and transcend" (1978, p. 19). It is my hope that this chapter will help me come to terms with the growth and the frustration which have characterized my teaching career.

Chapter III. The Profession of Teaching and the Possibility of Change: An Analysis and Critique

I want to explore those writers who speak to the issue of fundamental educational change. I plan to rely heavily upon the work of Maxine Greene, William Pinar, Henry Giroux, and David Purpel as a means of investigating alternative ways of bringing about this change. I want to be free to move beyond these writers if necessary to other critics who speak to the issues in which I am interested.

Chapter IV. The Teacher as Artist, A Narrative

I want to use narrative as a research tool which expresses and shapes my experience and my imagination so that I might approach questions of not only educational but human involvement. I want to place a character into a situation which to my thinking typifies the current educational world and determine whether the narrative will in any way enable me to understand my own experience as a teacher.

Chapter V. Synthesis

This chapter offers an opportunity to bring together what has been learned from the study. In particular I am very interested in coming to terms with what I have learned about the nature and possibility of the individual teacher making an authentic impact on the educational community beyond his classroom. My central question is whether he can ever hope (or whether he should hope) to be somehow more than he currently is, at his best, or whether that is an unreasonable question in the first place.

Appendix. The Teacher as Writer

I plan to keep a journal of my thoughts and feelings during the research process. For me, this is yet another opportunity to probe my subjective experience, yet another lens through which to observe the reflective process. The appendix is meant to be a way of articulating language to get at meaning in this study, reflection upon reflection, as it were.

I hope I have made it clear in this introduction that this study represents for me an issue of the greatest importance. I begin it with these assumptions:

1. Teachers in the public schools can be more than mere transmitters of subject matter.
 2. Teachers can be, if they choose, agents of positive, creative transformation by virtue of their human interaction with students.
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3. Teachers are victimized by a philosophy of schooling in American society which asks them to function without questioning their world, without encouraging them to fulfill their human potential for autonomy and creativity, without enabling them to have a legitimate voice in their work.

Central to my thinking, then, are the issues of liberation and autonomy for teachers. But liberated from what to what? Autonomous to what? At this point I'm not sure; I can only sense that what is currently happening with and to teachers is to my mind unacceptable. As an expression of my freedom, I want to investigate possibilities and alternatives.

CHAPTER II

SELF-SEARCH, SAFE DISTANCE, AND THE GATHERING

". . . the past isn't quaint while you're in it.
Only at a safe distance, later, when you see it as
decor, not as the shape your life's been squeezed
into . . ."

--Cat's Eye by Margaret Atwood

"Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is
the secret of redemption."

--Hassidic saying

"There is properly no history; only biography."

--R. W. Emerson

If one makes the case for autobiographical method in educational research, one is suggesting that a teacher or an administrator or a student needs to know himself as a way of better understanding the process of education and that idea itself suggests, on one level, that education is somehow structured, designed, or has resulted in an unawareness of that loss of self-knowledge. To probe the subjective experience of an individual in education is to attempt to figure out and come to terms with how he relates to and integrates with both others around him and the larger structure of education. The need for autobiography is the need to recover an understanding for how education can be a very real human activity, and it is, at the same time, a way an individual can come to some conclusions about why he does

what he does and why he thinks the way he does. But more than that, and perhaps most importantly for the educator who wants to be a genuine part of educational reform autobiography starts, as it were, from the inside out, personalizing and empowering the observer by naming and describing the chain of causally-related events which is his professionally lived life.

In his essay, "'Whole, Bright, and Deep with Understanding': Issues in Qualitative Research and Autobiographical Method," William Pinar (1988) suggests that the process of transforming curriculum studies from the mundane and predictable to genuine, enlightening commentary from which observers might truly have a change to learn about, and therefore modify, schooling, depends in part on focusing on what he calls the "lived life" of the individual teacher. By "lived life" he means the "under life," that is, the true sources of motivation for what one does in the classroom.

Pinar's goal seems to be a pragmatic attempt to probe beneath surface, routine, unreflective behavior, which he finds facile, unexamined, and repetitive. He wants an educational criticism which gets to know teaching on a real level, not distanced by charts, numbers, and trends in the manner a quantitatively-oriented examination might proceed. Pinar wants to get to know and understand teachers the way one gets to know and understand fictional characters: an understanding of motivations and actions helps one in some way to get a better view of the larger picture.

Pinar makes the case for probing not only beneath statistics, but also mere observations of teachers' routine behaviors. He wants to know the real person, and he wants the real person to know himself or herself. Autobiographical method is itself an attempt to swing educational investigation away from the impersonal and general, and in so doing swing power and dominion more toward the teacher as the educator gradually accounts for himself.

Such an interest in humanistic research suggests, "an interest in interpretation." One departs from generalized concerns with validity and enters into "lived experience" which does not function as a superficial diary of routine behavior. For Pinar, one must go deeper; one must "excavate layers of intention and experience which antedate and live below the text which is daily life, of which language and event are deposits" (1988, p. 139).

Though Pinar never says so, there is the inference that educational researchers avoid investigating what is for him the reality of teaching--even in ethnographies--because that would involve getting too close to the human experience of the teacher, too personal to be in any way objective, which draws upon and still, in effect, depends upon the scientific, positivist bent to categorize and schematize, categories and schema which fail to penetrate the surface, the obvious. When a careful record is made of what happens in classrooms, no real progress is made because we learn what we already knew, "the urban classroom is . . . mundane and lifeless." But of the individual living, breathing teacher we discover little, if anything.

While, on the one hand, an educator's "self-report" attempts to record what one saw, how one felt, and tries to account for why one did what one did, the reader of such an account must not risk "complicity" with the autobiographer through misplaced empathy. The observer must act as "mid-wife" to the birth of the educator's account and its implications. One must be "a trusted colleague who wishes [his] client well," but in so doing must not "relinquish [his] independence or critical judgment" (1988, p. 141).

Part of the purpose, perhaps a large part, of the autobiographical method exists for Pinar for reasons of liberation, autonomy, and self-enlightenment, more so than providing genuine data for an ethnographer. This process of freeing works like this for Pinar:

When one is psychologically "present" one can attune oneself to a situation, and one's experience of that situation. We can become conscious of how life-history, commitments and assumptions operate in our experience of that situation. We become free of them as we become conscious of them. We attune ourselves to the situation, allowing the problematic--the unknown, the tension--to state itself through us. The situation comes to form through us, and thus our sensibilities do not merely precondition knowledge; they make it possible. By focusing on the underlife of the situation we avoid restatement of the obvious and mundane. Such a focus brings the situation to form; in Dewey's words it becomes an object of articulate thought. (1988, p. 143)

To suggest that the teacher put pen to paper to free associate a life view, a life history, is to suggest not only that one might be enabled to get beneath the ennui of normal classroom behavior; it is also to suggest that there is a real need for a more expressive mode of understanding in the way teachers think about their world and the theoretical methods used to discover meaning in teaching: "The

description of a classroom needs to be more experimental in a literary way, and mimic less the dry formalism of much theoretical language in psychology and sociology if we are to progress in our field" (1988, p. 144).

Here, I think, Pinar means "literary" in a rather mild way; that is, what I sense he means is that, as noted before, educational research must be prepared to become more nearly a human expression, of the language of human beings. Teachers must have a way of opening up the undercurrents of their professional world to themselves, and other researchers, as readers who can then have a better chance to assess what really goes on not only in classrooms but in classroom teachers we well. I say "mild" because I do not think he means a polished autobiography; teachers need to be invited to free associate autobiographically, perhaps using the method of freewriting to "brainstorm" teaching experiences in diary form.

I find it interesting that, in passing, Pinar mentions an essay by the late John Ciardi, "How a Poem Means," (1959), because this one essay not only influenced the way I teach poetry, but it also speaks to the issues I am concerned with in this paper. Ciardi suggests viewing poetry by looking (and listening) to "how" it means, assessing the words, images, rhythms--everything the author uses to arrive at meaning rather than conditioning students to look for the "what" in a poem, which inevitably ends in paraphrase, words other than the poet chose, words the student uses to summarize. Pinar (and Ciardi) want language which more nearly is the language of the person as he or

she struggles to come to terms with his or her world. And part of the Ciardi connection is the warning to avoid the distortion of analysis that necessarily comes when one gets away from the language of the person who is in the act of expression: one should not be interested so much in what he means but how he communicates his meaning if one really wants to get at the essence of the work.

Autobiography is one way to achieve this effect. It is one person's interpretation of his reality. It has his or her particularized stamp of experience on it and becomes very quickly another step toward viewing educational experience through human (and perhaps humane) eyes. Pinar says:

For interpretation and understanding of human affairs--educational and otherwise--cannot be achieved apart from time, history, and human intention. This fundamental fact some of our quantitative colleagues have evidently forgotten. Part of our task is to remind them." (1988, p. 146)

Ultimately, Pinar calls for a "reflexive grasp of problematic qualities of situations." The "self" in relation to the "situation" forms dialectical relationship of recognition and assessment which hopefully leads to transformation. The teacher pursues the "what" of his life and stalks the "why" as well. His consciousness is alerted and freed of unknowing and frustration. According to Pinar:

Autobiographical method offers opportunities to return to our own situations, our "rough edges," to reconstruct our intellectual agendas. The focus in such work is the felt problematic; its method is intuitive. One falls back on oneself--rather than upon the words of others--and one must articulate what is yet unspoken, act as midwife to the unborn. One uncovers one's "domain assumptions," one's projections--not in order to clean the slate but in order to understand the slate of

of which one is the existential basis, the basis which makes knowing possible. (1988, p. 148)

Autobiography is, then, a tool of liberatory thinking which serves to probe the day-by-day world, the immediate school world which allows teachers little time for reflection. Whereas one could make the case that such reflection would be important for any worker as he comes to terms with what he does and why, it seems most reasonable to conclude that it is crucial in a profession where action takes precedence over thinking. For Pinar, teachers need not write it for other readers, necessarily, "we write it for ourselves, in order to cultivate our capacity to see through the outer forms, the habitual explanation of things, the stories we tell in order to keep others at a distance. It is against the taken for granted, routine and ritual we work, for it is the regularized and the habitual which arrest movement, intellectual and otherwise. Arrested, we cannot see movement in others nor contribute to it. In this sense we seek a dialectical relationship between self and work, self and others" (1988, p. 149).

Thus it is I come to study myself as teacher, beginning as I do, daily, with the notion that teaching is a very special and misunderstood work, as are many teachers misunderstood and misunderstanding. Because I am conscious now for the need of critical examination in teaching, I move toward an interpretation of self and world. My first thought is that such was not always the case.

Going Back

The gymnasium was empty. I don't remember now how I got into the junior high school because it was early evening over twenty years ago. I had come to play basketball, but no one was there, or if anyone was, I can't place them now. I guess I was too much into myself. And so, in an empty, smallish gym, I took shots: lay ups, jump shots, more lay ups.

Finally, I played games against myself, like I had much earlier in my life, being both teams, one shooting, the other, at the same time, defending. I had passed much of my youth that way because I lived "in the country" outside New Bern, North Carolina, and had no neighboring playmates.

Now, at age twenty-one, I was playing basketball with myself, and by myself because I was alone, afraid, and discouraged. At home, in Burlington, North Carolina, in my modest apartment, on my black and white television, names were being drawn and then posted on a large board numbered on through three hundred and sixty-five.

It was the fall of 1969 and Richard Nixon had, in his zeal to raise the number of young men available for the draft, instituted a lottery. I was a first-year teacher with a couple of months experience. I had graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill the previous spring with full intention of being the teacher and coach I had, it seemed to me, always wanted to be.

Even when I had played those imaginary games of basketball in my garage in New Bern, I would imagine myself the coach of the weaker

teams, who, hired as a last desperate act, would, through hard work and enthusiasm, make the players see their true potential and feel a resultant loyalty to me, their teacher and coach.

But, on that fall evening in Burlington, the echoes of the bouncing ball seemed to me somehow hollow, somehow pointless. I could not concentrate on ball. Richard Nixon had discounted deferments for teachers. I was 1-A.

For four years I had enjoyed privileged status at Carolina. I had been 2-S, a student, who, if he kept his nose clean, could stay away from Viet Nam and could, rather, invade the beloved classroom buildings of the Lower Quad, Bingham and Murphy, in which professors had spoken learnedly of Yeats and Carlyle and in which I had become very, very sure that teaching English was what I wanted to do with my life.

To do that, and to coach running, seemed enough for me and logical for me. To think that I would be paid in the bargain seemed, well, wonderful.

I don't remember leaving the gym. I would brood, now, whether I had locked all the doors, shut down all the lights. I do remember, however, not being able to wait until I got home, so I turned on the car radio and immediately all I heard were numbers and dates. The announcer had an impassive voice as he read from the big board drawn numbers and days of the year: Number sixty-eight, March 6; Number sixty-nine, August 28; and so on.

By the time I arrived home, this toneless voice was into the two hundreds, and I had not yet heard August 2, my birthdate. What we had heard, we, the freshly graduated male teachers at Broadview Junior High school, who had talked of little else in the week preceding the lottery, was that whatever birthdate was chosen first would almost certainly be drafted and that number three hundred sixty-five almost certainly would not be drafted and would have a fair chance of living a natural life. No one could be sure where the cut off point would be, the deadline or lifeline.

I remember being filled with the relief and joy of having avoided direct confrontation with another crisis. I was sure I would be in the two hundreds or three hundreds and out of danger. I would not, I was sure as I made myself a sandwich and sat down in front of the television, have to die like my friend and former high school classmate, Ricky Parnell, had.

I was wrong.

When I turned on the set the camera was panning the large board which matched numbers with birthdates. August second was in the first column, number forty-five. There was not doubt. Life was real, and for a few weeks, the possibility was, too. I would be drafted and gone soon.

There have been times in my life when I avoided a learning experience through sheer, dumb, blind fortune, through nothing I did or did not do. And what happened as a result was that I never learned what I would have done or said.

So it was in the fall of 1969 that through a quirk or caprice Nixon changed his mind and reinstated teacher deferments. I believe the thinking was to try once again and avoid a teacher shortage. In any case, I was "saved." I can remember feeling relieved that I would not have to die senselessly and futilely in southeast Asia. Nor would I have to embarrass my parents by fleeing to Canada. I remember being grateful that I would be allowed by my country and my fate--to teach.

And so I have, for upwards of twenty years. In many ways it seems to me a strange experience, these years in teaching. I have come to wonder about what I've done and what I try to do in the classroom each day. It seems to me that education in the United States will always be "in trouble," in need of reform. What interests me is how I, as an individual, fit into all this huge, educational structure.

I find being a public school teacher a set of contradictions. Society reveres me and despises me, sets me up and knocks me down, entrusts me and discourages me. At times, I think, I am a fine teacher. But we hear daily that all our "best" people are finding their way out of the profession. Why then do I stay?

The answer would seem to lie within the complexity of whatever it is that I am as an individual. Each of us has his own story and in the exploration of that story can help one understand how he got where he is in order to lend some light to help him see the possibilities of the future. Many would have the world of schooling

measured as a business, in a scientifically verifiable way. For me, teaching is part of who I am. I have not tried to get out of it.

Public school teaching as I have experienced it is mostly action, hurried, unreflective action. The modern teacher in America is not encouraged to reflect upon what he or she does. As I will discuss later, I have come to understand that this not as much a matter of expediency as much as it is a matter of control. In this part of the study I want to question the assumptions of what it means to be a teacher in our time. Must teachers lose their docility only in the north, only over compensation or class size as a union matter?

For me, the question is rhetorical. The answer is clearly no. As important to me, however, is the deeper question of how can esteem be raised for the teacher and by the teacher. On the face of it there are two important levels to consider. First, there is the larger issue of how we can form teaching into a profession of men and women who are treated by society with dignity and respect. In other words, how can teaching be discussed through particular attention to macro issues of the role of the teacher given the free public education promised to each child in this country. I must confess to a certain impatience with a society which seems to speak out of both sides of its mouth. One has to have a very discriminating eye to distinguish between significant change and yet another trend.

The second level of consideration is that of the uniqueness of the individual experience, and in this meditation I do not want to discount macro change, but neither do I want to focus upon it.

It seems to me that education is, or ought to be, concerned with human beings. Yet I have found that such a proposition is very easy to forget, as a teacher, student, or administrator, let alone anyone else who might be even further removed from the real movement of schooling. I do want to focus upon the human factor in teaching, each individual's uniqueness and a "system" which celebrates rather than works efficiently to suppress that notion. I am interested in a school environment which takes great joy in the creative possibilities of each person present and the recognition that each person's experience is unlike any other.

Unlike any other. That very phrase seems to me cause enough to read a thousand biographies and autobiographies. I am a teacher, a human being trying to help, transform, and communicate with other human beings. How can I do that, how can I be myself while continuing to grow as a professional if my chief adversary is the system of administration whose ostensible job it is to facilitate what I do? Clearly I want, within what I have called macro issues, to change that system. But what of today? Today I must go to work as a teacher as I have for twenty years.

The Tradition of My Life

Over the last ten years of my teaching career, I have made a habit of asking my classes what they wanted to "be" in life. By the time of the late 1970s, I could expect almost outright contempt if I asked who might consider becoming a teacher. That seemed to change in

the early 1980s, and gradually, very gradually, the question was not received with as much disdain as it once was accorded.

During the Reagan years, though, I noted that few of the brighter students, those most folks could easily imagine in law, medicine, or business, would consider teaching because of salary considerations alone. That has always seemed ironic to me because I have, since I was a sophomore in high school, been moved and awed by the power of a teacher, the commanding position, the crucial point claimed by the nature of the job. And so, many students express disbelief when I tell them I have always wanted to be a teacher and really never considered any other course.

I mark the beginning of my professional journey from that tenth grade year when I did two things of note. First, I published a poem, and secondly, I discovered Thomas Wolfe. The second event came about like this: I had already acquired the habit of patrolling the library, noting each title, and, now I do not remember exactly why, I picked Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward Angel, and sat down to read, pushing past the preface and Wolfe's famous note "To the Reader." And what I found myself reading, without having been directed or prompted, was a description of my hometown, Asheville, North Carolina in his opening descriptions of the fictional Altamont.

Through this bit of serendipity, I was thus introduced and connected to the world of literature. In the printed word I found something of my own experience: the place where my family traveled each Christmas from the eastern part of North Carolina in those

pre-interstate days, up, finally the mountain-clingling two lane highways.

Wolfe, too had been there, long before I. When I read and dimly understood that fiction can have a basis in reality, my reality, I clearly remember that my first urge was to tell someone, to share it. I wanted others to enjoy those kinds of connections when the imagination commingles with the given world.

Eugene Gant's father, W.O., owned a stonecutter's shop on the square. At one point, Wolfe writes that "they" had come to tear down Eugene's father's shop to erect the town's first skyscraper. One of those workman in real life was my grandfather, W.M. Smith, Sr., who did not understand in the least my enthusiasm for what he remembered as "some old buildings."

How could he understand that his Asheville was not Wolfe's Asheville? The Wolfes of Spruce Street, off Pack Square, were uptown folks compared to the Smiths of Biltmore and Oakley. My grandfather's skills at carpentry, as they had been for my great grandfather Buckner, became my father's translated into the simple but powerful philosophy of a hard day's work "on the job" for adequate though never excessive wages. One worked hard and was secretly proud of it. When my generation had more of an opportunity for a college education, a good number of us became teachers. At least, we were told, we wouldn't have to work outside during the bad months.

When I teach I always have a strong sense of purpose; I feel that what the class is doing is important, that this is my job and

theirs, not a time to waste, not a time for excessive levity if that gets in the way of getting the job done.

It has not always been that way with me. I can distinctly remember that while I was in the third grade, when we lived out "in the country" in New Bern where my father had built his own house in his spare time, I brought home a report card with a considerable number of "Ns" for "needs improvement." My mother, in the space provided for parental response, wrote that "we are going to have more homework and less T.V. done around this house." Education was valued, but I was never paid for good grades; it was made clear that one worked there. Characteristically, my father left the details of our schoolwork to my mother. My sister, Wanda, older than I by four years, created a fine example for me to follow, excellent grades from start to finish. When he would look at my report card, or hers, there would be only a dismissive word or two if he detected some irregularity. As I think back, I believe his cursory glances at our school evaluations must have covered his growing concern as I demonstrated less and less aptitude for math or science. When I told him sometime during my senior year I wanted to be a teacher he made a remark about the low pay and didn't I want to become some kind of engineer?

The last comment was made when it was clear that by January of 1965 I had been accepted without obstacle to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. When he said, "engineer," I laughed, an inappropriate reaction since what he was really saying was that he

had always wanted to be an engineer, or, more probably, an architect, but he had been given no real chance.

My father, William McKinley Smith, Jr., returned from his stint in the Marine Corps with a wife and a child and the only skill he knew or had practiced, carpentry. When I appeared in August of 1947, he was working with his father and brothers for Merchant Construction Company in Asheville before he took a job with P.S. West Construction Company located in Statesville, North Carolina. In those post war years, West opened a branch in eastern North Carolina and sent my father "down the mountain" with his young family to build A & P stores, banks and high schools. My father had quickly moved up, into the position of construction superintendent. We moved first to Greenville, North Carolina, then to New Bern, and eventually back to Greenville, where my parents still live.

My father had briefly attended Asheville-Biltmore College on the G.I. bill. When the money for that ran out, his venture into higher education ceased, and I have always felt that as we moved to the eastern flatlands, it became a clear goal for him that all his children should get a college degree.

In the summer of my junior year of high school in Greenville, I began to get a new form of education from my father. I became one of his laborers, and I was quickly introduced to his notion of fair play when he went to some pain to avoid being accused of giving me soft jobs. Suffice it to say I looked forward to the return of September and school. It was my initiation into back-breaking and

sometimes dangerous work. I realized to my horror that I could easily get hurt and no one really cared. It was a sort of code: one worked hard, one didn't put others in danger, one didn't waste time.

The reason I am recalling these memories here is because I strongly believe that my working relationship with my father during those summers of my high school and college years has in many ways influenced my practice of teaching over the years. It strikes me as ironic that I do not feel that way about my professional education training at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. And it is also true that recently, in the last four years, my attitude toward teaching has undergone a drastic revision.

In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to examine the reality of my teaching experience by searching for reference points in my past to help me understand how my career evolved. In so doing, I would like to underscore what is for me a central truth concerning the essentially human nature of the profession and the need to begin to view it more that way than as some sort of technical implementation. By the same token, teachers must also realize to a greater degree that what they do, or what they have the power of doing, is not really like any other work. It is my strong belief that only through a reflective, internal, individual process can teachers begin to improve their self-esteem as professionals and hope to change the societal view of the importance of teaching.

My starting point would be to say something that might seem essentially obvious: teaching is basically a human act. My

assumption is that the humanity goes out of it both ways, for the teacher and for the student. When the complex and wonderful relationship between teacher and student is better understood, when both regard themselves and are regarded as beings deserving of greater respect and dignity than is currently the case, then, and only then, can we expect genuine educational reform to have a chance. For those who have different priorities, S.A.T. scores, smoothly running schedules, or balanced budgets, I can only predict that they will continue to be disappointed by the failure of our schools because, in effect, they are missing the point.

Earlier I said that I had learned much about life from working on construction. One of those lessons was that one does not, by some careless act, put another in jeopardy. It seems to me that is done all the time in public education because of a lack of reflection. Action is not matched by an evaluation of what is being done, what possible injury is being done, to human beings. I am not sure whether it is indigenous to Americans, but it seems to me that we wait until the bridge falls many times before we decide to inspect bridges; in my estimation, the bridge is falling between what we think we want to do in education and what we are, in fact, doing.

In public education, we are often guilty of trying to survive the day without decoding the larger message of the interdependence we share as individuals with the school community. I recall working for my father in the summer of 1964.

We were laying huge slabs of what is called insulrock into place between beams on the roof of a commercial building. After the insulrock was put in place, tarred paper was rolled out in preparation for the hot tar seal. Many people were busy with various tasks, one of which was to immediately cut a hole in the tar paper where there was no insulrock in a place where the air conditioning unit would eventually be placed. It was the job of some carpenters to do that. But they failed to cut a hole quickly enough, and a young man walked over it, thinking it was solid footing. He fell through, one story down, to the ground below, hitting his back on some stored l-beams. We heard his screams.

I never saw my father move so fast, nor was I aware he was capable. There was no phone on the site. He had to race down the road to call help. Work ceased. We all stood there, some on the roof, some on the ground, as the young worker screamed and cursed in pain. The carpenter whose job it had been to cut the hole lit a cigarette and tried to look unresponsible. In just a few minutes, my father's truck came roaring back down the narrow dirt road followed closely by a rescue squad truck.

Later, the injured man was taken away. I heard someone say, "Damnedest thing. Kid went to Viet Nam and didn't get a scratch. Here he falls through a roof."

None of us escaped that day without the severest of lectures from my father, the superintendent. The carpenter was fired. In that community of a construction site, there was a certain code of conduct

that revolved around one basic premise: one did not endanger himself or others. If two men were obliged to pick up a board and carry it, it was inappropriate to half-way grab it. The same held true with, say, holding a ladder for someone. You really held it; you didn't slip into that carelessness of tedium that can so easily take over "on the job."

In other words, I learned something about authenticity of action, being rather than seeming, the importance of following through and giving a real effort. To do less was incomprehensible to my father. What one did in one's work went very far in one's self-definition. The honor and dignity of hard work seemed so appropriate to construction. Out of the concrete dust and trash and piles of fresh pine boards, one could, daily, watch the progress of one's, and everyone else's, efforts, no matter how menial. I remember feeling part of something good as the building rose.

As often as not, my job would be what I considered menial, moving concrete blocks, sweeping, digging. Part of the Code of Construction was if you weren't busy, you had to look busy. You were being paid and you were expected to be doing something. I remember detesting the charade of pretending to be busy. I remember thinking that I was perfectly prepared to do what I was asked, but work was work and rest was rest, and I didn't like having to falsify my effort. I often tell my students to seek work which engages their imagination, something they actually enjoy doing, something to please themselves, not a clock-watching boss.

As a common laborer in those five summers, I was, more often than not, a clock watcher, agonizing for the day and the heat to be done. There were two notable exceptions that stand out for me. Once, I found myself "waiting on masons," keeping the highly paid brick masons busy by keeping the mortar, bricks, and scaffolds ahead of them so there would be no down time. My mind was engaged organizationally; it was fun rather than drudgery.

On another occasion, I was cutting ceiling molding with a mitre saw; each piece had to be planned and fitted. I remember not wanting to go home at quitting time which theretofore had been unthinkable.

Dialogue With the Past

As I said earlier, I received little of use from the School of Education at Chapel Hill. I had, though, been touched by much of the literature I had read as an undergraduate, particularly in English and philosophy. Modern American poetry, Eliot, Pound, Williams, all seemed to me voices I had been listening for, and it seemed a great way to spend one's life in the reading of them. I remember reading all of John Updike and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

I chose to student teach in the fall of 1969 so as not to interfere with spring track, and my sister asked me to be a guest speaker at Williamston High School, where she taught, and before I returned to Chapel Hill for the year, I did give a talk to five classes on Thomas Wolfe. Never in any of the construction work I did for my father did I ever get as exhausted as I did after that one day

of "teaching." And never was I ever more sure of what I wanted to do with my life.

I student taught at Parkland High School in Winston-Salem. It was an interesting experience. The school day was broken into "mods" of twenty minutes. An English class would meet for one mod on Monday, two mods on Tuesday, and three mods on Wednesday. The school system was experimenting with ways of making the curriculum more relevant to the students. No one could anticipate the social upheaval that was to occur there in the 1970s. Almost nothing in my professional training prepared me along those lines. One did one's student teaching, and one got a job. That was about it.

Comparing my initial teaching experiences with my construction work, I always come back to what I think my father taught me that held me in greater stead than my professional education. As a sort of mentor, my father instilled in me a love for authenticity, a sort of protestant equivalent of Hemingway's imprecation to always have a built-in crap detector. My father did not have anything to do with shoddy work; he was, in this regard, my firm foundation.

Parkland, with its mod system, was an early example for me of passing trends in education, fleeting attempts to make it all work, and yet that honest attitude toward work I learned on the construction site is somehow more permanent. To that extent, then, my experiences with my father represent for me what I think of as my first of three lives, what might better be called my preconceptual life where I learned that work was serious and involved.

My high school and college years had been marked by a growing cynicism as I became more and more aware of the contradictions and hypocrisies which I found all around me. Holden Caulfield in Salinger's Catcher in the Rye became my hero, as he did for many others, and though I did not know it then, I was beginning the process of examining events in my life for that same authenticity I had been tutored for by my father's refusal to take second best and that I would find suspicious in trendy educational schemes and strategies beginning at Parkland. More and more, I began to look for models in fictional characters like Caulfield, and more and more I moved toward my second life.

When I teach transcendentalism to high school juniors, I try to remember how little it made sense to me when I was sixteen years old. In fact, I often think of my first eighteen years as a time when the preponderance of what I understood about life came from the given of my parents, the world through their eyes, their epistemology passed on to me.

As I moved away from that life, I entered into a more dangerous one of self-discovery and risk. This "second life" I think of as one more solipsistic and, perhaps, arrogant. In this life, one rejects in many ways the givens of the first life and sees himself as self-sufficient. Much of life is perceived as bogus and unfulfilling. One strikes out on his own. He is miserable but independent. One is bathed in a sort of self-adoring awareness. Death is far away, if at all.

Whether or not the sensory world alone exists, or whether there is the unseen world promised by his parents, this second-life man believes he, and he alone, must find the answers. His actions, my actions, were reactions to the first life. He, I, moved on.

When I started teaching in the fall of 1969, I resembled my father in many "first life" ways. Like the Marine Corps drill instructor he had been, I taught my classes. Discipline was never a problem because we were on the job, not on a picnic, and I communicated, for the most part, that sense of mission I had learned well. As I look back, I think the analogy works well because I approached teaching, and I approached students almost as faceless boot campers who would be taught whether they wanted it or not. What overwhelms students many times is the spectacle of a teacher who takes his job seriously and with passion, perhaps because not all educators do. These are often the teachers one remembers because, in their zeal, they get one's attention; one can't escape.

As I look back, I would describe my first ten to twelve years as a teacher, what I am calling here my second life, as a time of prescription, a time in which I did a lot of talking and not enough listening, a time when, with little patience, I told my world how things would be, how to write a structure essay, how to read a poem, and how to behave.

Since my formal education as a teacher had done little if anything to lead me to an awareness of humanity in the situation of teaching, I had only to fall back on my "first life" examples: my

father, the Marine, who was a good director but not a good listener, and the unquestioned given of my parents' world. I taught English like my father taught carpentry, through example with little guided practice. As a superintendent, my father would rather do it to get it done right and expeditiously than take time to teach it. In the same way, I lectured too much, was too autocratic, and was largely unaware of the students as human beings.

In my second life, I moved as though I were my own person while unconsciously using the stern lessons of my first life as a model. Gradually, through those years of teaching, many of which I finished without any evaluator ever coming into my classroom, I began to emerge as if from a long sleep. I began to shed my first two lives in favor of the third one which I believe I am in now, in which I am still looking for authenticity.

I graduated, as I have said, from Carolina in 1969. In 1979, I took a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In many ways this degree was the extension of an early love of writing, poetry and stories, which began my sophomore year in high school through the guidance of an English teacher, Robert Mulder, who encouraged me to submit a poem to the Raleigh News and Observer. I did submit a poem entitled, "Lord, Give Us Peace" which was published in 1963. While at Carolina, I entered a short story about a boy and his father entitled, "My Father's Pompano" which won third place in the Thomas Wolfe Creative Writing Contest in 1969. Throughout my adult life, I have had a love

for fiction and poetry which I have held as being more effective mediums for me than expository prose and that is why I have included both in this study.

This master's degree came at the end of a decade of teaching and was also a time when I was afforded an interesting perspective of trends in education which attempted to respond to the social upheaval of racial integration. My own search for authenticity was mitigated as I watched curriculum, textbooks, and attitudes swing to facilitate the social struggle. Content, it seemed, was less important than surviving the school day.

At this point, I need to go back and pick up on one other thread of influence in my life that has deeply affected my professional life. It began for me in those days before integration. This was my relationship to and participation in track and field. I ran track for Carolina, lettering all four years, as I had before that at Junius H. Rose High School. At Chapel Hill, I was not a star half-miler, but I was dependable and consistent.

When I went for placement interviews in the spring of 1969, I chose to interview with Burlington City Schools. During that interview, the representative did not want to discuss my future as an English teacher so much as he wanted to talk about their need for a person to start a track program at the new high school. I took the job and started the program and have been coaching running in one form or another for twenty years. It is revealing to note that both teaching jobs I have gotten have been primarily for coaching. What I taught has always been treated as an incidental.

What kind of teacher did I become in those jobs? In the broadest sense, I would characterize it this way: My approach when I arrived at Cummings High School in the fall of 1969 was both dictatorial and prescriptive. I quickly became known as a "hard" teacher. In all fairness, however, I can say that on the whole, I also became known as a "good" teacher, more than competent, intense, and lacking, to a degree, in humor. I have never been able to have "fun" if the work was not done. This legacy comes straight from my father-as-superintendent. I have also found it difficult to endure laziness, tardiness, or complacency very well or with patience. I came in right in the middle of cultural upheaval arising from racial integration and protests over our involvement in Viet Nam, and I assumed that such indecision, chaos, and short-sighted planning that I observed all through the 1970s was typical. For the most part, I was right.

My "second life," then, was both a reaction to and a product of my "first life." My "third life," the one I believe I am currently in, began sometime in the early 1980s, and for convenience, I associate it with my introduction into the doctoral program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As part of my despair that teaching could be insufferably the same for always, and, in part, as a result of my fear of stagnation intellectually, I began, somehow, to care more about people, not just but certainly including, my students. I began to realize that not only was my dictatorial method of teaching a dehumanizing factor in their lives, I also began to

understand how I was being used and objectified as part of a school system that really cared little for me as an individual and seemed to ignore or be unaware of the considerable power I had over students' lives.

As result of this fundamental change in attitude, I developed greater empathy for students, tried consciously to be less sarcastic and abrasive in the classroom, and became increasingly interested in their problems. Part of me had to overcome learned inhibitions from hugging a student, say, or putting a hand on a shoulder when it was needed. What happened, in part, I think, is that I began to let my guard down a bit, allowed myself to be human, to admit error or ignorance. I began sometime in the early 1980s to remove from my thoughts that students were somehow the enemy. To this day, it is a relief when students finally arrive in August. I think any teacher who does not feel this way should consider seriously doing something else.

This change for me signals the onset of the "third life," though I am not yet sure how it came about. I have felt more for students, and I have felt more strongly for my profession, stronger rage at the injustices, and a strong commitment to help it without really knowing how to help it. Indeed, this study stands as my plunge toward not accepting the status quo of teaching as a despairing given by trying to find a better, newer vision of what it might be.

Every teacher feels peaks and valleys about his or her work, self-worth, and effectiveness. My second life might be termed my

adolescence as a teacher because of my egotistical and dictatorial manner. At the same time I began to despair about my career choice even while being aware that teaching was all I was meant to do. I felt no mission beyond the day-to-day routine.

I stated earlier that I could not tell, exactly, when this change of heart and attitude came about, but I think the change owes a lot to a particular course I took early in my course work, "Helping Relationships" as taught by Dr. William Purkey, an energetic, supremely optimistic teacher who never failed to make me regain some pride in the importance of what I did for a living. As he described it, I was a "helper" in the lives of other people. The cynicism which was characteristic of the second life remained to a degree because as I looked around the class I saw other teachers, nurses, counselors, and ministers, all of whom worked to improve the world while only being gently tolerated and certainly not paid well by the society in which they dwelled.

After each class I would feel the zeal of coming from a religious meeting and would go to work the next day with renewed strength. That euphoria would last two or three days before the glow was diminished. But a more lasting effect the class had on me was to make me have a renewed interest in the importance of the profession of teaching, which, combined with my growing recognition of students-as-humans helped me make the transition into what I am calling my third life.

This issue of "importance" has always figured powerfully into my view of professional life. As long as I can remember, it has mattered to me whether or not my services are needed, whether or not I am well-regarded by students, co-workers, and parents. What Bill Smith taught me, among other things, on that construction job was to take a deep, quiet pride in the excellence with which you work. As a teacher, that pride resides in a hidden place and is quite important to me. This is what I would call the real teacher, the teacher who, in spirit and in intellect, functions as an autonomous individual, free of the oppression of the conditions imposed on him by an insensitive system in which he works. He cares and thinks and, in his own way, searches for an outlet to express the true him.

What I am talking about, of course, is power. While the collective voice of society agrees that what I do in the classroom is important, it cannot bring itself to adequately support my efforts in any but a mediocre manner, and, on one level, it does not trust me to labor independently; society wants to control me as it wants me to control my students.

In my third life, I have responded to this awareness of student-as-human being and myself as social being by wondering how one transforms teaching into a strong profession where teachers are respected for what they do, and what they do consists in large measure of being more than controllers of children and vehicles of information. I have, of course, been frustrated because most teachers and administrators are inundated with the present and do not have time, energy, or vision to search for alternatives.

But the one idea that has occurred to me in this latest teaching life is although the prospect for change in education is limited on the large scale, the need for teachers to empower themselves is not only present but crucial at this point. For me personally, I have found reason enough to stay in teaching and hopefully to write about teaching and work for fundamental change in the profession.

Maxine Greene speaks of the need for teachers to awaken from the lethargy of routine and the usualness of poor conditions to become aware that one's power comes from one's ability to make choices, to perceive alternatives, to cross gaps. I have come to feel that I can somehow educate teachers to greater possibilities in not only self-esteem but to see themselves in a more political and social frame.

I feel that teachers who remain in teaching for any length of time, who have satisfactory evaluations, often have a tendency to perpetuate the system by feeling helpless to change, by feeling that their opinion, because it is not sought, is not worthy or even sound. Simply put, I think teaching is too important to allow such a feeling to continue unchecked. I want to help change perceptions of teachers so that they feel more power over their professional lives by becoming more and more aware of choices and possibilities, by becoming more and more involved. The legacy of my third life is greater social awareness in teaching, greater awareness of the need to alert my colleagues that they have the potential to become exactly that, to become more than "co-workers." In my mind, that responds back to the first and second lives by wanting to do the job right, by

not being satisfied with second-rate work, in this case, second-rate conditions.

Earlier I mentioned the effect of William Purkey's class upon me, how it made me feel better about my professional work and how his radiant optimism had the effect of neutralizing my cynicism. I remember one of the habits he shared with us was that he was fond of "having a project" on campus, some modest vision which he would work on by changing attitudes and lobbying for change.

I could relate to that practice because at my high school I try to do the same thing. I remember just a few years ago when I was an assistant girls basketball coach I noticed there was no national anthem played before the girls' game the way there was before the boys' game. I made inquiries. No one seemed concerned. The girls played at 6:00 p.m. typically, preceding the boys' 8:00 p.m. start. Six p.m. was an inconvenient time to arrive for the band. No one seemed to think adversely of the unequal treatment; no one was concerned about this tacit suggestion of inferiority. With some cajoling, I was able to change this act of discrimination, but when I ceased coaching, old habits were relearned. I think small projects like this one are more than worth the effort. I think involved, aware teachers ask disturbing questions and press for small and large change as an expression of their professional vitality.

In this autobiographical study, then, I have tried to show how I have, in some measure, evolved in my own professional aliveness, how I have acted upon my early desire to become a teacher, but how

I had taught for some fifteen years before I began to change in my views of teaching, how I had become more aware of the humanity of students and of teachers, and most importantly for me, how I have lately begun to see, as a cause in my life, the need to help teaching beyond trying to be the best teacher I can be. Lately, I have begun to explore how a teacher can lobby for significant change in the system, and I have become, during the course of this study, fascinated with the steps and mechanisms of social change. During the course of writing this dissertation, the countries of eastern Europe had undergone extreme modifications, and I have tried to find parallels for such far-reaching change in the educational system in which I work.

I am convinced that only when teachers are enabled to become more responsive and responsible for what they do, more directly in control over their professional lives does education have a chance to move out of its sluggish indifference to the people it serves and is served by. I see teachers as potential school leaders, practitioners who are willing to transform the profession to one befitting its own transformative characteristics. Like Plato's cave prisoners, many teachers see only shadows of themselves and of students, and they must break the chains of indifference and passivity which currently marks the profession and move outward, toward the light, toward a clearer vision of who they are, and then, a clearer vision of what they can be.

It would be a mistake to think that in my third life I had moved away from the lessons of my father which so dominated my early

career. In it, he, in his own way urged me to pursue excellence, and I, for my part, am trying to do that, still, for myself and for the profession with which I am so concerned.

CHAPTER III

THE WRITERS

The issues which concern my thinking about the possibilities of education for critical inquiry and awareness center on the classroom teacher's supposed, assigned, and possible place in the school setting. As I have noted earlier, teachers find themselves caught in the dilemma of being told how critical education is to the growth and nourishment of a healthy society while at the same time they are often expected to practice without sufficient resources, respect, or responsibility necessary and appropriate for the work. Teachers are often perceived, at best, as skilled technicians or clerks while asked to do the job of specialists and experts. And, in turn, this "job" itself is generally regarded as being the very important business of sharing information, passing along the culture, but often times not the extremely important enterprise of teaching critical thinking. I think it is fair to say that teachers, in general, are not encouraged, nor expected, nor thought capable of deeply investigative critical thinking, but it is the position of this paper that a critical, questioning attitude is a necessary component of the transformative teacher and a crucial part of the legacy of his influence upon his students. It is the commitment to a transmission of the joys of a critical stance to living that simultaneously transforms the teacher and makes his work itself transformative, active, engaged, and vital.

In this chapter, I discuss several authors who speak to the issues I have tried to raise in this study. While these authors are certainly diverse in the particulars of their views of educational reform, I think it is fair to say they all attempt to voice a critical view of education which grounds itself in a social and cultural context rather than a technical or methodological one. I find that these authors seek alternatives to the basic ways our society thinks about education as a profession.

I have come to these critics because, as noted in chapter two, I had become disenchanted in my undergraduate days with conventional educational theorizing which seemed alien and largely inapplicable to what really happens in schools. For as long as I can remember, the type of educational thought which dwells upon the objective and prescriptive has always seemed foreign to me, uninformed, and disconnected from the contingencies I actually encounter in the classroom. It has seemed uninformative, and, in many ways, unusable. Most particularly, I found myself rejecting views on education which presented themselves authoritatively but did not speak to me or seek input from the experience of teachers.

In the writers included here, I find critics who attempt to question many of our basic, sometimes unexamined, attitudes toward education in America. It is to them I have taken my questions about the possibilities of the role of the classroom teacher in public education. The presentation of these authors attempts in no way to be exhaustive of their work or of the subject of critical school

reform in general. What it does try to do is present a series of authors who speak in various ways to the issues with which I am most deeply concerned in this study, namely those issues of personal, social, and cultural involvement for teachers interested in authentic educational reform.

Two of these authors, Maxine Greene and William Pinar, tend to speak most clearly to the personal attitudes and development of fully conscious classroom teachers by writing about the teacher's inclination toward personal reflection and vision as a part of his professional process. The other authors I have chosen to discuss, Ira Shor, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and David Purpel, tend to speak more generally about conditions in public education by writing about the need for a critical reassessment of assumptions and conclusions which shape not only our educational system, but also our culture. Theirs is a larger or more macro critique of education. In them, the personal experience of the teacher is not specifically treated, but they argue for a system of education which promotes and encourages the type of educational environment that Greene and Pinar want.

I include these particular authors because of the various ways their contributions inform my struggle to locate and understand a critique of education which addresses reform based upon a humanistic agenda. By way of review, I would like to clarify what I mean by that and at the same time put forth a series of questions which have served me as basic points of inquiry as I have read these authors.

When I say I am trying to investigate the "role" of the teacher, I am as much as saying that the conventional wisdom of society and the modern practice with which teachers formulate a professional self-image has seemed and does seem to me to sell the profession short if a teacher's worth, his proficiency, or his effectiveness are measured (whether by himself or by an evaluator) in strictly objective terminology. What has always seemed special about teaching could not always be fully measured quantitatively. As a certified mentor teacher, which in North Carolina is a teacher who has undergone training to help and to evaluate initially certified teachers, I was trained that if I didn't observe something, it did not happen. Surely there is more to "good teaching," some special chemistry of skill, understanding, and personality than the "behaviors" which one finds on the evaluation instrument. Should not the profession strive to recognize and reward those special qualities of those special people?

My idea in this study is that both teachers and others (administrators, parents, and society at large) should possess a greater awareness of the transformative possibilities of teaching before the teacher-student relationship can have its best possible chance for maximum success. I want to make it clear that at the heart of my idea of authentic educational change is my deep concern for what happens to students in school, but to get there I feel we must focus on what happens to teachers, how they are treated and how they treat themselves as a result of what I am calling their professional self-image.

The authors I examine in this chapter seem to me to be in general agreement that teachers are more than and should be perceived as more than merely a conduit through which the information of the culture passes. These writers are of most interest to me when they shed understanding on these questions:

1. To what extent, if any, should a teacher be aware of or assume responsibility for the conditions under which he works?

Rationale: If a teacher sees himself as merely an employee who does the best with what he is given, who follows orders without ever questioning the process, then I think that teacher is not fully engaged in making the crucial decisions which effect his professional life, and more importantly, he demonstrates a trust in others over the important relations between his students and himself. If teaching is really no more than a transfer of knowledge, and if teachers are the lowest rung in the hierarchy justifiably, then there is no problem. But if one has a greater vision of the nature of teaching, then the real issue is one of power and empowerment.

2. If one accepts that the teacher should understand and then act upon the idea that conditions must change for teaching as a profession to achieve its potential as an act of transformation, what strategy or strategies should a teacher adopt so that his is a profession in which he has a real voice over what he does?

Rationale: A co-worker once told me I must feel more oppressed with our educational situation than most. Her attitude seemed to be one of unquestioning acceptance of, say, thirty-five in a class if that was what she was given, out-moded texts, or distracting and time-consuming paperwork. The question, though, is whether as teachers we accept these conditions or find them unacceptable. If unacceptable, what can or should we do to change them? It seems to me it is a matter of awareness and attitude. But what do my authors say about the priorities for real change? How can a teacher become authentically engaged in a program for change? I see my co-worker as being well-intentioned while at the same time being unreflective and lacking in vision, content, like many of her students, perhaps, to get through the day, week, and year as well as possible.

3. From a teacher's viewpoint, can authentic educational reform best be brought about, that is, can schools best become institutions which celebrate life and its development rather than practicing control over it, by a personal stand or a public one or a combination?

Rationale: One has the temptation to be full of despair and cynicism. Even as I write this paper, the state of North Carolina and the City Council of Greensboro are in the process of cutting funds for education. In education one does not have to travel far to reach a broadly-based and deeply felt pessimism. And yet there are those of us who choose to remain, still convinced we can "make a difference" in students' lives while at the same time feeling a

constant uncomfortableness with society's commitment to education. The educational bureaucracy makes little attempt to exhibit any sensitivity toward my professional situation. As an individual, is there anything I can do to change the structure of education as well as society's collective attitude toward public schooling?

Ira Shor and Paulo Freire

I begin my presentation of critics with Ira Shor and Paulo Freire for two reasons. Freire, a Brazilian educator, is widely known in this country for his foundational work with literacy and consciousness development. In many ways, fundamental and radical educational reform has been articulated by Freire in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970). Freire wants people to think more thoroughly about their world, be more critically engaged with it, as a necessary step toward changing it if that life experience is found lacking and if change for a better life is possible. But what I like about Freire is his desire to help people achieve control over their lives by becoming aware of while developing their autonomy rather than being controlled by those who do not necessarily have the oppressed's best interests in mind.

Secondly, I have chosen another work of Freire's, one more recent that Pedagogy of the Oppressed, because it is in the form of a dialogue which reinforces in my mind the idea that a free and open exchange of ideas is characteristic of the empowered individual. Freire and his partner seem to be intent on living their theories.

That is to say, the conversational format of the work lets me hear the voices of the critics, particularly Freire, who, in many ways has been a leader in the last twenty years of the idea that one of the main purposes of education is a process of enabling individuals to be aware of the potential power they have over their own lives.

Ira Shor is a university professor in the United States who espouses many of the same ideas as Freire but who seems intent upon sometimes transmuting Freire's global concerns to ones which more directly affect educators in this century.

In their work, A Pedagogy for Liberation (1987), Ira Shor and Paulo Freire talk through many of the issues which trouble them about education, teachers, politics, and liberation, or as Shor is fond of calling it, "liberatory education." Freire calls it, "liberating education," and in both cases these critics mean to speak to the problems encountered in any process of schooling whereby the dominant culture seeks to protect its status quo at the expense of both teacher and student, the former, often as not, perceived not as a person by whom transformation of the individual student might be achieved, but rather as merely an unquestioning transmitter of that culture, and the latter of whom control is desired in order that the substance of the culture might smoothly be passed or transferred, again without question.

Both Shor and Freire see the teacher as one in whom much is entrusted and to whom much is possible. The teacher for them is one who has the opportunity, if not always the self-willed power, to

enable individual students to approach the world critically, with questions, with hopes of change, seeing alternatives, beyond what is bequeathed if that legacy is inappropriate or undesirable.

It is perhaps wise to note at this point that the word "teacher" operates for each man in this dialogue somewhat differently based upon each's experience in the world. For Freire, a teacher can be anyone who has the ability to enable a "student" to become more aware of his or her world; thus, in his examples of teachers he speaks of teaching illiterates how to read, write, and think, who, in turn, teach others often, in Freire's Braxilian experience, at the risk of imprisonment or worse. Shor, on the other hand, speaks of teachers as meaning instructors in elementary, secondary, or higher education, though all his examples come from college teaching. One feels though that when he says "teachers ask me" he does not mean colleagues but rather public school teachers.

In any case, I approached Shor and Freire and found them propounding the virtues of liberatory education, but I wondered how teachers can be genuine instruments of transformation, actual promoters of a critically conscious environment if they themselves are not those same questioning, probing, aware individuals one supposes they should want their students to be? The thrust of Shor and Freire's dialogue moves toward the possibilities for creating an active, involved, challenging environment in the classroom, but it also speaks, peripherally, to the teacher in his thought and critical conduct beyond the classroom. They rightly concern themselves mostly

with the practice of the teacher, but a person's critical attitude toward the world does not stop with the interaction he has with his students, particularly if he can somehow affect the environment and possibilities of that involvement with the questions he raises with his colleagues and superiors. Shor's focus, however, is on his experience with college-level criticality, and neither he nor Freire discuss particular contingencies for public school teachers as a group, though I am inclined to think there is a need for such a strategy since in my history with public school teaching, faculty meetings, for example, have almost never existed for the exchange of ideas or questions so much as they have been for the dissemination of practical information.

I assume, then, that one must mold Shor and Freire's ideas to one's particular situation, just as one must "buy into" the premise that the dominant culture has an interest in maintaining itself, its values, and its means of continuance if one views the need for liberation education as being a real issue. Liberation education teaches that part of an education is, or ought to be, the awareness of one's right to question one's world as a means of educating whether a better way of life might be possible. Just as one might see a parent reply to a child who inquires why he must do a thing by saying he must do it because the parent says so, it is possible that the parent might choose to explain the rationale for his or her request without demanding it because he or she has the power to enforce the request. So it could and should be in society, or in the schools, that an

individual can be aware that he or she possesses the strength of will, the self-esteem and the power to ask why a condition must exist, why a thing happens, or why not consider an alternative method. To one in a position of dominance, such questions are dangerous as they tend to attack by probing the existing structure.

For Shor and Freire, one must not only be aware of this power to question and choose, one must study its nature, ". . . through education, we can understand power in society. We can throw light on the power relations made opaque by the dominant class. We can also prepare and participate in progress to change society" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 32). Only when one understands how power flows and in what direction, can he better have a hope of bringing about anything better.

As one begins to understand power as it affects schools, one begins to see the world differently, through a more critical lens in a more inquiring context. The effect occurs in more than just classroom discussions, and the change happened to everyone involved, "the students and teachers will be undertaking a transformation that includes a context outside the classroom, if the process is a liberating one" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 33).

As a first stage, the teacher who sees his role in some way as a liberationist must realize, Freire says, that such a critical attitude toward living and working cannot be foisted upon someone, a teacher or a student, against his will. As stated earlier, one must to some degree agree with the conclusion that a perpetuation of the

mass culture as is has the effect of socializing people "to police themselves against their own freedom" (p. 25) by inducing teachers, for instance, to believe that education is nothing more than consuming a body of information. This process is what Freire calls "transfer teaching," and it has the effect of isolating the individual (teacher, student, person) from his individualism, his personhood, by convincing him that he is not or should not be actively involved in the educational process: he is really a receptor, the more received the better, the more specialized the receptive material, the better. Here one thinks of (and Freire mentions) prescriptive grammar as often being presented as a block of information, its correctness unchallenged and yet often outside the reality of students, from the written word, unchanging and inviolate even though we know language is in a constant flux, new words popping in, obsolete words dropping out, the same with usage. Freire suggests that using the student's own writing to study grammar and literature works (p. 28).

Shor and Freire both agree that the teacher who wants "to liberate" must realize that the individualism which is lost or masked by a curriculum and an educationally philosophical attitude which has as its main goal a continuance of the dominant culture, that teacher must go into the educational situation convinced that he must "have dialogue with the students" (p. 28). Their voice must count as much as the teacher's does because, while the teacher is the leader, the guide, the enabler, the student is more than an objective container into which one places information. The student exists as potential,

more than he is, as he meets the eye, just as the teacher is, and the school is, and the society is. All must be perceived in an unfinished state, and it does damage to the individual to see him a receptor who willingly or unwillingly participates in some sort of filling process. The key factor is his involvement, his motivation to learn about himself; his participation in the process and the realization on his part that he has value as an individual who doesn't necessarily have to accept the world as it presents itself to him is at the heart of the transformative process with which Freire's teachers concern themselves. This teacher must take the "form" of the individual one finds and work with that, while encouraging the student to participate in his own creation and recreation. For Shor and Freire, being "educated" is synonymous with being aware of one's unfinished state, and "not accepting ourselves as finished, reinventing ourselves as we reinvent society" (p. 50).

To see the educational process as merely the consumption of information, what Freire (1983) elsewhere calls the "banking concept" of education, is part of a process of myth making, the myth being that the dominant culture should be imbibed without the consumer's critical appraisal. Accepting the myth "de-forms" rather than transforms those who come under its sway. Freire states that:

the standard transfer curriculum is a mechanistic, authoritarian way of thinking about organizing a program which implies above all a tremendous lack of confidence in the creativity of students and in the ability of teachers. (p. 77)

If the student is "involved" in the class in the way Shor and Freire want him to be might result, for instance, in his asking why the class is reading The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn rather than accepting it as another requirement to be gotten through. And, for that matter, the teacher might well question himself as to why it is in the curriculum rather than passively teaching it year after year. He might well ask, for example, whether it helps or hurts the promotion of racism to see Jim portrayed the way he is. For a student or teacher to know that such questioning is not only condoned but encouraged throws a far different light on a person's connection to the curriculum and the school environment in general. Such an attitude toward the school world puts "into practice a kind of education that critically challenges the consciousness of students" and "necessarily works against [the] myths which deform us" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 55). Transformation here is used to signify a process of taking the "form" "across" to what it has the potential of becoming in the best of worlds, while deformation is the process of inhibiting the reinvention of the person. The constant process of remaking is facilitated by an attitude of critical consciousness, "situated in the real conditions of the people who are making and remaking their society, so their day-to-day curriculum cannot be invented by someone else from a distance, delivered, or imposed upon them" (p. 79).

Shor and Freire perceive the teacher as much more than a neutral propagator of mass culture. He or she is someone who

challenges others, "to know their actual freedom, their real power" (p. 173). But being aware of one's freedom to choose from the alternatives of one's existence can be a frightening experience particularly if one must assume any responsibility for the consequences of one's choices. This holds true for teacher or student. Many people are content to capitulate and let others think and choose for them (they believe). Others, perhaps, are very aware of their own fear of reprisal on the part of those in control. Shor and Freire define the type of domination which must be critically examined as "when I say you must believe this because I say it" (p. 172). But whether I, as teacher, promote an environment in which you feel comfortable critically probing that "belief" is oftentimes another issue.

In the case of the student or the teacher, each, in his own way must have what Freire calls a "dream," which I interpret as a vision of better alternatives, which is separate from what is now happening and is arrived at by this critical examination. Freire suggests one first "dive" into the stream of the status quo and decide whether one wants to swim with or against the current (p. 179); one must become aware of the "transformative power of any activity" (p. 35), to see it dynamically, from all sides, to assess the possibilities. Such is a process for Freire of "illuminating reality" not possible when one merely accepts without awareness or question the world as it is handed him. An individual must, in short, learn, through his critical skills, "to use the possibilities of his

environment" (p. 67). And it is important to Freire that once a person has this vision, this dream, of how things might be different and better, one remains "faithful" to it in spite of the obstacles and opposition which will surely occur when one challenges the dominant mode in a society. By "faithful" I interpret him to mean steadfastness more than stubbornness, and one has to remember that at the same time, a critically aware individual has to constantly reassess his dream and modify it if change is called for.

Concomitant with the dream is limitation and fear. To imagine one's world different than it is typically necessitates also imagining a process of change which challenges the status quo. Freire is clear on the matter that as the stakes rise so, often, do the consequences. One's personal situation can be jeopardized when one questions the prevailing way of doing things, and, in the case of some of the teachers of Freire's acquaintance, the results have been incarceration, in Shor's experience, loss of jobs.

Freire insists, then, that an educator who wants to live and teach a message of critical consciousness must not go into it uninformed or unprepared. One must make careful use of "research and preparation to make opposition count" so that one reduces fear of consequences "by reducing mistakes and unnecessary risks" (p. 66). The whole process of critical consciousness is one of awakening from the slumber of unfairness, depersonalization, and domination. In the most practical terms, then, an individual who dares to imagine alternatives which depend upon changing the present course of events

should not, at the critical moment, revert to naivete by being blind to the ramifications of challenge--whether of power or ego or both, he studies, and he moves slowly; he asks questions. Above all, he is aware of his limitations.

Shor develops this idea of limitations by suggesting that there is a stark reality one must be aware of as he moves to bring about his "dream":

We change our understanding and our consciousness to the extent we are illuminated in real conflicts in history. Liberating education can change our understanding of reality. But this is not the same as changing reality itself. No. Only political action in society can make social transformation, not critical study in the classroom. The structures of society, like the capitalist mode of production have to be changed for society to be transformed. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 175)

As one dreams of a better world, he is very aware that the new one cannot be mandated or legislated from the classroom. At that level, "you can achieve a much better understanding of [each] issue without changing it as reality" (p. 175). The teacher interested in those transformative concerns needs to understand this fundamental concept, which to my mind, simply means understanding that the classroom is potentially the place where seeds of ideas might be planted, but in no way is the classroom the place where one's vision flowers. Again, Shor:

If teachers don't think in terms of phases, levels, gradations in a long process of change, they may fall into a paralyzing trap of saying that everything must be changed at once or it isn't worth changing anything at all. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 35)

Being aware of "the transformative potential of any activity" does not mean being unprepared, idealistic, taking unnecessary risk. And yet, Freire cannot deny that as one moves toward change, be it in the classroom, in the faculty meeting, or anywhere, one challenges the dominant mode and runs risks because conflict is a necessary part of change. Conflict is, he says, "the mid-wife of consciousness" (p. 176). In order to develop genuine consciousness, one must realize the natural resistance to change. In the very process of consciousness, one filters the possible from the impossible. Freire speaks:

The liberating educator has to create by creating, in the very practice of teaching itself, learning the concrete limits for his or her action, getting clear on the possibilities, not too much behind our limits of necessary fear and not too far ahead. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 177)

Freire's notion of "necessary fear" involves an educator realizing and then facing up to the dread of recrimination often associated with the process of actually bringing about significant social change. To ignore the fear is to ignore the clarity of consciousness one seeks. Freire elaborates:

First of all, I think that when we speak about fear, we must be absolutely clear that we are speaking about something very concrete. That is, "fear" is not an abstraction. Secondly, I think we must know that we are speaking about something very normal. Another point I find right now when I'm trying to touch the question is that when we think of fear in these situations it leads us to reflect about the need we have to be very, very clear concerning our choices, which in turn demands some kinds of concrete procedures or practices, which in turn are the actual experiences that provoke fear. To the extent that I become more and more clear concerning my choices, my dreams, which are substantively political and adjunctively pedagogical, to the extent to which I recognize that as an educator I am a politician, I also

understand better the reasons for me to be afraid, because I begin to foresee the consequences of such teaching. Putting into practice a kind of education that critically challenges the consciousness of the students necessarily works against some of the myths which deform us. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 55)

As part of the process of conflict and change the fear is, he counsels, "normal." It is, he goes on, "a manifestation of being alive":

I don't have to hide my fears. But what I cannot permit is that my fear is unjustified, immobilizing me. If I am clear about my political dream, then one of the conditions for me to continue to have this dream is not to immobilize myself in walking towards its realization. And fear can be immobilizing. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 55)

Shor and Freire agree that as one makes the appropriate adjustments, realizing limitations, facing fear, even "cultivating fears," Freire calls it, and maintaining a steadfast interest in the vision of alternatives, the liberating educator must preserve a vigilance over what is allowed to transpire in the classroom (and on this point they are adamant that a liberatory environment is not synonymous with "anything goes"). The teacher is in a position to expose issues worthy of discussion without believing or investing in the idea that social structures could actually be changed in the classroom. The liberatory teacher keeps his vision in perspective and does not expect the improbable.

Part of the "dream," though, is helping students discover their own voice in the world, and that is possible within the confines of the classroom. Just as the teacher is, in his own right, looking for his own political voice in the world, he can provide the student with

a forum for the frank exchange of ideas and an environment where disturbing questions are welcomed, not shunned, and in so doing, Shor and Freire seem to intimate, the teacher can help others while he helps himself to grow in a critically conscious way. It is the job of a liberatory teacher to provide this opportunity for his students. He challenges them, Freire says, "to know their actual freedom, their real power," even though "people may feel manipulated when asked to reflect on such a difficult subject, because it is something they do not want to think about or they want to deny, their fear of becoming free, taking responsibility for their freedom" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 173).

For Shor and Freire, the teacher interested in liberation education must realize that it is all an active process, the teacher changing, and then reflecting upon that change, as he engages others in that same process of change, which is itself undeterred from a close, then an even closer view, of the reality of one's world. For them, finally, "reality is a becoming, not a standing still" (p. 182). As educators, we know we will not make huge changes, but we move that way.

In many ways, A Pedagogy of Liberation represents a synthesis of the questions in which I am interested. That is, in the conversational format of their book, Shor and Freire touch upon issues of teacher (and professor) assumption of risk at both the personal and systemic levels. A teacher should have both a personal goal, a "dream" which forms the basis for the manner in which he conducts his

class, an attitude toward that class. He moves beyond the classroom, in effect, with this sort of commitment because his mind and the minds of his students partake of a broader awareness of the world.

It is true, as I have tried to point out, that Shor and Freire tend to dwell on the transformative power of the teacher in the classroom without addressing the specific plight of a public school teacher in the United States who wants to practice his profession with greater empowerment as part of the given of his work; that is, they really do not discuss how one goes about getting society at large to change its view of teaching in such a way that tends to embrace the idea that a teacher is a powerful force and influence over the lives of students and should be accorded the respect which would affirm and advocate that power. And, finally, one senses that while there is much both agree upon in terms of the need for a view of liberatory education, there is also a fundamental difference in how each perceives the contingencies of education for liberation: Freire's is a more global view where the risks of challenging the dominant mode might include consequences of physical abuse or worse, while Shor struggles with the need for freedom within a society which advertises itself as being free.

Shor and Freire's repetition of one realization is worth noting at this point. For them, the classroom, no matter how transformative it may be in attitude and nature is not a legislative or policy-setting venue. The teacher cannot change the world in there and should not expect to. I am reminded of the injunction of Earth

Day, 1990: Think globally; act locally. In some respects, the teacher interested in liberation for himself and his students must think in inches more than miles as he envisions the road to a better world through being aware of alternatives. Yet, I find that for my purpose, I need to know more about this idea which intrigues me, the relationship of the teacher's "local" experience, what he thinks and how he manifests that attitude in the classroom, and his place in the larger world. Of the radical critics I discuss here, Henry Giroux is one who argues for the need for a revision of schooling which concerns itself more with larger strokes. He is concerned with what I am calling the macro concept of school reform.

Henry Giroux

In his book, Teachers as Intellectuals (1988), Henry Giroux argues for reformation of schooling in the United States which takes into account the transformative potential of public school teachers and concomitantly accords the dignity befitting such a position. His title implies, of course, that teachers are not necessarily perceived as thinkers, those who deal in theoretical work, and he explains that teachers are thought of and controlled, not as thinkers, but rather as skilled technicians whose job it is to reproduce the dominant culture without questioning what they do.

His announced purpose in Teachers As Intellectuals is to further the work of what he calls radical educational theorists by responding to more conservative views of the basic purposes of

schooling. Indeed, Giroux sees his fellow "radical theorists" as unresponsive to the prevailing attitudes of conservatives and therefore guilty of having "caved into" the power interests of those who would keep teachers at bay, controlling them so that they may transmit the culture without trying to modify or add to it transformatively. Giroux says, "Despite its insightful and political analyses of schooling, radical educational theory suffers from some serious flaws, the most serious being its failure to move beyond the language of critique and domination" (1988, p. xxxi). By focusing on the language of domination, theorists undercut "any viable hope for developing a progressive, political educational strategy" (p. xxxi).

By "strategy," I take him to mean that, as a theorist, Giroux sees systematic change as possible only when modes of believing and learning are altered. In the language I have been using here, Giroux, on a pragmatic level, sees little use for a "micro" orientation. His strategy aims at larger target, a larger vision of schooling which conceives of schools as what he calls "democratic sites" where one looks for "opportunities for democratic struggles and reforms within the day-to-day workings of schools" (p. xxxii). Radical pedagogists must, he insists, develop a "theoretical basis" for teachers and others" to experience the nature of what he calls "teacher work" that transcends the clerking and execution of preconceived lesson plans which effectively take the humanity out of teaching. In other words, for Giroux, in an effort to reconceptualize schooling in the way he thinks necessary to allow for the transformative power and the

creative potential an empowered teacher would bring, there are two main steps of this new thinking which must occur: we must begin to see (1) schools as public spheres where democracy is practiced and (2) teachers as "intellectuals" who use their minds to reflect upon the power they invoke and promulgate (p. xxxii).

At the heart of Giroux's argument is the idea of the need for "politicizing" schooling through a sort of collective heightened awareness of the nature of "teacher work" so that those who have an interest in what teachers do (and Giroux would say this includes virtually everyone in the society), and teachers, themselves, might begin to rethink and reform how schools operate:

. . . teachers as intellectuals will need to reconsider, and possibly, transform the fundamental nature of the conditions under which they work. That is, teachers must be able to shape the ways in which time, space, activity, and knowledge organize everyday life in schools. (1988, p. xxxiv)

Teachers do this by first of all recognizing that, as individuals--just like their students, they have a right and a duty to "combine reflection and action," to "address injustices" in the world of the school, just like they should want their students to do. As "intellectuals," teachers would have the opportunity to become "critical actors" who are "committed to developing a world free of oppression and exploitation" (p. xxxiv). For Giroux, one uses memory of past suffering to trigger "resistance" to the prevailing nature of things while at the same time proceeding toward "a better way of life," which I interpret as Giroux's counterpart of Shor and Freire's "dream."

Such a vision is not readily possible, in Giroux's view, as long as there is little, if any, discourse which is geared toward "struggle and commitment" in the school world. The chief method currently employed, as a reflection of the dominant conservative pedagogy, is that which privileges teacher technique over true professionalism. Teachers are evaluated on their proficiency at following orders, as it were, with no critical involvement requested or desired by the administration. To counteract this prevailing mode, Giroux suggests a language of discourse aimed at liberating the teacher from regarding himself, or allowing himself to be regarded as an "obedient technician" since the "language of efficiency and control promotes obedience rather than critique" (1988, p. 4).

Giroux's "discourse" breaks down into four categories: "rationality, problematic, ideology, and cultural capital" (p. 4). "Rationality" he sees as the "assumptions and practices that allow people to understand and shape their own and others' experiences." Also, it encompasses "the interests that define and qualify how one frames and engages problems confronted in lived experience" (p. 4). In other words, Giroux wants to rethink in teaching the given manner in which the language of the profession as a reflection of assumptions about it are conceived. He mentions, in particular, "teacher proof" packages which direct the teacher how to proceed in a lesson. Giroux wonders out loud whether such a rationale says more than one at first notices about what is expected of a teacher if he is not able or does not choose to, as it were, think for himself in a lesson. I wonder

how teachers in higher education would react if prompted, in a pre-packaged way, what to say when teaching. For those who would say teachers need the help, I, along with Giroux, wonder by what means do we want those individuals--who need that help--to be in such a potentially transformative position?

Secondly, Giroux identifies the "problematics" of "conceptual structures," and these he identifies as those issues focused upon and those ignored. As important as what is taught is the hidden agenda of larger goals the school has for the student. Giroux finds it necessary to develop a language which examines that which is not made obvious as much as that which is on the surface. Related to the idea of problematics is Giroux's notion of "ideology" which he defines as "a dynamic construct that refers to the ways in which meanings are produced, mediated, and embodied in knowledge forms, social practices, and cultural experiences" (p. 5). How is it, he asks, that a school attempts to achieve a sense of meaning in what it tries to do each day? Such a meaning is based upon certain assumptions which bear close and critical evaluation by educators.

And lastly, Giroux counts as important what he calls "cultural capital." This he defines as that which "gets labeled as high status knowledge in the schools and universities and thus provides legitimacy to certain forms of knowledge and social practices" (p. 5). Thus, for instance, the humanities are currently devalued by the natural sciences, and, I think, the world of sports are an obsession in our society. For Giroux, it is critical that the cultural currency

be examined as a de facto way of measuring the messages issued by a school. The "cultural capital" is that which the culture trades in, puts its stock in, and openly or covertly, sets its standards by.

The current practice in North Carolina of end-of-course testing serves as a ready example of Giroux's point about cultural capital. The state establishes guidelines, the teachers teach, and the students take tests which are graded by machine. The teacher receives the results some time later and records them. If the state decides, for instance, that dramatic irony (but not situational irony) should be taught, and then tested, there is no room for debate or inquiry. There are no essay questions, no forum for working out ideas in written (and therefore, individual) form. As individuals, both teacher and students cease to function beyond each's ability to serve the content of what Giroux calls "the dominant culture." Schools are regarded as, "sites for transference," places where "social and cultural reproduction" is the goal. The net effect of such an attitude is that the student is charged with "mastering someone else's meaning." His subjectivity is not important and cannot be measured. Such an attitude, "ignores the dreams, histories, and visions that people bring to schools" (Giroux, 1988. p. 6).

In Giroux, as in Shor and Freire, one sees the need for public school teachers first to recognize the existence of a problem, namely that the given world, the educational world teachers are handed, must not, of consequence, be taken for granted and for unchangeable. Part of the "power" of being "empowered" is to recognize that one has the

ability to question one's world. Without that, it seems, not much more is possible unless it falls by chance toward the helpful and humane. What Giroux calls "intellectuals" are professionals who, as an alternative to being merely a clerk or a technician for the state in a transferal educational process, become ones who, as a way of professional life (a) question the taken-for-granted, (b) function as active critical citizens, and (c) perceive schools as sites of democratic possibilities, that is, places where individuals can grow authentically, according to their own personal potentials (Giroux, 1988, p. 6).

Giroux fears that many teachers do not understand that, as individuals, they must examine their own place in the cultural capital exchange, examine their own ideas and attitudes about why they are there in the school. Such a self-examination, or a lack of one, is the difference between existing as a passive worker/clerk/technician and as an active professional, who attempts to transform the lives of his students in a positive way. For Giroux, part of the function of a school is to serve as a site where the concept itself of schooling is shown to be non-neutral and political. Discussing, for instance, whether or not a school does serve, in fact, the students' authentic needs is part of the course of study. In short, Giroux wants teachers who think critically and who enable students to think more critically as a necessary part of the purpose of schooling. To accomplish this, the curriculum should contain strategies whereby students and teachers "decode" history (personal history,

institutional history, societal history) as a prerequisite to a "vision of the future" (Giroux, 1988, p. 8). How else can one declare one's independence from racism, sexism, and class domination? In Giroux's thinking, there is one question which forms a foundation on which one can begin one's education: "What is it that this society has made of me that I no longer want to be?" (Giroux, 1988, p. 8). Such a question serves equally well for teacher and student.

More than critical inquiry, Giroux sees alternatives to blind acceptance of the given world consisting of teachers, who, for instance, acquire more control over the development of curriculum materials. He wants teachers who do not placidly accept what they are given to work with, but he is not overly specific on how teachers should go about changing the societal perception that renders them receivers of decisions rather than makers.

He does, however, acknowledge that in the current zeal for reform witnessed throughout the country, there is a climate of change which might offer teachers more and more opportunity to become both more vocal and more visible. In Giroux's opinion, if teachers do not seize the opportunity to promote a self-critique and a collective organization, then they are in jeopardy of a process of continued distancing and objectification on the part of "experts" far removed for the authentic educational scene. As objects of the decisions, teachers are often ignored. Giroux says:

For instance, many of the recommendations that have emerged in the current debate either ignore the role teachers play in preparing learners to be active critical

citizens, or they suggest reforms that ignore the intelligence, judgment, and experience that teachers might offer in such a debate. (Giroux, 1988, p. 121)

Because the decisions which affect the teacher and student come down from "above," the personality and individuality of the learning situation is generalized, in Giroux's view. It is here that the professionalism goes out, is denied, or is not permitted teachers. "When teachers do enter the debate, they are the object of educational reform that reduces them to the status of high level technicians carrying out dictates and objectives decided by experts far removed from the everyday realities of classroom life" (Giroux, 1988, p. 121).

To put it more bluntly, Giroux sees that teachers have no real voice in the arena of school reform debate because they are not accorded any real status of expertise in their professional world which itself results from a societal distrust of teacher training programs. If one is not trained to think critically as part of his professional preparation, he goes into his work without the tools to question the integrity of the conditions under which he is supposed to work. In other words, in a colossal irony, teachers are not seen as "intellectuals" because they are not trained to be that which it would be logical to assume is the main part of their focus.

In general then, decision-makers see teachers, Giroux thinks, as essentially workers who have no real input to give in the business of education. They are merely ones who are bidden to implement, to go and produce results. Missing from the formula, in Giroux's view, is the recognition of the special possibilities between teachers and

students which are at the heart of authentic educational experience which go unaccounted for by the distant decision-makers, the involvement in human growth, problems, and vision. Giroux argues that the same view of education which seeks to pass on the dominant culture through strict control (which stifles imagination and endangers freedom) continues on with the teacher who is expected to be effective (which means passing on the culture) but who is never consulted in the designing of her profession's intellectual climate. Giroux elaborates,

Technocratic and instrumental rationalities are also at work within the teaching field itself, and they play an increasing role in reducing teacher autonomy with respect to the development and planning of curricula and the judging and implementation of classroom instruction. This is most evident in the proliferation of what has been called "teacher-proof" curriculum packages. The underlying rationale in many of these packages reserves for teachers the role of simply carrying out predetermined content and instructional procedures. (Giroux, 1988, p. 124)

Giroux sees it simply as a choice between whether teachers are to be managed or whether they are systematically encouraged to take a more active role in the educational process beyond transference of information. But how is this more active mode to be brought about so that teachers see themselves as well as being seen as what he calls "intellectuals?" Inevitably, one must begin with the attitude and approach, as well as the philosophy, one takes toward teacher training. At the heart of that view, Giroux insists, must be the realization that, "teaching cannot be reduced to merely training in the practical skills, but involves, instead, the education of a class of intellectual vital to the development of a free society (Giroux, 1988, p. 126).

For teachers to be thus regarded, that is, as intellectuals, Giroux finds it crucial that the society begin to rethink how it perceives the nature and function of a school. It is not a neutral place, nor is the teacher neutral. Of course, for those conclusions to be reached, one must lend weight to the idea of a need for a critical approach; that is, for a teacher to be seen as something more than a neutral technician and agent for the transmission of the culture, he must announce his selfhood through the manifestation of his opinion, and by his critical stand toward the world. In so doing, he can advertise the information for societal consumption that schools are not subdued sites, but are economically, culturally, and socially tied to issues of power and control (Giroux, 1988, p. 126). Also, involved in this process of intellectualization is the need to recognize that students, themselves, are not objects to be controlled and manipulated. Thus, Giroux says, "transformative intellectuals take seriously the need to give students an active voice in their learning experiences" (p. 127).

To hope for these fundamental changes is, in Giroux's view, a necessary ingredient of the formula which leads to a world where teachers are intellectuals is a reality. In fact, such a world's existence would also imply an environment of respect for life and selfhood and shared power. Such an educational arena is, of course, not easily attained because of an unwillingness to share authority on the part of those who are afraid of any changes in the status quo. In his eighth chapter, "Culture, Power and Transformation in the

Work of Paulo Freire: Toward a Politics of Education," Henry Giroux (1988) points out that Freire views education in terms of meaning, critique, and emancipation, rather than merely a process of impersonal mastery of information, and that teaching can and should be more than a proficiency of pedagogical techniques.

Freire's ingredients for viable social change are, as noted in Giroux, grounded in hope for something better. But more than that, one must be encouraged to participate in critical reflection and be part of a collective struggle. For Giroux, Freire avoids cynicism from and despair over repression by having a clear vision of life as something which involves a liberated humanity, rooted in a deep mutual respect, as well as a willingness to participate in an ongoing struggle against those who would control others for obvious or hidden purposes (Giroux, 1988, p. 113).

In addition, one of the main contributions Freire lends to Giroux in the debate over the need for the establishment of teachers as intellectuals is the notion that before this can become a reality one needs language, in this case a language of critique, which would enable not only teachers, but students and parents as well, to have the ability to speak to possibilities for change, ways of articulating and perceiving alternatives (p. 111). Without that, the participants in the educational process simultaneously become participants in their own oppression. In other words, the language which articulates the understanding and power in one's world should be drawn from that world. Such expression requires legitimization. It should not be

the case that teachers fill some mold for interpreting their professional experience outside that experience. In the same vein, students should be encouraged to deal with the world in their own terms. To accommodate that, "educators will have to work with the experiences that students bring to schools and other educational sites" (Giroux, 1988, p. 117). That administrators and teachers are often afraid to hear of the experiences of students, or even of themselves for that matter, is a major symptom for Giroux of the prevailing view of "traditional educational theory" which finds meaning in product more than process and values the teacher more for his help in achieving that product than his personal struggle in the process.

Henry Giroux's work speaks directly to the way in which conceiving of schools and the attitudes schools, and society at large, regard teachers. In the language I am using here, that is a view from the outside in, a "macro" plan that requires broadly-based changes. My concern with what strategies the individual teacher might use to survive today while feeling good about her potency as a transformative individual is, to some degree, self-serving, since I love teaching but want more for it right now, while I am still working. What can the individual teacher do to combat the slow, glacial changes in education? My mind typically thinks in analogies, and I compare the teacher's situation to a slave on a plantation. If he waits for the owner to improve conditions, the wait could be long. The war may be coming, but does the slave realize that? Perhaps

learning to read and write could help now. In terms of this study, I turn to another writer for the inside out view, the "micro," and the personal.

Maxine Greene

In the work of Maxine Greene (1988), I find an author who concerns herself with many of the same issues one finds in Shor, Freire, or Giroux: the need for authentic reform, the suggestion that teachers need to be more aware of their teaching world by being more prepared to examine it closely, question it, and operate with a critical stance through reflection and vision.

Greene, however, seems more concerned than the others with the experience of the individual teacher. In many ways, Greene serves in this study, along with Pinar, as the voice for micro reform, for the value of and the need for a greater understanding of an individual's struggle to interpret his own private experience before, and as a prerequisite of, any determination of the larger world.

Life is, for Greene, a "quest" to find and understand the genuine self, the real voice, the true person, not clouded by the disinterested intrusions of a distorting, exploiting public world. Within this subjective venture, the individual tries to overcome the temptation to be what one is not by sharpening and exercising one's consciousness of the personal world in an attempt to become as aware as possible of the potentialities of one's existence that may have been muted by a world which tends to see freedom as a quantity,

something that can be given or taken. Greene, however, takes freedom to be the characteristic of each individual by virtue of his ability to choose in his world, which is for her, the capacity to seek alternatives to the given world for purposes of finding or creating, "an authentic public space, that is, one in which diverse human beings can appear before one another as, to quote Hannah Arendt, 'the best they know how to be'" (Greene, 1988, p. xi).

Though Greene's The Dialectic of Freedom is directed less at classroom teachers than, say, her earlier works, Teacher As Stranger (1973), or Landscapes of Learning (1978), there is no question that her more recent work still speaks for, to, and about teachers. Greene is "troubled" by the depersonalizing effects of the school system on all who are touched by it, and she feels teachers must take initiative to understand better their own experience rather than wait for legislators or administrators to formulate law or policy that speaks to the lived experiences of the school world. Greene says:

My hope is to remind people of what it means to be alive among others, to achieve freedom in dialogue with others for the sake of personal fulfillment and the emergence of a democracy dedicated to life and decency. (Greene, 1988, p. xii)

Greene specifies that her definition of personal freedom is not the popular one which emphasizes individual autonomy and "self-determination," which she says, seems to be part and parcel of the American dream. Rather, she is concerned with a type of personal freedom which ultimately ties the individual to the larger community in such a way that he or she functions with a "critical perspective."

The individual, thus endowed, has his choices informed in a way that tells him the results of his, "mediation between what impinges on [him] from without and [his] response" (Greene, 1988, pp. 2-3). When the individual is thus "free," he is able to weigh the world and its influences on him in relation to what those influences could be if things were different. He is, in the process, more alert to different paths his life can take, and then he has the task of deciding how best to go about realizing his dreams. Greene says her "focal point is human freedom, in the capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise" (1988, p. 3).

Being aware, however, of what Greene calls "lacks," the gaps between what one is and what one could be is not the same as acting on that consciousness to fill the void. For those who reflect on their lived experience and are cognizant of something missing, there can be frustration until one commits to a course of action aimed at the possible change. For Greene, it is important that the individual realize that movement toward this change is the person's own responsibility and characteristic of his emerging freedom that comes from such knowledge. This freedom of what she calls "open spaces," the areas of potential modification, might mean the individual must endure pain or discomfort that accompanies change, while others, less aware of alternatives, are content, in their ignorance, to let the status quo remain.

It is in this process of growing awareness that Maxine Greene would have us understand that the individual has a chance to help

himself ward off a society which, more and more, does not want him to question the world as it is presented to him. That presentation is of an objective reality of which he has less and less a part, computerized, social-security numbered, and codified so that an individual is not individualized; his subjective experience is not valued or trusted, and consequently, his personal interpretation of his own life runs the risk of disappearing because he is never aware of how to see it, examine it, question it, or name it. He is expected to score well on standardized tests so that he will fare well in the business of comparison with others, but rarely, if ever, is he asked to come to personal terms with his world. As a teacher, he functions without a workplace or a system which cares about his particularized view or interpretation of the world, or his unique experience in the school experience. Again Greene:

the language of contemporary schooling and, indeed, of proposed reforms emphasizes something quite different from such interpretive thinking. Rather than being challenged to attend to the actualities of their lived lives, students are urged to attend to what is "given" in the outside world--whether in the form of "high technology" or the information presumably required for what is called "cultural literacy." There is, in consequence, an implicit encouragement of the tendency to accede to the given, to view what exist around us as an "objective reality," impervious to individual interpretation. (Greene, 1988, pp. 6-7)

For Greene, quite simply, the need for an authentic "individual interpretation" of one's own life involves the realization and responsibility to do so on the part of each person and is quite necessary for a more fulfilled life. Indeed, for her, doing so

further involves the critically important step of "affirming human beings as 'subjects of decisions' rather than objects, of involving men and women in the striving toward their own 'completion'--a striving that can never end" (Greene, 1988, p. 8).

To be a "subject" (as opposed to an "object"), one takes on the manipulative, depersonalizing world which would have him conform, unquestioningly, to its wishes. But to become a "subject" in one's own view, requires a process of mediation and meditation upon the "dialectical relation marking every human situation: the relation between subject and object, individual and environment, self and society, outsider and community, living consciousness and phenomenal world" (p. 8). In so doing, in figuring out where one stands, as it were, in the world of lived experience, one becomes aware of the walls which are erected between the individual and his "space" of possibility, his distance to his goal. Without this process of growing awareness, one is in jeopardy of prolonged submersion in the given world like the fish who is unaware of the water.

If a person is being deprived, Greene says, of what he might be or do, and if he is asked to accept this deprivation as a logical thing, there is the further danger of complacency and stasis out of which he might never emerge. Her definition of "freedom" in The Dialectic of Freedom speaks to this possibility of continuous oppression because a sort of dullness settles in which never takes the time to examine its world. Again Greene:

When oppression or exploitation or segregation or neglect is perceived as "natural" or "given," there is little

stirring in the name of freedom, at least as freedom will be explored in this text. When people cannot name alternatives, imagine a better state of things, share with others a project of change, they are likely to remain anchored or submerged, even as they proudly assert their autonomy. (Greene, 1988, p. 9)

For Greene, before one can "name alternatives," one has to be aware of something missing, the gap, a needed facet in one's life. For the teacher, in particular, she thinks, there has to exist a heightened consciousness of the need for alternatives, an ache or a feeling of disgust or disenchantment with the current state of affairs which can only be assuaged with a better (more professional) way of doing things. The teacher, in short, should possess a desire to achieve her potential as an individual; she must not see herself with the limited vision her "superiors" might be satisfied with which often renders the teacher with no awareness of her autonomous, transformative power. Again Greene:

In the face of all this, school people are asked to increase academic rigor, ensure the preparation of a work force for "high technology," enhance cultural literacy, overcome mediocrity, contain adolescent pregnancies, prevent suicides, educate against AIDS. Confronting some of the most tragic lacks in American society, some of the saddest instances of dehumanization, they offer promises of "career ladders," "board certification," decision-making power . . . (Greene, 1988, p. 13)

To be able to sort out authentic educational reform from the merely palliative, or worse, the false and misleading, the teacher can, and in Greene's view, should stand as one who, realizing the importance and transformative power of his position, refuses to be comforted that the educational system at large is doing all it can do for its professed focal client, the students.

Indeed, Greene believes that as long as "teachers and administrators are helped still to see themselves as functionaries in an instrumental system geared to turning out products," and as long as the school system is "infused with a management orientation," (p. 13), there will be the tendency to limit one's vision of what can be achieved with that student, and teachers will be disinclined even to be aware of the dehumanization process of which they are both victims and co-conspirators. For Greene, the essence of education is the opportunity of noticing the bad and suggesting the good or, at least, the better, but when the system itself does not have time or interest in offering or fulfilling that dream because it is busy objectifying the human beings in its midst, freedom is quashed, and oppression of the spirit is the unacknowledged and unexamined norm.

The teacher's place in all this is concerns a critical and hopeful possibility. Teachers are the ones who, if inclined, occupy a position uniquely suited to a "reflective practice" which weighs the given world against an envisioned one. Because of his contact with students, a teacher, "in search of his/her freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons to go in search of their own" (Greene, 1988, p. 14). As best I can determine, this type of teacher is present in the vision of Shor, Freire, and Giroux, as well as Greene; it's just that Greene believes the teacher must take it upon himself to become this visionary, while the others want a school system which encourages the growth of this type of individual.

For Greene, such a searching teacher, in his quest, and, perhaps by virtue of his search for freedom, can provoke students to look for and "reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space" (Greene, 1988, p. 12). It is in this investigation the teacher has, as a part of what he does professionally, the capacity to aid the student to probe and evaluate as a way of accepting or rejecting the characteristics of the student's world. That which would be rejected is not seen as intolerable unless there is, as Greene says, "the possibility of transformation," a vision of a "better state of things" (p. 16). This is the process of "positing alternatives" and the remedy in terms of meaning being found in one's life compared to "mere passivity." Freedom, as Greene defines it, depends upon this inclination, this power to be aware of and comforted by, "the relation between freedom and the consciousness of possibility, between freedom and the imagination--the ability to make present what is absent, to summon up a condition that is not yet" (p. 16).

Yet there are those who accept the given passively with no hope or insight that the way could be any other way. In Greene's terms, these people are, in a manner of speaking, unconscious, because consciousness, "it so happens, involves the capacity to pose questions to the world, to reflect on what is presented in experience. It is not to be understood as an inferiority. Embodied, thrusting into the lived and perceived, it opens out to the common" (Greene, 1988, p. 21). Consciousness, as a characteristic of the free individual, by its very nature, is an active force, taking in the world

and the world's possibilities. There is a reaching out that places the conscious individual in a dialectic between the self and the world which constantly measures and evaluates one's situation, "inevitably engaged with others," reflecting upon what is and supposing how those situations might be changed. For Greene, the experience of life is the dialectic of "effecting transformations" which creates, and then recreates, the understanding of the self, and to deny either teacher or student that process is to deny each a measure of his humanity.

Greene's pursuit of the full development of the individual seems to depend upon this transformation through deeper consciousness which, by its very nature, moves outward from the individual into the world. As noted, she does not view the process of growth as "an inferiority," but it is not always clear how greater insight necessarily leads to reformation or transformation of the world. Greene implies that a world full of fully aware, questioning, probing, envisioning people is a world destined to greater actualization of its potential, and thus the true purpose of education is one that "brings together the need for wide-awakeness with the hunger for community, the desire to know with the wish to understand, the desire to feel with the passion to see" (Greene, 1988, p. 23). Education is, for her, the movement toward the several paths our lives can take rather than the path someone or something else insists we take without due regard for our personhood.

As in Shor and Freire, awareness of the possibilities in one's world leads to Greene's idea that some sort of action, to make the vision come about, is natural and consequential. And yet, again as in these two other authors, such a step forward to change the world from its taken-for-granted mode to a better, more viable alternative, involves sometimes upsetting apple carts, displeasing superiors, lobbying for change. "Conscious thinking always involves a risk," Greene says (p. 125), a voyage into the unknown which may end in ways or means as yet unperceived. For one to want a system of education which regards all persons connected with the schools as human beings, who are constantly in the process of making and remaking their lives, and who, as a result, are "unfinished," one must put away thinking in business-like terms of manager and product.

In Greene, one must not be afraid of this incomplete state; it is only human and comes with the territory. One must "recognize the role of perspective and vantage point," and "recognize at the same time that there are always multiple perspectives and multiple vantage points" and that, in so doing one can "recognize that no accounting, disciplinary or otherwise, can ever be finished or complete. There is always more. There is always possibility" (Greene, 1988, p. 128).

A classroom in a school where the diversity and multiplicity of humanity is explored is a classroom in a school where questions open the doors to a type of inquiry not feared by the knowledge and power of authority seeking only an orderly transfer of the dominant culture. "Teachers, like their students, have to learn to love the

questions, Greene says, "as they come to realize that there can be no final agreements or answers, no final commensurability" (p. 134). The power foisted by those "in charge" can never act upon its clients, or even its professionals, in a human (or humane) way, until it realized that its power is not the possession of some over others. Power, for Greene, "may be thought of, then, as 'empowerment,' a condition of possibility for human and political life, and, yes, for education as well. But spaces have to be opened in the schools and around the school; the windows have to let in the fresh air" (Greene, 1988, p. 134).

William Pinar

The third author I chose to read was William Pinar. We have already seen in chapters one and two how Pinar's work emphasizes the need for reflection on the part of the classroom teacher as a means of conscious-heightening. He calls his method "currere," and I would like to draw him into this chapter to further discuss how education might profit from strategies which tend to help the teacher know more about himself.

For William Pinar, the teacher is but one example of many individuals in our society who is conditioned to look for meaning and significance outside himself. That is to say, the society's priorities tend to privilege those goals, like self-aggrandizement and material accumulation, which do not necessarily feed the individual's personal growth. Pinar, in his introduction to Heightened

Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory (1974), defines "dehumanization" in terms of man being separated from his authentic self and thus unaware of not only what he is but what he can be. Seen in this way, man, following the instruction of a society not primarily interested in his developmental welfare, seeks dignity and satisfaction outside himself, attempting achievement through perhaps public honors or financial gain. In this process, Pinar sees modern man alienated from his own true, human self. Man becomes not himself but that which he supposes the world wants him to be, a "character" in a dominating society which is itself preoccupied with the observable and with furthering the interests of the group before the private needs of the individual. (Pinar, 1974, p. 8). Ignoring the inner voice of this interior existence, man heeds the dictates of the public agenda, which, as I have said, doesn't necessarily concern itself with his most urgent needs, the individuated meaning of his life. Man, in essence, goes away from himself, Pinar argues, and even though he might accomplish with aplomb and reward the agenda of the public world, if he has ignored his interiority, his life is correspondingly empty and devoid of meaning.

"If on the other hand, political work is done consciously as a historical manifestation of who one is, is done, as it were, for oneself then the probability of genuinely furthering consequences would seem stronger," Pinar says (1974, p. 11). Otherwise, as one avoids an exploration of the inner life, one risks the victimization of a one-dimensional existence. One does not act so much as he

reacts to the will of those who dominate simply because he does not know what he wants his life to be. He may not know how to know. All that is decided by others.

Pinar feels that before one rebels from the conformity to such a world, one must first feel that something is missing, that life is not proving to be what one expected, and the individual may choose to plumb the depths of himself for the answers, or at least some direction. In so doing, he expresses the hope of his becoming more aware of the limits of his existence, of some inkling of potential and expectation.

For Pinar, any social force which tends to encourage an avoidance of self, is, in effect, dehumanizing and evil. The process of getting in touch with one authentic self is natural, informative, healthy, and, in essence, "good." Pinar insists that "evil is fought by being good" (Pinar, 1974, p. 11). It is an individual struggle, one which is necessary to salvage and then develop one's true being through inner exploration. One must find oneself to know oneself.

Such a development is, for Pinar, multidimensional in that it subscribes not only to the unconscious but to all other avenues of knowing as well. If one presumes that a life given over to practices which prevent authentic, personal betterment must be overcome as one searches for meaning, a person should be willing, in Pinar's view, to do whatever it takes to make the breakthrough, be willing to go beyond normal means of knowing, to arrive at a deeper insight into one's life. Such a process becomes an "inner orientation" which

inevitably leads to a richer life because it rests upon a revelation of characteristics, attitudes, preferences, and ideas previously hidden because one has put most of his energies into the exigencies of the external world's agenda, the dominant world's priorities.

Pinar concludes,

If indeed this idea of inner orientation represents, as it were, a metaphysical and ontological response to the modern age, if indeed this orientation might permit a recognition, an exploration, and possibly a disclosure of the unconscious, both collective and individual, then the evolution of a more integrated, hence more intelligent, more human being, then this matter takes on a significance that is staggering . . . (Pinar, 1974, p. 14)

"Staggering" I take it because Pinar sees it as a troubling characteristic of modernity that many of us lead lives of unreflective, semi-conscious existence, trying to keep up and survive in a world which we only dimly understand. To look up forms one's absorption in this external struggle, to become aware of a more dynamic and interesting person one is within is "staggering" because, in essence, one attends to himself rather than, or before, he attends to the world of other individuals.

In his essay, "Political-Spiritual Dimensions" in Toward a Poor Curriculum (1976), Pinar continues this discussion of the power of introspection by thinking about the political implication of the process of reflection discussed above. He begins to discuss these associations by drawing upon some of Paulo Freire's basic ideas as developed in Pedagogy of the Oppressed. The first of these is that "the human vocation is humanization" (Pinar, 1976, p. 93). Pinar hastens to point out that "humanization" is understood but vaguely

by many because it is used so generally to cover a variety of activities and attitudes. For Pinar, "humanization" means "nothing esoteric or even vague":

To be fully human means to conceive an idealized not historically present human being, a human being, I think we would all agree, characterized by the classically admirable qualities. Love in its agape sense comes to mind as the highest or at least a central quality in this gestalt, and compassion and understanding or wisdom are near in significance. (Pinar, 1976, p. 94)

The process of "humanization" is for Pinar (and Freire) of the essence of education because the teacher leads one out of the ignorance of underdevelopment toward these admirable characteristics of what an individual might become. Accordingly, Pinar points out that Freire's second basic theme is that to act pedagogically in harmony with idea of humanization is the same as "dialogically [encountering] one's students, which leads to a third conclusion that to do so is to point students toward a cultivation of thought (reflection) and action (Pinar, 1976, p. 93).

Touching upon the second theme, Pinar infers that it is the province of the teacher to promulgate a curriculum which eventuates in nothing less than a more humane world. The teacher, then fulfills an activity designed to be much more ambitious than merely transferring the culture in an efficient manner. He becomes the agent of transformation, changing the understanding and attitude of the student toward a greater awareness of mankind's potential to do "good."

As in Maxine Greene, Pinar's is a world of influence for the teacher which begins privately and personally and works outward:

Who is it we can attempt to influence? For the most part, we can answer "our students and our colleagues." This is so, and it is both useful and significant to focus on those whom we meet (physically and intellectually through our writing and reading). Useful because we have effects (if at times unintended and unobserved) on those spheres we walk and write and read in. It is in a way community work . . . (Pinar, 1976, p. 95)

The seeming audacity of one's wanting to influence others toward one's conception of what humanity should be is mitigated and dependent upon the individual's close self-study by which he first understands that his life is itself an ongoing interpretation. This, Pinar says, should be a "continuous yet not excessive self-examination" (p. 96). Ideally, Pinar hopes, the reflective teacher influences students toward their own process of reflection which, in turn, leads to a better understanding of self first, and then of the world. For Pinar, becoming more fully human means working toward social justice and "reverence for human life" by initially understanding how each individual is himself grounded in the world. The individual in this scheme achieves access to a power over and within self which enables him to react to and with the world from a personal standard rather than ones constructed for him.

In my study of the writers thus far, I have found that Shor, Freire, and Giroux tend to represent for me what I have called the "macro" view of educational reform, while Greene and Pinar stand at the other end of the spectrum, the "micro" or personal view. Shor,

Freire, and Giroux argue largely for systemic change, whereas Greene and Pinar see the need for a more private reckoning, an interior journey, as a starting point for a higher level of consciousness in education.

David Purpel

The last author I wish to discuss, David Purpel, is, in my view most comfortably allied with the group of Shor, Freire, and Giroux because his is a search for a more pervasive social and cultural change in education. As always, I am searching in Purpel, as in the others, for ideas pertinent to a clearer definition of the role of the classroom teacher in meaningful educational change.

In his most recent work, The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education (1989), Purpel expresses many ideas which, for me, in this particular study, represent a sort of bridge between the group of Shor, Freire, and Giroux and the Greene, Pinar pair. I say he represents a bridge because, while it is clear Purpel wants systemic and societal change for not only education but life in general, he is also very mindful of the need for individual attention and focus for teachers if there is to be authentic educational reform. In this sense, he is a compromise writer for my needs, though he is very wary of those who would make the struggle a totally private one without aiming for larger strokes.

In the study sections of The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education, David Purpel argues that the need for educational change

must focus on something more than a merely instrumental or technical level. By this I think he means that much of the recent reform movement one reads about in the media has emphasized public education's response to managerial or business models and as such has attempted to reform school to make them more productive in those terms. This process of trying to shake up the schools of the United States by attending to, for instance, test scores, class sizes, or teacher evaluation is really a method of "trivializing" education in this country, and that mode, Purpel thinks, couples itself with an evasion of some of the more profound questions facing our society.

These inquiries are couched in social and cultural terms and deal with the society's "moral numbness and spiritual alienation" (Purpel, 1989, p. 3). Genuine educational reform would for him address "the urgent task of transforming many of our basic cultural institutions and belief systems" (p. 3), so that our society would, in fact, be able to offer the humane, democratic, life-affirming experience it wants for itself. If we look for solutions in the general run of educational discourse, we will be disappointed, and we will find (if we have not already) that such talk is ineffectual because it does not probe the truly significant questions of where we are and what we as a culture really believe. Traditional American dialogue has been, in Purpel's view, "narrow in scope, technical in nature and naive in quality" (p. 4). He calls for "major theoretical alternatives" (p. 4) which include a shift toward a language of educational critique which is also a language of cultural and

societal critique. Such discourse would attempt to reconcile the paradoxical characteristics of American culture which values education, on the one hand, but ironically funds it poorly and provides appalling conditions for teachers to work:

Working conditions for public and private educators at the elementary and secondary levels are absolutely shocking. Compared to other educational institutions (colleges and universities) and to corporations, salaries of teachers and administrators are very low, opportunities to grow intellectually and professionally are extremely limited, and resources are slim and of low quality. (Purpel, 1989, pp. 5-6)

Purpel sees one possible reason for America's educational paradox in its love for the practical and technical juxtaposed by its disdain for the "theoretical and speculative." The net effect of the relationship includes a suspicion of the intellectual and the reflective as well while privileging skills of problem-solving and being useful. If true, it becomes easier to understand that conditions in schools are so dreadful because American culture does not really value the public educational experience as a life-enhancing event in the same way it does for "higher education." High school in this view, for instance, becomes a slightly disdainful by necessary preparation for other things, something to be endured but not treasured.

If one discounts the strictly instrumental view of public schooling and sees it as a potentially transformative experience of deep meaning and significance, then it becomes imperative that one develop a new, more powerful means of talking about teaching which includes some of the more troubling and profound questions about our

social existence. In other words, when education concerns itself with the technical and trivial, it is, by definition, not automatically involved with instructing the individual because it does not address itself to the deeply felt problems of being a human being. Purpel says, "Serious education, therefore, has a way of forcing continued confrontation with our basic moral commitments, and, more unnerving, with our failure to meet these commitments" (Purpel, 1989, p. 8). He finds a synonymous relationship between meaningful discourse on education and with moral issues:

When we talk of education we are simultaneously talking about culture, when we propose changes in education, or when we propose not making change, we are making moral statements. (Purpel, 1989, p. 8)

Serious educational discourse in the terms is, of course, dangerous talk because it wants to concern itself with real answers to real questions even if that means attacking the status quo of the dominant culture which might not want nor encourage close scrutiny of itself. It is undeniable, I think, to say that American education works quite nicely, thank you, for those who need a fast academic track. At my school, for instance, parental demand for the best teachers and the most suitable course does not come from the under-privileged or the below average student. Purpel agrees that it, "is clear that those who benefit at least in the short term are mostly those in power and those who represent dominant institutions and ideas" (Purpel, 1989, p. 9).

For Purpel, the current state of American education might be the result of unconscious neglect or conscious intrusion by the

"dominant" culture. In either or both cases, the system let many down including the fast trackers by avoiding the questions which would explore the complexities of life on more than a materialistic, superficial plane. The need, in Purpel's view, of a deeper probe involves as well a recognition of moral accountability and "commitment to a vision" of a world of "love, justice and joy" (p. 12). For him, education absolutely must be more than acculturation, "Education involves some combination of affiliation and skepticism, a concern both for boundaries and for the crossing of boundaries" (p. 11). It is, finally, the on-going product of a vision of human interaction and growth which privileges "the development of reflective and creative potential" (Purpel, 1989, pp. 8-9). That involves an interest, on the part of educators, with the spiritual orientation of not only students, but those who guide them as well.

To challenge the existing educational structure, as Purpel does, to manifest a system of compassion, justice, and life affirmation is an act of reformation of the social community which makes possible "personal development" not aimed at self-aggrandizement. In Purpel's vision, schools should promote the best values of society, and those are the values which reinforce and encourage the mutual well-being and growth of the community of which each individual is a valued member.

Our current society, in Purpel's explanation, is one which tends to reinforce and encourage the perpetuation of the dominant culture and its dominant mode, individual acquisition, which works

against communal care and growth. To the extent that the school curriculum does this, it is a "hidden curriculum" in that its actual agenda does not square with its announced intentions. Students are consequently schooled to become productive members of society only in so far as they perpetuate the class consciousness that feeds capitalism. Thus, measuring success by accrued income, the spiritual dimension is ignored in the curriculum and only that which aims at the "pragmatic" or "functional" is valued in terms of how it is funded or otherwise supported. The community's orientation centers "around terms of class rather than of humanity" (Purpel, 1989, p. 16).

Purpel sees himself as a "revisionist" curriculum theorist, in the same broad group with the other critics I have discussed in this paper, but only broadly, because as we have seen, each varies in the emphasis he or she attaches to the micro or macro reform ideas. In Purpel's view, those revisionists writers who see a discrepancy between what American education promises and what it, in fact, delivers have in common, again, in varying degrees, a desire to sort out the hidden curriculum from the supposed or announced one. They have in common, as well, a desire to raise and transform the culture's consciousness to make possible the finer aspects of human growth and awareness. None of this is possible for Purpel, though, as long as educators, let alone society at large, are unable or disinclined to confront the real questions of substance and, instead, trivialize the discourse through objectification of humanity by suggesting "superficial remedies" (p. 22). In my own experience, what Purpel

calls the "trivial" is what led me near despair with professional education as an undergraduate.

Purpel's departure from the type of questions he finds characteristic of the "educational establishment" because of its impotency to deal with many of our current problems signals his interest in a fresher language, one that seeks to reformulate the most powerful questions a society can ask itself. Purpel says, "They must be questions rooted not in the existing arsenal of the educational establishment but in the vital concerns of the culture's and individual's search for meaning" (Purpel, 1989, p. 23). He places a premium on an education of the whole individual and that complex and probing struggle with life's essential questions of how best to live in the community of mankind. Education, as a microcosm of society, does us all a disservice as long as it does not reflect upon or raise these basic questions. The instrumental and technical critique I have already mentioned is, in Purpel's view, not only essentially dehumanizing and superficial; it is also the sum and substance of the educational establishment's "language" of control with which to confront the attacks from the left and the right. Worse than that, he says, schools tend to take a stand of neutrality on issues of social consciousness and because there is no commitment to such an awareness, it is devalued.

David Purpel's quest, as I understand it, is, then, for a mode of discourse which would have a chance to transform the culture by nourishing "the critical and creative consciousness" (p. 28) of each

individual who would, in turn, by virtue of this nourishment, realize the social character of his existence. Because the upper class has no vested interest in altering the present structure, and because the under class has little power, understanding, or inclination to change the basic nature of the society, Purpel sees the middle class as "the only major group that has both the potential power and inclination to transform the culture" (Purpel, 1989, p. 29).

It seems to me that a central tenet of Purpel's argument is his unflagging optimism and his insistence on the need for risk. Americans must convince themselves that it is worthwhile to try to envision a more satisfying way of life than is currently practices. As discussed above, he does not see much help coming from the extremes of society; rather, he looks to that more centrally situated group which has the potential for both the vision and the action. Purpel says, "I operate on the assumption that there is a vast and influential group in America who would very much like to choose a way of life that is right, just, and loving" (p. 30).

Such a statement strikes me as the type of statement that needs to be uttered because it is generally assumed but not necessarily in evidence. We hope it is true, and, indeed it is an indispensable ingredient for meaningful social change. But, also, I think there is a tendency in myself and others to shrink from the task at hand because of an attitude of despair and pessimism, a fear of ultimate failure. Purpel articulates, in this case, Freire's stand that one must have a vision, by urging positive action, action which has

authentic potential for change. Purpel wants to get below the surface, the nonessential, which has for so long typified educational theory. He seems to feel that human problems can have human solutions if people will tap into their essentially moral nature and utilize the language of what they perceive to be right and good. In so doing, they "choose a creative rather than a destructive" existence by exploring our "deeply felt moral principles" (p. 30). In addition, he says,

When we look at our problems as rooted in evil and sin, then the only alternative to despair is prayer; but when we are able to see them based more on confusion, then we can put our hope in education. (Purpel, 1989, p. 30)

At the heart of Purpel's thought is the necessity to see man as a creature in a social situation interacting with other human beings. Part of the "confusion" to which we should turn our reforming attention lies for Purpel in our penchant in this society for isolated action which inhibits social praxis. It is here I think I should examine what I think Purpel means by "individual" with his negative connotation and what I have meant by the word as I have used it in this study because I intend my use to be taken positively and affirmatively.

For Purpel, one must understand that when people are cut off from each other, and when they perceive that such alienation is what life is all about, life becomes a struggle for competitive achievement and self-aggrandizement. Selfishness becomes a trait of survivability. Anything larger than the individual is not understood or is held to

be useless. Man is left to himself and sees no alternative. Purpel explicates, "By individuality we mean here not so much the development of autonomy and independence as much as egocentricity, a belief that the individual is the basic and most important unit of decision-making" (Purpel, 1989, p. 31). Because the dominant culture depends upon and encourages a concept of success measured by individual attainment, our educational system, mirroring that value, perpetuates "a more powerful role in stressing an individual rather than a common vision" (p. 32).

As I have tried to use the term "individual" in this study, I have meant a person, a teacher, struggling against larger, for the most part, uncaring and dehumanizing forces of educational bureaucracy, a person striving to be aware of and find or reinstate the power to make the vital professional decisions befitting his role as educator. One of the ideas I am trying to understand in this paper is how the individual in this process also effectively acts to help bring about larger, more inclusive change so that his efforts will not be, in the end, an isolated, truncated effect. I am still of the mind that great ideas and great actions start with individuals, and I am certainly of the mind that each teacher must first formulate his own vision of what schools can be and then think, act, and move toward the realization of that dream. He cannot wait to receive it in a memo from Raleigh.

David Purpel's idea of "a common vision" that is needed to recreate a morally sound society depends in some measure upon what the

society sees as necessary for control. In other words, one must investigate who or what is in power and what that position says about the presumptions of society. Purpel defines "power" as "equivalent to the capacity to make decisions" (p. 45). This, he says, "should be based upon legitimate authority" because when it is not, it is not power so much as it is "coercion." Because schooling is based upon a hierarchical model with "power" flowing downward, everyone, including teachers, expresses the society's "passion for control" so that, in effect, everyone is encouraged to do what he is told, without question or exploration.

This type of manipulation is pervasive in American schooling, Purpel contends, and it results in a system which denies the human dignity of autonomous involvement to make the crucial decisions over one's life. Like a feudal lord, it seems to me, education's promise depends upon blind trust and no insubordination. Underlings are presumed unable to defend themselves, and the more someone else does it for them, the easier it is to go along with that system and the greater the temptation to think it a natural occurrence. Purpel sees this penchant for control as being partially responsible for the "gap" between "our highest aspiration and how we actually live" (Purpel, 1989, p. 57). And if we pretend there is no privation, "we deceive ourselves and our community" and "we undermine our efforts to act upon our deepest beliefs" (p. 62).

Purpel never speaks directly to teachers so much as he addresses "educators" which is consistent with his communal rather than

individual focus. In that regard, he says that as a reaction to the power and control characteristics of American education, "we must confront ourselves as both oppressors and oppressed" (p. 63). We do this through a type of "educational inquiry" which identifies the distance between what we say we want for society and what we are really providing. To do this much requires the courage to be honest with ourselves and to run the risk of upsetting firmly held but oppressive beliefs, to let go of power when it means liberation and freedom of engagement with the world to those "under us."

Before this desirable outcome can occur, though, educators must come to realize there is an insufferable hypocrisy when "teachers are asked to perform at very high level tasks of profound importance and yet are given resources that are absurd and insulting" (Purpel, 1989, p. 101). What we currently have is what Purpel calls "a weak profession." I find it extremely interesting that this weakness is, in Purpel's view, something that has not evolved "by chance." Even if teachers admit and become aware of the gaps in their profession, they must also realize that, "it does not seem to be in the interest of those currently in power to encourage and empower the education profession to seek that intellectual and moral authority" needed for a broadly ennobling and positive vision (p. 103). Those who currently occupy the roles as educational decision-makers must be lobbied, cajoled, and encouraged to see that the practitioners of a profession must have some direct input into the nature and practice of that profession. The decision-maker must be urged to see that it is in his best interest to share his power.

I said earlier that of the writers I have chosen to draw upon in this study, David Purpel seems to me most likely to serve as a bridge between the micro and macro approaches, the inner and the outer, the individual teacher and the larger community. I hope it is clear now that he serves that function by speaking broadly, at the societal level, while at the same time bringing his vision down to a reckoning of how each teacher herself perceives her work. At the grass roots level of the profession, the teacher has to each day confront herself with the professional and moral implications of what she is doing for and to the society by virtue of her actions whether or not the decision-makers--the legislature, the school board, or the administrators invest him with any more power than is currently enjoyed.

In Purpel's view, educators can modify their present state of relative powerlessness over what they do in their work by seeing themselves in a new mode, what he calls the "prophetic voice." By this he means that teachers should begin to empower themselves by improving their view by realizing that we "need a profession with critical capacity and the courage and expertise to provide insights into cultural problems . . ." (Purpel, 1989, p. 104). For me, the key phrase here is "critical capacity" because it means having and using the inclination to question authority, question decisions if that authority acts in what doesn't seem to be in the best interests of children.

Purpel's idea of teacher-as-prophet draws upon the ancient biblical prophets who were those who served to remind, criticize,

and warn more than foretell the future. Educators who fulfill this conception would be those who have a "prophetic function" in that they "affirm a set of sacred and moral principles" in their work (Purpel, 1989, p. 105). The larger implication of such a view includes the teacher-as-prophet who commits himself "to that which has ultimate meaning" to him (p. 105). For Purpel, the teacher ought to be, and just as importantly ought to see himself as, a cultural leader, a transformative individual, who, lacking the appreciation or the respect due him by his society, nonetheless injects himself into the public world of educational issues. In doing so, teacher-as-prophet has a chance to both reflect upon and influence community attitudes.

One must understand, at this point, how such an activist role in education runs counter to the brow beaten passivity which characterizes much of teaching today. Teachers are told implicitly and explicitly that their input about what they do is not valued, and consequently, they do not trust their own insights. Purpel's prophet is one who is not content, on moral grounds, to be docile and manipulated in the face of injustice. He wants educators who "speak in the prophetic voice that celebrates joy, love, justice, and abundance and cries out in anguish in the presence of opposition and misery" (Purpel, 1989, p. 110). To do otherwise runs the risk of perpetuating the present situation in which teachers are objectified into becoming mechanistic extensions of the dominant culture, carrying out orders, burdened by threats of insubordination, disseminating information but

not fostering or believing in critical consciousness. Educators-as-prophets are envisioned by Purpel as those who articulate new ways of looking at old problems:

Such educators must regard themselves and their students as holy and sacred, not as tools and mechanisms, hence as ends not means; they must be committed to the development of institutions of learning in which all those involved (teachers, administrators, staff, students) are full citizens, each of whom has the inherent right of personal and social fulfillment, each of whom has the inherent right to grow, learn, and create as much as he/she possibly can. (Purpel, 1989, p. 110)

David Purpel, then is one who wants a revision of the school world as well as the larger culture, but he is also mindful that individual teachers must work daily with students whom they influence and even transform. With the individual teacher realizing the need to gain power over his own professional life in his dealings with the "outside world," he must also realize the need to give up the influence over his students that is so much like the domination which oppresses him in his work. Purpel goes on, "Teachers and students need to be free of the fears of dominating and being dominated in order to facilitate free common inquiry" (p. 120). Such a desirable condition can be brought about when "legitimate authority" is privileged over privately interested "coercive power."

General Conclusions

In this chapter I have tried to present the views of several writers who speak to the issues with which I am most concerned. I have, in essence, provided an exposition of some of their ideas and

have not, in the main, tried to attack their ideas because I have selected them precisely because they inform my desire to know more about the transformative possibilities of public school teaching.

By way of closing this chapter, I would like now to draw some general conclusions by speaking to the broader impact each of these writers has had on me. It is not my purpose at this point to review each of them, but rather to treat them as exemplars or symbols of distinct parts of my ongoing investigation. I hope that in so doing I do not minimize or trivialize any of the writers, nor do I want to distort through oversimplification. But it does seem important to me to make the point that these writers are important to me, in my study, only insofar as they better inform my struggle and understanding. Rather than view them as scholarly disputants, I would instead want the reader to see them as pieces of a puzzle, or better, separate locations on a landscape.

I feel I must start with Maxine Greene and William Pinar because, by disposition and inclination, I began this study feeling that if I define the endeavor as self against the world, I have always felt that the self was more important because it was more manageable. Greene and Pinar represent this interior world for me, for the need for protecting, informing, and cultivating that self with the tacit feeling that the larger world was not as wieldy.

It is tempting to conclude that if one engages in autobiographical probes and aesthetic encounters, he can take care of, heighten, and, in general ameliorate his human condition by simply

searching for his voice. I want to make it extremely clear that I am still very close to that position, even if it is a defensive position arising out of a desire for order and harmony on a small scale rather than not at all. For me, Greene and Pinar represent this need for personal growth. Where I am, at the moment, finds me moving, to some degree, from personal growth and search for the individual voice (as a life strategy) outward to the larger political and social world. Certainly I always think that whatever one does to discover private meaning in his life, he cannot or should not exist in isolation and let the world go its merry way. Exposure to these writers has helped me move more toward a greater feeling of social responsibility, that the inner must connect to the outer for there to be efficacy.

If one speaks to the problematics of Greene and Pinar by broaching the issue of disconnection to the larger world, I would respond by saying that it is my feeling that theirs should rightly be seen as a necessary first step. In the same way it is often said that one cannot love others until one loves oneself, Greene and Pinar represent, for me, the need for one to be able and ready to change the world only after, and perhaps as a result of, being able to transform oneself through greater awareness. What one decides individually he or she must do in life implies a life process of going backward as well as looking forward, of figuring out the source of conditions and difficulties in addition to conjuring visions. Reflection is the match that lights the larger fire of the dialectic which

exists as a way of life, a way of measuring and deciding while living and acting out life. As I have said elsewhere in this study, perhaps in a different manner, this private experience is, finally, our own responsibility, something we must do for ourselves without counting on some outside agency or force deciding what is meaningful or right in our experience.

At a different location in the argument are those who see personal expression and experience as limited and ultimately ineffectual in any larger sense. I have often asked these proponents of societal change, "What are you going to do, storm the winter palace?" Very often, they reply in the affirmative, and I see the teacher, who remains the focus of my concern, getting lost in the shuffle. I have always been extremely suspicious of any plan for reform which discounts the individual because I have been particularly sensitive to any process which dehumanizes through neglect.

Henry Giroux stands in my mind as a symbol of the larger dream, schools as "democratic sites" where humanity is celebrated and education is perceived as a critical process rather than as a cultural product. He does want teachers to be "intellectuals" who are actively involved in consciousness heightening rather than passively disengaged as vessels of cultural transference, and I couldn't agree with him more in his (and my) dream, but he has little to say about how, as an individual, the teacher takes power. In Giroux, the teacher seems to have to wait until he is encouraged. I use the passive voice here because I remain convinced that the primary need in educational

reform is for teachers who are aware and therefore in control of their own personal and professional freedom. If a teacher waits until she is "encouraged" to be more fully human, she will wither and die in the professional sense.

For me, Giroux represents a desirable, albeit later, step in the process. Greene and Pinar precede him, and Shor and Freire loom as enablers who bring a message of caution. Shor and Freire remind me that the classroom is not the larger world, and that the teacher who is not clear on that point is doomed to the frustration which results from thinking that macro change can be undertaken there. The teacher in his or her classroom practices critical interplay, but he or she is not fooled into believing that the ills of the school system, let alone society, can be radically changed in there. One lives with oneself and one's conscience, and one also looks for ways to change the structure of any unjust part of one's world, but it will not happen, in all probability, because one is a teacher.

It is here that I think I have grown in understanding the most. Heretofore, I have wanted "the teacher" to be something that I now understand he cannot be, a legislator, perhaps, or a social theorist. Shor and Freire exemplify the need for balance, prudence, and, most of all, perspective. If the teacher functions as an enabling agent of critical awareness, he should not confuse that important position with something it cannot be.

Having said that, though, it is also important to remember that the teacher in the classroom is a part of the educational process

which, as David Purpel points out, is a part of the culture. It is, in some way, all connected. Perhaps the greatest surprise of my study of these writers was the conclusion I came to that Purpel was not lodged firmly with Giroux in a position of inattention to the needs of personal experience. As I have noted earlier, Purpel represents, for me, a bridge or connection between the micro and macro, the private and the public.

Purpel's link is one that spans not only the distance between questions of personal awareness and public activism, it also carries the added freight approached by none of the other writers, save Greene, of discussing the moral implications of allowing an educational system or professional life to transpire where people are mistreated in favor of less honorable goals like perpetuating an economic and cultural dominance. Purpel serves to remind me that human beings are social creatures by nature, that they cannot avoid the social, that is the larger, situation. At the same time, as social creatures, they are free to respond to their world; indeed, it is important for Purpel that we cannot avoid responding. Silence or indifference to the world is a statement, too, by virtue of the original premise of our social nature. What I found most reassuring in Purpel was his insistence on the importance, as well, of the personal vision and struggle. I find his metaphor of teacher-as-prophet to be particularly appropriate in connecting the interior teacher, who cultivates and practices a process of growing awareness, and the teacher-in-the-world, who is an active force for change. Like Purpel's prophet, the

teacher shares his vision of events and consequences, and in so doing, is at once "aware" in both a personal and a public way.

As I have noted in different places in this study, I began this investigation almost completely (and somewhat cynically) with my allegiance tied to personal struggle exclusively, but now I feel more comfortable with a foot in each camp, though I remain committed, at this point, to a need for an order of events which gives primacy to the personal quest, the self-search and the aesthetic experience, with the all-important proviso that the teacher cannot stop there, with reading a novel or writing a poem. He must quit his study and move into the world if he is to participate fully in authentic educational change.

CHAPTER IV
THE STORY AS SITUATION

Introduction

"I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of imagination-- what the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth . . . the imagination may be compared to Adam's dream--he awoke and found it truth."

--Extract from a letter of John Keats
to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817

"Like a good many other writers, I am myself touched off by place, the place where I am and the place I know."

--Eudora Welty

"I think the whole glory of writing lies in the fact that it forces us out of ourselves and into the lives of others."

--Sherwood Anderson

"It is necessary to write, if the days are not to slip emptily by. How else, indeed, to clap the net over the butterfly of the moment?"

--Vita Sackville-West

"Art is the only thing that can go on mattering once it has stopped hurting."

--Elizabeth Bowen

"I write for myself and strangers. The strangers, dear readers, are an afterthought."

--Gertrude Stein

"I suppose I am a born novelist, for the things I imagine are more vital and vivid to me than the things I remember."

--Ellen Glasgow

I have attempted in this study to investigate my world of teaching autobiographically and critically in order to make use of diverse means and different languages which might speak to the issues of critical inquiry as they relate to teachers and teaching. Now I want to turn to yet another mode of observation and inquiry, fiction.

As noted earlier, I have been a serious reader for twenty-seven years, and, to a lesser extent, I have held writing, chiefly of poetry and fiction, to be a natural expressive outlet for me during that time. My exposure to and involvement with fiction is more special than that. Both in reading and in creating, I am capable of feeling not only liberated, but also more fully alive. Fiction is part of me and whatever I am.

I find it natural, then, to include this chapter, to place a character into a situation which evolves out of teaching to see how he reacts in that world. I will allow myself into his world to see how he reacts. I am his observer and to an extent, his biographer. At this point I feel I must broach the question of why a chapter of fiction, and my quick response is that I am not this character in the

way I am the figure of study in an autobiography. Bits and pieces of my experience as well as my observations of the world are part of the work but Creighton Garner is only a possibility in an imagined world. It is literally true that when I sat down to begin this story in the summer of 1989 I did not know what would happen, what the characters would do or say; the story started with a feeling and a place, and I listened, waited, and watched.

As John Gardner points out in The Art of Fiction (1983):

Art depends heavily on feeling, intuition, taste. It is the feeling, not some rule, that tells the abstract painter to put his yellow here and there, not there, and may later tell him that it should have been brown or purple or pea green. It's the feeling that makes the composer break surprisingly from his key, feeling that gives the writer rhythms of his sentences, the pattern of rise and fall in his episodes, the proportions of alternating elements, so that dialogue goes on only so long before a shift to description or narrative summary or some physical action. (1983, p. 7)

It is my feeling that a work of art, in this case fiction, is but one more of what Maxine Greene calls a "mode of interpretation" with which to search for meaning in one's life. While it is not thought of as research in the traditional sense, I find writing fiction to be a most intriguing form of research in that it becomes an experiment, a closely watched one. As I wrote I found myself in a dilemma of wondering whether I should alter, in revision, what I wrote in first draft form or whether I should publish in this study both versions since each would tend to represent different "feelings" at different moments of expression.

In the end, I decided to produce one version which tries to do at least two things. First, I confronted a fictive world in juxtaposition with the real world from which I come; indeed, the former flows out of the latter. Secondly, in this confrontation, I positioned myself to assess the meaning of the piece as a separate entity, liberated, as it were, from my particularized experience in somewhat the same way a son is part of but separate from his father. In these senses, it is true that the work becomes an edifice of those feelings to be encountered and interpreted.

As Maxine Greene (1978) says:

It is, at least on one level, evident that works of art--Moby Dick, for instance, a Hudson River landscape painting, Charles Ives' Concord Sonata--must be directly addressed by existing and situated persons, equipped to attend to the qualities of what presents itself to them, to make sense of it in the light of their own lived worlds. Works of art are, visably and palpably, human achievement, renderings of the ways in which aspects of reality have impinged upon human consciousness. (p. 163)

Writing fiction is for me a human activity in part because when I write I view, along with the reader, what is happening even though later I might choose to change a detail here or there, or even make radical changes to character or plot. Here and now, it is an imaginative adventure to find out what the characters are going to say or do today. In writing fiction, the writer is active in an imaginative way, a way in which, as creator, he is a participant in the unfolding narrative, anxious, more than a reader could be, to see what happens next. Again, John Gardner speaks of the immediacy of

the imaginative plunge, "Art is as original and important as it is precisely because it does not start out with a clear knowledge of what it means to say. Out of the artist's imagination, as out of nature's inexhaustible well, pours one thing after another. The artist composes, writes, or paints just as he dreams, seizing whatever swims close to his net" (1983, p. 13).

If the path away from noninvolvement, from the passivity which renders much of teaching unawake and unaware is through a raised or heightened consciousness, then writing fiction is art which attempts to put "people" before us in such a way that the artist has, in the end, taken a stand by studying exemplars of human beings in conflict. I do not intend, however, to throw my "net" in one particular part of the creative creek. I do not intend to gain insight, to become more "aware" by foisting a preconceived series of events on myself. For my purposes, that would be almost pointless. In this story I want to watch the characters and then assess what I saw. To do otherwise would lack integrity in the aesthetic mode as I see it. The artist, "who begins with a doctrine to promulgate, instead of a rabble multitude of ideas and emotions, is beaten before he starts. True art imitates nature's total process: endless blind experiment . . ."

(Gardner, 1983, p. 14).

In other words, it is of paramount importance to me to give any characters free reign to be what they must be in the story. To do otherwise would be, to me, manipulative and offensive, if not downright immoral. "True art is too complex to reflect the party line"

(Gardner, 1983, p. 15).

One finds in the work of Milan Kundera (1988) an articulation of fiction as a means by which an author may pursue meaning in his own life and in the world. Kundera defines a novel as, "the great prose form in which an author thoroughly explores, by means of experimental selves (characters), some great themes of existence" (1988, p. 142). The writer or storyteller is, for Kundera, "an explorer feeling his way in an effort to reveal some unknown aspect of existence. He is fascinated not by his voice but by a form he is seeking, and only those forms that meet the demands of his dream become part of his work" (1988, p. 144). For me, the important words are "demands" and "forms" because this chapter differs from that of chapter two, the autobiography, by virtue of the latter's reliance on a telling of the "facts" of my actual lived life. Fiction, it seems to me, has a different kind of freedom, one which is at once experimental, progressive, selective, and unpredictable. Fiction searches for its form and in so doing interprets a reality that can be. The characters, the situation, the conflict all come in some way from my experience but now by means of an imaginative reshuffling which wants clarification rather than distortion of life. It seeks a new language to better understand what Kundera calls, "the enigma of the self" (1988, p. 24). In this reshaping process, "the novelist destroys the house of his life and uses its stones to build the house of his novel."

Kundera sees himself as a novelist who comes in the evolution of the novel as one interested primarily in the existential situations

in which characters find themselves. In the first stage, he thinks, writers tended to concern themselves mostly with the actions of their characters; in the second, with a psychological exploration, and in the most recent, with an examination of existence as one finds it. For Kundera, a character is more than a psychological being trying to figure out what to do or think next. And a story, as a means of trying to interpret existence, is more (or needs to be more) than a purveyor of the author's great ideas. Indeed, "the author makes no great issue of his ideas," in a world which seems, more and more, to impinge on the self, to determine the self: ". . . we are more and more determined by external conditions, by situations that no one can escape and that more and more make us resemble one another" (1988, p. 34).

Throughout this study I have tried to communicate in some way the nature of the problems which tend to conspire to inhibit teachers from functioning as the transformative guides their position asks them to be. In Kundera's language, part of that problem, that obstacle, which stands in the way of the fulfillment of that potential transformative power arises not from some inadequacy on the part of professional teachers but rather with the conditions of the world in which they try to work. If indeed, the push of "external conditions" works to force teachers to "resemble one another" in the sense of unquestioning conformity to preserve the status quo, then it is my purpose in this piece of fiction to explore where such an influence might lead. The struggle of this study, the interior teacher seeking

awareness and personal power in a depersonalizing world, can be studied on one level by viewing how a person reacts to the impositions of those "external conditions" as they seek to destroy his personhood:

Man does not relate to the world as subject to object,
as eye to painting; not even as actor to stage set.
Man and the world are bound together like the snail
to its shell: the world is part of man, it is his
dimension, as the world changes, existence . . .
changes as well. (Kundera, 1988, p. 35)

To my way of thinking, then, research through fiction is a redundant phrase: fiction is by its nature research of the purest kind, not bound by the immovable facts of one's experience; fiction feels free to interpret the potential of a character in a particular world, drawn from the variety and texture of the author's lived life, "both the character and his world must be understood as possibilities" (Kundera, pp. 42-43). To this extent, one's aesthetic interpretation of the world corresponds with Pinar's "progressive" in that it is forward-looking; it hasn't happened yet. As Kundera says, a fiction of situation not only helps us understand and interpret our existence, it also helps us understand "what we are capable of . . . existence is not what has occurred, existence is the realm of human possibilities . . ." (1988, p. 42). Through such investigation the novelist creates what Kundera calls "the map of existence," possible places, situations, and conflicts for an individual to encounter. The storyteller's vision, then, is of a terrain of unexplored territory. For Kundera, it is not of primary importance whether or not the situation

has happened or will happen in exactly a particular manner, "Whether or not that possibility becomes a reality is secondary: . . . if the writer considers a historical situation a fresh and revealing possibility of the human world, he will want to describe it as it is. Still, fidelity to historical reality is a secondary matter as regards the value of the novel. The novelist is neither historian nor prophet: he is explorer of existence" (1988, p. 44).

Here, then, is my attempt to probe the world of teaching as it impinges on a fictional character. I have used many things and many persons, real or imagined, to tell the story, but throughout I have tried to be faithful to the realities of what I see in this world.

Stylistically I have found the need to move at times in the narrative from third to first person because the story makes much use of extended flashback. Whenever the story switches to first person, all caps will signal the shift, thereby avoiding the problem of double and single quotations marks.

Journey, Farther Inland

From where he was seated, Creighton Garner could see his three-year-old son William throwing the red and blue beach ball straight off the boardwalk which led from the house to the ocean.

He would throw it, as best he could, over the railing, but just as it left his hands, the sea breeze, which was more like a strong wind, would grab the ball, lift it, and shoot it back across William's head onto the beach house porch.

William would laugh, run to the ball, which bounced around the railing of the porch like a spongy pin-ball, retrieve it, and return to the beach edge and throw it off again only to meet with the same result.

Creighton Garner sat on another porch, a smaller one on the second floor, located where the corner of the house should have been. There were two doors leading away from it into the bedroom of the Garners and into the bedroom of the Leslies, Creighton and Laura's guests, up from Nassau for the week at the beach.

Creighton sat in a rocking chair, and beside him, Louis Leslie. In front of them lay the Atlantic, grey green for the most part, but brownish, too, near the shore for a hundred yards or so, where the pounding of the waves had disturbed the sand, Creighton thought, seeing in his mind's eye the cyclic motion of the waves with the little segmented circling arrows of his college geography text.

"What are you going to do now?" Louis said, with his feet propped on the railing, his iced tea craddled in his hands and his eyes directed to the Atlantic as if the question were sent there instead of to his old friend.

"I don't know, Lou," Creighton did not look at him. Instead, he imagined the pounding waves as they hit the sand beneath the surface, tearing at it, consuming and dragging it away with each withdrawal. "Appeal it I guess. When I left, everyone had already gone on vacation. The place was a ghost building. Even the secretaries were gone, and I knew nothing would happen without them."

"This is a real nice place, Cray, maybe too nice. You may be needing the money you forked out for this week, you know."

"It was paid in advance, no cancellation possible. Besides, there's no way I'm not going to have this week. Seeing you and Gladys, the kids. Hell with them. They'll wait."

Lou seemed to see something on the horizon and looked there as he spoke. "Why don't you all come stay with us for awhile. We have the extra room now, with Mindy in Atlanta."

Lou was a Salvation Army Colonel stationed in Nassau, the Bahamas. He was in charge of the Army's budget accounting for the Caribbean. Before he had remarried four years ago, Cray had visited the Leslies and had been moved by the lush beauty but depressed by the random garbage strewn in the translucent blue water and by the opportunities to buy drugs at each corner, it seemed, in downtown Nassau. People would walk right up to you.

"Maybe. But Laura would never go for that, and, no I have never been able to leave something hanging like this. I don't trust people when it comes to my well-being. Especially these jerks."

The wind, which to Cray has seemed hard, relentless, and omnipotent for the two days they had been there, suddenly stopped. Just as it did, William threw the ball only to have it fall down into the sand, among the pilings under the house. He turned and looked up at his father with a look that could only be described as disbelief.

"It's okay, partner," Cray yelled as he made his way down the steps, two flights, to the sand. The house from beneath, stuck its

huge brown pilings, reminded Cray of the many times he had come to the beach in the last fifteen years since he had graduated from college, the times had come and the times he had only wanted to come and could not.

Later, when the wind had resumed and the ball had been returned to its owner, Cray settled back into his rocker. Lou had disappeared, and Cray became interested in a lady two houses down as she made her way through the sand to the beach with a folded chair in one hand and a cooler and novel in the other. She had an oversized hat on that reminded Cray of an old aunt who grew roses in Asheville.

"What are you looking at, old, twice married person?" Lou settled back into his rocker.

"Would you believe an old aunt?" But Lou's smile indicated that he would not.

He got serious a little too quickly. "Now look here. I've got a full glass of tea, a lot of time, and big ears. Why don't you just tell me why you were suspended?"

Cray could not tell whether the tide was coming in or going out. There was very little room to walk on the beach on the firm brown sand, and he couldn't tell from his perch whether things would get better or worse. One could choose from the crashing, grating surf or the white, formless sand.

He rested back in his rocking chair and looked at his old friend. The wind cooled his legs but could not hit the rest of his body because of the way he was seated behind the wall. He liked that, the protection.

"You see that pier, there?" Cray said, pointing beyond his friend, to the left. The fishing pier was maybe a mile away, or two. You couldn't ever tell at the beach. You could run to it, plowing through the soft sand at dawn and it would never get larger, and you could sprint, to no avail.

"Yeah, I see it," Lou said, looking briefly and then back to Cray.

"When I first graduated from State, I thumbed to the beach. Not right away, of course. I had to work for daddy, you remember? I had promised him, and he had promised me. I promised him I would help him re-roof ten houses, and he promised me I could go to the beach, to Mystic Isle. He was very specific about that. I don't want you at Seacoast, he said. Too many drunk Marines there. Find a nice place at Mystic Isle, he said. Well I got out there on 58, you know, near the Holiday Inn, and stuck my thumb out. Don't think I would do that now. Had a little sign that said, 'Mystic Isle.'"

"For a while, no one stopped. And then this beat-up truck with a camper did stop. I ran up to it and there was this old man, well, old doesn't quite get it."

Lou stopped Cray's rocking chair with his hand.

"All of this has a point, doesn't it? I mean all this is going to explain why you've lost your job, won't it?"

Gladys Leslie came through the door leading to their bedroom.

"Men in my life, I have two messages. First, Lou, please get ready for supper, and two, Cray, from Laura, please retrieve William."

Cray jumped to his feet. The porch below was empty. On the beach, he could see, just over the two dunes which protruded in front of the house, a red and blue beach ball floating in the wind, going down and up.

It was the same rush of fear-sickened panic Cray felt every time he saw flashing blue light in his rearview mirror. The ache of being caught and the knowledge of guilt mixed with the uncertainty of the worst.

He could no longer see the ball, and then, as he made to move toward the steps, the ball and William emerged at the top of the first flight of stairs up from the sand which led to the boardwalk between the two hills of sand.

William was smiling, and Cray felt the old accepted shame of mixed guilt and averted disaster. In this, his second marriage, Cray felt that he could allow himself no error, no matter how slight, let alone some egregious error. In the sad failure that had been his first marriage, he had, he now believed, taken the whole business too cavalierly, not taken his vows literally or sincerely. He was determined to do better, to be completely honest, and to leave no room for gray areas. He was a man on a tight rope below whom existed a grand canyon into which he would not allow himself to fall. He must get it right this time.

After the slightly burned minute steaks had been eaten, after the dishes had been stacked into the dishwasher, after the television had been turned on to its Tuesday evening fare, after all that, and

even after Laura had embarrassed him by cracking that her out-of-work husband could clear the table, Cray and Lou, returned to their porch and quickly darkening beach. There was no moon yet to glide across the southern sky. To the left, Sportsman's Pier had its lights on. Each seemed to Cray unlike the other, some large and bright, others smaller, dimmer. Like stars from different distances or more likely a pier management which didn't care what the lights looked like as long as there was light. To the right, at what seemed to Cray an equal distance from the house, was another pier, the name of which he did not know; he had never been there. Its lights were, by contrast, uniform in size and brightness. Pearls, Cray thought. Electric pearls. Same ocean though. Same fish swimming under one only to be caught at the other.

Coffee had replaced the iced tea of the afternoon.

Laura, Gladys, and William moved onto the porch beneath them toward the beach. Laura did not look up as did Gladys. Lou shook his head from side to side as she silently asked if he wanted to go with them.

"You were saying something about an old man, I believe, and refusing to directly answer my question."

"Look, you sure you want to hear this?"

"Please, sir, the story of your life. Me and the ocean, we're all ears."

As he began, Cray saw the black top of Laura's head disappear down the beach steps.

WHAT I WAS SAYING, Cray began, was that I ran up to the truck to get the ride and there was this old man driving. I just want to tell you this because, well, we have some time don't we, and it seems to me that you want to know how all this came about, and it seems to me it all started somehow with this man who gave me a ride to Mystic Isle in my senior year in college.

With a nod and a shrug, Louis indicated his willingness to listen, that, and there was little else he could do at this point.

I say "old," but he was, I could see instantly when I ran up to his truck, that he was a tough, old, I'll-cut-your-heart-out tough that scared hell out of me, Louis.

He had a cigarette in his mouth, dangling, and his eyes were half-closed out of disinterest, and he just looked at me without smiling, one hand on the wheel, and the other on the gear shift.

Finally he said, "Well, get in son, I haven't got all day, and I don't bite." But he didn't say it mean.

We started down the road, and it turned out he was through ticket. His name was Billy Grant and he was going fishing in Mystic Isle. Right here. In fact, right to that pier. You know how we saw those campers down there. Those people pull their trucks up there, fish, sleep, and fish some more. That was Billy.

He had six packs of cigarettes on the seat of the truck and what was left of a six-pack in the floorboard and a shotgun on the gunrest on the back window of the cab. Typical, like you would expect, but I felt funny crawling in there.

After a few minutes, he looked at me.

"Why you going to Mystic Isle?"

"Vacation," I said, looking at the highway in front of us.

"Ever fished much off a pier?"

I told him I hadn't done much fishing at all.

"College boy?"

When I told him I had just finished he said he had one daughter in six who had gone to college. The others had not gone because they were too sorry.

Then there was silence as we rolled past the fields of tobacco and corn.

"What did you take up?" he asked me.

"Sir?"

"You learn a trade or what?"

I could tell I would have to earn my ride.

"I majored in education," I told him.

"Say what? that mean you're going to be a schoolteacher?"

When I confirmed that, he looked straight ahead and said something so low I couldn't make it out. I don't remember trying to find out what it was. We rode on in silence.

"What?"

"Sir?"

"Teach what?"

"Oh, I'm going to be a social studies teacher at Ledbetter High School in Sturgis County this fall."

He looked at me so long I thought he was going to drive straight off the curve. I just pointed, and he swerved, and said, "I see it, I see it."

By this time we were in Trenton and Billy was sipping on a half warmed beer. He offered me one, and I refused.

He put the unopened beer can down and looked at an old farm house we were passing. On the porch, three black children waved. Billy did not wave back.

"Where'd you go to college, son?" he said finally.

"State."

"In Raleigh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Cut the sir crap. Why aren't you in the army? Going to Vietnam?"

I looked straight ahead again. "I don't know, I just feel I can do more good in a school helping kids understand what's really going on here and over there. And I have a teacher's deferment.

"Oh, I see," he said, "You're a coward."

So we were oil and water from the get-go, but when we got to Sportsman's Pier, he offered his front seat as a free bed, and I tried it for one night. I couldn't sleep. There was too much noise of fishermen coming and going all night. It was if there was no need to be kind to those who wanted to sleep because what they were doing was primary, was more important.

Billy came back at three in the morning, talking loudly and banging on the door. I looked up, and he had about a dozen pompano and blues. I was irked that he would disturb me, but I knew there was no use arguing with him. So, I helped him clean the fish out behind the truck. He found a cold beer for me, and he talked for hours while we cleaned the fish. And then he produced a charcoal grill and while the sky turned lighter and lighter, he cooked some fish and we had them for breakfast. It was an unreal morning, like being on another planet where they discount the normal world of sleep and regular hours.

He told me he was a tobacco farmer and that, other than tobacco, he sold vegetables in a farmer's market in Winston-Salem. As we ate fish and beer, he told me his life story.

He said his oldest son had accidentally killed his youngest daughter with a tractor. The boy had run off after that and Billy had never seen him since.

After a while, he stood up, stretched, and said, "Time for sleep. Clean this mess up."

When he emerged from his camper, it was past noon. I was reading a novel; I can't remember which one now. As he stepped down from his truck, he looked at the novel the same way he had looked at me when I told him I was going to be a teacher.

"You know you ain't going to make much money teaching school."

"You know that, don't you?"

"I don't think I need much money."

He stopped where he was and came back to me. Looking down at me as I sat in his folding beach chair, I thought he was going to spit.

"You don't get it, do you, boy? It don't pay much cause it ain't a real job. Herding kids. Singing songs. Drawing pictures. Making letters. It ain't a real job"

And he started walking toward the beach, and he tossed another comment over his shoulder.

"At least not for a man."

During this narrative, Lou had been patient and quiet. As it grew darker, Cray told him the story, and Lou generally just looked at the ocean. Cray had spoken directly to the side of Lou's face, but it would never had occurred to Lou that the other man was not paying attention to him. Lou was a good friend even though they saw little of each other over the years. When they were together, they tried to make it quality time and were generally allowed to by their significant others who seemed to understand their need.

Lou turned to him. "I have a great deal of faith in a great many things in this life, and one of them is that you will somehow pull all this together for me. But right now, I need a shower."

"Would you check with the others. Tell them we are not truly anti-social," I said.

Lou disappeared into his bedroom, and a few minutes later, Laura came out and took a place in his rocking chair. She said nothing. Like Lou, she just looked at the ocean which now blurred its grayness into the amorphous night.

"I can't believe you almost lost our son today. How could you? Aren't you doing enough?"

"And just what does that mean?" he asked.

"Oh nothing, really." She waved her hand as if she were gesturing to the ocean, her confident. "You lose your job because you won't wear a goddamned tie, and you lose your son because you're running your mouth and not paying attention."

Cray made no response.

"Well, let me tell you something else, Mr. Man-With-A-Cause. You better get your act together, or you will lose something else. I tell you, Cray, I know these are your friends and all, but I'm scared, do you hear, scared." And then she was gone into their bedroom.

Alone, Cray could barely see the ocean, and he wondered why the world was full of people who bent over backwards to help him twist his life to suit them.

To his mild surprise, Cray found Lou sitting beside him again. There had been a passage of time. Had he dozed? Lou said nothing. After a time, he did say, "Go on tell me your story. I can't help if I don't know what's going on."

"O.K., I will. But it seems my problems bring on new ones. Now Laura's mad. I guess she has a right. I was hoping for some support though. A man has to live with himself."

"Yeah, but you have to live with her, too, don't you? Get on with it."

BILLY GRANT AND I stayed together for three days. He was gruff, but he seemed to appreciate the company. I couldn't figure out why he kept me around, fed me the fish he caught and told me his life story in bits and snatches.

It was clear to me without his completely saying so that to him I was a coward, a shirker, an egghead (his word) and a person who, like himself, would never have any money.

In any case, he took me home three days later, even drove me to my folk's house. As we entered my neighborhood, he gave me one of those long looks that always seemed to me like he was ready to tear my head off or, at least, spit at me.

Finally, he said to me, "Were you one of those protesters up there at State? Carrying signs, I mean?"

I nodded yes as I pointed to my house.

"Well, you listen here, boy. I guess you're pretty much O.K., but I don't want you stirring things up in Sturgis County. There's no railroad in Sturgis, not one inch. Tolerably few niggers. We got it pretty much like we want it. You get the picture?"

By now, I had gotten out of the truck and was listening to him through the cab window.

"You live in Sturgis County?"

Billy Grant just winked and goosed the old truck, squalling his tires so loud my mother came to the front window.

I didn't see Billy for five years after that. I got a horrible apartment in Pointerville and started teaching country kids whether they wanted it or not.

Viet Nam seemed far away. I was more concerned with my own little world. In our social studies department, we had six teachers, two blacks and four whites, including me. The texts were old and inaccurate, and the principal, Mr. Clapp, didn't seem to care about anything except beating the other county high school in football or whatever was in season. I don't think he really knew I was there for the most part. I was clearing about \$415 each month, and fairly happy that anyone would pay me for what I was really interested in. It wasn't like working for Daddy. I remember missing State, and I felt like I was on a rural island, but off from the mainstream of life.

In class that first year, I was saved. We had a lot of trendy little seventies courses then, thematic ones to make school more relevant, and I had been given one section of something called "Wars." It had been a dead issue until Viet Nam, and the teacher who taught it before me had done her thirty-five years and faded away.

I had them push back their desks. We all sat on the floor and rapped. I just knew I was doing one helluva job. One day soon there was a note impaled on the in/out book of my school mailbox. It said, "Mr. Garner, see me at once. R.L.C." I didn't know who that was, and I asked around. It turned out to be the principal. I felt like I did when I was caught running in the hall in elementary school and was sent to the principal. It was the uncomfortable feeling of not being in control and not quite knowing what the stronger forces are going to do with you.

Mr. Clapp was a huge man. I don't mean fat. I mean big. He had the largest hands I have ever seen. When I walked into his office, he stopped what he was doing, stood up, and pointed to the chair in front of his desk, and, without saying a word, moved to close the door.

When he was seated again, he immediately picked up a piece of paper, and, without reading it, started talking to me, looking directly into my eyes.

"Mr. Garner, I have a letter here from one of our parents. Mr. Bigelow. You teach his daughter, Sarah?"

"Yes. She's in my fourth period. Wars."

"Yes, that's right. Now Mr. Bigelow says you told them we ought not be fighting in Viet Nam. That right?"

All during this time his right arm was propped on his chair, and he was holding the letter with his left by one corner.

"No. That's not correct," I answered. "What I said was our duty in the class to closely examine all wars including this one. That's what the course is--wars. What I said was there are plenty of student--at State where I went last year--who think we ought not to be fighting and dying there."

Mr. Clapp looked at me as if I were an interesting species of beetle. I learned only later he had been in the battle of Luzon.

"Mr. Garner, I have to leave for the Rotary Club. But I want you to do the following. I want you to call Mr. Bigelow this afternoon and tell him you apologize and that you are a good American and

that you didn't mean what you said and that you didn't mean to upset him or his daughter. And lastly, Mr. Garner, I want you to teach that course as facts not half-baked opinion. Do you understand me, Mr. Garner?"

Before I could or would say a word, he stood, looked directly at me again, nodded ever so slightly, and left the office.

"So what did you do?" Lou asked.

The time had been measured only by the strong surf wind which blew steadily into their faces from the darkness. It came from the darkness. There were no trawlers a hundred yards off the coast tonight. There was no moon.

"As I remember," said Cray, "I just stood there looking at his impressive collection of the Ledbetter Etoile, the yearbook. There seemed to be one for each year going back to 1953.

"He the one who had you in all this mess?"

"Yep. The same. Between that incident and this one, we've tolerated each other for fourteen years. I've gotten good evaluations but never a compliment. That's the school system for you. Success is rewarded with silence. You know the real truth that he doesn't give a damn for me. I'm either a problem for him or invisible."

"Listen, old man. I've had it. Can we continue this tomorrow?"

"No problem, Lou. I'm surprised you stayed this long. Want to walk tomorrow morning? Yes? Six o.k.?"

When Lou left, Cray remained a few minutes more. Low in the southeastern sky the moon bumped its head onto the horizon in the

last few minutes. It was gibbous and gold. In a strange way, he liked the aloneness now, the rush of the sea, the brightening light of the moon. And suddenly Cray knew and was depressed by an awareness that all of this sound and power, the moon, the surf, even the darkness would be there and would be there exactly as it was whether he was there or not.

Quietly, he went into their bedroom. Laura had left the windows down. A beach front house, and she had left the windows down. That was exactly like her, to prefer the air conditioning to the power of the surf. He tried to raise one of them, and it would not budge.

Laura, who had been facing the window, turned in the bed toward the wall. Cray crawled in beside her and lay on his back and tried to sleep. He thought about putting a hand on her shoulder but decided not to. Suddenly he remembered a bit of poetry from a college English class, and he said it over and over to himself until he slept, "But she is mine! Ah, no! I know too well/ I claim a star whose light is overcast:/ I claim a phantom-woman of the past./ The hour has struck, though I heard not the bell!"

At 6:05 a.m. Cray and Lou began their walk. Ten years before, it might have been a jog, but never a long run. Though Lou had talked Cray into going out for the high school track team, Lou had been from the beginning, a sprinter, a hurdler, and a jumper. He was a runner for whom any distance over two hundred yards was superfluous. After high school Lou had received an appointment to the Naval Academy, but had quit when he tired of the constant talk of killing.

He had followed his father into the Salvation Army and had been posted in Zambia, where he had been an administrator for a hospital and had almost died when he drove an ambulance over a land mine.

Now he was in the Bahamas and had told Cray how he worked daily with obscene poverty in the midst of just as obscene wealth. As they walked in the freshness of the morning, Cray wondered who had the worst job, the toughest situation. It was the mindlessness of the people he had to work with in Sturgis that always brought him to the same conclusion. He wondered if Lou had to deal with idiots, too.

"Did he ever give you a chance to defend yourself?" asked Lou as he picked up what looked like a conch shell but was only a piece of one curving itself into the sand to fool morning walkers.

"Who?"

"Your principal."

"Him? No way. To him I was just another Marine. Orders were orders and all I had to do was follow them. The next morning he stopped me in the hall and asked if I had made the call. As a matter of fact, I hadn't."

WHAT DO YOU MEAN you didn't make the call, asked Mr. Clapp. As he waited for my answer, he watched some students move down the hall. Then his eyes were back on me demanding an answer.

"I didn't think we were finished talking about this. You never asked me what I was doing in the class."

"Mr. Garner, you are now late for your homeroom class. We will discuss this matter later, but if I were you, I would make that call before we talk again."

When Clapp had left me standing in his office to go to the Rotary Club, I felt betrayed, I guess that's the best way to put it. I realized then that he didn't give a rap about what I was doing in my class unless it caused him a problem.

The class itself was turning out all right. It was fourth period, and I think the kids peaked out about that time. There were neat kids in it; some really wanted to learn.

True to the thematic seventies, I was not moving chronologically. We were into "Causes of War," and we were jumping around from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War when someone asked if Kennedy was responsible for getting us into Viet Nam. Someone else answered by saying, no. Eisenhower did that.

"Blame them both, if you want to," I said, "but why are we there?" At about that moment, Clapp came through the door, clipboard in hand.

The room went totally silent.

It was up to me to get things going again. "How about the Civil War? What started that one?"

A voice whined from the back of the room, "Mr. Garner, can we stay on one war at a time? Didn't Eisenhower send advisers into Viet Nam in the fifties?"

Everyone looked at me including Clapp.

"That's right. He did send in advisers. So what does that tell you?"

Mr. Clapp was busy writing something on his clipboard.

Fred Lail had his hand up. He was the only student at Ledbetter with a mustache.

"Mr. Garner, Isn't the real reason we are in Viet Nam is that it is good for business?"

Clapp stopped what he was doing and looked at Lail. Then he looked at me. Standing, he slapped the clipboard against his thigh. He disappeared through the door.

The surf at Mystic Isle was hitting the beach at angles. They had walked to the end of the island walking close enough to the shore to be close to the water, but walking quickly around any hard push that would wet their tennis shoes. Cray's stomach burned for food and coffee.

Two large gulls swooped in large arcs near them, landing a few feet away, and then walking parallel and with them away from the rising sun. Two men, two birds.

"So, while I was fighting ignorance in Sturgis County, you were in Zambia. Thanks for all the letters, by the way."

His friend gave him the old, patented smile that seemed to say Lou will be Lou, what can you do?

Then almost too quickly, Lou got serious. "Can we talk about me later?" He had stopped and the surf spilled around his feet, getting his shoes wet. Except for an old lady poking at shells farther down the beach, they were alone. Cray could feel the sun on his back like a warm hand.

"I want to hear more about this Mr. Clapp," Lou said. "He reminds me of my divisional commander in London. Do what I say. Don't make waves. Don't think for yourself. Do be loyal. Don't ask questions."

"You must have met Mr. Clapp. He would do anything to keep parents off his back and students in his pocket. He made an announcement over the P.A. one day saying that if there wasn't a teacher's car parked in the teacher's parking spaces by 8:15 a.m. students could claim the spot."

Lou had remained fully stopped, and while Cray really was feeling antsy, really wanted to keep moving, he, too, remained stationary, feeling like he always had that in this twosome Lou was the leader, he the follower.

"Have you ever thought about getting out of teaching? I mean, before all this? It doesn't seem to me that these people you work with are entirely, uh, rational, sometimes."

Cray knew what Lou really meant by the question. Lou, himself, had "gotten out" of merely being only a Salvation Army preacher by becoming an administrator for hospitals. They had had this conversation before, about how Lou had wanted to spread his influence more, how he wanted to have a greater impact than he felt like he was in the pulpit.

To Cray, becoming an administrator was, as they used to say, a cop-out, a false promotion, a way out of the classroom or off the playing field and yet a way to still have power over others. This was

what was wrong with teaching: it was a dead end career-wise, and yet, he loved it.

He did not answer Lou's question, and they walked in silence the rest of the way back, facing the sun, to breakfast.

Everyone except Cray went later that morning to Blue Atlantic and Fort Stevens. Cray stayed, begging off from the trip by saying he had calls to make, which he did. Laura was not talking to him, a carry-over from her wall movement the night before. That was fine with Cray. He had expected they would face this crisis together, but he was, apparently, wrong. Like Freud, he didn't know what women truly wanted.

He felt she had somehow become a stranger; he not longer knew her, and he felt closer to the Leslies than his own wife. He was only good for her when there was security, it seemed. The hell with her.

Cray's first call was his lawyer in Winston-Salem. He got a recording which he hung up on. His second call was to Eva Chambers, the superintendent's secretary. She said she had been trying to reach him, that Dr. Lowell wanted to meet with him and Mr. Clapp this week.

"Cray, I am afraid if you don't come back, they are going to make a move on this situation." Eva Chambers had been one type of secretary or another for years in the school system, and she had gotten to know Cray when he had had her son, Eric, who had been all but ready to quit school when Cray steered him to the track coach. Eric, it turned out, was a natural leaper. He stayed in school and

jumped, high, long, and triple, taking third in the state in the long jump that year. Eva was grateful. In this conversation, there was a conspiratorial tone in her voice.

Cray knew that even as she spoke, there was a cigarette lit somewhere near. "I don't think they intend to try to dismiss you, Cray. That would be too hard, too messy. A reassignment to a middle school, perhaps. Avery, probably. You better come back and see what you can do for yourself."

"Dammit, Eva. We paid seven hundred dollars for this place. For one week. Don't you think it will keep for one lousy week?"

"You do what you have to, Cray. I'm just telling you they don't care a toot for you, and the word is the school board will back them on whatever they do."

"Surprise, surprise, Eva," Cray said. "Has my lawyer tried to call him or anything? How about the newspaper?"

"No and no. I'm telling you, get back here. When the mouse is away the cat is going to rearrange his life. I think I hear someone coming, Cray. Gotta go."

The buzz of the dial tone reminded Cray of all he hated about Sturgis County. It's steady hum disgusted him. He hung up.

When everyone else returned and Cray told them he was thinking of driving back to Pointerville, Laura continued to make tomato sandwiches without looking up. Lou and Gladys said nothing but merely looked at Cray as if they wanted to help but didn't know how. William was playing in the floor with a large red and white sailboat. Cray realized he had never seen the boat before.

Finally, Laura, without turning around from the sink spoke. "Have you told these people what the situation is, Cray? Don't you think they deserve that much?"

Lou looked at her and then at Cray, "Look, both of you, this is really none of our business, please don't feel . . ."

"No, I insist that you know. My husband, your friend, has put the well being of his family in jeopardy by refusing to wear a tie to school." By now she had turned from the sandwiches. She leaned against the sink with both hands supporting her. To Cray her hair seemed too long and stringy, her makeup missing or misapplied. Who was this person, anyway, and what was she doing here?

"My dear husband is currently suspended with pay, which is a joke since school is out, because Clapp told him to wear a tie, quit wearing jeans--that was it. And now they're calling it insubordination. My husband the idealist; my husband the pain in the butt."

Just then, William started crying. The main mast of his new sailboat had fallen out of its deck. Outside, the Mystic Isle garbage truck powered up its crusher. This was Wednesday of the Garner's vacation.

On Thursday morning, Cray and Lou were driving on highway 70 near Goldsboro, North Carolina. It had been decided that Cray would make the drive to Pointerville to see if anything could be done. The discussion had lasted most of the afternoon, with Laura presenting her case, Cray his, Lou remaining mostly silent, and, to Cray's surprise, Gladys had sprung to his defense.

"I just don't see how rational people could really think wearing a tie to school could possibly make any real difference in whether or not you are a good teacher, Cray," she said.

With that, Laura had scooped up William and had taken him to the beach. Cray was past embarrassment, and a little later, when he saw her walking on the sand with his son, he marched down to her. William still had the sailboat, which, by now, had all its lanyards twisted and tangled. He kept throwing it into the incoming surf to make it float. The undertow would take it a bit, and then it would get lodged in the sand.

Cray approached his wife. "You know something, you are really a piece of work, Laura, a real helpmate in my time of need."

"Don't you start with me, Creighton Garner. I'm sick of the whole mess and of your hardheaded way of doing things."

"Yeah, right. Well, listen to this bulletin. I'm going to Pointerville tomorrow to meet with those jerks. Are you happy, now? But at this point, I'm not sure where I'm going from there."

She turned from looking at William, who was at the moment covering the sailboat with sand. A burial perhaps.

"What, exactly, does that mean," she said, with a fierceness in her eyes that Cray had not seen since he had told her that the school board had once again voted down a local supplement for teachers.

"I don't know what that means, but I can tell you this. You've been a real jerk about this whole thing, and I need some time to think. Maybe I'll go to the mountains."

"The mountains is it? It's always the damn mountains when you have a World Class Problem. Go the mountains for all I care. Just go somewhere."

And now as they drove on 70 westward and inland, Cray talked to his old friend. Lou was a good listener. They both heard a jet taking off from Seymour Johnson, tried to see it and couldn't.

"You know, Lou, I have always hated faculty meetings. It was always as if the rinky-dinkness of our school was on display at those meetings, the vacuous thought, the anti-intellectual atmosphere of the place heightened.

LATE LAST SPRING CLAPP was conducting one of these get togethers. I remember he had just told us that the next week's meeting would be given over to a guest speaker from the Wake Forest school of education who was going to speak to us on something like "Strategies to Strengthen Teachers' Effectiveness as Role Models." When the meeting was over, Clapp caught my eye. He wanted to say something but couldn't get away from the French teacher who was telling him why an individual was not going to be allowed in the National Honor Society.

When she finally left, he saw that I had waited.

"Ah, Garner. I got a call today from a parent regarding your attire. Seems this parent thinks that maybe you're dressing too casually these days." As he said this, he looked at my jeans. "You know we have to keep our distance from the students, Garner. Would it be too much to ask you to wear normal dress pants and a tie?"

"Excuse me?"

Clapp had begun moving out the library. He had said this virtually over his shoulder. Now he stopped and squared up to me. He wanted to be understood clearly.

"A tie. I want you to wear a tie. And some decent pants. A shoe shine wouldn't be a bad idea either. I want you to look like a professional. We have our image to think about. There will be a letter in your box to this effect. I have spoken to the superintendent about this. We are both of the opinion that you need to modify. Are there any questions?"

Before I could say a word, he was out the door and gone.

Cray and Lou continued on highway 70 in Cray's ancient (143,000 miles) Toyota Tercel. Cray considered that, even after all these years, he still considered Lou his best friend, and thought that the great ease with which they could resume was evidence enough of the firmness of the friendship. What would it take, Cray thought, to find a wife who could also be your best friend?

Lou and Cray had first met each other in high school, in the ninth grade, when they both had had a study hall together in the wood shop. Lou had talked Cray into going out for the track team in March of that year. Lou had been a promising hurdler and jumper, while Cray had been none of these, was not, in fact, very strong in anything, so he had been directed to the half-mile, two laps around the track. That was harmless enough; he could hide there.

Cray had admired his new friend's ability to glide over the hurdles, rump-close, with great speed in close races. And he could jump nineteen feet or more into the sawdust-filled long jump pit.

The half-mile, the 880, was another story. Cray would run one lap well enough, but as the coach read out the times to the passing runners, Cray's lungs would begin to burn, his legs would tighten and gradually feel like evolving concrete, and he would wonder why he was there and what promise it held. When he would finally finish, he often needed support to remain standing, and the only time his father came to a meet, Cray promptly threw up at the end of the race, and his dad left the meet shaking his head, saying later he couldn't understand why anyone would want to kill himself like that.

Lou looked over at Cray. "What did you do the next day?"

"What are you talking about, Lou?"

"The next day after your principal told you to wear a tie."

"Oh, I don't know. Yes, I do. I wore an old paisley tie from the seventies. All the kids laughed."

"But what did Clapp, is that his name, what did he say?"

"He wasn't there that day. I was angry and sarcastic and he had disappeared to a meeting somewhere."

"There must have been a day when he was there, though. What did he say then?"

Cray looked straight ahead. Eastern North Carolina was giving way to the rolling land southeast of Raleigh.

"Let me fill you in a little more about my beloved principal. He and I have a history of sorts."

IT TOOK ME SEVERAL years of teaching to figure out what was going on. A principal, like Clapp, seems to need to keep teachers

firmly under this thumb. In Calpp's view, a male teacher is a little suspect unless he is teaching P.E. or Ag or driver's ed. So I think he thought, at the heart of things, he needed female English and history teachers. It was sort of his world view, if you know what I mean.

But I think he thought he had my number for a long time. Once, about three years after I started teaching, I began to be concerned about the way the history department was being run, and I wasn't the only one. We had two department co-chairs, Mary Belle Langston and Eva Washington, and they would take the majority of the best courses for themselves each year and would do nothing to help the rest of us. So I took the initiative and asked a few of the department members to stop by during my lunch period to talk things over. Well, you would have thought I had asked Hitler to tea. It wasn't long thereafter that I got another cryptic note attached to my box summoning me to Clapp's office p.d.q.

It was a replay of the 'Wars' debacle. Clapp brooding behind his desk. Me asked or told to sit. Him staring at me before speaking.

"Garner," he began.

"Mr. Clapp," I interrupted. "Would you please call me either Mr. Garner or Creighton?"

He swallowed. "Mr. Garner, Did . . ."

"Thank you."

"Did you have an unofficial meeting of the social studies department on school time?"

He really looked ticked but under control as if he knew what he could do if only I would say the right words.

Facing me was his desk sign made out of large bullet casings saying "R.L. Clapp."

"What we did, Mr. Clapp, was have a little get together during lunch, which, I believe, is my own time, is it not?"

"Your own time? Was it during the school day? Yes? Then it was not on your own time! You have no time during the school day, sir, and what you did was call an unauthorized meeting of a department over which you have no control. You, Mr. Garner, did this by invitation, did you not? Yes, I thought so, and you invited no department chairperson, and you did it for the sole purpose of stirring up dissention in this school, didn't you?"

Now he stood behind his desk, and, as he did, he picked up a manilla folder that contained a thick sheaf of papers.

"I, Mr. Garner, am the principal of this school, and, as such, am empowered by the school board and the State of North Carolina to run this school as I see fit, and what I see is that you, Mr. Garner, are a troublemaker, and I don't think I want you in my school. How would you like to teach elsewhere?"

Throughout all this I said nothing. My legs trembled a little but not because I was afraid of the man; my legs always tremble when I feel I am in the presence of some irrationality, where all good

reason is no longer possible, where there is no possibility of salvation. So, I said nothing, and I think he interpreted that as further insolence.

"Nothing happens at this school unless I say it does, do you understand me on this?" He had not expected an answer to his question, or he had, in his anger, forgotten he had asked it. In any case, he pushed ahead. His eyes never left me. He was not trembling in anger; I imagined that he had been brave at Luzon and that it came in handy as a principal of errant history teachers.

"Mr. Clapp, do you even want to know what the meeting was all about?"

"No, I do not, but I do want you to know two things. You'll not have any more meetings, number one, and number two, I would really like you to consider a transfer. I think that would be the best for all."

Cray's Tercel had made it, by now, to the edges of Raleigh, and they stopped for coffee at a Hop In.

Cray felt like he had said enough for a while, and he drove silently. Lou, for his part, looked ahead, and was, Cray thought, thinking it over. Lou was not one to shoot before he aimed.

They made it around the southern beltway which had only recently been completed; they could see the modest skyline of the state capital to their right, and pushed on toward and then through the Research Triangle Park. At one point, a jet descended from their left to their right into the Raleigh-Durham airport.

How had he arrived at this point? What had he done that was so wrong? Didn't it count for anything that he was a good teacher? Apparently not. Sturgis County was light years from the Research Triangle Park. Safely hidden in their proud ignorance, the Clapps of the world needed passive little teachers who really were not interested in changing the world, even a little bit.

Cray felt that somehow you gave up being yourself if you let the Clapps just walk over you. The county loomed in his mind strong and defiant, proud in the worst way. Like Billy Grant in the front seat of the pickup so many years ago.

"Hey, Lou. I never told you what happened with Billy Grant once I got to Sturgis County, did I?"

"You mean the farmer who gave you a ride? No, you never said. I assumed you never saw him again. Did you?"

"Oh, yes. I saw him again."

IN 1975 INTEGRATION FINALLY came to Sturgis in the form of two ninth-grade blacks, a male and a female, James and Shandra Davis, whose father was a farmer near the western edge of the county.

Now, for all its faults, Sturgis County is made up of fairly decent, hardworking folks. When the two black kids showed up in August, nothing happened. A little name calling, maybe. That is, nothing much happened for a couple of days.

I was in the teacher's lounge getting some coffee when a teacher came in crying. It was Mrs. Luther, a math teacher.

"What's wrong, Charlotte," I said, thinking, Oh, God, who has offended her now? She was of the old school and was having an easy time with integration.

"It's the Klan. They're here. There's about twenty trucks out front."

And she wasn't wrong. When I went outside, I saw pickups lined up in the front drive. A bunch of men were leaning against the trucks. I saw no white sheets.

I didn't know whether to be angry or afraid. Then, I realized that I was, except for them, alone. The only school person, I mean. Then, I heard sirens in the distance and dogs at a nearby farm howling as a result.

Not one of the men seemed to know what to do next. I was about twenty yards from them.

And then I saw him. Billy Grant. Yellow CAT hat on. Leaning against the same battered Chevrolet truck. Holding a cigarette with his right hand and his right elbow with his left hand.

As I recognized him, he was talking to a large, bearded man to his left. They were laughing about something.

I walked out to his truck and stood there until he noticed me. He did not say a word. He just looked at me, intensely, like he was sizing me up, trying to place me. He had that same old fierceness I remembered from the beach, like he was ready to hit me.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said. "Look what we got here. What's the name again?"

I told him.

"Creighton." He repeated, drawing out the first syllable.

"Boys, meet Creighton Garner. Him and me done some fishing a few years back. He's a schoolteacher."

The boys just looked at me and didn't say a word.

"What you doing here, Billy? Getting ready to go hunting?"

His eyes narrowed. "You might say that."

"Well, hello, Bob." He had looked past me. I turned and saw Mr. Clapp approaching.

"Mr. Garner, I believe you have a class right now," he said, looking quickly at me and then at what was apparently an old friend.

"As a matter of fact, I don't."

"Well, in any case, I need you back inside," he said, staring at me this time as if he didn't have time to worry about having to deal with me.

I did leave, and as I did I looked back and saw Billy Garner smiling as his eyes followed me. The "boys" had gathered in a circle around Clapp. At the far end of the lot, I saw two sheriff's cars sliding in.

"So what happened?" Lou shifted his weight. The Tercel had gotten them to Burlington by now.

"Nothing. As far as I know. After a few minutes, all the trucks left.

"Did anyone ever bother the two black kids?"

"Not really," Cray said. "Name calling, I guess. That sort of thing. Anyhow, they stopped coming to school just before Christmas. The next year, though, was something different. We had about a dozen blacks, three or four walkouts, lots of name calling, heckling, a couple of fistfights. Eventually, it worked itself out."

For a few minutes they rode in silence, and then they came to the outskirts of Greensboro, Lou started smiling.

"What?" asked Cray.

Lou shook his head.

"No. What's funny? I could use some humor in my life just now," said Cray.

"I was just thinking about what happened when I visited my parents last weekend in Lake Junaluska."

"And?"

"We were all sitting around the living room when Daddy asked about you. You haven't seen them since before we went to Zambia, have you? I didn't think so. Anyhow, Daddy started talking about the film highlights of your high school track career."

They both laughed hard. Cray knew what was coming. One of the reasons he was none too anxious to visit the Leslie's was that he knew it wouldn't be long into the visit before Mr. Leslie would drag out the home movie projector and run a loop of Cray's disgrace at a meet in 1963. First there would be a thinner Lou hurdling and jumping and smiling self-consciously at the camera. Then, there would be a dim herd of runners beginning a race on the opposite side

of the track. The 880. As the pack approached around the oval, a very skinny kid would quit the race and then realize to his horror that he was being filmed. He then, very obviously, grabs one thigh in a failed attempt to feign great injury. For some reason, the Leslies never tired of this loop.

Lou continued to laugh and then he fell silent. The Tercel cruised past Kernersville.

A little later, he spoke. "Cray, I have heard quite a bit about your situation in the last couple of days. And it seems to me you are ramming your head into several types of brick walls here. I mean you have survived the jungles, or maybe I should say the corn-fields, of Sturgis County, right?"

Cray nodded.

"You've stuck it out for, what is it, fifteen years for essentially the same reason I quit the academy. We both wanted and want to be something other than a destructive force in life, to make this world a little better than we found it. Right?"

Again, a nod.

"I have to tell you this man Clapp sounds like every short-sighted pragmatist I've ever known. It seems to me that for every Calpp in this world, there needs to be a Garner."

They drove in silence for a while, but Cray knew more was coming.

"You seem like a Don Quixote with one hand tied behind him to me. You want to fight causes no one else cares about. And it must

be very frustrating. Listen, just a few weeks ago, I was sitting in my office in Nassau. A man comes in with a suitcase and says to me that he has to leave the islands that night and he doesn't know what to do with the suitcase. At first, I don't understand, but then he opens it and it is absolutely full of money--\$300,000. He says he wants the Army to have it rather than the police."

"What was going through your mind, Lou?"

"Fear. I was afraid someone would walk in and blow us both away. It was clearly drug money, and I kept looking at the door."

They passed through the infamous Hawthorne Curve without having a wreck.

"But you know what, Cray? Just now when you listened to me tell that story, you didn't ask me whether I took the money. You didn't have to. You knew that I didn't. And you know what? You know we are basically two decent people, always trying to do the right thing. But I worry about you, friend. Like in daddy's film loop. I don't want you to quit when it gets a little uncomfortable, or maybe not a little, but a lot."

"Lou, things aren't going too well with Laura and me."

"I know."

"And you know something else, Lou? I don't know why I grabbed my thigh when it was my lungs that hurt."

When they arrived at Cray's house in Pointer Forest, he immediately called the central office and spoke to Mrs. Bigelow. She told him the appointment had been set up for ten the next morning.

Clapp would be there, too, she said. Rather than cook, Cray decided he and Lou would eat supper in a truck stop he was fond of near I-75.

As they drove through the countryside, Lou was quiet and observant. Cray had thought when all this had happened, when the beachhouse had been arranged and the Leslies had agreed to fly in and take their vacation with them, it was going to be one of the nicest reunions of his life. But now all this. He was embarrassed beyond endurance.

In many ways, Lou was for Cray a measurement of his own life.

Theirs had always been a friendly, never bitter, rivalry. Lou was who he was, a hurdler, spinter, leaper, and Cray was who he was, a distance runner. And the support ran both ways. Their friendship had continued curiously without envy or comparison. Each respected the other's right to be.

Now, they drove past corn and tobacco fields, it occurred to Cray that he was past the embarrassment of it all; in fact, he was glad Lou had come with him. Lou had been the one person in his life who had more or less accepted Cray without stipulation.

"What are you going to do?" asked Lou.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean what are you going to do if they make moves to fire you tomorrow?"

"First of all, I don't think that will happen. Gutless wonders that they are. They'll take the easy course. The question is, will I?"

After supper, Cray drove Lou eastward back through the country and then north through the center of the small town. These were the longest days of the year, and at eight thirty, there was a pleasant dusk, a reluctance of the day to give up. In the farms north of town, a few lights had been turned on and they could see flickering television eyes on in living rooms.

After a bit, Cray pulled the car to the side of the road in a turnaround near a bridge. A green and white sign announced Eastbend River.

Here they were in the middle of nowhere and Lou was, as usual, passive, willing, attentive, and unquestioning. Just as he had been on the porch at the beach, on the drive inland, he was the good friend, the good listener.

"This is the new Shiloh Bridge, Lou. I hope it is not too dark for you to see." The frogs and crickets were, by now, in huge symphony. A car could be heard down the highway on their side. As it got closer, lights preceding it like parallel flashlights, it slowed, thought better of it, and sped across the bridge, its sound receding a blurring into the cacophony of frog croaks.

They walked toward and then onto the bridge. If there was a moon, it could not be seen deep under the trees, and Cray remembered the moon on the beach had been gibbous. It would rise later.

"So? A bridge. The Shiloh Bridge," said Lou.

They both looked down to the quietly rushing water beneath them.

"Remember I said this was the new Shiloh Bridge? About ten years ago there was a lot of talk around the state about the safety of bridges in North Carolina. Or lack of safety, as the case may be. This was one of them. One night, it was foggy here and at least this dark. A man named Jesse Talley drove his pickup across what he thought would be a bridge, but it collapsed with him. He was killed.

"No. That's incredible, Cray."

"Oh, that's only the beginning. Car after car came along, from both sides, seven in all and drove off into nothing but steel and rock and water. You won't believe this part, Lou. One man who died that night had a letter in his coat pocket from the governor. It was a response to the man's inquiry about the safety of Shiloh Bridge."

For a minute, neither said a word. The frogs and crickets seemed to gather themselves for the crescendo. In the distance, the two men could hear the approach of another car, so they quickly moved back to the parked car. In a rush, a pickup descended to the bridge and then disappeared into the darkness of Sturgis County.

The next morning, after Cray had tried to call the beach and couldn't get anyone to answer, he and Lou drove to Pointerville to the school system's central office building.

They were early and decided to sit on a park bench out front.

"How are you doing?" asked Lou.

"I'm O.K., I guess, I'm just ticked these guys have the power to intrude on my life like this. I'm angry and sick that I have to deal with such small minds. You know what I mean?"

At this point Mr. Clapp parked his school car in one of the slanted spaces near them. When he got out, he looked in Cray's direction and gave a slight nod and then went in the building.

Cray's eyes followed him into the building, and then he shook his head from side to side.

"I have to tell you, Lou, part of me wants to take that street right there which eventually turns into 411 which eventually gets to the mountains. A very strong part of me wants to go even farther inland."

"Yeah, I know. But I'm here. And you know what?"

"What?"

"The camera's running."

"Yeah, I know. I guess I should have worn a tie this morning and really confused them. What are you going to do?"

"Wait right here. You won't be long. It will resolve itself."

Cray moved up the sidewalk to the front door. Taped to the glass on one side was an advertisement of teacher vacancies. Cray did not read it; he just pushed through the glass door and felt the coolness of the air engulf him in its own swirling darkness.

CHAPTER V
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

"I have a kind of existential faith that people are somehow aware of what they are not yet, of gaps, of spaces to be crossed."

--Maxine Greene in a letter to the author

"What indeed," snorted Dr. Goldman. "Here we have a woman more than thirty years of age, who, though unusually intelligent and lovely to look at, has failed to transcend a slight, albeit bizarre congenital deformity . . ."

"It was Dr. Robbins turn to snort. Although a younger man, less experienced at snorting, Dr. Robbins snort made up in bravvra what it lacked in finesse and was the match of the other fellow's. 'Transcend, you say. What a pompous word! The very idea of transcending something smacks of hierarchy and class consciousness; the notion of upward mobility; with which this country attract greedy immigrants and chastises its poor. Jesus, Goldman! The trick is not to transcend things but to transform them. Not to degrade them or deny them--and that's what transcendence amounts to--but to reveal them more fully, to heighten their reality, to search for their latent significance."

--Even Cowgirls Get the Blues
by Tom Robbins

"In the midst of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer."

--Albert Camus

"For what is a poem but a hazardous attempt at self-understanding? It is the deepest part of autobiography."

--Robert Penn Warren

This study has been an attempt to explore through several means what it means to be a public school teacher. Through autobiography I have searched my own experience as a teacher to better understand my last twenty years of teaching. I have also studied other writers who offer alternatives and visions for the profession. Thirdly, I have explored teaching through an imaginative view, a fictional story which draws upon people I have known or created and situations I have lived, heard about, or observed. And lastly, I have kept a journal for more than a year as yet another means for reflecting on issues that concern me as well as the process of the dissertation.

I have consistently termed this research "humanistic" or "qualitative," but I now suggest that we simply call what I have been trying to do "research" because I want this dissertation, among other things, to be clear on the matter that one should not feel obligated to qualify the nature of investigation, that one should accept and incorporate the idea that it is a meaningful field of endeavor to probe the personal experience of an individual if one wants to know more about that personal experience. If we want to understand the human experience better, we should have no trouble admitting and enjoying the meaning of human expression as the most natural mode of coming to terms with that experience.

Trying to do that sort of study, I have wanted to find out more about the essential role of the teacher because I feel that not only does society and the school system send out mixed, confusing, and

sometimes erroneous messages about the proper vocation of public school teaching, teachers themselves are often unaware and unreflective upon the subject.

Further, I have tried to suggest that as a person who teacher and as a teacher who tries to understand and improve upon the role of what he does professionally, I want this study to serve as a model for other teachers interested in a close examination of the characteristics of their professional life. In this way, one might say that the multiple perspectives of this dissertation draws upon and enlarges what Pinar suggests with *carrere*; in other words, one does not stop with autobiographical investigation in that one looks for every means by which he can understand his professional experience by attempting every mode of meaningful expression. Such a model is admittedly more complex and time-consuming than teachers in my experience have time or energy to implement, but that does not necessarily doom the idea that teachers would be better teachers if they were better able to name the characteristics of their world. Indeed, it is my opinion that it is vital to encourage teachers to understand the creativity that they as human beings possess and the crucial nature of a greater understanding of that force they all have within to understand better their professional world.

It is also my belief that the dynamic of this field of creativity and its ultimate importance cannot and should not be thought rigid. Along with my adviser, I planned this study with an eye toward different means of looking at my world. But, during the

course of this examination, and in spite of the freedom I have felt at having so many media at my disposal, to my surprise I found the need and the satisfaction of being able to utilize poetry at the end of this chapter as yet another way of dealing with the issues which concern me in this paper. I remember being at a teacher's workshop once, and all the participants were asked to get a partner and teach that partner something in five minutes. I taught my partner, a guidance counselor, how to write a haiku. I remember the look of pleasure on her face when she realized the power she now had to deal with the beauty of nature is such a simple, effective way.

That's really what I have hoped this study would investigate: how teachers can become more aware of modes of power which yield greater understanding of what they do as professionals. In so doing, I have found myself fascinated with trying to apprehend how teachers, as purveyors of influence among the young, can legitimately think of envisioning a society which truly wants a democratically-oriented school system, one which encourages and fosters an environment of development of what I am calling personal powers of inquiry and expression for human beings. Considering that, I have tried to focus upon where the role of the teacher stands in the process of genuine social change for the betterment of humanity through authentic educational reform. I have said the issues of that role define themselves this way: As an individual, how effective can a teacher be if he or she pursues a role of responsible awareness and action both in and out of the classroom.

In this last chapter I want to attempt several things. First, I want to review the substance of the issues I have tried to discuss in the study, and, secondly, I want to assess more fully the effectiveness of the mode of inquiry I have employed in the study. Thirdly, I want to discuss how the study has helped me make certain connections with related ideas and works. And fourthly, I want to venture into yet another mode of expression, poetry, by way of final words on the subject.

It would perhaps be useful at this time for me to restate the purpose of the study as I now see it. The more I write and think about teachers the more I am convinced that the real issue is the nature of power in public school teaching. By "power" I do not mean to imply that teachers should somehow want to be more administrative in what they do, though there is current evidence that the schools are headed that way with so-called site-based decision-making. At present, among paid professional staff, teachers are at the bottom of the ladder by law. Whether that should change so that teachers are entrusted with a more autonomous position legally is only of peripheral interest to me here. For the moment, it is a given.

Because it is that way, and because teachers are as influential as I have argued they are, I am concerned with the "power" each teacher feels he has in terms of his self-image and self-confidence as professional, his feeling for his standing in his work. In my view, the teacher who truly feels himself inferior to, say, an assistant principal is less likely to lead a critically astute life or

function as a transformative professional. He is less likely to investigate alternatives or to think and act critically toward the conditions under which he works. He has a better chance, in short, to fall victim to the paradox of our schools which wants a magic product without providing an appropriate process, and all too often, this teacher, in his numbness acquiesces to this system without so much as a question, let alone an outrage.

This paradox also involves conferring to teachers that same type of oppressive power over his students that victimizes him. As the bastion of knowledge of English or French or Algebra, the teacher is encouraged to control rather than transform because on all levels very often no one is urged to question the status quo, only to keep order even if that order stultifies and postpones growth.

The teacher is, then, all important on one level, and relatively unimportant on another, in theory, crucial, in practice, an expendable technician. Perhaps teachers are not afforded higher status in our society because he is associated with children who are not, despite our claims to the contrary, important to a society which overvalues material accumulation. Perhaps as well teaching as a profession is devalued because it is thought of as female profession and is, in turn, victimized by a ill-concealed sexism in our culture. I do not intend to explore these ideas in depth here.

My concern is with the type of power we normally associate with vitality, awareness, and control over one's life. I have tried to make the case that it is an insufferable paradox to put forth the idea

that a teacher fulfills a crucial role in society while at the same time that the teacher is either not intelligent or creative enough to deserve a position of high respect for discharging the duties of that urgent role.

The more particular nature of my struggle in this research has been with the dialectic of the individual teacher in relation to his school world and the larger, outside world. If one, for the sake of argument, assumes that even though there is much talk of school reform, little is likely to change in the near future in the basic ways we go about educating our young in this country, then where does that leave the teacher of today who wants to be and to be regarded as a vital element in student lives? From what source does he get his professional autonomy, his centeredness, his pride in his work (as opposed to his job)? How does he balance that search with a desire to be more of a factor in larger issues of reform? How does he enlarge his area of responsibility so that he is able, in fact, to respond to the forces which would hinder his efforts to be a transformative power in teaching?

I have tried to make clear throughout his investigation that in the same way that we might desire a curriculum of critical consciousness for students in public schooling, one which teaches confrontation of compelling issues of the day as a means of empowerment and engagement, so also is a critical attitude a prerequisite for the teacher to be capable and inclined toward professional life of discerning review into its conditions, its weaknesses, and even

its strengths. I have tried to say that there are those who do not want teachers who ask probing questions because such an articulation of awareness would constitute a threat to the power structure, a breach in the chain of command. It is my impression that one who will brook no inquiry is himself lacking in confidence over what he does and probably will not risk censure by himself asking about better alternatives.

This mode of thinking, while all too common in all areas of society, is of the utmost harm to teachers because it renders a view of teaching which is characterized by subservience, powerlessness, dehumanization, and truncated professional freedom. Teachers are not in the business of making a profit for the company; on the contrary, their business is or ought to be the guidance toward growth and fulfillment of living for relatively defenseless individuals who come to them, knowingly or unknowingly, for a clue about a better life.

Thus, it is quite a reason for pity that teachers are, for the most part, not trusted with a high degree of professional autonomy, nor, sadly, do many of them want more than they have. I have tried to point out that these unresponsive teachers are, as Maxine Greene says, submerged so deeply in deep assumptions about the hierarchical view of education which places, for the most part, men at the top and women at the bottom, that they are disinclined to speculate or question, let alone be outraged that perhaps one reason (predominantly male) legislators refuse to revise the basic nature of responsibility in teaching evolves out of a thinly disguised chauvinism.

In some ways, I should like this study to be a challenge to teachers to fight for their own intellectual freedom by first reflecting upon their own assumptions and experiences in teaching. If I have tried to use several lenses here, several modes of expression and therefore exploration, then perhaps future research can offer a host of modes for teachers to move toward self-information. I have tried to tailor the modes I have used to my particular needs and strengths. Other teachers would need different combinations.

I hope I do not overstate the case when I say that although the writing and thinking processes involved in this project have taken a long time, I cannot, at this time conceive of a more thorough way of challenging the reflective and critical faculties than this approach has done for me. And even though it makes the model for other teachers more involved, let me be quick to add that an integral part of the study has been the challenging dialogues I have had with my dissertation adviser who provided yet another learning lens for me. It occurs to me that what I have enjoyed in my adviser is a sample of the collegial dialogue all teachers should have time for, but often, sadly do not.

In my particular mode of inquiry, I have availed myself of autobiography, fiction, journaling, expository non-fiction, and poetry. The goal has always been for the dissertation to express itself out of my human experience. It is meant, then, to be a human document, framed as interpretive inquiry into one person's world of teaching. For me, there is no doubt that this particular form tested

me and challenged me to focus and understand what have been for so long unexpressed feelings about my professional work.

To be more specific, I have decided that the autobiographical part, chapter two, tries to do too much, to cover too much ground in my life. I think I would try to focus it more were I to do it over, to develop a set of questions, perhaps, geared more toward my intellectual development, more than anything else. It seems to me that the autobiography tries too hard to link my layman's life to my professional life. Having said that, however, I have few regrets from what I learned from that backward voyage. It would seem pertinent to investigate more fully, for instance, my religious and philosophical orientation rather than how I got interested in teaching. I think teachers might benefit from particular questions, windows, which look back at basic orientation, like, for instance, "How do you think you react to injustice? criticism? Why do you think that way?"

Perhaps the most interesting part of the study was for me the writing of fiction. Certainly, I generally feel comfortable writing fiction, but I had questions about whether didacticism or aestheticism should be first served in a fiction-for-research. That is to day, I knew basically what I would be writing about before I began, a teacher who is forced into a confrontation with the school bureaucracy, and I think it would be fair to say that I did not begin the piece necessarily on the side of the school system. Yet, I enjoy the writing of fiction principally because I do not put words into the mouths of characters, nor do I know what they are going to do at any particular juncture.

Writing fiction for a dissertation, then, provides the researcher with a choice, to propound a didactic message, a preconceived message in which the characters merely act out parts, or the writer can observe the characters as they evolve in his efforts to portray the situations genuinely. Clearly, I advocate the second choice, and I believe the rightness of that choice emerges in my fiction because the protagonist, which in some measure is based on my feelings, if not my experiences, develops as a much more ambivalent character than I would have supposed.

This question of didacticism or aestheticism also raises another question, one which seeks to know more about fiction as a research tool. To what extent should the writer revise if that revision involves a manipulation of the characters. After I finished the story, I found it lacking (from an aesthetic viewpoint) in immediate action. That is, I found most of the action to be in the form of reminiscence; the characters do very little in the here and now. I have since experimented with putting the protagonist's marriage in jeopardy, but I am still not happy with the final product. But I am satisfied that using fiction in this type of research has its place. What that place is exactly, I am not entirely sure. I am confident, however, that writing fiction is, as one might suppose, an extension of the writer's self. It is a version of his vision of life if he is true to his understanding and perceptions.

During the course of composition, I read the story to two individuals to gauge their reactions. One said she found herself

ambivalent to the protagonist's situation. While I could see her point, it was true that I had tried to express my basic feelings and thoughts about school issues. Along with this listener, I found myself less in sympathy with the protagonist.

The fact that the story is written in the third person also presents some interesting questions when one considers using fiction in research. For instance, why did I choose third person? Would the story have communicated more had I used first person? Or would less have been achieved? It is not within the scope of the present study to venture answers, but I am absolutely convinced that writing and revising fiction is an authentic tool for research, particularly when the author is comfortable with the narrative form and particularly when he is prepared to approach the writing with few preconceived ideas about plot or character development. To my mind, writing fiction is a way of ordering one's life, a way of better understanding it by allowing characters to interact without being confined to the factual history of the author's life. How they interact tends to reveal a great deal about how the author interprets life. As a sort of balance to the creativity of fiction, I had the journal. Though I now wish I had kept it more faithfully, I nonetheless found that its presence added another valuable dimension to my study by giving me an outlet to write my innermost thoughts which might occur when I was writing one of the other chapters. Ironically, it was the presence of the journal that convinced me of the usefulness of the multi-perspective approach because I found that at my best, most creative

moments in the writing of this dissertation, my mind would race as it tried to make many connections at once. Thus, I might be, say, explaining Pinar and I would think of a scene for the story, and at the same time have a perception to record about the process itself. The journal was a needed outlet when nothing else was logical. It furthered my efforts to participate in the process while observing myself in that participation. I hope it is clear, then, that I believe journaling satisfies an integral role.

The process has been for me a meaningful learning process, challenge, and adventure. And yet I find a certain irony in the notion that utilizing autobiography, fiction, expository prose, and a journal successfully avoids that genre which has always been closest to my heart. That genre is poetry. The omission was not an accident. I first published a poem when I was a sophomore in high school, and since then I have always thought it my most effective and satisfying mode of expression, though my least productive one.

During my early years as a teacher, I had modest success publishing poetry, usually in university and college literary magazines. The problem was with subject matter. I was never able to tap into what I considered my most authentic voice unless I was writing about unrequited love. Therefore, when planning this study, I did not seriously consider the poetic mode because I did not feel the medium suited the message. That decision has changed in the evolution of this study, and I have included some poetry near the end of this

chapter as an attempt to articulate my feelings on some of the issues I tried to raise in a less direct, but hopefully more intense, manner.

As I view it, the modes of inquiry used here have helped me in two tangible ways. As I have discussed above, the multiperspective approach has heightened my awareness of the issues with which I am most concerned. At the same time, I have also been able to learn more about myself. Secondly, I have made (and am making) what I think of as "connections" to works I have read and am reading. These "connections," I am confident, have occurred because my exposure to the issues involving critical consciousness has helped me focus upon what amounts to a different way of reckoning causal relationships. In the study, making these links has provided me with a certain joy, an affirmation of the appropriateness of my search.

In his work The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation, Paulo Freire (1985) discusses this affirmation in his short essay, "The Act of Study." Even in the compilation of what one reads, Freire feels, one can see the fundamental differences between an education which engenders growth and one which encourages a more mechanical reaction. To have a critical attitude toward what one reads involves, among other things, a willingness to engage oneself analytically with the text, to understand its sociological-historical underpinning, and to come to terms with one's own relation to the content.

Such a critical attitude toward study makes possible what I think of as a literary connection. In support of this, Freire says,

When reading a book, we subject-readers should be receptive to any passage that triggers a deeper reflection on any topic, even if it is not the main subject of the book. Sensing a possible relationship between the read passage and our preoccupation, we as good readers should concentrate on analyzing the text, looking for a connection between the main idea and our own interest. (1985, p. 3)

How we "study" for Freire reflects an "attitude toward the world."

Studying is an act of understanding how one relates to the author and his confrontation with the world. It is, for Freire, "thinking about experience, and thinking about experience is the best way to think accurately" (1983, p. 3). A critical attitude toward reading is, lastly, an act of creating and recreating ideas rather than consuming them.

My act of study, which feeds my evolving awareness, which is, after all, a goal of this dissertation, is made manifest by the manner I am able to take the ideas and issues with which I have been primarily concerned and connect them to other authors. For me, it is a crucial step because it speaks directly to the relationship between the individual teacher, what I have come to think of as the interior teacher, and the exterior world, what I have come to regard as the teacher-in-the-world.

What I offer here is but three examples of how I have linked to authors whose interest is not primarily the education one discussed in the study. To my way of thinking, this research has influenced me to see on different levels and in different disciplines the same human issues which beset American public education. First, I was struck by a chapter from a work by Walter Kaufman (1973). Kaufman was, for

many years before his death, a professor at Princeton University in the Department of Philosophy. I am most acquainted with his works, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (1960), The Faith of a Heretic (1963), Existentialism, Religion, and Death (1976), and the work with which I am concerned here, Without Guilt and Justice (1973).

In his opening chapter to Without Guilt and Justice, Kaufman speaks to the issue of self-directedness which characterizes the teachers of my experience only to a limited degree. Even as I write this, North Carolina is trying to move toward so-called site-based decision-making as a mandate from the state. Can a legislative body really hand down freedom? Do teachers, at this point, really want to get involved in the decision-making process, to have personal power over the conditions under which they work?

Kaufman defines autonomy as consisting "of making with open eyes the decisions that give shape to one's life" (1973, p. 2). He says that paradoxically humanity "craves but dreads autonomy" (1973, p. 2). To the extent that we would rather avoid the whole issue of being responsible, of responding to the choices we have to confront, we possess what Kaufman calls "decidophobia," and we find refuge in more trivial acts, less meaningful decisions. We are, in proportion, less free, less evolved, and more repressed.

Confronting "fateful decisions" is, for Kaufman, facing the larger questions, what we might call in this study the "macro" questions of living that "mold our future" (p. 3). Particularly interesting to me is his notion that one popular way of avoiding true freedom

is by losing oneself in narrow, specialized interests. It seems to me I see this form of blindness working much of the time in public schools. Kaufman says:

People do not fear all decisions. Decidophobes, far from dreading meticulous decisions, may actually revel in them. For immersion in microscopic decisions is one good way of avoiding fateful decisions. (1973, p. 3)

In suggesting that teachers can be "decidophobes" about their role in education is to single them out unfairly. I find that fear of true autonomy flourishes at all levels within the school. When I ask questions about teaching and learning conditions, I am very rarely treated to responses which result from an envisioning process. More often than not, I am told what the law or policy is that dictates the particular issue, and, that as a classroom teacher, I am not aware of all the contingencies involved. Since, when I told a school board member of a school system I had read about where English teachers taught only three classes and spent the rest of the school day counseling students on writing skills, she laughed and dismissed it as an utter impossibility.

I should think we would want school people who ask the disturbing questions, the questions which recreate ground for other possibilities. Perhaps it is merely human nature to abhor the daring or the imaginative because risk involves uncertainty. For Kaufman, those who avoid looking at far-reaching alternatives, or who discourage others from doing so, are characteristic of the decidophobe:

Choosing responsibly means that one weighs alternatives But comparing fateful alternatives and choosing between them with one's eyes open, fully aware of the

risks, is what frightens the decidophobe. Basically, he has three options: to avoid fateful decisions; to stack the cards so that one alternative is clearly the right one, and there seems to be no risk involved at all; and to decline responsibility. He need not choose between these options: They can be combined. In brief: avoid if possible; if that does not work, stack; and in any case make sure that you do not stand alone. (1973, p. 4)

An autonomous individual is, for Kaufman, the person who does the right think based upon a total, or nearly total, awareness of the risks and the consequences. Such awareness is, in my mind, likened to Maxine Greene's "wide-awakeness" and is possible only when individuals make an effort to know themselves and know how their major choices in life affect the community as well as themselves.

As I think of teachers and strategies for them to possess greater personal power over their work, and, at the same time, the climate of "decidophobia" I have witnessed in twenty years of teaching, it occurs to me that should a teacher want desperately to transform education in an experience of true human growth and celebration, she is going to have to become more responsible, better able to respond to the effects of decisions which adversely affect her role as a transformative individual. She is going to ask questions and take risks. But more than that, as a professional and as a moral being, she is going to have to confront obfuscation, distortion, and prevarication where she finds it.

The second "connection" I want to discuss, then, is found in Bertolt Brecht, who addresses the problem of confrontation in his essay, "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties" (1966). In this work,

which first appeared in 1934, Brecht offers an approach to truth-telling, and it includes at least as much risk taking as that which Walter Kaufman would advocate in overcoming decidophobia:

Nowadays, anyone who wishes to combat lies and ignorance and to write the truth must overcome at least five difficulties. He must have the courage to write the truth when truth is everywhere opposed; the keenness to recognize it, although it is everywhere concealed; the skill to manipulate it as a weapon; the judgment to select those in whose hands it will be effective; and the cunning to spread the truth among such persons. (Brecht, 1966, p. 133)

While Brecht is addressing his remarks to those victimized by the spreading threat of Fascism, I find particular relevance to the public school teacher's situation. In my experience, there are always at least two levels of truth corresponding to actual and hidden agendas. There are those who will avoid actual agendas, which I associate with authenticity, because in their decidophobia, they feel more comfortable with decisions which are of a politically more popular dimension. In terms of teaching, for instance, teachers might sense that the school's administration daily makes decisions which are not in the best interests of the school community but who choose to remain silent rather than raise disturbing questions and risk unpopularity with principals. As I have continued writing this study in the summer of 1990, the state legislature of North Carolina, facing a revenue shortfall, would not consider any sort of tax increase to aid school funding because they were fearful of political fallout in an election year. In a month or so, I will be teaching a class of thirty or upward in a classroom which will reach ninety-six to

ninety-eight degrees. That is the authentic conditions under which I will try to work. There will be no one, save those thirty students, five times a day, and myself, who will feel the outrage and frustration of the situation in my particular room. For the school system it will be business as usual. Of course, there are other, similar situations.

Many teachers are passive and docile to the extent they adapt to unreasonable conditions such as these in silence. Teachers, functioning as what Giroux calls "transformative intellectuals" make a habit of being more aware and involved, more vocal and investigative, not merely going to their classrooms like galley slaves. One of my central concerns in this paper has been what the proper path to that awareness and involvement might be. Brecht suggests simple courage to tell the truth as one sees it. He suggests that it starts with the self and moves toward the larger structure. A personal power is needed to face the unpleasantness that might accompany any expression of inquiry that attacks the way things currently are:

And it also takes courage to tell the truth about oneself, about one's own defeat. Many of the persecuted lose their capacity for seeing their own mistakes. It seems that the persecution itself is the greatest injustice. The persecutors are wicked simply because they persecute; the persecuted suffer because of their goodness. But this goodness has been beaten, defeated, suppressed; it was therefore a weak goodness, a bad, indefensible, unreliable goodness. For it will not do to grant that goodness must be weak as rain must be wet. It takes courage to say the good were defeated not because they were good but because they were weak.
(Brecht, 1966, p. 134)

Teachers have always seemed to me an extremely decent group of people, however acquiescent they are in the midst of ill-conceived and ill-delivered decisions from "above." I believe that as professionals they must awaken from their passive slumber and examine closely what they do, are encouraged to do, and are allowed to do. Then they must have the courage to speak out if the results of that examination demonstrates an educational environment ill-suited to democratic and humane goals, actions, and resources.

Brecht goes on to say that what he calls "truth" is not necessarily a consequence of having courage. One must have "keenness" to recognize "truth" worth dealing with. If not, one might find easily accessible truth, comfortable, facile, expedient truth. The seeker of actual truth must avoid those who would resemble "a painter adorning the walls of a sinking ship with a still life" (p. 136).

In his third difficulty, "the skill to manipulate the truth as a weapon," Brecht speaks to one of my central questions in this study, namely, what is the relation between the interior teacher and the teacher-in-the-world. He says, "the truth must be spoken with a view to the results it will produce in the sphere of action" (p. 137). The seeker, courageous and keen, must be aware enough to foresee consequences; he must attempt to carry his vision over to its supposed or hoped for application in the world. What we see in the world in urgent need of change, what we might even call "evil" in its unwanted results, must be located and named:

If one wishes successfully to write the truth about
evil conditions, one must write it so that its avertible

causes can be identified. If the preventable causes can be identified, the evil conditions can be fought. (Brecht, 1966, p. 140)

Brecht's advocacy of not merely action, but directed, thoughtful action as a mode of change, is reinforced when he identifies the fourth difficulty, judgment. One must, he insists, speak well and listen well to the "truth," what I interpret to be "authentic meaning" as I have used the phrase here, but more than that, the effort will be efficacious, if it is put into the hands of someone who can deal with it, "But the truth cannot merely be written; it must be written for someone, someone who can do something with it" (p. 140). The recognition of an undesirable or damaging situation must therefore form a dialectic between perceiver and victim, "We must tell the truth about evil conditions to those for whom the conditions are worst, and we must also learn the truth from them" (pp. 140-141). This last comment reminds me of Freire's advocacy of instilling critical consciousness among the illiterate by involving them in dialogue, starting with their perceptions of justice.

Lastly, Brecht discusses the need for "cunning" once the other four difficulties have been overcome. Because those who have created the regrettable conditions do not tend to find them regrettable, one must, at times, use subterfuge to modify the consciousness of unaware victims. For Brecht, any means to stimulate thought among the oppressed is helpful, but it must seem to have a different goal than liberation and oftentimes it must be indirect:

What counts is that the right sort of thinking be taught, a kind of thinking that investigates the transitory and

changeable aspect of all things and processes. Rulers have an intense dislike for significant changes. They would like to see everything remain the same--for a thousand years, if possible. They would love it if the sun and moon stood still. Then no one would grow hungry any more, no one would want his supper. When rulers have fired a shot, they do not want the enemy to be able to shoot; theirs must be the last shot. A way of thinking that stresses change is a good way to encourage the oppressed. (Brecht, 1966, p. 148)

For Brecht, truth against opposition is an active process; for Walter Kaufman, a willingness to make the important choices of one's life is, as well. In both of these authors, there is the underlying notion that one must have courage to do the genuinely right acts in life, that one must take risks oftentimes because very often "the right thing" does not perpetuate the way things are, nor is it the most comfortable. Certainly this holds true for the transformative teacher who promotes critical consciousness in his work and in his students. As I noted in chapter three, Ira Shor pointed out to Paulo Freire that at issue in American schooling is not life or death per se, but rather life or death of a manner of education which promotes full growth of human development and fulfillment through critical examination.

My third, and last, connection in this chapter concerns the obstacles which stand between a teacher and this educational environment of critical consciousness. One recalls David Purpel's analysis of the educational expectations of "the dominant society," that is, that education is depersonalizing because it is not there so much to develop individuals humanely as it is to pass on the culture, as a product, and as a mode of dominance. In this scheme, education is not

there so much for thinking and questioning as it is for perpetuating the capability to make money and acquire possession.

In her article, "A Class Divided: The Intelligentsia vs. the Suits," Barbara Ehrenreich (1990) suggests that anyone not connected with the capitalistic model is not only destined to lower income jobs in our society, he is also suspected of being a disruptive force. The middle class is made up of these "two cultures," those that work for accumulation of money and those who work for "ideas or ideals," the first she calls "suits," and the second she calls the "intelligentsia." The "intelligentsia" includes professors, journalists, public officials, foundation executives, occupants of the nonprofit sector, the media, and the education industry" (Ehrenreich, 1990, pp. 46-47).

For Ehrenreich, the culture gap is wide, and she is concerned that those who ally themselves with the corporate mode are not only given to unexamined conformity and critical faculty, they are also capable of influencing the other sector. She notes:

So I worry about the blind loyalty and intellectual timidity that I encounter in representatives of corporate culture. No one ever claimed that corporations are models of internal democracy, but what matters is that they have the power to limit free expression for the rest of us. (Ehrenreich, 1990, p. 49)

Those who give their hearts and minds to the corporate culture tend to want schools which function like a business. One sees the path clearly: with schools modeled after businesses, teachers are the workers producing a product, the student, who must, in turn, be regarded as an object who either chooses a line of work that makes

money, or he chooses the liberal arts, which does not. To my mind, and I suspect to Ehrenreich's, such an attitude diminishes any hope of education for life in terms I have been discussing here. The corporate culture cannot concern itself with human issues unless dealing with those issues somehow leads to greater profitability. Ehrenreich had an occasion to be in a seminar with certain corporate heads, and she found herself asking some of them questions. She elaborates:

The corporate culture does not encourage nonconformity and positively scowls at dissent. When I cornered an official of Burroughs Wellcome, the manufacturer of AZT (a drug used for AIDS treatment), to inquire gently why the company's life-giving product costs so much, he answered by reading from a public relations bulletin that seemed to be imprinted somewhere on his frontal lobe. Similarly, when I tried to question a representative of a notoriously untidy chemical firm, he excused himself to get another drink. (Ehrenreich, 1990, p. 48)

I think it is fair to say that the dominant culture does not understand those who pursue ideas, though Ehrenreich's argument makes me think education itself is divided between those who merely want to teach skills (which lead to making more money) and those who think there is more to life than acquisition of worldly goods. And all this only deepens the discussion of how in the world can a teacher function as a guide toward those ideals of seeking a worthwhile life in other than monetary terms. At this point in my thinking I always find myself returning to some of the basic tenets I hold as an English teacher, that human expression is important, that personal human expression can help an individual better understand his experience in life. That is to say, education should be more, and should be perceived as being more than skills training; it should be a strategy for living with meaning.

But these words I have just said, "human expression is important" and "human expression can help" strike me as all too facile. No one would argue with them, I think. Yet what I tried to understand throughout these chapters is how best to express what teaching means to me and why, as a teacher, I feel repressed and underexpressed.

The whole notion of searching for one's personal liberation means finding who one is in spite of any forces which, for reasons of other agendas, don't care or don't care to encourage individuals to name their world, find terms that help it make sense. For teachers to find power over their professional lives, they must awaken to the realization that what they have to say counts for something. It is the pursuit of finding the self in order to understand the world.

In one of my courses for this degree, William Purkey, professor of counseling education at UNCG, asked our class why is it that if one asks a first grade class "Who can sing?" nearly everyone raises his hand, but if one asks the same thing of adults almost no one volunteers? At some point we succumb to what we think we are expected to do with our expression, and yet those same nonrespondants may sing away in the privacy of their showers.

Throughout the dissertation process, my adviser has encouraged me to allow myself to experiment with different means of expression, and to a large degree, I have struggled against him, perversely holding back and not always listening to him, or, if listening, not always believing. He has said, "All research is autobiographical; yours is just more obvious." Together we plotted the different ways

I could develop and explore my ideas, and, at each step, he challenged me to go deeper into my lived experience. He has also said, "The term 'humanistic research' is redundant." To confront the world with the challenge that objectivity is not possible, that each of us lives his own subjectivity, continues to be for me the place where one must try to learn to understand how every person must be freed to explore and revel in that selfhood. My adviser said recently, "You could not finish the dissertation without including your poetry." When he said that, something snapped. I realized that up to that point I had been hiding part of me just as one guards the ace in a poker game. I had been asked for autobiography, and I had delivered, the same with fiction, the same even with writers who spoke to the issues treated here.

But I had been holding back on, what shall I call it, the real Richard Smith? The ultimate Richard Smith? No, not that, because Richard Smith goes on. It is devastating to me to realize that if I am that reluctant toward disclosure of myself in a study which investigates the importance of reflection for liberation, where are my co-workers in the matter of self-expression?

As I write these words, I have just finished participating in interviews for a prospective English teacher at our school. During one of the interviews, I was struck by one teacher's admission that she needed to teach to live the kind of life she wanted. She was referring to human expression, not money. It occurred to me at the time what an outrage it is if a person is not allowed or encouraged to

express his life naturally and fully as a matter of course, as a way of life. What I sense is a profession with teachers is constraints as individuals, like prisoners who are in cages in which they cannot stand or sit comfortably: there is an inclination toward realization, naming, and expression of the self, but there is also a fear of it, fear that reflection will lead to outrage and upheaval. Within every teacher, as within every other human being, there is a dissertation with several chapters, each one the slab of marble inside of which is the sculpture of one's life waiting to be freed.

Please think of this section in some way as an attempt to begin that release, and, in particular, as a poetry reading, something rather rare in our present lives. At the readings I have attended and thought most effective, the poet gives a brief background of the genesis of the poem, and then he or she simply reads it. I offer no analysis; the poems stand or fall on their own merit. After the last poem, I will offer my conclusion to this study.

Poetry

Poem 1: At Dusk

If the autobiographical chapter, chapter two, taught me anything about myself, it was that my father had an early and profound effect upon my teaching. The following sonnet was written in response to his on-time request, delivered rather off-handedly, to make sure there were no flowers at his funeral. I seriously doubt he remembers making the remark, but it stayed with me as sort of a legacy, a

handing down of responsibility, as well as an admission of a father to his son of the father's mortality. This, then, is "At Dusk":

My father moved through rows of greenhouse plants
 While I would walk through twisted orchard trees,
 And throw green bombs at regimented ants,
 Or headlong swarms of kamikaze bees.
 At dusk, he sipped a cup of scuppernong
 Beneath latticed vines of muscadines
 Till wine confessed a thick-tongued song
 Of buried men and their defunct designs.
 My father's rage might stay the night, until
 His drunken mouth, in those uncolored hours,
 Would cry and belch his desperate, dying will
 To me, "Remove, destroy the funeral flowers."
 And now, though organ music claims the room,
 I weep without his dread of funeral perfume.

Poem 2: Changes

As a second poem, I would like to offer "changes" which speaks to a profound change in a former student, but it also represents a decisive change in me when I realized more fully that students are human beings. On the day before he broke his neck, Billy passed my classroom (I was teaching summer school) and threw up his hand by way of greeting as he strode down the hall. Within forty-eight hours, I visited him in Duke hospital: he could move only his eyes and his lips. He was on a moveable, rotating table which helped keep his body fluids where they were supposed to be. This, then, is "Changes":

Some summers ago
 Billy took an awesome leap
 Into his neighbor's pool,
 (he dared the devil to jump with him)

his game was this:
 to aim his Billyness at a floating inner
 tube, and hurl him
 self toward a crisp and soundless splash.

He overshot the mark, and
for a sleepy instant
the pool became his bed,
the rubber tube, a pillow.

No one heard his neck pop,
its noise was minute;
razor sharp, a machete of bone
sliced through a jungle of nerves.

The pool received him,
entombed him, claimed him;
he sank noiselessly
into its chlorinated depths.

Sinking, Billy notices the sun
exploded and splattered
on the water,
its numbing fluid sucked him in
and everything turned to jelly.

He almost drowned.
Retrieved and sprawling
like a gasping fish on the lip
of the deadly pool,
the new Billy waited.

And waited,
with his new friends.
Years later, it seemed,
he was borne away,
transformed,
untouched by any

of all this.

Poem 3: Motelled

For my third poem, I would like to develop the theme of depersonalization that evolves out of society which uses people rather than regarding them, understanding them, or celebrating them. The protagonist in this poem, in his isolation, reminds me of Milan Kundera's imprecation, mentioned in the introduction to chapter four,

that modern society wants to make us all alike. Here, then is

"Motelled":

The room around the man
could suffocate all memory
of place or time or purpose.
In his motelled cube he waits,
lying on his tightly-made bed
half-drugged from a sweating
afternoon's sleep,
hearing in the background
shrieks and dives and Marco Polos
and the steady combustion
in the dither of a world
escaping on its asphalt world
into its concrete brain
on miles and miles and miles
of look-alike interstate highway.

He has been there before
spread-eagled and dying
on this canvas of a bed, alone,
where he has dreamt
of being trapped somewhere
in a convenience store
and, turning around, not
knowing, exactly which city
he was in, today or night.

And he has dialed "8" for room service,
for someone to bring him . . .
for someone to deliver him . . .
for some sort of rescue . . .
in the glowing, never sleeping night
of MacDonald's
and Texaco
and Kentucky Fried Chicken
(waited for some clue)
in the shadows of his room.

But strange feet clamored by
in the hallway
and the man found
other worlds
on television.

Poem 4: Typical Old Field Succession in
Piedmont North Carolina

For my last poem, I want to deal with the more positive, affirming notion of a word I have been using freely throughout this study, transformation. By a teacher functioning in a transformative role, I mean nothing less than his or her potential to help others achieve all the power and meaning and understanding the relationship is capable of summoning. When one transforms, he takes what is there and enables the formulation of something better. To communicate this idea artistically, I have chosen to recount my visits when I was eight or nine years old to my great grandfather Gaither Buckner in the mountains of North Carolina. Here, then, is my last poem, "Typical Old Field Succession in Piedmont North Carolina":

Not by chance was the field fallow,
the old farmer wanted it that way.

Great Grandfather Buckner raised
his Mason Jar to spit brown snuff
juice before he continued.

I talked to that farmer when I was
younger than you, he said, looking
at the Haw Creek street in front
of his house as if it were
a limitless valley.

His old field was fallow;
he left it that way
to gather itself, sort of,
to take a rest from being gouged.

We were living in Guilford County, then,
farmers, too, but I couldn't understand
why a man like him would leave a field,
forget it like that,
but the old man told me
watch, just watch.

and I did, but we moved her, to Asheville I mean,
not Haw Creek like now, and we would go back
of a summer, to see the folks
and I would remember that field
for it was two lanes over
from our sagging barn.

Great Grandfather Buckner
paused in his Mason Jar again
and he noticed my disgust.
he opened his pocketknife from his
vest, and wielded it at me
with a mountain fierceness in his eyes.

now, you listen here and maybe
you'll learn something.

Yes, sir, I said

and once again he took me
to Guilford County
in God knows what year
saying that what he noticed

was that the fallow field
was now full of broomsage and ragweed
that very next summer
when they came down the mountain
to their old piedmont home.

full of broomsage and ragweed
and just beneath that,
little pine seedlings sprouting through.

now, don't you see, boy,
the farmer was right
for telling me just to watch,
and I saw that he had had a plan
it wasn't sorryness: he really had a plan.

and when I asked to see the farmer
some woman at his house
said he had died;
they found him slumped over the edge
of his clearwater well.

Great Grandfather Buckner
looked over his valley again
blind to the indifferent cars
sliding by an old man's front porch
in Haw Creek.

We left his Mason Jar
and walked behind his ancient
house, as always, for
a teeth freezing drink
of water from a mountain spring
and Great Grandfather Buckner
remembered the Guilford County field:

Every summer we went down the mountain
and I would find that untouched field
and measure the pine trees progress
head high one year,
but remember I was growing, too,

and the broomsage and ragweed
were all but gone

And of course there were years
I forgot the field
or didn't care, as I married Hattie
and got your granddad and the others.

But after all those years
I returned to that field in Guilford--
that was after your granddad had gone
and married Molita--

the pine trees were tall by then
sixty, eighty feet
and what do you know? on the ground
beneath them were little trees,
oaks and elm

You look confused, mind you listen
to what I say about that old field.

Voices from inside were calling us to supper
but the old man wouldn't yet go-

Son, I would have you know about that field
that all of it-
the broomsage and ragweed
and little pines
and sturdy hardwoods
were always there
and the farmer had always known it,

don't you see, boy, that's as close
as we get to God in this world

one needed the other
to help it along, in its own time
when the ground and air and shade
were ready,
one following the other
just as it should have been.

let's go to supper boy
and we can come here again
away from all the others
and I'll tell you more

about that field
and how to find it
before some fool looks at that forest
and sees a field to plow.

Later, much later, I went
down an asphalt road
in northern Guilford County.
I couldn't be sure
if I had really found the woods

there were homes and mobile homes
transforming the place,

but in every lot and unmolested field
I saw through Great Grandfather Buckner's eyes
the seeds beside seeds
strewn around, just waiting,
for heat and light and shade
just right--
the farmer had shown him,
the power in power
waiting for their chance

each of the trees and weeds together
each in its own moment
strong in its own time.

Conclusion

In the back of my mind, the question of role of the teacher has been for me, throughout the study, a battle against priorities in education and a culture which tend to diminish the self-esteem and effectiveness of the teacher. It has been a sort of Darwinian struggle in which the teacher is the hunted, by the bureaucracy, by the dominant culture, as well as by the ignorance and indifferences of teachers themselves. As I write this conclusion, I face a return to the public schools next week with a great deal of ambivalence. I am a teacher; I know that. I know, by all rights that's what I should be doing. But I don't know whether I am up for the fight in this my twenty-second year in the profession. I am weary; one might say a weary warrior. Yet even as I write this, I know I will be there.

I think, at this point, the question is whether I am up to the encounter. Having already spoken to my principal, I know the first order of business will concern setting up committees to implement Senate Bill 2 which seeks in some ways to effect site-based decision-making on the part of teachers. He sees it as a misallocation of funds. We talked about the virtues of greater parental involvement. He is suspicious of parents trying to run the school.

The ultimate question for me, as an individual, is the same as it was at the beginning of the study: how can a singular teacher help facilitate authentic educational reform? Throughout the study, I have, in some manner, constantly thought about what I have come to think of as the inside-outside question. If one thinks of the

teacher, how does significant social change begin? Of the writers I have read, which has the edge? Which should be given priority?

If one sides with Giroux and Purpel, on the facet of large change, where does that leave the individual teacher in personal struggle? If one takes the more individuated view of Greene and Pinar, doesn't one run the risk of the teacher seeking empowerment exclusively from private experiences, literature, personal expression with no hope for structural and systemic improvement?

As I have tried to come to terms with these issues, I have found myself developing a dialectic relation between the two views, so that, for me, it has become a matter of order, a question of which should come first to ensure the possibility of the other following.

By nature, I think, I am an impatient person and a bit of a pessimist when it comes to events outside my purview. Education in America is large and so unwieldy I am inclined to retreat from the possibility of the culture ever possessing enough introspection to save itself. I am fairly sure I disagree with what are the putative goals of an "improved" school system: being more productive, raising test scores, being more dedicated, like we fancy the Japanese schools are.

While those large wheels move slowly, if at all, my mind keeps returning to some method of survival, some way of saving, as it were, the individual teacher, Maxine Greene's "hero." And, at that point in the study, I am convinced that the emphasis, for the individual teacher, should be toward greater awareness, greater activity as teacher-in-the-world, and dialogue.

That is to say, that though I have moved more toward staking my claim with those who advocate an emphasis on macro change than I was earlier in the study, I am convinced that hearts and minds are, finally, changed on the individual level, dialoguing and networking, teaching each other as one might teach one's students to question the world and not accept the misplaced priorities of others simply because it is there, because it is dominant.

Of course, I desire macro change toward an educational system that celebrates the human experience in a climate of curiosity, love, justice, and personal growth. But I simply do not trust the genesis of such a concept to law makers, school boards, or in most cases administrators.

It is the professional teacher who must first figure out who he is, what his vulnerabilities are, why he is so docile and accepting of a system that many times does not have either his or his students' best interests in mind. If one will notice that in any public school, the principal, the assistant principal, or the guidance counselor can be absent and the school runs quite well, as a rule. But let a teacher be absent with no substitute in place and the main office scrambles.

The teacher is central; she just doesn't think of herself that way. She's told she is subordinate in most ways, so she begins to believe it. To my way of thinking, teacher education programs need to provide basic training in critical consciousness, teachers who are aware of their centrality, who are willing to ask troubling questions

when a child's education is at stake, who know school law, and who will not be impotent, passive, placid in the face of thoughtlessness, carelessness, and expediency.

I find confirmation in my conclusion of the importance of the individual teacher in the fascinating events happening in the Soviet Union. In his article, "Passing the Torch--Soviet Style: A New Outspoken Generation Waits to Take Over," David Broder (1990) reports that "the next generation" of Soviet leaders, those twenty to thirty years younger than Mikhail Gorbachev, find him conservative and out of step with a process to change the Soviet Union. They think he is trying to revive a corpse when he tries to work within the present structure to save itself. For these younger people, the answer can only come through an improved exchange of information which share the ideas of small businesses and "radical, democratic, political change" (Broder, 1990, p. 8).

In his article, Broder quotes Boris Isajko, a thirty-one year old Kishnev software designer and entrepreneur who says, "he is convinced 'no one can impose change' on the Soviet Union, as Gorbachev is trying to do. 'It has to come from within, by gradual but irreversible changes taking place within individuals'" (p. 8).

For there to be "gradual but irreversible changes taking place within" teachers, the teachers themselves must become aware of the positive power for change they have outside, as well as inside, the classroom. They must develop a greater awareness of the oppressive nature of American education when it seeks to promote the culture at

the expense of the human being, and then they must take pains to share the information; they must discuss the issues and work toward dialogue. Teachers must save themselves through an awakening to new and better possibilities of an educational community which is not afraid, but rather welcomes, questions.

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APPENDIX A
DISSERTATION JOURNAL

DISSERTATION JOURNAL

June 8, 1989

I begin this journal because I need a place to discuss the process of this paper, to examine my grappling with my feelings and what I want to explore in this paper. But I feel I must make some primary considerations clear:

1. My mind at the moment is not totally on the paper. It is on Jani in China. And I think that in itself makes a point about the paper: the paper intends itself to be about the notion that a human being is not a desperate set of isolated areas of experience, like, say a T.V. channel selector might find. A person is a complex of overlapping interweaving experiences, some happening concurrently: and that is how he must face the world, the teacher as he walks into class, the surgeon, anyone. So, now, at this moment, I care about the role of the teacher, but the heaviness in my chest mitigates all that, but does not diminish it.

2. Why am I writing a journal? Primarily because I am trying to understand - action, reflection, reaction, and I have for a year or more been trying to blend expressive writing into my feelings about "liberation" education for the teacher and student. This journal now gives me a place to retreat where, in the end, I can forget about audience and write just for myself, which is, or should be my goal in the dissertation paper.

3. Dr. Purpel urged me to free myself the other day from my desire and my problem of somehow working "expressive writing" into the dissertation. He knows me all too well and knows that I would have to jettison that part rather than his doing it for me. It occurs to me that that is what the dissertation is all about: me finding what it is I really want to learn about teaching through my eyes.

4. I said earlier I wasn't a T.V. channel selector, but, in many ways, that's how my mind works. I have been virtually unable to work on this paper until I get rid of the school year. Public school teaching is fundamentally an anti-intellectual enterprise. At best it provides a springboard for such thought.

(The house is silent except for the chest freezer behind me and the clothes dryer in the far room. The dog, for the moment, is quiet and I luxuriate in the focus of this room where I can write and think alone. I want to read more of Sartre's The Words.)

People: It seems a lot of people have asked me what I am going to do this summer. Write my dissertation I say. Oh, they respond, impressed apparently.

June 9, 1989

This whole business of truth pursuit is a thorny patch. It is, itself, an acid test of liberation, of taking a step of courage which says I must write for myself, not for my committee. Indeed, my committee members are fully supportive, urge me toward honesty. And yet I know that honesty has, for me, always been couched in vibrant cynicism.

I have begun to be intrigued with autobiography as a genre. The idea would never have crossed my mind before all this. I've got to be careful not to record a fictional Richard; or, rather, I must know when I am confusing him with the historical Richard.

June 10, 1989

I have decided this morning how I must finish the autobiography. I must deal with the third life, which is my present life, honestly, at least as honestly as I can manage at this point. How can one assess the life one is in? Somehow it gets to the heart of the problem of a dissertation of this sort to face how honest one is prepared to be. Must I worry about who will read it? Isn't that what an autobiography does: names, names and events and thoughts and conclusions that got one to that point. With Jani facing her problems in China, the least I can do is have enough courage to give an accurate and detailed view of my experiences.

June 11, 1989

The first chapter, which has gone so slowly now emerges in my mind as a never-ending task. I am supposed to find the language to capture the past so I can understand whence I came, but I can never get it right, can never hold its lid down; it moves.

It occurs to me that Dr. Purpel and I aren't off as much as I have thought. We want the same end, a just world. We do differ as to means. I see the school system as being too monolithic to change wholly, like the Chinese students wanted to do. I see well-armed teachers chipping away: they are the only ones doing any substantive work, though they are not the ones making the decisions, by any means.

I am beginning to like this dissertation.

June 19, 1989

I have begun writing chapter three today, passing neatly over chapter two like a barnstorming airplace which chooses to ignore the next town because it is a little dangerous, a little too unknown.

When I write I have at least four legal pads in front of me at any one time. Multi-level thinking with the means, the outlet to express. Sometimes I want and need to be able to write on two different pads at the same time, a good though frustrating feeling.

Two thoughts occurred to me today while walking:

1. To change the school system profoundly, as Dr. Purpel argues, depends upon budgets drawn up by people who make decisions for me and who have little if any real idea what I do in the classroom. What I do in there is a matter of morality if for no other reason than I am affecting other peoples' lives. Why do teachers not respond to the crush of that responsibility more readily?

2, Writing chapter three (or the others for that matter) depends upon small things: whether I have a headache, whether I need to go to the bathroom, and so on. A character might say or do something simply because I choose to write at that particular time rather than later.

June 21, 1989

My number one thought (above) came to me a bit more clearly in conjunction with Jani's present situation in China. The generalization is this: She is miserable (her word) with the "reign of terror," people afraid, losing jobs, dying. Yet she wants to be an agent of change against such overpowering odds. She wants to go back, she said it the eyes of her students who could not believe she remained.

Again: the generalization: The agent of oppression (China) creates a superstructure under which certain elements, by the nature of their vocation, can do little other than oppress though even they, in their private moments, complain or even know better.

Schools are like that, too. I have many misgivings about administrators in my experience. Yet, when I went to lunch with one once I found him human. He was not aware of my discontent, or he didn't care to inquire, silence keeping problems at bay. He is too busy with his own problems to look for more.

I have been fascinated by the parallel levels of critical consciousness. Dr. Purpel wants the superstructure to change, and I see it as a glacier, which moves slowly toward change, if at all. I find it more practical to assess my place on the glacier, what's going on around me now. I am aware, however, that I cannot be complacent, and if I see the chance to change the superstructure significantly, then I must act. But that won't happen in my lifetime as a teacher.

I was relieved when Dr. Purpel and I decided to jettison expressive writing as a tool of humanistic instruction. I know that is true but I could not make it work as part of the dissertation. Maybe later.

Chapter two must approach the role of the teacher.

June 22, 1989

It is not by mistake that I am writing around chapter two. The creative impulse of one (minus the introduction) was liberating, even mystifying. Corridors which open other corridors. I keep wanting to go back and fill in details, patch through, clarify. Chapter three is, as always, compelling but extremely difficult. Chapter two involves a gathering I have not done. Can I focus on three chapters at once? If this dissertation were conventional, perhaps so. But one chapter feeds another, and then a third. I approach the quarry from three sides, I now know I must go back to the third life in chapter one. What is oppressive in my school world needs documenting. If anyone wants to read it, then let them.

June 24, 1989

I have long been interested in how subjectivity is scorned by those who would regularized experience, who see it as too idiosyncratic. As in expressive writing, an affirmation of one's history (one's lived life) is an instrument of empowerment.

June 27, 1989

At this point, I am of the opinion that chapter four should be, among other things, a sort of explication of chapter three. For instance, I want to interpret the autobiographical implications of the protagonist meeting the principal on the wars issue.

It also occurs to me that chapter one, life three needs more of my evolving consciousness.

I just spoke to Dr. Stephens, and he suggested that it might be more logical to have the fiction as a natural outgrowth of the autobiography, while doing the review of literature later. It's a good idea and worth considering.

Pinar's idea interesting: How can we say teaching is an art, not a science without looking into the heart of a teacher, as an individual?

June 28, 1989

In the mornings I work at the Bob Sawyer Sport Camp, and in the afternoons, sometimes, I work on my dissertation. Time to think, but only after I have made some money. There is a side of me which worries about the bacon before the brains, and it occurs to me that all of my professional life (and maybe even my personal life) has been, to an extent, mitigated by money, the worry over whether there was enough. Even when I finally sit down to think, write, shape, dispel, disclose, and eliminate from my dissertation, I often feel guilty, as if the work were not an end in itself that I should be occupied with, but rather a time away from work. In many ways, my life is a struggle between the two.

The introduction is taking the heft of a chapter unto itself, treating the efficacy of the autobiographical search. I must keep a tighter watch over my bibliography as I go.

June 29, 1989

The introduction needs to define the problem more clearly.

How can I understand my experience as a teacher and its relation to what I do as a teacher, why I do it, and how all of that plugs into my selfhood? How does my creativity manifest my selfhood? And how does that relate to the notion that I think teachers should be more engaged in their work?

Pinar's search for inner expression is the guts of the solution to the problem, probing to find causation through recollection.

June 30, 1989

Part of the problem is to discover how study of one's own inner experience can inform the exterior world in the matter of emancipatory education. Certainly understanding education is attempting to understand what it means to be human or, more particularly, to be the human that I uniquely am. The dissertation becomes my immediate agent for seeing more, being more wide awake as Greene says. The turn toward introspection through autobiography and function is the look at inner experience.

This journal correlated to what Pinar calls "private associations," documentation of thoughts while reading. So far, I have gotten three notebooks going. Such a spread provides me with places for roughly simultaneous (almost) thought.

July 1, 1989

My tentative plan is this:

- I. Introduction
- II. Autobiography
- III. Fiction (?)
- IV. The Role of the Teacher
- V. Bibliography
- VI. Appendix: Journal

It would seem an appropriate place in the introduction to discuss the writing I have been reading on the need for teacher autobiography. Most of the writers have been keen on it but not many have said toward what end one writes. If the teacher is encouraged autobiographically, is he then empowered? I think there ought to be a firmer link established between reflection, greater awareness, and action for change.

I am still concerned for my story that it will be too didactic and not entertaining enough. Should I broach the subject in the introduction? The problem is this: much of contemporary fiction depends on sex and violence for its existence; I think of Pat Conroy's self-indictment of his first work The Water is Wide. I also think of John Gardner.

I feel more liberated in this journal than elsewhere in the study, and I have decided that is because of audience. I am my own audience, and I feel comfortable with that here. But I have not yet overcome the tyranny of audience elsewhere.

July 2, 1989

Last night, I read Sue Stinson's essay on aesthetics and morality and realized several things: (1) I can write this dissertation; (2) I had already touched upon many of the works she cites in her bibliography; (3) that the struggle of this paper is the struggle of my understanding of the relation of the individual to community. Purpel wants to change the world; I want to come to terms with myself. He called that Protestantism and was accurate to a degree. The struggle has become fascinating for me; the paper is cogent.

July 4, 1989

I am reading Pinar tonight, and it occurs to me that it would be interesting to rewrite my autobiography and compare my instinctive method with currere.

July 5, 1989

It occurs to me that administrators have their problems and their egos, too. I am inclined too much to see only my own problems and forget that they, too, are caught in the web.

July 6, 1989

I am roughly two-thirds through my story. For chapter two I am in the process of reading, reading, reading. One bibliography leads to another. And that leads to others I want to read. I have to stop somewhere. I think that when you meet yourself coming back, when the titles become more and more familiar, you've done something. It gives me a good feeling, and a particularly intellectual one. I miss that in high school work. Why must it be so anti-intellectual? Perhaps I should be somewhere else.

Within my narrowed topic, I must narrow still.

July 9, 1989

Jani is back safely from China. I must find something else to worry about.

Though I feel ill today, I have written 2,000 words on the story. It is too didactic, and I still feel constrained to make it less than the full story of his (my?) life. A teacher is more than his relationship with his administrators.

July 24, 1989

I read what I have of the story to V.V. the other day and she was very supportive, offered some good comments, and was a good listener. She seemed to think there was depth to the protagonist she was surprised to find. I think she meant she was surprised to find that the story was not necessarily self-serving, that I was not manipulating it to prove what I wanted it to say. That leads me directly into a consideration of fiction as a real journey where the characters and their actions become an examination of one's perception of reality rather than a simple expression of it.

I must re crank, jump-start myself on this dissertation. Part of my reluctance is because I do not want the story to end in an unsatisfying manner, and I have been afraid to face it.

I am considering offering a choice of endings to reflect the different perceptions of all those involved. But today that idea feels more cowardly than innovative.

July 26, 1989

I am just about to finish the story. The fact I have chosen to write chapters one and three while avoiding two says worlds to me; I do best when I am locked in this room fighting my way out.

Writing the fiction has forced me to see myself from an outer dimension or point of view.

I have to remind myself to enjoy writing this, to give myself permission to learn and to create without worrying about the outcome.

July 27, 1989

I suppose I am not the first to awaken on a number of mornings and have the first thought be a question on the content of my dissertation. In a very formal way, I am examining the meaning of my professional existence. Could anything, any kind of research be more important?

July 29, 1989

It is somehow a microcosm of my intellectual life that I wrote the autobiographical portion first and the fiction second, neatly skipping over the critics. The first two were, in fact, a learning experience and a real probe. I want to begin the critical part now and prove to myself that I am up to the task.

August 12, 1989

What I learned from the protagonist of my story, and what I learned from reading it to V.V. is that he is not always to be admired, though I do sympathize with him. I should assign his friend more of a balancing role of devil's advocate; on the other hand, I don't want the friend to come off too brash: he is the reflective voice of reason.

August 28, 1989

As I progress into this work, I am more and more aware that what I am trying to understand blossoms in several directions at once.

On the phone just now with Dr. Purpel, and I asked his opinion of the story. He said he found it "compelling" but wondered if it

could have been rendered just as effectively in essay form. That is a wonder.

September 5, 1989

I had a productive discussion with Dr. Purpel today. I felt the need for a reversal to the basics of what I am doing, and out of the discussion came the following suggestions:

1. that I revise the story to include more present action: I think I will experiment with switching from first to third person to accomplish this.

2. that aesthetics deal with subtleties of expression not possible in more straightforward essay styles.

3. that I should go back to the introduction and sort those problems out now.

September 6, 1989

Tonight's output was much more productive than last night's. I have decided to practice what I preach with the kids and believe more forthrightly in freewriting.

September 7, 1989

I must this night face up to an old nemesis: assimilation of research. I must have the patience to read and read thoroughly.

An incidental thought: On Labor Day, 1989, I put aside the television as visual drug and escape. When I say "put away," I mean exactly that. I stored it and embarked on a more meditative life. I feel as if I have gone cold turkey.

I am reading Pepys' diary to gain economy of style in journaling.

September 9, 1989

I am pleased with myself that when Dr. Purpel says "We will agree to disagree" on the subject of the individual vs. the community, I don't feel threatened. It is evidence for me that I am still open to see how the pieces of the puzzle come together. I am more and more intrigued with the relationship of the individual to his community and believe I would like to spend much of the rest of my life studying it.

September 22, 1989

I had a good meeting with Dr. Purpel last Thursday. He said he liked where I was going but that the introduction did not yet speak to "sources of knowledge." I must, he said, have (or learn) academic humility. We discussed the difference between assertion and demonstration. I am interested. (One must earn one's generalities through specifics.)

It seems to me that demonstration is exactly the value of fiction. I am more and more impressed by the power of fiction, as I think

September 23, 1989

Recently I had a good discussion with Sue Stinson. She put forward the idea of looking into feminist-oriented writing with the notion in mind that quantitative research is another strategy of male-distancing. For me, it all fits, is all true. Why have I not seen this before?

The air is cooler after hurricane Hugo. I feel good, focused, and ready to learn this morning.

I am searching for a language with which to explain my experience, but then, we all are in one form or another.

September 27, 1989

At the heart of what I am doing is the dialectic between teaching and being able to think about teaching. Tonight, I am too tired from the first to do the second.

October 1, 1989

The introduction becomes clearer. The shape of the dissertation is the shape of currere, as Pinar explains it. Fiction is the future, the possibility of action and situation.

October 8, 1989

Sunday again. I have always been able to get more done on Sundays than any other day. Better focusing.

Objectification of an individual results when one person uses another for the user's own selfish ends.

October 20, 1989

Teaching by day and reflecting upon teaching by night is an exhausting business, but it does reinforce for me the incredible misguidance and wrongheadedness of the whole show. Control, not growth, is at a premium. How I long for a job which encourages thinking as well as the action of teaching.

October 22, 1989

It is my plan this evening to begin my latest rewrite of the introduction. If the introduction is this difficult, will I be able to do four chapters?

October 23, 1989

I had to come to the painful conclusion that, after all, this time I didn't know what my topic was specifically. The number of bases to cover is overwhelming. I must be calm. I must do one thing at a time. The marathon was easy compared to this.

October 24, 1989

The evening focus is on the dissertation. There is nothing else in the world.

October 26, 1989

I am resolved to look for work elsewhere.

October 29, 1989

I never thought writing a dissertation would prove a test of character. My meeting with Dr. Purpel on Friday had a curious physical effect on me. I had been sure that the particular draft of the introduction was sufficient, but he was being his consistent self. Going to his office is like going to Delphi.

In any case, I came home without undue panic and resumed writing. Here are some directions for thought:

1. What I am really writing about is teacher liberation. The paper has to assume there is repression.
2. The story needs to be rewritten with the protagonist having a family life which is affected by his situation.
3. Dr. Purpel and I discussed how one of the real (yet unspoken) problems is with the inherent mediocrity of intellectualism in public school teachers.

November 21, 1989

I suppose writing a dissertation is an ordeal for everyone who attempts one, but in my case, it's an effort of the soul. Because it comes out of me I have been forced to face myself, long and hard, and everything I run away from is there. I have spent over a year just trying to get a focus on what I am doing and am not there yet. The battle with avoidance can and will be a positive thing for me, though.

December 8, 1989

Today I am reading Giroux. Like a flash I realized that most teachers don't see the school as a political site; they are so inured to the idea that they are not a factor as to have given up. Or, if that is not the appropriate phrase, then they like neutered creatures who are blithely unaware of lost power. In a mixed metaphor, I see myself as Plato's cave dweller who must free himself rather than wait for the chains to be loosened.

December 9, 1989

Ice and freezing rain again today. But I have been able to write and read. I would like to spend the rest of my life doing just that, but I want to be prolific in output. That hasn't happened yet.

I think in chapter one, "life three" I can find the freedom to voice my concerns about power more clearly.

What this paper is about is power, plain and simple. The question is what kind of power and how can a teacher get it.

Is Freire a bridge between the inner and outer worlds of the teacher?

December 10, 1989

I had a good day yesterday not because I produced so much, but rather because I felt comfortable in the theoretical world. MacDonald says its O.K. to think, but I have had trouble feeling like I am getting anything done.

One thing I have had to realize is that for Pinar autobiography is not intended as art but as a means, but what teacher would do it on her own, what teacher would take the initiative to reflect upon her teacher-world?

December 11, 1989

I find it amazing that, as a rule, teachers are not insulted by the way they are mistreated, except if it becomes too blatant.

For fiction to work it must be unreserved in its approach to what it thinks is truth, what I am calling meaning.

Fiction objectifies the subjective, makes it less awkward, less current.

December 13, 1989

I need to let my protagonist (Creighton Garner) be a romantic to the devil's advocate, (Lou), who will, in turn, shoot holes in the idealization.

January 15, 1990

Pinar says autobiography in his sense is not literary; it is not for an audience. My first draft did not understand that.

January 24, 1990

Shor on transformation: Teachers must practice it, think it, live it, propound it, to have a chance to becoming empowered or enabling anyone to carry away such an attitude from the classroom. What I am talking about would encompass a full-fledged revolution in perspectives on teaching. I wonder if there is any other public school teacher voice for critical consciousness like me.

February 7, 1990

It struck me today while I was in class, while students stood around me, I seated, they waiting to follow instructions, how powerful I am over human beings' lives, how incredibly important it is to step back from the given school world to question the basic givens, and also how hard that is to do.

Chapter one is the full-grown child of what used to be the introduction.

Perhaps one of the great effects of this study for me has been the soaring moments of liberation and insight I have experienced.

February 13, 1990

I must not forget that the last chapter will assess the mode of inquiry. That is something I should keep in mind throughout. The journal would be an excellent place for storing impressions in that vein.

February 16, 1990

One of the chief functions my dissertation adviser has fulfilled has been as enabler; he has, at all times, been consistently in the role of, if not liberator, then one who counsels toward that professional freedom.

February 17, 1990

From the outset, I have assumed that the micro or inside world of teaching, the individual orientation, is a given, but it needs further explanation.

Freire and Shor discuss feeling fear when engaged in liberatory education. I do feel fear, though I think I know the limits of how far to push for change. I can think of nothing more valuable to do with my time in the next ten years than try to help teachers help themselves.

February 18, 1990

One of my main problems is to figure out how to make the flow of power go both ways from the inner to the outer, and vice versa. The answer is simple, though: bring the issues of both to the consciousness of the teacher; dialogue about freedom and the possibility of change.

I find myself more and more drawn to Freire, the wise pragmatist.

February 24, 1990

The struggle of teaching while doing this study is overwhelming, and I have moments of utter despair.

Kundera really helps because he gives me a language for pulling together the seemingly disparate elements of the study.

February 25, 1990

Two things: Shor and Freire seem to me a breath of fresh air in that they speak directly to the issues which concern me in

practical terms. Their discussion of risk-taking seems to comfort me because it makes me think they really are talking about the real world.

Secondly, I think it is important to remember that, as a teacher, what I "am" is a teacher first and a political animal second. But, as soon as I say that, I realize that in Svi Shapiro's phrasing that "all consciousness is social consciousness" one finds the retort to my consideration above: teachers are or have to consider themselves political by the nature of what they do.

February 26, 1990

Why is it that teachers, particularly high school teachers, are considered with such ambivalence by society? What will have to change for that to change?

March 16, 1990

I am revising the story even yet. I am intrigued by Kundera's thoughts on the "problem of situation" and his idea that modern society wants us all to be alike and is afraid of anyone who is not. I would like to pursue further study on that subject.

March 18, 1990

I still would like to consider the whole notion of "voice" and am sorry that it did not take shape in this study. It seems to me that the whole process of humanization is the search for voice, for individuality, for an awareness, a self-awareness of the unique character of life. That is an affirmation of life, and I can't think of a better context from which to teach.

April 9, 1990

The whole issue of teacher autonomy centers for me on the notion that teachers should be accorded more while at the same time wanting to have more and the concomitant responsibility. What will it take to achieve that?

There is not doubt in my mind that this study has, for me, accomplished what it was supposed to: the road seems clear, and I can never see teaching in the same light; the question will be whether I will ever figure how to help initiate genuine change, and then whether I will actually do anything about it. It is an intriguing possibility for my forties and fifties.

April 15, 1990

Easter Sunday. I am revising chapter three, integrating Giroux and Greene. It is interesting how my thinking has changed in the course of writing this paper: I am moving (somehow) toward a Purpelan systemic change, inevitably, without understanding fully how to bring it about. Having said that, I keep coming back to the individual center but simultaneously do not want that to mean isolationism or insulationism. The self is a center moving out into the world.

May 1, 1990

I must now record what I learned and what I think I learned in San Antonio at the end of last month. I went there for a meeting on Higher Order Thinking Skills. It was a seminar for principals (and a few teachers like myself). There were two speakers, one from ETS on how to do better on the S.A.T. and another speaker who made the week for me. This second gentleman was a teacher at a junior college in Florida, and is what one might call a "hard scientist." Virtually every remark was prefaced by "The research shows." At one point he addressed his comments to the teaching of composition. He said that the research shows that process writing doesn't work, that all teachers need to do with classes is do sentence combining!

It seemed to me the man was totally out of touch with reality, and when a few of the participants began to ask disturbing questions about his conclusion, he adjourned the meeting for the day. One principal from Maine, a former English teacher, told him before the adjournment that she hoped that those who listen to him would not give up on the process of revision, and unexpectedly, the room burst into applause. He was very defensive. He also said that the content of student writing should be "neutral." He was afraid of learning anything about a student's actual life, afraid of asking the student to write from his experience.

I learned from this experience that some people have no clue about how to generate good writing, but more than that, I am right in assuming that many people are afraid to approach genuine issues.

June 4, 1990

School is finally over, and I feel able to focus directly on this study now. The process has been a long one, and it is not over yet. Dr. Purpel suggested that I should feel rage at a system that does not foster or encourage my higher level study. I think, though, that I am past rage, but am curiously intrigued by the problem of how to change culture (if it can be changed).

June 6, 1990

Interestingly, part of me doesn't want the study to end because this has been, to date, the only venture I have made into a theoretical world, and I like it very much. I do feel the need to reconcile that world with the manipulated world, the anti-intellectual world of the public school.

The way you achieve change is by keeping the dialogue going.

I am beginning to have a special feeling about chapter five, perhaps it is an authentic feeling of synthesis.

Like a many faceted diamond, the study has been the several faces of Richard Smith. A model for teachers would need to accommodate the individual expressive traits of each teacher.

June 11, 1990

At all levels, no one wants his little kingdom challenged. No one wants or encourages questions. There has to be a great deal of trust involved for such a critical environment to flourish.

June 19, 1990

I am surprised and delighted that Dr. Purpel has been so patient with me because it has taken me so long to learn, and take great assurance in, the notion of my liberation. Dr. Robinson once told me about the aloneness of the dissertation process, and how right she was. Is all empowerment self-empowerment?

June 22, 1990

One of the nice things about the members of my committee has been that each, through the general nature of his or her personality, has helped me and encouraged me, and taught me. For this, I am genuinely grateful.

The work goes on chapter five. It didn't flow until 2 p.m.

June 25, 1990

My general impatience is mitigated by the sure knowledge that meaningful social change has to occur slowly as attitudes change or are made to change. I think, more and more, that appearances must come first, and then the real work comes in changing deeply-felt attitudes. I can still remember the separate drinking fountains and rest rooms in the tobacco warehouses in Greenville, NC. By law, those were abolished, and that led, perhaps, to the deeper thaw.

First, one has to get the discussion started, and then one has to keep it going.

July 11, 1990

It occurs to me that this whole study has been a pursuit of topic and that that is the true nature of research: the willingness to take something other than what one finds in oneself at first look. If that premise is true, then I am overwhelmed by the unfinished nature of this study, the making and remaking, of none less than the expression of my life. The greater the awareness of one's freedom, the greater the responsibility to explore it.

July 20, 1990

This study has been a sort of ultimate coming to terms paper, a search for and a naming of the freedom that is Richard Smith and the freedom within Richard Smith. Dr. Purpel has, unwaveringly, encouraged me to find and express that self, to find the lost language of my world. For this, I am grateful.

August 2, 1990

I am pleased with "Typical Old Field Succession" and will continue to revise it, or it will continue to revise me.

August 26, 1990

It is Sunday, my good writing day. Let me continue to write, then.