Pedagogy, Virtue, and Narrative Identity in Teaching*

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The ethical paradox of the postmodern condition is that it restores to agents the fulness of moral choice and responsibility while simultaneously depriving them of the comfort of the universal guidance that modern selfconfidence once promised.
—Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity*

The present controversy over the next stage in the evolution of the teaching occupation clearly shows that the moral dimensions of teaching are often ignored or forgotten.
—Fenstermacher, *"Some Moral Considerations on Teaching as a Profession"*

Virtually all of teaching in schools involves values and is guided by normative principles. This is true at every level of the context.
—Goodlad, *"The Occupation of Teaching in Schools"*

ON THE MEANING OF PEDAGOGY AND ITS RELATION TO TEACHING

When students are asked about their experiences with teachers, their anecdotes reveal that classroom interactions are always relational; teachers and students cannot help but stand in certain relations to each other.

AGAIN

As Mrs. Gogo bent over to pick up a pencil you could hear the guys' jaws drop. But Mrs. Gogo did not notice. She looked tired due to the fact that she sang in a small band many nights of the week. She had just finished teaching us how to solve equations and she was walking around checking that we were working. Just as I completed our assignment I noticed Sarah raise her hand.

"Oh no, not again!" I could hear the high heels of Mrs. Gogo trip towards Sarah.

"Yes, Sarah. What's the problem now?"

"Well, I don't understand this question."

"Okay, whatever you do to the one side you do to the other. Isolate the variable. After you have done that you will have your answer!"

*Editor's Note: A response to this article and a rejoinder appear in the Dialogue section of this issue.

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Mrs. Gogo strutted off. Thank God she did not blow up again. Just then I saw Sarah's hand in the air, again. Sarah must have immense courage considering that Mrs. Gogo kicked her out of class last time she asked too many questions.

"Yes," she sighed, "what do you want now?" She appeared to try to hold her anger.

"Well, I don't understand this still. . . ." Sarah was as white as a ghost. Sarah did really try very hard but she was not very good at math.

Mrs. Gogo walked back over to Sarah's desk. "I have to mark papers. I don't have time for people who do not pay attention in my class!" Mrs. Gogo's jaw was clenched tight as she abruptly turned away from Sarah.

"But I did pay attention!" Sarah defended.

However, Mrs. Gogo was already on her way to her desk. "Well in that case try to remember," she snarled over her shoulder.

POWER

"Why Robin? Why must you always be disagreeable? You have not done your assignment."

Mr. Sewel sat heavy in his seat, staring at Robin with stern, lifeless eyes. He sat there as if he were waiting for magic.

Robin again uttered excuses for not doing his work. But I knew the real reason. And it was obvious to me that Robin, my friend, was inevitably provoking Mr. Sewel with his lame excuses. He was rapidly getting into trouble. As Robin yelled and Mr. Sewel yelled back, their voices crescendoed into one garbled, throbbing scream which spun in my head. Faster, faster, until a violent climax of brash words . . .

I stood up, hoping I could possibly save my friend. There was a sudden hush over the class as if a cloud had temporarily snuffed out the turmoil. Then someone coughed in the back and suddenly I gathered enough courage to speak.

"Why do you torture us like this Mr. Sewel?" My voice cracked with nervousness. I was almost crying.

"Jeff . . . out!" Mr. Sewel pointed a withered old finger in my direction as a motion to leave the room. But I did not budge. I looked at the teacher's hand. It trembled and was worn with age. Then a strange feeling came over me. It was at that moment that I suddenly realized something in a way that I had never understood. I realized that teachers were, in fact, real people too, with emotions and feelings of vulnerability just like mine. The actions of teachers also had their real reasons. This thought had a strange effect on me. For the first time in my life I felt a sense of power and somehow in control.

SMART

The new grade eight math teacher took over three months into the school year. By that time I had already developed a serious case of math anxiety. Math was a subject that seemed not coded into my genes. I distinctly remember our second class with this new teacher. She called on several students to solve the math that she had explained the previous day. But her prodding soon led to much confusion and frustration. Then she said something that I still remember after all this time. This is what she said:

"I am sorry, I must not have explained it very well. Let us go over it again. We'll do it a different way." Then we did go over it again. She knew how to reach each one of us. And after school she prompted kids to come to her drop-in math class.

Now, two years later, it has become clear to me that with this teacher I turned unbelievably smart overnight.

Anecdotes that students tell are rich with potential significance. They show us that relations are constantly enacted in and out of the classroom. Some relations between teacher and students completely lack pedagogical content, other relational events are pedagogically significant but only in spite of the teacher, and still other relations demonstrate lasting pedagogical consequences. But observations such as these beg the question that we know what is meant by pedagogy, that we are able to discern the qualities or virtues that sustain pedagogical relations, and that we understand why the pedagogical relation is at the heart of good and effective teaching.

I would like to start my discussion of the meaning of pedagogy and the pedagogical relation with an informative digression. There is a common word in my native Dutch language that is not easily translated into everyday English, *mensenkennis*. In Dutch *mensen-kennis* literally means people-knowledge, to have a perceptive understanding of people. Who possesses this special knowledge? We might first think of some great author such as Dostoevski. His novels *Crime and Punishment* or *The Brothers Karamazov* are celebrated because they probe the human soul so deeply and with so much understanding. This brought the Dutch psychologist Buytendijk (1962) to remark that we may learn more about people from Dostoevski than from psychology. However, *mensenkennis* is not limited to such great examples. An especially thoughtful friend, some wise aunt, or an old grandmother may be respected as people with *mensenkennis*. If you were to ask people in Holland who has *mensenkennis*, they might mention the popular author Simon Carmiggelt. For many decades he offered small stories, observations about ordinary people, in a weekly newspaper column, on radio, and on television. Each story, humorous or tragic, would contain some small truth about ordinary human beings you might meet in the bus, in the café, in the street, or among your friends or family. Sometimes we would feel that his stories were about ourselves and our small misunderstandings that sometimes give rise to comical situations.

Carmiggelt's stories were rarely more than two book pages long. As a genre they had the structure of anecdote. The shortest story that I could find by Carmiggelt (1987, 136) tells how he found on his desk at home a note from his wife: "Mr. Verdeman asks if you will return his call." Now Camiggelt did not know anyone by that name but decided to call the number that his wife had jotted down. He dials, and he hears a small voice answer:

> "This is Annie Verdeman." Carmiggelt guesses that the voice belongs to a four year old and he adds some sweetness to his voice.
> "Well, Annie, is your Daddy home?"
> "No sir."
> "And your Mummy?"
> "No sir."
> "So who is home then?"

"My brother sir."
"Well let me talk to your brother then."
"Yes sir."
Next there is the sound of crashing, banging, and muttering.
Finally Annie comes back to the phone: "Sir . . ."
"Well, where is your brother?" asks Carmiggelt.
"I'm sorry sir," Annie answers sadly, "I cannot get him out of his crib."

While Carmiggelt would never teach or preach, his short stories would always make you smile and ponder. What assumptions do I make about people? In the case of the above story: How does one talk to children? Why is there an immediate assumption of incompetence? Why the sweet voice? How to avoid misunderstanding children who only try to please us? When Carmiggelt told his little stories, one never had the impression that one was taught something specific, and yet he would leave each a touch more perceptive, a bit more inclined to wonder and reflect about the significance of people's actions and life's little tragedies and circumstances.

In ordinary life one generally acknowledges that some people possess more of this sensitive insight into human nature than others. *Mensenkennis* is a kind of wisdom about how people are and how they tend to act or react in specific situations—the significance of people's frailties, strengths, difficulties, inclinations, and life circumstances. It is a practical type of knowledge of how people's actions relate to motives, intentions, emotions, feelings, and moods. And this may account for the fact that some people who possess this practical knowledge tend to get along better with others, or that people with *mensenkennis* often are specially regarded, and that they may be sought out by individuals who have personal problems. *Mensenkennis* would be desirable in psychologists, teachers, doctors, and clergy, but it is not always found in such professionals.

There are probably cultural reasons why the notion of *mensenkennis* has common currency in some languages while it is not directly translatable into an equally colloquial English term (other than the more awkward approximations "good judge of character" or "insight into human nature").[1] It is not my intent to speculate about the cultural causes of different linguistic practices. My hope is that the example of *mensenkennis* may support the suggestion that the notion of pedagogy similarly possesses different linguistic meaning in different language contexts. Unlike the term *mensenkennis*, however, the word *pedagogy* does retain educational currency in both the European and the North American language communities. However, this shared terminology is misleading. What I would like to argue here is that there are certain strands in the continental tradition where the concept of pedagogy possesses a common significance that differs from the North American usage and that may allow for a useful rethinking of the nature of teaching and teacher education.[2]

Just as *mensenkennis* means to understand people, so the continental concept of pedagogy[3] means to understand children or young people,

but in a somewhat different way from what we are inclined to mean in our North American usage of the term. To have a sense of pedagogy implies that one is capable of insights into the child's being or character. But more important pedagogy implies distinguishing between what is appropriate or inappropriate, good or bad, right or wrong, suitable or less suitable for children.

Pedagogy as a form of inquiry implies that one has a relational knowledge of children, that one "understands" children and youths: how young people experience things, what they think about, how they look at the world, what they do, and, most importantly, how each child is a unique person. A teacher who does not understand the inner life of a child does not know who it is that he or she is teaching. Moreover, the concept of pedagogy not only refers to this special knowledge—it also includes an animating ethos. A pedagogue is an educator (teacher, counselor, administrator, etc.) who feels addressed by children, who understands children in a caring way, and who has a personal commitment and interest in children's education and their growth toward mature adulthood.

Teaching is often compared with other professional practices and human activities. Usually this is done on the assumption that the similarities of these practices allow us to borrow models of expertise and professionalism to improve teaching. However, in several important respects teaching seems to differ from many other professional practices with which it is often compared. Teaching, as a pedagogical interaction with children, requires not only a complex knowledge base but also an improvisational immediacy, a virtuelike normativity, and a pedagogical thoughtfulness that differs from the reflective wisdom (phronesis) of other practitioners. The classroom life of teachers is difficult especially because it is virtuelike, improvisational, and pedagogical.

Unfortunately, the interest in pedagogy could easily be misinterpreted in terms of the traditional child-centered (progressive) versus knowledge-centered (academic) orientation to teaching. The question whether a teacher (or school) is pedagogically sensitive is neutral toward the philosophical orientation underlying the teacher's (or school's) program. It is instructive to note that Langeveld ([1944] 1990), who wrote an authoritative pedagogical primer which was reprinted some twenty times between 1944 and 1990, was rather critical of Dewey's educational theories. It should also be noted that German and Dutch schools tend to be more traditional from a North American curriculum point of view. Yet, while expectations of subject matter mastery tend to be high in the average school, there is also a keen awareness that high expectations of children's learning make it even more mandatory that the teachers be pedagogically sensitive to how individual children learn, what particular learning experiences mean to them, how the teacher as a person is involved in the students' growth, and in what way circumstances and structures may help or hinder children's overall growth and development.

In the next section I will present a discussion on the virtuelike nature of the pedagogy of teaching. It contrasts vividly with the more rationalistic conceptualizations of teaching (articulating teaching as complex process of reflective decision making) that we encounter in the mainstream literature. The rationalistic view locates the sources of teacher excellence in certain knowledge systems that have been sedimented from the research literature; for example, there is the deliberative rationality of "the language of the practical" in Schwab (1969), the studies of "effective teacher behavior" as reviewed by Brophy and Good (1986), or the categories of "the knowledge base of teaching" as outlined by Shulman (1986, 1987). These models of teaching are sophisticated and challenging in that they map some of the difficult professional knowledge and critical skills that good teachers need or employ.

However, teaching is difficult not only because these knowledge bases of teaching are complex, teaching is difficult also, and especially, because it is essentially a normative pedagogical activity. In everchanging practical situations it is constantly required of teachers that they distinguish instantly and yet thoughtfully what is appropriate from what is less appropriate, what is good from what is not good in their interactions with children. This pedagogical dimension is involved in everything that teachers do or do not do in classrooms; yet this dimension is often little understood, undervalued and marginalized. Moreover, even if a teacher were to acquire successfully the complex knowledge base of teaching as outlined in the rationalistic paradigms, the strange consequence is that such competence guarantees nothing. Shulman's knowledgeable teacher may still prove to be a poor teacher. Why? Because the excellence of teaching lies not primarily in the mastery of such complex knowledge base (though it would no doubt contribute), but rather the excellence of teaching resides in the much more subtle nature of the pedagogy of teaching.

Professionals, such as medical doctors, dentists, engineers, artists, critics, or craftspeople tend to have a relatively stable sense of their knowledge bases, even as these are evolving. As experts, they know who they are, what they can do, and how they developed their professional or artistic competencies and talents. But reflective teachers never stop asking themselves what the nature of teaching really is. For many teachers their sense of self as teacher is easily called into question, especially when they encounter "difficult" youths or when they become unsure whether what they teach and how they teach is still appropriate for their students. Even senior teachers may experience feelings of self-doubt, and feel that their "expertise" is in question.

I suspect that this unstable feature of the identity of professional educators lies in the pedagogical nature of their relation to the students.[4] Teachers always stand in certain relations to the students they teach. The very term *pedagogy* already brings out the relational quality between teacher and student, in a manner unlike any other educational concepts such as curriculum, instruction, or teaching. The term *pedagogy* shares

with terms such as *friendship*, *love*, or *family* that they evoke first of all an implicit relational significance. It is not surprising, therefore, that Dilthey suggested that in order to develop a "science" of education one must first of all come to terms with the meaning and significance of the notion of the "pedagogical relation" ([1888] 1969, 36–87). Children do not grow in isolation or simply from within, such as seeds or acorns. It is only in certain relational contexts that the thinking life, the developing identity, the moral personality, the emotional spirit, the educational learning, and sociopsychological maturing of the young person occurs.[5]

Now, the curious situation of educational theory is that neither the European nor the North American scholarship of teaching seems to have fully explored the significance of the pedagogical relation for the practice of teaching and learning. For example, in the Netherlands, beginning teachers take a subject called "pedagogy" as a part of their professional preparation. But this subject is not necessarily closely linked or integrated with the theories and the practices of teaching. Pedagogy is usually regarded as a separate discipline, relevant to child psychologists, social workers, counselors, and, of course, teachers. European educators possess a long tradition of thinking about the notion of pedagogy and the pedagogical relation in a manner that is quite foreign to North American educators. Yet, their educational theories have only partially explored the implications of the pedagogical relation for teaching.

There is little doubt that the term *pedagogy* has recently acquired a popular currency in North American discourse.[6] However, this usage does not necessarily seem to signify a different conceptualization of teaching. I give two prominent examples: In 1986 Berliner gave the Presidential Address at the 1986 annual meeting of the American Education Research Association (AERA) entitled "In Pursuit of the Expert Pedagogue." Berliner made the important point that teaching expertise is extremely complex: "We would argue that the cognitive processes required for classifying problems and positing solutions are the same for the very experienced physicist and the very experienced teacher" (1986, 13). He argued that pedagogical knowledge of teaching is best gained from studying expert teachers, and from the way that expert teachers differ from novices. There is little if anything in Berliner's account, however, that would distinguish a special "pedagogical" significance in the term "expert pedagogue"; rather, this term appears largely equivalent to the phrase "expert teacher."

In the previous year, 1985, Shulman, in his Presidential AERA Address, had already used the term "pedagogy" in his argument that teaching competence had been erroneously separated from the subject matter of teaching (1985). Soon afterwards Shulman (1987) employed the concept of "pedagogical reasoning" to refer to "the capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students." Therefore, improving the quality of teaching would mean "influencing the grounds

of reasons for teachers' decisions" (1987, 13). However, Shulman's exposition of the knowledge base of teaching is notably intellectualistic and rationalistic. This led one commentator to suggest that Shulman, like many of his academic colleagues, seems to be afraid of using a language that is appropriate to the moral nature of all teaching. "If we are to develop a comprehensive understanding of teaching, we need to cut loose from our poverty-stricken, paratechnical language, not the least if we are to educate student teachers to understand their situations within an appropriate moral framework" (Sockett 1987, 23).

On the one hand, one cannot help but be impressed with Shulman's comprehensive account of the nature of teaching. On the other hand, his notion of pedagogical reasoning and thinking appears unfortunately indifferent to the personalistic and normative (moral or ethical) nature of pedagogy as suggested above. Shulman draws a challenging picture and a carefully articulated set of categories to describe what would constitute outstanding professional competence in teachers. But, in Sockett's words, Shulman nevertheless has it wrong. He has it wrong because the "moral character [of education] demands an account of the teaching virtues as fundamental to understanding what good teaching is" (217). Shulman's teachers might be experts at what he calls "pedagogical reasoning" but they might nevertheless lack the qualities[7] that are essential to good teaching.

ON THE NATURE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL RELATION

I would like to propose that the idea of the pedagogical relation may help us better understand the virtues or qualities that are at the heart of teaching. And vice versa, the virtuelike dimensions of teaching are always best understood as inherently relational terms. In order to make the case for the pedagogical relation as the critical dimension of teaching I should first need to extrapolate further the meaning of *pedagogy* and of the notion of the pedagogical relation. However, without wanting to unduly mystify the situation, I have already indicated that the meaning of pedagogy is first of all a pervasive normative cultural sentiment and that it is somewhat of a challenge to articulate this notion of pedagogy in our different cultural setting.

It would be challenging to review the theoretical literature on the pedagogical relation, since the concept of the pedagogical relation has a considerable history—some of it rather obscure—in West European educational theory (Stellwag 1970; Giesecke 1979, 1987; Spiecker 1982; Nohl 1982). I do not intend to discuss this whole tradition of the theory of the pedagogical relation although some of its specifications of meaning may be helpful. In the following paragraphs I will briefly articulate some common features of how the pedagogical relation is understood in certain European educational discourses.[8]

The concept of the pedagogical relation has been considered fundamental in German educational thought because it was meant to answer

the question whether the study of pedagogy was a discipline in its own right or whether it was merely a branch of sociology (socializing young people into the social order that surrounds them), psychology (child-development practices), and so on. The answer to whether the study of pedagogy is an independent "science," irreducible to other disciplines, was sought in the question of the nature of the pedagogical experience itself. Is the experience of pedagogy (parenting or teaching children) a primordial and unique human experience? This was indeed Dilthey's contention. He was the first to propose that a "science of pedagogy" could only find its real starting point by studying the relation between the educator and his or her pupils.[9] Dilthey's student, Nohl, elaborated a theory of the pedagogical relation in Germany during the 1930s. While the notion of the pedagogical relation emerged as a philosophical problem, several generations of German and Dutch scholars such as Nohl, Litt, Flitner, Bollnow, Langeveld, Spiecker, and Imelman have continued to explore the experiential and interpretive aspects of the concept.

Nohl (1982) described the pedagogical relation between pedagogue and child as an "intensely experienced relation," characterized by three aspects. First, the pedagogical relation is a very personal relation animated by a special quality that spontaneously emerges between adult and child and that can be neither managed nor trained, nor reduced to any other human interaction. Second, the pedagogical relation is an intentional relation wherein the intent of the teacher is always determined in a double direction: "by caring for a child as he or she is, and by caring for a child for what he or she may become" (135–136). Third, the educator must constantly be able to interpret and understand the present situation and experiences of the child and anticipate the moments when the child in fuller self-responsibility can increasingly participate in the culture. Nohl stresses that for the student the pedagogical relation with the educator is more than a means to an end (to become educated or grown-up); the relation is a life experience that has significance in and of itself. Our relation to a real teacher—someone in whose presence we experience a heightened sense of self and a real growth and personal development—is possibly more profound and more consequential than the experience of relations of friendship, love, and so forth.

> In the pedagogical relation, in the experience of being a father, a mother, a teacher, a part of our life finds its fulfillment. The pedagogical relation is not merely a means toward an end, it finds its meaning in its own existence; it is a passion with its own pains and pleasures. Similarly, for the child the pedagogical relation is a part of life itself, and not merely a means for growing up—for that the pedagogical relation lasts too long, and how many do not experience that aim! Among the few relationships granted to us during our lives such as friendship, love, and fellowship in the workplace, perhaps the relationship to a real teacher is the most basic one, one which fulfills and shapes our being most strongly. (P. 132)

From the teachers' point of view there is often a deep feeling of satisfaction regarding this special relation (Jackson 1968, 141). And as past stu-

dents we may feel indebted for the rest of our lives to a real teacher, even though the stuff that we learned from this person has lost its relevance. In part this may be due to the fact that what we "received" from a great teacher is less a particular body of knowledge or set of skills than the way in which this subject matter was represented or embodied in the person of this teacher: his or her enthusiasm, self-discipline, dedication, personal power, commitment, and so forth. A great teacher's influence is sutured into our flesh so that it is now impossible to conceive of our sense of self without this influence.

The pedagogical relation is fundamentally a personal relation. In this relation the adult intends the maturation or education of the child. The prereflective or primitive form of the pedagogical relation is already found in various relations of everyday life: in the conversational relation, in the helping relation, and in every event where a certain influence toward formative growth is exercised by one person towards another. The pedagogical relation differs from these incidental formative relations in that the pedagogue is "given" special responsibility for the young person. In addition, he or she reflectively mobilizes his or her conscious will or desire to give direction and shape to such influence. According to Bollnow ([1964] 1988), when these intentions of the educator to give direction are met by a responsiveness on the part of the student, then the pedagogical relation has come into existence. In other words, something is expected of the child as well. Both Nohl and Bollnow describe the requirements of the qualities of dedication, openness, and trust on the part of the student toward the teacher or educator.

Already it seems that this description of the pedagogical relation may make intelligible why classroom teachers so easily speak of teaching in terms that are reminiscent of family life. Teacher-student relations, too, tend to be personal, intentional, and interpretive. Although the process of teaching differs in some fundamental respects from parenting, the fact that so many family responsibilities have been delegated to the school seems to be an implicit affirmation of the close links between the pedagogy of teaching and the pedagogy of parenting. But even as I utter this suggestion I can almost feel the shudder of incredulity on the part of some of my politically minded Dutch and German colleagues who have witnessed the severe criticisms of the theory of the pedagogical relation in the last two decades.

On the one hand, critical theorists and Marxists, such as Klafki (1976) and Mollenhauer (1972), have argued that the family based, inward-directed concept of the pedagogical relation lacks a larger social perspective. As a term of an ideological system it fails to acknowledge how societal, class-specific inequalities are reproduced by families and schools. On the other hand, pedagogical critics, such as the renowned German psychiatrist Alice Miller and proponents of the so-called black pedagogy movement, have argued that the very concept of pedagogy hides the fact that parent-child and teacher-student relations easily slip into power relations of domination and oppression. Miller questions

whether a pedagogical relation (in her words "a humanistic pedagogy") that is not based on repressive power is possible at all (1983, 260).

Is the idea of the pedagogical relation still relevant? The Dutch educator Spiecker thinks so. Spiecker (1982) argues that, in spite of the virtues inherent in various academic critiques, the pedagogical relation (especially the relation between the mother and the infant) possesses certain features that seem to emerge already at birth and that cannot be attenuated by social or psychological critique. He points out that there exists a broad range of psychological evidence that shows that the pedagogical relation between the adult and the child is marked by typical anticipatory behaviors and conceptualizations on the part of the adult. Almost from birth, the adult (especially the mother, but often also the father) interacts with the child in a manner that differs from any other human relation: the parent constantly and contrafactually presumes in the child abilities and behaviors (such as language and intentionalities) *as if* they were already present and simply needed to be realized. For example, it is well known how the mother engages the child in motherese speech as if the child already possesses language competence; the parent may interpret the child's crying in a manner (for example, being hungry, in pain, annoyed, frightened) as if the child intended this interpretation. In short, Spiecker tries to show that the pedagogical relation is a relation sui generis, which means that the pedagogical relation is a unique human phenomenon and that it resists being reduced to other human relations. He concludes that "human development and personal becoming are only possible in a pedagogical relation" (112).

THE EROSION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL RELATION

In European educational thought, the notions of pedagogy and the pedagogical relation are so firmly woven into educational thought that it would seem difficult to change their meanings. And as I suggested above, the term *pedagogy* or *opvoeding*, just like the term *mensenkennis*, has a taken-for-granted significance amongst the general public. Yet, under pressure of social scientific and postmodern perspectives educational theorists continue to wonder whether the pedagogical relation still fits the reality of contemporary family arrangements, schooling systems, and modern life. They wonder: Is there evidence for the functioning of the pedagogical relation? If so, what is it that makes a pedagogical relation different from the many other social relationships between adults and children? On what is it based? To what extent is it socially constructed? Moreover, it has been suggested that the idea of the pedagogical relation is based on various assumptions: that it makes sense to differentiate between children and adults, that the concept of maturity (adulthood) is still workable, that we have views of how life is to be lived and whereto we should guide children.

On the one hand, it has become difficult to determine what the needs of children are on the basis of our contemporary understanding of the

nature of children. The concept of what a child is has become relativized; the term "child" has lost its seemingly universal and general meaning. Historians and anthropologists have shown us the socially constructed nature of the concept of childhood, and social philosophers have argued that the differences between adults and children are not so much differences of kind as of degree. Is it still possible to differentiate between maturity (adulthood) and immaturity (childhood)? Is there a difference between child immaturity and adult immaturity? These questions function as assaults on the culturally taken-for-granted sense of normativity that living with children presupposes in a so-called "decent" society. Many people still feel that growing children need special treatment, that they must be protected from the brutalities of the larger culture, and that the experience of living with children requires special pedagogical sensitivities and reflection.

Meanwhile, European social scientists are confronted by the same questions that have beset North American educational theorists. Do children growing up in different contexts have anything in common? Is the concept of childhood simply a cultural construction? Do we know what a child is and what kind of behavior is descriptive of children? So how then can we come to a determination and an agreement about what is appropriate for children?

There is an irony about the contemporary question marks over the meaning of child and childhood. While our pedagogical orientation to children seems to have lost its bearings, educational programs for adults in all areas of life have multiplied, broadened and diversified. It is more than a pun that this kind of "adult pedagogy" has presently become a growth industry: the business of education is now a concern with all people's learning, adult education, leisure studies, self-improvement, career development, personal growth, continuing education, and so forth. Some commentators have argued that the interest in children and the care for children has been substituted by the present adult generation for an interest in the self and a care for the self (Lasch 1979; Taylor 1991; Hewlett 1991). This preoccupation with self rather than with one's children expresses itself in a never ending search for self-fulfillment through a pursuit of absorption into working life by both parents, through no-fault, no-responsibility divorce when conjugal relations do not satisfy, and through an excessive increase in therapy practices devoted to problems of the self. The present younger generation is increasingly voicing a critique of their parents, the baby-boomers—a generation suffering from a perpetual state of adolescence, a generation that has had it all but that still refuses to grow up and take responsibility for young people and for the world that they are leaving their children.

On the other hand, the significance of pedagogy as an interpretive practice derives from cultural contexts that are open and pluralistic. The more complex and troublesome the contradictions of bringing up and educating children, the greater the need for a concept of pedagogy that can deal with these complexities. Educational critics have painted a chal-

lenging pedagogical environment. They have argued that pressures from peers, the commerce industry, and the media have seriously displaced the influence spheres of parents, teachers, the extended family, and the neighborhood. Values have evolved (or devolved) so much in the last few decades that parents and teachers can no longer rely on the same pedagogical norms that have traditionally guided the education of children of earlier generations. Family, school, neighborhood, and communities have changed and are less likely to offer the sheltered pedagogical spaces wherein children can find supportive and protective areas in which to live, play, explore, learn, and develop.

The discontinuity between generations and family spheres means that young parents too are left more to their own devices; there is less advice from grandparents to parents. Young parents tend to rely perhaps more on self-help books, on community parenting programs, or on the myriad messages received through television and other media. The advice about how children should be raised and educated has become extremely diverse and contradictory. There exists so much general uncertainty in the various domains of cultural, social, and private life (this uncertainty is sometimes referred to as the postmodern condition) that political, cultural, and moral norms and values no longer can confidently tell us on what basis and to what end educational programs and philosophies should be constructed. How can parents or teachers still practice pedagogical influence that keeps in view the whole being of the young person? How can an individual teacher maintain relations with many students that are pedagogically positive?

While these questions occur again and again in the western European literature, I will focus especially on Giesecke's writings (1979, 1987) since he seems to echo and articulate most clearly the various critical voices of a pervasive pragmatic realism. He proposes that we must be "realistic" and lower considerably our standards and expectations of the professional educator (1979).

Giesecke argues that there are assumptions inherent in the idea of the pedagogical relation that are especially unrealistic for the life of school teachers. He suggests that we must relinquish the following naive expectations: (1) We cannot expect that the professional educator loves or truly cares for the children he or she teaches in a similar way to how the child is loved and cared for in the family. (2) It is unrealistic to expect that the average teacher should in any way be expected to identify with great educators (such as Pestalozzi, Peterson, Montessori) upon whose lives the idea of the pedagogical relation has been considerably based. (3) We should not expect that the professional educator can give positive direction to the development of children's growth without slipping into biased or authoritarian presumptions about what is good for children. (4) It is naive to suppose that young people will still enter the job of teaching because they experience a sense of ethos or calling about the vocation of being an educator. (5) The concept of the pedagogical relation is unworkable anyway since it is very difficult to see how we could assess in

a scientific, objective manner whether the pedagogical relation exists in concrete and particular circumstances (6). Even if it were possible for the pedagogical relation to exist, it is virtually impossible for the teacher (especially at the high school level) to maintain pedagogical relations with every one of the students he or she teaches.

In short, Giesecke argues that the institutional circumstances of professional educators are such that they can realistically only be expected to have an effect on children in very particular and limited ways. The general task of pedagogy (in domains such as therapy, counseling, social work, recreational work), says Giesecke, is modest: it is to help people grow or learn. And in the specific case of the school teacher, Giesecke proposes that the essential task is quite simply that of instruction (*unterricht*) in subject matter knowledge. What appears striking in Giesecke's reconceptualization of the pedagogical relation is that it is now virtually void of any moral content. Since educators are ill-equipped to know what is appropriate or good for children their task is reduced to the more technical domain of helping professionals in neutrally perceived learning processes (Giesecke 1987).

Giesecke's arguments may appear compelling since they are well suited to the modern businesslike approach to education. But it should not escape us that his arguments are only pleas. They are meant to appeal to our sense of "reasonableness." But the argumentative logic of his propositions hinges on the degree to which one tends to be optimistic or pessimistic, demanding or conceding, perfectionist or "realistic." Giesecke (1987) feels that professional educators suffer from a crisis of identity. In their German Teachers' Colleges they learn to understand children and they study to become subject matter experts; however, professional educators do not learn to understand who they are themselves. But rather than setting the sight high, Giesecke orients to the lowest common denominator. We should not expect too much from teachers and other educational professionals because we will only be disappointed.

One response to counter Giesecke's minimalist credo consists is simply to reject his claim, and turn his argument upside down; yes, we should care for the children we teach; yes, we can be edified by the example of great educators; teachers do affect their students in positive directions; educators can experience a sense of vocational inspiration. It is in the nature of pedagogy that we abide by the principle of hope, possibility, and the *as if*. We must act on expectations as if they were real possibilities; then possibilities do become realities. Each day there are teachers who demonstrate that the pedagogical relation remains vital in the classroom. And yet, simply being affirmative and positive may not constitute an effective and strong response to the contemporary crisis of pedagogical thought. Rather we need to understand the strange conflict between the new critical consciousness of what Lyotard (1984) calls "the grand narrative" of modernism, and a surviving modernist faith in technological

rationality that seems to strip the pedagogical relation of its normative and personal dimensions.

Two issues that Giesecke raises are considered especially troublesome. The problem of observability of the pedagogical relation makes it difficult to subject it to scientific measurement or objective evaluation. And the original parent-child model of the pedagogical relation is difficult to apply to classroom situations where one teacher must relate to many students at the same time. In the following paragraphs I want to suggest that these questions issue from a certain sensibility that places the informal vitality of the pedagogical relation in tension with the general thrust to rationalize all aspects of educational institutions and with a general sense of nihilism that threatens to pervade our educational reality.

THE VITALITY OF THE PEDAGOGICAL RELATION

In reviewing the critiques of the pedagogical relation, we should weigh Giesecke's objections against images of classroom life and teacher-student relations as children experience them or as teachers talk of their experiences with children. As I have aimed to show elsewhere (van Manen 1991), we find then that, in spite of the various objections and criticisms, pedagogical relations do show a sustaining vitality. While there may not exist in the English language an explicit term to give voice to the personal, intentional, and interpretive quality of teacher-student relations, these pedagogical relations do seem to emerge spontaneously and naturally between teacher and students. Of course, the word *pedagogical relation* is not the issue but rather the idea or better the experience. Many teachers everywhere foster and nurture pedagogical relations between themselves and the students they teach. Maybe we should be amazed that pedagogical relations are maintained in spite of the increasing technological rationalization of educational life in schools and other educational systems.

The pedagogical relation is the concept of a caring human vitality that captures the normative and qualitative features of educational processes.[10] In the accounts of many teachers the informal life of teaching usually overflows the technical rationalizations in terms of which education is commonly framed (such as educational programs, planned curriculum structures, bureaucratic system policies, the management of learning by objectives, and the measuring of instructional productivity by means of results-based tests). It is often said that when teachers close the classroom door they effectively close out certain pressures and influences that are aimed at maintaining external control over teaching-learning experiences.[11]

Behind the closed doors a certain mix of the rational with the nonrational and formal instrumental efficiency with informal humanistic sensitivity tends to occur. This is most readily illustrated by the fact that teachers teach an externally mandated curriculum but behind classroom

doors they interpret and modify the curriculum in a manner that reflects the personality, the philosophy, and the style of the teacher as well as the character, the voices, the needs, the activities, and the influences of the students (individually and as a class). In the classroom what determines the tone of the lesson foremost is the relational atmosphere between teacher and students. By definition a true pedagogical relation between teacher and students can only be beneficial for the students' growth and learning; however, the relations between teacher and students is certainly not always and everywhere positive in a pedagogical sense. Sometimes we hear teachers express themselves about children in ways that are thoroughly unsettling and that may make us feel discouraged about the possibility of our children receiving a quality education. And, from their point of view, students may sometimes experience a teacher as unfair, uncaring, mean spirited, incompetent, aloof, disinterested, impersonal, or insensitive to their problems and needs.

There are several ways of viewing the nature and function of the informal life of the pedagogical relation. The formal and informal could be seen to relate symbiotically or antagonistically or as a constantly shifting mixture of both. First, it should be seen that the informal, personal, relational aspects of teaching are not just an undesirable accident that interferes with the systematic and planned processes of the curriculum. The informal relates to the formalized dimension of teaching as the melody of jazz relates to the rhythmic structures and the melodic groundforms that carry the improvisational themes. In other words, pedagogical actions are improvisationally played across the rationalized features that are maintained by the necessities of routines, lesson plans, the curriculum programs, the philosophical foundations, and the specific subject matter methodologies.[12] Schools and even classrooms must to a certain degree be managed according to organizational principles of modern rationality. Teachers develop their instructional programs. There are certain demands of order and efficiency, and there are certain expectations of favorable results associated with modern institutions of learning. In fact it is only because teachers have timetables, programs, and appropriate expectations of their students that it makes sense to expect of teachers dedicated diligence, patience, trust, and pedagogical tact so that the timetables, programs, and high expectations do not override the teacher's thoughtful understanding of the child's experience.

Second, we can see how the personal and moral dimensions of teaching are constantly being threatened by the divisive consequences of what Taylor (1991) calls a runaway dominance of instrumental reason. The dominance of technological rationality makes it a challenge for educators (in European as well as in North American schools) to hold onto a non-instrumental understanding of the pedagogical nature of teaching.[13] And it has the effect of creating divisions within us, between us and our children, and between ourselves and the world. Few would deny that parents desire effective schools, that children require effective teachers, and that effective teachers must possess technical competencies as well

as improvisational artistry. However, teaching is primarily neither a science nor an art, neither a technology nor an aesthetic. Therefore, teachers should not let their relation to students be governed by a technological-instrumental or an artistic-aesthetic orientation. As I will argue in the next section, teaching is at heart a pedagogical (virtuous normative) practice, or, in Aristotelian terms, pedagogy is the excellence of teaching.

In spite of decades of research into teaching, ever-changing philosophies of education, and countless experiments with instructional methodologies and curricular programs, it seems that the actual reality of teaching and learning continues to defy effective rationalization. Some commentators feel that, in fact, the more one has tried to rationalize educational processes and the tighter the structures of management, testing, and evaluation have become, the less impressive are the consequences.[14] In the effort to gain more effective control over the curriculum and over the way that teachers actualize the programs in classrooms in order to promote greater accountable productivity of schools, the educational leadership increasingly seems to adopt more totalizing perspectives that force teachers to think of their own actions as rationally grounded and rationally executed in a technical sense. All this is at the cost of the teachers' personal pedagogical sensibilities.

Giesecke and like-minded modern critics argue that we can no longer practice pedagogy in the full sense of the term, since we no longer know to what end we should educate the child—we no longer share a set of public values, a concept of the meaning of maturity (adulthood), or a consensual practice of disciplinary measures and rewards to control children.[15] In opposition to such critiques I would argue however that such social conditions (to the extent that they are true) not only make pedagogy a higher priority but also make pedagogy possible in the first place. In the caricature of a totally closed society where all norms and roles are socially determined and fixed, there would be no place or call for pedagogy—pedagogical discretion or tact would become unnecessary or otherwise certainly outlawed. Similarly, in a society where there exists an agreed notion of maturity, one needs no longer to be sensitive to the uniqueness and possibilities of the individual child. Education would simply be a matter of preparing each child for his or her fixed station in life. And in a society where young people are controlled by oppressive measures and punishment, there would be no need for pedagogical tact and thoughtfulness either. In short, pedagogy is only meaningful in a society that is relatively open and in essence prudent toward the needs of children.[16] Even in earlier days, society probably never was this closed and cohesive. So what is the promise that pedagogical relations can continue to shape the informal life of teachers and students?

On the negative side there is the possibility that a greater interest, among North American educators, in the meaning of *pedagogy* and the significance of the *pedagogical relation* is being preempted by the events that I have discussed: The practice of teaching has become increasingly technologized, North American discourses of education grow increas-

ingly barren of moral content, and European theories of pedagogy have turned self-destructive and subject to increasingly totalizing rational frameworks. As a result, we stand in danger of losing the special meaning of *pedagogy* and of the *pedagogical relation* altogether.

On the positive side we see that teachers continue to feel pedagogically responsible for the children they teach. Pedagogically motivated teacher-student relations are sustained in spite of (indeed, even partly because of) their rationalized institutionalized context. It would be wrongheaded to try to develop technical frameworks or instrumental theories that aim at bringing about more effective pedagogical relations. However, it would seem possible that spaces can be created where pedagogical relations in classrooms and schools have a chance to emerge, to be nurtured and strengthened.[17]

Creating these spaces would seem to be a question of political will and of professional wisdom. Politically it means that the organizing impulse of educational institutions must remain democratic and pedagogical. Professionally it means that we must admit that the fundamental concept of education, the pedagogical relation, cannot be scientifically researched within the present broad technical-rational frame. But rather than putting teachers' colleges and universities out of work we need to develop languages that recognize the essentially qualitative nature of pedagogical life.

TEACHING AS A VIRTUE

The question of what kind of teacher behavior, curriculum, school life, or life in the family is appropriate, good, or right for children is usually considered a question of moral import that, but for some exceptions (such as Tom 1984; Noddings 1984, and more recently Goodlad 1991; Feinberg 1991), strangely seems to have been ignored by both educational practitioners and by educational researchers and philosophers. Teachers are expected to leave questions of ends largely to curriculum policy makers—within certain degrees of freedom classroom teachers teach what they are mandated to teach. Meanwhile educational researchers and philosophers, like analytic philosophers in general, have been less concerned with addressing what is good for children than with the question of what it means when we say that something is good. Many teachers privately realize that everything they do with children, every minute of the day, has to do with what is appropriate or less appropriate for particular children in specific situations.[18] Quite apart from the larger questions of ends and of curriculum goals and programs, the interactive process of teaching is thoroughly pedagogical. But in the history of the dominant research traditions the actual practices of teaching have rarely been problematized and systematically discussed as pedagogical actions.

In everyday life in classrooms, the thousand and one things that teachers do, say, or do not do all have normative significance. Not only the ends or goals of education but also the means and methods used have

pedagogical value. What is appropriate and what is less appropriate action in teaching children? What should one say? In what tone of voice? When to be silent? What glance? What gesture? Which teaching techniques and what evaluation approaches are pedagogically more appropriate in particular circumstances? What type of experience is good for children here? And what material is less good for them? Should this difficult subject matter be taught? Should it be made easier? How easy? What kind of difficulty is good for this student? How much pressure is too much? What kind of discipline is right in this situation? And what expectations may be inappropriate?

The problem with recognizing the normative, ethical, or moral nature of all teaching is that this recognition would often get practitioners involved in complex moral reasoning and the subsequent disillusioning awareness that how we should deal with children in particular circumstances rarely can be derived from or translated into abstract ethical concepts or political ideals. Moreover, reflection *on* practice is of a very different nature from reflection *in* practice.[19]

In their daily living with children or young people, teachers tend to be mainly occupied with the moment-to-moment demands of acting in an appropriate manner. In the rush of daily interactions with children in classrooms teachers rarely do have opportunity to step back, as it were, in order to "reflect *in* practice" on what is the next thing that they should say or do. It appears that larger moral and critical social issues become ethereal and largely irrelevant to their everyday tasks.

There are two developments in philosophy and the human sciences, however, that may restore the normative pedagogical value to teaching—away from the traditional inclinations to see teaching as a science on the one hand or as an art on the other hand. One development is the emergence (or reemergence) of virtue ethics[20] and the other is the awareness of the function of narrative or story in moral reflection and action.[21] These developments are suggestive of a fresh way of conceptualizing the relations between virtues, narrativity and thoughtful pedagogical acting in classrooms.

Traditionally the determination of right or wrong actions means viewing concrete actions from overarching moral concepts such as The Good, Justice, Equality, Dignity, and political ideals of Democracy. But virtue-ethicists propose that questions of how we are to act in particular situations are not usually answerable by abstract reasoning about moral principles and ethical or political theories. Questions of how one is to act with children are more often dependent upon context and on the pedagogical thoughtfulness of the personality of the teacher. Think of any moment of classroom life: Sandra has completed her work and she hands it with visible pride to her teacher; meanwhile Lester is not able to concentrate. Emmy fails to understand when the teacher is trying to get something new across to the students. Sue complains that Jack broke her pencil. Rob refuses to participate in the science lesson since he feels repulsed at killing and dissecting a living creature. All the children are applying

themselves with enthusiasm to their project in class, but David does not seem to be interested. Mary is in tears, she approaches her teacher and confides that she feels that nobody in class likes her. The teacher started the lesson with great inspiration but a certain mood among students seems to spoil her every good intent.

We could go on indefinitely in drawing incidents from everyday life in classrooms. But what constitutes the pedagogical nature of each instance? What is the pedagogical moment of each incidence? Let us first notice that *each situation is pedagogically charged because something is expected of the teacher.* In each situation an action is required even if that action is nonaction. That active encounter is potentially the pedagogical moment. Let us notice as well that oftentimes, if not usually, in our daily living with children we are required to act in the spur of the moment. The usual case is that we do not have time to sit back and deliberatively decide (either strategically/rationally or emotionally/morally) what to do in the situation. And even when there is time to reflect on what several alternatives are available and what best approach one should take, in the pedagogical moment itself one must act (even though that action may consist of holding back).

Thus, traditional moral concepts such as The Good, Equality, and Justice do little to guide the thousand and one interactions of the daily life of teaching. Educators, therefore, need to point to richer and more concrete norms such as acting in ways that are thoughtful, tactful and sensitive to the child's experience, understanding a learner's difficulties, knowing how to listen, seeing each child as unique, understanding fears and vulnerabilities, encouraging success, remaining patient and supportive, and being reliable, trusted by, and available to children.

ON THE CONCEPT OF VIRTUE OR QUALITY IN TEACHING

The notion of virtue is a common translation of the Greek word for excellence: *arete.* The *aretai,* the excellences or virtues were simply the qualities that made a particular life exemplary, good, admirable, or excellent. The interesting point about virtues is that they are not reducible to rules or moral principles. Ever since the ancient Greeks, specific virtues have usually been explained narratively—through story, poem, anecdote, parable, myth, theatre—by referring to virtuous individuals or virtuous actions as examples or models. In contemporary life too, we tend to use stories and anecdotes when we wish to explain that good parents should have patience, or that good teachers should "know" their children. Often what happens is that we tell concrete anecdotes about things that a certain person would do, who possesses this or that quality. Thus virtues are indications of the educated character of a person. They answer the question of whether a person is well prepared for certain life tasks and responsibilities. Aristotle (1962) argued that virtues are commonly acquired through the formation of good habits or customs that

parents instill in children. Good parents and educators teach children good habits that are becoming of the well educated and the "good" person. On first sight this proposition may seem conventional and old-fashioned, reminiscent of the berated "bag of virtues approach"[22] of yesteryear.

Every age has its "politically correct" or "philosophically correct" language and knowledge forms. And even though the concept of virtue is being revived by contemporary philosophers interested in the practical import for everyday life of virtue ethics, it may be difficult to warm educators to the relevance of thinking about their professional practices in terms of virtues. The term *virtue* still possesses old-fashioned associations of pious obedience to some prevailing morality. Virtuousness seems to imply the opposite of a vigorously critical reflective personality. To talk of the virtues of teaching or pedagogy could call forth memories of servile teachers trapped in the suffocating atmosphere of small-minded, patriarchal, and intolerant communities. However, we need to remind ourselves that the ancient notion of virtue referred to the "quality" of strong personality. The modern notion of virtue, as employed by virtue ethicists, also explicates the enabling practice of personal choice and self-responsible agency that virtuous action requires.[23]

The modern (or ancient) notion of virtues or qualities may be much more helpful for the image of the excellent pedagogue than either the moral principled or the rational principled concepts of teaching. The moral principled model conceives of teaching as practical reflection on moral principles and dilemmas that inhere in certain practices. The rational principled model conceives of the interactive phase of teaching as deliberative decision making[24] and strategic use of principles of curriculum and instruction in practice.

Important for this discussion is the suggestion that the practice of teaching actually relies more appropriately on the unique and particular features of qualities or virtues. The thoughtfulness that good teachers learn to display towards children also may depend upon internalized values, embodied qualities, thoughtful habits that constitute virtues of teaching. Thus, virtues are the "learned" and "evoked" pedagogical qualities that are necessary for the human vocation of bringing up and educating children. Virtues form the material that makes much pedagogical reflection practical and possible in the first place. Rarely do we face Kohlbergian (Kohlberg 1985) dilemmas in classrooms that require moral argument. Even in the reflective moments, when we wonder, "How should I have acted in this pedagogical situation? What should I have done? How should I have responded to this child?" we usually are appealing to practical knowledge that is best accounted for with forms of reasoning that contain anecdotal narratives or stories. Virtues differ from the larger moral values such as The Good, Justice, and Equality in that they best function in particular, unique, and concrete situations. And, as I suggested already, a helpful type of practical reflection about matters of virtue is by means of anecdote or story.

Individuals may find teaching more or less rewarding for its career possibilities, its financial rewards, or its life-style; these are the *external* values of teaching. The values that are *internal* to the practice of teaching have to do with the growth, maturing, education of our children for which the educational profession has evolved a complex knowledge base and particular practices (disciplines, skills, rules, priorities, policies). In this context MacIntyre provides a provisional definition: "A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (178). No doubt, several questions suggest themselves: How do we know the goods internal to the practice of teaching? Can all qualities or virtues of good teaching be taught to new teachers?[25] What is the relation between virtues and critical reflection? Are there virtues that most teachers should share?

Some human characteristics (such as having a sense of humor, a certain intelligence, and an interest in knowledge) that would be morally neutral in the general population could be seen as pedagogical virtues in teachers. Virtues are never morally neutral—they are always normatively desirable. And what is a virtue for a math teacher (such as knowing mathematics) need not be a virtue for other teachers. Virtuous qualities of good teachers may include the following: patience, trust, humor, diligence, believing in children, having special knowledge, and the ability to understand the meaning and significance of difficulty, discipline, interest, and other aspects of learning.[26] These various qualities may be considered virtues of the teacher since without them the teacher would be pedagogically diminished as an educator. But to say that this or that teacher needs to be more patient does not evoke an abstract principle (patience) so strongly that it no longer needs narrative examples of circumstances where this teacher lacked patience, what teacher patience may mean to the child, and how particular situations should have been handled.

Most programs of teacher education are founded on the assumption that all teachers need a basic preparation consisting of learning theories, child development, curriculum methods, subject matter knowledge, and educational history and philosophy in order to become effective and reflective educational practitioners. Few responsible teacher educators would argue that such programs are unnecessary or irrelevant. However, these programs have become highly fragmented due to the continuous process of differentiation and specialization of professional interests. Students are expected to be able to integrate the fragmented elements into a personally founded expertise. But this cognitive expertise bears little relation to the improvisational and normative demands of classroom teaching practice. From minute to minute teachers are confronted with situations that are always in some respect new and unique, requiring of the teacher an improvisational readiness to know exactly what is the appropriate thing to say, do, or not do. Not until they find themselves in

questions that can be universally answered with yes or no. Much will depend on what one knows about the particular child or children, the parents, or the teachers involved in the situations. Often when these types of pedagogical problems are addressed we tend to resort to narrative argument.

Narrative reasoning contrasts with logical reasoning in that the premises and the conclusions also have narrative forms.[29] Narrative reason speaks to the emotions as well as to the conceptual and the moral aspects of a broader human rationality. Typically, in telling anecdotes or stories, one deals with people's character, backgrounds, feelings, hopes, moods, social relations, life circumstances, and so forth. This knowledge is practical in the sense of human insight (*mensenkennis*) and understanding children (pedagogy) as explained above. Obviously, the argumentative structure of narrative reasoning is not as logically compelling as arguments that have more strict syllogistic forms (Doeser 1990). However, the narrative argument can persuade at both a noncognitive (emotional, moral) and a cognitive (intellectual) level[30] by bringing about "understandings" of evoked meanings, human truths, and significances that something can hold.

Good narrative shares with literary sources the ability to teach us understandings about life that evade normal narrative discourse (Nussbaum 1990).[31] For example, in explaining what it means "to believe in children" or "how to be patient in teaching" one needs to recognize that these meanings are in part noncognitive, appealing to a form of understanding of human experience and sensitivity to human subjectivity that is based on a broadened sense of rationality[32] and on a certain pedagogical thoughtfulness.

In every experience of meaning there is a certain orientation to the transcendent, something that is not immediately given and that escapes to a certain extent cognitive clarity. We sense the nature of this meaning when we compare an expository speech to a poetry reading. Both expository and poetic texts may deal with ideas or meanings that are hidden or difficult to grasp. Expository narrative aims to describe, explain, analyze, and give explicit cognitive clarity to difficult ideas and underlying assumptions and meanings. But there is a strange (nonnarrative?) quality to human science narrative that is related to poetic texts. In nonnarrative or poetic texts there are always remains that are essentially ambiguous, implicit, iconic, or evocative of transcendent meaning and that resist expository explication. The strange thing is that an ordinary text, just like an ordinary musical melody, may sometimes be charged with a certain vitality and significance so that it touches and speaks to us with special meaning. We experience this meaning as the evocation of deeper significance or richer understanding of life.

The difference between informational texts and evocative texts is that meaning is weakly embodied in the first case while strongly embodied in the second case.[33] Weakly embodied texts are characterized by exactness

and clarity (such as scientific languages) that make paraphrasing, summarizing, and sharing of information possible.[34] Strongly embodied texts are ambiguous and rich (such as poems, prayers, and ceremonies) and therefore resist being put in different words or being paraphrased.[35] To understand the pedagogical significance of teacher patience, tactfulness, dedication, and so forth the educational research literature needs to employ certain narrative practices that can not only conceptually explain but also evoke such qualities or virtues.

PEDAGOGICAL VIRTUES, NARRATIVE, AND IDENTITY

The present interest in story or narrative may be seen as the expression of an attitude that is critical of knowledge as technical rationality, as scientific formalism, and knowledge as information. Interest in narrativity may express the desire to return to meaningful experiences as encountered in everyday life—not as a rejection of science, but rather as a method that can deal with concerns that normally fall outside of the reach of "normal" science (Ankersmit 1990, 9). Ever since the romantic impulse, the human sciences (such as hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions) have evolved a narrative rather than a formalist rationality. The significance of the explosion of narrative methodology in North American educational research is probably not so much that a new research methodology was developed but rather that—under the labels of "narrativity" and "biography"—a form of human science inquiry is now being legitimated in leading research institutions and journals.[36] A strength of this development is that truly fresh beginnings are possible in educational thought. But a weakness of the sudden popularity of the narrative approach lies in its "instant tradition"—a tradition which for some of its practitioners seems to require little knowledge of foundations, even though such roots exist.

At any rate, the narrative and biographic approaches have been employed to address the thematic of self, teacher personal identity. Personal identity can be brought to self-awareness through narrative self-reflection. Self-knowledge not only assumes that one can establish one's own personal identity by means of stories, but also assumes that one can be accountable narratively for how one has developed as a person—for how one has become what one has become.[37] By means of stories we justify the manner in which our character, wishes, and interests have grown and changed as a result of past circumstances, decisions, and formative experiences in specific situations.[38] Self-knowledge is related to the search for one's own life story. Thus, by engaging in such narrative "theorizing" teachers may further discover and shape their personal pedagogical identity, and through such stories they can give accounts of the way they have developed over time into the kind of persons they are now.

Of course, no particular teacher's life can be understood, individually, in a way that is unrelated to the pedagogical lives of others and of the

culture. It is through hearing stories that we learn or mislearn what a teacher or a parent is—the family I grew up in, the schools I attended, the teachers I experienced, as well as the nature of the society:

> the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity . . . the self has to find its moral identity in and through its membership in communities such as those of the family, the neighbourhood, the city and the tribe [but that] does not entail that the self has to accept the moral *limitations* of the particularity of those forms of community. (MacIntyre 1981, 205)

In giving personal interpretation and practical shape to the meaning of teaching (or parenting), one must inevitably critically question, reject, alter, or confirm the pedagogical practices of one's own parents, teachers, and others.

How then is the notion of personal narrative important for establishing one's pedagogical identity of teacher or teacher educator? Ricoeur (1991) reminds us that "narrative constructs the durable properties of a character" (195), not only of the individual character but of the character of the teacher as a person, a professional. Personal narrative should amount to more than simply "telling one's story." It is the significance of good narratives that they tend to reveal universal aspects of human beings. In this context, Aristotle argued that poetry is more philosophical than history or what is now social science. This is true for social and for personal history or biography. An historical account describes things that have happened in the past, but a poetic narrative describes a universal truth. What Aristotle says about the poetic epic of his time applies to the good narrative of our time:

> the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e., what is possible as being probable or necessary . . . poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. (*Poetics*, 1451)

In education too, the narrative process should always be oriented to the more universal pedagogical questions or themes that are dialogically relevant to those who share pedagogical responsibilities for children. One only discovers one's deeper identity as a teacher by measuring one's pedagogical practices, competencies, and insights against more fundamental understandings of those pedagogical themes that give meaning to one's pedagogical life to begin with.

Each teacher expresses in his or her active relations with children the qualities that make up the ethical sphere of teaching as a professional practice. The extent to which these virtues are personally embodied is determined by two moments: (1) by the personal thoughtfulness and tact in relation to the pedagogical differentiation of teaching-learning situations in the classroom and the preparedness to act in accordance with these differentiated perceptions, and (2) by the acceptance of the peda-

gogical virtues as one's own, that is to say as the true normative motives of one's personal acting. If certain qualities do not belong to our selves then they do not belong to the "durable properties of our character," then we do not live in and through these virtues, and vice versa they do not live in us, do not touch us, and do not constitute the soundboard of our emotional life. We cannot simply learn these pedagogical sensibilities and sensitivities as "knowledge" applied to our external behavior. The teacher who only knows intellectually or cognitively that he or she must be patient and understand the child's experience, but who is not really patient and interested in the child's subjectivity, is not really affected by the child's difficulties. In contrast, the teacher who feels "addressed" by children's situations and difficulties discovers in this experience his or her pedagogical nature and the need to be patient and understand the child's experience.

So, how does narrative reason enter our professional lives? First, it is by sharing stories or anecdotes with one another that we reflect upon our pedagogical practice: We ask, "What really happened here?" "What sense do you make of it?" "Should I have acted this way?" "What would you have done? Why?" or "What should I do now?" Second, through narrative reasoning we become accountable: we give account of what we have done, what we think we should do, and why we think that our actions are good, responsible and appropriate or not. Third, by interpreting the meaning of our lived experiences and what certain experiences mean to the children we teach, we may gain pedagogical thoughtfulness and tactful intuition. Sharing stories and narrative reasoning is what we do in dialogue or conversation with others, but it is obviously much more difficult to interpret the pedagogical meanings of our experiences. Yet, herein lies the significance of narrative for the virtue of teaching: by telling anecdotes about the daily practices of teaching and by reflecting in a pedagogical manner on those experiences, one may discover the pedagogical qualities or virtues that may give coherence, purpose, and meaning to one's living with children.

Often intuitions have their roots in personal life history. And so by reminiscing about one's childhood experiences, and how one has become what one has become, it is possible to see how intuitions are related to particular family, communal, cultural, social, and educational experiences. In our conversational relations with other teachers or parents we may come to understand what intuitions and what pedagogical virtues are valued by the community in which we have formed our sense of identity and in which we feel a sense of belonging. All our interactions with children are always already embedded in a cultural context where certain virtues are valued. And yet, in the end, the validity of our views becomes a matter of pedagogical responsibility for each and every one of us. This responsibility needs to be animated by the moral experience of our encounter with the child, our pedagogical Other.

I have argued that, in order to identify and understand the virtuous character of teaching, the narrative approach of telling anecdotes is

often the most appropriate form of reflection. It is often through telling and reflecting on anecdotes or stories that we can come to an understanding of what is good pedagogical action.[39] So, when we wonder about "What is (was) going on?" "What should I have done?" and "What to do next?" it is the embodied knowledge shaped by reflection on experience that will help us interpret our pedagogical situation and possibly give us a sense of practical guidance. But to this end we need to learn to reflect on the meaning of pedagogy, on the normativity of pedagogical interpretation and pedagogical reasoning, on the significance of our pedagogical relations to the children for whom we are responsible, and on the qualities that enable us to do the appropriate thing in concrete and particular circumstances.

The question of the possibility of the pedagogical relation and the virtuous nature of teaching are less philosophical problems that we need to solve theoretically than practical concerns that introduce themselves in situations where teachers and other educators interact with children. Calling certain relations pedagogical does not mean that teachers should think of themselves as leaders of a band who march up front while dictating the route, pace and program. From the beginning, the task of teaching (professional pedagogy) was a temporary responsibility of certain adults who stood *in loco parentis* to children. Even at present, the pedagogue is just a supporter along the way: someone who can be relied upon, who believes in this child, who accompanies the child some distance through life, sharing what he or she knows, showing what one can be, and creating the conditions and secure spaces for young people to play an active part in their own becoming. When Giesecke stresses that the modern pedagogical relation can only be particularistic this does not necessarily mean that teachers can only function as instructors of a narrowly circumscribed piece of subject matter knowledge without having any illusions that they can affect the whole person. It can mean, or rather it should mean, that the teacher can pedagogically touch or affect the whole person but only in his or her particular way and only for a limited time—yet with consequences that are infinite and lifelong.

NOTES

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1. The Dutch-English dictionary (van Dale) states that the English equivalent to a person who is called a *mensenkenner* is someone who is "a good judge of human character," someone who has "insight into human nature" (Martin and Tops 1986, 781).
2. My intention is not to suggest that Europeans have more sophisticated educational concepts. On the contrary. European educational thinkers have learned much from their North American partners. I am merely hoping that we, North Americans, can also learn from them.

3. In Dutch the term *pedagogiek* tends to be the more formal term while the informal everyday equivalent of pedagogy is *opvoeding*. Often these terms are used interchangeably. For example, at the university one studies pedagogy or opvoeding. Teachers' College is called *Pedagogische Academie*.

   I want to reiterate that one should not confuse the Dutch *pedagogiek*, German *Pädagogik*, or (to a lesser degree) French *pédagogie* with the recent popular usage of the term *pedagogy* in North American educational discourse. Often these European variations of *pedagogy* are translated into the English term *education*. But the Dutch equivalent of education is *onderwijs*, in German *Erziehung*. The Dutch terms *pedagogiek* or *opvoeding* partially cover education, except that *opvoeding* or *pedagogiek* take in the total emotional, intellectual, physical, and moral growth of the child for which both parents and teachers (though in different respects) are responsible.

4. For an introduction to the concept of the pedagogical relation in teaching see van Manen (1991).

5. I am not aware of North American research literature that systematically deals with the concept or the nature of the pedagogical relation in teaching. Even the phrase "pedagogical relation" seems little used. The only exception is the philosopher of education Vandenberg (1974, 1975). He made some early attempts to introduce Bollnow's notion of the pedagogical relation and the pedagogical atmosphere to the English language community. Some authors such as Jackson (1968) have concerned themselves with teacher-student relations but not, in my view, in an interpretive pedagogical manner as outlined in this paper.

6. A quick ERIC search of article titles shows that in the sixties the term *pedagogy* was scarcely used. Between 1975 and 1985 educational articles with the term *pedagogy* in the title became more common. A sudden increased usage of the term *pedagogy* started around 1985.

7. At this point I will just mention some of the virtuelike qualities such as patience, love, trust, dedicated diligence, believing in children, having an appropriate sense of humor, knowing how something can be interesting or difficult for children, as well as the ability to listen to children and to understand the nature of their experiences. For a discussion of some of these virtuelike qualities, see van Manen (1991, especially 191–209). References to the term "virtue" are sprinkled throughout educational discourse, yet the concept of virtue has received little systematic attention in the North American educational literature. Paulo Freire explicitly recognizes that "a teacher is a professional, one who must constantly seek to improve and to develop certain qualities or virtues. . . . Virtues are qualities which you re-create through action and through practice, qualities which make us consistent and coherent . . . a consistency which teachers try to achieve within what they are doing" (1985, 15). Freire mentions virtues such as humility, patience, tolerance, and affirmative love. More recently the notion of virtues in teaching has emerged in the debates recognizing the moral dimensions of teaching (Goodlad 1991; Sockett 1987).

8. An important text is Stellwag (1970). For an introduction to the notion of the pedagogical relation, see van Manen (1991).

9. Notice that even Heidegger seems to refer to this special relational quality in his much-quoted line on teaching: "What teaching calls for is this: to let learn. . . . *If the relationship between the teacher and the learners is genuine* . . . there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official" [emphasis added] (1977, 356).

10. Foucault (1977, 1980) may provide a framework by suggesting that such informal life constitutes marginalized practices that do not fall outside of

rationalized domains but operate at the margins, within, and even against those technologically rational structures. In Foucault's terms, they form a kind of "local knowledge" that gets enacted in ever-unique, always-changing, particular situations of educational life in and out of classrooms. And yet, in everyday teaching-learning situations, the local knowledge that sustains pedagogical relations is not so much located at the margin but operates at the very center of classroom life.

11. The teacher is no doubt the most important element in the entire educational system. Agencies like the Holmes Group acknowledge the irreplaceable part of the teacher: "Curriculum plans, instructional materials, elegant classrooms and even . . . intelligent administrators cannot overcome the negative effects of weak teaching, or match the positive effects of positive teaching. . . . The entire formal and informal curriculum of the school is filtered through the hearts and minds of classroom teachers, making the quality of school learning dependent on the quality of teachers" (1986, 23).

12. And yet, it sometimes happens that the features of technical rationalizations become so confining that the possibility of maintaining pedagogical relations between teacher and students is completely thwarted by nonpedagogical themes imposed by overly bureaucratized powers and centralized administrative policies.

13. Not only pedagogical relations between teachers and children but even intimate relations such as friendship and love fall under the sway of technological rationality. Dreyfus (Flyvbjerg 1991) gives the example of friendship as an instance of a human relation that must of necessity resist the influence of instrumental reason. It would seem ridiculous to try to develop a "science" of friendship and try to discover more effective techniques or strategies for behaving as a more productive or efficient friend.

    Yet, friendship too is becoming increasingly rationalized. More so than before, people seem to make friends not because of the inherent quality of the experience of friendship but because they hope that being friends and playing golf with the boss will get them ahead in life. Moreover, psychologists are proposing that friendship is healthy for a more relaxed and longer life. Love and marriage too are thought to add years to one's life. Dreyfus sees a real risk here:

    > Marginal practices always risk being taken over by technological rational understanding and made efficient and productive. . . . As soon as you have friends for your health or for your career you've got some new kind of friendship which is of a technological-rational kind. . . . This new kind of friendship could replace the other kind of friendship. People wouldn't even know anymore what real friendship was. (P. 99)

    For the same reason, we stand in danger of losing our informal understanding of pedagogy and of what it means to teach or educate children in a pedagogical manner. It is impossible to develop a technology of the relational skills of friendship, love, or pedagogy. Foucault would say that these so-called skills are a kind of counter memory, counter practice, or counter power (Foucault 1977).

14. See, for example, Solway (1989).

15. Similarly, the postmodern movement in North America and its deconstructionist strategies may have become a ruse that prevents us from seeing that postmodern reason has the same effect as the here-criticized narrow technological rationality that excludes the normative and the moral. Postmodernism, as critical reason, has become a kind of critical social philosophy *for* contemporary life rather than a philosophy *of* contemporary life. The postmodern movement tends to promote even more effectively than modernist technological reason an effective undermining of humanistic values. In edu-

cation we can see that modernist as well as postmodernist influences play into the hands of the bureaucratic managerial elites. On the one hand, there is the modernist stress on progress, productivity, and measurability of outcomes. On the other hand, the postmodern erosion of shared values and the waning of the very idea that some things are better for children than other things gives the social managers the leverage to impose whatever policies or values seem politically expeditious.

16. It may be true, of course, that people have lost a certain common sense, a sense held in common, that serves to ground their daily actions. For example, in more close knit societies child abusers may have been kept in check by community pressures and the shaming effect of neighborhood norms. In modern society, it seems, individuals at risk must learn from the media that child abuse is wrong and that sexual assaults are despicable and seriously damaging the youngsters who are victimized by abusers. The question is whether educating abusers and victims through the media or even through special therapy programs is as effective as the power of the earlier community norms in reducing the level of violence against children and women. But at any rate, child physical, psychological, and sexual abuse are severe distortions of human relations that fall automatically outside the bounds of pedagogical relations.

17. Enlightened administration ministers to the need for marginal space where thoughtful pedagogical relations can be sustained. For tactful practices in teaching to be possible, administrators need to learn not how to "control" or "manage" these practices, but how to create the spaces wherein pedagogical relations can "naturally" emerge—for example, by making it possible for teachers and students to develop close and personal relations with each other.

18. See van Manen (1991).

19. *The Tact of Teaching* draws distinctions between teaching as reflective practice and teaching as thoughtful practice (van Manen 1991). Teachers engage in reflective practice primarily before and after the interactive life of teaching. However, the everyday interactive moments of teaching are best described as thoughtful practices that require an improvisational pedagogical tact on the part of teachers. Of course, the tact of teaching is also profoundly normative or moral in nature.

20. See, for example, McDowell (1979), Waide (1988), and the essays in Kruschwitz and Roberts (1987).

21. Doeser (1990).

22. Kohlberg (1985).

23. These considerations led me to use the term "qualities" in describing virtues of teaching that probably contribute to a teacher's pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact: "The following qualities are probably essential to good pedagogy: a sense of vocation, love and caring for children, a deep sense of responsibility, moral intuitiveness, self-critical openness, thoughtful maturity, tactful sensitivity toward the child's subjectivity, an interpretive intelligence, a pedagogical understanding of the child's needs, improvisational resoluteness in dealing with young people, a passion for knowing and learning the mysteries of the world, the moral fibre to stand up for something, a certain understanding of the world, active hope in the face of prevailing crises, and, not the least, humor and vitality. . . . This is a tall order for any human being. And yet underlying this suggestion is a crucial question: Does a person who lacks any of these qualities possess the pedagogical fitness required for educating young people?" (van Manen 1991, 8).

24. For a review of such research-oriented literature, see for example Shavelson and Stern (1981).
25. The classical discussion by Ryle (1975) comes to mind.
26. As an example of a central virtue of the good teacher we may think of the pedagogical facility of listening to the child and understanding the child's experience (van Manen 1991). But pedagogically understanding children is not a simple affair; it is related to who one is as a person, what one has become, and what one has made of oneself.
27. See *The Tact of Teaching* on the pedagogical moment and on the relation between reflection and action (van Manen 1991, 37–47, 98–124).
28. In *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (van Manen 1990), I have offered a phenomenological methodology for reflecting on everyday experiences of teaching. And in *The Tact of Teaching: The Meaning of Pedagogical Thoughtfulness* (van Manen 1991), I have shown how conversations with teachers yield anecdotal material that is narratively useful in dealing with the normative or moral dimensions of all teaching.
29. See Doeser (1990).
30. See Burms and De Dijn (1990). Burms and De Dijn argue that in Wittgenstein's *Lecture on Ethics* an interesting distinction is made between cognitive and noncognitive meaning that corresponds to the common distinction between expository and poetic texts.
31. DePaul (1988a, 563) argues that literature can have formative influence on a person's moral intuition: (1) Literature provides us with many more interesting examples of complex moral predicaments than does the life of the average person. (2) When we encounter situations requiring moral judgment and actions, we are often too emotionally involved to see our situation clearly; in contrast, the vicarious experience provided by the novel offers us moral predicaments that are emotionally less crippling. (3) Novels offer us experiences that are less complex than life, but more complex than the common dilemmas analyzed by moral philosophers. See also van Manen (1985, 1989).
32. For example, Bollnow's (1964, 1988) treatment of pedagogical trust and patience is presented with obvious sensitivity to this noncognitive aspect of hermeneutic understanding.
33. For an argument along these lines, see Burms and De Dijn 1990.
34. Of course, hermeneutic phenomenological writing aims at a certain depth and richness of meaning that provides the text with a transcendental power. It is for this reason that strong phenomenological texts, just like poetic texts, cannot be summarized or paraphrased (see van Manen 1990). When we change the body of a poem by substituting different words or by trying to paraphrase its meaning then we inevitably alter the meaning of the poem—often losing the power of the poem. In contrast, weakly embodied texts such as informational newspaper articles are not as sensitive to the exact wording of the text. Similarly in mathematics it does not matter whether we say 8×7, 4×14, or 56; these expressions mean exactly the same thing (see Burms and De Dijn 1990).
35. In his Oxford *Lecture on Ethics* Wittgenstein argued that it is wrong to suppose that evocative, poetic aspects of strongly embodied meaning are only the sentimental effect or emotional content of language (see Burms and De Dijn 1990). To understand what is evoked by a poem, a piece of music, an image, or a gesture is in essence no different from understanding words and sentences. Similarly, it is wrong to suppose that the meaning of a poem or evocative text is too complex, too rich, or too deep to be grasped by means

of language. It is not that language falls short of reaching directly the iconic meaning of poetic texts but rather that this indirectness, this iconicity, belongs to the structure of poetic meaning. The fact that we cannot unambiguously summarize evoked meaning is a function of the nature of meaning that is being expressed in qualitative research.

36. Those who are more cynically suspicious that the widespread interest in narrativity has faddish cultural significance may have noted how William Ackerman, "New Age" founder and president of Windham Hill Recordings, has created the Gang of Seven label, dedicated to commercially exploiting stories and other narrative material by monologists and writers.

37. Ricoeur (1992, 165) explains the ethical significance of self-constancy of narrative identity:

    Because someone is counting on me, I am *accountable for* my actions before another. The term *responsibility* unites both meanings: "counting on" and "being accountable for." It unites them, adding to them the idea of a *response* to the question "Where are you?" asked by another who needs me. This response is the following: "Here I am!"

38. Doeser (1990).

39. In the cultural experience of child rearing and educating children, the value of narratively coming to terms with our intuitions and pedagogical insights is certainly nothing new. For generations parents have told stories, real and imagined, that were meant to show what is appropriate in helping children grow up.

    In more formal educational discourse too, pedagogical insights and practices have long been provided and clarified by means of narrative examples. Plato's parables, Froebel's writings, Pestalozzi's letters, and Montessori's accounts are all narrative demonstrations of the desirability of certain pedagogical virtues or practices. It was the important contribution of romanticism to the European human science tradition that forced the narrow logical rationality of cognitive reason to broaden to a more narrative rationality that would be able to address noncognitive dimensions of human understanding. The European human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) have always been straddling the intellectual domains of the humanities, philosophy, and empirical social science. And so, the educational discourses, which find their roots in these human sciences, have long been infused with social scientific, hermeneutic philosophical, existential phenomenological, *Verstehende* historical, and aesthetic poetic strands. Therefore, when we read the writings by representatives of the European tradition or the work of figures like Greene (1973) in North America, it is possible to be so struck by the narrative quality of these texts that it is still difficult for many educational researchers to accept such work as "social scientific."

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