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Working to Recover the Essence of Education for the Sake of Teaching and Teacher Education: Towards a Phenomenological Understanding of the Forgotten, Ontological Aspects of Learning

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Abstract: *The current definition of a good teacher is grounded in sets of pre-determined competencies established and imposed upon schools by bureaucratic organizations that are, proximally and for the most part, removed from the foundational elements of education, namely, the existential, embodied conscious experience of teaching and learning as it unfolds in the lived world of schools and universities. As Pinar (2004) observes, contemporary American education is deterministic, and "in its press for efficiency and standardization," has the effect of reducing "teachers to automata" (p. 28). Thus, the subject-hood, or authentic identity, of both teachers and students is not of their own free construction, both run the risk of becoming mechanized and depersonalized because education has lost sight of, or obscured, what it means to be human in the first instance, which is an autonomous Being-in-the-world with others. Teachers are increasingly becoming alienated from the curriculum (educational content and pedagogy), their students, and themselves with dire consequences to the overall view to authentic subject-hood and real education.*

In this essay, I focus on diverse and alternative forms of meaning arising from the lived, embodied conscious experience of educators and students in the process of learning, in order to reacquaint practitioners (those who teach and those who educate prospective teachers with the forgotten and more original aspects of education. Through a phenomenological method (*epoche* and *eidetic* reduction), I attempt to show how teacher alienation might be transcended through an understanding of *real* education, by means of recovering the forgotten *ontological* aspects of learning and living, which might lead in a positive direction to the reassessment of the standards, practices, and values of contemporary education. Admittedly, this form of ontological insight into the grounds of *real* education as I define it is not measurable by means of a standardized epistemological model, through quantifiable data. However, this *originary* form of insight into the human and education holds the potential to enrich professional development and improve the quality of our teaching and teacher education programs.[1]

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[1] Bonnett (1978) states that it is necessary for philosophers of education to embark on the "rather large undertaking of attempting an ontology of man," for education must reaffirm the notions as "self-expression, conscious choice and appropriation of thoughts, human understanding," all of which involve basic and "fundamental assumptions" about the human being (p. 55). Bonnett adds that it would be "strange" indeed if such basic assertions about the ontological "nature and development of the human did not have implications for education," in that they hold the potential to inspire a "shift in emphasis in which education is regarded as a process in which the expression and the development of the individual through the acquisition of authentic understanding is central" (Ibid. p. 60). If the process admits of a formal institutionalization, i.e., if phenomenological "description" is to serve as a theory for "prescriptive" educational practice, it might give rise to "the practical maxim that the child is to do nothing that he cannot himself see the point or value of in the context of his own concerns" (Ibid. p. 60). This is not to indicate that educators are not actively exposing the child, by means of enlarging the student's understanding, to a variety of "things beyond his present understanding," to which educators have agreed are valuable, for this is required for education, "provided only that it is conducted in the context of the pupil's own care" (Ibid. p. 61).

1. Alienation in Education: The Loss of Authentic Being-in-the-World

A. The Crisis in Contemporary Education

There is a crisis in contemporary democratic education: radical achievement gaps in the public schools, a shortage of highly trained and effective teachers, and the continued bureaucratization of the American university where market place values dominate (Pinar, 2004; Spring, 2000; Solomon & Solomon, 1994). While a detailed, systematic diagnosis of this problem is beyond the scope of this essay, I consider two problems inhibiting the drive toward effective education. First, the ineffectiveness of teacher reform emerging from the *professionalization agenda* for the training of effective teachers, which attempts to definitively establish what teachers should know and teach, and secondly, the detrimental effects of "high stakes" testing on students and their teachers, who upon entering a system of education are forced to teach an inauthentic curriculum. Reading Diamond (2008) and Zeichner (2009), it is possible to trace these problems to the *social efficiency model* in education, which represents the dominating ideological force in American education. Thus, a brief explication of its philosophy and educational methodology is provided in order to contrast this stultifying view of education with an alternative, more positive vision of authentic education.

Spring (2000) writes that the "dominant public goals for education in the twentieth century are economic […] and these goals include preparation for work, the control of labor, and economic development" (p. 5). In 1990, as a result of Bush's education initiative (*State of the Union*), schools were focused heavily on math and science, which represented a "political decision based on economic concerns" (p. 4). Diamond (2007), researching the effects of "high stakes testing" on curricula, identifies a shift in the trend favoring math and science, and writes that as of recently standardized education has seen a rise of math and language arts in the curriculum; despite the change in curricular focus, what is being taught is still determined in great part by goals and aims linked to standardized tests. Pinar (2004) argues that despite "the empty rhetoric linking education with democracy and politically involved citizenry," schools continue to exist for the explicit purpose of job preparation in an age of radical technological advancement (p. 235). Education has not evolved in the past 100 years, it has simply gone from "preparing citizens for jobs in an industrial economy" to preparing citizens for jobs in a corporate economy," and so the "base economic function of schools remain unchanged" (Ibid. p. 234). It appears that our educational, pedagogical, and ultimately, our overarching curricular goals are still grounded in the essential principles of utility and the student's potential contribution, as functioning and flourishing democratic citizen, to the general economic growth of the country.

The *social efficiency model* works off *product-process* logic for designing and implementing curriculum (as in the Tyler rational), it is teleological, i.e., goals, standards, and objectives, which comprise the definition of "good education" are determined in advance, and often times, at a proximal distance from the practical unfolding of learning in the classroom. For example, private foundations (Carnegie Corporation) and accrediting agencies (ETS – Education Testing Service) are "non-governmental professional organizations that establish standards and criteria for educational institutions" (Spring, 2000, p. 207). Since the *social efficiency model* works to implement programmed instruction, which is designed to assure that students achieve established sets of standardized objectives, it deals only "with a limited part of the child's total functioning; it is not intended to give students a well-rounded education but to provide them with a set of specialized skills" (Schiro, 2009, p. 85). Kliebard (1984) has labeled the *social efficiency model* the least academic of the four educational ideologies, and in fact, has referred to it as "the most anti-academic" (p. 33). According to Pinar (1994) this model for education, which embodies the "factory model" in praxis, has turned the classroom into a highly unpleasant and unproductive environment for teachers and students, causing more than a few teachers to

> retreat into the apparent safety of their own subjectivities. But in doing so, they have abdicated their professional authority and ethical responsibility for the curriculum they teach. They have been forced to abdicate this authority by the bureaucratic protocols that presumably hold them "accountable," but which in fact, render them unable to teach (p. 4).

B. The Professionalization Agenda, High Stakes Testing, and Teacher Alienation

Zeichner (2003), writing on recruiting, preparing, and retaining qualified teachers, addresses deficiencies associated with the *professionalization agenda,* which as stated, represents the "current incarnation of what has been referred to as the social efficiency tradition of reform in teacher education – the quest to establish a profession of teaching through the articulation of a knowledge base for teachers based on educational research and professional judgment" (P. 498). This agenda is propelled by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the National Commission on Teacher's and America's Future (NCTAF), the National Council of American Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Holmes Group and Partnership. The *professionalization agenda* pushes for universal standards that determine teacher excellent, and as a system, "addresses teachers' abilities to display certain knowledge, dispositions, and perfections thought to be necessary for effective teaching" (Ibid. p. 498). Because the federal government, private foundations, and accrediting agencies are playing major roles in "nationalizing educational policies," a yawning chasm exists between those who draft and push for the implementation of education standards, many of whom are not remotely involved with education, and the actual lived sphere of the curriculum (Spring, 2001, p. 201).

The *professionalization agenda* is not concerned with much of the empirical research available that establishes specific links between standards and student learning, and because the validity of the standards is based on the decisions of panels of experts and scholars, there is a "failure to establish clear links in teacher standards and pupil learning even as broadly defined," and as a result, critics argue that "performance based teacher education is of little consequence" (Zeichner, 2003, pp. 498-299). As related to the issue of alienation in education, Zeichner raises an important point regarding the fact that experienced teachers are becoming more and more hesitant to work in teacher education programs because "they are asked to write performance indicators and rubrics and to examine their courses to see if they are covering what will be covered on the state content exams" (p. 501). Along with public education, teacher education programs are also grounded in the *product-process* model of education, and are thus creating the identical problem in higher education that exists on the levels of elementary and secondary education, which Apple (2004) describes as a situation wherein the "tail of the test wags the dog of the teacher" (p. 174). Educators in institutions of higher learning are unable to freely select and organize curriculum content and pedagogy, which might benefit from their insight, experience, and sense of better judgment concerning the best ways to educate teachers because they have been absolved of the responsibility of writing and implementing the curriculum. As Zeichner states, this type of standard based educational program for teachers does not lead to better learning, and that the clear and present danger is already upon us, because teacher education is

> turning performance based teacher education into a purely mechanical implementation activity that has lost sight of any real purpose and of the need to constantly step back from the daily grind of implementation to ask hard questions about what is being accomplished and for whose benefit (p. 502)

Diamond (2008) stresses yet another aspect of educator and student alienation from the curriculum, namely, the manner in which "high stakes testing" is negatively effecting both curriculum content and pedagogical methods. Diamond states that teacher and student accountability and performance on standardized tests has changed the face of education, e.g., Illinois State Standards directly effect "instructional content (the knowledge and skills that teachers teach) and pedagogy (how teachers teach that content)" (p. 293). Since the bulk of the curriculum is grounded in the content of standardized tests, based on the Board of Education's mandates, the context of the learning environment, and subsequently those who teach and learn, is being adversely affected in the following ways: First, there is a narrow focus of curriculum content, e.g., Diamond sights a current rise in privileging math and language arts over other subjects such as science and social studies. Next, there is a narrow focus within these areas that are privileged, e.g., only certain aspects of math and language arts are highlighted. Finally, there is a significant amount of class time

devoted to test preparation, e.g., teachers are not only drilling students using the content of tests, they are also reproducing the stultifying "testing atmosphere" in the classroom. [2]

It is evident that there is a serious problem with educational procedures emerging out of the "bureaucratic/rational choice model" that is two-fold in nature, a problem that is in fact *antibiotic*, as in a vicious sense of codependence. Instructors who are increasingly alienated from what might serve as legitimate, or authentic, curriculum for the preparation of teachers entering the field are slaves to institutions governed by pre-determined standards of achievement. These institutions are then filtering ill-prepared (alienated) teachers into a system that is governed in much the same way, namely, by standards and competencies established by bureaucratic agencies that are at a remove from authentic educational purposes and practices. Teachers are thus alienated in a duplicitous sense, both from the curriculum they are now forced to teach and the students who cannot relate to what is being taught. Bonnett (2001) echoes the sentiments expressed earlier when stating that the current "predisposition to regard *outcomes* of education as definable in advance of the *process* of education" engenders a deterministic system of education that obscures authentic *subject-hood* and we lose sight of the fact that humans are "individual centers of consciousness capable of relating to the world in ways that have personal meaning, for this is essential to human being against some sort of mechanized and depersonalized being" (p. 30). In short, there is a loss of ownership on the part of both educator and student, but beyond this, there is a loss of authentic *subject-hood*; ironically, by means of education, we are losing sight of what it means to be truly human.

The alienation from the curriculum and authentic *subject-hood* of which I speak should not be conceived in terms of Marxist theory, which tends to focus on ideology and the critique of capitalism and its detrimental effects on schools. Rather, I conceive alienation and depersonalization in terms of what Heidegger (1979) calls the oblivion, or *forgetting*, of Being, which is grounded in the failure to ask about "the truth of being itself" and about "the way the essence of human being belongs to the truth of Being" (p. 246). This condition, which pervades the world of education, grows from the tradition in Western metaphysics and its subsequent influence on the rise of science and technology. In short, education is moving us farther away from essential issues of human dwelling as linked with our Being, and the ontological aspects of our existence. It is now to the potential recovery of this essential, forgotten ontological notion of authentic *Being-in-the-world* as related to education that I turn.

2. The Phenomenological Understanding of *Real* Education and Authentic *Being-in-the-World*

A. Real Education Conceived as Plato's Paideia

Transcending the alienated, inauthentic state of education, concerned with the issue of what teachers should know and learn, begins with an authentic understanding of education, which includes a reinterpretation and reassessment of the 'traditional' teacher-student relationship as expressed within *social efficiency ideology*. This calls for the crucial understanding that students are not in the first instance "information processors," rather they are "seekers of meaning," and education is never reducible to a cold, calculative process of digesting and accumulating information, but rather resembles an act of love, as *eros,* such as we find in the "very best ancient Platonic model," where education represents the "instruction and inspiration of souls" (Solomon & Solomon, 1994, p. 20). Heidegger expresses the notion of Plato's authentic education, which is elucidated

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[2] Although Diamond's findings show that the effect of high stakes testing has a greater effect on curriculum content than pedagogy, Pike (2003) writing on the authentic aspects of teaching English, or literature, indicates that a major change in pedagogy is evident when educators are forced to approach literature exclusively from the perspective of the Either/Or epistemological framework. Pike observes that English teaching is being reduced to a calculative and "explicit" endeavor, wherein teaching is akin to a technology, or "vehicle which delivers a subject in an efficient and effective manner, where rote analysis and explicit teaching are all that appear to be required" (p. 92). In effect, English teaching, which should unfold as interpretation, along the lines of hermeneutic discourse, is being reduced to a didactic system of delivery, and so in reading Pike there is the sense that pedagogy (at least as it relates to teaching literature, which interesting enough, Diamond claims is now being privileged in the "High Stakes" curriculum) is in fact impacted in a severely detrimental way.

through etymology focused on the ancient notion of what a "real," or authentic, education is in terms of *paideia.*

Heidegger (1996), rendering the Greek from the *Republic,* claims that Plato's "real" education takes hold of the "soul (*psyche*) itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us back to the place of our essential Being and accustoming us to it" (p. 167). It is the antithesis of the rote transformation of information as found in much of contemporary education grounded *social efficiency ideology,* which as Thompson (2003) argues, resembles the "filling up of the *psyche* with knowledge as if inscribing a *tabla rasa* or, in more contemporary parlance, 'training up' the neural web" (p. 134). To grasp the originary meaning of *paideia* as employed by Plato, Heidegger (1996) points out the multifarious ways in which the term means, and states that it represents the movement or process from an uneducated state (*apaideusia*) to a state of education (*paideia*). While this seems an obvious, if not banal, description of the process of education, Heidegger highlights the depth and complexity this vision of education holds by comparing Plato's use of *paideia* to the essential German rendering of *Bildung,* which for Heidegger

> means forming [*Bilden*] in the sense of impressing a character that unfolds. But at the same time this "forming" [*Bilden*] "forms" [*bildet*] or impresses a character by antecedently taking its measure from some measure given vision, which for that reason is called pre-conception [*Vor-bild*] (p. 166).

Against the *product-process* model, Heidegger argues that authentic education demands of the educator a *fore-knowing,* an insight into the unfolding of essential learning, but rather than simply the understanding of how students learn, through observing and charting the stages of their cognitive development, the form of insight Heidegger is concerned with is an ontological insight that penetrates into the student's Being. In many ways it is, and must be, an incomplete vision, for it is not like the vision of the artisan-craftsman (*technite*), who by means of knowledge (*techne*) captures an accurate, indelible vision of the essence of the *ergon,* as finished product, artifact, or object in advance of efficaciously bringing it into existence. Heidegger states that the "turning" in the processes of Plato's education "has to do with one's Being and this takes place in the very grounds of one's essence" (P. 166). Thus, the vision of the educator is always informed by the human's ontological constitution, and this insight serves to engender the evolution of a "real" education," which requires knowledge of "the true relation between teachers and taught" (Heidegger, 1959, pp. 15-16).

For both Plato and his mentor Socrates, the notion of soul, or *psyche,* represents the moral locus of the human, and beyond, the center of one's Being, or essence *as* 'identity'. It is clear that when Socrates engages an interlocutor through the method of dialectic in quest of defining the virtues, he is communicating, and beyond, communing with the essence of that person. For example, when conversing with Alcibiades, Socrates states the following: "I, Socrates, am not arguing or talking with the face of Alcibiades, but with the real Alcibiades; and that is with his soul" (Plato, 1999, p. 456). In contemporary discussions of philosophy and education, we find a similar notion of this ancient Greek ideal of "self-identity" expressed in terms of *phenomenological self-hood.* This notion of the self, as will be elaborated, which forms the foundation for authentic education *as* teacher-pupil interaction, represents the ontological view of the human being, or its *being-human,* that educators and those who oversee education have fallen away from with to the severe detriment of both educators and students.

B. *Toward a Phenomenological Understanding of the Human Being*

Bonnett (2009), also grapples with the detrimental effects of education's "rigid and limited conceptions of what it is to be 'more fully human' through pre-specified aims and objectives of the sort found in many 'rationally justified' curricula," and warns of the trend in education to dehumanize both teachers and students (p. 360). Education has objectified the sense of authentic *self-hood,* reducing it to the hypostatized construction of forces that are external to and beyond the control of the individual. As previously stated, this gives rise to the *deterministic* view of the human, one who has been stripped of her autonomy, her authentic freedom. In such a state the self becomes both "decentered in the sense of losing its central epistemic position and denucleated in the sense that any supposed core or essence is removed" (Ibid. p. 360). This post-modern notion of the self, according to Bonnett, is both "phenomenologically untenable and

educationally stultifying" (Ibid. 357). Moving beyond Bonnett, I suggest that that the understanding of the human being as *Being-in-the-world* with others should precede discourse on the determination of the overarching purposes, aims, and goals of education, and so I move to formalize a reconceived notion of *phenomenological self hood* as it relates to inspiring a view towards authentic education as it emerges from two philosophical sources: (1) Sartre's[3] phenomenological description of *Being-for-itself* and the notion of freedom and the concomitant burden of responsibility, which opens the potential for our authentic projects and allows for the manifestation of the unique values we bring into existence through autonomous choice, and (2) Heidegger's phenomenological (fundamental) ontology of *Dasein* ("there-being") and the ontological understanding of *Dasein's* "care-structure," which grounds the deep, solicitous care we demonstrate for our Being and the Being of others.

Attempting to return to the grounds of human existence in order to philosophically define the human in terms of its untapped ontological-existential possibilities, I consider the invariant structures of pure intentional experience, which ground and define our embodied conscious worldly existence, as the essence of our *Being-in-the-world* with others. A brief description of the phenomenological method employed to reveal these transcendent-embodied structures will enhance the reader's awareness of this philosophical process to uncover the original grounds of our humanity. Since both Sartre and Heidegger are indebted to Husserl's "phenomenological method," a rudimentary overview of the process will assist the reader, with the understanding that first, this is only a brief description of a highly complex and technical method, and second, the understanding that each thinker modified the phenomenological method (*epoche-eidetic reduction*) for their own unique philosophical purpose.

Generally, the method unfolds through two phases: the *phenomenological epoche* ("bracketing") and the *eidetic reduction.* The first phase refers to the philosopher's suspension judgment with respect to the phenomenon under investigation, this allows for a whole range of unique and previously overlooked dimensions of experience to manifest. In slightly more technical terms, the *epoche* allows us to see things through a reconfigured lens where epistemological and psychological categories are held in abeyance, they fall away and things appear non-contingent and independent of our subjective categorizations for defining and understanding them. The second phase reveals insight into the essential and invariant structures (ontological-existential) that give form to our existence, we see, as it were, in the particular manifestation of the phenomenon what is essential to all phenomenon of that type, i.e., when aspects of the contingent and empirical withdraw, the *eide* are adumbrated and highlighted, they stand out in bold relief, and are made available for thematic inquiry. For example, when "bracketing" the lived experience of education, we glean insight into what is essential to all activities bound up with the processes of teaching and learning, without which the empirical experience of education (teaching and learning) would be impossible.

C. The Phenomenological Ontology of Sartre's Being-for-itself and Heidegger's Dasein as Care

Sartre (1986) states that the main tenet of existentialism is reducible to the epigram, "existence precedes and commands essence," which succinctly represents the ontological understanding of the human being set within a critique of essentialism in Western philosophy (p. 438). Any analysis of Sartre must begin and end with the interrelated notions of freedom, responsibility, and the "creation" of values. The human is for Sartre *Being-for-itself (entre-pour-soi),* while all other aspects of the world are *Being-in-itself (entre-ea-soi).* The human is free and *for-itself* because she is self-questioning and can envision a life-project, or "fundamental project," that emerges through the exercise of her autonomy in relation to *facticity* within what Sartre terms "the situation". There is always the potential, barring the single fatality of death, of assessing, reassessing, and re-defining our lives, this because of the ontological structure of freedom itself, which is a necessary condition for the enactment of our freedom in any and all situations, within the lived experience of our life. Morris (2005)

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[3] I acknowledge the contribution of such scholars as Papastephanou (2009) for bringing Sartre into educational studies in philosophy. She rightly comments that Sartre's philosophy is relevant for educational studies "regardless of what Sartre really thought of education or of whether contemporary philosophers have Sartre in mind when they share (or even radicalize) his suspicion of everydayness, institutions, and practices" (p. 454). Sartre, unlike Heidegger, did not write explicitly on the state of education nor did he offer a formalized philosophy of education; for this reason, it is far more common to encounter scholars engaging Heidegger in their discussions of education than Sartre.

states that being free within particular situations refers to "the fact that the situation is a condition for, though not a limitation on, our freedom" (p. 144).

"To be free," writes Sartre (1986), "is not to choose the historical world in which one arises – which would have no meaning – but to choose oneself in the world whatever this might be" (p. 668). When born into the world, or *thrown-into-the-world,* the historical milieu we enter is not of our choosing, it is literally given to us in advance as heritage. This is something we cannot change, but can work with, in that we can determine its meaning for us and re-value it if we so choose. Other aspects of *facticity* would include the laws of nature, the historical world with its scientific limits, the genetic limits of our physiology, and the past choices we have made as *having-been.* Sartre even includes family and community to this notion of *facticity.* However, *facticity,* "far from being a danger to freedom, resolves only in enabling it to arise as freedom" (p. Ibid. 621). *Facticity* might be understood as marking out the horizons, or limits, that allows for authentic freedom to manifest in the first instance. Initially, our choices are made possible there is a convergence of freedom (as human *transcendence*) and *facticity*.

Sartre (1986) writes of the *freedom toward* the enactment of a "fundamental project," which always involves "nothingness," or the *negatite,* because in the present situation we are always seeking to bring into existence that which has not-yet been chosen or given form, and all authentic action "necessarily implies as its condition the recognition of a 'desideratum,' or lack, and absence" (Ibid. p. 560). Morris (2005) claims that for Sartre, *nothingness* is duplicitous in nature, involving a "double nihilation": First, the ideal end or goal exists is conceived in futural terms as that which is not-yet enacted, and represents *nothingness* in the present moment, while the present moment also shows up as lacking (*nothingness*) that particular "something" in terms of the futural goal or ideal end (p. 148). As stated, freedom is directed toward our *fundamental project,* which "constitutes the person's – totally individual and changeable – essence" (Ibid. p. 154). We are utterly responsible for our "fundamental project" and the enactment of our own unique possibilities that arise through its creation, and this project is always bound up in important ways with others, because while choosing a world the human is also choosing, or creating, the values that give meaning to it. The values that the *for-itself* brings into existence also affect others, and so there is a great burden of responsibility associated with the authentic exercise of one's freedom.

If we turn from this responsibility, Sartre (1948) claims that we are living in *bad faith,* which in certain instances amounts to turning ourselves and other human beings into objects, or the *in-itself,* things with immutable essences lacking embodied, conscious potential. Thus, we must be cautious and clear when making choices, for all actions are bound up with a process of personal valuation, but this valuing transcends mere subjectivity when we are choosing projects that involve others, e.g., the creation of institutions, states, nations, and the like: "And when we say that a man is responsible for himself, we do not only mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men" (p. 471). Thus when we express our values, we are at once informing the Other, "I value X, you too *should* value X." So, we must always act with the understanding that in significant ways we are ethically responsible for the Other's Being. When "creating" values, we are engaged in reassessing, reinterpreting, and either accepting or rejecting the values that have, in many ways, been passed along to us through our emersion in the world and by way of our heritage, which forms one of the horizons of our *having-been.* If we accept, or choose, these values as part of the *status quo,* we are not exercising our freedom authentically, and hence, living in *bad faith,* resisting the burden of freedom and making excuses for our imagined lack of autonomy. Since the latter portion of this explication of Sartre concerned the human's responsibility for others, I deepen this line of thought by turning to the philosophy of Heidegger in order to further elucidate what human responsibility entails when thinking about human communities, history, and destiny.

In Heidegger's (1962) fundamental ontology, "care," in terms of the human's *care-structure,* is instantiated within the "formal existential totality of *Dasein's* ontological structural whole" (p. 237/192).[4] Care

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[4] Having published articles on both Heidegger's fundamental ontology of 1927 (*Being and Time*) and his later works of the so-called "turn" (*Kerhe*), I acknowledge the division in educational studies between scholars favoring *Being and Time* and those who argue that no authentic educational philosophy can emerge from the analysis of that text. However, there are Heidegger scholars such as Walter Brogan who argue that Heidegger is successful in *Being and Time* at legitimizing the authentic move beyond radical individuation, and thus accomplishing the task of establishing *Dasein* as communal *Being-with-others* through the temporal analysis of the notions of

situates the human being in the world temporally, as the stretching out of the *Dasein* from its birth to its death, in such a way that both its own Being and the Being of others become issues for it. The understanding of care is linked inextricably with the enactment of *Dasein's* authentic Being-with others: "Selfhood is to be discovered existentially only in *Dasein's* authentic ability-to-be a self, that is to say, in the authenticity of *Dasein's* Being as care" (Ibid. p. 369/322). When dealing with others, our sense of concern should manifest as care (*Sorge*) and in particular, care as *Fursorge*, or solicitude that "cares-for" the other, and this represents not only a respect for and preservation of the other's freedom, it also represents the call for a resolute understanding of the responsibility we must shoulder when helping to the make the other's freedom an authentic possibility. When caring for entities in the world that are not like Dasein, we demonstrate concern (*Besorgen*), e.g., when encountering *present-at-hand* entities. It would be inauthentic to show mere concern for *Dasein*, and yet this is precisely what education grounded in the model for standardization appears to be doing. Huebner (1999) expresses precisely this concern when critiquing educational goals, aims, and objectives that are determined in advance of education, at a complete remove from the student's temporality, her historicity conceived in terms of the "caring" communal destining of *Dasein's* supreme, authentic manifestation of *Being-with*. Care, as *Fursorge*, is thus integral to *Dasein's* living historically (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in an authentic manner, crucial to it enacting its collective destiny (*Geschick*).

Heidegger (1962) states that Dasein's authentic temporal existence, as related to the three moments, or horizons, of the *care-structure*, expressed in terms of the fundamental character of our Being as "ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in (the world) as Being-alongside entities which we encounter (within-the-world)," is an historical occurrence culminating in Dasein's authentic destiny (p. 293/249). While it is certain that we die alone, it is not the case that we enter the world in the self-same manner, for we are born into a family and community, we share, as part of our *throwness*, a common lineage and heritage, and this element of our Being discloses our factical possibilities through our authentic historical comportment, or *historizing*. When authentic Dasein enacts its possibilities, projecting itself toward the future, its heritage approaches and is taken up in "repetition," by enacting the possibilities "it has inherited and yet chosen" (Ibid. p. 435/384). However, the mere acknowledgement of the past does not constitute the authentic understanding of heritage in terms of *historicality*, rather *historicality* involves choosing to accept or reject, through reinterpretation, the decisions of its forebears, the collective *ethos* of the community, in light of its ownmost potential-for-Being. Thus, there is a burden associated with the "repetition" of Dasein's heritage. The concept of destiny, the pinnacle of Dasein's authentic existence, refers to the shared, collective *historizing* of a community, in which people draw from a collective heritage and fatefully enact their existence through "communication" and "struggle". Destiny is not merely a collection of individual fates, as it is guided in advance by the fact that Dasein's existence is *Being-in-the-world* as *Being-with*. "Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world […] Only in communicating and struggling does the power of destiny [*Geschick*] become free," and our destiny is bound up with and in our "generation," which makes up our "authentic historizing" (Ibid. p. 436/384-385).

3. Reclaiming Our Authentic *Being-in-the-World* and Recovering of the Forgotten Ontological Aspects of Education's Essence

A. The Original Nature of the Question Concerning What Teachers Should Know and Learn: Grounding a Curricular Vision

What are the implications of the ontological-existential insight as described above for educators in the lived experience of the classroom of the public school, for educators in the *lived world* of the university who are engaged in teacher education programs? I suggest the ontological concerns that are at stake manifest across the curriculum through the organization, or *bringing-into-existence*, of the context of an authentic experience of learning. My focus will not be directed on curriculum content, on the subjects that are included or excluded, i.e., the knowledge-centered aspects of education. Rather, I am concerned with focusing on learner-centered

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history, fate, and destiny. I leave it to the reader/practitioner to decide whether or not the inclusion of Heidegger from 1927 contributes in any beneficial way to their educational practices.

and community-centered aspects of education along with the crucial aspects of authentic classroom management when seeking to understand the types of things that authentic teachers should know and learn and how they should approach the education of their students.

It is the case that when educators are developing a "curricular vision" they are concerned with the knowledge of the students and how they learn, the *content-knowledge* that students are to be learning, and the manner in which student learning might be clearly, cogently, and accurately assessed in relation to the goals and aims of the curriculum in order to evaluate the processes of education (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2005). However, I suggest that developing an authentic curricular vision does not begin with attempting to provide answers to the foregoing curriculum concerns, but rather with an analysis of the questions being formulated about education, which is to say, prior to concerning ourselves with answers or solutions to problems, educators should return to an original understanding of the questions they are asking and encouraging students to ask. For example, when formulating "original" questions, we embark on an *inquiry* as opposed to an *investigation*. With respect to the latter, it is terminated by the answer provided; as related to the former, the problem is not terminated but enriched by means of revelation and understanding (Gelvin, 1979, p. 81). When asking original, or fundamental, questions, we learn that answers do not always follow the lines of logical argumentation and that the truth revealed defies standards of deductive correctness. As related specifically to our educational practices, Heidegger (2000) states that the original questions that educators should be concerned with formulating emerge only when they are "not being seduced by overhasty theories, but instead experiencing things as they are in whatever may be nearest" (p. 32/23). Original questions are of a dual-nature: they are *transformative* in that they seek to reveal, but at the same time inspire in us the preservation of and care for the basic question-worthy status of such things as love, existence, transcendence, freedom, human potential, and authentic education. Original questioning "pushes us into the open […] and transforms itself (as does every genuine questioning), and casts a new space over and through everything (Ibid. p. 32/23).

Thus, the question I pose is of a special kind, which is antecedent to any formalized curriculum plan, and it is not a question that admits of an easy answer, for it is the type of question that evokes the mode of the infinitival as it attempts to elucidate the essential movement of the "lived experience" of learning, intimately bound up with inquiry of a philosophical nature. Pursuant to the end of understanding what authentic teachers should know and learn, as opposed to asking the question, "What *is* an effective teacher?" Or, "What *is* an efficient curriculum?" I ask the more primordial question, "How is it in the first instance that an authentic education unfolds in its essence?" Addressing this concern, the reader is encouraged, in a resolute moment of reflexivity, to return to the lived world of the classroom as an ontological context for learning in the *originary* sense, envisioning her future role as educator enlightened by the phenomenological understanding of the ontological structures that ground our existence and the processes of *real* education. This final section is devoted to inspiring the educator's transcendence of the alienated state of education by means of formulating a response to the foregoing query. The ontological-existential structures introduced above will be reinterpreted in terms of their concrete enactment in educational praxis, through formalizing the manner in which authentic education might be conceived, and from this interpretation, an authentic curriculum is intimated through the vision emerging from the inquiry.

B. What Teachers Should Know and Learn About Freedom, Responsibility, and Values in the Classroom: Structuring and Managing an Authentic Classroom

Classroom management includes the creation and sustaining of a fecund and intimate environment (or world) for learning that engenders a sense of responsibility for the values that emerge through the activities in which educators and students engage. The classroom environment that fosters and nurtures an atmosphere of existential authenticity must be grounded in the notion of a free, responsible, and caring human being, and this phenomenological understanding gleaned from approaching education by means of asking fundamental questions about existence might serve as the guiding framework, or *Gestell,* marking or sketching out the appropriate horizons within which the authentic occurrence of learning transpires. Authentic classroom management should seek to allow students to *feel-at-home-in-a-world* of learning that is, in great part, of their own making, in terms of their *fundamental projects*. It is possible to conceive of the

curriculum in terms of a *fundamental project,* as the organizing structure that directs the learning, but is itself, as of yet, incomplete, for it is "groundless," bound up as it is with the students' indeterminate futural potential. It is possible to state that education, as our *fundamental project*, is rooted in the choices educators and students make, it is always the "original choice which originally creates all reasons and all motives," and our *fundamental project* as educators "arranges the world and its meaning, its instrumental-complexities, and its coefficient of adversity" (Sartre, 1986, p. 465).

Every *for-the-sake-of-which,* e.g., choice of curriculum, choice of content, choice of instruction and assessment, selection of knowledge that we value or devalue, is directed toward the fulfillment of our *fundamental project*. Thus, the phenomenological understanding of *being human* inspires the educator's *fore-knowing* into the authentic "formation" of the classroom because it is always already situated in the ontological understanding of the student as human Being, as *Being-for-Itself*. Through this preparatory insight into the Being of students, educators are readied to respond authentically to the ever-changing, ever-evolving needs, wants, and desires of all students, which emerge through the understanding that change, *becoming,* and transcendence are integral components of our lives, in terms of a way of life, and this is essential to all authentic teaching and learning. All situations, all learners, hold the potential to be otherwise, but this is something that is either forgotten or ignored in much of contemporary education, and such an authentic understanding of the student as a locus of freedom and the unique, as of yet, untapped potential, as I suggest, might be expressed in terms of Sartre's philosophy.

Educators should be skeptical of such models for curriculum making as the Tyler (1949) rationale, which through techniques of behavior modification leads students toward the achievement of curriculum goals and aims that have been established in advance for their education. In addition, when we standardize, label, and categorize students and prospective teachers preparing to enter the field based on rigid standards that are pre-determined in advance of the curriculum, we are stripping students and educators of their ontological essence, or existence as *Being-for-itself* and reducing them to mere objects, to *Being-in-itself,* to things equivalent to the chairs, tables, desks, books, and things that fill up our classrooms that have immutable essences but do not hold the power to transform their existence. There must be ways of teaching and formulating the direction of our educational practices in which students are participants and co-creators in the process of learning and the determination thereof in ways that maximize their freedom through the enactment of unique possibilities that contribute simultaneously to the context of education, the formation of the student, and the emergence of authentic standards of education, where the goals and aims for teaching, rather than being determined in advance of the curriculum, are imminent *as* potential in the authentic unfolding of the curriculum within the classroom.[5] Greene (1995) also argues for the power of student autonomy in contributing to the authentic "dialogue about educational purposes, standards and common learning," and claims that fundamental to the formation of our educational purposes must be "the achievement of human freedom within a human community" (p. 184).[6]

Authentic classroom management is also concerned with the educator's knowledge of the subject matter, of pedagogy and the most effective ways to teach the subject-matter, and these issues are undoubtedly important to effective teaching. However, putting these aforementioned components of classroom management aside, our focus should first be on the understanding of "how" authentic education

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[5] Huebner (1999) writes of such a notion in his critique of the dominance of *social efficiency* in education, as represented in the Tyler rationale when he states that definitive, pre-ordained goals and aims in education should not be the primary concern of curriculum makers, for the "educators to easy acceptance of the function of or the necessity for purposes or objectives has replaced the need for a basic awareness of his [temporality and] historicity" (p. 132).

[6] Greene does not talk explicitly about the process of allowing goals and aims to organically emerge from the curriculum in progress, but it is possible, in line with the phenomenological method, to imagine goals and aims for the curriculum emerging through a process of hermeneutic interpretation. Following a "spiral structure," rather than a linear model for curriculum-making, educators begin with a fore-conception, or presupposition, concerning goals and outcomes, but these goals and outcomes are fluid and protean in nature, they change, evolve, develop, and are reworked as knowledge and understanding of the student and her needs, desires, and abilities are revealed and "interpreted" by the educator. Following a *process-product model,* goals and aims set forth at the outset are thus subject to revision and elaboration as the educator works to deepen and clarify her understanding of that which emerges from the learning experience. It must be noted that the goals and aims should always begin at the existential level of the 'lived experience' of the student in her environment.

unfolds by exploring the manner in which the educator approaches students, this despite the content of her instruction. As opposed to didactic techniques such as monologue, where the educator embodies a "possessor" of objective, immutable knowledge to be transferred through a system of "delivery" to students who are empty vessels, education should unfold primarily by means of discourse (dialogue), which represents the search for meaning through a process of inquiry and knowledge-construction, or *meaning making,* in fellowship. This opens the space for student participation in a communal environment for learning, for in the processes of asking original questions about not only the material they are engaging, but also their lives, regarding various and potential meanings, students are at once assuming the role of learner, teacher, and assessor, contributing to determining both the validity and value of the learning, in the context of the lesson.

As evident from Sartre's philosophy as outlined, bound up with freedom is the supreme burden of responsibility, which both student and educator must assume. However, the contemporary state of education, as earlier described, in fact works to abolish the students' freedom outright, and so with the loss of freedom it follows that any authentic sense of responsibility for the curriculum, learning, and their unique potentiality-for-Being is also lost. This occurs because we are telling students in advance what forms of knowledge are most valuable, what specific "facts" and "skills" are absolutely necessary for mastery, and then we are handing over to them the curriculum in the form of a pre-packaged finished product. Education of this type is not intellectually demanding from the perspective of deep meditative rumination, as the foundation for all critical thought, nor is it personalized in any sense of the term, so it should not be surprising that students fail to demonstrate an authentic sense of responsibility, they are not beholden to the material educators are presenting in the curriculum. They are being forced to assume the *faux* sense responsibility for things learned that are not of their own choosing or making, things that are not related in any authentic manner to their own unique fundamental *projects.* We are doing a great disservice to students by relieving them of both the burden of freedom and responsibility as related to their unique lives. Because every single thread forming the student's web of meanings that comprise her world and potential world, every action, every *for-the-sake-of-which* must be done in the service of her unique *fundamental project* if it is to be authentic.

In terms that are familiar to educators, the situation described above manifests a lack of student ownership of to the process of learning, and this I suggest is a problem of monumental proportion. If students and educators are to ever experience the full weight of their freedom and responsibility, they must take seriously with what Sartre indicates about those who ignore, or *flee-in-the-face* of, their responsibility as autonomous agents: When in "anguish" we shirk the responsibilities of enacting our freedom, we are living an existence of *bad faith,* for we must not seek to, nor should we impose this condition on others, relinquish the burden of responsibility that has been given over to us in light of our being condemned to an existence that is bound up with autonomous choice and action, When living authentically, we "cannot help escape the feeling of [our] total and deep responsibility" for our lives and fundamental project (Sartre, 1986, p. 472) It is clear from the foregoing diagnosis of the crisis in contemporary education, educators must shoulder much, if not all, of the burden for creating learning institutions that are exemplary of *bad faith.* There must be a move by teachers to engender an authentic sense of responsibility, or ownership, in the classroom, which accompanies the informed choices that our students make in the process of learning. This relates directly to the manner in which the learning unfolds, i.e., the "how" of an authentic education and the pinnacle role that the teacher must assume when working towards structuring and managing an authentic classroom in order to facilitate and allow for a deep and true sense of ownership in student learning to once again emerge, and hence, revive the all-important sense of responsibility for the unique and authentic choices they make.

Sartre's concept of *nothingness* as earlier introduced will prove helpful when envisaging the space of education as the locus of potential, growth, and evolution. "If man as the existentialist conceives him is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing" (Sartre, 1986, p. 471). This notion includes responsibility for the learning environment that students and educators have formed as well as a responsibility for its future enactment, by means of speculating on how the learning environment might be improved in more authentic ways through collective choice. It is crucial to grasp that the present structure of worlds within the classroom represents what Sartre calls the "given," that which has been brought into existence through the autonomous choices we have made, and the Being of both educators and students "causes there to be a given by [first] breaking with it and illuminating it in the light of the not-yet-existing," and that which does not yet exist,

represents our unique futural potential (p. 615). The notion of *nothingness* also relates to learning, knowledge, and meaning, i.e., what we already know and what we seek to know in the future as it relates to the *fundamental project* of education to which we are contributing. If educators view the context of the classroom authentically, a sense of *nothingness* must be acknowledged, they must remain open to student potential, which is the understanding of those elements of human existence, as *Being-for-itself*, that have not yet been enacted, and can never be fully determined in advance of the *situation* at a remove from the lived world of the classroom, the locus of the merging of *transcendence* and *facticity*. To teach and to learn is to be as "projection" toward the future, with the knowledge that learning occurs when what is (a current lack of knowledge) is rejected in the move to bring about a condition that is not as of yet present (future erudition as actualized potential brought about by our inquiries). Reading Sartre we are reminded that no educational program, no curriculum, no lesson, no method of pedagogy, no schema for classroom management, despite the amount of research poured into its justification is determinate, for he is adamant that that no current state of affairs (including education as a national institution) can influence the projection of our freedom, nor can any factual state "determine consciousness [*Being-for-itself*] to apprehend it as a *negatite* or as a lack" (Ibid. p. 615).

When discussing the importance of the awareness of the values we are choosing in the classroom, recall that our actions affect the lives of those around us. It is crucial to understand that in choosing our values in the present moment of action, in the *situation*, and "creating the man we want to be, there is not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be" (Sartre, 1986, p. 427). Thus, educators assume a double-responsibility when choosing values, for not only do they establish values in the present, they are simultaneously bound up with projecting these values upon others, and in an undeniable ethical sense, making a powerful normative declaration that others should assume the values they are endorsing. Here, I focus exclusively on the educator and the awareness that she is at all times modeling values for students along with embodying the collective values of the educational programs that she endorses. For if the context of the classroom represents a communal, ecumenical *fundamental project* of learning in macrocosm, the teacher must be vigilant at all times about what her choices (personal and educational) indicate about the values she is projecting onto students. This includes everything from the physical structure of the classroom's environment, the way the room is arranged, the style of instruction, the manner of assessment, to the tone and timbre of her discipline. In addition, simply the manner in which she expresses her thoughts and emotions to the students is indicative of her value system.[7] While Sartre is clear that our values are really groundless, for without God, the luminous realm of intrinsic values falls, evaporates, it is perhaps safe to say that an educator choosing and modeling an authentic existence would demonstrate the characteristics of an engaged, authentic learner, a person who genuinely functions as a co-facilitator and co-participant in the process of learning, and as such, would be of great benefit to all students.

C. What Teachers Should Know and Learn About Caring for Their Being and the Being of Students: Knowledge of Learners in an Authentic Social Community

It is the case that the authentic learner is in integral component of an authentic learning collective, whose *fundamental project* might be described in terms of a caring collective who are engaged in the ecumenical pursuit of their "destiny" as authentic learners. Caring for our own Being of that of others as a "primordial structural totality, lies before ["vor"] every factical 'attitude' and 'situation' of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori;* this means that it is always in them" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 238/193). In order to speak of a true community of learners in the Heideggerian sense must be understood as representing the authentic possibility of *Dasein,* because for Heidegger, when Dasein is readied through *Angst* and individuated for its

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[7] It is possible to make the claim, in light of what I have presented earlier in the paper, that since teachers are alienated from the authentic notion of education (curriculum) in a duplicitous sense, that the values they are modeling might not be freely chosen, and in fact, forced upon them by the social-political-economic ideological factors governing the institution of education. In short, it is the system that has stripped teachers of their ontological *Being-for-Itself*. However, if are to read Sartre correctly, and take his arguments about *bad faith* to their logical conclusion, to make such a claim, that one is a mere victim, or unwilling and reluctant participant in the processes of social construction, would amount to the admittance of living a life of *bad faith*. It is for this reason that I have focused on the teacher as one who is in full-ownership of her choices and the subsequent values she brings into existence and models.

authentic existence, this represents the resolute openness to the understanding that its own Being is authentic (historical) only when in community with others, and this is referred to as *Mitsein* ("Being-with"). In Heidegger's analysis of the existential-ontological structures in relation to time (temporality), he writes about *Dasein's* authentic communal achievement, or its destiny, which is "fateful Dasein," or the authentic way in which the human "exists essentially in being with Others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as destiny [*Geschick*]" (Ibid. p. 436 /384). In the classroom we are always already bound up with others in our ecumenical pursuit of learning, and to grasp the weight of this claim, Heidegger indicates that this social aspect to our Being is the center of our authentic *historicality*, and it is inextricably linked with the notion of solicitous care and temporality. The care of a solicitous nature manifests in the environment of the classroom, where the student's freedom is embraced and she is given space for both personal and communal growth within an environment that strives to assure that her own most *potential-for-Being* becomes as reality in communion with Others.

Learning in community, learning within an intimate social context, is essential to an authentic education, and we return to Heidegger who indicates that the bond between the teachers and taught represents the primordial relationship wherein *Dasein* is in tune with its own Being in communion with the Being of the other (soul to soul, as it were, in the Platonic ideal of *paideia*), which allows learning to be *as* authentic learning. Importantly, each student brings to the learning context (as *having-been*) a vast store of knowledge and personal experience, which holds the potential to make a valuable *futural* contribution to the communal learning. Communal learning, in an atmosphere of solicitous care unfolds through a process of knowledge construction, where the view to knowledge is primarily one of a *procedural* nature, especially when dealing with the humanities, art, music, and the like. There is at once care for the communal archive of knowledge developing as a collective in the classroom, and care for the student's individual store of knowledge, as related to her own unique possibilities of existence, which grow and evolve in community with others who are also demonstrating a like-minded sense of care. Meaning is constructed within a shared horizon of learning wherein students' interpretations are composed of clusters of interpretations, and individual interpretations develop along with, and indeed because of, those with whom the student participates with in the process of learning. The communal character of learning, where knowledge emerges through the arduous but respectful process of accepting rejecting, refining validating and honing various interpretations that are offered up for debate, nurtures the students' problem-solving abilities through a process of self-discovery grounded in communicative discourse, or "conversation".

Simply put, students are engaged in the community of learning because their Being and the Being of others is an issue, and we might imagine the classroom embodying what Heidegger (2004) refers to as the "originary community," which represents *Dasein's* authentic dwelling in the world with others, its authentic destiny, which manifests as a possibility because of the way Dasein is grounded in the world as *Care*. There is a true sense of belonging in such an environment embracing "heritage" and students are beholden to the learning because the classroom or learning community is, "through each individual bound up in advance to something that binds and determines each individual by exceeding them," and what they are bound in advance to is the common, ecumenical goal of authentic learning as the authentic destining of both students and educators; authentic learning may be likened to the process of *historizing,* where what is given as heritage is taken up in "repetition" by the students and creatively interpreted anew, in relation to their unique and distinct *potentiality-for-Being* (p. 74). As related to Heidegger's fundamental ontology, in addition to foreknowledge, the student also brings a diverse cultural background to the learning context, which has been given over to her in advance through her unique heritage, as a member of a family, community, and most importantly, a person with a distinct, and unalterable, culture ground. This authentic aspect of our Being, as *Being-with,* must not be overlooked, and functions as a valuable and indispensable contributory aspect of an authentic education, which seeks the formation of students in social contexts, welcoming diversity in learning and actively embracing the social, cultural, and linguistic background of students because these elements are inherent to their *Being-in-the-world* with a "heritage".

Solicitude, according to Heidegger (1968), has two distinct forms, an inauthentic manifestation, wherein "it can, as it were, take away 'care' from the Other and put itself in his position in concern: it can *leap in* for him" (p. 158/122). When this form of solicitude manifests in education we have an example of learning that is devoid of authentic care. Drawing on Heidegger, this taking away of the other's care might

manifest in several ways in the classroom: First, in the form of a domineering educator, who assumes that students are inferior, and secondly, in the form of a dotingly overbearing teacher, one who may be good-hearted and well-intentioned, but is adverse to witnessing students struggling and is all too eager to step in at the most inopportune moments. Ultimately, she becomes an enabler to students who are dependent on her for their learning. In both cases, Heidegger indicates that was is actually occurring is that when we are "dominated" or "dependent," the notion of solicitous care degenerates into the type of concern we show objects, and "pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand" (p. 158/122). The authentic manifestation of care is described by Heidegger as

> a kind of solicitude that does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him [ihm *vorausspringt*] in his existential potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his care but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time, This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a "*what*" with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care and become free for it (Ibid. p. 159/122).

Dwyer, Prior, & Shargel (1988), writing on Heidegger, authenticity, and education present an accurate interpretation of how care might manifest in the act of teaching as the solicitous concern for the Being of students as essential learners. The authors suggest that this latter instance of authentic care is enacted by teachers who, "rather than doing the work for the students, leaps ahead and prepares the way for them" (p. 147). Students should be given encouragement as they work through formulating their own answers and solutions to learning quandaries, in a moment of anticipation, as related to *fore-knowing* as previously introduced in relation to *Paideia,* the authentic teacher "should anticipate the obstacles to be encountered and, rather than remove, help the students to find what is necessary for them to overcome such problems themselves" (Ibid. p. 147).

4. Concluding Remarks: On the Potential *Transformative* Value of Phenomenological Insight for Education

As stated at the outset, I believe that ontological insight into the human and education holds the potential to enrich professional development and improve the quality of our teaching and teacher education programs. However, there is resistance to the positive contribution that the type of theorizing represented in this essay might make to education, and this occurs along two lines: First, practitioners are wary of academics or curriculum scholars, at a remove from the day-to-day operations of the "lived classroom," who are writing on educational issues from the abstract heights of the university, speculating on educational reform by means of abstruse, impenetrable jargon. Secondly, education policy makers are wary of the potential application of such philosophical theorizing because it does not live on the epistemological plane of quantitative research associated with the "bureaucratic rational choice model," which forms the foundation of what policy makers prefer to reference. Apple (2004) traces this propensity to resist philosophical methodology in educational policy making to the overarching anti-theoretical and anti-intellectual tendencies in the United States. For Apple, resistance is centered around the tradition of "aristocratic culture," which is underdeveloped in the United States, and in general, there is disdain for what might be termed "elitism," which means that "theoretically complex apparatuses like the kinds of ways of looking at the politics of education and curriculum that requires a great deal of discipline and study are actually seen as simply 'mere theory'" of an impotent, vacuous nature, which is of no practical (or pragmatic) value in the day-to-day happenings of our schools (p. 185).

Dall 'Alba (2008) argues along similar lines, stating that such descriptions that take us into the ontological grounds of the human Being in education are viewed pejoratively as abstruse, metaphysical speculation, and often "goes unacknowledged in theorizing and practicing relating to higher educational programs" (p. 42). Clearly, one reason for the "anti-theoretical" attitude toward such philosophizing is the difficulty in adequately justifying it by means of traditional epistemological models, and like much of phenomenology it is subjected to the charge of epistemological subjectivism, or worse, relegated to theoretical scrapheap of obscurantism because it is untenable. However, as Morris (2005) argues, the charge

of subjectivism and obscurantism leveled at the phenomenology is itself untenable as critique. Admittedly, there is no way in which to provide categorical objective verification for its claims because they emerge from descriptions of the lived experiences portrayed. However, this is not to indicate that these descriptions are limited to subjective ruminations occurring within the interior consciousness of an isolated ego to which readers have no legitimate epistemic access. Rather, in a manner unique to phenomenology, readers are "meant to *recognize* something in this description, a recognition which may be manifested in our spontaneity of relating" the descriptions contained within the work to our own world and occasions where we have had similar, if not identical, experiences (p. 29). Morris goes on to add, that far from phenomenological "descriptions being untestable, we might say that our recognition is a *criterion of correctness* for a phenomenological description" (Ibid. p. 29).

In the educational research of Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1994), the "criterion of correctness" of which Morris writes extends beyond validation through recognition, and serves as testimony to the *authenticity* of all that is revealed through the phenomenological lens, which captures "the essence and resonance of the actors' experience and perspective through the details of fiction and thought revealed in context" (p. 12). The authors, in line with the purpose of this essay and the method(s) of *epoche* and *eidetic reduction,* writing on "portraiture" as a methodological tool for conducting qualitative research, which is "framed by the traditions and values of the phenomenological paradigm," express identical concerns with revealing and discovering "resonant universal themes" (pp. 13-14). As was my concern, I sought to highlight the universal themes of ontology and the invariant structures grounding our existence and the enactment of our authentic modes of teaching and learning. However, it must be noted that the alternative paradigm for approaching education that I chose does not represent, despite the fundamental, ontological nature of the discussion, the entire picture of what authentic education should be. For as Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis rightly point out, researchers must always recognize their limitations, and their "inability to capture and present a total reality," and thus our purposes must not be "complete and full representation, but rather the selection of some aspect of – or angle on – reality that would transform our vision of the whole" (Ibid. p. 5).

Thus, I have attempted throughout is to present an aspect of or view to education that is not readily available to research methods grounded in traditional empirical quantitative methods, in order to reveal, or tease out, an alternative vision of education as related to the question of the Being, or essence, of authentic education, which might lead to a transfigured vision of teaching and learning – contributing to a renewed, invigorated *vision of the whole.* Although working from the critique of the standardization of education and professional development, I have refrained from compiling a list of new and improved standards and practices for teacher training, or specific directives aimed at more efficient professional development, which are grounded in the above existential-ontological analysis; for to produce yet another rigorously outlined program of education is counter-productive to the meditative aims of this essay.[8] Rather, focused on the forgotten ontological aspects of learning, I have attempted to speculate on ways in which teacher education might inspire a move beyond the inauthentic constraints and limitations of the standards imposed on both teacher education programs and the public schools' curriculum.

My goal has been to challenge, by presenting an alternative perspective to, the *professionalization agenda* in teacher education and the bureaucratic policies endorsing "high stakes testing" in our schools. Teachers need to approach education in terms of a multi-faceted endeavor, which includes the crucial concern with the question concerning the existential-ontological grounds of our existence. If we allow our experience of education as described herein to manifest in terms of the unfolding of the authentic Being of teachers and learners in community, if educators resonate with the ontological descriptions of education inspired by the philosophies of Sartre and Heidegger, teachers and students alike might feel empowered to transcend the

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[8] Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) deal with indispensable issues concerning learning and instruction, e.g., what should be taught, why it is important, how this knowledge should be organized, who learns, how, and why, what kinds of classroom, school, and school-community environments enhance learning (p. 41). It would be irresponsible and do great harm to our students to remain skeptical of the effectiveness of such research, or, like those endorsing the *professionalization* agenda in teacher training, to simply dismiss out of hand the direct and positive effect that such learning-teaching strategies for educators are having in many classrooms. It was not my purpose to critique specifically the various strategies offered by those working in teacher development, but rather to suggest, through philosophical analysis, an alternative way in which to perhaps better and more thoroughly understand the complexities of teaching and learning.

alienated state of education within which they find themselves. Much like a work of art, this essay sought to inspire in the reader a "transformative experience," functioning in such a way that the "ability to think and see might generally be altered" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 2004, pp. 35). This would allow us to raise the "reflective glass," or clarifying lens of our lived, existential experiences of education, in order that we might freely *choose to choose our world, and ourselves* and authentically "shape our lives, pedagogy, and institutions" (Ibid. p. 36).

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