

Teacher Authenticity: a Theoretical and Empirical Investigation

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BOSTON COLLEGE

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Teacher Education, Special Education, and Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction

TEACHER AUTHENTICITY: A THEORETICAL and EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

Dissertation
by

PAUL N. AKOURY

submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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By Paul N. Akoury

Lillie Richardson Albert, Ph.D., Chair

Abstract

This study builds on a small, under-acknowledged body of educational works that speak to the problem of an overly technical focus on teaching, which negates a more authentic consideration of what it means to teach, including an exploration of the spiritual and moral dimensions. A need for educational change and the teacher's authentic way of being are presented as the basis for the primary research question: "What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?" The study consists of two equally intensive parts, i.e., a theoretical and empirical investigation. The theoretical developed a framework on authenticity, drawing from the Buddhist and Christian theological traditions; the Twentieth Century philosophical writings of Buber and Heidegger; and the in-depth review of conceptual and empirical educational literature. This framework supported the empirical design, which was a phenomenological study of six teachers in a small Catholic urban K-8 school. An empirical framework on authenticity evolved through the data analysis. Ultimately, the theoretical and empirical parts were integrated into a comprehensive framework on teacher authenticity, defined as follows: *Teacher authenticity is a trust that, through the desire and intention to care, the teacher can awaken through teaching a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. This trust is the teacher's faith perspective, and is lived, dynamic, and iterative, which makes authenticity an ongoing process.*

A sub-question was also presented in the study: "What does it mean for the researcher to engage as an authentic learner in the research process?" The focus on the researcher as an

authentic learner presented an expanded view of reflexivity, probing deeply into the philosophical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the researcher's learning process throughout the study.

The implications of the study are presented, focusing on the professions of teaching and research, and also showing the relevance for education and society. The most impending implication pertains equally to teachers and to researchers, and emphasizes the need for professional development programs of self-learning and self-formation.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to

Naif J. and Mary B. Akoury
My parents

Gina M. Akoury
My wife

Caleb L. Akoury
My son

Dr. Lillie R. Albert
My mentor

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Chapter One: Introduction

The basic underlying problem that this study addresses is the fragmentation in educational practices among the teacher, student, and curriculum. This problem involves institutional disregard for teacher authenticity. In the next chapter, I present a working theoretical framework on authenticity, interpreting educational, philosophical, and theological bodies of literature. For now, however, I define authenticity as a deep intuitive sensing of oneself as both distinctly separate in this human body and yet deeply connected as a sacred member of this formless, relational body called humanity. I refer to this *both/and* paradox as “the between” of our deepest truth as human beings. In other words, authenticity cuts through the illusion of absolute separateness between oneself “in here,” such as the teacher or student, and the world “out there,” such as the world of subject matter in the curriculum. Instead, authenticity intuitively realizes that the teacher, student, and curriculum, although separate in appearance, always have been sustained within an underlying wholeness of deep connection. Thus, my definition of authenticity embraces the polarities of paradox: the deepest truth about human nature is *both/and*, not *either/or*.

This study focuses specifically on teacher authenticity. The deepest conviction that is underlying the study is that authentic educational change must begin deep within the hearts and souls of the teachers themselves. Palmer (1993) writes: “Institutions are projections of what goes on in the human heart. To ignore the inward sources of our educational dilemmas is only to objectify the problem – and thereby to multiply it” (p. 107). Thus, despite the critical need for, and the deep importance of, external change efforts, the secret of deep educational change lies within these inward sources. Palmer elaborates: “The transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher. Only in the heart searched and transformed by truth will

new teaching techniques and strategies for institutional change find sure grounding” (p. 107). In other words, the transformation of the teacher’s way of being is the “sure grounding” on which deeply meaningful conditions for educational change may occur in the teaching and learning process.

However, in the standards movement of recent decades, the intensive product-oriented focus on teachers presenting long lists of predetermined knowledge to students, i.e., the consumers, has been promoting an overreliance on technical knowledge in educational practices. State and federal curriculum frameworks are providing the key operational focus for many schooling contexts, regardless of whether public or private. To demonstrate the comprehensive nature of these frameworks, take for example the Massachusetts English Language Arts framework, which contains twenty-three standards, many of which are broken down into sub-standards. Third and fourth grades, for example, address sixty nine sub-standards (retrieved May 12, 2011 from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Web site: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>). Correspondingly, the prevalence of standards-based educational processes compels teachers to dispense fragments of knowledge. In turn, these processes may easily reinforce in students the belief that they are divided from the world of subject matter rather than intimately connected with it. Overemphasis on technical mastery of isolated skills and bits of inert knowledge can consequently thicken the veil over the potential for deep change.

On the other hand, this study assumes that authentic education does not depend merely on one’s ability to know math, science, technology, history, or language arts. Unequivocally, knowledge of these disciplines is necessary, and because of this, I believe that standards reform can provide a basis from which new directions in curriculum and instructional practices can be

explored. However, the critical condition of authentic education, one which standards-based reform largely overlooks, is the capacity to build, expand, apply, and integrate knowledge of the disciplines in ways that intentionally show concern for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. *If students were to explore how their lives deeply connect with the lives of many others*, as well as the world of subject matter that comprise the curriculum, then they may increasingly think, speak, and act with the care, respect, and compassionate insight that can create a healing impact in the world. However, implied in Palmer's observation is that, for students to investigate authentic ways of being, the teacher must shepherd the process. In other words, assumed is that, when teachers deliberately cultivate their own ongoing investigation into authenticity, they can be ready to nurture instructional conditions that bring forth the subtle interdependency among the teacher, student, and curriculum. Palmer (1993) writes:

If [the educational establishment] believed that knowing requires personal relation between the knower and the known, our students would be invited to learn by interacting with the world, not by viewing it from afar. The classroom would be regarded as an integral, interactive part of reality, not a place apart. The distinction between 'out there' and 'in here' would disappear; students would discover that we are in the world and the world is within us; that truth is not a statement [i.e., an assertion or a proposition] about reality but a living relationship between ourselves and the world. But such an epistemology is rarely conveyed by our teaching. (p. 35)

Nonetheless, institutional neglect in nurturing teacher authenticity is not merely an educational phenomenon. The neglect is societal, as well, if one were to view the educational establishment and society as analogous to two mirrors facing each other, mutually reflecting their images onto one another. The *conceptual categories* of education and society may easily

misdirect one to compartmentalize and to reify the two phenomena as independently fixed entities rather than as interdependent processes. However, upon reflection, one can see that the educational institution is the living and breathing process of people who are living together in society, i.e., who are existing within an indeterminate network of relations that span temporally (past, present, and future) as well as spatially (local, regional, national, and international). The teacher, for example, does not walk into the classroom and shift her fundamental understanding of reality from the one that she holds outside of school. She is simultaneously an educator and a member of society. The two phenomena are inseparable.

Furthermore, once one cuts through the misperception of these classifications, the ubiquity of misperceiving our deeply connected nature becomes evident. In other words, the misperception of self “in here” and world “out there” is manifesting to some degree in many spheres of human life and activity. Still, the source of this endemic misperception is rooted not in any particular institution out there, as if our institutions were separate from us. Rather, it stems from the human habit within our personal and collective psyches to approach life with a narrow and unquestioning attitude about who we truly are. His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1999) elaborates:

[The world's] problems, both those we experience externally – such as wars, crime, [poverty] and violence – and those we experience internally – our emotional and psychological sufferings – cannot be solved until we address this underlying neglect [of realizing humanity's deep interdependence].... A revolution is called for, certainly. But not a political, economic, or even a technical revolution. We have had enough experience of these during the past century to know that a purely external approach will not suffice. What I propose is a spiritual revolution. (pp. 16-17)

In the next chapter, I elucidate spirituality as central to the authentic way of being. For now, however, societal neglect of authenticity gives the assumption of separateness all-too-easy dominion in education. The paradigm of perceiving one's deepest nature as absolutely separate from others and the world provides the root of one's ontology (view of the nature of reality), one's epistemology (view of how one comes to know reality), and one's ethic of action. Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) posit three gradual dualities – each one more subtle than the previous – to illuminate how the paradigm of a fixed and separate self can so easily manifest and be sustained without challenge. They write:

First we separate the mind/body from the environment and limit ourselves through identifying with the organism. There is then a further narrowing in which we identify with the ego-mind, that [solid and self-subsisting sense of 'I' and 'me'] to whom all experience is happening. Finally, the mind itself becomes fragmented into those aspects we identify with because they are acceptable in light of our self-image, and those we repress because they are not. (p. 188)

These dualities represent deeply ingrained habits within the human psyche. Their subtlety alludes to the difficult, ongoing work of reconciling oneself with one's interconnected nature. In other words, the habitual yet perhaps often unacknowledged struggle within each of us to sustain and protect the false sense of an independently fixed self will not acquiesce lightly to a total shift of paradigms. Therefore, authenticity – that is, the recognition of the sacredness of self, other, and world with the understanding that all three are not as separate as they appear – demands diligence and patience as we embark upon the work of reconciling ourselves with who we truly are. I expound this theme in the second chapter. For now, however, the increasingly subtle yet profound process of individuation and reification that occurs between the subject and object, the

self and experience, the conscious and unconscious mind, is the hidden force beneath the dominion of perceived separateness. The implication is that fragmentation “out there” in society and in schools is merely the mirror reflection of this individuation and reification within ourselves, since, as I suggested earlier, society and education are indeterminate, mutual networks of relational processes that span across time and space.

Moreover, the prevalence of the perception of separateness leads to consequences that, upon reflection, may be viewed as immoral and unacceptable, since these consequences may endanger one’s own well-being as well as that of others. Following Osama Bin Laden’s death, for example, I observed that many Americans on television were reacting with self-righteous indignation, chanting “USA...USA,” and “Revenge is ours.” However, on September 11, 2001, many Americans may recall seeing disturbing images on the television of Muslims who were celebrating in the streets. I believe that the striking similarity between the two sets of reactions to these events is disconcerting. Rather than rise above hatred upon hearing the news of Bin Laden’s death, many Americans blindly do justice to his agenda by watering the seeds of hatred in themselves. Makransky (2007) writes:

Too often one person’s mindless hatred evokes our hatred in response, our own inner evil. And rather than acknowledge the fact that we are succumbing to the very evil we oppose, we indulge the self-deception by insisting that the evil in us is the way to confront evil. (p. 128)

Habits of reducing the richly immense complexity of human beings to simple divisions of “we versus they,” and “good versus evil,” may be understood as the hidden curriculum of the paradigm of separateness. Therefore, urgency arises to address the critical need to cultivate the authenticity that sees through the illusion of separateness between self, other, and object of

study. Without the ongoing work of shifting paradigms from rugged independence to mutuality and interdependence, implied is that future generations may indeed become highly adept with the inordinate sophistication of new technologies, while their illiteracy of deep connectivity may invoke catastrophes. J. Robert Oppenheimer (as cited in Palmer, 1993), the director of the Manhattan Project, which created the atomic bomb, said on the day after the first successful test:

To feel it's there in your hands – to release the energy that fuels the stars. To let it do your bidding. To perform these miracles – to lift a million tons of rock into the sky. It's something that gives people *an illusion of illimitable power*. I would say – this [is] what you might call *technical arrogance* that overcomes people when they see what they can do with their minds. [Italics added] (p. 1)

Nearly seven decades later, countries now have the nuclear capacity to destroy the world many times over. However, technical arrogance, which lacks recognition of the connection among others' well-being, the world's, and one's own, occurs not only in science but also in many other sectors of society. Examples abound in economics and politics. Technical arrogance is inevitable when the developments and uses of knowledge in a particular field disregard deliberate, ongoing concern for the implications of how such developments and uses may impact people's well-being. For example, Kaku (2011), interpreting interviews with over three hundred scientists, predicts developments in technology and science that, although seemingly outlandish today, may become an unsettling reality by the end of this century:

Doctors will be able to grow 'spare parts' for our organs as they wear out.... Chips, costing less than a penny apiece, will be hidden by the millions in the environment, and we will be able to command these hidden computers telepathically.... Cars will be driverless...and will also fly (finally!) by floating on a cushion of magnetism.... The robot

industry will dwarf the size of the current automobile industry.... Genetic engineering will allow us to create ‘designer children,’ so parents can choose the physical (and perhaps even intellectual) characteristics of their children. (pp. 44-45)

Disregarding thoughtful and deep deliberations on the implications of potential developments such as these is the alarming consequence of technical arrogance, which waters its roots in the paradigm of separateness. Implied is that separateness, which deadens one’s awareness of the underlying interdependence of human nature, may seductively lead to the “illusion of illimitable power” and, in turn, may diminish one’s moral responsibility while strengthening competition that seeks to divide and conquer in matters that are political, economical, social, environmental... educational! The word “illusion” suggests a contradiction with how things really are, i.e., interdependent. One might perceive the illusion as analogous to a body of broken bones. Broken bones hurt. On the one hand, the physical pain of broken bones is clearly noticeable. On the other hand, the “existential pain” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 174) of separateness may be so pervasive, and therefore so subtle, that it may deaden one’s sense of human birthright as a contributor to the infinite complexity of the world, as well as a healing participant who is endowed with the world’s holy mystery. H.H. the Dalai Lama (1999) writes:

Modern industrial society often strikes me as being like a huge self-propelled machine. Instead of human beings in charge, each individual is a tiny, insignificant component with no choice but to move when the machine moves. (p. 8)

On the one hand, the standards movement of recent decades, with its excessive focus on long lists of information in each subject area, formulaic scope and sequence approaches, and high-stakes accountability may, in some ways, be helping to recondition seeds of technical arrogance, i.e., seeds that may inevitably blossom in society. However, when one understands

one's life as deeply connected with the lives of countless others, one's sense of self is redefined in its intrinsic relation to others, which in turn helps motivate actions of care, concern, and compassion, rather than greed, hatred, and envy. In turn, any aspect of the educational process that deliberately supports the exploration of teacher authenticity may implicitly yet significantly lead toward alleviating suffering while generating possibility for deeply healing movement in the world.

If, indeed, separateness in society and separateness in education are mirror images of each other (i.e., because of the fundamental interconnection between these two phenomena), then schools inevitably are influencing as well as being influenced by society, which, in turn, engenders a hopeful predicament. The mutuality entrusts schools by nature with the potential to serve as conduits for societal change. Unequivocally, the millions of children in schools today will become the adult citizens of tomorrow's world. As technologies make widespread communication more accessible and multifaceted, these children may become future diplomats whose purpose is to use their knowledge to generate peace and harmony – *provided that education has cultivated this sense of lived purpose within them*. Undeniably, improvements in pedagogical practices across the curriculum, as well as providing teachers additional instructional supports for diverse populations, such as English language learners, are necessary. Yet, to reiterate the deepest conviction that is underlying this study, the core of profound educational change abides in the boundless resourcefulness, creativity, and wisdom of teachers themselves. Therefore, the need to understand what it means to be an authentic teacher is timely and urgent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore what it means to be an authentic teacher. The phenomenon under investigation is authenticity, and the medium through which I study the phenomenon is the teachers' experiences and reflections. Thus, the primary research design is phenomenology, which is the exploration of the content and form – i.e., the meaning and structure – of one's lived experiences (Creswell, 1998, p. 51; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 7). More specifically, the purpose is to investigate how teachers experience authenticity in their teaching lives; to examine their implied conceptions as well as their intuitions about authenticity; and to thread together their perceptions and understandings in order to clarify what it means to be an authentic teacher. The result will be a descriptive and detailed analysis that suggests the underlying themes and structures of, on the one hand, how teachers might already be experiencing, recognizing, and understanding authenticity in their teaching lives, and on the other hand, how teachers might deepen their reflections on authenticity and perceive new possibilities for becoming authentic as teachers.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, for now I am defining authenticity as deeply intuiting the sacred space in which teacher, student, and world of subject matter (as reflected in the curriculum) exist both as distinctly separate in form and yet deeply connected through an underlying wholeness. In the next two chapters, I comprehensively interpret educational, philosophical, and theological bodies of literature to construct a working theoretical framework on authenticity that provides a scaffold for the research methodology, which in turn supports the purpose of this research.

Research Questions

The research questions are embraced by three key beliefs that support my vision for investigating teacher authenticity. First, I need to draw on philosophical and theological resources to clarify authentic being; second, in light of these resources, I need to draw on educational resources, including empirical and conceptual literature as well as teachers themselves, to clarify authentic teaching; third, I need to research ways in which authenticity occurs in the lives of teachers as well as ways that may further promote and empower authenticity in their teaching.

With these three beliefs, the overarching question for this empirical study becomes: What does it mean to be an authentic teacher? Two sub-questions support the overarching question:

1. How do teachers understand and experience authenticity in their teaching lives? For example:
 - a. What is authentic about the teacher's understanding and experience?
 - b. What does this suggest about the teacher's quality of being?
 - c. What clusters of themes (i.e., conditions/ways of being) account for teacher authenticity?
 - d. What is the essence of teacher authenticity?
2. What does it mean for the researcher to engage as an authentic learner in the research process?

With the first sub-question, several points need clarification. First, with Creswell's (1998, p. 102) suggestion, this question foreshadows steps in the data analysis, explained in the fourth chapter. In addition, this question makes an assumption about the teacher's implicit

understanding, which is that, for teachers to deliberate on authenticity, they must already know, to some degree, what it means to be authentic. Creswell (1998) makes a similar point, with regard to a study on caring and noncaring interactions. He writes: “Each subject, in order to explicitly realize and describe the caring and noncaring interaction, had to be already living an understanding of the meanings of caring and noncaring” (p. 292).

This implication subtly speaks to a paradox. The introduction presented the paradigm of perceived separateness as being habitually ingrained in society and education; however, to reduce infinite moments and subtle understandings in teachers’ lives to an abstraction makes the sub-question moot. Implied would be that perceived separateness is the only mode of actuality and possibility in which the teacher can think, speak, and act. David Bohm (1986) clarifies this point:

It’s only large masses of things which obey the simple mechanical laws, just as only large masses of human beings obey simple statistical rules [or societal patterns]. Individually they are far more subtle [and complex]. (p. 110)

Therefore, several additional assumptions now become explicit. Although ingrained patterns of perceived separateness exist mutually in society and education, “ingrained” does not mean instantiated essence or reified substance; rather, it implies the prevalence of an inauthentic mode that is occurring, within which authentic modes are also occurring. In other words, the assumption is that teachers are far more subtle and complex than the institutional culture acknowledges in its attempt to fixate an illusion of perceived separateness. Another assumption is that that subtleties and complexities of teachers’ lives can reveal glimpses of authenticity, which therefore warrants this systematic investigation.

It should be noted that this sub-question is supported by a scaffolded experience, which is explained in the methodology chapter. The “scaffolded experience,” defined as a deliberate support within the research design to deepen reflection, assumes that the educational establishment has been neglectful in nourishing teacher explorations into authenticity. The methodology chapter further expounds the purpose and presents the selection of the scaffolding tools, in particular Caldecott books, i.e., award-winning picture books in children’s literature. The development and implementation of scaffolding tools, including an analytic rubric to identify Caldecott exemplars of authenticity, are also explained.

The second sub-question may appear unusual, since it focuses on the researcher’s authenticity. The underlying logic is as follows: My personal and professional history represents an ongoing effort to explore the deeply felt question: “What does it mean to be an authentic human being?” This theme is elucidated in the next section on positionality. This dissertation study creates an opening to deepen this path of personal growth and self-discovery. Although I appear as a researcher, more accurately, I am always first a person who happens to be metaphorically wearing the clothing of researcher.

Therefore, the topic under investigation compels me to reflect on what it means to engage in and experience an authentic process as a researcher. My self-reflections explore questions such as the following: How might this study teach me about what it means to be authentic? How do I open myself more fully to encountering the teacher as a person who happens to be teaching, rather than as teacher who is an object of my research study? Where are the struggles and successes in my own process to listen deeply?

Positionality

This section clarifies two deeply held beliefs that I bring with me to the current study. My intention here is not to justify or to challenge these beliefs but rather to present them along with a brief explanation of the personal and professional experiences that have helped to shape them. After presenting these beliefs, I connect them as the building block for my fundamental belief that teacher authenticity is the primary locus of authentic educational reform.

Two deeply held beliefs.

First, I believe that who I am influences what I study. I base this belief on the emerging realization that the question, “What does it mean to be authentic?” has been the underlying theme in my evolution as an educator. For example, two decades ago, I studied music at a well-established fine arts college. Intuitively, I knew that music was not my real reason for being there, but I was unable to name my authentic purpose. When I shifted from music to become an elementary school teacher, I began to explore music, as well as visual arts, drama, and dance within the regular classroom curriculum. Again, my intuitions suggested more than merely supplementing the academic curriculum for my first graders. In effect, I could sense the same underlying theme from my earlier musical experiences.

Moreover, early in my doctoral program, I re-entered the classroom to conduct an independent yearlong study. The underlying theme began to name itself in my awareness: “interdependency.” For example, I constructed a classroom schema that became a vital tool in working with my students to build a respectful and caring interdependent community. This schema resonated with my reflections about my earlier musical experiences as well as the kind of

artistic awareness that I desired to cultivate. After the yearlong study, I then pursued philosophical and theological coursework. In particular, my examinations of Buddhist and Heideggerian philosophies brought me closer to naming what appears to be most deeply significant to me as an educator: authenticity.

Thus, the underlying theme has been the question, “What does it mean to be authentic?” I call this theme my “ontological” question, i.e., the question that matters most deeply to me. In turn, the main research question, “What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?” represents an outgrowth of this ontological question. Therefore, I believe that the research question is somewhat autobiographical. In other words, who I am influences what I study.

Second, I believe that the educational establishment has been and continues to be an ideological conduit, within an individualistic society, for the paradigm of separateness. However, I believe that no institutional climate can completely dissolve ontological questions, i.e., questions that matter most deeply to people. For example, as a K-12 student roughly three decades ago, I felt “dumbed down” by an institutional milieu that embraced individualism, fragmentation, and competition. A low class rank along with average-to-poor grades, and a tracking system that categorized me as “mediocre,” conditioned in me a somewhat marginalizing view about teaching and learning. In fact, for this reason, I decided to enter teaching, i.e., to counter the marginalizing view from happening with my young students.

In teaching, I struggled with demeaning “efficiency” modes of classroom curriculum and assessment. However, despite the gradual rise of standards reform and high stakes accountability, and the corresponding pressures on schools to perform within a politically ominous environment, the ontological question within me did not diminish. In fact, there were colleagues who helped me to cultivate the question. Examples include the art teacher who, early

in my teaching career, helped me to see beyond worksheets; the principal who frequently joined my classroom to participate in respectful and caring dialogues with me and the students; and the literacy teacher whose empathetic conversations inspired in me the shared sense of enthusiasm and purpose for why we were teaching.

The fundamental building block.

These previously stated beliefs affect my understanding as an educator, but also my positionality as the researcher for this study. First, I approach the research with the belief that teachers have their own ontological questions of deep personal truth and meaning to manifest and explore. Second, I believe that the ongoing institutional milieu of efficiency may distract the teacher's focus, sometimes incurring burnout; yet even burnout may represent the teacher's intuiting of an ontological question that has been neglected by the educational institution. From these two beliefs, I interpret the fundamental assumption of the current study. In other words, I assume that, to create transformative instructional change, educational reform efforts must acknowledge, touch, and cultivate the questions that matter most to teachers. Palmer (1999) makes the point while manifesting in inspiring prose the fundamental building block from which I proceed with this study. He writes:

We become teachers for reasons of the heart./ But many of us lose heart as time goes by./
How can we take heart, alone and together,/ So we can give heart to our students and our
world,/ Which is what good teachers do? (p. 10)

Significance of the Study

Discussions on educational policy and practice tend to marginalize the development of teacher authenticity. On the one hand, the *both/and* paradox of authenticity implies strong undercurrents of spirituality and morality. In other words, authenticity suggests uniquely personal ways of being that express, evoke, and recall the underlying wholeness of one's human nature, i.e., the *both/and* paradox of wholeness and separateness, which is central in the working theoretical framework. However, while there is tremendously significant work that educators are accomplishing conceptually and empirically on authenticity in teacher development, *the body of work remains largely underdeveloped in relation to the prevalent discourses on policies and practices for teachers*. The third chapter comprehensively addresses this small yet significant body of educational work. For now, however, there is an identified and unequivocal need to support teacher authenticity (e.g., see Belousa, 2005, p. 14; Cummings, Harlow, & Maddux, 2007, pp. 70-71; Doring, 1997, p. 50; Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009, p. 16; Fraser, 2007, p. 290; Kreber, McCune, & Klampfleitner, 2010, pp. 383; Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt, 2007, p. 27; Malm, 2008, p. 375; Marshall, 2009, p. 28; Sanger, 2008, p. 174; Starratt & Guare, 1995, p. 196).

Moreover, as implied in the previous introduction, although many schools propose social justice as their mission, the push for standards-driven reform, which is technocratic and administrative in nature, narrows the pursuit of these missions. Palmer (2008) writes: "Our institutions too often become the worst enemies of their own missions, in part because they operate on signals from another planet" (p. 12). Thus, to contextualize the significance of this

study, some background on prevalent trends in educational reform may help to illuminate why the topic of teacher authenticity may easily be disregarded.

Prevalent trends in educational reform.

In the late 1990s, and since the 2001 reissuing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (i.e., No Child Left Behind), much of the emphasis in educational reform has been to build systemic coherence and alignment within and among schools (Elmore 2000, 2002; Fullan, 2003, 2005; Hightower & McLaughlin, 2005; Kronley & Handley, 2003; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Togneri, 2003). In fact, for three years, I observed comprehensive systemwide reform through my work with an educational non-profit organization, which had been partnering with a mid-sized Massachusetts urban school district (e.g., see Akoury & Walker, 2006). Moreover, sustained focus and investment on comprehensive systemic improvements is evident in the signing of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which is allocating \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund (retrieved May 14, 2011 from the U.S. Department of Education web site: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>). This federal initiative is providing funding to states through competitive federal grant processes. In turn, state-selected school districts (through competitive statewide grant processes) partner closely with local educational agencies (LEAs) to implement accelerated comprehensive change agendas that:

Achieve significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and [that] implement ambitious plans in core educational reform areas, [such as] adopting

standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy, [as well as] building data systems that measure student growth and success and [that] inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. (Retrieved May 14, 2011 from the U.S. Department of Education web site: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>)

Thus, the bottom line in national educational improvement is “substantial gains in student achievement” on standardized tests. The assumption is that these gains, directly or indirectly, lead to efficacy in other measurable outcomes (e.g., high school graduation, college matriculation). Consequently, the prevailing perspective on teacher quality and teacher knowledge, and from there, the coordination of professional development, appear to function with the assumption that the outcome of education is to prepare students “to succeed in college and the workplace.” However, the juxtaposed outcome is to attain and sustain vibrancy in the marketplace, i.e., “to compete in the global economy.” Implied in these improvement efforts – even if not consciously recognized or understood by the educational policymakers – is that success in college and the workplace are the aims by which an educational system may realize its core value, i.e., competition, which may be euphemistic for other terms, such as fragmentation, divisiveness, and disintegration.

In turn, these assumptions about the aims of education may translate into categorical beliefs about what constitutes effective teaching and learning. For example, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) writes: “Teacher expertise is the single most important factor in determining student achievement, and fully trained teachers are far more effective with students than those who are not prepared” (p. 12). National proposals such as this one help to frame local policies and practices on teacher development as a series of measurable

processes that support “expertise” and “full training.” In fact, the mantra of standards-based reform, i.e., “should know and be able to do,” suggests the measurability of these processes. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards uses this mantra to preface its five core propositions of accomplished teaching: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, commitment to students, management and monitoring of learning, and systematic, reflective practice (retrieved May 14, 2011 from NBPTS web site: <http://www.nbpts.org>). Furthermore, progressively diverse student populations have been creating the need to expand prevailing beliefs about teacher quality to include culturally relevant pedagogy. Villegas and Lucas (2002), for example, outline teaching strands such as being socioculturally conscious, having affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, and knowing about the lives of students. However, within these discourses about teacher quality and knowledge bases, the focus remains on what teachers can know and do (often “measurably”) for students. On the other hand, the assumption that underlies this study is that teachers must deepen their knowledge of the most primary content, i.e., themselves, in order to give authentically of themselves in their teaching approaches with students, including culturally diverse populations. Palmer (1999) suggests the implications and effects of teacher development that overlooks authenticity. He writes:

I was taught the history of the Holocaust at some of the best public and private schools.... My teachers – who taught only the objective facts without attention to the subjective self – distanced me from the murderous realities of the Third Reich, leaving me more ignorant, more ethically impaired, more spiritually disconnected than authentic education should.... Because my [personal] story was not taken seriously, I failed to learn [that] I have within myself a ‘little Hitler,’ a force of darkness that will try to kill you off when the difference between you and me becomes so great that it may challenge my conception

of reality. I will not kill you with a gun or a gas chamber, but with a word, a category, a dismissal that renders you irrelevant to my life. (pp. 9-10)

Thus, this brief sketch about prevalent trends, as well as the banality that may occur, as Palmer implies, when education fails to support teachers in their “human quest for connectedness” (Palmer, 1999, p. 8), speak to the need for this study. More specifically, this study will contribute to the educational field by expanding the significant but relatively small body of work on authenticity in teacher growth and development. In addition, along with this small corpus of existing work, the current study will help to raise awareness in discourses on educational policy and practice about, perhaps, the most generative space for impacting deep educational change, i.e., the teacher’s way of being. Lastly, my hope is that the study will be personally significant and useful to the participants, that is, as they enter a space in which to reflect explicitly on authenticity.

Chapter Two: Philosophical and Theological Literature Review

The next two chapters represent an integrated focus, which is to delineate a working theoretical framework on authenticity to support this study. The current chapter reviews the philosophical and theological literature on authenticity; the next chapter reviews the educational literature on authenticity, i.e., both conceptual and empirical. In the “interpretive summary” following these reviews, I describe how the educational, philosophical, and theological literature cumulatively form an integrated and meaningful basis for the development of my research methodology.

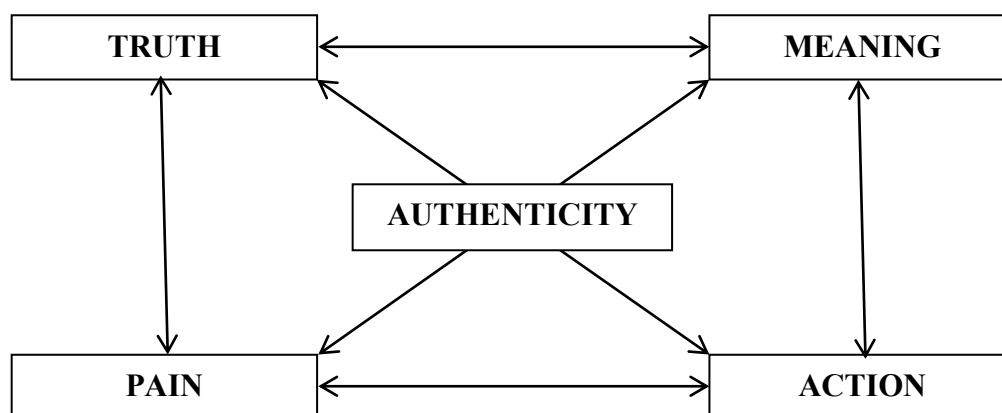
The literature that supports this integrated focus emerges from several sources. For the current chapter, I draw from my coursework in philosophy and theology: (a) Education of Christians, (b) Heidegger’s Concept of Truth, (c) Meditation Theory, Activism and Social Service, (d) Philosophy of Existentialism, and (e) Psychotherapy and Spirituality. I include the required and suggested course readings, as well as relevant supplements, such as an interesting citation. I also include personalized suggestions from meetings with course professors, as well as interesting insights that developed from these meetings.

For the conceptual and empirical reviews of the next chapter, I draw from four databases: Education Research Complete, Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR. I detail the parameters and decisions of my literature search when I introduce these reviews. In general, however, I focus on teacher development and authenticity, which includes spirituality and morality, i.e., I assume that one’s authentic nature involves spiritual longing for wholeness, and that spirituality has moral implications for how one chooses to act. I outline the themes for the conceptual and empirical literature when I introduce the review in the next chapter.

Furthermore, throughout these reviews, I include page numbers when paraphrasing or referencing ideas from a single source or from multiple sources. My decision is twofold: (a) The American Psychological Association (2006) encourages authors to engage in this practice (p. 121), and (b) I feel a sense of scholarly accountability to the reader with regard to the accuracy of my interpretations. If the reader wants to cross-check an interpretation or to follow-up on a relevant passage, then including the page numbers facilitates the task.

Regarding this chapter, Figure 2.1 provides a thematic schema for the philosophical and theological literature review. This review begins with establishing a working definition of authenticity. Then, I delineate the implications of this definition through four thematic clusters: (a) truth, (b) meaning, (c) existential pain, and (d) action. The bi-directional arrows indicate the interdependency of this thematic schema.

Figure 2.1
Thematic Schema of the Philosophical and Theological Review



Defining Authenticity

In the previous chapter, I defined authenticity as a deeply felt sense of oneself as both distinctly separate in this human body and yet undivided, because so deeply connected to one another and the world by an underlying wholeness. I refer to this *both/and* paradox as “the

between” of our deepest truth as human beings. However, with ordinary, everyday understanding, which is the inauthentic mode of seeing, one misses the between and therefore does not recognize the sacredness of life that is ever-present to oneself in each moment. The inauthentic mode does not see through the duality of subject and object, and therefore reifies, fragments, and reduces oneself, others, and the world, often believing as if the duality between subject and object were our deepest truth. To clarify the distinction between authentic and inauthentic, imagine the analogy of being at the movies. The images on the screen are distinct and always changing, such as the world of form. Yet the screen, which is inseparable from the images, is formless, still, and whole. The inauthentic mode focuses on the images only, while the authentic mode recognizes the images but also cuts through them and realizes the inseparable wholeness that always has been holding them all.

In this section, I explore this theme first by examining the views of two ancient wisdom traditions: Christianity and Buddhism. I then continue the exploration by examining the views of two prominent Twentieth Century philosophers: Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber. Table 2.1 summarizes authenticity according to each of these views.

Table 2.1
Summary of Philosophical and Theological Definitions of Authenticity

	Authentic Mode of Seeing	Description	Inauthentic Mode of Seeing
Christianity	Sacramental vision	Seeing God's presence in the world	Original sin
	Beatific vision	Seeing the world as God sees the world	
Buddhism	Pure perception	Seeing the buddha nature in beings	Impure perception: i.e., ignorance
Heidegger	Giving thanks, i.e., gratitude	Taking to heart the sacredness of the world's mystery	Thanklessness
Buber	Speaking the basic word I-Thou	Seeing the Spirit in form	Speaking the basic word I-It

Christianity

Christianity has a twofold characterization of authenticity: sacramental vision and beatific vision. Sacramental vision is the experience of seeing the mystery of God's grace in some part of God's creation (Himes, 1995, p. 113; personal communication, 10.20.10). Take for example the parent who looks directly into her baby's eyes and spontaneously senses God's mystery illuminating in and through the baby's presence. God's mystery is the intimacy of the middle, i.e., "the between," that joins the mother and baby in unconditional union. Himes writes: "'God' is closer to being a verb than a noun. 'God' is what is done, not the one who does it, nor the one to whom it is done. God is the doing, the loving" (p. 17). Thus, in the act of cradling her baby in loving care, the mother senses God's loving presence. She has sacramental vision.

Beatific Vision is the experience of seeing the world as God sees the world (Himes, 1995, p. 112; personal communication, 10.20.10). In “The Beatitudes” (Mt 5:3-10, 1978, p. 822), Jesus challenges humans to imagine what *ought to be* in the world, i.e., the glory of God’s loving mystery in all things. Jesus offers humans bread and wine as “the first installment of future glory..., the first step in the transubstantiation of all things” (Himes, p. 129). In beatific vision, for example, the homeless person on the television news is no longer an indifferent object of consumerist malaise. Instead, the person is a sacred being, disgraced by the system of economic injustice. Beatific vision, with strong ethical undertones, might mobilize one to imagine and to take action that may help to restore the integrity of the person’s sacredness in the world (Himes, pp. 138 & 142). As Merton (1961) writes:

The saints are what they are, not because their sanctity makes them admirable to others, but *because the gift of sainthood makes it possible for them to admire everybody else....*

A person becomes a saint not by the conviction that he is better than [others] but by the realization that he is one of them. [Italics in original] (p. 57)

The key distinction between sacramental and beatific vision is subtle. Sacramental vision sees what is holy, while beatific vision sees what ought to be holy but is hidden by human sin. Beatific vision, which imagines transfiguring the destiny of all things into God’s glory (Himes, 1995, p. 129), is an attitude of service to God in which one bears witness to the image of the Cross in the world. With the Cross, death as “the between” intimately bridges suffering and resurrection, i.e., unites time and eternity, as well as delivers the person to God’s grace. Thus, the Cross signifies the hope and potential for restoring temporal phenomena to their sacred origin. For example, in Matthew (1978) 25: 40, Jesus says: “[A]s you did for one of my least brothers or sisters, you did it for me” (p. 837). Sacramental vision might not compel one to envision the

“ought to be” quality. Beatific vision does. With the example above, beatific vision may invoke one to imagine the homeless person as Jesus in disguise, i.e., to imagine the world as God sees the world and in turn to act accordingly with how one sees.

Contrary to sacramental and beatific vision, original sin is the inauthentic mode of seeing. Original sin signifies one’s broken relationship with God (Himes, 1995, p. 72; Makransky, 2005, p. 292; Merton, 1961, pp. 34-35 & 48). When humans sin, “God, Who is infinite reality and in Whose sight is the being of everything that is, will say to [the sinner]: ‘I know you not’” (Merton, p. 48). In sin, humans deny and reduce the wholeness of God’s reality. To expand the earlier example, the homeowner blindly reduces the homeless person to merely a stranger or perhaps repulsive other with whom one cannot identify, thus overlooking the grace of God’s love which binds them in equal humanity.

Buddhism

In Buddhism, the authentic mode of seeing is pure perception. Pure perception is a deeply felt sense of the buddha nature (i.e., selfless nature) that is intrinsic to all beings. It recognizes “others intuitively through the wisdom and love that values each one as holy mystery, beyond the grasp of self-centered, reductive thoughts” (Makransky, 2007, p. 134). Pure perception sees the world through “egoless” eyes.

For clarity, the ego is the constellation of deeply ingrained mental habits and internalized dispositions, which have the sole agenda of strengthening and sustaining the construction of the false sense of oneself. This false self is believed to be substantially real, separate, and unchanging, as if there were a real “I” existing behind the impermanent flow of all experiences (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 27; Novak, 1984, 97; Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, pp. 116-117). On

the one hand, implied in the definition of the ego is the meaning of impure perception – i.e., ignorance – which sees the world through the reductive lens of this false self. Pure perception, instead, sees human and nonhuman beings as real and separately distinct on the relative level (that is, the level of form) while cutting-through the relative appearance of form to their ultimate nature as open and spacious: egoless (Dalai Lama, 2005a, pp. 114-119; Garfield, 1995, pp. 304, 318 & 320; Khen Rinpoche & Surya Da, 2008, pp. 50-51).

In the next theme, I address the deep interdependence between the Buddhist concepts of relative and ultimate truth. For now, pure perception is, as Buddha teaches in *The Heart Sutra*, the ability to see at once that “[f]orm is emptiness, [and] emptiness is form” (Dalai Lama, p. 60), as if we were at the theater, viewing all of the changing images and activities on stage while at the same time realizing the empty space of the stage that holds them all.

The following thought experiment may briefly illuminate the paradigm from which pure perception operates. If one were to examine the so-called “real self,” i.e., one’s ego, one could not find the self in the arm, the leg, or any body part. Nor could one point to some tangible consciousness and say, “This is the self. Here I am.” The self is empty, insubstantial (ultimate truth), and yet it exists by conceptual understanding (relative truth). In short, pure perception, that is to say, authenticity, perceives “the between” – the buddha nature – of the two inseparable truths, i.e., the relative and ultimate, while impure perception does not. The analogy is like waking from a dream (Garfield, 1995, pp. 176-177; Khen Rinpoche & Surya Das, 2008, pp. 50 & 78). Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche (2002) writes:

While dreaming, the dreamer only believes that what is dreamt is real. He is not likely to think, ‘This is all an illusion.’ Even if he were to think it, it would be very hard to simultaneously experience the dream as unreal. In exactly the same way, all that we

experience right now is illusory. But it is very difficult to have that confidence and to actually experience everything as being insubstantial and unreal. (p. 64)

Like the Christian concept of sacramental and beatific vision, the Buddhist concept of pure perception also can be understood in a twofold schema, which in turn may be broadly interpreted in relation to the Christian schema. For example, the pure perception that abides in unconditional love can be understood sacramentally in that it “knows and reverences the intrinsic sacredness of beings, their inner dignity, their buddha nature” (Makransky, 2007, p. 133). Moreover, the pure perception that abides in unconditional compassion can be understood beatifically in the sense that it is closely related to the urge to help beings be deeply freed from suffering (Makransky, p. 157). To that end, the pure perception of unconditional compassion may broadly correspond with the beatific attitude of doing God’s will. As H.H. the Dalai Lama (1996) observes, this pure perception embraces the underlying unity and equality of the whole of humanity, and compels actions that are grounded in the wisdom that all beings, including people whom we dislike, are intrinsically worthy of one’s compassion (pp. 68-69). In the fourth and fifth themes of this chapter (existential pain and authentic action), I extend these delineations of love and compassion from both Christian and Buddhist perspectives.

Martin Heidegger

Throughout parts of this literature review, I make reference to the earlier and later periods of Heidegger’s thinking. Therefore, brief clarification of these two periods is necessary. The key distinction between the two periods of his thinking involves what Heidegger calls Dasein (“dah-zine”), which means Being-there. In *Being and Time* (1962), which many consider as Heidegger’s masterpiece, and which characterizes his earlier period, Heidegger writes: “This

entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term ‘*Dasein*’ [Italics in original] (p. 27). Dasein focuses on the existential character of the human being. In “On the Essence of Truth,” Heidegger (2008) makes the shift to Dasein as the “openness of the open region” (p. 126), that is, the worlding of the world, which clears the open space for life to occur. To clarify, pretend that we are metaphorically walking through a dark, thickly wooded forest. The darkness represents the mystery of death. Then suddenly we enter a clearing of trees. The open space illuminates the region of life in which we now find ourselves. In truth, the mystery of death surrounds the illumination of life. They are two sides of the same coin, and metaphorically, our nature is the whole coin. Thus, the worlding of the world is metaphorical for the pre-conceptual wholeness of life and death in which all beings abide.

In the second and third themes of this chapter (truth and meaning), I develop these concepts in depth. For now, however, I want to emphasize several points about these earlier and later periods. First, the shift in Heidegger’s thinking in the later period is from analyzing existential structures to pondering the irreducible “mystery” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 130) of the world’s worlding, i.e., the distinction between existential inquiry and mystical inquiry. Still, this shift *by no means* indicates the move from inferior to superior phases in his thinking. In the next theme (authentic truth), for example, I examine each period of his thinking and demonstrate the richness of the earlier period as the complementary basis for the later period. In the current theme, however, I primarily draw from his later period to provide a definition of authenticity that resonates with the mystical quality of the previous definitions.

Giving Thanks.

Heidegger (1968) defines thinking in its purest sense as giving thanks for the precious gift of being (p. 141). Giving thanks arises from the space of the heart, which is the “authentic divination that is not the outer court before the gates of knowledge [but rather] is the great hall where everything that can be known is kept, concealed” (p. 207). The heart is the human capacity to sense the sacredness and preciousness of the world’s mystery. Moreover, giving thanks responds in harmony with what one senses by letting beings be, which is to say, by preserving them in their unconditional nature as gifts of the world’s mystery (1968, p. 203; 1971a, pp. 147 & 149). For example, the competitive and individualistic approach to life diminishes the appreciation and gratitude of giving thanks. Conversely, the recognition that our lives are built upon an unavoidable and inexplicable foundation of interdependency can open the heart to an attitude of reverence, care, and gratitude for one another and the world.

Thus, Heidegger (1968) writes: “[The gift of being] now suddenly emerges as a relatedness that pervades the human stay on this earth from the ground up” (p. 206). He continues, however: “[W]e have never asked where this relatedness originates.” Implied is that we as human beings, who cling to the illusion of separateness, need to step beyond the boundaries of our perceived sense of control over life, our “book” or theoretical knowledge, in order to explore the mystery of our deeply relational nature. Take for example, “The tree is brown, tall, full, or old.” The predicate is comforting because we can know and confirm it through our senses. However, remove the predicate and just say, “The tree *is*.” The habitual reliance on conceptual knowing is now rendered silent (see Heidegger, 1968, pp. 173 & 206). This example may be lightly disregarded and perhaps perceived as irrelevant within a knowledge-based society. Yet, abiding in silence is a precondition to the wonder and gratitude

that embody giving thanks. The words of the Taoist sage Lao Tzu (1988), although written many centuries ago, may inform what I am suggesting about the abiding silence of giving thanks. Lao Tzu writes:

Free from [conditioned] desire, you realize the mystery. / Caught in [conditioned] desire, you see only the manifestation.... The Tao gives birth to all beings,/ nourishes them, maintains them,/ cares for them, comforts them, protects them,/ takes them back to itself,/ *creating without possessing,/ acting without expecting,/ guiding without interfering* [i.e., letting beings be]./ That is why the love of the Tao/ is in the very nature of things. [Italics added] (pp. 1 & 51)

Imagine the parent cradling the baby in pure acceptance, melting away all conditioned concepts for the moment. Thinking most purely, the parent's open heart senses the precious, unique gift that is present in the baby's being. In turn, the parent experiences an indescribable and spontaneous feeling of thanks for this gift of the baby's existence. The parent recognizes the truth of unconditional gift and awakens to "authentic memory" (Heidegger, 1968, pp. 10-11 & 140-142) in which she intuitively recalls the wonder and fragility of being. With this recognition, she responds in kind with reverence and care for the sacredness of this moment with her baby. She gives thanks.

A broadly conceived parallel between the Heideggerean and Christian concepts of giving thanks (i.e., the Eucharist) may provide further clarity. First, recall that earlier Dasein is the being which can inquire into the meaning of Being, and later Dasein is the world's worlding, which, as previously mentioned, is the metaphorical clearing of trees (the opening of life) that one enters while still abiding within the dark, thickly wooded forest (the mystery of death). With

these reminders about Dasein, I juxtapose what Himes (1995) says about the Christian Eucharist and what Heidegger says about giving thanks.

Himes (1995) writes:

The word ‘eucharist’ comes from the Greek verb *eucharistein*, meaning ‘to say thank you’.... [W]e are created to be the recipients of God’s gift to us. That is why we are. And the primary gift which God gives to us is God. So our basic stance before God is gratitude. We are the part of creation which is given the knowledge and tongue to say what all creation longs to say: thank you. [Italics in original] (p. 128)

Heidegger (1968) writes:

In giving thanks, the heart gives thought to what it has and what it is. The heart, thus giving thought and thus being memory [in the sense of devotion, i.e., the constant concentrated abiding in the oneness of what is past, what is present, and what may come] gives itself in thought to that which it is held. It thinks of itself as beholden, not in the sense of mere submission, but beholden because its devotion is held in listening. Original thanking is the thanks owed for being. (p. 141)

Thinking most purely, which is to give thanks, is the mode in which the heart deeply intuits that, for Christians, one is the beholder of the mystery of God’s love, and for Heidegger, one is the beholder of the mystery of the world’s worlding. Both interpretations imply an unconditional cradle in which all of conditioned, finite existence is being held. Humans lay within the cradle as the ones who can be grateful for the sacred mystery that originates and holds all of life within abiding deep relation. Like the parent cradling her baby, what this recognition

calls forth is a response of gratitude for the intrinsic worthiness of life, which is given to us from beyond our capacity to reason, and therefore is not fundamentally of our individual or collective doing. Christians call this primary giving the gift of God, while Heidegger calls it the abiding oneness of what has been, what is, and what will be. Nonetheless, such recognition and response is giving thanks, is authenticity.

Buber¹

For Buber, the “I” of being human exists in two modes of speaking. He calls these two modes the basic word pairs, which are I-Thou and I-It. He writes: “The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. The Primary word I-It can never be spoken with the whole being” (1958, p. 3; 1970, p. 54). In other words, I-Thou is beyond the context of space and time (1958, p. 100; 1970, p. 148). Its home is the irreducible wholeness of God’s love, i.e., one’s eternal Thou. Therefore, I-Thou is the authentic mode of seeing. On the other hand, I-It is set in the context of space and time, which is reducible to the particulars of one’s experience. The reducible nature of the I-It basic word is the inauthentic mode of seeing.

The two basic words are accompanied by the two basic attitudes toward the world. While I-It reduces the world to calculable and orderable processes, I-Thou perceives the world in its exclusivity and inclusivity: exclusivity excludes human concepts, which particularize and reduce the scope of one’s perception of the world (Kramer, 2003, p. 51); inclusivity includes the immediacy of God’s wholeness within authentic meeting between self and other (Kramer, pp. 145 & 189). Regarding the world attitude as perceived through I-Thou meeting, Buber writes:

¹ I use Smith’s (1958) and Kaufmann’s (1970) translations of Buber’s classic work. In most cases, I provide page numbers to both translations, although I prefer the Smith translation, which was accomplished by the translator in close collaboration with Martin Buber.

Nothing is present for ['I'] except this one ['Thou'], but [the authentic meeting] implicates the whole world. Measure and comparison have disappeared; [only immeasurable wholeness remains]. These meetings are not organized to make the world, but each is a sign of the world-order..., each assures you of your solidarity with the world. (1958, p. 32; 1970, p. 81)

In other words, the irreducible, immeasurable holiness of the world order – one could say, the mystery of “the Kingdom [of God] that is hidden in our midst” (Buber, 1958, p. 120; 1970, p. 168) – reveals itself in the authentic meeting. The wholeness of the world lies there exclusively and inclusively between I-Thou, i.e., God’s presence manifests within the midst of authentic relation. Clearly the authentic meeting does not serve functional purposes, such as producing usable knowledge, but the meeting does remind oneself of one’s relational nature. In other words, authentic meeting reminds us that there can be no “I” without the basic word pairs and that the kind of “I” we speak through our way of being utterly depends on the kind of relationality we embody: I-Thou or I-It (1958, p. 4; 1970, p. 54).

As previously mentioned, evident is that the mode of authentic seeing occurs in I-Thou meeting. Kramer (2003) describes the twofold perceptual dynamic of this occurrence. On the one hand, there is the distancing of the self from the other, recognizing oneself and the other as uniquely separate. However, at the same time, this distancing act makes room for entering into authentic relationship (p. 100). The joining together and moving apart of this twofold perceptual dynamic imply life-giving meaning. For example, when one says I-It, one can easily speak possessively in the sense of “mine”: my child, my spouse, my friend, my pet, or my workplace. I-Thou, on the other hand, cannot reduce the world to one’s possessions. I-Thou, in which one is open to the mystery of God’s loving presence in authentic meeting, removes the narrowing sense

of “mine.” In reference to Genesis 1:31 (1978, p. 2) and to Kaufmann’s translation of I-Thou (Buber, 1970), which is translated as I-You, Himes (1995) makes this point:

Everything that exists has its own integrity as that which God loves. Thus everything that exists is always a you, the other which exists not because I can make use of it but because God has looked at it and seen that it is good. (p. 112)

Inauthenticity as Positive

The inauthentic mode may seem negative, and indeed does become negative when we approach life with an attitude such as the technical arrogance, which, as previously mentioned, lacks recognition of the connection among others’ well-being, the world’s, and one’s own. However, when approached differently, the inauthentic mode – the subject/object, or perhaps more precisely “subject/subject” way of knowing – also can be life-giving and positive to the well-being of humanity and the world. This section describes three ways in which the inauthentic mode may have positive, life-giving value.

The first is that the inauthentic mode can serve as a means to communicate and point to the ultimate truth of our deeply connected nature. Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche and Surya Das (2008) write: “[Selfless] practices may seem conceptual and relative, but they actually include the [ultimate] truth that is our very nature” (p. 59). The practice of loving kindness, for example, which is the selfless concern for the well-being of others without any expectation of material gain, praise, or recognition in return, manifests and expresses our deeply connected nature, and may evoke others’ awareness of it, as well (see Makransky, 2007, pp. 46-47 & 135-136). Furthermore, just as street signs point us in one direction or another when we are driving, likewise skillful words and actions may be for many of us necessary signposts that can point our

reflections toward what is most deeply true about who we are. In a university dance class over a decade ago, for example, while warming up I inadvertently heard the instructor tell another student, “Isn’t that what it’s all about: letting go.” In this split-second occurrence, those words pointed to something deeply true for me, as if my previous years as an artist and my forthcoming years as an academic merged spontaneously and with great clarity about what is most important to me, i.e., the question about authentic being.

Second, the inauthentic mode is positive because it creates the platform from which we can evolve our deepest purpose in life, which is to realize and act upon the realization of our deeply connected nature. Weil (1999) writes: “It is God who in love withdraws from us so that we can love him..., to make it possible to surrender the ‘I’ for love’s sake” (pp. 32-33). We are conditioned into the illusion of an independently existing self. Yet this fixated sense of “I,” “me,” or “mine” is the starting point from which we can employ skillful means and practices that can dissolve the illusion and allow us to “climb the spiritual mountain” (Khen Rinpoche & Surya Das, 2008, p. 54) toward a deeply felt sense of our connection to the world. T.S. Eliot (1991) writes about “the unceasing exploration in which one arrives where one began, only to know the place for the first time” (p. 208). Perhaps one can interpret this quote as the journey from the inauthentic illusion of self as absolutely separate toward the authentic perception and action of “what we always *were*” [Italics in original] (Makransky, 2007, p. 79), that is, selfless and deeply connected by nature.

Third, the inauthentic mode has yet another significant value. Buber indicates the functional necessity of subject/object knowing (Kramer, 2003, p. 26), which arises from speaking the basic word pair, I-It. For example, Buber (1964) writes: “Without the splendid condensations, reductions, generalizations, symbolizations that science turns out, the handing

down of a 'given' order from generation to generation would be impossible" (p. 48). Thus, as he makes clear, the inauthentic mode of seeing, which reduces the wholeness of the world to particulars for calculating and ordering purposes, does in fact have positive value; indeed, it is completely necessary for living in the world. However, Buber critically maintains that this perspective must balance with the fact that "he who lives with 'It' alone is not a person" (1958, p. 34; 1970, p. 85).

Two Qualities of Authenticity

Authenticity occurs spontaneously and in degrees of awakening. First, authenticity is spontaneous. The spontaneity occurs in the active "non-doing" (e.g., see Chuang Tzu, 1965, p. 101) of authenticity, what Taoists call *wu wei* (Chuang Tzu, pp. 99-102; Kramer, 2003, p. 104; Loy, 1993, p. 176; Palmer, 1990, p. 5). Lao Tzu, who is the founder of Taoism, (1988) writes: "[P]erforming without actions/ that is the Master's way" (p. 43). For clarity, *wu wei*, i.e., active non-doing, does not mean "not doing," as if one were merely indifferent and passive in the world. Rather, it means preserving the integrity of the world's wholeness, which is prior to the conceptual attitude, since concepts by nature reduce the world to the appearance of particulars. Thus, *wu wei* is an active listening and respectful response to the world's pre-conceptual wholeness. Implied in the pre-conceptual wholeness of authenticity's *wu wei* is spontaneity. Recall, for example, that Buber's basic word pair I-Thou is not set in the context of time and three-dimensional space, which are concepts that emerge from the subject/object dichotomy (1958, p. 100; 1970, p. 148). Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche (2002) adds that "[t]he conceptualization of time and [space] is the habit of the [conceptual] mind." He continues: "Although right now time and [space] do not exist, it seems to the thinking mind as if they do" (p. 135). Weil (1999)

concurr: “We are all bound by unreal chains. Time which is unreal casts over all things including ourselves a veil of unreality” (p. 52).

The spontaneous nature of authenticity, the active but non-doing (i.e., wui wei) quality that the mode of authentic seeing requires, is clearly evident in Buddhism. For example, Loy (2003) writes that wui wei is nondual action “without the sense of an agent-self who is apart from the action and [who] has the experience of being the one doing it” (p. 176). The absence of an agent-self (Garfield, 1995, p. 182; Nagarjuna, 1995, p. 25) removes the conceptual sense of “I,” the sense of oneself as separate from the world as one’s object, and allows one to sink into the pre-conceptual, spontaneous wholeness of authenticity, even while one is “doing.” Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche and Surya Das (2008) offer the Buddhist Dzogchen tradition’s parallel to wui wei, i.e., to “doing” the Tao: “Everything in our experience is actually spontaneously appearing, spontaneously changing, spontaneously liberating or releasing, without our help. We don’t need to interfere, to manipulate, to fabricate anything” (pp. 62; also see p. 75).

The active but non-doing quality of authenticity is evident in the spontaneity of Buber’s I-Thou relational meeting, as well (Kramer, 2003, pp. 104 & 111). For example, Kramer writes: “An activity of the completed or whole being entering into dialogue is personal action that I undertake and, at the same time, that undertakes me” (p. 104). Being the whole self means letting go of the conceptual attitude, which deters authentic meeting, and entering into the open, i.e., beyond three-dimensional, space of genuine dialogue (undertaking) while allowing the space to enter oneself (being undertaken). In other words, the spontaneity of the I-Thou meeting joins together temporal will and eternal grace, with the latter always leading first and foremost (Buber, 1958, p. 96; 1970, p. 144; Kramer, p. 22). Buber continues:

This is the activity of the person who has become a whole being, an activity that has been termed doing nothing: nothing separate or partial stirs in the person any more, thus she makes no intervention in the world; it is the whole person, enclosed and at rest in her wholeness, that is effective – she has become an effective whole. (1958, p. 77; 1970, p. 125)

Second, authenticity occurs in degrees of awakening. Some authentic moments may be so subtle that they can be easily disregarded or overlooked after they have occurred, and, as a result, may not be a source of one's reflection. However, other experiences may be more obvious and, as a result, may be more likely to serve as a source of reflection for the person after the authentic moment has run its course.

For example, Buber describes glancing into the eyes of the house cat, who is sitting on the windowsill. In the ephemeral moment of authentic meeting, he realizes that the cat is looking back at him, with the uniqueness of a creature that can be open to him but can never be understood by him, since humans differ from cats, and since cats, who stand before the threshold of language, can never utter the spoken word to describe their existence. Still, Buber recognizes the power of language that the cat speaks with its whole being, i.e., language that tells of an existence that abides “between the realms of vegetable security and spiritual venture” (1958, p. 96; 1970, p. 145). “In response to the cat's ‘truly speaking glance,’ [Buber is] touched by the cat's uniqueness [and] in the process, [his] glance is altered by the cat's glance” (Kramer, 2003, p. 54). Buber and the cat have entered the open space of mutuality, each retaining their uniqueness while abiding in pre-conceptual wholeness.

Perhaps, instead of the cat, the parent and the baby glance at one another, having a moment of genuine meeting. Unlike the cat, however, the baby stares with the glance of the

potential to cross the threshold of language and to utter the spoken word. Still, the baby cannot yet venture too far from the wholeness of God, of the “eternal Thou” (Buber, 1964, p. 83; Kramer, 2003, pp. 64-66), i.e., the venture that will inevitably and progressively carry the growing baby toward the consciousness of adults, who bear the complexities of formalized concepts that particularize and reify wholeness, and thus veil its presence.

These subtle examples of authentic meetings with babies or animals, such as the family pet, might be common for many people. However, unlike Buber, who is a great philosopher, one’s everyday understanding might compel one to overlook the potency of the moment, and, as a result, to disregard it once it is over, i.e., sensing the pleasantness that occurred but not reflecting on its significance of revealed truth. For this reason, I consider these examples as subtle occurrences of authenticity.

A less subtle example may be found in the story of the speech pathologist who is working in the hospital with a severely disfigured boy (Dass & Gorman, 1987). In response to the question, “How are you?” the boy is told to say the words, “I’m doing fine.” Repeatedly fumbling his part, the boy spontaneously bursts into a crazy, slurry laugh. The pathologist explains: “It was the nuttiest sound we’d ever heard. He wasn’t doing fine at all. Neither was I. We were doing terribly. It was absurd. We just howled” (p. 141). In the moment of authentic meeting, the pathologist realizes the child’s vast perspective and wonderful sense of humor despite the severity of the boy’s condition. In the spontaneous moment, the pathologist witnesses the gift of basic humanity that is being given to him in the authentic meeting. The residue of the moment does not easily fade and the pathologist carries its palpable potency with him throughout the day, and later into his reflections, as well.

Truth and Authenticity

In this section, I examine how humans can abide in “the between,” which is the spaciousness of authenticity, that is, the spaciousness beyond the appearance of absolute separateness, the spaciousness that brings us into natural intimacy and deep connection with one another and the world. More plainly, I explore the question: Who are we, really? In particular, I focus on Buddhism’s and Heidegger’s nontheistic concepts of truth, because both philosophies clearly emphasize the nondual wholeness of human nature, prior to the perception that reifies self, other, and world as absolutely separate. Table 2.2 summarizes the truth of nonduality, i.e., wholeness, according to both perspectives.

Table 2.2
Summary of Truth and Authenticity

Nondual Concepts	
Buddhism	<p>The deep identity of emptiness and dependent origination, which also implies impermanence and egolessness</p> <p>Impermanence: the constant flux of all phenomena</p> <p>Egolessness: the self is interdependent and therefore insubstantial and empty of a separate, isolated existence.</p>
Heidegger	<p>Earlier period: Dasein as Being-in-the-world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand of equipment; (b) referential context (i.e., “in order to,” and “for the sake of”); (c) facticity (being situated) and understanding (projecting possibilities onto one’s situation) <p>Later period: mortals abiding in Dasein, i.e., the worlding of the world’s mystery, which is to say the pre-conceptual wholeness of life and death in which all beings abide</p>

The Buddhist Concept of Truth

The belief in oneself as absolutely separate is not merely an abstract ideal but rather an operational view of who we are, how we know, and how we should act. In this section, I challenge this reifying attitude as well as its extreme counterpart, i.e., the nihilist attitude, by presenting the Buddhist conception – in particular, the Madhyamika (Middle Way) view (Nagarjuna, 1995) – of the true nature of reality. I describe the Buddhist concepts of emptiness, dependent origination, impermanence, egolessness, ignorance, suffering, and karma, which comprise an inseparable framework of human reality. This framework provides the basis for the Buddhist view on what I call authenticity.

To begin, H.H. the Dalai Lama (2005a) writes: “Emptiness does not imply non-existence; emptiness implies the emptiness of *intrinsic* existence, which necessarily implies dependent origination. Dependence and interdependence is the nature of all things” [Italics in original] (p. 17; also see Dalai Lama, 1999, pp. 35-47; 1994, pp. 53-57). Thich Thien-An (1975) clarifies this point with an analogy:

If in a dark room a stick of burning incense is twirled very rapidly, a circle of light is seen. But as soon as the incense stops moving, the circle disappears. Though the circle was visible and everybody saw it as such, it was actually an illusion created by the mind. Since it has no [reified] existence, the circle even when present and visible is empty [of an absolutely separate existence]. In the same way, all phenomena are empty because they arise in dependence upon causes and conditions. In themselves, they are as insubstantial as the twirling stick. (p. 84)

Thus, we are interdependent by nature because who we are is empty of a separate, isolated existence. Recall the Buddha's words: "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form" (Dalai Lama, 2005a, p. 60). The truth of this inseparable relation between form and emptiness includes the basic reality that humans impute concepts on form. Therefore, the Middle Way in Madhyamika philosophy is to realize through the wisdom of experiential knowing "the critical three-way relation between emptiness, dependent origination, and verbal convention" (Garfield, 1995, p. 304). However, the problematic issue with conceptual designation is that one can easily reify form, and as a result, can forget the empty, unformed nature that is inseparable from our human form.

Take for example the human body. Shantideva (2006) poses the inquiry: "The body is not ribs or hands, / Armpits, shoulders, bowels, or entrails. / It is not the head, and it is not the throat, / What is the 'body,' then, in all of this?" (p. 148). In other words, one often says "my body," which designates the collection of body parts. The hand is part of the body, but if the hand is missing, the body is still there. The body is neither in the foot, the leg, nor the arm. They are part of the body, but, if any of them are missing, one still has a body. If one were to continue the meditative investigation, one might conclude that the body is nonexistent: there is no body that one can find. The conclusion, however, contradicts the fact that the human body does indeed exist. The contradiction resolves when one understands that the body is not some objective, intrinsic reality but rather merely a conceptual designation upon a set of phenomena. The body exists just by conceptual designation upon a set of parts, causes, and conditions. Emptiness, which is overlooked by the reifying attitude, means that the body, for example, exists within an interdependent network of circumstances and conditions, as well as wholes and parts. Humans name this network, "body" (Dalai Lama, 2005b, p. 64; 2000, pp. 63 & 64; 1999, p. 37; 1994, p.

68; Garfield, 1995, pp. 304, 316, & 320; Nagarjuna, 1995, p. 69; Pelden, 2007, p. 359). In short, the relation of the three – emptiness, dependent origination, and verbal designation – is the Buddhist concept of truth. Dependent origination, the conventional truth, implies emptiness, the ultimate truth.

Furthermore, dependent origination implies impermanence, which means that all phenomena, including oneself, are in constant flux by nature, are always already living and dying. Dynamic, in process living and dying are like two sides of the same coin. For example, the clouds in the sky are there one moment and gone the next. Their dissipation is already happening even while one is looking at them. Another example is when one takes a breath. While it is occurring, the breath is already in the process of dissolving into the next breath. Thus, the conceptual explication of emptiness and dependent origination must therefore include the law of impermanence, i.e., the truth that “[n]othing at all has any lasting character” (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 25). Garfield (1995) writes:

Everything that is coming into existence is at a stage in a process that culminates in destruction. So everything that is becoming is at the same time being destroyed.

Everything that is being destroyed is in a later stage of a process that earlier resulted in its coming into existence.... So becoming and destruction cannot coexist, but cannot exist apart. Hence they cannot exist independently. (p. 269)

In other words, the emptiness and interdependence of all phenomena are identical with impermanence. Likewise, impermanence is identical with egolessness: that “[t]here is no separate entity from the flow of experience, no ‘self’ to whom it is happening” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 179). The realization of egolessness, which, in fact, is the realization of emptiness, dependent origination, and impermanence, thoroughly undercuts any reificationist

view of an inherently existing self that, by nature, is independent and separated off from others. One's perspective broadens when deeply intuiting how the reifying perspective of absolute separateness compels a life of false security, a life that is in constant conflict with the ephemeral, insubstantial reality of how things really are (see Loy, 2003, pp. 20 & 22; Makransky, 2007, p. 162). Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) write:

Knowing that nothing is secure, that there is no [inherently substantial and] solid place on which to stand, we can let go, let be, and come to rest. We discover the depths of what it means to let go. For as much as we grasp and hold the body and senses, the feeling, the memory, ideas, reactions, and observation, so much do we make a separate 'self,' and so much do we suffer through this attachment [to the separate self, i.e., the ego]. (p. 71)

Ignorance of impermanence and egolessness create suffering. Ignorance sustains the “incessant movements of grasping at a delusory notion of ‘I’ and ‘mine,’ self and other, and all the concepts, ideas, desires, and activity that will sustain that false construction” (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 117). Ignorance impels the pervasive conflict in one's life between what appears to be and what actually is. This existential tension is what Makransky (2007) describes as “a subconscious... subtle grasping that seeks to fill the totally insubstantial and open nature of experience with a constricted, substantial, and isolated sense of self” (p. 37; also see Loy, 2003, pp. 30-31). Ignorance is suffering, and suffering comes from ignoring one's authentic nature, one's fundamental interconnectedness, which is rooted in emptiness, dependent origination, impermanence and egolessness.

Emptiness, dependent origination, impermanence, and egolessness give rise to karma, which means action. Karma is what the Dalai Lama (2005a) indicates when he writes, “Emptiness and interdependence is the nature of all things; things and events come into being

only as a result of causes and conditions. Emptiness makes the law of cause and effect [karma] possible” (p. 117). The implication of emptiness and karma is that ignorance of the interdependent reality of self and others reifies them as separate and grasps to them as such, which in turn leads to negative karma, generating suffering. Conversely, recognizing our conventional nature (i.e., the relative truth of things as interdependent) leads to positive karma, creating happiness. Sogyal Rinpoche (1993) writes:

[W]hatever we do with our body, speech, and mind, will have a corresponding result.

Each action, even the smallest, is pregnant with its consequences. It is said by the master [the Buddha] that even a little poison can cause death, and even tiny seeds can become a huge tree. And as Buddha said, ‘Do not overlook negative actions merely because they are small; however small a spark may be, it can burn down a haystack as big as a mountain.’ Similarly he said: ‘Do not overlook tiny good actions, thinking they are of no benefit; even tiny drops of water in the end will fill a huge vessel.’(p. 92)

Karma signifies the need to act in ways that increase happiness and decrease suffering; in other words, the need to act in harmony with how things actually are: i.e., empty because interdependent, and interdependent because empty. I address ignorance, suffering, and karma later in the themes of existential pain and authentic action. My intention in presenting them now has been to foreshadow the deep relation between the truth of authenticity and the soteriological and moral views of Buddhism.

Martin Heidegger’s Concept of Truth

Heidegger’s earlier and later concepts of Dasein (Being-there) offer two complementary ways of understanding the insubstantial, empty nature of human reality. These understandings

come from (a) the earlier period of Dasein as the being (i.e., humans) who can inquire into how we exist as Being-in-the-world, and (b) the later period of Dasein as the worlding of the world, that is, the pre-conceptual wholeness of life and death in which all beings abide. The way in which humans are positioned within each understanding of Dasein demonstrates the compatibility of both periods. I address this point later, but first, an explication of both understandings of Dasein is necessary.

Heidegger's earlier Dasein.

I begin this investigation with earlier Dasein. The primary focus is to elucidate the insubstantial nature of Dasein while describing the existential structures that allow humans to exist in the world as humans, and not as animals or plants. For Heidegger (1962), Dasein fundamentally exists as Being-in-the-world. This truth puts his view of reality in good stead with the Buddhist view of emptiness, which I described above, because they both emphasize the insubstantial, interdependent wholeness of one's being, prior to the conceptual designation and subject/object dichotomy. Heidegger writes:

A commercium of the subject with a world does not get created for the first time by knowing [i.e., by representing knowledge], nor does it arise from some way in which the world acts upon a subject. Knowing is a mode of Dasein founded upon Being-in-the-world. Thus, Being-in-the world, as a basic state, must be Interpreted *beforehand*. [Italics in original] (p. 90)

Heidegger uses the uppercase in "Interpreted" to indicate ontological interpretation, or interpretation that occurs prior to the conceptual attitude, which is why he emphasizes "beforehand." For example, the worldhood of Being-in-the-world can help to clarify the pre-

thematic, basic stance of people's everyday living. Heidegger's concepts of readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand speak to this worldhood. People use equipment everyday to function in the world. For example, the parent sits in the rocking chair and rocks the baby without having to think about how the chair is constructed. The chair is ready-to-hand for the parent. In other words, when people use equipment holistically, without needing to turn some aspect of it into an issue for thematic inquiry, then the equipment is ready-to-hand (p. 98). Take as another example the fact that I am sitting at my computer and using it to formulate my ideas, and yet I do not need to understand the technological complexities of operating the computer in order to be involved with it as equipment for my purposes. Plainly, I use it without such thematic knowledge. However, if the computer suddenly stops functioning, my work is then interrupted. The "unusability" of the equipment (pp. 102 & 103) holds my attention, and thus I investigate the cause of the disruption. In other words, I thematically involve myself in some kind of basic analysis of the problem: the computer is now present-at-hand. While I investigate, I observe that the cord is loose from the electrical outlet under my computer table, and infer that my foot must have accidentally knocked it loose.

In the above example, my attitude shifts from pre-thematic involvement to deliberate inquiry and thematic analysis. The shift in attitude arises from the shift in the usability of equipment (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 200 & 412), i.e., the shift from the computer as being ready-to-hand to present-at-hand. Thus, propositions about the way the computer works or does not work are not the first, fundamental way of knowing and living in the world. In short, facts, propositions, theories, and analyses are de-contextualized from the basic state of how humans live in and know the world. The worldhood of Dasein's basic state, of Being-in-the-world,

suggests that all thematic knowledge *derives from* one's already being pre-thematically involved in the world.

Moreover, how one deals with the worldhood of equipment as ready-to-hand and as present-at-hand depends on the personal significance of one's involvement in the world, i.e., involvement that occurs within what Heidegger (1962) calls the "referential context." Expanding the computer example, my involvement with the computer differs from that of the computer technician, programmer, or engineer, because what computers mean to me does not carry the same significance as what computers mean to them. The existential constituents that define the meaning of the referential context are: "for the sake of which," "in order to," "in which," "toward which," and "with which" (p. 120). To clarify, I sit *in* my office *with* my computer *in order to* write my dissertation (i.e., in which, with which, and in order to). I write my dissertation to move *toward* the goal of finishing my doctoral program (i.e., toward which). I work toward the completion of my program *for the sake of* pursuing my life goals, such as deepening my vocation, developing my understanding as an educator, and improving the quality of life for me and my family (i.e., for the sake of which).

Of course, the equipment that is available for people to use, and the significance that equipment carries within one's own referential context depends on one's nature as "Being-in" the world. To clarify, people already find themselves in a particular sociocultural and historical situation. This being-thrown into a particular situation is what Heidegger (1962) means by "facticity." Facticity influences one's pre-thematic understanding, that is, one's understanding of possibilities prior to analysis, explanation, proposition, and theory. For example, the possibilities of technology that were understood by people two centuries ago did not include iPads, iPods, and high-speed internet. Thus, understanding and facticity stand in relationship with each other.

For humans, however, understanding carries more significant existential import than facticity does. Heidegger writes: “Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of” (p. 184). In other words, understanding is the pre-thematic stance of humans, and is the basic condition that allows humans to problematize their situation and to achieve human growth and development. Nonetheless, pre-thematic understanding differs from one person to the next. For example, when I hear a strange noise emanating from my car, I am unable to understand it beyond the possibility that something strange is happening. The car mechanic, however, may quickly recognize several starting points for investigation and analysis. The mechanic is predisposed to a wider range of pre-thematic possibilities than I am because he or she is intimately familiar with the workings of a car.

Moreover, as I mentioned, in relation to facticity, understanding is the critical forerunner. If facticity were the forerunner, then humans would be much more constrained, like animals, by the limits of their context. Take for example the dog that, indeed, has understanding: it fetches the stick since it understands the possibility of the reward to come once the fetching is complete. Yet the dog cannot create, recreate, and transform its context in the same way as humans. However, humans in their natural capacity toward pre-thematic possibilities tend to create constraints that are unique to being human, which I explain in later sections (e.g., idolatrous faith, inauthentic care, original sin, and existential self-project).

In short, Heidegger (1962) considers the basic state of one’s Being-in-the-world as temporal in nature. While humans live in the world, which has been defined by the past (facticity), they understand their involvement in the world in terms of the future (understanding). Moreover, the worldhood of the world, i.e., the pre-thematic involvement of humans in their

facticity and understanding, implies that worldhood depends on people while people depend on worldhood. For example, medical researchers are situated within and therefore dependent upon the worldhood of scientific meanings that provide the soil from which to frame, understand, and grow their research. Yet this worldhood of meanings is constantly being shaped, challenged, redefined, and transformed because of the ongoing work by medical researchers. This mutual dependency occurs because humans as Dasein are temporal by nature, which means that we are not substantial, independently fixed beings but rather insubstantial, interdependent processes, which again puts Heidegger's philosophy in good stead with the Buddhist concept of emptiness. Dasein as Being-in-the-world implies pre-conceptual wholeness, which is existentially prior to any subject/object dichotomy. The person as a temporal process is naturally whole with the world. Although particularizing this natural wholeness is a functional necessity for human growth and progress to occur, it also creates the appearance of the subject/object dichotomy. However, what appears to be real and what is really real are not necessarily the same. For Heidegger, as with Buddhism, authenticity – the seeing of formlessness as the inseparable nature of form – depends on the truth of this distinction.

Heidegger's later Dasein.

Recall that, in Heidegger's later period, Dasein shifts from Dasein as humans who exist as Being-in-the-world to Dasein as the world's worlding, which illuminates life, like the metaphorical clearing of trees, while surrounding all of life in the mystery of death, akin to the figurative thickly wooded forest that surrounds the clearing. These earlier and later concepts of Dasein are complementary, which I describe below. But first, I need to provide brief explanation of the world's worlding so that the link between earlier and later Dasein can be clear.

The world's worlding, which, until now, I have been defining as the pre-conceptual wholeness of life and death in which all beings abide, is more specifically the measureless dimension in which the joining together and moving apart of form and formlessness occur. Recall the twofold perceptual dynamic in Buber's I-Thou, in which the self remains uniquely separate, and yet only in this distancing is one able to enter into authentic meeting. Only in "the between" of joining together and moving apart can authenticity occur. The paradox of the twofold perceptual dynamic is analogous with Heidegger's concept of worlding. The openness, or "the between," in which all of existence is given life occurs in the interplay of the world's worlding. Heidegger (1971b) writes:

[Worlding] separates, yet so that at the same time it draws everything to itself, gathers it to itself. Its rending, as separating that gathers, is at the same time that drawing which, like the pen-drawing of a plan or sketch, draws and joins together what is held apart in separation. [Worlding] is the joining agent in the rending that divides and gathers. (p. 202)

The worlding is the "mirror play" (Heidegger, 1971c, p. 177) of earth and sky, mortals and gods (1971a, pp. 147-148; 1971c, p. 176), or more plainly, the mirroring of what is conditioned (earth and mortals) and unconditioned (sky and gods). For clarity, the term "gods" makes reference to Heidegger's (1971d) close kinship with early Greek thought (pp. 91-92). The key point, however, is that the wholeness of the world's worlding is the mirror play of the conditioned and unconditioned, i.e., the mirror play that (a) transcends all cognitive capacity to measure, calculate, or explain, like the mystery of God, and that (b) reflects the wholeness of the world in the uniqueness of each kind of being.

To clarify the mirror play of the world's worlding, consider the great jazz ensemble. The spontaneously integrated flow of the music gathers the musicians, committing them to the whole movement of the music as it occurs. This gathering is what Heidegger (1971c) calls the "appropriation" (p. 177) of distinct beings to the wholeness of the world's worlding. However, the gathering that joins the musicians into the spontaneous wholeness of the music's flowing occurrence also gives them their uniqueness, their separateness, but in a way that the separateness of each musician's voice contains the whole flowing movement of the music. This giving from the whole is what Heidegger calls the "expropriation" (p. 177), or delivering over, of beings to their distinct kind of being, e.g., human, animal, plant, or rock. Thus, one does not mistake the drummer's sound for that of the piano player's. Yet, the drummer's distinct sound reflects the wholeness of the music, which necessarily includes the piano player's. In short, the ensemble players mirror, i.e., reflect, the spontaneous wholeness of the music's flowing occurrence in their own unique sound, but only because each musician is committed to the command of the whole musical movement. This simultaneous joining together (appropriating) and moving apart (expropriating) of the jazz ensemble's motion is metaphorical for the mirror play of the world's worlding.

Earlier and later Dasein as the philosophical basis of "giving thanks."

The way in which Heidegger positions humans within the earlier and later concepts of Dasein can help to elucidate the philosophical basis of giving thanks, which I previously explained as a response of gratitude that spontaneously arises from realizing the sacredness of our being and that of all others. Recall that, in earlier Dasein, Heidegger's concept of Being-in-the-world (i.e., the "worldhood" of readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand, as well as the

referential context; and the “Being-in” of facticity and understanding) characterizes human nature as temporality. As I mentioned, Heidegger’s concept of temporality, like the Buddhist concept of emptiness, suggests that there is no substantial, independently fixed person called the “self,” that is to say, no permanent subject “in here” apart from an objectified reality “out there.” Furthermore, as I already explained, decisive about humans in comparison with all other beings is that we can deliberately ponder this insubstantial, interdependent nature. This capacity to question who we are is what constitutes earlier Dasein (Heidegger, 1962, p. 27). Moreover, recall that in Heidegger’s later Dasein, the “mirror play” (Heidegger, 1971c, p. 177) of the world’s worlding, which is the joining together and moving apart of form and formlessness, gathers humans into “essential [formless] community” (Heidegger, 1968, pp. 190-191) with the gods, earth, and sky (Heidegger, 1971e, pp. 218-219) while releasing us to form as distinctly human.

Consequently, implied from earlier Dasein with regard to later Dasein is that human beings can question and therefore can cultivate a path of awakening to their abiding nature in the measureless, pure, and still dimension of the world’s worlding. In turn, we can recognize and appreciate our abiding nature within the mystery of this essentially formless and therefore interdependent community. We can give thanks for the intrinsic worthiness of life that is given to us unconditionally, unfolding from beyond our capacity to reason and therefore not fundamentally of our individual or collective doing. Thus, the complementary link between earlier Dasein as human beings who can probe and question into the wonder of life and later Dasein as the interplay of form and formlessness clarifies why humans, unlike all other beings, can give thanks.

Meaning and Authenticity

In this section, I explore authentic meaning and examine how humans, by nature, are always seeking authentic meaning in their lives, even when their seeking is distorted. In other words, one's life always matters to oneself, and this life can matter authentically or inauthentically. The questions that help to focus my examination are as follows: How does one's life authentically matter to oneself? What is the source of authentic meaning? When is meaning authentic? When is meaning inauthentic?

Paul Tillich's and Martin Heidegger's perspectives inform this discussion. In particular, I analyze Tillich's concept of ultimate concern and Heidegger's concept of care. I describe the key elements that constitute the structures of ultimate concern and care. The discussion on Heidegger's care extends the discussion in the previous section on earlier Dasein. Furthermore, I consider similarities between Tillich's and Heidegger's concepts, a consideration that is particularly interesting since these two thinkers were colleagues at the same German university during the early Twentieth Century. Lastly, I explore an assumption that Tillich makes about Heidegger's concept of resoluteness, which is a key element of authentic care. I reframe resoluteness in light of Heidegger's concepts of Being-in-the-world (earlier period) and worlding (later period). I suggest that one can imagine authentic resoluteness as compatible with the definition of authenticity that I proposed earlier: realizing "the between" of human nature. Table 2.3 summarizes each thinker's system of existential meaning.

Table 2.3
Summary of Meaning and Authenticity

	Existential meaning	Existential anxiety	Existential courage	Existential distortion
Tillich	Ultimate concern: Deuteronomy 6:5: Love God with all your heart, which means to love all of God's community	Humans cannot bridge the infinite distance between them and God; they need God's grace The anxiety of death, doubt, and guilt	Taking the anxiety of nonbeing (i.e., death), doubt, and guilt into one's being	Idolatrous faith: finite, concrete realities substitute for the ultimacy of God's mystery and grace (e.g., democratic conformism)
Heidegger (earlier)	Care: the existential and temporal structure by which the meaning of one's life can matter to oneself	Anticipating death The call of conscience, i.e., guilt, which silently commands one to take responsibility for one's life	Resoluteness, i.e., authentic care, in which one commits oneself to take full responsibility for one's individuality	The uninhibited sway of self-assertive production, which reduces the world's mystery by unceasing human acts of calculation and ordering

Paul Tillich's Ultimate Concern

For Tillich (1957), ultimate concern and faith are identical. Ultimate concern, when it is authentic, is the same as true faith. However, when ultimate concern is inauthentic, then faith is distorted. My primary focus is authentic ultimate concern, i.e., true faith, although I address distorted faith, as well. Regarding the ultimacy of authentic concern, Tillich writes:

[I]n his name the great commandment is given: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might' (Deut. 6:5). This is what

ultimate concern means and from these words the term ‘ultimate concern’ is derived. (p. 3)

The ultimacy of authentic concern is simply to love God. However, the Christian implication of the commandment to love God does not mean to love some supreme being, as if God were some kind of Zeus-like figure distant from oneself. Rather, as I mentioned in the discussion on sacramental vision, God’s love is like a verb. Therefore, “God is what is done, not the one who does it, nor the one to whom it is done. God is the doing, the loving” (Himes, 1995, p. 17). God is also the undivided ground of such love, the ground of its possibility. God’s love is therefore found in relationship, and as a result, authentic ultimate concern, i.e., true faith, is discovered in authentic loving communion between people. Moreover, as with Buber’s concept in which “[t]he primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being” (1958, p. 3; 1970, p. 54), Tillich’s (1957) concept likewise states that the ultimate concern for God’s love must be spoken with the “total personality” (pp. 5 & 123-124). Merton (1961) summarizes this point:

The ‘spiritual life’ [the life of ultimate concern] is... the perfectly balanced life in which the body with its passions and instincts, the mind with its reasoning and obedience to principle, and the spirit with its passive illumination by the Light and Love of God form one complete person [i.e., the total personality]. (p. 140)

The interdependent love of agape and eros.

For Tillich (1957), authentic love through community is the unity of agape and eros (p. 133). Agape is the will to self-surrender, the desire to give oneself away for the benefit of the community. Eros is one’s desire for self-fulfillment, which occurs by participating in some part

of God's community, i.e., by participating in relationship with people. The unity of agape and eros is necessary, according to Tillich (p. 133), because in union their interdependence avoids inauthentic faith, which is any act of faith that breaks God's great commandment. I discuss this type of distorted or idolatrous faith below. For now, the point is that eros needs agape to keep oneself from manipulating others for self-serving ends, while agape needs eros to keep oneself from blindly submitting to the collective group.

The mutual dependency of agape and eros can be understood in the metaphor of the Cross. In Mt 16:25 (1978), "Doctrine of the Cross," Jesus teaches: "Whoever will save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will find it" (p. 830). Relevant here is the second half of the teaching: (a) "whoever loses their life for my sake" implies agapic love, which is self-surrender for the benefit of others; and (b) "will find it" implies the love of eros, i.e., the self-fulfilling love of God. While the first half speaks to human suffering – holding onto one's life, one loses it – the second half speaks to death and resurrection. Agape and eros implicate oneself in death and resurrection.

Yet the teaching does not suggest linearity but rather mutual dependency between death and resurrection, between agape and eros. If death and resurrection were linear, then death would be merely the means to resurrection, or agape merely the means to eros. However, although the end does indeed depend on the means, the means must depend on the end, as well, or else they can no longer be means. Therefore, means and end are mutually dependent, and so are death and resurrection, which suggests that to give oneself away (death: agape) is to receive self-fulfillment (resurrection: eros), but to receive self-fulfillment is to give oneself away. Dass and Gorman (1987) exemplify this point in their discussion about the mutual dependency of giving and receiving in the authentic helping act, or in Christian terms, the true act of charity:

[A]t a certain point ‘helper’ and ‘helpee’ simply begin to dissolve. What’s real is the helping – the process in which we’re all blessed, according to our needs and our place at the moment. How much we can get back in giving! How much we can offer in the way we receive! But even ‘giving’ and ‘receiving’ now seem artificial. Where does one begin, the other end? They seem to be happening simultaneously. That's how it feels, anyway. Isn't that why everyone's so pleased?

In fact, this point about authentic helping can be easily conceived within the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness, as well. In other words, there is no independently fixed “helper” and “helpee” within the helping relationship. Embracing this wisdom, one can enter the helping relationship open to the possibility that “giving and receiving are of one piece, [and that] ‘self’ and ‘other’ are not so different from one another” (Makransky, 2007, p. 290). Thus, the helping relationship can be “so pleasing” because its actions embody the fundamental truth that to help others without any concern for personal merit is the means of truly helping oneself (see Makransky, pp. 235-238; Thich Thien-An, 1975, pp. 67-69).

The tension and criterion of true faith.

The dynamic of true faith, i.e., of authentic ultimate concern, creates the tension between participation and estrangement. Tillich (1957) writes: “Without some participation in the object of one’s ultimate concern, it is not possible to be concerned about it” (p. 116). He continues: “But faith would cease to be faith without separation – the opposite element. He who has faith is separated from the object of his faith. Otherwise he would possess it” (p. 116). On the one hand, all humans by birthright are given the inspired breath of Jesus, and, as a result, are given participation in God’s love. Merton (1961) writes: “Christ Himself..., ‘breathes’ in me divinely

in giving me His Spirit” (p. 159). Since God’s love already participates in one’s being, one can participate in God’s love. On the other hand, God’s love is pure, simple, and unconditional; yet humans are “endlessly caught in a web of decisions among partial goods” (Himes, 1995, p. 60). As Himes suggests, “[to be human] means taking the risk of discerning the good and acting upon it insofar as you can see the good, knowing that you never see it with perfect clarity” (p. 60). Thus, being God’s creature implies human estrangement from God. In short, the tension of true faith, i.e., the tension between participation and estrangement, establishes the restlessness in Augustine’s (1960) famous passage: “[Y]ou have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (p. 43).

The tension of true faith also provides authentic ultimate concern’s main criterion – ambiguity – which states that humans, as finite creatures, cannot bridge the distance between themselves and God’s loving mystery from the side of humans (Tillich, 1957, pp. 13 & 122; Weil, 1999, pp. 88-89). The ambiguity of true faith therefore renders humans as helpless and vulnerable, i.e., humans are always in need of God’s grace. This ambiguity occurs in the two types of true faith: (a) authentic ontological (i.e., mystical) faith, in which, as with the earlier discussion on sacramental vision, one sees the mystery of God’s love; and (b) authentic ethical faith, in which, like the beatific vision from earlier, one sees the “holiness of what ought to be” (Tillich, p. 65). In addition, ambiguity as the main criterion implies that true faith must always be self-critical. As creatures of time and space, humans express their faith in concrete symbols, rituals, and forms, and therefore the human limitation of such expressions must be kept open to self-critique to avoid inflating the concrete to ultimate status (p. 143). Dass and Gorman (1987), in their discussion on the authentic helping act, summarize the main criterion of ambiguity:

We do what we can [in helping others]. Yet we cannot really presume to know the final meaning of our actions. We cannot help but see them against a larger backdrop [of God's loving mystery] in which the ultimate significance of a single life may not be clear. (pp. 209-210)

Anxiety and courage.

The ambiguity of authentic ultimate concern includes existential anxiety about death, doubt, and guilt. These structures are inseparable parts of the existential drive for authentic meaning in one's life. Moreover, as I make clear in the discussion below on Heidegger's concept of care, these structures suggest some kinship between the two thinkers' systems on authentic meaning. For now, however, I focus on Tillich's concept of these structures.

For Tillich (1952), "anxiety is the existential awareness of nonbeing" (p. 35). He elaborates: "Existential... is not the abstract knowledge of nonbeing which produces anxiety but the [pre-conceptual] awareness that nonbeing is [intrinsically] part of one's own being" (p. 35). For clarity, recall the discussion between Heidegger's earlier and later Dasein: humans have the capacity to question and explore the truth of our insubstantial nature, which is that life and death, form and formlessness, are two sides of the same coin. Although humans may vary in their readiness to appreciate this fact, except for the most deluded person all people have some degree of everyday intuitive awareness of their nature as including nonbeing. For example, we are careful when crossing a busy street, because carelessness can be dangerous. This ordinary, almost automatic act is a low-level (because not explicitly acknowledged) kind of sensing of our mortality. According to Tillich, humans live with the existential anxiety of this awareness, even if only dimly.

Furthermore, the anxiety of nonbeing coexists with the anxiety of existential doubt (Tillich, 1952, pp. 48). Doubt is the sense that one can never fully and decisively say, “This is who I am,” because our lives occur stretched over space and time, that is, dynamic, in process, and deeply connected with people and the environment. Thus, doubt reminds us that who we are is always in flux, constantly changing, heading into the unknown of nonbeing and therefore “limited in time, energy, ability, and intelligence” (Himes, 1995, p. 108). Doubt arises naturally from the ambiguity of ultimate concern, which suggests that the conditioned always depends upon the unconditioned for existence; form always abides in formlessness, not the other way around (Tillich, 1957, p. 122). In other words, all beings are held in existence by God’s grace, otherwise they would not be (Himes, pp. 103-104). In turn, from this utter dependency arises doubt as an existential structure.

Moreover, existential doubt suggests the anxiety of existential guilt. For example, recall Genesis 3:9 (1978): “The Lord God then called to the man [Adam] and asked him, ‘Where are you?’” (p. 3; also see Kramer, 2003, pp. 98 & 131-132; Tillich, 1952, p. 51). If each person is like Adam, then Jesus, whose “life flows in our veins” (Himes, 1995, p. 125), is constantly challenging each person to respond to questions about authentic meaning, such as: where are you? What quality of presence did you emit in the world? How have you actualized the gift of life in service to God, to your truest identity, and to all others in their truest identity? Guilt is therefore existential, not psychological, because there is no human form from which the questions arise or any specific content that the one who is asked can explicitly address. One therefore has guilt as an existential structure.

Authentic ultimate concern requires the courage to accept the anxiety of nonbeing, doubt, and guilt into one’s life without falling into “despair” (Tillich, 1952, p. 55), i.e., an inappropriate

hopelessness generated by the fact that one cannot ultimately affirm one's being; only God's grace can. Regarding this point, Himes (1995) writes: "There is a meaning-giver to my life, and I am not it. My life is not for me because I did not originate it nor do I [ultimately] decide what it is for or about" (p. 30). This fundamental ambiguity of authentic ultimate concern implies that courage must entail the risk of failure (Tillich, 1957, pp. 20-21 & 118), i.e., the risk of not responding authentically to one's calling to serve God's community. Or, one could also say the risk of failing to hear the great commandment, i.e., "Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut 6:5, 1978, p. 125). Take for example Genesis 3:9 (1978). In Adam's response to God's question, he says: "I heard you in the garden, but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself" (p. 3). Kramer (2003), who deliberates on Buber's response to this passage, writes:

In Buber's mind, Adam mistook God's original intention in creation. Adam didn't realize that he had to work toward perfecting the image of God placed inside him. Buber came to recognize in these verses his life purpose. And not just his alone. He understood this to be the task of all people who recognize God's address to them. The task is to become a partner *with* God in creation. [Italics in original] (p. 131)

The passage suggests that the authentically meaningful life requires the courage to risk answering God's question affirmatively. While Adam hides himself from exposure, the courage to risk means exposing oneself to life's wholeness, which must include some uncertainty of whether or not one is answering God's question affirmatively. Again, uncertainty arises only because humans participate in the image of God while finding themselves estranged from God, i.e., the criterion of ambiguity. If one indeed responds like Adam, then authentic ultimate concern becomes inauthentic; however, as Tillich (1957) writes, "[t]he risk of failure can be

taken, because the failure cannot separate us from what is our ultimate concern” (p. 122). In other words, humans may turn from God by distorting their ultimate concern, but as Himes (1995) reminds us, “[w]e are the people who are always being forgiven [by God]; we are constantly the recipients of God’s mercy” (p. 32). Therefore, one can have the courage to take the anxiety of nonbeing, doubt, and guilt into one’s being, because if one fails, God forgives, and thus one can risk ever anew.

The distortion of ultimate concern.

Ultimate concern, when it is inauthentic, gives worldly concerns ultimate status (Tillich, 1957, p. 13). Such idolatry turns the love of agape into blind obedience while turning the love of eros into individualism, or self-centered love. For example, Tillich describes democratic conformism as the distortion of agapic love into blind obedience. According to Tillich (1952), the interminable production process of modern times has created a closed system within itself, hardly giving rise to questions about where all of this unceasing productive activity is heading. In short, the means of the production process has mainly turned away from questioning or examining its ends (p. 108; also see Loy, 2003, pp. 166 & 180). Thus, modern times have become subsumed by an orientation of production for production’s sake.

Moreover, Tillich (1952) explains that uninhibited acts of human production, i.e., modern progress, “are felt [by people] as creations, as symbols of the infinite possibilities in [the human capacity for] productivity” (p. 108). In effect, the sacred gift of our capacity to create is now reduced to, and equated with, the incessant ordering of people and things into calculable acts of production. This production now signifies creation. Implied is that in democratic conformism our gifted capacity is diminished within the narrowness of human misperception and the uninhibited

momentum of productive activity. Therefore, the locus of the gift, which always is God's grace, can be easily forgotten. Once forgotten, humans may pretentiously misperceive the locus of creation within themselves (i.e., idolatrous or inauthentic concern), which is why Nietzsche's (2005) madman proclaims, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him" (p. 67).

Accordingly, Himes (1995) elaborates the implication:

Nietzsche maintains [that] we must face the fact that we live in a universe which is indifferent to us and carve out a space for ourselves.... [Since] human beings need the reassurance and comfort of believing in God, [if] we are to live in a godless world, we must become superhuman. (pp. 53-54)

With this implication, Tillich (1952) suggests that inauthentic faith evokes an unrealistic and limited self-affirmation about who we are, leading to cultural neurosis (pp. 68-69).

Inauthentic faith can never provide authentic meaning because it rejects the criterion of ambiguity, i.e., the truth that humans "are never able to bridge the infinite distance between the infinite and the finite from the side of the finite" (Tillich, 1957, p. 122). Thus, the neurosis of inauthentic faith implies enduring conflict in which "humans are hurt by [their denial of] the reality [of the criterion of ambiguity], which permanently penetrates the castle of their defense and the imaginary world behind it" (Tillich, 1952, p. 69). One may conclude that the outcome of inauthentic faith as one's participation in uninhibited productive activity is the modern neurosis of living in a godless world where one can no longer be human but rather, as Himes (1995) suggests, must play the role of God (p. 53). Tillich (1952) summarizes this point:

The modern idea of immortality [that is, coping with the anxiety of nonbeing, doubt, and guilt] means a continuous participation in the productive process.... It is not the eternal rest of individuals in God but their unlimited contribution to the dynamics of the universe

that give them the [sense of false hope] to face [the anxiety of nonbeing, doubt, and guilt]. In this kind of hope, God is almost unnecessary. For the courage to be as a part of the productive process, immortality [i.e., one's unconditional surrender to the uninhibited sway of productive activity] is decisive and not God. (pp. 110-111)

Martin Heidegger's Existential Care

Heidegger's (1962) concept of care focuses on earlier Dasein. Although the structures in Tillich's ultimate concern are somewhat similar to those in Heidegger's existential care, which I describe below, one should keep in mind a key distinction: Tillich's system is rooted in the soteriological and moral beliefs of Christianity. Heidegger's system is solely rooted in *describing* and *analyzing* the basic structures of the individual's human existence. The earlier analysis of Dasein as Being-in-the-world is an example of some basic structures (e.g., ready-to-hand and presence-at-hand; "in order to" and "for the sake of"; facticity and understanding). This earlier analysis is, for Heidegger, "preparatory" for the deeper analysis of existential meaning as care, which I address here.

Existential care.

Care is the fundamental structure of Dasein. As a reminder, humans, as Dasein, can explicitly pose the question about the meaning of Being (Heidegger, 1962, p. 27). In other words, questions such as "Who am I, really?" and "What is my deepest purpose in life?" always matter to people as Dasein. Animals, for example, do not have the same capacity. To be this way or that way, to decide on this set of possibilities or some other set, is the fundamental stance of humans as Dasein.

For Heidegger (1962), *Being and Time* formulates and investigates the question of the meaning of care as the most basic and fundamental of all questions (p. 24). Recall that, for Tillich (1952), the basic question is about ultimate concern, i.e., the great commandment to love God (Deut. 6:5). Heidegger's care, however, is rooted in the temporality of humans as Dasein and their ability to understand this nature as Being-in-the-world. In recalling the Buddhist concept of emptiness, one could say that Heidegger's analysis is rooted in Dasein's ability to recognize the insubstantiality of human form. The concept of existential care makes the insubstantiality explicit, and the structures deep within care (anticipation and guilt), which I address below, turn one toward authentic care.

Existential care is the name for the mutual dependency of the earlier concepts of understanding, facticity, and the usability of equipment. Heidegger (1962) writes: "[T]he Being of Dasein [the ontological structure as a whole] means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)" (p. 237). Ontologically there is no divide between oneself and Being-in-the-world, which means that care is fundamentally whole. "Ahead-of-itself" suggests that people pre-thematically understand themselves in a certain way and project themselves onto possibilities of thought, speech, and action that accord with their way of understanding. "Already-in" means that people find themselves situated in some sociocultural and historical context, which is the facticity of one's existence. "Being-alongside" indicates that people exist in the world among other people as well as artifacts of cultural significance, e.g., useable equipment that is ready-to-hand. In short, Dasein's care means to be, at once, the future (ahead of itself), the past (already in the world), and the present (alongside people and things). In turn, care is the holistic temporal structure through which being

human can matter to oneself. Because of care, questions of what does it mean to live this way or that way always remain an issue for oneself, even if they remain implicit.

Division Two of *Being and Time* (1962) investigates *authentic care*. The discussion below focuses on Heidegger's concepts of anxiety and anticipation, as well as guilt and resoluteness, which are the deep existential structures of authentic care. The parallels with Tillich's concepts of existential structures become evident. I indicate these similarities in the discussion.

Anxiety and anticipation.

For Heidegger (1962), anxiety is one's direct sense that death is (a) one's ownmost possibility, that is, the impossibility of having any more possibilities; (b) nonrelational, which means no one else can die for us; and (c) not to be outstripped, or inevitable for every human (p. 307). The anxiety of death is not merely anxiousness over one's physical demise. Like Tillich's concept (1952, p. 45), the anxiety of death threatens one with "the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 307); that is, threatens one's capacity to live the basic question of meaning anymore.

Anxiety is existential. As with Tillich's concept (1952, p. 36), anxiety is different from psychological fear, which denotes a definite object with which one can reckon. In anxiety, one's everyday familiarity with the world collapses (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 233 & 310). One is anxious in the face of Dasein's "nullity," in the face of the nature of oneself as a "not" (p. 330). Recalling Buddhism, one could say that one is anxious in the face of one's being as essentially empty of substantial existence (e.g., Dalai Lama, 2005a, pp. 114-119). Heidegger describes this direct awareness as anticipation, which means "coming close" (pp. 306-307) not to something that we

merely think *about* as present-at-hand but rather to a kind of knowing that, to use Palmer's (1990) term, runs "bone deep" (p. 153).

Guilt, conscience, and resoluteness.

Anxiety and anticipation occur equally with existential guilt. Heidegger (1962) frequently uses the term "equiprimordial" to indicate that these structures are ontologically wired in human nature. In anticipation, one's guilt is summoned by the call of care, which is conscience. Heidegger writes: "Conscience manifests itself as the call of care: the caller is Dasein, which, in its thrownness (in its Being-already-in), is anxious about its potentiality-for-Being" (p. 322). To clarify, take for example modern materialism. Humans find themselves living in a material culture, which is their facticity. Material culture powerfully allures people to create for themselves material identities. In anticipation, in the anxiety of one's ultimate potentiality-for-Being, which is death, the seemingly self-assuring edifices of material identity on which one has constructed one's life begin to crumble. Conscience is the uncanny sense that these metaphorical houses of material identity are built on foundations of sand, not concrete. This uncanny sense does not arise from some external object, but rather arises deep within one's existential constitution, which is Dasein itself.

The call of care, i.e., conscience, is prior to any psychological content, and is therefore silent. Silence means that the call of conscience has no particular wisdom to share, direction to give, or knowledge on which to shed light. This silence, what Heidegger (1962) calls "reticence" (p. 343), implies restraint on the part of the listener (Heidegger, 1971b, p. 207) who, in anticipating the impossibility of any more meaning in one's life, cuts through all prior concepts and listens to the wholeness of one's Being-in-the-world. "[E]verything that lies before [oneself]

is [now] ambiguous” (Heidegger, 1968, p. 201). The reticence of the call of conscience delivers the uncanny sense that one has been avoiding responsibility for oneself and has been handing it over to “*das Man*” [Italics in original] (Heidegger, 1962, p. 164), i.e., “the great formless sea of irresponsibility, which is the crowd” (Merton, 1961, p. 54). The reticence of the call of conscience tells oneself that avoidance is no longer an option, because the reticence renders silent the usual illusory tactics of the “crowd,” and thus renders still one’s habitual fleeing into the crowd’s allure. In short, the reticent call of conscience summons Dasein from the formless sea of irresponsibility and confronts one directly with one’s existential guilt, which again, as with anxiety, has no object with which one can reckon.

Heidegger’s concept of guilt speaks to Tillich’s (1952) existential guilt (p. 51), as well. Recall the discussion on Genesis 3:9 (1978) in which God asks Adam, “Where are you?” (p. 3). One can parallel Heidegger’s call of conscience as the questioning from God. However, as a reminder, Tillich’s authentic ultimate concern emphasizes the great commandment of loving God (Deut 6:5, 1978, p. 125), which again means loving God’s community (Himes, 1995, p. 105). On the other hand, Heidegger’s concept of authentic care, which unites the constructs of care, anticipation, and guilt, is resoluteness, and resoluteness emphasizes the *individuality* of the person. Gelven (1989) writes that, in resoluteness, “I am responsible for what I am because I am that kind of being who is free to accept or reject the possibilities I have” (p. 165). Authentic care, or resoluteness, for Heidegger (1962) therefore transcends the everyday noise of the crowd mentality, which has the function of “leveling-down” (p. 165), and resolves to take total responsibility for oneself, which, as I will suggest, also means for oneself as one is intrinsically related to all others. However, since Heidegger only conducts an analysis of existential structures, he does not provide the implications of what resoluteness in action might mean.

Therefore, the concept of resoluteness as total individuality appears to contradict the earlier definition of authenticity as “the between” of self as distinctly separate and yet deeply connected to all others and the world. Still, I explore the possibility of reframing resoluteness, i.e., authentic care, to suggest that it may be more compatible than at first glance.

Reframing resoluteness.

Tillich (1952) describes Heidegger’s concept of resoluteness as the courage to be oneself. In turn, as I mentioned above, the individualism of resoluteness distorts one’s authentic ultimate concern (p. 149). Recall that, for Tillich (1957), idolatry means “preliminary, finite realities [that] are elevated to the rank of ultimacy” (p. 13). In this regard, resoluteness, i.e., Heidegger’s authentic care, is idolatrous because in comparison with authentic ultimate concern, resoluteness involves neither “the voice of God nor the awareness of eternal principles” (Tillich, 1952, p. 149). Once again, for Tillich, the love of eros and agape must be mutually dependent to be authentic; otherwise, they turn into individualism or collectivism. Tillich’s earlier example of democratic conformism describes collectivism. On the other hand, according to Tillich, Heidegger’s resoluteness describes individualism. In describing the Reformation, Tillich (1952) summarizes this point:

The courage of the [Protestant] Reformers is not the courage to be oneself [individualism] – as it is not the courage to be as a part [e.g., collectivism]. It transcends and unites both of them. This radically distinguishes the personalism of the Reformation from all the later forms of individualism and Existentialism. (p. 163)

Despite Tillich’s claim, I believe that one can reasonably reinterpret Heidegger’s resoluteness to align with the concept of authenticity as seeing oneself as both separate and

whole. Recall, for example, Dasein's insubstantial, temporal nature, which is the structure of care. In resoluteness, one awakens to the meaning of care. In other words, one directly realizes the deeply connected truth of one's Dasein as Being-in-the-world. Because Dasein as Being-in-the-world implies deep connection with the world, it may be misleading to assume that one's Dasein as Being-in-the-world with people and things is the means to realizing individualism. The reasonable conclusion is that the individualism of resoluteness, i.e., in the sense of "freedom from the illusions of the [crowd]" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 311), is the means through which one may contribute authentically to the world, and so, deepen one's sense of caring for the world. Merton (1961) writes: "Very often it is the solitary [i.e., the resolute one] who has the most to say; not that he uses many words, but what he says is new, substantial, unique. It is his own" (p. 54). Furthermore, two examinations can strengthen the reframing of resoluteness and can reconcile it with the definition of authenticity as realizing "the between" of human nature: (a) direct encounter with Being-in-the-world, and (b) being the situation.

Direct encounter with Being-in-the-world.

In resoluteness, one has the direct encounter with one's Dasein as Being-in-the-world. More plainly, one encounters one's deep ontological nature. Unequivocally, Heidegger does not make theistic references, but neither does Buddhism in its concept of truth. Yet, one can reasonably make the parallel between Buddhism's deep identity of emptiness and form (e.g., Garfield, 1995, pp. 304-305, 316 & 320) and Heidegger's deep identity of Dasein and Being-in-the-world. Recall that, for Buddhism, pure perception sees emptiness and form as undivided. One can equally suggest that, for Heidegger, resoluteness sees one's Dasein and Being-in-the-world as indivisible, as well. Moreover, because "[e]mptiness makes the law of cause and effect

possible” (Dalai Lama, 2005a, p. 117), the one with pure perception may act with care in the world because one directly knows that one is implicated in the world’s interdependency. One might equally say that, the one who has resoluteness, who realizes one’s deep connectivity with one’s Being-in-the-world, may act in an authentically caring manner, as well.

One can imagine the parallel between resoluteness and theistic views, as well. Take for example the Christian God and Heidegger’s Being-in-the-world, which are both concepts that cannot adequately describe the pre-conceptual realm to which they point (Himes, 1995, pp. 9 & 84; Heidegger, 1962, pp. 342-343). Tillich (1952) suggests that authentic ultimate concern always transcends “the God of all forms of theism” (p. 186). Buber’s I-Thou speaks of the fourth relational realm, i.e., meeting the eternal Thou, which can never become I-It (Kramer, 2003, p. 65). Buber (1964) writes: “What is the case beyond our experience, thus, so to speak, from the side of God, no longer belongs to what can be discussed” (p. 83). In Exodus 3:14 (1978), God replies to Moses, “‘I am who am’ ‘This is my name forever’” (p. 41; also see Kramer, p. 142). If Being-in-the-world is pre-conceptual, then Being-in-the-world “is,” like the “am” in God’s response to Moses. In other words, there is no predicate; no concrete object on which to focus one’s attention: there is just mystery. Simply, in resoluteness one sees the mystery of one’s insubstantial nature as Being-in-the-world. The mystery speaks to one’s Dasein by saying nothing except that Dasein “is,” rendering oneself still to the silence that dissolves all noise from the crowd and guides oneself to be true to oneself. To clarify, Remen (2000) tells the story of the woman with terminal cancer; this story exemplifies the nature of resoluteness as the deep intimacy between separateness and wholeness. The woman says:

For the first time, I am sailing my boat by my own star. My God, have I sailed it by everything else! And allowed everyone else to take a turn at the tiller. All of my life I’ve

headed against myself, against my own direction. But now I have a deep sense of my way, and I am loyal to it. This is my boat and it was made to sail in this direction, by this star. You ask why I seem so much more peaceful now? Well, I am living in one piece.
(pp. 177-178)

Being the situation.

In resoluteness, one senses one's deep connectivity with what Heidegger (1962) calls the Situation. He writes: "The Situation is the 'there' which is disclosed in resoluteness.... It is not a framework present-at-hand in which Dasein occurs, or into which it might even just bring itself.... The Situation *is* only through resoluteness and in it" [Italics in original] (p. 346). In other words, in resoluteness, the subject/object dichotomy breaks down, and one no longer thinks *about* one's situation but rather one is *being* the situation (see Loy, 2003, pp. 177-178), such as is the woman with cancer.

Heidegger's concept of the situation speaks to the previous discussion about wui wei. Recall that the Taoist paradox of active non-doing suggests "action that harmonizes with the selfless Way of Things" (Dass & Gorman, 1987, pp. 167-171 & 173; also see Chuang Tzu, 1965, pp. 99-102; Lao Tzu, 1988, p. 48). In turn, one is *whole with* the situation. In Buddhism, the absence of an independently existent agent-self (Garfield, 1995, p. 182; Nagarjuna, 1995, p. 25) removes the conceptual sense of "I," i.e., the appearance of oneself and the world as two separate entities. Loy (2003) writes: "[Wui wei is like reclaiming] the simplicity of the child who is 'free from characteristics' and 'does not take credit' for what she does because she does not have the sense of a [reified] self that does them" (p. 177). The child's simplicity transcends complexities

that occur when the sense of the conceptualized, reified self takes hold in one's understanding and subsequently impels one to act as if one were merely separate from the world.

Similarly, in the *wu wei* of resoluteness, one releases from the inauthentic conformity of the crowd and acts authentically with the wholeness of one's situation. Like the example of the woman with cancer, when one harmonizes with the silent wisdom (i.e., Heidegger's call of conscience) that is deep within one's nature (whether God, emptiness, or Being-in-the-world), the resoluteness to be one's authentic self may manifest. As with the woman, the situation of the medical diagnosis may awaken the resoluteness to live differently. Yet there is no prescribed way in which resoluteness can occur, i.e., in which one can fully *be there* in the situation of one's life. Take for example Rosa Parks on the bus. In the moment of decision making, Parks is *whole with* the situation. In the *wu wei* of resoluteness, her being speaks to the bondage of cultural racism and to the possibility of human liberation. All alone, in the sense that no one can decide for her or guarantee the outcome, the refusal to move from her seat speaks from her whole being: "[D]ivided no more" (Palmer, 1999, p. 31). Resolutely, she decides not in isolation as an individual detached from the world but rather in the solitude of one who is already in the world pre-conceptually and holistically with other people and things.

As with the Parks example, in resoluteness the person chooses to be true to oneself, which means authentically separate. However, the choice always speaks to one's Being-in-the-world with people and things, i.e., authentically whole. Like with Rosa Parks, being true to oneself means that one's response will be true to the whole of the situation, irrespective of whether or not the people in the situation find one's response agreeable. In fact, if "agreeability" were the yardstick, then resoluteness might disintegrate into the "anonymous anxiety, the nameless fears, the petty itching lusts, and the all-pervading hostilities of mass society" (Merton,

1961, p. 54). Resoluteness dissolves, because it loses its individualizing freedom, i.e., “freedom from the illusions of the [crowd]” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 311). On the other hand, in the individualizing freedom, resoluteness harmonizes with the selfless Way of Things, i.e., the *wuwei* of *being* the situation. Dass and Gorman (1987) elaborate the implication: “When an action is appropriate, when it is in the Way of Things, it has great power, the power inherent in the Way” (p173). Therefore, in resolute action, such as with the example of Rosa Parks, the person speaks authentically to the world because what is being spoken is not the “general onrush of the human herd” (Chuang Tzu, 1965, p. 101) but rather the wholeness of Being-in-the-world. Thus, as “being the situation,” the individualizing freedom of resoluteness – which speaks with the wholeness of Being-in-the-world – aligns with the *both/and* definition of authenticity.

The mode of inauthentic care.

Implied earlier is that one’s falling into the sea of irresponsibility of the crowd, which Heidegger (1962) calls the “they-self” (p. 164), is the inauthentic mode of care. The they-self is an existential constituent of one’s Dasein as Being-in-the-world with people. As implied above, resoluteness separates oneself from the malaise of the they-self. Moreover, to understand how the irresponsibility of the they-self manifests in modern times, I suggest that one must explicitly link earlier Dasein (i.e., the human who can inquire) with later Dasein (the worlding of the world). In other words, one’s Being-in-the-world, which includes the they-self, must already hear the mystery of the world’s worlding in some distorted manner in order for the they-self to manifest its particular kind of malaise.

Both Tillich and Heidegger appear to agree that people in the modern age are misperceiving the undivided nature of existence through their efforts to control rather than to

harmonize with the natural ebb and flow of life. Recall, for example, how Tillich (1952) suggests that uninhibited productive activity itself is the new telos in modern times (p. 108). Likewise, Heidegger (1971d) sees “the object-character of [self-assertive production as spreading] itself over the earth ever more quickly, ruthlessly, and completely” (p. 112). Moreover, with Tillich (1952), the distortion of one’s faith through unconditional participation in the production process renders God as unnecessary (p. 110). Equally, Heidegger (1971d) posits that the mystery of the world’s worlding, that is, the joining together and moving apart of form and formlessness, recedes under the shadow of uninhibited self-assertive production in which humans set themselves up as the new lord of the earth (Heidegger, 1977, p. 27), as the end and goal of everything (1971d, p. 112). For example, Heidegger (1977) writes:

The hydroelectric plant is not built into the Rhine River as was the old wooden bridge that joined bank with bank for hundreds of years. What the river is now, namely a water power supplier, derives from out of the essence of the power station.... But, it will be [asked], the Rhine is still a river in the landscape, is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry. (p. 16)

Thus, Heidegger’s concept of inauthentic care is bound in what Loy (2003) calls “the tragedy of modern progress” (p. 180). Heidegger (1977) suggests that the uninhibited progress of self-assertive production gives the appearance that humans encounter their authentic purpose and meaning in all of these “creations” of production. However, the danger is that “precisely nowhere do humans today any longer encounter themselves, i.e., their essence” (p. 27). Loy (2003) makes this point, as well, while stating the implications of the predicament of inauthentic care that people today must face:

Our incredible [productive] power means we can do almost anything we want, yet the ironic consequence is that we no longer know what we want. Our reaction has been to grow and ‘develop’ ever more quickly, but to what end?... To keep evading these deepest questions about the meaning of our lives [i.e., the tragedy of progress]. (p. 166)

Existential Pain and Authenticity

This section examines the fundamental paradox of “the between” of being human, which therefore expands the discussion on the truth and meaning of authenticity. The paradox is that each unique human life provides a sacred opportunity to name the unnamable, the hidden wholeness, which transcends time and space; yet, human life must be lived within time and space. This paradox is the existential pain of “the between” and therefore is an essential mode of being human. However, as implied in previous discussions, when the intersection of the two dimensions, the eternal and the temporal, are misperceived, we can easily lean toward defining reality according to the dimension that is most apparent to us, that is, the temporal dimension. Arising from this misperception is the paradigm of self as independently fixed and substantially real. On the other hand, directly seeing the intersection of these two dimensions may arouse a paradigm shift: self as interdependent and therefore insubstantial and empty of a separate, isolated existence. This wise view is inherent in authentic action, which I explain in the next section. For now, however, I describe these two primary ways in which humans can relate with pain: divisively and integratively. In addition, I explore the human habit to resist integrative pain and to deepen divisive pain. Furthermore, because of the soteriological (view of salvation or ultimate freedom) implications of relating with pain divisively or integratively, this investigation

focuses on pain through Christian and Buddhist perspectives. Table 2.4 summarizes each tradition's perspective on existential pain and authenticity.

Table 2.4
Summary of Existential Pain and Authenticity

	Existential Pain	Relating Divisively	Relating Integratively	Tendency to Resist
Buddhism	Buddha's first two noble truths: suffering exists and there is a cause Bodhisattva vow to stay in the world with suffering (Mahayana Buddhism)	Ignorance	Learning to accept the antidote to ignorance, i.e., the compassionate wisdom of emptiness	Ploy of the ego to strengthen and sustain its self-project
Christianity	The restlessness of the heart	Original sin	Re-membering Christ's community, i.e., helping to heal the broken mystical Body of Christ	Temptation of the metaphorical demon within oneself to deny God's judgment of creaturely goodness

The Christian Perspective of Existential Pain

Augustine (1960) writes: "You arouse us to take joy in praising you, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (p. 43). Implied is that there is an existential hunger in humans that cannot be satisfied by worldly things (Merton, 1961, p. 81). Recall Tillich's criterion of true faith: ambiguity. Human hunger, i.e., the restlessness of the heart, metaphorically points to the inevitable ambiguity, the inescapable insecurity, that signifies what it means to be human: to live with hunger that can be fed only by God's grace alone (Tillich, 1957, p. 122). Moreover, one can see the Jewish-rooted parallel with Augustine's

restlessness in Buber's "inborn Thou," in which Buber writes: "The basic human yearning is for the cosmic connexion, with its true Thou, of this life that has burst forth into spirit" (1958, p. 25; 1970, p. 76).

The existential hunger, Augustine's restlessness, suggests that humans live with existential frustration. In other words, our natural gift as humans is discourse and reasoning, and yet all words and ideas fall short in trying to understand the mystery of one's hunger, which is like "skating on very thin ice over infinitely deep waters" (Himes, 1995, p. 84). Simply put, this natural gift of discourse and reasoning is merely, in comparison with God's mystery, like the pebble of sand on a beach that spreads for miles. Lao Tzu (1988) illuminates this point, but from the Taoist perspective: "The tao that can be told/ is not the eternal Tao. / The name that can be named/ is not the eternal Name" (p. 1). Thus, existential frustration means that, although humans can embody in their thoughts, words, and actions the unnamable mystery of God's love, by our finite, limited design, we can never fully succeed on our own. Implied is that the pain of being human means living in the midst of an existential frustration that is constantly reminding us of the truth that, as previously mentioned in the discussion about agape and eros, self-surrender of attachment to worldly things and self-fulfillment through God's love are two sides of the same coin.

The Buddhist Perspective of Existential Pain

The Buddha's first and second noble truths state that within the realm of impermanent phenomena, (a) there is suffering, and (b) suffering has an origin (Dalai Lama, 2005a, p. 25; 2005b, p. 105; 2000, p. 38). Humans live with the perpetual "dis-ease" of their suffering, which comprises three inseparable layers (Loy, 2003, pp. 19-22; Makransky, 2007, pp. 161-163). The

first is the obvious pain, such as sickness, injury, dying, crime, poverty, or catastrophe. The second is the more subtle pain of the inward struggle between knowing that all phenomena are impermanent and yet trying to hold onto them, as if they were permanent. The third is the most subtle form of suffering, in which one believes that there is a substantially real, independent “I” standing against the world as its object. This third form of suffering echoes the earlier point in which the Madhyamika (Middle Way) school in Buddhism tries to replace “apparent commonsense that is deeply metaphysical [the reified ‘I’] with an apparently deeply metaphysical but actually commonsense understanding of the world [emptiness and dependent origination]” (Garfield, 1995, p. 123).

The second and third types of suffering, i.e., of existential pain, imply that humans spend their lives trying to make themselves feel real, while on some level knowing that their continuous struggles inevitably fail (Loy, 2003, p. 22). Novak (1984) calls this ongoing struggle the existential self-project (p. 90). An analogy is that the truth of emptiness is like a bottomless hole, an abyss, that is in the center of one’s being, and yet one is always trying to fill the void, although unsuccessfully (Loy, p. 30).

Unlike the Christian perspective of pain, which suggests that humans always need God’s grace, and as a result remain hungry, Buddhism’s third and fourth noble truths offer the cessation to one’s suffering and provide the path. Consequently, my claim that existential pain is fundamental to one’s human reality appears now to contradict itself. However, despite the third and fourth noble truths, the Mahayana perspective in Buddhism, which follows Nagarjuna’s (1995) Middle Way philosophy, can help me to reframe the seeming contradiction.

Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the bodhisattva’s way. The bodhisattva realizes the deep identity of emptiness and form, samsara and nirvana, and therefore achieves enlightenment.

Yet the bodhisattva vows to remain in the world, i.e., to continue taking on innumerable rebirths, for the sake of helping all beings to liberate from their suffering (Pelden, 2007, p. 69; Shantideva, 2006, p. 48; Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 364). Although implied is the Buddhist concept of rebirth, the main point is that the bodhisattva, who has tremendous compassion for others, realizes deepest liberation not solely for personal attainment but rather to support the liberation of all beings, which the Mahayana perspective calls the “deepest purpose as a human being” (Makransky, 2007, p. 231). Metaphorically, if the mother of the world carries the pain of the world in her heart (Goldstein, & Kornfield, 1987, p. 174), then the bodhisattva, even as enlightened, carries the pain of the world while working for the benefit of all beings. However, if one does not believe in rebirth, the bodhisattva way can still apply to this one lifetime, such as in the Christian belief that true charity means helping to reset the broken body of Christ’s community (Merton, 1961, p. 71). Moreover, Christians and other non-Buddhists may agree with the Buddhist practice of equalizing oneself with others, which is analogous to the image of Christ’s body as the community. The equalizing practice redefines the sense of “I” as the humanity in all people, and recognizes that the human body, the human “I,” can never be at total ease while there is still so much brokenness in the world (Pelden, pp. 283-285).

In short, despite the third and fourth noble truths, which suggest the end to suffering, in light of the Mahayana perspective, the wise and compassionate heart of the bodhisattva always carries the pain of all beings in the world, until they are completely free of their ignorance, i.e., enlightened. From this perspective, my earlier claim of the pain of existence as inevitable to humans remains firm.

Relating to Pain as the Basic Human Problem

As mentioned, there are two ways in which one can relate to pain: divisively, which is inauthentic, and integratively, which is authentic. I examine the Buddhist and Christian perspectives on the basic problem of human pain, which is how to transform one's relation to pain from divisive to integrative. In other words, I explore the soteriology of each perspective.

The Buddhist perspective on relating to pain divisively.

In Buddhism, the basic problem of pain is seeing oneself as substantially real and permanent, while not accepting the conventional, empty nature of oneself and all other phenomena. This fundamental disparity between what appears to be real and what is truly real is the ignorance that is the basis of human pain (Dalai Lama, 2005b, p. 46). Ignorance is problematic because it precludes the attainment of true happiness, which, according to Buddhism, includes qualities such as inner peace, tranquility, unconditional love, compassion, and creative responsiveness (Dalai Lama, 1999, Makransky, 2007). If one does not realize the insubstantial impermanence of phenomena, including oneself, then one's efforts will inevitably point to sustaining the self-project of one's ego, i.e., one's false sense of oneself as separate and substantially real. Moreover, the self-project perpetuates ongoing habits of attachment, aversion, and indifference, all of which compel one to relate to people and things from the sole perspective of the ego's self-project (Dalai Lama, 2005, pp. 50-51; Garfield, 1995, p. 152; Makransky, 2005, p. 190; Novak, 1984, pp. 90-91). In other words, ignorance manifests in the gross and subtle tendencies of one's hope and fear: hope for what one believes is necessary to keep oneself feeling real, and fear of what might obstruct one's so-called realness. Yet despite these efforts, Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche (2002) asks, "Is there really ever any moment in which we are truly

happy?” He continues, “Honestly, those moments of being happy, unafraid, at ease, and totally fearless are very rare” (p. 53).

Implied is that the pain of ignorance constantly does violence to oneself, others, and the world by reducing all phenomena to the self-reifying and therefore narrowing worldview of one’s ego. This violence can occur in degrees of subtlety. Take for example walking across campus. In the walk, one passes by many people. Almost automatically, one reduces each of these people to the category of likeable, dislikeable, or mere stranger, depending on how each of them affects the self-reifying project with which one habitually identifies. More subtly, take the parent and the child. The parent sees the child as “my” child. This sense of “I,” “me,” or “mine” in relation to the child is very subtle, but if something were to happen to the child, not everyone would have the same reaction, because not everyone identifies with the child as one’s own. I do not suggest that identifying with the child as “my child” is violent, but the pattern of reduction is evident, even if extremely subtle, and moreover, the pattern can become the tiny seed that grows into the dynamic of unhealthy “possessiveness” (e.g., Makransky, 2007, pp. 75-76).

More broadly, the self-project of one’s personal ego can mirror the dysfunctional patterns that one sees in the collective ego’s self-project. Take for example the concept of good versus evil. One group reifies and therefore identifies itself as good. However, the group’s self-perceived goodness exists only in dependence upon what it deems as evil in relation to its goodness. Loy (2003) writes: “The interdependence [of good and evil] means that we don’t know what is good until we know what is evil, and we don’t feel we are good unless we are fighting against that evil” (pp. 110-111). This dualistic myth making is evident in blockbuster movies like *The Lion King*, in which one easily sees this cut-and-dry formula (Loy, p. 112). The collective self-project may prevent many Americans from entertaining global questions such as,

“Why do so many people in the Middle East, in particular, hate the United States so much? What have we done to encourage that hatred?” (Loy, p. 107). Rather than the authentic, sacred “othering” of people in the world, domestic and global histories show continual cycles of reductive, violent othering. Yet, to reframe how humans relate personally and collectively with the pain of humanity means to scrutinize how all are caught in the cycle of ignorance, the cycle of blindly reducing the sacredness of the world to self-righteous or self-serving ends (Loy, p. 115; Makransky, 2007, p. 74; Merton, 1961, pp. 115-116).

The Buddhist perspective on relating to pain integratively.

Relating to pain integratively involves a paradox pertaining to the void of emptiness. The paradox is that what humans most fear as the threat to meaningfulness (i.e., the void of emptiness) is what is most essential for meaningful living (Garfield, 1995, p. 180). The soteriological implication is that if one were truly self-existent, in the sense of being substantially real and separate, then one could not change (Nagarjuna, 1995, p. 58; Garfield, 1995, pp. 152 & 272-273). Salvation, i.e., freedom from ignorance, would be impossible, since the reified, permanent self would be “stuck” right where it is, i.e., in ignorance. In other words, for healing to occur, the ignorant self must be capable of change, which means that the self must be, by nature, impermanent, egoless, interdependent... empty. Therefore, the great bodhisattva Shantideva (2006) proclaims: “All those who fail to understand/ The secret of [emptiness], the greatest of all things, / Although they wish for joy and sorrow’s end, / Will wander to no purpose, uselessly” (p. 63). In other words, by not exploring the paradox, one will constantly miss the mark of true happiness, i.e., inner peace, which is why Shantideva teaches: “Whatever is

the source of suffering,/ Let that be the object of our fear./ But voidness will allay our grief,/ How could it be for us a thing of dread?" (p. 145).

Implied is that one should not fear the antidote: the wisdom of emptiness, which also means the wisdom of interdependence, impermanence, and egolessness. The antidote suggests that emptiness is not the self-refutation but rather the self-confirmation of one's meaningful existence (Garfield, 1995, p. 265). In other words, the promise of salvation from ignorance comes in realizing emptiness, which is the ephemeral, constantly changing nature of all people and things. Thus, one should not fear the antidote. Buddhist practices help one to realize the antidote by engaging oneself in exploring questions that point toward emptiness:

What makes the mind move at all? What is it we are trying to avoid by all this hoping, fantasizing, and remembering? What pain or loneliness or unworthiness do we try to escape? What do we want to gain by this movement? What is the nature of the wanting mind? (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 67)

The practices for receiving the antidote begin with respect for where one is in one's spiritual development. Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) write: "The Buddha's teachings always encourage us to take responsibility for our own development and to directly investigate the nature of our experience" (p. 110). In Mahayana Buddhism, the practices focus on oneself first before extending to other people and things in the world, thus expanding outward until, like the compassionate heart of the bodhisattva, one's whole being senses the suffering of the world in its many layers and manifestations. The logic for beginning with oneself is that, "[t]o connect with what others are going through we have to become vividly aware of what we ourselves are going through in all the layers of our being" (Makransky, 2007, p. 164). Furthermore, the wisdom of

emptiness, and the compassionate heart that arises from directly realizing one's interdependency with the world, happens little by little through diligent practice (Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 119).

Moreover, the practices may seem absurd at first, but only because one views them through the eyes of the ego's self-project. For example, on cultivating patience, Shantideva (2006) teaches: "Those who stay close by me, then,/ To damage my good name and cut me down to size,/ Are surely there protecting me,/ From falling into realms of grief" (p. 91). In other words, one cannot cultivate patience without these people. In turn, one should be grateful for the opportunity that they provide (Makransky, 2007, pp. 194 & 196; Pelden, 2007, p. 222; Shantideva, p. 92), since patience leads to qualities of authentic happiness, such as inner peace, tranquility, unconditional love, compassion, and creative responsiveness. Furthermore, the subtle yet profound implication of this example is that the real enemy of one's pain is not out-there in the external circumstance but rather in the self-project of one's mind (Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 86; Shantideva, p. 60). As one progressively comes to realize this profound truth – that the external situation is merely the trigger for one's pain while the real source is in one's ignorance (Makransky, p. 73) – one increasingly shifts from divisively to integratively relating with pain. The soteriological impact is that self-forgiveness can occur as one explores the shadowy parts of one's self-project, i.e., the parts that have been excluded from conscious awareness because they threaten one's ego (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 188). The grieving process may arise as one takes responsibility for one's ignorance and the pain that it has needlessly created for oneself and others by one's continually projecting blame onto the world. Goldstein and Kornfield write, for example:

When we investigate the fear of being judged, of not being accepted, we see that it does not have to do primarily with other people, instead it has to do with our own

unwillingness to experience certain of our feelings and emotions. It is we who are judging ourselves, not accepting ourselves, not loving ourselves. (p. 126)

In short, the antidote that Buddhist practices offer is fundamental to realizing the shift in how one relates to existential pain. The shift is from the reality and cause of one's suffering (i.e., ignorance: divisive relation to pain) to ceasing one's suffering, i.e., the compassionate wisdom of emptiness (integratively relating to pain). However, as I mentioned earlier, in Mahayana Buddhism, the highly developed spiritual practitioner who attains enlightenment (the bodhisattva) continues to work tirelessly for the benefit of all beings. The bodhisattva diligently helps them learn to relate integratively to the pain of their personal and collective self-projects, and therefore, to attain freedom from their ignorance.

The Christian perspective on relating to pain divisively.

In Christianity, original sin is the way in which one relates to pain divisively. Original sin is the broken relationship with God (Makransky, 2005, p. 17). Weil (1999) calls original sin the unknowing destruction of the real presence of God's mystery in the world. She writes: "Evil is carried out by those who have no knowledge of this real presence. In that sense it is true that no one is wicked voluntarily" (p. 76). In Genesis 1:31 (1978), "God looked at everything God made and found it very good" (p. 2). Thus, Himes (1995) suggests that original sin is when humans as God's creatures deny God's judgment of their creaturely nature as being very good and worthy of love (pp. 25-26 & 70). Merton (1961) summarizes all of these perspectives:

The one who lives in division is living in death. He cannot find himself because he is lost; he has ceased to be a reality [in God's eyes]. The person he believes himself to be is a bad dream. And when he dies, he will discover that he long ago ceased to exist because

God, Who is infinite reality and in Whose sight is the being of everything that is, will say to him: 'I know you not.' (p. 48)

Like the Buddhist concept of ignorance, the Christian concept of original sin emphasizes the human habit to reduce holy mystery to narrow self-perceptions. One can understand this tendency in the metaphor of the broken body of Christ. The human body of Christ was crucified long ago; however, Merton (1961) writes: "[T]he mystical Body is drawn and quartered from age to age by the devils in the agony of that disunion which is bred and vegetates in our souls, prone to selfishness and sin" (p. 71). Implied is that the constant disunion of Christ's mystical Body comes from the devil who breeds and vegetates within humans and who tempts them to continue to divide God's community. H.H. the Dalai Lama (1996) interprets the Christian devil as the metaphor of "negative tendencies and impulses that lie within each of us" (p. 98). In this way, the Christian devil is analogous to the Buddhist claim, which I mentioned above, that the real enemy of one's pain is not out-there in the external world but rather is in the ego's self-project.

However, while the Buddha's third and fourth noble truths denote the cessation of suffering and the path of cessation, the Christian concept of original sin, which is fed by the devil within, does not cease. Take for example "Temptation in the Desert" (Lk 4:1-15, 1978; Himes, 1995, pp. 25-28; Palmer, 1990, pp. 99-114). In Luke 4:13, the author writes: "When the devil had finished all the tempting, he left [Jesus], to await another opportunity" (p. 868). In other words, the temptation to break away from God's love and to veil God's grace never ends (Palmer, p. 102). Furthermore, Himes (1995) writes: "The devil has only one card to play, and if it does not work now, he will play it later in the game" (p. 28). Thus, the devil's one playing card in the devil's never-ending game is to tempt humans into believing that being God's creature is *not* very good, and in turn to find happiness in being other-than God's creature.

For example, in Luke 4:3-4 (1978), the devil tells Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to turn into bread” (p. 868). Palmer notes that the root temptation is for Jesus as human to prove his identity as Jesus the Christ (p. 105), i.e., as being other-than God’s creature, since being creaturely is bad. In the modern age of uninhibited progress, this passage is especially relevant. Recall the discussion on Tillich’s (1952) democratic conformism (pp. 105 & 110-111) and Heidegger’s (1971d, p. 112; 1977, p. 27) uninhibited self-assertive production. The tragedy of modern progress (Loy, 2003, p. 180), i.e., the world in which “God is dead” (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 67), is that people confront the impossible task of filling God’s shoes (Himes, pp. 53-54). The parable of Jesus in the desert may therefore be one of the most relevant reminders that the metaphorical devil may be working almost unhindered under the guise of modern progress to invoke people to relate divisively with the pain of human sin. I extend the exploration of “Temptation in the Desert” as I move into the discussion on relating integratively with pain.

The Christian perspective on relating to pain integratively.

In Luke 4:4 (1978), Jesus refuses the devil’s temptation to be other-than God’s creature. He says: “Scripture has it, ‘Not on bread alone shall man live’” (p. 868). Jesus reminds one that being God’s creature is indeed very good, and that the fame and glory of proving himself otherwise is unnecessary. Perhaps his response is one of *the* key challenges confronting people today: i.e., to allow one’s utter dependence on God’s grace (Tillich, 1957, p. 122) to be the only source of authentic refuge to one’s “restless heart” (Augustine, 1960, p. 43). Moreover, when one responds as Jesus does, then one relates integratively with the pain of human sin, which means that one re-members the broken mystical Body of Christ (Merton, 1961, p. 72). This re-

membering, however, is not like the memory in which one recalls facts or knowledge from one's past. Rather, it is authentic memory, which remembers that questions of human worthiness are irrelevant since all beings exist by God's grace alone (Himes, 1995, p. 103; Merton, p. 75). Therefore, the true judge of humans as creaturely is God, and as with Genesis 1:31 (1978, p. 2), God judges all of God's creation as very good. Himes writes: "Coming to grips with the rightness of our own finite being..., lies at the very heart of what the Christian tradition means by salvation, reconciliation, and holiness" (p. 26). Implied is that to see how limited humans are as creatures (Himes, p. 108) and yet to accept one's creaturely status as being very good, like God does, is to receive the world as sacred. In other words, when one accepts God's judgment of creaturely goodness, one can begin to see the world as God sees the world (i.e., the beatific vision).

However, one must journey, like Jesus, through the metaphorical "[empty] desert [of God's mystery, which lies] without trees and without beauty and without water" (Merton, 1961, p. 235), i.e., without the devil's false hopes and ill-conceived judgments. As Himes (1995) notes, this journey, i.e., the stirring of the Holy Spirit within oneself, may not be pleasurable or make one feel good. He writes: "The Holy Spirit does not lead us to satisfaction. Indeed, if Augustine is right, what makes us satisfied is a demon and must be exorcised" (p. 40). Recall that the pursuit of inauthentic happiness, as mentioned earlier, is buying into the devil's temptation to be other-than God's creature, and in turn pursuing inauthentic refuge in worldly satisfactions, such as fame, fortune, pleasure, and praise. The desert empties oneself of these demonic temptations. Moreover, the desert is not some place in which one stands, but is the journey of exorcising within oneself the inner afflictions that lead one to dismember the mystical Body of Christ. In short, the desert is the journey into Christian joy (Himes, p. 40). Merton writes:

You were created for spiritual JOY. And if you do not know the difference between pleasure and spiritual joy, you have not yet begun to live.... True joy is found in the perfect willing of what we were made to will: in the intense and supple and free movement of our will rejoicing in what is good not merely for us but in Itself [in God's judgment]. (p. 259)

Thus, "Temptation in the Desert" (Lk 4:1-13, 1978, p. 868) is the metaphor of the integrative journey, which each human must take through the wilderness of one's inner demon that denies God's judgment. Implied is that the joy of this journey is not easy. Therefore, one might reasonably expect humans to resist the joy of relating integratively with the pain of human sin. I now turn to this human habit of resistance.

The Human Habit of Resistance

There is deep psychology that penetrates the human habit to resist relating integratively instead of divisively with pain. In Buddhism, the deep psychology means balancing what is reactive, opening what is closed, and exploring what is hidden (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 18). Simply, the process of balancing, opening, and exploring one's ignorance and inner afflictions is part of the deeply psychological work in the integrative journey. Take for example Rumi's (1996) poem "The Guest House," which speaks to the human habit of resistance:

This being human is a guest house/
Every morning a new arrival./
A joy, a depression, a
meanness,/ some momentary awareness comes/
as an unexpected visitor./
Welcome and entertain them all!/
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture/
still treat each guest honorably./
[They] may be clearing you out
for some new delight./
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door

laughing,/ and invite them in./ Be grateful for whoever comes,/ because each has been sent/ as a guide from beyond. (p. 109)

One's inner afflictions or one's inner demon – i.e., the ego's reifying "I," which divides the mystery of wholeness – works hard to distract one from listening to the implications of profoundly true words like Rumi's (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, pp. 118-119; Novak, 1984, p. 90). For example, Rumi's poem may sound nice. One may appreciate and even agree with the concept of "welcoming and entertaining them all," but may savor these words from the safe distance of one's intellect alone. The ego is satisfied to "know about" the words. But the penetrating sense of the meaning, i.e., understanding them "bone deep" (Palmer, 1990, p. 153), is very different (Simmer-Brown, 1999, p. 108). Implications are like the threshold from which one's ego pulls back in order to sustain one's divisive relation with pain.

To clarify, recall the discussion about Tillich's concept of eros-agapic love, which I presented in relation to "Doctrine of the Cross." Whoever loses their life for the sake of God (agape) will find their life (eros). Himes (1995) elaborates: "Life comes where you have no right to expect it. It does not come from success [i.e., selfish clinging]. It is found among those who seem to lose everything [i.e., selfless service to God's community]" (p. 76). Weil (1999) offers the metaphor of a lever to describe this double movement of giving (agape) and receiving (eros). She writes: "A lever. We lower when we want to lift" (p. 92). Palmer (1990) agrees. The downward movement is "key to our quest for reality" (p. 87; also see p. 31). He suggests that, by traveling downward, i.e., by exposing the distorted views of self-clinging habits, one may gradually clear away the illusions that have kept one distant from the reality of God's hidden wholeness (pp. 31, 51 & 155).

Thus far, these concepts and metaphors may sound intriguing. Intellectually, one might easily respond, “Yes. Of course, I agree. This is the way to be in the world.” However, the implication of deeply touching reality is that, as Palmer (1990) suggests, “We [might] be called to do God-knows-what for God-knows-who” (p. 153). For example, one may enjoy eating a fine meal in an expensive restaurant. Yet, as the meaning of eros-agapic love begins to penetrate one’s being, one may experience uneasiness when, peering through the restaurant window, one sees homeless people begging for money. This uncertainty implies that the disunion of Christ’s mystical Body resonates on some level of one’s understanding. Still, while one stands at the threshold of uncertainty of what to do, the exposed ego (i.e., one’s inner affliction or devil within) may resist by deferring to the old patterns of relating divisively to pain. In other words, the individualizing ego may subconsciously resist the vulnerability of relating integratively and may defer to the “safe” illusion that the Cross is merely an event that happened to someone, albeit an important someone, long ago, detached from the meaning of one’s life in the present moment.

Implied is that the movement toward overcoming the human habit to resist pain, i.e., toward learning to relate integratively with pain, may radically undermine and transform one’s way of being in the world, including one’s actions. Thus, I conclude the philosophical and theological review with discussion on action and authenticity.

Action and Authenticity

This section expands the previous one by emphasizing the Buddhist and Christian moral teachings on right action, i.e., action that brings one toward the selflessness that is demanded when one relates integratively to pain. Since qualities such as impartial love, compassion,

kindness, forgiveness, and patience are emphasized in each body of teachings, I integrate the two bodies of literature to create a construct of action and authenticity. Several themes are emphasized. First, each tradition underscores a universal teaching on selfless concern, i.e., although the two traditions fundamentally differ in metaphysical beliefs, their shared purpose is “the creation of similarly good [selfless] human beings, spiritually mature and ethically sound” (Dalai Lama, 1996, p. 82). Second, the teaching may appear as counter-cultural and contradictory to ordinary, everyday understanding (i.e., to self-centered habits), and thus may result in some of the most challenging lessons one can explore. Third, the universal teaching demands wise discernment toward oneself and others, which means that compassionate confrontation may be necessary at times (e.g., others confronting oneself; oneself confronting others). Last, the teaching is rooted in the universal law that holds each person responsible for the consequences of their understanding and application of the teaching. Table 2.5 below summarizes the key points on action and authenticity.

Table 2.5
Summary of Action and Authenticity

Universal Teaching	Principle of Moral Action	Universal Law
Selfless concern for the well-being of others is the only way to attain authentic happiness	Impartial love for the deepest goodness of all beings (i.e., “there is no right or wrong”)	The Buddhist law of karma: what goes around comes around
	Wise discernment that evokes the deep worthiness of humans, who are prone to ignorance or sin (i.e., “but right is right and wrong is wrong”)	Matthew 7:1-3: Jesus says, “The measure you give will be the measure you get”

The Universal Teaching on Selflessness

Jesus Christ and the Buddhist sage Shantideva epitomize the universal teaching on selflessness in each wisdom tradition, respectively Christianity and Buddhism. In Matthew's "Doctrine of the Cross" (1978), which I just mentioned, Jesus says: "Whoever will save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (p. 830). Likewise, in *The Bodhicharyavatara* (i.e., *The Way of the Bodhisattva*), Shantideva (2006) says: "All the joy the world contains/ Has come through wishing happiness for others./ All the misery the world contains/ Has come through wanting pleasure for oneself" (p. 127).

Evident in each teaching is the theme of selflessness, which may appear absurd to the self-clinging ego, whose perpetual self-project is to reify oneself as substantially real and separate. However, the absurdity is what makes the implications of the teachings profound. The implications challenge one to take the plunge into not-knowing, i.e., into the spontaneous landscape of the beginner's mind, and to bear witness to the unknown, which is holy mystery (Halifax, 1999, pp. 174 & 176). Recall that the ego merely tolerates "knowing about" teachings like these but remains on guard because the ego knows that such teachings are inevitably threatening and therefore does not like them. As hooks (1999) writes: "To live the life of the spirit, to be true to a life of the spirit, we have to be willing to be called on – often in ways that [one's ego] may not like" (p. 114).

The universal nature of the teaching means that it applies to everyone. For example, Himes (1995) writes: "Jesus is not telling us, 'This is how you ought to live,' but rather, 'This is how the world is. This is what it is like to exist'" (p. 77; also see Palmer, 1990, p. 155). Likewise, Shantideva's teaching also describes this basic fact of life: only by selfless love and compassion can one be authentically well, "[and until] we recognize this fact [of life], we can't find much

happiness” (Makransky, 2007, p. 76). Consequently, one can understand why, in Rilke’s (1982) final verse in “Archaic Torso of Apollo,” the author writes: “[F]or here there is no place/ that does not see you. You must change your life.” In other words, one cannot escape the image of God’s pure self-gift, which is inscribed in one’s human nature (Gen 1:27, 1978, p. 2), or one cannot escape one’s empty, interdependent, impermanent, and egoless nature, i.e., the buddha within oneself and others, even if one is prone to sin or ignorance. Moreover, the universality of the teaching implies that one must carry oneself in the world in a way that harmonizes with the profundity of its truth. Thus, the discussion now turns to the principle of moral action.

The Principle of Moral Action

The universal teaching in Buddhism and Christianity implies the challenging and paradoxical principle of moral action, which is: “There is no right and wrong, but right is right and wrong is wrong” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 194). To clarify the first half, recall the dualistic myth making of good and evil (Loy, 2003, pp. 110-112) in which one reduces the other person or group to wholly evil and, in turn, identifies oneself as wholly good, e.g., the overly simplistic formula that one might see in blockbuster movies such as *The Lion King*. However, the first half of the principle of moral action (i.e., there is no right and wrong) dissolves the dualistic concept of good and bad, or right and wrong. It speaks to the unconditional, selfless nature of humans, which is impartial, beyond all biases and concepts.

For example, in Matthew (1978) 5:45, the author writes: “[God’s] sun rises on the good and the bad, [and God] rains on the just and unjust” (p. 822). Himes (1995) adds: “Our Father in heaven doesn’t especially care whether you are good or wicked. Your Father in heaven simply loves you. There are no bounds to God’s love, so do not put any bounds on yours” (p. 11). Thich

Nhat Hanh (2007) makes the point, as well: “In Buddhism we are encouraged to love every living being as a mother [who selflessly] loves her only child; this is called boundless love” (p. 107). Moreover, in Taoism, Lao Tzu (1988) frames the point this way: “What is a good person but a bad person’s teacher? / What is a bad person but a good person’s job? / If you don’t understand this, you will get lost, / However intelligent you are. / It is the great secret” (p. 27). The “great secret” of the first half of the principle of moral action is that all human beings, through the impartial love of God, or in their Buddha nature, have a deep worthiness.

However, one must also acknowledge that humans live together in the world as finite creatures who bear sin and ignorance, which can compel people to do bad things to themselves and to one another. In other words, we all have potential and powerful tendencies for confusion, possessiveness, hatred and apathy. Therefore, the second half of the principle of moral action applies, as well: “[b]ut right is right and wrong is wrong” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 194). Thus, the paradox of the principle becomes clear: there is no right and wrong in the ultimate truth of emptiness or in God’s unconditional love; yet, there is right and wrong in the world in which finite, limited human beings must live and act together. The challenge of the paradox, consequently, is twofold in relation to its two parts. First, one must recognize the essential goodness of humans, i.e., their holiness, which is irreducible to limiting labels (Himes, 1995, p. 112; Makransky, 2007, p. 161). Second, beginning with oneself and then extending to others (Makransky, pp. 79 & 164), one must act in ways that “evoke” (Makransky, p. 142) this deep worthiness and that challenge habits of sin or ignorance (Himes, p. 111; Makransky, pp. 179-180).

Take for example Matthew (1978) 5:44 in which Jesus commands: “Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors” (p. 822). Jesus does not advocate for passive love, in the sense of

being idle and doing nothing. Nor does he suggest emotional love, in the sense of falling in love with someone. The command would make no sense (Himes, 1995, p. 110). Instead, the command implies “nonviolent love” (e.g., see Dass & Gorman, 1987, pp. 157 & 163; Lao Tzu, 1988, p. 48) that does not interfere with others’ well-being but rather confirms their essential goodness while confronting, if necessary, their selfish words and actions (Makransky, 2007, pp. 179-180). Jesus is, in effect, giving the command to live the principle of moral action, which means to live with “wise discernment” (Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 149; Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 195; Himes, 1995, p. 111).

Consider, for example, the parent who discerns her child’s deep goodness and at the same time knows that little children, because of their lack of experience, can easily place themselves in harm’s way. The child tries to climb to the kitchen cabinets, and yet the parent emphatically says no; as a result, the child becomes angry with the parent. Indeed the parent interferes with the child’s action, but only because enabling the action might likely interfere with the child’s ongoing well-being. Thus, the parent, who is acting in selfless concern, safeguards the child’s deepest goodness while confronting the child’s potentially harmful choice. The parent is, in effect, exercising wise discernment, which is a loving and compassionate action for the child’s ongoing well-being and happiness.

Applying the principle of moral action, i.e., using wise discernment, in one’s life may be challenging when one tries to extend the principle, for example, beyond the love of the parent for the child. Yet, Buddhism and Christianity provide analogies that may help to expand one’s perspective. Recall the Buddhist practice of equalizing oneself and others. One redefines how one identifies with the construct of “I,” shifting from oneself as “I” to the whole body of humanity as “I.” On the equalizing practice, Shantideva (2006) teaches: “The hand and other

limbs are many and distinct, / But all are one – the body to be kept and guarded. / Likewise, different beings in their joys and sorrows, / Are, like me, all one in wanting happiness” (p. 122; also see Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 28). Metaphorically, if one treats one’s body well, i.e., the body as the whole of humanity, then the body will take care of oneself. In other words, one’s “overall state of heart and mind” (Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 30) will be based on selfless concern for the well-being of others, and despite the complexity and uncertainty of the situation, one will be able to exercise wise discernment better than if one were acting merely from selfish concern. Moreover, in Christianity, analogous with the Buddhist equalizing practice, all beings are God’s children, and to extend the same loving courtesy to all beings, as the parent does for the child, is to give God one’s best offering as a Christian. In reflecting on Matthew 5:43-48, “Love of Enemies,” H.H. the Dalai Lama (1996) writes:

God created you as an individual and gave you the freedom to act in a way that is compatible and in accordance with the Creator’s wishes – to act in an ethical way, in a moral way, and to live a life of an ethically disciplined, responsible individual. By feeling and practicing tolerance and patience toward fellow creatures, you are fulfilling that wish: you are pleasing your Creator. That is, in a way, the best gift, the best offering, that you can make to the divine Creator. (p. 50)

Nonetheless, irrespective of whether or not one takes to heart the universal teaching on selflessness as well as explores the paradoxical principle of moral action, which means engaging in wise discernment and subsequent action, one cannot escape the consequences of one’s choices. This leads to a discussion on the universal law, which concludes this philosophical/theological literature review.

The Universal Law

Buddha proclaims: “In this world, ill-will is never appeased by ill-will; ill-will is always appeased by [unconditional] love” (Loy, 2003, p. 109; also see Makransky, 2007, pp. 128-130). Above, in Matthew (1978, p. 822) 5:43-48, “Love of Enemies,” Jesus is suggesting the same point, as well; in other words, hold oneself and others, both friends and enemies, responsible for our actions, but do not forget that we all are God’s children, and are loved unconditionally in God’s eyes. The dynamic of what Buddha and Jesus are implying is what Buddhism calls karma, which I mentioned earlier in the Buddhist concept of truth. Karma, which is the law of cause and effect, is infinitely layered in complexity. The key point to remember is that intentions lead to actions that both create an immediate effect and imprint a predisposition into one’s consciousness (Dalai Lama, 2000, 49); this in turn leads to either lessening or increasing one’s ignorance (Dalai Lama, 2005b, 109; 2000, pp. 48-51). In other words, “we are the heirs of our own motives and deeds” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 143). Good motives and deeds generate a positive energy and power of mind, and condition a habit of virtue, which can help empower the path of liberation. The converse is true for bad motives and deeds. Moreover, although the Christian tradition does not speak of karma, parallels can be made in the teachings of Jesus. For example, in Matthew (1978) 7:1-3, Jesus teaches:

If you want to avoid judgment, stop passing judgment. Your verdict on others will be the verdict passed on you. The measure with which you measure will be used to measure you. Why look at the speck in your [neighbor’s] eye when you miss the plank in your own. (p. 823)

In other words, what goes around comes around. Good dispositions, motivations, and deeds may ultimately support good consequences. For example, if one smiles at another person,

genuinely indicating with one's whole disposition how happy one is to see the other person, one might expect the other person to smile in return. Perhaps a friendly conversation occurs, and this interaction leaves each person feeling uplifted. Their subsequent interactions throughout the rest of their day may bear the positive imprint of the earlier exchange. This example, of course, does not speak to the infinitely layered, nonlinear complexity of karma, but it can help one to clarify the essential point that one is an active participant in sowing the seeds of one's own destiny, whether for better or worse. As Buddha says, "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now" (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 93). Merton (1961) the Christian mystic and middle Twentieth Century social activist, concludes:

Many people have asked God for what they thought was 'peace' and wondered why their prayer was not answered. They could not understand that it actually *was* answered. God left them with what they desired, for their idea of peace was only another form of war. The 'cold war' is simply the normal consequence of our corrupt idea of a peace based on a policy of 'every man for himself' in ethics, economics, and political life. It is absurd to hope for a solid peace based on fictions and illusions! [*Italics in original*] (p. 122)

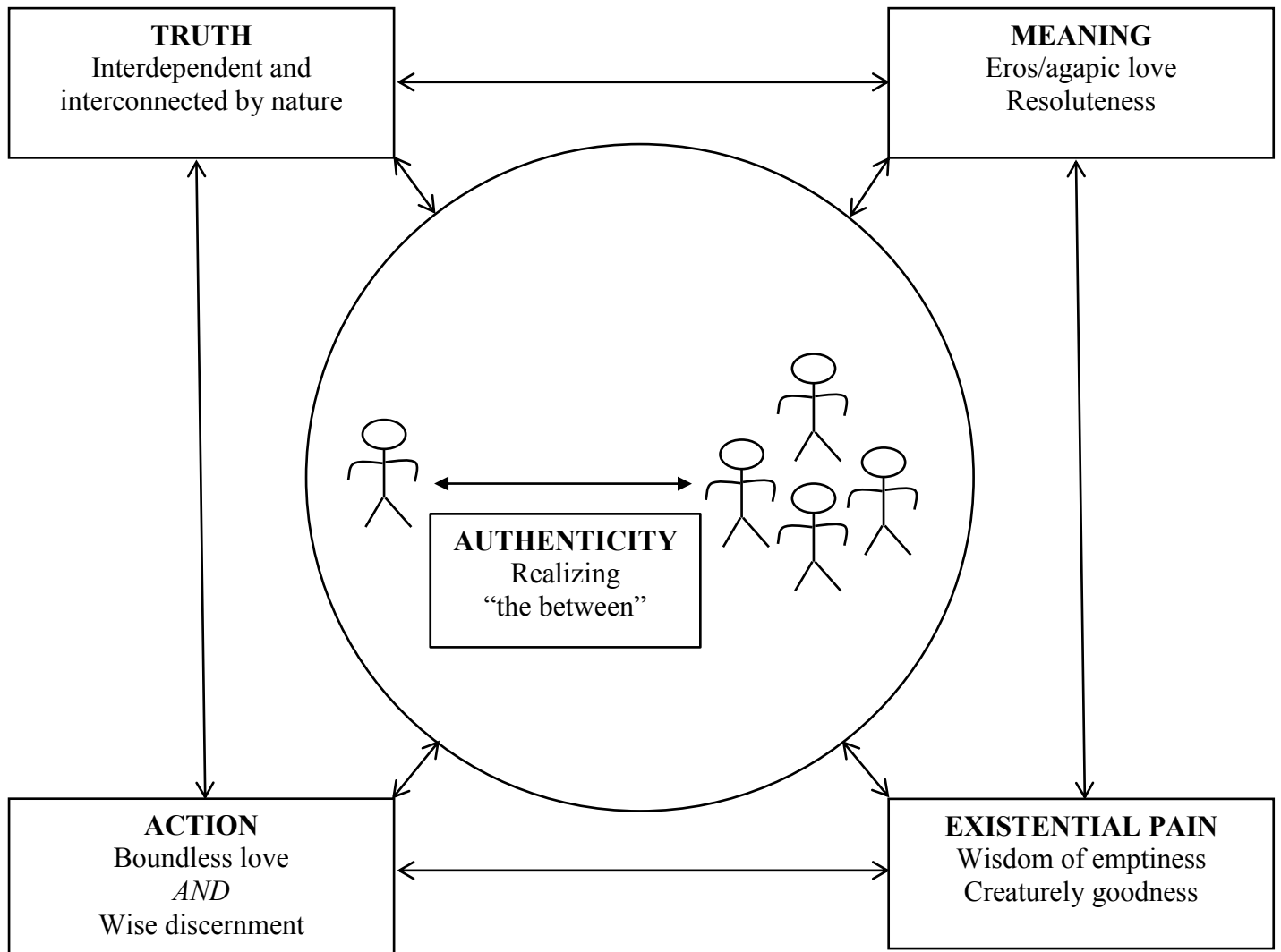
Conclusion

The universal law safeguards the integrity of the universal teaching on selflessness and upholds the principle of moral action. To explore the universal teaching means to seek ways of authentically relating to existential pain, i.e., ways that help one to differentiate between relating that divides and that integrates. The investigation into action and pain is coterminous with the examination of the existential meaning of one's life, as well as the discernment of the authentic nature of human being. Along this path of inquiry, one may develop new eyes, eyes that see

oneself, others, and the world more authentically, that see the world and all of its beings in the sacredness of their inseparable uniqueness and wholeness. This authentic seeing is authenticity.

Figure 2.2 highlights these key concepts. The next chapter expands the review on authenticity by exploring and interpreting the educational literature. The interpretive summary at the end of the third chapter brings both reviews into dialogue to establish the working theoretical basis for this study. Nonetheless, the current chapter already suggests a vitally different perspective from the narrowing technocratic, administrative lens of standards-driven reform, which I outlined in the previous chapter. In other words, these key concepts suggest the need for uniquely personal ways of being that express, evoke, and recall the underlying wholeness of self, other, and world. In turn, the implications may call forth new understandings of the teacher's significance in authentic educational reform. Keeping this in mind, I now turn to the review of the educational literature.

Figure 2.2
Summary of Key Concepts: Philosophical and Theological Literature Review



Chapter Three: Review of the Educational Literature

In this chapter, I review the educational literature on authenticity. One purpose is to delineate conceptual and empirical bodies of work on authenticity in education. The broad purpose, however, is to inform the working theoretical framework for the current study. Accordingly, at the end of the chapter, I present an “interpretive summary” that integrates the educational, philosophical, and theological reviews to establish an integrated, meaningful framework as the working basis for my research.

The key criterion for the database search on the educational literature emerges from this study’s primary purpose, which is to explore authenticity in teachers’ lives. In other words, because the primary research focus is teachers and their authentic development, I restrict this review to literature that focuses on teachers themselves rather than on what teachers can do for students.

Some of the literature under review emerges from texts I discovered by (a) accessing my knowledge of prior coursework; (b) conducting blind searches in the library; and (c) pursuing interesting leads from sources that I had been currently exploring. For example, Buber’s (1958; 1970) prologue to *I-Thou* indicates an exchange between Buber and the well-known psychotherapist Carl Rogers, in which they discuss authenticity in the educational relationship. This prologue compelled me, therefore, to examine transcripts of their meeting (see Anderson & Cissna, 1997). In turn, in the conceptual review, I discuss Buber’s concept of “normative limitation,” which Buber first made explicit through this exchange.

Most of the literature, however, emerges from scholarly articles. The literature search for these articles spans three comprehensive educational databases: Education Research Complete, ERIC, and JSTOR. Moreover, I used Google Scholar, as well. I chose this database because it

provides a cross-reference feature to educational works that cite the article on the results list.

This unique cross-reference feature helped to embellish the literature search.

The preliminary keyword search strategy was twofold. First, I used the word authenticity but also words that were relevant to the theoretical framework, such as spirituality and morality. I chose spirituality, for example, because the earlier definition of authenticity goes beyond the perception of oneself as an isolated individual who is separate from others and the world. I chose morality because authenticity involves mutual responsibility and reciprocal accountability. Second, since the primary focus of this study is teachers themselves, I juxtaposed each of the above keywords with each of the following: teacher learning, staff development, and professional development. The results of the preliminary strategy, however, did not yield many articles. For example, in the ERIC database, the keyword authenticity in addition to either teacher learning, staff development, or professional development yielded six articles. Replacing authenticity with spirituality generated only one article while morality resulted in no articles. Therefore, I decided to expand the parameters of the literature search.

The expanded search provides an inclusive view of the educational literature with regard to authenticity as well as spirituality and morality while upholding the integrity of this study's main unit of focus, i.e., teachers themselves. This expansion includes: (a) teacher education, i.e., the development of pre-service teachers; (b) educational leadership, because educational leaders directly influence the conditions for teacher learning and growth; (c) higher education, which includes the development of professors across disciplines within public and private universities and colleges; (d) private and religious K-12 schools; (e) international education; and (f) adult development across the helping professions (e.g., medicine).

I restricted the search parameters to peer-reviewed journal articles; however, I kept the range of years open. Furthermore, as mentioned above, I excluded literature that primarily deals with what teachers can do for students. I also limited the number of articles that focus peripherally on authenticity (i.e., that mention it only once or twice). Lastly, I limited the number of articles that define authenticity as “relevance,” i.e., teachers making real-world connections in their professional learning. The articles on relevance are unequivocally important, which is why I included a sample, but I limited the number in order to keep my focus on articles that appear more germane to the previous theoretical analysis.

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review examines twenty-seven educational articles or texts. I organize this review with the same five themes as addressed in the previous chapter: (a) defining authenticity; (b) truth and authenticity; (c) meaning and authenticity; (d) pain and authenticity; and (e) action and authenticity. Reasoning about this decision is based on several criteria. When I began to conceptualize this body of literature, I knew that I wanted to explore definitions of authenticity (i.e., the first theme). I also observed that some of the literature addresses the meaning of teaching as one’s vocation, which aligns with the third theme. Consequently, I began to wonder whether the other themes, as well, might provide an appropriate framework to organize the conceptual review. As I explored this inquiry, I realized that the five themes would provide a workable framework and therefore decided to use them.

Defining Authenticity

On defining authenticity, Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, and Knottenbelt (2007, p. 39) propose a multidimensional concept. These authors apply Heidegger's concept of care, suggesting that teachers have an existential concern for the possibilities that may help or hinder the discovery of their uniqueness as teachers (pp. 31-33). The authors also apply Taylor's ethics of authenticity in which, they suggest, the authentic teacher-self occurs against the background of issues that deeply matter in education or society in general. Thus, the authentic teacher negotiates the ongoing tension between self-originality and the background of sociocultural meanings (p. 36; also see Taylor, 1991, p. 66). Moreover, Malm (2008), who draws from Mead's concept of "I-me," appears to agree with Taylor. The symbolic "I" is one's free-willed self, which is always negotiating with the symbolic "me," i.e., the internalized set of cultural beliefs within oneself (pp. 376-377). For Malm, being true to oneself as a teacher means "upholding one's 'I'-identity within reasonable limits by not succumbing to the limitations of 'me' if it goes against one's inner beliefs and personal convictions" (p. 378). In other words, authenticity depends on discovering and balancing one's originality against the background of sociocultural and political meanings.

As mentioned, integral to the earlier theoretical analysis of authenticity are spirituality and morality. Here I address how educators are defining these two concepts. First, Dantley (2005, p. 501), Palmer (2003, p. 377), and Starratt and Guare (1995, p. 191) suggest that spirituality is the deep longing to connect with a depth of reality that cuts through the surface appearance of oneself as separate. Dantley (pp. 501-502) and Mayes (2001, p. 6) expand the definition by suggesting that spirituality is the ontological ground that defines one's sense of meaning and purpose. Lastly, Dantley (p. 503) enriches these definitions by positing the critical

lens in which one questions and takes action upon hegemonic structures that aim to silence voices and marginalize people.

On Morality, Fallona (2000, p. 686), Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, and Sanger (2009, p. 8), Osguthorpe (2008, p. 289), and Sanger (2008, p. 175) apply to education Aristotle's concept of virtuous action, e.g., bravery, truthfulness, honor, generosity, and temperance. Furthermore, Fenstermacher et al. embellish the concept of morality by distinguishing moral manner and teaching morality. Moral manner means conducting oneself in harmony with what is right, i.e., virtuous behavior. Teaching morality, on the other hand, means explicitly teaching moral behavior (p. 8).

Moreover, Sanger (2009) expands the concept of morality by including not only moral virtue and moral decision making (i.e., acting in the best interest of students) but also formal domains of moral discourse (pp. 175-177). For example, "the moral wrongness of [beating someone up] does not depend upon what the teacher says or thinks" (p. 179). In other words, the topic of violence falls within the formal domain of social discourse. Simply, one could be arrested for harming someone else, irrespective of the social conventions in school. However, one could not be arrested for walking out of line down the hallway, despite the fact that one may, as a result, miss recess. In the fifth theme, I examine the nuances between moral reasoning and formal domains as well as the implications for teacher education. For now, however, the point is that in defining teachers' morality, Sanger is suggesting that teacher educators and educational researchers can expand their understanding to include the body of scholarly literature on formal domains. By doing so, they may create a rich conception of morality that can inform teacher education.

Truth and Authenticity

Halifax (1999, p. 173), Palmer (1993, pp. 43 & 81), and Remen (1999, p. 53) observe that the root word of education, which is *educare*, means to draw out the personal truth of one's hidden wholeness. This section explores how educational thinkers are conceptualizing this meaning of education.

Authentic knowing in bonds of Thouness.

Palmer (1993) suggests that discovering personal truth depends on how openly teachers can enter into loving relationship with their students and the curriculum, i.e., the world of subject matter. Palmer quotes Paul 1 Corinthians 13 to explain key characteristics of the loving relationship. First is the direct encounter with the non-objectifying, sacred reality of the other: i.e., “[T]hen we shall see face to face.” Second is the mutuality of oneself within the bonds of community: “I shall know even as I am known” (Palmer, p. 15; also see *The New American Bible*, 1978, p. 965). Palmer writes:

[K]nowledge that heals and makes whole will come as teachers look creation in the eyes and allow it to look back, not only searching creation but allowing [creation] to search them [i.e., the direct encounter].... This will be perfect knowledge...., [because] the ‘objects’ of their knowledge will no longer be objects but beings with personal faces, related to them in a community of being [i.e., mutuality]. (p. 16)

Evident in the loving relationship is Buber's concept of I-Thou. Palmer (1993) writes: “We will find truth... in the quality of our relationships with each other and with the whole created world.... We are to learn and live in bonds of Thouness, of community” (p. 50). Palmer (p. 52), Shields (2005, pp. 610-611), and Starratt and Guare (1995, p. 198) suggest that bonds of

Thouness require teachers to engage in modes of knowing that open them to these bonds with their students and the world of subject matter, all of which may become “Wholly Other” (Starratt & Guare, p. 198) to them. For example, Palmer asks: “We ourselves are part of the reality we wish to know: does the multiplicity of our modes of knowing [i.e., nonrational, nonempirical faculties such as empathy and intuition] suggest a similar multiplicity in the nature of that reality” (p. 52)? Implied is that teacher development that merely heeds an epistemology of rational and empirical knowing fails to honor the ontological truth of teachers, which is relational, and thus fails to support teachers in embracing, ever anew, bonds of Thouness among themselves, their students, and the world of subject matter, which they teach.

Buber’s normative limitation.

Malm (2008) emphasizes Buber’s I-Thou, as well, but focuses on Buber’s concept of “normative limitation” between the teacher and student (p. 377). The concept of normative limitation became explicit in the prologue to *I-Thou* after Buber’s conversation in 1957 with Carl Rogers (for transcription and commentary, see Anderson & Cissna, 1997, pp. 37-42). To delineate the concept, Buber writes: “[T]he educational relationship could not endure if the pupil also practiced the art of embracing by living through the shared situation from the educator’s point of view” (1958, pp. 131-132; 1970, p. 178). Thus, according to Buber, the art of embracing is the teacher’s task alone. For him, embracing is precisely what constitutes the normative limitation and therefore defines the particularity of the relationship between the teacher and student. In other words, the teacher practices the art of embracing the shared situation with the student by imagining what the student, “at this very moment, is wishing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking” (Kramer, 2003, p. 194), i.e., a kind of empathetic knowing. However, the student most

likely does not attempt to embrace the shared situation from the teacher's perspective. Kramer elaborates this point:

When the student experiences the world from the teacher's side, the nature of the educational relationship shifts, and teacher and student become friends. Or perhaps they become colleagues, in which case their concerns are decidedly mutual. To put it another way, while the teacher experiences that a student is being educated, the student does not normally experience the education of the teacher. Advanced students do show interest, and better teachers do acknowledge their position as learners in the world, but students in these classrooms still normally experience their teachers as those with the ability to pass on their knowledge. (p. 191)

Implied is that mutuality between the teacher and student will always be limited by this normative limitation; otherwise, the relationship becomes "friendship" (Buber, 1958, p. 132; 1970, p. 178; also see Kramer, 2003, p. 191) because the primary task that defines the teacher's role in the teacher-student relationship is no longer the teacher's exclusively. In effect, the normative limitation implies a kind of one-sidedness between the teacher and student, thus leaving one to wonder, especially with regard to the previous chapter's interpretation about authenticity: "What about reciprocity in the teacher-student relationship?" "Can the teacher learn anything about humanity by entering into an authentic and dynamic relational process with her students?" Moreover, recall the example about Buber glancing at the cat (1958, p. 96; 1970, p. 145). Kramer writes: "In response to the cat's 'truly speaking glance,' [Buber is] touched by the cat's uniqueness [and] in the process, [his] glance is altered by the cat's glance" (p. 54). Thus, is Buber exhibiting a kind of stubbornness as well as inconsistency by suggesting that complete mutuality may be achieved with the cat but not with his students? In response, Buber might

argue that the nuances of the normative limitation do not eliminate the dynamic, interdependent, and reciprocal potential between the teacher and student. Rather, this potential for reciprocity may still exist, but never fully as long as the teacher's task is defined by the art of embracing. To conclude this analysis, Buber (1964) asserts this position in the following way:

The teacher will awaken in the pupil the need to communicate of himself and the capacity thereto and in this way bring him to greater clarity of existence. But, he also learns, himself, through teaching thus; he learns, ever anew, to know concretely the becoming of the human creature that takes place in experiences; he learns what no human ever learns completely, the particular, the individual, the unique. No, certainly no full partnership; but still a characteristic kind of reciprocity; still a real dialogue. (p. 68)

The critique of a Heideggerean perspective in education.

Donnelly (1998) proposes another view of truth and education, drawing from Heidegger's (1962) Division One of *Being and Time*. Donnelly correctly suggests that the teacher is already in the world with students, prior to any dichotomy of subject and object. In other words, he refers to Heidegger's concept of "Being-with" people as equally pre-thematic with one's basic stance as Being-in-the-world (pp. 946-947). Therefore, he makes the insightful claim that theories of teacher activity that begin with the subject/object dichotomy inevitably fall short of how the activity of teaching really is. However, Donnelly attempts to parallel the teacher-student relationship with the same kind of relationship that Heidegger uses to describe human interaction with equipment. At this point, Donnelly's analysis becomes conceptually problematic.

Donnelly suggests that students are “ready to hand” (p. 946) like equipment, which humans use within the wholeness of everyday, pre-thematic contexts. In other words, one uses the hammer without having to think thematically about how to use it, or about its properties. Only when the hammer stops functioning properly however, does one inspect it and problematize it as a theme for inquiry and analysis. Donnelly makes the same parallel regarding the activity of teaching (p. 941). For example, students walk into the classroom and the teacher notices that one of them is crying. In turn, the teacher walks over to the student to inquire into the problem. The thematic particularity of the crying student announces itself from out of the wholeness of the pre-thematic classroom context. Although Donnelly’s parallel is intriguing, he imprecisely interprets Being-with equipment and Being-with people as comparable. In Heidegger’s terms, circumspective concern (Being-with equipment) and solicitude (Being-with people) are *not* parallel, although they are equally pre-thematic. On this point, Heidegger (1962) writes:

Circumspective concern is a character-of-Being which Being-with *cannot have* as its own, even though Being-with, like concern, is a Being-towards entities encountered within-the-world. But those entities towards which Dasein as Being-with comports itself [i.e., people] *do not have* the kind of Being which belongs to equipment ready-to-hand. They are themselves Dasein [i.e., because people, unlike hammers, can problematize and reconstruct their situation]. These entities are not objects of concern, but rather of solicitude. [Italics added] (p. 157)

Thus, to characterize the teacher-student relationship as “concernful circumspection” (Donnelly, 1998, p. 935) and to suggest that children are ready-to-hand (p. 946), like equipment, is conceptually problematic. On the one hand, Donnelly’s attempt to reframe the activity of teaching by penetrating theories that begin with the subject/object dichotomy is insightful. On

the other hand, the implication of this reframing reinforces the view of teaching as “an instrumental practice” (p. 946), which is the assumption on which he bases the proposal. As a result, the overall argument might be most conducive to administrative modes of educational practice, which prevent teachers from entering into authentic relationships with their students, i.e., relationships such as those suggested above by Buber and Palmer.

Meaning and Authenticity

The earlier definitions of spirituality (Dantley, 2005, p. 501; Palmer, 2003, p. 377; Starratt & Guare, 1995, p. 191) imply that authentic meaning in teaching occurs within one’s longing to connect with depths of reality that penetrate the surface appearance of separateness. This section explores how educators are conceptualizing this deep longing.

The decision to teach.

For Mayes (2001), teaching is an act of, what Tillich (1957, p. 3) calls, “ultimate concern.”² Mayes writes: “[Ultimate concern] as the essence of true religiosity, is so often the basis of [one’s decision to teach]” (p. 10). Implied is that ultimate concern is the silent content that is speaking deep within one’s decision. Hansen (1994), moreover, suggests that one’s decision arises from (a) one’s sense of service to others, and (b) one’s desire for self-fulfillment (p. 261). With these twofold criteria, one might recall Tillich’s (1957) earlier definition of love as the interdependency of agape (service to others) and eros (self-fulfillment) (p. 133), i.e., the interdependency that is integral to one’s authentic ultimate concern. Thus, at the root of the

² Recall that Tillich writes: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might’ (Deut. 6:5). This is what ultimate concern means and from these words the term ‘ultimate concern’ is derived.”

decision to teach may be one's ultimate concern to love authentically, i.e., to fulfill one's spiritual longing for wholeness by serving others.

Furthermore, as Hansen (1994) suggests, when one decides to teach as the vocational response to one's deep longing, one simultaneously knows "everything and nothing" about teaching (p. 274). One knows "everything" because the decision to teach comes from the ontological wholeness of one's life, including countless small moments that subconsciously speak to and shape one's decision making process. From these countless moments, one may sense the teaching profession as the "social medium" (pp. 265-266) through which one can explore the deep longing for wholeness. On the other hand, one knows "nothing" because the full meaning of one's teaching occurs in time over the span of one's teaching career. In this way, teachers might intuit teaching as the expression of their calling far before they recognize the deep awareness of what this calling means for them in their lives. To clarify, when two people marry, they have the initial sense of deep mutual love and commitment; in turn, they decide to state their wedding vows (i.e., they know "everything"). However, the implications of their wedding vows come from the faith and willingness to explore the deep meaning of these vows over the course of their lives together, i.e., they know "nothing" (see Himes, 1995, p. 85).

Implied is that the decision to teach is not some static moment in the teacher's life; more accurately, one might say the "decision-ing" to teach, i.e., the ongoing process of exploring and expressing one's ultimate concern through teaching. This process, however, is guided by an ontological questioning process that lies deep within the teacher's concern for authentic meaning. I now turn to this process of ontological questioning.

The process of ontological questioning.

Remen (1999) writes that “[m]ost of us live far more meaningful lives than we realize” (p. 47). The process of ontological questioning explores the hidden depths of one’s meaningful life. As Palmer (1999) suggests, ontological questions, i.e., questions of one’s ultimate concern, are “the kind that we, and our students, [implicitly] ask every day of our lives as we yearn to connect with the largeness of life” (pp. 6-8). For example: why does teaching matter to oneself? What are the unique gifts that one brings to the classroom? How does one hope to connect with his or her students? What are the dreams that one aspires to realize through teaching? What does one fear that one might lose in the midst of undesirable reforms, such as high-stakes testing? Palmer continues: “Our only choice is whether we will reflect on the questions we are living – and how we are living them – in a way that might make our work more fruitful” (p. 10). Mayes (2001) calls this kind of ontologically-based reflection, “spiritual reflectivity” (p. 10).

However, the educational focus on objectivism (Palmer, 1993, p. 27) or technicist education (Mayes, 2001, p. 8; Shields, 2005, p. 612) may dissuade one’s intention to explore teaching in a spiritually reflective manner. Still, as Mayes (2001) suggests, the top-down rhetoric of educational reform does not completely dissolve many teachers’ views of teaching “as primarily the emotional and moral nurturance of children” (p. 9). In other words, teachers are people first and foremost, and as people, the ontologically deepest questions, the ultimate concern – i.e., the human longing to fulfill oneself by helping others (Hansen, 1994, p. 261) – may recede but never leave completely. Therefore, Hansen (2004, p. 137; 2000, p. 8), Mayes (2001, p. 10), Palmer (1999, p. 10), and Remen (1999, p. 44) suggest that ontological questioning should be made explicit so that teachers may name and claim the questions of deepest meaning in their practice. With that, Palmer (2003) writes:

What one names this core of human being [i.e., heart and soul] is of no real consequence to me, because no one can claim to know its true name. But *that* one names it is, I believe, crucial. For ‘it’ is the ontological reality of being human that keeps us from regarding ourselves, our colleagues, or our students as raw material to be molded into whatever form serves the reigning economic or political regime. [Italics in original] (pp. 377-378)

Pain and Authenticity

The institutional context of education is often antithetical to cultivating spiritually reflective explorations in one’s teaching (Mayes, 2001; Palmer, 1993; Shields, 2005). Palmer (2008), for example, emphasizes that reductionist, mechanical, and information-driven educational practices “do violence to the souls of the young, to say nothing of the souls of those who would teach deeply and well” (p. 13). Nonetheless, Hansen (1994) suggests that the traditions and practices in education, which for example differ from those of counseling or medicine, provide the context in which teachers may explore their sense of service to others and their desire for self-fulfillment. He writes:

[T]eachers step into a practice with traditions undergirding it, with layers of public significance built up over generations. The sense of teaching as a vocation presumes willingness to engage the public obligations that go with [teaching], to recognize that one is part of an evolving [and perhaps, in some ways, ‘devolving’] tradition. (p. 272; also see Malm, 2008, pp. 376-377; Taylor, 1991, pp. 37, 40-41 & 66)

On the one hand, the standardization movement in education may be in fact, as Palmer (2008) observes, reductionist, mechanical, and information-driven. To that end, the “evolving

tradition” actually may be to some extent diminishing in its practices. However, as Hansen (1994) implies, teaching does not occur inside a vacuum. Rather, one’s engagement and possible struggle with the educational context will be necessary for new forms and expressions of authentic meaning to manifest in one’s teaching. To clarify, Dantley (2005) makes an informative parallel point, but regarding the black struggle. He writes: “To many, there can be no authentic African American self-conception absent the context of the black struggle..., the struggle for social, political, and economic justice” (p. 505). The reductionist “othering” of societal racism impelled many African Americans to manifest their authentic self-conception. Likewise, the reductionist othering of institutional standardization may impel many teachers to manifest their authentic self-conception, as well. In fact, national movements such as “Courage to Teach” and “Mindfulness in Education” suggest that many teachers are already manifesting the personal and professional renewal of their authentic meaning as educators.

From these observations, a paradox arises: both Palmer’s and Hansen’s points are equally salient in the exploration of authentic meaning, i.e., in the journey toward the hidden depths of wholeness that may manifest through one’s uniqueness as the teacher. Moreover, this paradox may be the ongoing pain – i.e., the inevitable tension and struggle – that dwells along the teacher’s lifelong path of discovering authentic meaning.

Relating with the pain of the paradox.

Implied however is that the pain of the paradox can equally become the basis of inauthentic meaning in one’s teaching, i.e., if one is relating divisively. In this case, the pain might manifest as the weariness of burnout. Dass and Gorman (1987) make this point: “It is not always our efforts that burn us out [but rather] where the mind is standing in relation to them” (p.

195). For example, the teacher with five years of experience is becoming increasingly frustrated by administrative demands. She believes that these demands are progressively obscuring the deeply intuitive (i.e., ontological) questions that have been informing her decision to teach and her teaching. Yet, unwilling to concede to these demands, and seeing no other way to relate to them besides frustration, worry, and stress, the teacher may be invoking her own burnout.

However, if the same teacher were to perceive the conflict as the indispensable context in which she can explore the “self-originality” and “self-creativity” (i.e., Taylor, 1991, p. 66) that may enable her to support the well-being of others, then burnout may not be as likely to occur. In effect, this insight might allow her to perceive authentic purpose and meaning. Dass and Gorman provide the metaphor of the television series M.A.S.H. to exemplify this kind of balanced wisdom in teaching as well as in other helping professions. They write:

We take in every absurd, contradictory, counterproductive aspect of the war zone and transform it into grist for irony, humor, irreverence, and creative mischief. That’s how we stay nimble inside it. That’s how we keep it from burning us out. Ultimately, that’s how we *turn it around*. [Italics added] (p. 199)

Still, “to turn it around,” i.e., to relate integratively with the pain of the paradox, may be hard-won wisdom for teachers. In learning to relate integratively, one may discover what Palmer (1993, p. 53) and Starratt and Guare (1995, p. 194) call “human greatness,” which is the human capacity to conquer narrow self-perceptions and to enter into caring and compassionate relationships. Moreover, if as Hansen (1994) suggests, teaching expresses one’s wish for self-fulfillment by serving others (p. 261), then discovering one’s greatness within an overly deterministic educational climate might best begin by “acknowledging the reality of a house divided against itself – i.e., the inner conflict between [one’s] head and heart awakened by the

[call to help, to teach] itself” (Dass & Gorman, 1987, p. 188). One might recognize, for example, how one is embodying the narrow tendencies that one observes repeatedly in institutional reforms and societal practices (Dantley, 2005, pp. 504 & 511; Freire, 2006, pp. 93-94; Palmer, 1993, p. 12). As a result, one might deconstruct the “false fronts” (Rogers, 1961, pp. 109-110) of professional objectivity and distance that protect oneself from the hidden vulnerability that authentic relationship, authentic knowing, and thus authentic service demand (also see Remen, 1999, pp. 42-43). In relating integratively, moreover, one might come to perceive the once reductive other (e.g., the particular student, parent, colleague, or administrator) as “the precious other” (Palmer, 1999, pp. 23-24), i.e., the other whose presence may help oneself to deconstruct the narrow tendencies in one’s mind, which in turn may create space for the teacher’s discovery of authentic meaning and purpose. To this point, Simmer-Brown (1999) asks:

What is the ‘other’ for you? What is it that you have been reluctant to engage with? In yourself? In your [teaching] practice? In the world? Where is it that you need to go [in your practice], need to learn, need to develop, in order to go more openly and deeply into your spirituality and the world? (p112)

Implied is that the hard-won wisdom of relating integratively does not occur in isolation. Palmer (2008, p. 13; 2003, p. 383) and Remen (1999, p. 43) emphasize the need to cultivate circles of relational trust among teachers. In fact, the central significance of interdependency in the previous chapter’s discussion about authenticity suggests the inevitability of relationships in the teacher’s evolution toward this hard-won wisdom. Thus, the circles create spaces in which teachers might reconnect with what Fleischman (1994) calls the universal need for the witnessed significance of one’s unique existence (p. 7; also see Shields, 2005, p. 617). Moreover, Palmer (1993, pp. 71 & 73) and Rogers (1961; 1980) characterize these spaces as open (i.e.,

nonjudgmental), and hospitable, which means unconditionally receptive to the person's struggles and discoveries. These kinds of spaces, in addition, honor the exploration of emotions (Palmer, 2007, pp. 9-10) and, as a result, can help one to cultivate "emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1994, p. 43), i.e., emotional awareness. Still, these educational spaces are not therapy. As Palmer (p. 11) suggests, they are a type of disciplined group inquiry that allows teachers to make room for all kinds of data, including reasoning but also emotions and intuitions.

Action and Authenticity

Suggested above is that the wisdom of learning to relate integratively means exploring the authentic meaning of one's teaching; or, in spiritual terms, exploring the journey toward the depths of wholeness that might manifest through one's uniquely expressive acts of teaching. However, authentically expressive acts implicate the moral imperative of teaching as well as the principle of moral action as it applies to teaching. This concluding section discusses these two themes.

The moral imperative of teaching.

In her discussion on race, class, and gender, hooks (1999) asks: "Why do we first have the experience of the sea of whiteness or blackness rather than the sea of love?" She continues: "Why is the fire of love not burning so hot that we have not even a moment to think about race, class, or gender" (p. 124)? If, as hooks implies, the "sea of love" is what joins humans in the equality of their humanity, then perhaps the question of moral action in teaching is not an educational imperative simply because it is the right thing to do. Instead, perhaps moral action is an educational imperative because it is the way to the depths of human wholeness. Indeed, if

Dass and Gorman (1987) are right, that “[t]he basic social institution is the individual human heart, [which] is the source of the energy from which all [compassionate] action [and social justice] derive its power and purpose” (pp. 164-165), then the authentic function of education as “educare” (Halifax, 1999, p. 173; Palmer, 1993, pp. 43 & 81; Remen, 1999, p. 53) is to preserve this basic human institution through authentically moral action. Implied, moreover, is that teachers are the primary gatekeepers of education’s authentic function. Thus, two implications arise. First, the efficiency-based, depersonalized mode of teaching, which is the vision that is most implicit in teachers’ practices (Mayes, 2001, p. 8; Palmer, p. 29), suggests that education is primarily fragmenting the basic social institution. Second, Palmer’s proposal on authentic reform becomes vital to efforts that wish to rebalance the lopsided scale. He writes: “[Teachers] must practice disciplines that permit love and truth to re-form [their] hearts..., to do the sort of teaching that can help re-form our students, our schools, and our worlds” (p. 108).

Yet, the belief in the moral imperative of education requires some boundaries for authentically moral action. The earlier discussion on the paradoxical principle of moral action (i.e., in the previous chapter) aligns well with what educational thinkers are suggesting. I now turn to this principle as it applies in education.

The principle of moral action.

As a reminder, the principle of moral action suggests that “[t]here is no right or wrong, [b]ut right is right and wrong is wrong” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 194). The first half implies the unconditional “sea of love” (hooks, 1999, p. 124), which metaphorically penetrates the appearance of the sea’s separate waves and instead senses their essential and binding equality of nondual wateriness (Makransky, 2007, p. 55). In education, the implications of nonduality

may deepen as teachers appreciate the moral character of the many small, seemingly insignificant moments that subtly point to the underlying wholeness of human equality (Hansen, 2004; Starratt & Guare, 1995). Starratt and Guare write that these moments are “like soft touches of a feathery wind that gentle our everyday routines” (p. 192). Hansen calls these moments the poetics of teaching in which “serious-minded teachers are moved or quickened to action by [bearing witness to] the good [of humanity] and by expressions of the good” (p. 134; also see pp. 130 & 140). For example, the parent who hugs the child at school drop-off might arouse in the teacher the recognition of the equally deep affection that she has for her own child. The nondual equality of human goodness and care that arises in this recognition may open the teacher’s heart in reverence and respect for this particular student in a way that may have been previously overlooked.

On the other hand, the second half of the principle of moral action – i.e., “right is right and wrong is wrong” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 194) – implies the need for critical reasoning, because humans live and act together in ways that may ignore rather than acknowledge each other’s sacredness. For example, Dantley (2005, p. 509), Freire (2006, p. 93), Hansen (2004, pp. 130 & 133; 2000, p. 10), Ladson-Billings (1998, p. 262), Shields (2005, p. 613), and Starratt and Guare (1995, p. 201) emphasize the need to deepen critical reasoning in the moral development of teachers so that they may think critically about and act upon depersonalizing, marginalizing forms of education.

However, as implied in the earlier discussion on relating integratively with the pain of the paradox, moral reasoning equally involves the dynamics and complexities of hidden contradictions between one’s deeply held beliefs and explicit understanding. Recall the earlier example of formal domains in moral discourse (Sanger, 2008), i.e., one can be arrested for

committing violence but not for running down the hallway. The “moral wrongness” (p. 179) of violence appears much more universal than does running down the hallway. To deepen this example, one might reasonably assume that most people believe in the absolute moral wrongness of killing. However, if one were to examine the *implications* of living nonviolently, one may uncover the subtle contradictions between one’s deeply held beliefs and explicit understanding. Take for example the following moral investigation: Do people such as Hitler or Osama Bin Laden deserve to die? If so, one does not truly believe in the absolute moral wrongness of killing. But where does one draw the line? Less globally, what if one and one’s family were being attacked by an assailant with a knife in the subway? Is killing in self-defense then permissible? Less dramatically, has one ever intentionally swatted a fly?

Moreover, the moral investigation into killing concretely applies to teaching and schooling, as well. Palmer (1999) writes, for example: “I have within myself a ‘little Hitler,’ a force of darkness that will not kill you with a gun or a gas chamber, but with a word, a category, and a dismissal that renders you irrelevant to my life” (pp. 9-10). Moral development in education might therefore encourage teachers to explore the ways in which their own “little Hitler” may be doing violence to the sacredness of their teaching by, for example, sustaining an unquestioning belief in institutional labels and roles, such as seeing the child with learning difficulties as merely the struggling student. Dantley (2005) might frame the inquiry this way: What if one were to discover the source of one’s ethical identity as merely obedience to the set of loyalty norms that the schooling institution demands to do one’s job correctly (p. 504)?

Thus, the imperative in the moral development of teachers suggests the principle of moral action as its guide. Moreover, moral development, as implied, may open teachers to new ways of relating integratively with the pain of the paradox in teaching. In turn, they may deepen their

sense of authentic meaning and purpose as the gatekeepers of sacred wholeness, which seeks expression through the teacher's uniqueness and unique service to others.

Empirical Review

The empirical review of the educational literature examines twenty-six studies. All but four of the studies were qualitative in design (i.e., Barab, Squire, & Dueber, 2000; Hanegan, Friden, & Nelson, 2009; Lustick, 2009; Reiman & Peace, 2002). I organize this review in five themes: (a) the ontological “un-divide” of teachers’ lives; (b) the secular relevance of authenticity; (c) the need for moral reflection; (d) relevance and balance; and (e) parallel research designs.

The Ontological “Un-divide” of Teachers’ Lives

This theme describes how teachers bring the “whole” of their life background with them to their teaching. In other words, as Campbell (2005) writes: “We must understand our personal narratives, which have always been deeply embedded in our teaching and our research” (p. 67). Likewise, as Wu (2004) writes: “Work is constitutive in life, and life extends itself through our work, for a better life. Life and work stand for a unitary phenomenon of human beings” (p. 321). To elucidate this theme, I organize the discussion first by the un-divide of the spiritual lives of teachers, and then by the un-divide of their moral lives.

The “un-divide” of teachers’ spiritual lives.

Marshall (2009) interviewed a cohort of eighteen pre-service teachers, examining their spiritual reasons for deciding to teach. She observed that, “[w]hile these future teachers... did not

seem to have language to talk about how their spirituality related to their teaching, they did seem to [have] distinctly spiritual concepts [that] related somehow to... previous experiences” (p. 38). For example, one of the participants recalled her fifth grade experience when she helped her second-grade reading partner to spell a word. A teacher who observed this interaction approached her and suggested that she become a teacher. This experience resonated with the pre-service teacher’s desire to help others, and thus it influenced her decision to enter teaching (pp. 33-35).

Moreover, Doring (1997) investigated the faith development of Catholic school in-service teachers as well as a small group of administrators. He concluded that faith development encompasses “the whole of life and all of one’s activities” (p. 58). For example, many of the sixty-seven participants indicated that “[b]ecoming a teacher of religious education shadowed the same type of response as parenthood in terms of influencing [them] to search and explore their own beliefs” (p. 56). In addition, Doring observed that life experiences that were dislocating, such as an accident, a serious illness, or the death of a loved one impelled teachers to reassess the meaning of their faith, which in turn moved them toward significant growth in their faith development as religious educators.

Likewise, Tisdell (2000), who examined the spirituality of sixteen females who teach for social change (e.g., in community organizations), observed that grief moments were sometimes followed by “graced moments” (p. 322) in which teachers found the courage to act differently in their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, Tisdell also examined the sociocultural dimension of the spirituality of these teachers. She indicated that the teachers brought their “whole selves” (p. 332) to their teaching, including personal experiences of marginalization. She

concluded that the participants integrated their spirituality and their work on social change into a way of being in the world. Tisdell commented:

[The teachers] had a strong sense of mission, fueled by their spirituality, of challenging systems of oppression based on race, class, gender..., and sexual orientation in their adult education practices. But their involvement in social action efforts also called them back to their spirituality. (p. 328)

The “un-divide” of teachers’ moral lives.

Estola, Erkkila, and Syrjala (2003) conducted a retrospective data analysis of three in-service teachers, investigating how the teachers’ stories informed the concept of teaching as a vocation, as well as how vocation manifested in the practice of teaching (p. 241). These investigators concluded that vocation was the metaphor for how the teachers heard the issues of deepest concern in their teaching (p. 251). Moreover, the personal life stories provided the background of deepest significance in the teachers’ efforts to serve students and “to build a better world” (p. 247). For example, Tiina began to think about becoming a teacher because of her son’s learning difficulties. Consequently, as a teacher, the impact that she most deeply wanted to make was to advocate for children at risk of marginalization, like her son (pp. 246-247). The background of these life experiences affected how Tiina heard the matters of deepest concern in her teaching (i.e., her vocation), as well as created the moral horizon from which she focused her teaching efforts.

Joseph and Efron (1993) interviewed twenty-six in-service teachers, examining their perceptions of the moral choices and conflicts in their teaching. They suggested that, regardless of the moral choices that the teachers made or value conflicts that they faced, the teachers

brought their moral convictions with them to the learning environment. In other words, the “whole” of their moral lives entered the classroom, i.e., there was no ontological divide. For example, the investigators observed that many of the teachers valued honesty, respect, and cooperation in their practice. In turn, one of these teachers experienced a value conflict when deciding how to respond tactfully to a student who used profane language, which the teacher learned had been modeled by the student’s parents. Instead of suggesting to the student what the parents should do, the teacher decided to tell the student, “We do not use that kind of language in school” (p. 213), thus upholding the integrity of her personal values. Joseph and Efron concluded: “One teacher characterizes [what] we have learned from the interviews: ‘I have my own values and I don’t want to put them on somebody else, but I do... because I think they are good values’” (p. 216).

In sum, these studies suggest that the experiences and decisions of teachers arise from the ontological un-divide of their whole lives and backgrounds. In the next section, I review studies that demonstrate teachers’ ontological un-divide with their common humanity.

The Secular Relevance of Authenticity

This theme explores the secular relevance of authenticity, which implies spirituality and morality. The theme is secular because it speaks to qualities that lie deep within the human desire to connect, regardless of the particular type of schooling context in which one teaches. Therefore, these secular qualities may be relevant to humans in general. I organize the discussion first with studies that broadly highlight this theme of secular relevance. I then describe the studies that provide specific examples.

Watzke and Valencia (2011) examined Freire's spiritual qualities of authentic pedagogy (i.e., love, hope, critical thinking, trust, faith, and humility)³ in the teaching practices of nine beginning teachers across public, Catholic, and Jewish schooling contexts. The investigators observed that "[although spirituality] might be expected to be found in teachers working exclusively in religious schools, its presence was identified in the practices of teachers working in public/urban schools as well" (p. 158). For example, the majority of the teachers evidenced the secular relevance of faith through their belief in the creative inner capacities that they and their students possess (p. 155). In addition, Doring (1997), who studied the faith development of Catholic school teachers, likewise observed the secular relevance of qualities such as courage, integrity, acceptance, and wisdom (pp. 58-60). Equally, Kreber, McCune, and Klampfleitner (2010), who interviewed nine professors at a research-intensive university, examining their conceptions of authentic teaching, concluded that qualities such as caring, sincerity, and honesty were among the most evident in the professors' practices (p. 393).

More concretely, Campbell (2005), Estola, Erkkila, and Syrjala (2003), and Keyes, Maxwell, and Capper (1999) provided specific examples of the secular relevance of authenticity in teachers' lives. For example, Campbell, who interviewed three veteran art educators, offered the portrait of Kimiko, a university-level teacher of twenty-nine years. Kimiko's spirituality developed early in her life in her native country of Japan. The Japanese tea ceremony, which she internalized through childhood experiences, became the metaphor for her teaching and professional development throughout her career. The ritual represented her desire to serve students "with the goal of promoting harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility" (p. 59). Moreover, Keyes et al. examined the spiritual practices of Marta, the building principal in an inclusion school. They concluded that she perceived her spirituality through six personally held

³ Also see Freire, 2006, pp. 88-93.

beliefs, such as her belief in the inner dignity of each teacher and student (p. 222). Marta clarified this belief, for example, when she asked Tom, a fifth-grader with emotional disturbance, to emcee the school's talent show. She facilitated the experience by finding an adult volunteer to coach Tom. In addition, Estola et al., who explored the concept of vocation through teachers' life stories, observed that the three teachers in the study uniquely voiced their interpretations of care. For example, Kaija, whose family background heavily emphasized an appreciation for various cultures, religions, and lifestyles (p. 243), cited respect for parents' ethical decisions as the most central aspect in caring for the needs of her young students (p. 250).

Thus, implied in the above discussion is that the secular relevance of authenticity speaks first and foremost to teachers in their humanity as beings who are spiritual, i.e., who innately desire to relate deeply with others. The next section addresses the need for reflection to support moral activity that accords with these deeply connecting qualities.

The Need for Moral Reflection

This theme focuses on the need for reflection to deepen one's moral awareness. For clarity, reflection here means "not only [reflection] on the self for deeper understanding, but [also] on the self as it relates to the *other*, to the greater good of society" [Italics in original] (Campbell, 2005, p. 52). First, I discuss the results of a comprehensive review of moral reasoning in teacher development. Then, I outline the common recommendation of several studies, i.e., to help teachers cultivate their capacity to deepen moral awareness. Lastly, I describe what I call "authentic othering," which several studies observed as being helpful in the moral development of one's teaching practice.

Cummings, Harlow, and Maddux (2007) comprehensively reviewed empirical studies on the development of moral reasoning in pre-service and in-service teachers. First, the reviewers identified very few studies on moral reasoning for pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as intervention studies that investigated the efficacy of training in teachers' moral reasoning. However, in undergraduate education, the reviewers identified numerous studies on moral reasoning and training in undergraduate majors *other than* education. Furthermore, they indicated that, in comparison with the few existing studies on moral reasoning in pre-service education, the principled moral reasoning scores (as measured by the Defining Issues Test or DIT) for students in majors other than education were much higher than those for students in education. The reviewers suggested:

Lower moral reasoning scores rest on the possibility of an ideational poverty within the types of courses that education students experience, the emphasis of which is on the preparation of the teacher as a technician rather than as a critical thinker. (p. 75)

However, Cummings, Harlow, and Maddux (2007) as well as Reiman and Peace (2002), who studied the application of a framework on moral judgment (pp. 54-55 & 60), suggested that teachers can cultivate their moral reasoning through the support of direct interventions. For example, Loads (2009), who studied an arts intervention with eight university nurse educators, observed that the deliberate use of arts activities created imaginative spaces in which the participants expanded their empathic understanding, tolerance of ambiguity, and self-acceptance (p. 65). On the other hand, although Fallona (2000) did not conduct an intervention study, she suggested that the results of her study, which examined Aristotle's concept of virtue as it applies to teachers' practices, might inform teachers in developing their moral manner in the classroom (pp. 292-293). Likewise, Campbell (2005), who examined spiritually reflective practices in

veteran art educators, suggested that, by deliberately exploring their personal narratives, teachers can gradually deepen their understanding of how their stories intersect with the teaching philosophies that shape their actions and practices (p. 67).

Moreover, several studies observed the practice of what I call “authentic othering.” For example, Fraser (2007), who studied teachers’ views of spirituality as well as spirituality’s place within secular primary schools in New Zealand, described Shirley, the English immigrant teacher who entered the Maori spiritual ceremony. This investigator commented:

[Shirley] entered a world very different from her own.... [Her] story provides an example of how dominant groups can start to *de-center* their perspective through the invitation of a minority culture to experience something deeply held and crucially important within their culture. [Italics added] (p. 301)

Likewise, Haynes (2010), who conducted a critical self-examination of her teaching in Cape Town, observed how the other-ness of her students’ identities, which were rooted in South Africa’s sociopolitical history of apartheid, fostered an ongoing de-centering of her own internalized hegemonic views. Her experiences impelled her to deepen and broaden her appreciation of what she calls the tripartite framework of multicultural identity: humans are, at once, “(a) like no other individual, (b) like some individuals, and (c) like all other individuals” (p. 305). Furthermore, Tisdell (2000), who studied female educators for social change, observed that these teachers tended to move away from their childhood religious traditions to explore alternative systems of belief, such as neo-Marxist political literature (p. 323). These shifts were necessary in the trajectory of the educators’ spiritual development and identity formation. Equally, Doring (1997) also observed the importance of contrary belief systems, but as mentioned earlier, in the faith development of Catholic school teachers (p. 57).

In short, the previous discussion explains the need for reflection in supporting the development of teachers' moral awareness. Suggested, moreover, is that teachers can cultivate this critical capacity, provided they receive deliberate and appropriate supports. Lastly, the movement toward "authentic othering" can be significant in deepening teachers' moral capacity.

Relevance and Balance

A number of studies explored the concept of relevance in teacher development, i.e., relevance in which professional connections, meaningful problems, context specific supports, and/or person centered decisions (as opposed to administrative control) were prominent (Barab, Squire, & Dueber, 2000; Boyd, O'Reilly, Bucher, Fisher, & Morton, 2010; Calderwood & D'Amico, 2008; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Hanegan, Friden, & Nelson, 2009; Khong, 2008; Reiman & Peace, 2002; Slepko, 2008; Tuzel & Akcan, 2009). Moreover, two studies discussed the failure to achieve relevance. These studies subsequently described the need to balance (a) efforts that foster relevance with (b) the demands of the contexts in which the efforts were being implemented (Lustick, 2009; Thang, Hall, Murugaiah, & Azman, 2011). Thus, I first describe several studies that illustrate this concept of relevance. Then I discuss the two studies that demonstrate the need for balance.

Hanegan, Friden, and Nelson (2009) investigated the efficacy of biology instruction in which the teachers engaged in authentic inquiry by designing their own problems and proposing their own solutions. The teachers received facilitative professional development that supported the combination of inquiry, reasoning, and instructional technique in the context of their classroom teaching (pp. 80 & 82). Hanegan et al. reported that the firsthand experience of

authentic inquiry helped the teachers to value and incorporate similar authentic tasks in their work with students (p. 88). Likewise, Barab, Squire, and Dueber (2000), who examined authentic ownership in the field experiences of pre-service teachers, observed that both the practicality of the environment and the value of the work were necessary conditions for authentic learning to occur (p. 59). In other words, hands-on involvement in the field placement was not sufficient by itself for these pre-service teachers to experience meaningful learning. The students also needed to perceive the relevant value of their work, such as developing and implementing a management strategy that the classroom might actually use and from which it might benefit, even after the pre-service teacher leaves the field placement.

However, the implication of participants coming to perceive the relevant value of their work can be complex and dynamic. For example, Lustick (2009) discovered that, in evaluating his master's level science course, pre-service teachers perceived the "authentic" inquiry task as impractical. These teachers commented that the perceived impracticality related to the inundating realities of standards reform and standardization, which were incongruent with Lustick's coursework design (p. 597). Equally, Thang, Hall, Murugaiah, and Azman (2011) made a comparable observation. For example, in their study of the partnership between a group of higher education mentors in Malaysia and a group of local in-service teachers, the unaddressed pressures of each group deflected the perceived authentic value of the technology project in which they were participating (p. 95). As a result, the groups did not cultivate the kind of trust, belonging, and rapport that might have improved the efficacy of their participation and collaboration. Thus, for Lustick and Thang et al., the unexpected outcome of failure became the catalyst to reassess and improve their programs, compelling them to seek an effective balance between institutional pressures and meaningful, relevant professional learning experiences.

Parallel Research Designs

Four of the research designs in this empirical review (Fallona, 2000; Kreber, McCune, & Klampfleitner, 2010; Watzke & Valencia, 2011; and Wu, 2004) inform the design of the current study. More specifically, each of these studies identified a theoretical framework that served as the working basis for methodological decision making. Likewise, the integrated theoretical framework, which I explain in the “interpretive summary,” will become the working basis for this study. Therefore, I conclude this empirical review by outlining these four studies.

First, Fallona (2000) applied Aristotle’s moral virtues (e.g., bravery, generosity, temperance, and truthfulness) to education as the working framework to guide her study on teachers’ moral manner. In her framework, she presented a chart of each virtue, along with Aristotle’s definition as well as its application to education. For example, magnanimity, which means possessing pride, dignity, and self-esteem, may apply to education when the teacher expresses pride in self, students, and profession (p. 686). Within this working framework, she explored explicit and implicit ways in which each quality manifested itself in the teaching practices of three middle school reading specialists. Again, take for example magnanimity, which manifested implicitly, i.e., it required a high degree of inference. Although one of the teachers did not recognize magnanimity in herself, she still felt as if she had something important to teach her students (p. 690). Fallona therefore inferred that the teacher’s statement exhibited magnanimity.

Likewise, Watzke and Valencia (2011) examined how teachers redefined and reinvented Freire’s six qualities of authentic pedagogy (i.e., love, hope, critical thinking, trust, faith, and humility) in their practice within public as well as religious school settings. The investigators

also decided to explore which elements were common across schooling contexts (p. 146). Thus, the situational scope of the study was broader than Fallona's, and yet the structural designs were similar, because Watzke and Valencia, like Fallona, predetermined the theoretical framework to focus their investigation.

On the other hand, Kreber, McCune, and Klampfleitner (2010) developed their framework of authenticity from their previous comprehensive literature review (Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt, 2007, p. 39). As mentioned earlier, their framework included Heidegger's concept of existential care as well as Taylor's ethics of authenticity (Kreber et al., 2010, pp. 385-386). This multidimensional theoretical framework became the investigators' formal conception of authenticity, which in turn supported their research into how teachers implicitly, i.e., non-theoretically (p. 384), understood and enacted authenticity in their practice. Thus, the study's structural design paralleled that of Fallona's (2000) as well as Watzke's and Valencia's (2011), yet the key difference was that Kreber et al. constructed their own framework from their previous synthesis of multiple sources.

Wu (2004), taking a somewhat different approach, applied Heidegger's philosophy as well as Taoism to examine teachers' development within curriculum reform discourse. Take for example Heidegger's concept of pre-thematic everyday understanding. Wu suggested that teachers were already thrown into pre-thematic possibilities. Consequently, the ongoing work of shaping and re-shaping the reform objectives occurred in advance of the teachers' conceptual understanding, within the whole context of the teachers' pre-thematic everyday involvement in curriculum improvement (p. 314). Moreover, according to Wu, the use of language enabled the teachers to name and to re-name the "name-less" (i.e., Tao) nature of their pre-thematic involvement (p. 318). In other words, language provided the medium through which teachers

conceptualized and particularized aspects of their pre-thematic involvement in curriculum reform. Through constructing and re-constructing their thematic understanding, furthermore, they generated new sets of possibilities within their pre-thematic everyday involvement. Thus, Heidegger's perspective provided one of the major foundations from which Wu examined the interplay between pre-thematic understanding and thematic naming, and how this interplay influenced the teachers' way of being within the development of curriculum reform discourse.

Interpretive Summary

The major goal of the previous reviews on the educational, philosophical, and theological literature has been to develop a theoretical framework on authenticity to support the current study. The opening analysis in the philosophical and theological review frames the working definition of authenticity for my research. As a reminder, authenticity means seeing the sacredness in oneself, others, and the world. Furthermore, implied in sacredness is that human nature is neither eternal nor temporal, neither separate nor whole, neither pure nor impure, but rather is *both/and*, which I am calling "the between" of human nature. I constructed the implications of this working definition by interpreting the following thematic clusters: truth, meaning, pain, and action. These clusters and the working definition comprise the theoretical framework for this study. Moreover, the thematic clusters help to establish the conceptual link between the review of the philosophical and theological literature and that of the educational literature. This interpretive summary briefly explains how each thematic cluster mediates the link between the two sets of reviews.

Truth as the Mediating Link

Recall that Palmer (1993) proposes the conception of true knowing (i.e., authentic knowledge) as loving relationship between persons. He writes: “I not only pursue truth but truth pursues me. I not only grasp truth, but truth grasps me. I not only know truth but truth knows me” (p. 59). Implied is a relational epistemology of mutual vulnerability and reciprocal accountability, whereby the maxim is that “if truth is to be taught, then teaching and learning must take the shape of truth itself – a community of faithful relationships” (p. 42). In other words, the *both/and* paradox of wholeness and separateness is necessary in the actualization of an authentic educational process. The Buddhist philosophy of emptiness and interdependence, as well as Heidegger’s philosophy of the world’s worlding, both suggest this relational epistemology while illuminating its deeply communal ontological roots. For example, recall the metaphor of the jazz ensemble, which clarified Heidegger’s concept of the mirror play of worlding. The gathering that joins the musicians into the spontaneous wholeness of the musical flow also gives them their unique separateness, but in a way that the separateness of each musician’s voice reflects the integrity of the whole flowing musical movement. If I integrate Heidegger’s ontology with Palmer’s epistemology, the metaphor may be restated as follows: The gathering that joins the teacher into loving relationship with the students and the world of subject matter (i.e., curriculum) also gives the teacher her unique separateness, but in a way that her separateness mirrors the wholeness of the loving relationship, i.e., the authentic educational process.

Meaning as the Mediating Link

In my analysis of Mayes (2001) and Hansen (1994), I proposed the possibility that at the root of the decision to teach may be one's ultimate concern to love authentically, i.e., to fulfill one's spiritual longing for wholeness by helping others. Mayes explicitly references Tillich's theological concept of ultimate concern. For example, he writes: "[Ultimate concern] as the essence of true religiosity is so often the basis of [one's decision to teach]" (p. 10). Moreover, Hansen's twofold mutual criteria suggest that authentic love is the heart of one's ultimate concern to teach. Recall that the twofold criteria comprise the strong sense of service to others and the desire for self-fulfillment. As I stated earlier, these criteria parallel Tillich's (1957) interpretation of Christian love as the inseparable union of eros and agape. Furthermore, integrating this analysis with Heidegger's philosophy of authentic care, I propose that the resoluteness to take full responsibility for one's uniqueness as a teacher – i.e., to name and claim the ontological questions that are lived implicitly everyday (Palmer, 1999) – is rooted in this love.

However, further implied is that the ultimate concern to teach, which is rooted in the teacher's resoluteness to serve others (agape) as the means to self-fulfillment (eros), mirrors the truth of human nature, i.e., "the between" of being distinctly separate yet deeply connected, which I elucidated with the jazz metaphor. Still, the additional implication is that, with regard to the theoretical framework for this study, truth and meaning create the structural basis for the proposed working definition of authenticity. As a result, the two remaining thematic clusters, pain and action, become analogous to thematic building blocks upon which teachers may express and explore this structural basis of truth and meaning in their teaching lives.

Pain as the Mediating Link

Earlier, I interpreted a paradox by integrating Palmer's (2008) observation about the reductionist educational context and Hansen's (1994) observation that educational practices provide the context in which teachers may explore their sense of authentic calling. From this paradox, a metaphor arises that is rooted in the previous philosophical and theological conceptualization on existential pain. The reductionist, mechanistic institutional conditions metaphorically represent the ignorance (Buddhism) and original sin (Christianity) that, according to these theological traditions, confront each human being. Moreover, whether teachers relate divisively or integratively with this paradox may depend on how well they are able to question, examine, explore, and discover [as Dantley (2005), Freire (2006), and Palmer (1993) suggest] the ways in which they may be embodying the narrow tendencies that they observe in institutional reforms and societal practices. Palmer (p. 53) and Starratt and Guare (1995, p. 194) might frame this point alternatively as the ways in which teachers are able to actualize their capacity for "human greatness," which, as I mentioned earlier, is the *choice* to overcome narrow self-perceptions that enable one to enter into caring and compassionate relationships. Thus, the metaphorical structure of this paradox in education creates the inevitable basis from which teachers can explore authenticity, or in theological terms, in which they can develop the wise compassion of selflessness (Buddhism) and re-member themselves as responsible contributors to the healing of Christ's mystical Body.

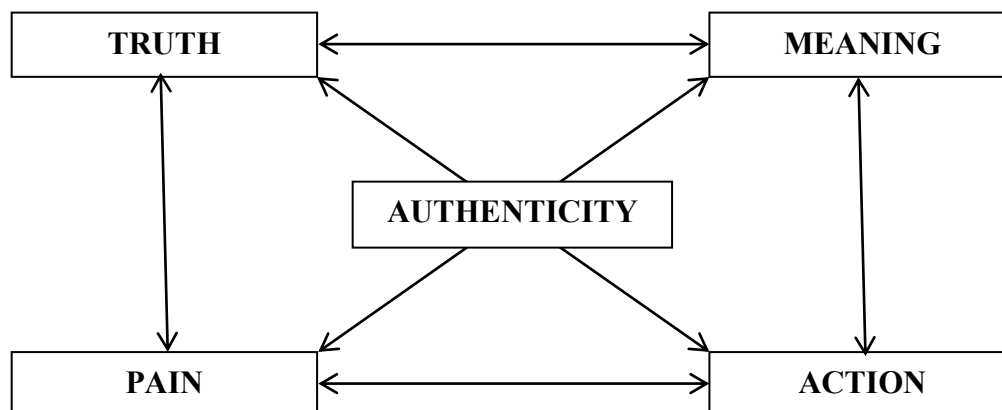
Action as the Mediating Link

Recall that the secular relevance of authenticity speaks to qualities that lie within the teacher's natural desire to be deeply connected with others, regardless of schooling context (i.e.,

public, private, or religious). These qualities, such as love, kindness, compassion, empathy, caring, respect, courage, and humility reflect the earlier Buddhist and Christian universal teaching: i.e., selfless concern for the well-being of others as the true path toward authentic happiness. Moreover, the expression of qualities like these signifies that the teachers have some degree of awareness that their deepest nature is, metaphorically, swimming in “the sea of [God’s] love” (hooks, 1999, p. 124), which unconditionally gathers them and their students into equal humanity. In addition, the proposals for moral reasoning in teacher development (e.g., Cummings, Harlow, & Maddux, 2007; Dantley, 2005; Hansen, 2004; Palmer, 1999) acknowledge the unavoidable reality of living and teaching as a conceptual being in a conceptually and infinitely complex world. Thus, implied is the need for the principle of moral action in the educational process, i.e., the recognition of the deepest goodness in human nature as well as the wise discernment to evoke and to challenge persons to actualize this goodness. Lastly, the ontological un-divide of teachers’ lives frames the universal law, e.g., the Buddhist concept of karma, as it applies to education. For example, as the Buddha says, and as the empirical educational studies demonstrate (e.g., Estola, Erkkila, & Syrjala, 2003; Marshall, 2009; Tisdell, 2000), “What you are is what you have been, and what you will be is what you do now” (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 93).

Thus, the four thematic clusters (truth, meaning, existential pain, and action), which suggest the depth of authenticity, are the mediating links among the three bodies of literature: the educational, philosophical, and theological. Moreover, the working definition of authenticity, along with these four clusters, create the theoretical framework as the working basis for this study (see Figure 3.1 below). I conclude this chapter by elaborating this point.

Figure 3.1
Working Theoretical Framework on Authenticity



Conclusion

The previous literature reviews support several methodological goals regarding this study. First, I believe that I must be clear about the theoretical framework that can best support me in my research. On the one hand, the previous section titled “Relevance and Balance” (e.g., real-world professional connections, meaningful problems, or context specific supports) typifies what I believe is the dominant understanding of authenticity in education. However, this understanding does not adequately address what is most meaningful to me, i.e., the spiritual and moral implications for teachers in their growth and development. On the other hand, many of the educational thinkers whom I reviewed, e.g., Parker Palmer and David Hansen, clearly speak to my vision and values as an educator. Still, without my passion and proclivity for the philosophical and theological literature, my interpretations of these thinkers would have been far less discerning. Moreover, I believe that this passion and proclivity are the reason for my selection of the current research topic as well as my review of these thinkers. In short, philosophical and theological reflections comprise part of who I deeply am as an educator.

Thus, the integration of educational, philosophical, and theological perspectives into a working theoretical framework on authenticity creates a meaningful basis to support the development of my research methodology. As I previously mentioned, other educational researchers have used similar approaches. For example, recall that Kreber, McCune, and Klampfleitner (2010) constructed their theoretical framework on authenticity from their comprehensive review of philosophical and educational literature. In addition, Wu (2004) applied Heideggerean and Taoist philosophies to her research methodology to support the study of teacher growth during the process of curriculum reform discourse. Furthermore, recall that, to examine teachers' explicit and implicit conceptions, Fallona (2000) applied Aristotle's moral virtues while Watzke and Valencia (2011) applied Freire's qualities of authentic pedagogy.

Consequently, my approaches with the theoretical framework are not unprecedented, and yet my suggested framework is unique in comparison with the others. Still, even with this meaningful baseline in place, my methodological approach, which I elaborate in the next chapter, takes to heart the belief that all sound qualitative research is iterative. In other words, sound qualitative research constantly oscillates "between theoretical ideas, data, and the researcher's reflection on both" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, pp. 11; also see p. 283). Thus, my methodological approach with the working theoretical framework remains flexible and open to surprise and change while engaging with the data. With this point in mind, I now shift to the discussion on the research methodology.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This study applies qualitative approaches and methods to explore the central research question, i.e., “What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?” and the subquestions, which examined the teachers’ experiences and understandings of authenticity. The only exception to qualitative applications is with the Caldecott Medal books. A rubric was needed to identify exemplary books of authenticity, which in turn supported the subsequent scaffolded experiences with the research participants. I address this numerical aspect in the data analysis section. However, as I mentioned, qualitative applications are central to the research design, since my questions examine the teachers’ experiences, perceptions, descriptions, and understandings of authenticity. Therefore, the qualitative focus is foundational in this chapter.

Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klinger, Pugach, and Richardson (2005) define qualitative research as “a systematic approach to understanding qualities, or the essential nature, of a phenomenon within a particular context” (p. 195). Therefore, one major goal in this discussion is to delineate what “systematic approach” means in the context of the study, and to describe the theoretical underpinnings that justify the design. Moreover, Brantlinger et al. observe that the researcher himself is the primary research instrument (p. 197). The implications of this observation are particularly meaningful with regard to an effective research design and implementation.

To clarify, Moustakas (1994) observes that research itself is often “autobiographical” (p. 59). Take for example the positionality statement, which in the first chapter described my personal and professional history as reflecting an ongoing pursuit of the ontological question: “What does it mean to be authentic?” The current study provides another opportunity to deepen exploration of this question. Two implications arise. First, recall that the earlier theoretical framework was constructed by integrating philosophical/ theological literature with conceptual

and empirical educational literature. The fulcrum of this integration is my passion and proclivity for the underlying ontological question. Equally, the same fulcrum is at work when identifying the appropriate qualitative approaches and methods. Implied is that the previous theoretical framework and the decisions about the research design are related because of the passion and proclivity of the “primary research instrument,” i.e., the researcher, who constructed them. As a result, another goal is to indicate these conceptual links, which supported the overall coherence of the study.

Second, because “qualitative researchers are constantly evolving instruments” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p. 197), significant learning about authenticity emerges not only through my engagement with the *content* of the data but also through my exploration of what it means to engage in and experience for myself an authentic research *process*. The research question (i.e., what I aim to study) and the research process (i.e., how I aim to study it) are held in balance by the ontological question. Thus, the study calls upon me *to be* as authentic as possible in the research process, and in turn requires me to explore, to challenge, and when necessary, to modify my own interpretive sense of the theoretical framework along the way. Therefore, the final goal is to explicate the attitudes, assumptions, approaches, and techniques that support an authentic research process, and enable me to “evolve” as an authentic researcher in the implementation of the study.

First, I present a methodological clarification. Second, I discuss the methodological orientation. Third, I overview the access and entry as well as the setting and participants. Fourth, I present the data gathering and analysis procedures. Fifth, I review validity and reflexivity. Lastly, I discuss the study’s limitations.

Methodological Clarification

This section clarifies two key considerations before moving into discussions about the appropriate methodological approaches and applications. The first pertains to what I call “methodological eclecticism,” and the second to what I call “the essentialist trap.” First, my central task with the research design, as previously mentioned, is to decide on the approaches and applications that best serve my ability to answer the research questions. The research questions provide the gauge by which to make these methodological choices. However, as the primary research instrument for this qualitative study, I also need to decide on the approaches and applications that are most sensible to me. Consequently, I envision an eclectic research design. i.e., what Brantlinger et al. (2005) call, “methodological triangulation” (p. 201). In other words, regardless of the qualitative research genre that is most suitable, the diverse array of other genres, along with their guidelines, assumptions, and techniques, inform and enrich my decision-making process. Therefore, methodological eclecticism is critical to my approach.

Second, despite the eclectic approach, the primary methodological orientation for the current study is phenomenology. In the next section, I explain my reasoning as well as describe the Epoche process, which is central to phenomenology. However, if I do not preface these discussions with clarification, then readers might misinterpret my philosophical position. In particular, I need to clarify the “essentialist” connotation with regard to traditional phenomenology, i.e., the philosophical method originated by Edmund Husserl (Creswell, 1998, p. 52; Eagleton, 2008, p. 47; Groenewald, 2004, p. 3; Moustakas, 1994, p. 25). This connotation poses what I call the “essentialist trap,” which contradicts the previous working theoretical framework.

Eagleton (2008) writes: “[P]henomenology is a form of methodological idealism.... [In phenomenology], the world is what I posit or ‘intend’ [and] is to be grasped in relation to me, as a correlate of my consciousness” (pp. 49-50). The traditional phenomenologist “brackets off” the world out-there and assumes that the world is in-here, i.e., in the person’s consciousness. Heidegger (2008) observes the underlying implication: “[T]he objectivity of all objects in their valid structure [i.e., in their truth] is secured in and through [absolute] subjectivity” (p. 440). The idealism of traditional phenomenology, which Eagleton and Heidegger indicate, disintegrates the *both/and* nature of authenticity, and undermines the assumptions about truth from the previous theoretical framework. Therefore, to not clarify my position severely compromises the coherence and integrity of the study.

For example, if the nature of reality is rooted in the subject/object duality, then the epistemological problem arises as to how the “knowing subject comes out of its inner ‘sphere’ into one which is ‘other and external,’ and of how knowing can have any object at all” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 87). Moreover, if as the reificationist, i.e., essentialist, would have it, one assumes the subject as being inherently independent, then the problem arises as to how an entity whose existence is not contingent on external conditions or circumstances can influence and be influenced by external surroundings. The autonomous subject, by nature, stands outside the laws of interdependence. The logic is incoherent, since one can be interdependent only because one is interdependent by nature. The previous discussion on the Buddhist philosophy of emptiness and form clarified this point (e.g., Dalai Lama, 2005a, pp. 114-119). Garfield (1995) writes:

The midpoint [in Nagarjuna’s Middle Way] is achieved by taking conventions as the foundation of ontology, hence rejecting the very enterprise of a philosophical search for the ontological foundation of convention [i.e., the world of form]. To say that causation is

nonempty, or inherently existent, is to succumb to the temptation to ground our explanatory practice and discourse in [reified] causal powers linking causes to effects. (p. 122)

The reificationist stance gives rise to the paradigm of separateness – i.e., oneself as intrinsically independent – which was described in the first chapter as deeply problematic. The Buddhist philosophy on emptiness, as the previous quote suggests, avoids the metaphysical incoherence that arises when positing an inherently independent knower while at the same time positing an interdependent reality.

Still, the full implication of the reificationist stance is only partially clear. Denying the world out-there – subjugating the world and the true nature of human reality to human consciousness, which traditional phenomenology does – easily leads to the other extreme, i.e., nihilism, which denies the real existence of form itself, including human form. Implied is that the essentialists of traditional phenomenology incur the inseparable result: reification and nihilism go hand in hand. To elucidate this point, once again with reference to the ancient Buddhist doctrine of Nagarjuna's Middle Way philosophy, Garfield (1995) writes:

To hold a view of emptiness [or consciousness] – to reify it and then attribute it to phenomena – would then involve *simultaneously* reifying those phenomena as having a fixed nature and denying their existence at all in virtue of disparaging their conventional reality as unreality by contrast with the reality of emptiness [or consciousness]. It is this incoherence, so characteristic of essentialist philosophies [such as traditional phenomenology], that leads Nagarjuna to assert that one holding such a view is completely hopeless – incapable of accomplishing anything philosophically. [Italics added] (p. 214)

As I move forward, the two key points from these previous discussions are helpful to keep in mind. First, the research design is open to “methodological eclecticism” in service to the research questions as well as to the primary research instrument, i.e., the researcher, who investigates the questions. Second, any discussions on phenomenology are in light of this clarification about “the essentialist trap.” The reader should therefore recall my position, i.e., that I do not assume methodological idealism.

Methodological Orientation

As mentioned, the primary methodological orientation is phenomenology. Moustakas (1994) writes: “Phenomenon means to bring to light, to place in brightness, to show itself in itself, the totality of what lies before us in the light of day. Thus, the maxim of phenomenology, ‘To the things themselves’” (p. 26). For clarity, the phenomenon under investigation is authenticity, and the medium through which I proposed to study how this phenomenon “shows itself in itself” is the teachers’ descriptions and reflections about authenticity. More specifically, I intended to “bring to light” how the teachers experience authenticity in their teaching lives; “to place in brightness” their implied conceptions as well as their explicit reflections about authenticity; and to thread together “the totality of” what their perceptions and understandings thematically and essentially mean.

Moreover, Moustakas (1994) proposes a methodological orientation that he calls “transcendental phenomenology” (p. 33). Fundamental to transcendental phenomenology is the Epoche (i.e., bracketing) process. Moustakas writes: “In the Epoche, no position whatsoever is taken; every quality has equal value. Only what enters freshly into consciousness, only what appears as appearance, has any validity at all in contacting truth and reality. Nothing is

determined in advance” (p. 87). In other words, the researcher must deliberately cultivate a methodological orientation of open-mindedness and nonjudgmental listening in the research process. By doing so, he facilitates an open space in which the research participants can describe and reflect on their experiences, perceptions, and understandings of the phenomenon under investigation, i.e., authenticity. As a result, the Epoche process can support a “twofold bracketing” (Groenewald, 2004, pp. 12-13), in the sense of nurturing spaces in which the researcher as well as the participants can openly focus on the studied phenomenon.

Because the Epoche process sets the tone for the study, and in light of the “essentialist” assumptions that might be invoked when observing this term, i.e., its association with traditional phenomenology (as previously described), a brief clarification of my interpretation is necessary. Therefore, I draw on the previous theoretical framework to elucidate how I understand the Epoche process within the context of the research.

Clarifying the Epoche process.

Recall the spontaneous nature of authenticity. This spontaneity was previously described with the Taoist expression, “wui wei” (Chuang Tzu, 1965, pp. 101-102; Lao Tzu, 1988, p. 48), which is the active but nondoing condition of authenticity. The Epoche process implies “wui wei.” Regarding the “active” aspect, the researcher cultivates the habit of letting go of preconceptions and biases to become a “perceptual beginner” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). Zen Buddhists call this state of openness, “the beginner’s mind.” Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) write: “The whole art... is to keep a mind where, with each experience, at each time we sit down [e.g., to interview or observe], we are willing to discover what is actually going to happen *this hour*” [*Italics in original*] (p. 61). However, the researcher’s willingness to “bracket” is not

enough. As the “wui wei” of authenticity implies, the “nondoing” aspect is necessary, as well. Accordingly, Moustakas’ (1994) previous phrase, “only what enters freshly into consciousness” (p. 87), suggests that the researcher must also patiently wait for “what appears as appearance,” i.e., the essence of what it means to be an authentic teacher, to show itself to him. Therefore, implied within the Epoche process – i.e., the “wui wei” of the researcher’s intentional letting go and patient awaiting – is the mutuality of will and grace, which was previously described in Buber’s philosophy of I-Thou meeting. Buber (1970) writes:

The Thou confronts me [e.g., the researcher]. But I enter into a direct relationship with it. Thus, the relationship is at once being chosen and choosing, passive and active. For an action of the whole being does away with all partial actions [i.e., the Epoche in its purest sense]..., and hence it comes to resemble passivity. (pp. 124-125)

Moreover, implied within the “wui wei” of the Epoche process is the researcher’s deliberate effort to cultivate an authentically intersubjective, i.e., relational, space with participants. Take for example, the previous metaphor of the jazz ensemble, which clarified Heidegger’s concept of worlding, in which the movement of the musical flow involves both being distinct yet deeply connected. In the same way, the intersubjective movement of the research relationship involves its own kind of parallel *both/and* structure. Philosophically, Buber (1958) indicates this dual intersubjective movement: “He who takes his stand in relation shares in a reality, that is, in a being that neither merely belongs to him nor merely lies outside him.... This is the province of [authentic] subjectivity” (p. 63). Moustakas indicates the dual movement, as well, but from the perspective of cognitive psychology rather than philosophy. He writes: “Subject and object are integrated.... My perception, the [person] I perceive, and the experience

or [conscious] act interrelate to make the subjective objective and the objective subjective” (p. 59; also see Creswell, 1998, p. 53).

In the space of authentic intersubjectivity, in which the subject/object dichotomy yields to a relational ontology and epistemology, the uniqueness of the pure ego (i.e., Moustakas) or of the “I” of the I-Thou basic word pair (i.e., Buber) is preserved with integrity. For example, Moustakas (1994) writes: “Although the value of intersubjective truth is recognized, the beginning point [i.e., but not the only point] in establishing the truth of things must be the researcher’s perception, seeing the world as a solitary self” (pp. 57; also see pp. 37 & 59). In other words, Moustakas may be suggesting that, as Brantlinger et al. (2005, p. 197) make clear, the researcher is the primary research instrument. Thus, according to Moustakas, the intersubjectivity of the Epoche process avoids the illusion of researcher “solipsism” (p. 37) but also avoids leaping to the other extreme, i.e., denying the researcher’s unique subjectivity. However, the “wui wei” of the Epoche process not only preserves the integrity of the researcher’s uniqueness but also the integrity of the participant’s uniqueness. Himes (1995), while interpreting Buber’s I-Thou from a Christian theological perspective, elucidates this point in a way that can deeply inform one’s understanding of the Epoche process. He writes:

You can be my friend, my student, my associate, my colleague, [my research participant], but I cannot make you ‘my you.’ You are incapable of being owned, of being reduced to an aspect of my life. You are always sovereignly mystery to me, not something that I can manipulate or control or absorb into my framework. You remain you, always the [authentic] other. (p. 112)

The “wui-wei” of the Epoche process, which is fundamental to the study, aligns with the *both/and* paradox of being at once distinctly separate in form and yet deeply connected to all

others and the world, i.e., the working definition of authenticity. In fact, I assume that this qualitative study is most effective as an “intentional communion” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 37) in which the researcher and the participant are co-present in the research space. Therefore, the deliberate and ongoing effort to nurture an authentic intersubjectivity in the research space suggests that the previous theoretical framework remains flexible and open to surprise and change throughout the research process. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, an even subtler implication arises: the Epoche process calls upon the researcher himself to pose, examine, and explore the phenomenon under investigation, i.e., authenticity, yet as it relates to himself. In other words, the methodological orientation also implies the previously mentioned question: “What does it mean for the researcher to engage as an authentic learner in the research process?” As a result, in the section on reflexivity, I discuss why the Epoche process is challenging as well as describe reflexive practices that support my capacity as the researcher to engage in it as an authentic learner.

Access and Entry

This study was conducted in St. Anonymous Elementary School, a small Catholic K-8 urban school. Initial access was provided to me through one of the Lynch School of Education professors, who consults with the school on a regular basis. I visited St. Anonymous Elementary School in the late summer of 2011, during one of the professor’s faculty workshops. I introduced myself to Principal H. and the teaching staff, and then briefly explained the topic of the study. After the workshop, I was invited to join the staff for lunch, which provided an additional opportunity to engage in informal discussions about the study. The principal and staff appeared open and welcoming to the possibility of my conducting the research at their school.

Setting and Participants

This section is presented in three parts. First, I explain the neighborhood community in which St. Anonymous Elementary School is situated. Second, I discuss key characteristics about the school, including demographics, mission statement, as well as curriculum and assessment approaches. Third, I overview the recruitment strategy for the study's six participants.

St. Anonymous Elementary School neighborhood.

St. Anonymous Elementary School is situated in a demographically diverse neighborhood within a large urban area in the northeast region of the United States. The city's documents, which profile each neighborhood using 2010 Census Bureau data as well as 2005-2009 American Community Survey data, indicate that approximately 34,000 people live in the St. Anonymous Elementary School neighborhood. More specifically, 59% of the population are white; 22% are black or African American; and 23% are Hispanic or Latino. Moreover, 25% of the community are foreign born, with the largest percentage from Dominican Republic (18%) and Haiti (10%). In addition, 35% of the population five years of age and over speak non-English at home, with Spanish as the most common non-English language. Furthermore, 75% of the neighborhood community are family households. Approximately 40% of these households are single parent. Additionally, 40% of the population twenty-five years of age and over have a bachelor's degree or higher while 37% have their high school diploma or lower.

Likewise, the economic characteristics within the St. Anonymous Elementary School neighborhood also represent diversity. For example, approximately 44% of the population sixteen years of age and over work in management, professional, and related occupations; 26%

occupy sales, retail, and administrative support positions; while 18% occupy service jobs, including healthcare services, protective services, as well as cleaning and maintenance. Smaller percentages of the neighborhood comprise work in construction, production, and transportation. Moreover, the median household income is approximately \$62,000, which is similar to the state's median statistic. In addition, 89% of the families live above the poverty level; however, 11% live below, while approximately 25% of the neighborhood's household incomes are less than \$25,000 per year.

St. Anonymous Elementary School community.

St. Anonymous Elementary School is a small Catholic K-8 urban school with 358 students. Its demographic profile reflects that of many urban communities. For example, 48% of its student population are black (e.g., Haitian) or African American, and 35% are Hispanic. Evident is that while the white population represents the largest percentage (59%) in the St. Anonymous Elementary School neighborhood, it only represents 11% of the school's student body. The reason for the discrepancy may be that the students not only live in the immediate community, which is most common, but also live in two nearby communities, as well. In addition, 22% of the students are English Language Learners. According to school documents, these students are identified in several ways, including teacher recommendations and family surveys. Furthermore, the school provides English as Second Language services. Examples include after-school tutoring, Title 1 support, in-class assistance, computer programs, and individualized educational plans.

Moreover, although St. Anonymous Elementary School is a Catholic school, it receives government funding. As mentioned, the school receives Title 1 funding, which serves

approximately 15% of the students. In addition, 42% of the students receive free or reduced price lunch. Furthermore, 5% of the students receive subsidized transportation, e.g., busing, travel passes, and compensation to parents.

Regarding teacher demographics, 90% of the thirty-one professional staff are white, while 10% are black or multiracial. Thus, the contrast of the racial composition between the teachers and students can be clearly observed. In addition, 97% of the teachers are Catholic in comparison with 60% of the students, who are Catholic, as well. Furthermore, while 22% of the students are English Language Learners, which I previously mentioned, the teachers speak English only. Still, according to school documents, the teachers are offered support in learning another language; moreover, the staff meetings often focus on cultural topics as well as advancing the practice of teaching English Language Learners.

Concerning teaching and learning, St. Anonymous Elementary School's mission is to "equip students with the skills necessary to meet the academic, social, moral, religious, and technological demands of the 21st Century." Furthermore, similar to public schools, St. Anonymous Elementary School envisions promoting "independent and self-sufficient [learners] who will succeed and contribute [as adults] in an ever-changing technological and global community." Consequently, the school's curriculum follows the state curriculum frameworks as well as the Common Core Standards, which reflect an emerging movement among states to align their curriculums with the tenets of outcome-driven education, i.e., standards-based reform. Moreover, although St. Anonymous Elementary School does not administer the high-stakes statewide test, it does administer standardized testing, including Stanford Achievement Test and Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, both of which measure skills development and proficiency in

English Language Arts and math. Accordingly, the school's curricular, instructional, and assessment approaches align with state and national reform agendas.

The participants.

As mentioned, I established initial contact with St. Anonymous Elementary School's staff. My next step was to meet with Principal H. to discuss the study in detail. The Lynch School professor who regularly consults with the school informed Principal H. about my follow-up contact to schedule the meeting. At this meeting, I delineated the research questions, the purpose of the study, as well as the expectations and benefits for participation. For each participant, expectations include one reflective written narrative, two sixty-minute interviews, one sixty-minute group interview, and one sixty-minute classroom observation. Benefits include the opportunity to reflect on and explore an aspect of teacher development that is often overlooked in standards-based reform, that is, the spiritual and moral dimensions of teaching.

During the meeting, I asked Principal H. for recommendations about potential participants. Specifically, I was seeking six participants to represent variety along the professional career span, i.e., beginner, mid-career, and veteran teachers. For purposes of the study, and drawing from school documents, beginner is 1-5 years, mid-career is 6-10 years, and veteran is 11 or more years. Of the 31 professional staff, nine are beginner, seven are mid-career, and fifteen are veteran, which provided sufficient numbers to meet the desired continuum along the professional career span.

In addition, the professor from the Lynch School, whom I mentioned, made several recommendations about potential participants. I followed-up on these suggestions during the meeting. I also scheduled a second visit to meet with the identified teachers to discuss the study

in detail, and provided an official invitation to participate in the study (Appendix A). Table 4.1 provides data about each participant.

Name	Approximate Age	Gender	Race	Years in Teaching	Years at Site	Current Grade Level	Most Advanced Degree
Beth	20s	F	White	1	1	3 rd	Bachelors
Laurel	20s	F	White	6	3	3 rd	Bachelors
Maria	40s	F	White	6	6	K	Post-baccalaureate
Nancy	50s	F	White	16	16	4 th	Masters
Olivia	50s	F	White	9	7	2 nd	Masters
Rachel	20s	F	White	3	3	1 st	Masters

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering employs multiple procedures. I delineate these procedures below.

Table 4.2 presents the data collection chart, highlighting the data sources, participants, frequencies per participant, and totals. Table 4.3 presents the data collection schedule, ordering these sources by their chronological position within the current study, as well as describing in broad terms the function of each data source.

Table 4.2 <i>Data Collection Chart</i>			
Data Sources	Participants	Frequency Per Participant	Totals
Interviews	Six elementary school teachers: two new (up to five years of teaching experience), two mid-career (between six to ten years), and two veteran (more than ten years)	Two 60 minute semi-structured interviews	Twelve 60 minute semi-structured interviews
Observations		One 60 minute classroom observation	Six 60 minute classroom observations
Focus Group		One 60-90 minute focus group (i.e., with the six participants)	One 60-90 minute focus group
Reflective Written Narrative		One 2-3 page reflective written narrative	Six 2-3 page reflective written narratives
Caldecott Books	Caldecott books from 1991-2011	N/A	Caldecott books from 1991-2011

Table 4.3 <i>Data Collection Schedule</i>					
Caldecott Books	Reflective Written Narrative	Interview 1	Observation	Interview 2	Focus Group
Identify two exemplars of authenticity for the scaffolded experience	Acquire background information and begin the exploration about authenticity		Take field notes on classroom interactions	Provide scaffolded experiences on authenticity	

Interviews.

Participants engaged in three different interviews. The first two are individual interviews, while the third is a group interview, i.e., focus group. All of these interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. This section explains the purpose and approach for each interview format.

The first interview.

The main purpose of the first interview (see Appendix B for template) is to learn about how the teacher understands authenticity, that is, without intimation or structure from the previous working definition or theoretical framework. In other words, the researcher “bracketed” the definition and framework to enter the open space of initial exploration with each participant. In turn, the interview was informal and exploratory. Morrow and Smith (2000) write: “An informal interview... provides the flexibility to follow the participant’s lead, as well as to ask questions and probe replies that enhance the details of the participant’s story” (p. 211).

Moreover, the interview posed broad, open-ended questions to stimulate the teacher’s thinking about authenticity (e.g., see Moustakas, 1994, pp. 114-116). For example, the researcher asked: “What images or ideas come to mind when you hear the word authentic, as in an ‘authentic teacher’ or perhaps someone who is being authentic?” “Describe an authentic moment in your own teaching life. Where did this moment occur, e.g., classroom, school yard, faculty lounge? Which people and/or things were sharing this space with you? What were you doing at the time?” An important qualifier to these narrative questions was to inform the participant that the moment could be subtle, as with seemingly small moments that speak in personally meaningful or profound ways; it might be a more epiphany-like moment; or perhaps somewhere

in between. Also, the moment might not match exactly her ideal vision about authenticity, but it can still touch important aspects of it.

Furthermore, probing questions focused inwardly. For example: “What were you thinking and feeling as the experience occurred?” “What were you noticing about the people around you?” Additional questions explored the participant’s thinking, feeling, and doing just before the moment occurred. The inward questions deliberately deepen the participant’s focus on experiential-near accounts, such as imagery, time, relationship, as well as bodily and self-awareness. In turn, the telling of the account can become vivid, dynamic, and rich with detail.

However, the interview did not merely seek narrative descriptions but also explored how the participant reflects on these descriptive accounts. Thus, building on the previous set of questions, I proceeded with interpretative questions, such as: “Does this experience arouse questions about what it means to teach, or awaken new possibilities for you as a teacher?” “Does it influence your thinking about what you value most as a teacher, as well as what you envision for your students?”

Moreover, the interview encouraged the participant to think synergistically across the whole spectrum, i.e., personal and professional, of her life. This decision arises from the previous analysis that teachers live an ontological un-divide (e.g., see Doring, 1997; Estola, Erkkila, & Syrjala, 2003; Joseph & Efron, 1993; Marshall, 2009; Tisdell, 2000). In other words, teachers bring their “whole” selves every time they enter the classroom, and therefore the life that they live outside of teaching and the life that they live as classroom teachers – as well as how these two connect – were important areas to explore. Thus, the participant was encouraged to consider authentic moments from any aspect of her life: e.g., the participant as parent, sibling, friend, and even student or child.

Furthermore, this inquiry into the ontological un-divide follows the same format that I previously described, i.e., shifting from external to inward descriptive contexts, and then to interpretations. Moreover, the inquiry also asked the participant to compare the authentic moments that occur inside and outside of teaching. Conversely, inquiries into what is “inauthentic” can provide contrasts to help illuminate authenticity. Creswell (1998), who comments on a phenomenological study about caring, supports this point: “The [essence] or core of the [caring] interaction may also be identified by the absence of this quality in those interactions described as noncaring” (p. 278).

The scaffolded experience.

The second individual interview is a scaffolded experience (see Appendix C for template). The term scaffolding, which is common in teaching, originates from Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the “zone of proximal development” (pp. 86-87). For my purposes, ZPD means that participants can deepen their reflections about authenticity through intentional structures and supports, i.e., scaffolds, which the researcher provides.

The scaffolded experience recalls my positionality statement in which I posited the belief that institutional cultures promote fragmenting ideologies and practices that dissolve authenticity. In turn, curriculum practices within standards-based educational movements may compel “habits of self-identification with hegemonic ideologies” (e.g., see Charmaz, 2005, pp. 525-526; Lather, 1986, p. 271) that permeate the paradigm of perceived separateness. Therefore, the scaffolded experience countered this potential tendency by creating a bounded space in which teachers could identify and bracket separateness within their own belief systems to bring to light new insights about authenticity.

Two tools were used to support the scaffolded experience. The first is Caldecott Medal books. Under artifacts as well as data analysis procedures, I explain my reasoning for selecting Caldecott books, as well as the analytic rubric that was applied to analyze and identify levels of authenticity within these books. Moreover, this rubric, as I describe later in detail, is constructed from the previous theoretical framework. As a result, a schematic tool (Appendix D) helped to make the theoretical framework accessible to participants, and in turn provided them a catalyst to engage with the selected book, as well as to think synergistically and reflectively about what it means to be an authentic teacher.

The approach for the scaffolded experience comprises a generic format that was adapted to each of the chosen books, i.e., once they were identified through the analytic procedure. However, the general rhythm begins with an introduction to the scaffolded experience, informing participants that the researcher constructed a working framework based on comprehensive literature reviews about authenticity. Second, the researcher introduces the schematic tool, including the working definition of authenticity as well as the thematic clusters: truth, meaning, existential pain, and action. Third, the researcher presents the Caldecott book and provides a story summary. If the participant is familiar with the book, then the researcher asks the participant to summarize, and adds any pertinent information if necessary. Fourth, the researcher provides a brief statement to highlight why the book was identified as an exemplar of authenticity. Fifth, the researcher gradually guides the participant through the story, connecting story events or brief sequences with aspects of the working theoretical framework, and on occasion, as with Creswell's (1998, p. 278) previous insight, exploring the absence of authenticity. Sixth, the participant is asked to reflect on these suggested meanings about authenticity, i.e., as they are presented by the researcher, and to connect these meanings with her

understandings and experiences concerning being an authentic teacher. Furthermore, if the participant became comfortable with the schematic tool, she was allowed to “take the plunge” and begin to interpret, reflect, and connect without scaffolding prompts from the researcher. The researcher needed to be sensitive to the spontaneity of these moments, if they occurred, and to provide space to the participant to freely interpret, reflect, and connect.

The focus group.

The focus group is a scaffolded experience that follows the same format as the second individual interview (i.e., Appendix C). Fontana and Frey (1994) write: “The use of focus groups is not meant to replace individual interviewing, but it is an option that deserves consideration because it can provide another level of data gathering... not available through individual interviews” (p. 364). Accordingly, the purpose of the focus group is to provide an opportunity in which participants may listen to each other’s perspectives as well as clarify and probe their own understandings within the context of conversing with their peers (e.g., see Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, pp. 887 & 898; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 193).

Unique challenges to the focus group format, which do not occur in the individual interview, include the need to ensure the engagement as well as individual expression (i.e., not “group think”) of each participant (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 365). As a result, the researcher’s facilitation is more demanding than in the individual interview because of group dynamics. On the other hand, as implied above, benefits include the interactive conversational setting, which can be “data rich and stimulating to participants” (p. 365). Moreover, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) allude to another benefit: “Focus groups are little more than quasi formal or formal instances of many of the kinds of everyday speech acts that are the part and parcel of

unmarked social life – conversations, group discussions, negotiations, and the like” (p. 887).

Thus, the focus group as a scaffolded experience provided these colleagues a reflective space in which their everyday sociocultural knowledge, i.e., as teachers within the same school, could be deconstructed, reflected on, and if necessary bracketed, in order to open new possibilities into understanding what it means to be an authentic teacher.

Observations.

Classroom observations supplement the interviews, i.e., the primary data source. As previously indicated in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, the researcher conducted one 60-minute observation of each participant. Moreover, the observation occurred between the first half of the data collection (the written reflective narrative and the first interview) and the second half, which comprises the two scaffolded experiences (individual and group). This section highlights the goal for these observations; explains the rationale for including them in this study; and outlines the observational approaches.

Muncey and McQuillan (n.d.) write: “The goal of observations is to create descriptions..., to collect as much information as possible about an event and the people involved” (p. 5). Thus, to borrow from the field of anthropology, “thick descriptions” rather than “thin descriptions” are central in the observational process (e.g., see Geertz, 1973, pp. 5-10). Rossman and Rallis (2003) elaborate: “Thick descriptions present details, emotions, and textures of social relationships..., which in turn are necessary for thick interpretations [by the researcher]” (p. 197). Thus, the goal for each observation is to attain thick, texturally rich descriptions about the “real time” interactions among the teacher and students within the classroom setting.

The underlying rationale for conducting these observations is that actions can be “purposeful and expressive of deeper values and beliefs” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 195). In turn, the thick descriptions that the researcher constructs from the observations inform him in several ways. First, the descriptions can confirm or disconfirm the participant’s statements from the reflective written narrative as well as the first interview, which, as mentioned, is an open-ended, informal exploration about authenticity, i.e., without any suggestion of the previous theoretical framework. Second, the descriptions can help the researcher to reflect on and identify how the participant might be implicitly expressing, realizing, or complicating aspects of the theoretical framework.

Several approaches support the observational process. First, prior to each observation, the researcher reflected on as well as initially coded (i.e., see Data Analysis Procedures) the participant’s written reflection and first interview. Consequently, the researcher’s initial interpretations of these data sources informed the observational focus. For example, in the first interview, if the participant described an authentic moment and identified “persistence” as an essential quality, the researcher observed interactions that confirm or complicate the participant’s earlier statements. Second, in addition to attaining thick, rich descriptions about the teacher’s classroom interactions, the researcher kept a running record of his impressions, hunches, and reflections while conducting the observation (e.g., see Creswell, 1998, pp. 128-129; Muncey & McQuillan, n.d., p. 5), which in turn provided another means for honing his focus.

Moreover, in the post-observational write up, which occurred the same day of the observation (or no later than the day after), the researcher transferred the handwritten notes to the computer, and correspondingly elaborated details while they were fresh in his mind. Furthermore, he added commentaries that, on the one hand, reexamined data concerning the

reflective narrative and first interview, and on the other hand, integrated these evolving deliberations into dialogue with the theoretical framework. In turn, these deliberations informed the researcher's interactions with each participant during the scaffolded experience, which followed next in the data gathering sequence and made explicit to each participant the theoretical framework.

Artifacts.

Two types of artifacts were used in this study: (a) Caldecott Medal books, which supported the second individual interview and focus group; and (b) reflective written narratives, which aligned with the first individual interview. This section overviews these two artifacts.

Caldecott Medal books.

The Caldecott Medal books were used to support the scaffolded experience. In the previous discussion on interviews, I described the scaffolded experience, including my reasoning and approach. In this section, I overview Caldecott Medal books as well as highlight my decision for selecting them.

Since 1937, the Caldecott Medal has been awarded "to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published by an American publisher in the United States in English during the preceding year" (retrieved November 5, 2011 from Association for Library Service to Children website: <http://www.ala.org/alsc>). The award process is based on rigorous and well-defined criteria by an eclectic, nationally-based committee of school practitioners, university professors, librarians, museum educators, and artists. These criteria include:

Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed; excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept; appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or concept; delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood or information through the pictures; excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience. (Retrieved November 5, 2011 from Association for Library Service to Children website)

Caldecott Medal books from 1991-2011 were explored (see Data Analysis Procedures). Two exemplars of authenticity were needed for the second individual interview and the focus group (i.e., one exemplar per session type). This range of two decades, which is based on convenience alone, provided an adequate selection of books from which to engage the analysis and accomplish the goal of identifying two exemplars. If upon analysis, however, the books did not provide two exemplars of authenticity, then earlier books or Caldecott honor (i.e., runner-up) books would have been chosen to continue and complete the analysis.

In addition, there are several reasons for my decision regarding Caldecott books. The main reason is the highly visual format. First, people construct meaning from visual texts in their everyday lives. For example, if one walks across campus, one does not smile and then see the friendly face. Rather, one sees the friendly face and then smiles. Almost instinctively one works backward from the concrete sensory to the abstract. The friendly face triggers the cognitive association, such as “I know and like this person, and am happy to see her,” and results in one’s smiling response. Likewise, highly theoretical abstractions also work backward from the concrete sensory experience. Arnheim (1969) observes: “Abstraction does not abandon the context from which it was drawn.... [I]t preserves the flesh and blood of perceivable validity by

being referable to the kinds of actual events from which it derives and to which it applies” (p. 193; also see Palmer, 1993, pp. 58 & 63-64).

Moreover, visual texts span ethnicities, language barriers, and contexts (A. Friedman, personal communication, October, 20, 2011). Imagine that one were lost in a foreign country and could not speak the native language. Arnheim (1969) asks: “How would you make them understand that you are thirsty?” (p. 196). Most likely by gesturing a cup with one’s hand and then applying a drinking motion. Furthermore, the image of the baby’s smile cuts across multiple languages to the receptive person, just as images of grief, starvation, and death weigh on the hearts of people continents apart.

In addition, Caldecott books represent high quality art. Proficient, diverse arrangements of line, color, texture, and shape; integration of media, such as collage, paints, inks, and woodcuts; and choice of visual style, such as realism, expressionism, impressionism, or symbolism create dynamic, unified compositions that encourage synergy, imagination, organization, and connection (e.g., see Norton, 1991, pp. 128-155). For example, in Wiesner’s (1991) near wordless Caldecott book *Tuesday*, the chaos that erupts from frogs on flying lily pads, along with the puzzlement of the townspeople the next day, might suggest among other themes the need for humans to respect the limits of their technological and scientific knowledge concerning the mystery of nature. Perhaps the naturalist Loren Eiseley would agree with this interpretation, if he were to see Wiesner’s *Tuesday*. Eiseley (1957) writes:

The world is fixed, we say: fish in the sea, birds in the air. But in the mangrove swamps by the Niger, fish climb trees and ogle uneasy naturalists who try unsuccessfully to chase them back to water. There are things still coming ashore. (p. 54)

Furthermore, Caldecott books provide a familiar building block from which to engage participants in the scaffolded experience. For example, elementary school teachers know about these books through their passion for children's literature or, at least, their engagement with school-adopted literacy programs, which incorporate these books into literacy anthologies. Thus, familiar materials provide a meaningful vehicle through which to deepen reflections about authenticity. Lastly, although familiar materials, the Caldecott books for the scaffolded experience provide examples of authenticity that are *not* specifically about teaching. Therefore, these books offer what I call non-invasive catalysts. In other words, participants need to think synergistically and imaginatively in order to personalize the connections between their teaching lives and the suggested meanings of authenticity in these books.

Reflective written narratives.

Prior to the first interview, the data collection process sought written reflections from participants to provide some background information, and primarily to create an informal space in which they could begin exploring authenticity in their lives (see Appendix E for template). The written reflection pursues the same kind of questions that were previously described in the first individual interview. The difference between the two formats is that the written reflection is brief (i.e., two pages) while the first individual interview provides participants space for extensive spoken elaboration and clarification with the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) write: "The purpose of analysis is to bring meaning, structure, and order to data.... Confronted with a mountain of impressions, documents,

transcribed interviews, and field notes, the qualitative researcher faces the difficult task of making sense of what has been learned” (p. 31). Thus, this section provides the blueprint of the analytic procedures and techniques that enable the researcher to make sense of the mountain of data sources.

Two main analytical procedures.

In phenomenological research, two main analytical procedures support the researcher in bringing meaning, structure, and order to the data: phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). These analytical procedures apply to the interview and focus group transcripts, as well as to the participants’ reflective written narratives, while the observational data (i.e., field notes) are explained in the next sub-section.

As previously mentioned, the steps in the data analysis recall the organization of the research questions (e.g., see Creswell, 1998, p. 102). For example: “What do the authentic experiences suggest about the teachers’ quality of being in the classroom?” implies phenomenological reduction, i.e., the textural content (the “what”), regarding the teacher’s experiences, perceptions, descriptions, and understandings of authenticity. Moreover, the research question, “What clusters of themes account for these experiences of authenticity?” suggests imaginative variation, i.e., the structural form (the “how”), that illuminates the ways of being (and the conditions that support these ways) through which teachers experience or understand authenticity. Thus, from the beginning, the research questions foreshadowed the steps in the data analysis.

For clarity, textural content and structural form are mutually related (Moustakas, 1994, p. 30), although structure is more subtle than content. Moustakas writes: “Texture and structure are

in continual relationship. [Their relationship] is that of the appearance and the hidden coming together to create fullness in understanding the essences of a phenomenon or experience” (p. 79). To elucidate, take once again the musical performance of the jazz ensemble. The texture of sound, which is the content of the music, does not occur arbitrarily. Instead, the underlying melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structures create the conditions through which the players interact to create music, i.e., the textures of sound depend on these structures of musical form. However, the underlying musical form does not become fully meaningful without the embodied textures of sound, such as the interplay of tonalities, accents, modulations, crescendos or decrescendos. Therefore, the data analysis assumes that texture and structure are mutually dependent, while structure is the more subtle of the two to discern.

Phenomenological reduction.

With phenomenological reduction, the researcher finds statements about how the participants are experiencing or understanding the phenomenon under investigation, i.e., authenticity. Creswell (1998) observes: “[The researcher then] treats each statement as having equal worth, and works to develop a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements” (p. 147), i.e., the significant statements. In turn, the researcher groups the significant statements into meaning units (Creswell, pp. 150, 280, & 286-287). The “reduction” in the process of phenomenological reduction does not diminish the data. Rather, it hones the data toward significant statements, and in turn, toward meaning units that can clarify and illuminate the essence of the textural “what” about the participants’ experiences and understandings with regard to authenticity.

In the phenomenological reduction process, the researcher “immerses” himself in the data, allowing it to “incubate” on the front and back burners of his mind (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 279). Moustakas (1994) writes: “The task requires that I look and describe, look again and describe; look again and describe” (p. 90). This iterative process engages the researcher in reflecting on, intuiting, imagining, observing, and judging the data, while intentionally bracketing preconceptions or biases that may be interfering with an open-minded analysis. Furthermore, the process requires constant self-checking and self-correcting about what the researcher has been or currently is perceiving within the data. Moustakas clarifies this point:

Things become clearer as they are considered again and again. Illusion is undone through correction, through approaching something from a different vantage point, or with a different sense or meaning. Some new dimension becomes thematic and thus alters the perception of what has previously appeared.... [S]omething not seen is now recognized; the expectation of it makes the appearance more likely. [T]hings far away are viewed differently when they come near; inevitably we make corrections as things come into sharper focus and clarity. (pp. 93-94)

Imaginative variation.

In imaginative variation, the researcher plays with the “meaning units” in order to construct the clusters of themes that speak to the conditions and qualities that illuminate “how” teachers experience and understand authenticity. This imaginative play is not fantasy and whim that detaches itself from the reality of the data. To clarify this point, Himes (1995), although speaking as a theologian rather than an empirical researcher, posits imagination in a way that informs this analytical process. He writes: “Imagination ‘bodies forth’ what has been previously

unknown because unrealized..., [but] now it is given 'a local habitation and name.' Unlike fantasy, imagination is not about escaping reality; it is precisely about making things real" (p. 137). In effect, the imaginative play within the analytical process seeks the inner luminescence of the phenomenon, thus "making the invisible visible within the data" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98).

Moreover, in imaginative variation, the researcher plays with the data in relation to potential structures that might "precipitate feelings and thoughts with reference to [authenticity], e.g., time, space, bodily awareness, materiality, relation to self, and relation to others" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99). In addition, while the researcher constructs clusters of themes through the process of imaginative variation, i.e., "de-contextualizing" the data, he also points back to participant descriptions, as well, thus "re-contextualizing" the themes within the data to illuminate subtle forms and organizing principles (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 31; also see Creswell, 1998, p. 280).

In this analytical process, the researcher moves toward the essence of the phenomenon. Essence means the condition or quality without which an authentic teacher would not be authentic. Moustakas (1994) adds: "The essences of any experience [or understanding] are never totally exhausted..., but represent the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon" (p. 100). Therefore, the phenomenological reduction and the imaginative variation lead to an exhaustive statement about the textures and structures of authenticity "for now." Furthermore, for each participant, the textural-structural analytical process was applied and a synthesis was written. From there, a composite textural-structural description, i.e., essence statement, was constructed for the participants as a whole, thus capturing, at least for this particular study, the sense of what it means to be an authentic teacher.

Analytic memoing.

Memoing, which is a technique from grounded theory, was used throughout the research process. Memoing supports deliberate, systematic inquiry by enabling the researcher to “elaborate processes, assumptions, and actions [as the study unfolds]... [with the outcome of] keeping the researcher focused on the analysis and involved in the research” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 517). Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest three focus areas for analytic memoing: (a) methodological memos examine how the research design and techniques are progressing; (b) thematic memos look across data sources to construct and test potential themes; and (c) theoretical memos enrich thematic memos with theoretical literature that may inform the analytic process (pp. 291-292).

Moreover, the memoing technique supports several assumptions. First, data collection and analysis are non-linear processes, occurring simultaneously throughout the research. Second, the analytic process is both inductive and deductive. Rossman and Rallis observe: “[This] complex, nonlinear process of induction, deduction, reflection, inspiration, and just plain old hard thinking... can be conceptualized as researcher praxis, that is, the iteration between theoretical ideas, data, and the researcher’s reflections on both” (p. 11; also see Charmaz, 2005, pp. 509-510). Third, memoing assumes that the researcher does not approach the research as a “blank slate.” For example, the previous theoretical framework represents a whole set of concepts that the researcher brings with him to this study. As a result, Charmaz (2005) advises:

We cannot import a set of concepts and paste them on the realities in the field. Instead, we can treat them as sensitizing concepts, to be explored in the field settings. Then, we can define if, when, how, to what extent, and under which conditions these concepts

become relevant to the study. We need to treat concepts as problematic and look for their characteristics as lived and understood, not as given in textbooks. (p. 512)

For this reason, the working theoretical framework remained flexible and open to surprise and change while engaging with the data.

Analysis of observations.

Field notes from the classroom observations were analyzed with open and axial coding techniques. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) write: “Codes are organizing principles.... They are tools to think with. They can be expanded, changed, or scrapped altogether as our ideas develop through repeated interactions with the data” (p. 32). Open coding consolidates the data into manageable chunks of meaning (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, pp. 31-32), which is parallel to the function of phenomenological reduction. Conversely, parallel to the function of imaginative variation, axial coding uses these manageable chunks, i.e., meaning units or codes, to imagine, play with, and compare the data in ways that clarify or illuminate subtle themes (Charmaz, 2000, pp. 515-516; Coffey & Atkinson, p. 50). In turn, the coding of field notes was then triangulated with the other data sources to enrich, confirm, or complicate the researcher’s analytic process of phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation.

Computer assisted technology.

The computer software application NVivo 9 supported the data management and analysis. Software analysis applications such as NVivo 9 help researchers to organize mountains of data, to retrieve data quickly, and to assemble ideas into themes and theories (Charmaz, 2000, p. 520; Creswell, 1998, pp. 155-156). However, these software programs did not substitute for

the researcher's close reading, immersion, and reflective analysis concerning the data, nor did they, as Charmaz observes, reduce the analytic process to mechanical procedures (p. 520).

Caldecott Medal books.

This section reviews the development and organization of the analytical tool (Table 4.4) for the Caldecott book analysis. In addition, the methodological approach for this literary analysis is overviewed, as well.

Table 4.4
Caldecott Book Analytic Rubric

Broad Level	Sub-Level	How is <i>truth</i> perceived?	How is <i>meaning</i> perceived?	How does one relate with <i>existential pain</i> ?	How does one <i>act</i> ?
Inauthentic	1	Without question, I see myself as separate from other people. The world is out-there, and I am in-here.	I assume that meaning primarily comes from serving myself and satisfying my needs and desires, regardless of the well-being of others.	I believe that attachment to externals such as material gain, physical pleasure, and praise, as well as avoiding their opposites, make me feel secure about who I am.	I take care of myself and the people who are closest to me, since the way of the world is “dog eat dog.”
	2	I see myself as basically separate from other people and the world, but I do not deny that to some degree I depend on people and things to live.	I believe that meaning primarily comes from serving myself and satisfying my needs and desires, yet I believe that others have the same right, as well.	I believe that externals such as gain, pleasure, and praise are fundamental to my pursuit of happiness and well-being, but I also believe that, to some degree, externals cannot provide me everything that I need or want.	I take care of myself and the people who are closest to me, but I try to be respectful of, or at least not impose upon, the rights of others to take care of themselves and their own.
Pre-authentic	3	I assume that there is more to me than this separate self, yet I seldom reflect on or explore this assumption.	I assume that meaning comes from serving others, but I seldom reflect on or explore this assumption.	The habitual struggle to seek and avoid externals makes me weary at times, and I sense myself wanting something besides externals, yet I remain drawn to my habits.	I try to be a good person in the world, taking care of family and friends, as well as being kind to acquaintances and strangers, yet I assume that some people are bad by nature and therefore do not deserve my compassion or kindness.

Table 4.4
Caldecott Book Analytic Rubric

Broad Level	Sub-Level	How is <i>truth</i> perceived?	How is <i>meaning</i> perceived?	How does one relate with <i>existential pain</i> ?	How does one <i>act</i> ?
	4	Part of me believes that I am more than this separate self, and I tend to examine this belief through reflection and exploration.	Part of me believes that meaning comes from serving others, and I reflect on the significance of this belief to inform my understanding.	The habitual struggle to seek and avoid externals makes me weary at times, and I find myself pondering whether my values and beliefs are misleading.	Part of me realizes that people cannot be neatly categorized as either good or bad, and as a result, I reflect on the ways in which I might blur the boundaries through my thoughts and actions.
Authentic	5	Through an awakening experience, I sense my selfless, interdependent nature, but I tend to dismiss the significance and depth of this experience.	Through an awakening experience, I sense that authentic self-fulfillment comes from giving myself to others, but I tend to back away from exploring the implications of this experience.	Because of an awakening experience, I sense that my habitual struggle to seek and avoid externals is misleading, yet I tend not to deepen my thinking about this experience.	Because of an awakening experience, I sense that people are essentially good, yet I tend to disregard the implications of what it means to live with an appreciation of this goodness in an imperfect world where people do bad things.
	6	Through an awakening experience, I realize my selfless, interdependent nature, and I reflect on the significance and depth of this experience to inform my understanding about who I really am.	Through an awakening experience, I realize that authentic self-fulfillment comes from giving myself to others, and I purposefully explore the implications of this experience.	Because of an awakening experience, I realize the false security of attachment and aversion. I wisely intuit that, as I empty my life of this habitual struggle, I come to feel fuller and more secure	Because of an awakening experience, I realize that people are essentially good, and I intentionally try to discern this good nature even while I hold people responsible for their harmful or misguided deeds.

Development and organization of the rubric.

As previously mentioned, the working definition of authenticity – which means to see the sacredness of oneself, others, and the world – as well as the thematic clusters (i.e., truth, meaning, existential pain, and action), create an integrated working theoretical framework. Implied is that, because the working theoretical framework is integrated, each level and row in the rubric represents an integrated unit. For example, perceived truth at the first level cannot coincide with perceived meaning at the fifth or sixth level. Moreover, the rubric does not suggest that the characters in the Caldecott books cannot evidence examples of the different levels as the story events unfold and as they develop or change.

In addition, recall from the interpretive summary that truth and meaning provide the structural basis of this working theoretical framework, while existential pain and action provide the thematic building blocks on which to express and explore this structural basis. The twofold vertical layering within the overall design of the rubric suggests this twofold organization of the working theoretical framework: i.e., structural basis and thematic building blocks. Therefore, one vertical organizing unit is “evident awareness,” which means that the story provides visual and/or verbal evidence in which the character is having an awakening experience of the authentic truth and meaning of existence. The second vertical organizing unit is “evident intention,” which means that the story provides visual and/or verbal evidence in which the character is demonstrating an implicit or explicit intention to relate integratively with existential pain and to act authentically.

Accordingly, the first and second levels of the rubric suggest neither evident awareness nor evident intention. The third and fourth levels suggest evident intention but not evident awareness. To clarify, one can actively choose to examine and to challenge one’s thinking,

feeling, and doing, and as a result, can prepare oneself to awaken to the authentic truth and meaning of existence. Yet, one cannot choose when or how to experience authenticity. This reasoning draws from the previous discussion about the spontaneity of authenticity, i.e., one cannot conceptually predetermine the experience of authenticity's pre-conceptual wholeness. Take for example, Tillich (1957), who suggests that ultimate concern (i.e., authentic meaning) renders humans helpless and vulnerable in the sense of their always being in need of receiving God's grace (p. 122; also see Himes, 1995, p. 30). Thus, the design of the rubric follows this logic, and as a result, the third and fourth levels imply pre-authentic readiness while the fifth and sixth levels, which are the highest levels, not only suggest evident intention but also evident awareness.

Moreover, the twofold distinction within each broad level (i.e., inauthentic, pre-authentic, and authentic) suggests that the character's evident intention is either implicit or explicit. Take for example, Buber's authentic meeting with the cat. In the fleeting moment of the cat's glance, Buber (1958, p. 96; 1970, p. 145) realizes the power of language that the cat speaks with its whole being. The two have entered the open space of mutuality, each of them retaining their uniqueness while abiding in pre-conceptual wholeness. In turn, because there is evidence of awareness, the example applies best with the fifth or sixth level, since the preceding four levels exclude evident awareness. The deciding factor on whether the fifth or sixth level is most appropriate depends on whether the awakening experience is implicitly or explicitly understood by Buber once the experience had subsided. Clearly there is evidence that he explicitly reflects on the experience, thereby naming and claiming the experience as more than a "soft, feathery touch" (Starratt & Guare, 1995, p. 192) in his day but rather as a depth of reality that informs his

ongoing deliberations, choices, and actions. As a result, the example applies best with the sixth level.

Accordingly, on the pre-authentic level, one may choose to act in a morally sound manner because doing so is instinctively the right thing to do. However, if one deliberates on the implicit choice, then the level of intention becomes explicit, thus illuminating the difference between the third and fourth levels. Likewise, one who thinks and acts with the sole focus of gaining money, for example, deliberately disregarding how this material gain may affect the well-being of others, functions on a lower inauthentic level (i.e., the first level) than someone who pledges unknowingly to self-cherishing habits, such as frequently indulging in expensive meals without consideration that the money may help to feed starving children.

Methodological approach.

The methodology for this literary analysis employs a structuralist-semiotic approach. Eagleton (2008) writes: “Structuralism, as the term suggests, is concerned with structures, and more particularly with examining the general laws by which they work” (p. 82). In other words, structuralism provides the set of formal rules through which one may interrogate texts for meaning. On the one hand, these rules involve literary devices (Appendix F), such as figurative language, mood, and theme. On the other hand, and particularly relevant to the current analysis, these rules also include visual grammar (Appendix G), such as the composition of line, color, shape, and size.

The other aspect of this integrated approach is semiotics, which is the study of sign systems. The sign system consists of two parts: the signifier and the signified. Rossman and Rallis (2003) provide a basic example: “A red octagonal traffic post is a *signifier* that motorists

should come to a full stop (the meaning conveyed – *signified*); together they constitute the *sign* of the traffic control” [Italics in original] (p. 300). Moreover, Eagleton (2008) observes three basic kinds of signs: (a) iconic signs resemble what they reference, such as a photograph of a person; (b) indexical signs associate in some way with what they reference, e.g., smoke with fire; and (c) symbolic signs arbitrarily or conventionally connect with what they reference, such as the red octagonal traffic post for stop (p. 87).

Regarding the relationship between structuralism and semiotics, Eagleton (2008) writes: [The] two words overlap, since structuralism treats something which may not usually be thought of as a system of signs as though it were..., while semiotics commonly uses structuralist methods (p. 87; also see Ball & Smith, 1992, pp. 40-54). Thus, like two sides of the same coin, the structuralist-semiotic approach integrates the formal rules of literary analysis that govern the piece of literature, i.e., the visual grammar and literary devices, as well as the sign systems that convey the meaning of the work.

Take for example the brief analysis of the cover illustration of Wiesner’s (1991) Caldecott Medal book *Tuesday*.⁴ The large, lighted town clock, which is at the center, immediately draws one’s attention. The clock’s time (9:00) and the darkness of the town below (i.e., lights out) suggest that the people who live there are settling down to rest. However, the clock’s diagonal lines imply unsteadiness, imbalance... unrest. Moreover, looming lily pads with frogs on each, as two of the pads indicate, appear from the periphery, encircling the clock and hovering above the houses below, enhancing the sense of dissonance. Furthermore, in the background, the small light from a house draws the viewer’s eye to an alert dog, which is staring upward at the ominous activity near the clock. The impending sense of mayhem from above on

⁴ The cover illustration for Wiesner’s (1991) book, *Tuesday*, can be viewed at: <http://www.hmhbooks.com/wiesner/tuesday.html>

the unsuspecting, largely dormant town below may be suggesting some kind of confrontation between nature and humans. Thus, this brief analysis demonstrates how the composition of visual grammar, e.g., the contrasts in color, line, shape, position, and size, as well as the interplay of literary devices, such as foreshadowing, imagery, and mood, can provide the formal structures and elucidate the sign systems through which meaning may be accessed.

While clarifying the meaning of the book, the analytic rubric was used to discern the overall level of authenticity that the story events were evidencing. Moreover, two raters (i.e., the researcher plus one) collaborated in the analysis process. They engaged in dialogic reflection to achieve consensus on two exemplary books as well as to discern how story themes, characters, and events illuminate the artist's representation of the theoretical framework about authenticity. After the co-raters identified an exemplary book, the researcher documented the outcome of the collaborative analysis (see Appendix H for template). In turn, the written record became a set of working guidelines for the researcher to implement the scaffolded experience. This process was repeated for the second exemplary book, as well. Once the two exemplars were identified, the Caldecott analysis was completed. In effect, the full range of two decades was not necessary to explore.

Resulting from this process, *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney, 2009) and *The House in the Night* (Swanson & Krommes, 2008) were selected. Pinkney's *The Lion and the Mouse*, staged within the African Serengeti of Tanzania and Kenya, is a near wordless adaptation of Aesop's fable between two unlikely friends. The book represents a metaphor of the human capacity to conquer narrow self-perceptions and enter into caring, compassionate relationships. It reveals the "awesome yet fragile sides" of both protagonists as they embark upon an interconnected journey (see Appendix I). In *The House in the Night*, Swanson's poetry and

Krommes' scratchboard illustrations, which contain gentle touches of golden watercolor, illuminate images of harmony and order in the universe. The rhythmic movements of the verbal and visual patterns suggest that, beneath the appearance of separateness, there is oneness without division. Metaphors in the poetry provide an invitation to ponder one's participation within this harmonious, non-divisive order (see Appendix J).

Validity

Several kinds of validity are considered in this study. The first is the most common type, which Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) describe as "the defensibility of the inferences that researchers make from the data collected" (p. 111). Morrow and Smith (2000) elaborate: "Validation is an ongoing, discursive process of checking (adopting a critical attitude toward one's interpretation and probing for bias and poorly supported findings); questioning (seeking corroboration and consensus); and theorizing (probing for the theoretical significance of the phenomenon" (p. 221; also see Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 67). The defensibility of the researcher's analysis depends on the triangulation or confluence of multiple data sources to corroborate claims. In addition, defensibility requires the researcher "to point to specific instances in the data to support an interpretation" (Morrow & Smith, p. 218). Moreover, analytic memoing strengthens the defensibility of the researcher's interpretations by probing for disconfirming evidence as well as discrepant evidence (Creswell, 1998, p. 280; Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 219). This open skepticism of the researcher toward his interpretations may "challenge the researcher's confirmatory bias and increase [his] sensitivity to the meanings of incoming data" (p. 219; also see Lather, 1986, p. 270).

Another kind of validity deals with the intersubjective aspect of knowledge. Reason (1981) writes: “[V]alid knowledge is a matter of *relationship*.... We can move toward an intersubjectively valid knowledge, which is beyond the limitations of one knower” [Italics in original] (p. 241). In the current study, this validity type occurs through participant checks. Morrow and Smith (2000) provide some criteria for these checks: first, the researcher may seek clarification during the interview itself; second, he may pursue follow-up questions after reflecting on the interview, thus deepening levels of clarity and understanding about what the participant is saying; third, he may provide the analysis write-up to the participants to seek their input and correction (p. 220; also see Lather, 1986, p. 268; Moustakas, 1994, p. 95; Reason, pp. 247-248).

Moreover, relational validity means that the researcher revisits the working theoretical framework about authenticity, indicating how his initial interpretation of the educational, philosophical, and theological literature has changed because of the study, as well as how the framework has informed his engagement with the participants and the data analysis. Furthermore, another form of relational validity comes from the use of two raters in developing and applying the rubric for the Caldecott analysis. This approach supports relational validity in the sense of achieving consistency in the application of the rubric, i.e., reliability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 162), as well as in the decision making with regard to the appropriate books for the scaffolded experience.

Reflexivity.

To nurture an attitude of open-mindedness and nonjudgmental listening in the research process is challenging work. In fact, I assume that an authentic Epoche process is always a work

in progress and is hardly ever purely authentic, except in rare moments. Take for example, the existential self-project from Buddhism's concept of ignorance. This self-project is the pervasive focusing of one's beliefs, feelings, experiences, perceptions, and behaviors to support a deeply habituated and reified sense of "I," "me," or "mine" (Novak, 1984, pp. 90-91). As a result, deconstructing these deeply habituated patterns in order to be present authentically within the research space is an ongoing issue for the researcher's own reflexive process. Despite the arduous, ongoing, and humanly fallible effort to engage in the authentic Epoché process, Moustakas (1994) advises: "Regular practice... increases one's competency in achieving a presuppositionless state and in being open to receive whatever appears in consciousness, as such" (p. 90).

Three practices supported the self-reflexive process. First, reflexive journals aided the researcher in keeping track of thoughts, feelings, impressions, and hunches as they occurred throughout the research process (Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 212). The reflexive journaling was incorporated into the same journal as the analytic memoing, since "observational entries, interpretations, and reflexive memos often flow from one to the other" (Morrow & Smith, p. 212). Second, meditation practices from Tibetan Buddhism (e.g., see Makransky, 2007) and Theravada Buddhism (e.g., see Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, pp. 30-37) continued to support this researcher in observing, challenging, and releasing biases as they occurred. For clarity, meditation practices do not aim to lose the sense of the researcher's subjective self but rather to loosen the constraints of the existential self-project, which makes subtle biases and preconceptions difficult to observe. Sogyal Rinpoche (1993) provides a helpful metaphor:

Try an experiment. Pick up a coin. Imagine that it represents the [sense of "I"] at which you are grasping. Hold it tightly in your fist and extend your arm, with the palm of your

hand facing down. If you let go, you will lose what you are clinging to. That's why you hold on. But there's another possibility. You can let go and still keep hold of it. With your arm still outstretched, turn it over so that it faces the sky. Release your hand and the coin still rests on your open palm. You let go. Yet the coin is still yours, even with all this space around it. (p. 34)

This metaphor embodies the goal of the Epoche process, i.e., a goal that is realized gradually and with ongoing, dedicated practice. Lastly, to complement reflexive journaling and meditation, I heeded advice from Reason (1981), who suggests that the researcher “actively explore the stirrings of his own unconscious mind while engaged in research, and that he become practiced and competent in a discipline for doing this” (p. 246). As with Reason, I believed that counseling sessions could help to uncover rigid or obstructive patterns that interfere with an open-minded research process. Therefore, I continued to pursue counseling sessions as growth-oriented learning in conjunction with meditation and reflective journaling.

Generalizability

As mentioned in the first chapter, discussions on educational policy and practice tend to marginalize the development of teacher authenticity. In turn, one of the previously stated goals is to make contributions to discourses on educational policy and practice about perhaps the most generative space for influencing deep educational change, i.e., the teacher's way of being. The concept of generalizability is therefore necessary to address. This section re-interprets the classical quantitative view of generalizability, making it relevant to this qualitative study. Moreover, with this re-interpretation, limitations for the research are highlighted and addressed.

Re-interpreting generalizability.

Schofield (1990) observes that in qualitative research, “fittingness,” “comparability,” and “translatability” may be more realistic terms than generalizability, which implies the classical quantitative view of external validity, i.e., the assumption that research findings universally apply regardless of social context (pp. 207-208). Morrow and Smith (2000) suggest the term “naturalistic generalization,” while Rossman and Rallis (2003) emphasize the “usefulness” of working understandings (p. 68). Each re-interpretation points to a similar outcome: “Because of the adequacy and vividness of the portrayal and persuasiveness of the interpretation, the reader can make associations and implicit comparisons between the situation described by the researcher and some other case in the reader’s experience” (Morrow & Smith, p. 221). In addition, Fine (2006) deepens these re-interpretations with her concept of “provocative generalizability,” which describes “the extent to which a piece of research *provokes* readers, across contexts, to generalize to ‘worlds not yet’ ...; to rethink and reimagine current arrangements” [Italics in original] (p. 98).

Therefore, I hope that this study evokes readers to imagine possibilities for teacher growth and development, i.e., possibilities that deliberately nurture and encourage authenticity within the lives of teachers. At a minimum, however, thick, rich descriptions of the data should support readers in determining for themselves if and how the findings may be relevant – i.e., fitting, comparable, translatable, and useful – to their situations (Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 221; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 68).

Limitations to generalizability.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) write: “Limitations set some conditions that acknowledge the partial and tentative nature of any research” (p. 133). For example, readers may or may not identify with the characteristics of the setting and participants, e.g., small Catholic K-8 urban school; white female teachers. In turn, the degree to which readers identify with the setting and participants might influence how much they deem the findings relevant to their situations. Furthermore, with the small sample size, primarily based on convenience, the findings must be understood with consideration for the complex, diverse contexts in which readers work and live (Rossman & Rallis, p. 66). Therefore, by design, the current study imposes potential constraints on its readership, perhaps restricting the earlier goal of eliciting awareness in discourses on educational policy and practice about the significance of teacher authenticity.

However, the previous concepts of fittingness, comparability, translatability, usefulness, and naturalistic generalization not only require “thick, rich descriptions” but also recommendations about the ways in which “lessons learned” may inform the reader’s ongoing deliberations (e.g., see Weaver, 2004, pp. 74-75). For instance, how might the descriptive examples become a catalyst for teachers to reflect on the ontological questions about deep truth and meaning in their own teaching lives? How might school leaders adapt the findings to facilitate conversations among teachers about what it means to be an authentic teacher; why authenticity matters; where authenticity may be occurring in their lives; and how professional development activities may support teacher authenticity? Furthermore, how might academics and policymakers apply the lessons learned from this group of participants to enrich their vision of deep educational change? Considerations like these are re-visited in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Five: Findings

This chapter presents the findings, and provides an essential step toward realizing the vision of this study, which is to integrate philosophical/ theological and empirical resources into a comprehensive construct of teacher authenticity (presented in the next chapter). Several key points need to be clarified to provide an appropriate context for the reader.

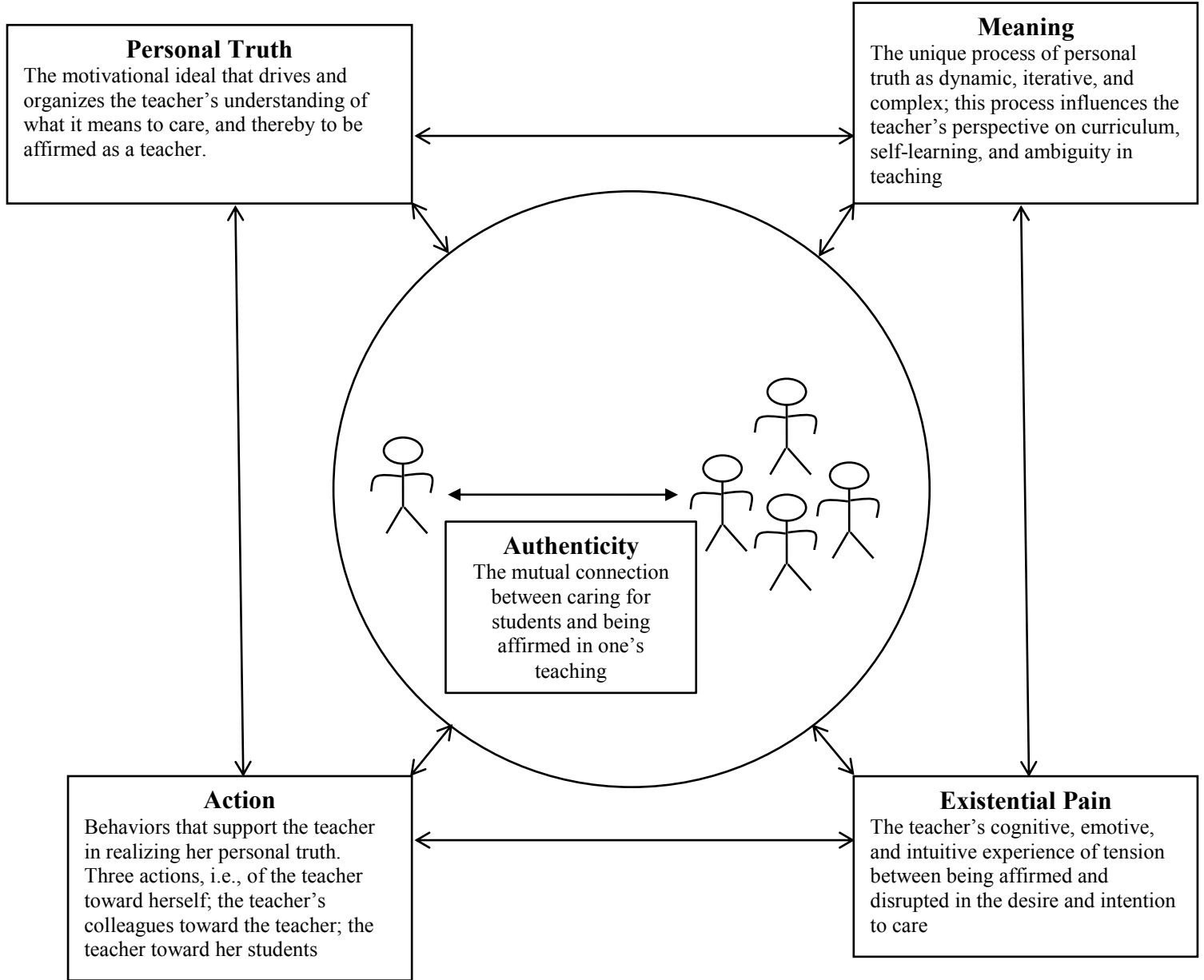
First, the earlier theoretical framework is deliberately excluded from this discussion, as the aim of the data analysis was to let the empirical data speak as much as possible without imposing the pre-existing construct. As already indicated, the next chapter will integrate the findings and the earlier framework to propose an inclusive construct. Second, the tone of this discussion differs from that of the earlier framework, as the interplay of the teacher's human limitation and fallibility as well as the aspiration to serve became clearly evident during the analysis. Authenticity as a unique process, dynamic, iterative, and complex, gradually permeated my outlook. This influenced me to interpret the data with a noticeably different cadence from the earlier framework, which presented authenticity as a neatly defined, either/or construct, i.e., one is either authentic or inauthentic. As evident now, my interpretation of the earlier framework emphasized authenticity as a quality of presence, i.e., a state of being, while the current interpretation evolved and now emphasizes authenticity as an ongoing process of becoming. This distinction is critical, as it sets aside any dissonance that may emerge between this interpretation and the earlier one, with the understanding that in the next chapter, i.e., the integrative framework, any dissonance will be resolved.

Figure 5.1 presents the empirical framework of authenticity, personal truth, meaning, existential pain, and action. Authenticity is being interpreted through the mutual relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher. Care, which is being defined

broadly, denotes a selfless concern for students' well-being, including qualities such as respect, persistence, kindness, generosity, and empathy. Personal truth is the motivational ideal, driving and organizing the teacher's understanding of what it means to care, and thereby mutually affirming the teacher. Meaning brings into focus authenticity as a unique process, and explores how a teacher's personal truth influences perspectives about the curriculum, self-learning, and ambiguity in teaching. Existential pain presents the teacher's cognitive, emotive, and intuitive experience of tension between being affirmed and disrupted in the desire and intention to care. This self-perceived tension stirs the movement of the teacher's authenticity process. Lastly, action speaks to behaviors supporting the teacher in realizing her personal truth, i.e., actions of the teacher toward herself; the teacher's colleagues toward the teacher; and the teacher toward her students.

To contextualize this chapter and to foreshadow its function within the broader vision of the dissertation, the sixth chapter, as mentioned, will bring the empirical framework into dialogue with the earlier theoretical framework. A faith perspective of authenticity will be made explicit, defined as a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. The integrative discussion then proceeds as a catalyst for the seventh chapter, which responds to the autobiographical question about the researcher as an authentic learner. Finally, the eighth chapter concludes the study and discusses key contributions, implications, areas for future research, as well as limitations.

Figure 5.1
Empirical Framework for Findings



Authenticity

Teacher authenticity is an ongoing process of self-affirmation, inseparable from a desire to care for students, and sustained through an intention to act upon and actualize this desire.

Simply stated, a commitment to caring for students can mutually affirm one's sense of being as a teacher. Teacher authenticity is therefore an essential relationship, i.e., the connection between

caring for students and being self-affirmed. In this mutuality, the teacher's caring for students is also care for herself; however, this self-care is not selfish but rather selfless.

To further demonstrate this point, Olivia, in her ninth year of teaching, distributed before and after a twelve-year absence to raise her children, uses the term vocation to suggest this relational meaning of authenticity. She comments: "When you are thinking about your career, which really is your vocation, and you really look inside yourself, and can do what you love, there is no greater blessing." The blessing is to do something meaningful with her life, "something that matters." For Olivia, what matters "is what you do for other people." Nonetheless, her understanding about vocation is not one-sided. She states: "There should be some level of satisfaction in teaching." When these two factors meet, she describes an experience of "oneness with the job," which is her vocational sense, and which, within this empirical framework, is the basic relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher.

Laurel, in her sixth year of teaching, mostly in the third grade, "does all the tasks that are required to get the reward of student learning." This implies that student learning reciprocally becomes her reward. The two are intrinsically related. She recalls several years ago, for example, in which she worked diligently with a third grader who "thought he couldn't read, so he didn't read. He hated books and the idea of reading. He turned it off." In working with this boy, his attitude changed over time, and he learned to love reading. She explains: "That was very rewarding for me, because I felt like I gave him a lifelong gift." In effect, the gift that she had given to him was also the gift that she had received, i.e., the very rewarding experience.

Nancy, who is the veteran of the group, in her sixteenth year of teaching after a career spanning two decades in graphic design, pointed to a sign hanging high on her classroom wall,

indicating to me what she calls her philosophy: “Give and gifts will be given to you.” She elaborates:

The reason why it is up there, and has been for years, is that I feel like, if you try to give one hundred percent by being prepared, by knowing what I’m teaching, and by being a caring teacher, that the children will respond to that. That’s one way I use it. The other way is for them to treat each other with kindness. If you are kind to your neighbor, to the person sitting next to you, to kids in the school, they will be kind back to you.

Clearly, the students’ responsiveness to the gift of a best teaching effort is equally Nancy’s gift, as well. Less obvious, however, is the way in which the students’ respect for each other impacts Nancy’s authenticity. This point will be clarified later. For now, I want to highlight a subtle finding: the mutuality between caring for students and being self-affirmed can be realized indirectly, such as in Nancy’s example of students treating each other respectfully. The deciding factor depends upon the teacher’s personal truth, described below as the “motivational ideal.” This will become clear as the empirical framework unfolds.

Rachel, who is a beginning teacher in her third year of teaching first grade, describes “serving others, caring for others, and giving to others” as her purpose as a teacher. She frequently calls this purpose: “Being a woman for others.” This language emerges from her undergraduate preparation program. She explains: “The Jesuit theology that became a part of me at [North-Central] University created a framework for how I always felt. Being a woman for others... means that your greater purpose is to make everyone’s day a little bit better.” However, as with the previous teachers, Rachel’s sense of service is a mutual care for herself, i.e., teaching as service is where she most fully comes alive. She confirms: “This is what I love; this is what I

do, and that's huge, because that's what makes me who I am. That's how I know that I'm the Rachel that I want to be."

Beth, who is a first year teacher, currently teaching third grade, is the most explicit in the group about her religious faith. She believes that "God tries to guide us toward things that will make us most happy; toward things that we're meant to do." Implied is that teaching is specifically a calling, intended uniquely for her, and an "inborn" desire, which she suggests is "at the core of her being." Not only an essential part of who she is, teaching is also the vehicle through which to fulfill "what she stands for and what she believes," i.e., her church's teaching on service for the greater good. In turn, "feeding the students' faith and helping them to grow" mutually affirms Beth's sense of teaching as a calling and an "inborn" desire.

Maria, who has been teaching for six years in kindergarten, and who, like Nancy, made a career change (from business administration), describes teaching as a calling, and provides a sense of this in a response during the group interview with the Caldecott book, *The House and the Night*. The question focused on a young girl who is being handed a key by an adult; the key is illuminated in gold against a backdrop of black and white scratchboard etchings. I then posed to the group: "What is the key of your teaching?" Maria replied:

Your passion is what you want to impart to them; that's what the key is. The key is also that the students are learning, like when they're asking you questions or when they're showing you – like in the picture, the key is light – you can tell that the students want to learn.

There are two parts in Maria's response that imply the relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher. First, Maria explicitly desires to impart to students a passion that emerges from her personal truth and that focuses not only on academics but

primarily on students' social and emotional well-being, explained in the next section. Second, indications of student learning, or expressions of the student's desire to learn, imply a favorable response to this intention. With these two together, therefore, the illuminated key in the story metaphorically suggests to Maria the calling toward this relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed.

To summarize, teacher authenticity is being defined in the empirical framework as a mutual connection between caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher. The remaining discussions emphasize how authenticity is a dynamic, iterative, and complex process of becoming, deeply intertwined with each teacher's personal truth, meaning, existential pain, and action.

Truth

The teacher's truth is a motivational ideal, driving and organizing the teacher's understanding of what it means to care, and thereby mutually affirming the teacher. The teacher works out the ideal through lived, real-time teaching experiences. Although the ideal originates prior to teaching, it persists as an underlying thematic or pulse throughout much of her teaching life. Through the ideal, the teacher's sense of teaching as a vocation rather than a job discovers its mission and purpose.

To demonstrate this point, I describe each teacher's motivational ideal, as well as briefly highlight its origin prior to teaching. Implied in each of these ideals is caring that not only emphasizes the students' academic growth but equally their emotional and social well-being. As each teacher's ideal incrementally unfolds in the remaining sections of the empirical framework, this point will become increasingly evident.

Maria: “Like Being Dropped from the Air”

Maria emigrated with her family from Italy when she was five years old. She describes this experience as “new and exciting” but also “like being dropped from the air.” Maria’s life dynamic changed in this “whole new world.” She comments: “The language is different, the food is different, the people are different; they’re dressing differently.” Moreover, both of her parents needed to work, while in Italy only her father worked. Houses were much larger and closer together than in her tiny village. Religion played a much less prominent role than it did before she arrived. In addition, Maria experienced “racial unrest.” She explains: “Two kids chased me and my cousin from the playground, throwing rocks at us.... My cousin, I saw got jumped.” Maria epitomizes this dramatic change in her life, as well as her perceptions of it, in the story about her first day in America. This story, more importantly, serves as a powerful metaphor that supports the motivational ideal.

I came to live in a small apartment with my Aunt Angelina, Uncle Sebastian, my grandmother, my mother, my father, and my brother. On my first day I got lost trying to find my way from the back yard to the front door of the house. I knocked on the neighbor’s door (not the door to my family’s apartment) and a lady answered the door. She had large rollers in her hair and was wearing a big pink bath robe. She was speaking to me and I had no idea what she was saying. I was so frightened that I started to cry because I had no idea how to tell her that I was lost. I was in a strange country with all of these new aunts and uncles and cousins that spoke my language, but everyone around me outside of this small, new family didn’t speak my language or know where I came from. My aunt and uncle came running when they heard me screaming, and explained to the

neighbor that I could not understand her. I was so happy just minutes before. I had come to a place where I had lots of cousins and family, and everyone was so pleased that we had arrived; but I was scared when I realized just how lost I was in this new country.

Maria recalls this incident as if it were yesterday. The sense of “how lost she was” characterizes her perspective about kindergartners, who like her are arriving in a strange new land, as well, i.e., in school for the first time. To them, she considers herself as the lady with the hair rollers. She explains: “That’s what I am. It’s a scary thing. For a lot of these kids, they are leaving their parents for the first time, or the babysitter they have been with since they were born.” Consequently, these formative experiences greatly inform her ideal as a teacher. She states: “Moments like those shaped me into the teacher that I am today. I learned so many things during that first year in this country, things that I teach my students today.” Accordingly, Maria’s ideal is to ensure that students feel safe and happy in school, to nurture their curiosity, to help them function outside the familiar home setting, and to support them in learning to relate positively with many different people.

Nancy: “Where Everybody is Breathing Okay”

Nancy teaches fourth grade science and math. With regard to her ideal, she frequently references math, which is her favorite school subject to teach. However, Nancy’s own schooling experiences with math include some “bad memories.” These earlier recollections involved the teacher’s use of math as punishment, humiliation, and social exclusion, and demonstrated a lack of fairness. Nancy explains:

In my personal story, I have a few examples where teachers were not fair to me or not nice. I was not a trouble maker; and those memories stayed with me. Everybody has a

story, if you talk with adults. I'll tell you: 'Oh yeah, I was so embarrassed the time this happened to me.' That's why I always hated math, because this teacher was really rude to me. By the way, it is the teacher's fault.

Nancy assimilated much of these formative experiences into her earlier years as a teacher. The "fear of judgment" and "fear of disappointing others" served to distance her from the students. Nancy characterizes her earlier approach as authoritative "aloofness," and explains: "I was like: 'Don't come near me. You're there, and I'm here. I'm in charge. You just do what I tell you, because I told you to do it.'" There was also a tendency toward self-recrimination and catastrophizing about her mistakes as a teacher: "When I'm doing something wrong, I used to really fear, at the beginning, that these kids were never going to understand a fraction because I taught it this way."

Nonetheless, Nancy describes a major shift in her teaching approach because of various accumulated life experiences. Becoming a grandmother, observing the patience of several teachers whom she considered role models, and understanding the "emotional baggage" that some students bring to school, contributed as significant influences toward this shift. On the one hand, in Nancy's early teaching, math instruction was built into the protective structure of her aloofness; math was like the brick and mortar to help her construct "very structured and strict" boundaries between students and herself. However, by "learning to talk to children as people, not treating them like a number in a seat," Nancy loosened the protective structure and allowed herself to explore a "comfortable classroom environment where everybody is breathing okay and feels like it's a good place to be." This exploration is Nancy's motivational ideal. She states: "That's the gift." She elucidates this reorientation to teaching through an alternative version of the well-known poem "sticks and stones." Nancy explains:

When I was growing up, my parents always said, ‘When people say bad things, just turn and walk away. But if somebody hits you, then you have to let us know.’ My daughter found this really great poem that takes that kid’s nursery rhyme, but says, in fact, ‘Sticks and stones do hurt you, but you can’t block your ears; you still hear it. The words are still out there; they’re still affecting you.’

Nancy does not want to give students “any reason to feel badly here,” or exacerbate a potentially difficult life circumstance, since some of them carry heavy “emotional baggage.” Instead, her ideal is to be “somebody whom they know cares for them, and wants the best for them; not somebody to be feared.” Consequently, as Nancy’s ability to cultivate trust grows within her teaching, her vision for math (as well as science) instruction is burgeoning, as well, toward a more relational perspective, explained below under meaning.

Beth: “To Carry on that Gift of Faith”

The context of Beth’s religious upbringing provides the basis on which to understand her motivational ideal. Her family life was deeply involved in her church’s activities and community; in addition, her schooling experiences up until eighth grade were “heavily wrapped in her faith.” When she attended public high school, however, she experienced “culture shock.”

Beth explains:

In high school, it was as if faith was not even there. We’d have a moment of silence in the morning; I remember standing there and thinking that it was so odd: instead of a prayer coming over the intercom, we’re just standing there silently. I wasn’t sure if I should say a prayer to myself. I would look around and not see anyone else doing that. Even friends that I made; faith was just not as important for them.

Consequently, Beth decided to attend a Catholic college for her undergraduate preparation, which she believes re-integrated faith as central to her education. However, upon approaching graduation, she grappled with the difficult decision of whether or not to commit to a two-year master's program on teaching for social service. Beth comments: "There were many other things going on; I just kept questioning what it was that was drawing me to these programs." During this process, she received a "sign," which she refers to as "God's providential nature," to support her decision-making process. She explains:

It was a Sunday morning, and I walked to church with a friend. This wouldn't be unusual except that we decided to go to the parish service across the street, rather than to the parish service at the college. While there, I found myself thinking and praying about my decision. As I looked around the church, I was noticing the obvious lack of young people, particularly people my age in the church. It was then that it hit me that by doing this teaching program not only would I be enriching my own faith, but I could also do something to actively pass on that faith to a generation who might otherwise stray even further from it.

Beth calls this straying a "kind of tragedy" in which "faith is being lost in our society." For her, faith means "believing the teachings of the Church and trying to live them out in her life." However, and most importantly, this "tragedy" does not just reference an opposition to Church doctrine, but rather, as she perceives it, a "strong opposition from the general public toward faith in general, whether Catholic or another faith." Thus, the tragic loss is more accurately understood in what faith signifies for her. Beth epitomizes this signification:

Hopefully students will grow up not exactly having the same set of right and wrong, but being able to think about what's right and wrong, and to reflect on their actions and to

think about what's best for the greater good rather than what's best for themselves at specific moments in time. The gap is that they think more about what they specifically want at that moment in time rather than what's for the greater good in the long run.

That's a huge issue.

Thus, implied in the tragic gap for Beth is the loss of community and the increase of individual gain; more precisely, the undervaluing of selfless concern in place of the overvaluing of selfish concern. Because Beth appreciates the significance of her faith, i.e., the emphasis on concern for "the greater good," her motivational ideal is to instill this sense of appreciation in students. In her words: "I appreciate having that gift for myself, and my passion is to carry that on so that hopefully another student will get that gift, too."

Olivia: "Pureness of Heart"

Olivia decided to enter teaching because there is a "pureness of heart," which, she explains, "you don't see very often in adults, but you see in little moments in the classroom with the kids." She defines this pureness as "the best part of ourselves," and expounds several qualities that she perceives when she is observing this "best part" in the students. The first is their kindhearted nature. Olivia states: "There's an innocence to a person who hasn't lived a long time. They see things for what they are; they don't usually make assumptions about people or situations." The second quality of pureness is about the student's ability to be present in the moment. She characterizes this quality by sharing an observation of a young girl in the classroom:

She's so ready to learn, so ready to experience things. If you even just look at her face when she's engaged in something: she's thinking about it, but she's just completely

enthralled. Every part of her being is there at once. She's not distracted. That's an amazing thing to see in a little face like that.

Clearly, Olivia's appreciation of pureness shines through in her final comment, "an amazing thing to see." In fact, moments like these affirm her as a teacher in different ways, as presented below in meaning and existential pain.

Olivia's truth also comprises a secondary counterpart, which she refers to as the "balance" within her teaching. This balance manifests in three ways. The first is the human necessity of reflection and planning, both for her as a teacher and for the students as learners. She clarifies: "In order to be a productive human being, you can't just not think about anything and live in the moment every second of your life." Thus, Olivia implies a kind of duality in her personal philosophy about human nature, which in turn relates directly to her teaching ideal: i.e., there is the timeless, spontaneous quality that is the "driving force," but also there is the existing-in-time quality, which is necessary to be functional and productive as a person.

The second way of this balance alludes to Olivia's background as a mother of six children. She refers to "family" as a metaphor to describe an aspect of her responsibility as a teacher, which is being the "authority figure." She wants students to "treat each other with kindness" and empathically, i.e., "to see themselves in each other's shoes." She also wants them to be respectful learners, which includes having them write personal goals (e.g., "focus on work," "take care of classroom property," "think about today"); these are then discussed at the beginning of the day. Olivia summarizes:

I'm the person that needs to help them remember to control their behavior, to follow the rules, to do the right thing. One of my most important goals as a teacher is to help them learn to do those things for themselves. I don't always succeed, but I try to have them

think about what they're doing, and to have them decide what is the better choice, rather than me telling them.

The deep significance of deciding for themselves as “one of her most important goals” is interpreted symbolically in the section on existential pain. Regarding a balance with pureness of heart, however, Olivia's third way can also be interpreted from the “family” and “authority” metaphors, i.e., metaphorically, she is a mother who attends to each child's personal needs, and these needs become a source for cultivating personal connections. Through these connections, she desires to help each student gain a sense of personal satisfaction in school, whether social, emotional or academic. The student's satisfaction is mutually satisfying for Olivia, which is to say, it gives her a feeling of “oneness with the job,” and affirms a vocational sense. She confirms: “Being able to have personal relationships with them individually is very rewarding.” This third way might be considered quasi-pureness, because it alludes to the perception of oneness in teaching, but is rooted in her perceived role as the “authority figure” of this metaphorical “family.” This point of quasi-pureness will later be expanded in the section on the meaning and curriculum.

Thus, pureness of heart together with these three aspects of balance comprise a fuller sense of Olivia's motivational ideal, which is to say, her personal truth as a teacher.

Rachel: “A Mutual Way to Love the Same Thing”

Rachel's undergraduate program provided a theological framework “that really grew to be a part of her... , a framework for how she always felt.” One of the cornerstones of this framework is “to be a woman for others,” which she defines as somebody who “lets her own

wants and desires take a back seat to the needs of others.” For Rachel, teaching is the embodiment of being a woman for others. She explains:

There are days when I have consoled crying children; they have thrown up on me; I haven't sat down, and didn't get to eat lunch on time. It doesn't matter, because when I'm here, it's about the kids and about giving them the best day and caring for them.

Embedded in Rachel's belief system is not only this cornerstone of social service for others' well-being. There is also the unwavering belief that her specific vocation is intended to serve children. According to Rachel, no other group deserves a “woman for others” more in their lives than do children. She explains:

They don't get to pick anything. They have no choice. They are where they are; they are with who they are with; they are who they are because of everything around them. They know only what their parents, and me, and the community have put in front of them.

They absolutely deserve role models and a network to support them.

Thus, Rachel structures her teaching approach on an ideal that involves two components. First is the focus on character development, which involves supporting the social and emotional growth of children; in particular, to help them regulate their behavior and make responsible choices for themselves and in interaction with their peers. Second is the focus on academics, including learning to work hard and achieve goals. Both of these components include many concrete strategies and consistent modeling. For example, if a student is upset, Rachel believes that to tell the young child to “calm down” is not as effective as to provide a menu of options to help him settle down, such as fantasy play with one of the classroom puppets. Then, she engages the student(s) in reflective discussion about what happened, what choices were made, and what may be done differently the next time.

Rachel calls this twofold approach, “Terrific Tigers.” Many of the classroom values and incentives are centered on this theme, which she learned as a full practicum student but has since expanded. Terrific Tigers is more than just a classroom theme, however. It is the embodiment of Rachel’s motivational ideal. She calls it a “completely abstract concept” that the class works toward embodying concretely over the school year. She elaborates:

At the beginning, I am like, ‘You are a Terrific Tiger,’ and they are all like, ‘Yeah.’ But then, throughout the year, building this concept that’s abstract, modeling how it works, and helping them to actually become that vision. The kids are Terrific Tigers, but they have to become Terrific Tigers, as well. That’s why it’s abstract.

Rachel occasionally calls her love for Terrific Tigers, “silly.” However, as she explains: “It gives me a mutual way for us to all love the same thing and work toward the same thing.” In effect, Terrific Tigers provides Rachel an important conduit to actualize her personal truth as a teacher. In this context, the significance of Terrific Tigers is well worth loving, and is anything but silly, because of the function that it serves for her.

Laurel: “Doing What Works”

Laurel does “all the tasks required for the reward of student learning.” To that end, teaching becomes “real” for her, and this sense of realness is her motivational ideal as a teacher. Being real – or, as she comments, “doing what works” – comprises four interdependent conditions. First is being creative in her teaching, which means “putting her personality into the lesson.” She elaborates:

You can open a teacher’s manual, read what’s there, and do the steps that it tells you to do. But to be a [real] teacher, you need to think: ‘How can I relate that to my math

lesson?’ ‘How can I put in something hands on?’ It’s less following a recipe and taking more of yourself, of your creativity, and putting that into the lesson. That also makes me feel fresh in my teaching.

Although there is the secondary focus of staying fresh and not being bored, Laurel’s main motivation is in service to “doing what works,” which means actualizing the reward of student learning. In turn, the second condition of realness, which also connects with her idea of creativity, is “being prepared without being prepared.” For example, Laurel explains: “There’s a lot going on, and you think that they’re taking it all in, but they may be lost; other times, you think they’re lost, but they are taking it all in.” In this case, she is making specific reference to academics. However, this condition equally applies to other areas, as well, thus leading to a third condition of realness, which is teaching to the “whole child.” By this, Laurel means embracing “their family background, their cultural knowledge, other background experiences; the way they learn; the things that they like to do.” She describes an instance in the classroom in which a student had been telling classmates about a violent episode that happened downstairs in her house over the weekend. Other children began to convey similar experiences and concerns. Laurel explains:

You have to kind of let it in; and let them bond over it. They’re talking about it because they’re questioning it morally. They’re wondering if that’s okay, if that’s safe; and they’re having uncertainty inside of them. That’s why they’re coming in and talking about it. I feel like I have to embrace it.

This example is revisited in the section on meaning and curriculum, and next steps are briefly considered, but for now, implied is that Laurel’s ideal, as with all of the other teachers, extends beyond merely teaching academics toward care for the student’s social and emotional

well-being. The fourth condition of realness is Laurel's "positive outlook" about, and determination to actualize, the student's capacity to learn. Her work with the third grader on improving his reading, which was previously mentioned, is an example of believing in the student's ability and working diligently, i.e., through tutoring him after school, to actualize this ability. She elaborates:

He always used to say, 'Why aren't you going home? Why do you want to stay here and read with me?' I would say, 'Because I want you to like reading and to practice it.' I think he got that idea, and so he felt that I cared, and that I really wanted him to do well. That's why he was successful. He still emails me, telling me how he is doing well in school.

As a side note, this example reveals the ordinariness of authenticity, i.e., caring for students and being self-affirmed in a vocational sense point to effective teaching. However, the next chapter integrates these empirical insights into a philosophical/ theological dialogue to explore the deepest, most profound significance.

For now, however, these four conditions comprise Laurel's motivational ideal of realness, that is, of doing what works and essentially actualizing the reward of students' learning. Her understanding may have taken embryonic root when, as a child, she helped her mother at their home daycare. However, it became explicit for her while teaching an integrated, special needs Pre-K classroom in a public school during her first formal year of teaching. Laurel comments:

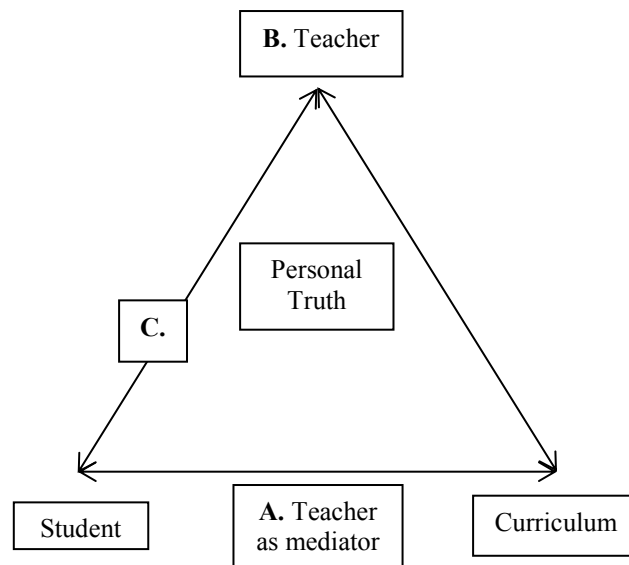
The students, many with autism, learned in a very different way. I needed to teach them in any way that they would respond that day. This experience changed the way I approach students, the way I think about their needs, and the way I approach situations.

Before that, I always fell back on what I learned in my teacher preparation. In this scenario, it wasn't possible. I think that experience as a whole made teaching real for me.

Meaning

This discussion builds on personal truth, and proposes the ontological constituents of manifesting authenticity as a dynamic, iterative, and complex process. The meaning of three fundamental processes will be described to suggest the ongoing, emerging meaning of authenticity, as understood through the teacher's ideal. These processes support the inference that authenticity may be more realistically interpreted as an ongoing process of becoming, not an absolute state of being. The three processes are: (a) personal truth and the meaning of curriculum, which describes how the teacher's ideal orients her toward strengthening connections between the student and curriculum; (b) personal truth and the meaning of inner growth, which describes how the ideal orients the teacher toward authentic self-learning; (c) personal truth and the meaning of ambiguity, which describes how the ideal orients the teacher toward ambiguity in teaching. These three subtle processes are represented by their respective letters in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2
*Process Orientations of the Teachers’
 Personal Truth and Meaning*



Personal Truth and the Meaning of Curriculum

Authenticity, as a dynamic, complex, and iterative process, suggests that the teacher discovers her motivational ideal as this unique teacher, with these specific students, in this particular situation. The teacher essentially is not just teaching a formalized school curriculum but is also fulfilling a personal truth/motivational ideal. However, since the formal school curriculum is intrinsic to professional teaching, a kind of “chicken or egg” question emerged during the data analysis as to whether or not one is more primary than the other. In addition, since I have argued in the past that a passion or love of subject matter is necessary to authentic teaching (Akoury, 2012), another question emerged during analysis as to whether this notion applied to the findings. Responses to these inquiries were subtle, as a number of factors inhibited more explicit answers, i.e., (a) prevalence of an objectivist-based, standards-driven climate; (b) over-emphasis on factual knowledge/skills acquisition in each classroom observation; (c) greater focus on students than on curriculum in the teachers’ interview responses; and (d) under-

emphasis in the research design on school culture and classroom immersion, which is considered in the concluding chapter as a limitation. With these factors, the key finding is that the teacher's motivational ideal to some degree influences how she relates with the curriculum, and orients her toward strengthening a connection between the student and curriculum.

This finding is most explicit in Nancy, the veteran teacher whose ideal is to nurture a “comfortable classroom environment where everybody is breathing okay and feels like it’s a good place to be.” As Nancy’s ability to cultivate trusting relationships grows within her teaching, her vision for math and science instruction is also burgeoning toward a more personalized perspective. She comments on this natural evolution:

After a lesson, they’ll start to tell you something, a story, a connection, whatever went on in class. They’ve made a personal connection, and they share that with you. They’re articulate about it; it’s part of them, because they’re explaining something that happened to them that reminded them of it. That’s a real glimpse into the child, not just the student who tells you, ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ First, I say to myself: ‘Why don’t I spend more time getting to know these kids on a personal level?’ The other thing I tell myself is: ‘Why can’t I get them to talk about math that way?’ They’re relaxed. They’re talking to you about something personal. Their whole demeanor changes. I can see their real personality coming through.

Nancy’s ideal of coming closer to students in relationship is naturally evolving into a richer, more personal way of teaching math and science. This integration of bringing the curriculum closer to the lives of students is in nascent form, but is unfolding. For example, Nancy explains a long-term math project, which extends the math manipulative of base-ten blocks by using paper-construction cubes. The classroom’s goal was “to make the ten thousand

rod, the hundred thousand flat, and the million-unit cube to show how the abstract concept of multiplying by tens goes from place value to place value.” On the surface, the clear focus is helping students to bridge abstract mathematics with concrete understanding. However, the underlying meaning for Nancy arises from, as she states, “really bad memories of [math] that found a place in her mind and stuck there; she does not want to create a bad memory for students.” This meaning points to (a) improving the student’s attitude toward math, i.e., Nancy’s belief that “everybody hates it,” and also (b) an evolving view of teaching from them-and-me to us.

The meaning of Olivia’s ideal, like Nancy’s, also involves an explicit vision for deepening a personal connection between the student and curriculum. Recall Olivia’s perspective about “pureness of heart,” which she describes as the student’s ability to be fully present in the moment. After sharing an observation about the young girl who, “when engaged in something is completely enthralled [with] every part of her being,” Olivia concluded: “That’s amazing to see.” In fact, Olivia is not merely offering an observation about pureness of heart. She is equally implying a self-description about her own experience of “oneness with the job,” which is to say, a moment of being self-affirmed in one’s personal truth as a teacher. She comments:

In terms of students being excited about their learning, that’s the part of teaching that I think is so rewarding. When you can reach that in a child, having them caught up in the moment, and so excited; it just doesn’t get any better than that.

Olivia’s most apparent sense of being authentic as a teacher points to moments like these, in which the student’s pureness of heart is evident in the learning. Olivia alludes to three curriculum conditions that help to initiate and actualize this participation: (a) the teacher’s enthusiasm toward the curriculum, (b) the curricular activity itself, and (c) reflective discussions

about curriculum. The first condition is evident in Olivia's "love" for teaching reading and history. She comments: "When you enjoy what you're teaching, the kids definitely get that, and they get a lot more out of it." Olivia's enthusiasm, i.e., passion for teaching these subjects, initiates the student's joyful engagement with curriculum, and reveals, once again, the ordinariness of authenticity, i.e., that caring for students and being self-affirmed in one's vocational sense point to effective teaching. As indicated earlier, however, the next chapter explores the deep philosophical/ theological significance. With the second condition, curriculum itself can initiate a shared experience. Olivia explains: "If we're doing a science lesson that excites them; they're planting seeds, and we're just enjoying the experience, not so much my having to teach it. I do teach steps, but just enjoying the actual experience together." The third condition is more reflection-based and less experiential. It stems from Olivia's appreciation for common human struggles, as explored through her love and passion for stories and history, as indicated above. It could be called quasi-pureness, since it elicits the student's reflective engagement with curriculum, and suggests a sacredness of human equality that can be observed in these struggles. Olivia elaborates in an example about teaching a mini-unit on folktales:

There's a real connection with teaching stories like these and with what we are learning from them. Students could see that, although this story was told in this country so many years ago, human beings are still learning the same things about themselves. I have a definite connection with that, and I think I connected with the children well in that aspect of it. I enjoyed that a lot.

Consequently, pureness of heart as well as these three curricular conditions, indicate that Olivia's ideal, to achieve fuller meaning, explicitly envisions a deepening of the student's personal connection with curriculum.

Thus far, Nancy wants to see the student's "true personality coming through" the curriculum; Olivia wants to actualize their "pureness of heart" with the curriculum. Implied in both is a perception of the teacher as strengthening to some degree a personal connection between the student and curriculum; in other words, a vision of less objectivist and more personal ways of knowing. In addition, Laurel and Beth also envision a personal connection with the curriculum. However, their ideals reveal this connection in a more indirect or less explicit way.

For Laurel, the potential of strengthening a personal connection between the student and curriculum is implicit within her ideal, but manifests somewhat differently from the previous teachers. As indicated earlier, Laurel's ideal points to realness, that is, "doing what works" and accomplishing "all of the tasks that are required to get the reward of students' learning." Student learning, from her perspective, embraces the "whole child," which includes background experiences. From these experiences, Laurel receives her cue for supporting a personal way of knowing the curriculum. In other words, while Nancy and Olivia, in their ideal, envision beforehand a less objectified curriculum experience, Laurel in her ideal remains open to the possibility, but does not explicitly intend to structure it in advance. Therefore, it is less anticipated regarding if, when, and with whom it arises. Take for example, the student who mentioned how he saw a homeless person and heard someone say that "homeless people were all drug addicts." The other students began to share similar experiences. Laurel recognized the situation as a "teachable moment." She describes the ensuing class discussion, drawing from the religious education curriculum (in particular, Jesus as a role model) to support the students' reflection:

‘Why might someone be homeless, or why might someone be sick?’ A lot of students had drug addicts in their families, and we started to talk about people that are mentally ill, how that’s an illness; a lot of them did not realize at their young age that your mind can be sick, too. ‘What would Jesus do?’ ‘Well, Jesus helped the people that were sick. He helped the homeless. Some of them made bad choices, but he taught us to treat people the way that we want to be treated.’

Perhaps Laurel’s next step would be to explore in depth some of the key issues, such as why people become sick, what the connection is between homelessness and mental illness, and whether there is always a connection. Nonetheless, the example points to the curriculum as more than a pedagogical tool, but rather demonstrates how Laurel’s ideal, i.e., the criterion of realness, is open to strengthening a more profound connection between the student and curriculum. Again, however, the objectivist sentiment may be more of a pervasive curricular reality, as was evident in each of the classroom observations, which focused on factual knowledge and skills acquisition. *Still, this dissertation examined not only actualities but also possibilities for authenticity, which were inferred within the deeper, more personal truth of each teacher’s understanding.*

Beth, for example, as the first year teacher, had difficulty responding to the interview question about supporting the student’s connection with curriculum. At one point, she commented: “I don’t know why I’m really having trouble thinking about this.” Later, she added: “I won’t stop thinking about it. I’ll be thinking, ‘How is my subject matter connected?’” This puzzlement implies a sense of disconnect between the student and curriculum, which is understandable: i.e., Beth’s ideal focuses on her faith in community; yet she teaches an objectivist-oriented curricular approach and, equally important, is a first-year teacher who needs

time to work through this puzzlement. However, valuing a more personal way of knowing is evident not only in this puzzlement but also in several descriptions about her teaching. For example, Beth explains a science lesson on heat. The objective was to help students move “beyond the concrete understanding that ‘fire means heat’ to a more abstract understanding that heat can come from other sources such as electricity and from other forms of energy that transfer to heat energy.” She then explains an unplanned interaction with a student who made a deeply personal connection with the lesson.

One of my students came up to me at recess and asked: ‘But what about my jacket?’ [In class, we were discussing conductors and insulators in terms of heat.] I said, ‘Does it make you hot or keep you warm?’ She said: ‘It keeps me warm.’ I responded: ‘What materials keep you warm? What is your jacket made of?’ We continued our questioning and discussion, which allowed me to help her sort out in her head what probably was all jumbled when she left class. She was able to make the real life connection.

In this example, Beth helps the student bring the “jumbled” abstract back to lived experience, yet in a more personally expansive way than merely stating that “fire means heat.” Beth confirms this personal way of learning through her own experience. Moving to her current city, which also comprises a main focus of the third grade social studies curriculum, she comments: “It made me grow in my knowledge of that area, giving me a deeper, more realistic understanding, because I’ve been living here, seeing and researching some of these places.” Moreover, Beth’s puzzlement, as indicated above, implies a richer, more deeply felt sense of what her ideal means, i.e., selfless concern for “the greater good” could also involve non-human beings, as well. Thus, the sentiment behind her comment: “I won’t stop thinking about it. ‘How is my subject matter connected?’”

Rachel provides a much less direct example of supporting connections between the student and curriculum. As previously mentioned, Terrific Tigers “gives her a mutual way for us to all love the same thing and work toward the same thing,” and this in turn is interpreted as a metaphor of how she understands authenticity. The explicit focus of Terrific Tigers, i.e., character development and academic learning, is to help change the student’s life outside of school and beyond first grade. Rachel comments: “When students can embrace knowledge [of curriculum] and can embrace confidence in themselves, it can actually change their lives, and potentially let them change the world beyond that. That’s the push that keeps me going.” Two points become evident: (a) Rachel is passionate about what the curriculum can mean for students: i.e., curriculum is an important conduit for making a better life and world for themselves; and (b) with Terrific Tigers, the curriculum becomes essential to each student’s “personal identity” as a learner and to the classroom’s “central identity” as a community. As Rachel states: “We all end up creating it. We’re like a team working together.” However, not evident in the data analysis is how this vision of curriculum manifests in the classroom. Rachel’s novice status as a teacher, and also factors that were mentioned at the onset of this section (e.g., prevalence of an objectivist-based climate; greater focus on students than on curriculum in the interview responses; and under-emphasis in the research design on school culture and classroom immersion) may account for this lack of specific evidence.

Maria, unlike the other teachers, primarily emphasizes the students’ social/ emotional growth through her ideal, while academics appear more peripheral. She explains: “My main goals are that you’re learning to listen to your teacher; you’re learning to make friends, and you’re learning to function outside of your family setting. The rest is just frosting on the cake.” The social/ emotional aspect and the academic aspect, i.e., the “frosting on the cake,” co-exist in

Maria's classroom approach, but concerning her ideal, the potential for integrating these two aspects is more unlikely than it is with the other teachers. Perhaps the structure of teaching in kindergarten allows Maria more latitude to keep the two as co-existing rather than to envision an integration. She comments: "In kindergarten, there aren't big lofty goals; we have more flexibility that way; whereas it gets harder as students get older, because you're trying to cover a lot of material." If Maria were teaching an older grade, her ideal may in fact indirectly if not explicitly emphasize a vision for supporting the students in more personal ways of knowing the curriculum.

Personal Truth and the Meaning of Inner Growth

The preceding analysis demonstrated that the teacher's personal truth influences how she relates with the curriculum, and orients her toward strengthening a connection between the student and curriculum. The present analysis emphasizes a connection between the teacher's personal truth and the meaning of inner growth. At times, the teacher's understanding of personal truth as an abstract concept appears to contradict an implicit sense of truth as emerging in process, dynamic, iterative, and complex. The misleading perception therefore arises, as it did with most of the teachers, that explicit beliefs determine one's authenticity, and as a result, an either-or perspective ensues: i.e., the teacher could be authentic in one moment and inauthentic in the next, depending on how strongly the situation matches her explicit beliefs about authenticity. The assumption follows that the personal truth of the teacher's authenticity is fundamentally rooted in concepts rather than in the ebb and flow of lived experience. However, as already indicated, the teacher's truth is fluid, dynamic, and in process. As a result, the contradiction between truth as a mental construct and an emerging process creates tension, which

in turn enables the teacher to reconsider and renew the meaning of personal truth through a process of inner growth.

This point is most pronounced with Rachel. Recall that part of her ideal is oriented toward the theological belief of “being a woman for others.” Rachel did not initially perceive herself as included with others. That is to say, she did not think that being a woman for others might coincide with being a woman for *herself*, as well. However, school conditions compelled her to reconsider her view. Although being in a parochial school provides flexibility in her teaching, the school’s lack of personnel resources creates the need for her to “wear many hats” and, as a result, to incur challenging demands on her time. She states: “We are so short on personnel resources here. I am on eight different committees. We don’t have resources to give kids the counseling they need. I do all of my duties, like lunch and recess everyday.” In addition, during her first two years, she completed a graduate literacy program while teaching full time. Because of this background, she also became the school’s reading specialist, although she indicates: “No way am I helping the amount of kids that need help.” These excessive demands, in addition to teaching first grade – and one could also argue, to being a novice teacher – impelled Rachel to reconsider *herself* in “being a woman for *others*.” In sharing her feelings about missing a couple of school days to visit family in the North-Central region, she elucidates:

I’m putting myself ahead of students. That’s hard for me. But as I am growing as a teacher, I’m learning that there are times when I have to prioritize myself, to attend to myself and take care of myself; otherwise I am never going to be able to be a good teacher ever again, because I’m going to completely burn out if I spend twenty-four hours a day being a teacher. I need time to be Rachel, not just Ms. S.

Rachel realizes that, to be a woman for students, she must be one for herself, as well. Otherwise, as clearly indicated, she will eventually not be there for students, because “she’ll completely burn out.” Nancy, like Rachel, has also been discovering the tension between personal truth and inner growth. As a reminder, Nancy’s ideal is to be “somebody whom students know cares for them, and wants the best for them; not somebody to be feared.” The challenge for Nancy, as with Rachel, has been learning to integrate the ideal as an abstract concept into the flow of lived experience. With the ideal as a concept, Nancy often references a former mentor with whom she taught the same grade, to exemplify patience, which is an essential quality of her ideal. She explains: “I never saw that woman raise her voice. You never saw her upset. She would get upset about school politics, but with children, you never saw any annoyance, any frustration, any impatience.” For Nancy, *impatience* is the opposite of being authentic, or as she says, of being “real.” Impatience means unreal. Nancy’s ideal as merely a concept creates this dichotomous thinking, but when the ideal is understood as an ongoing process, dynamic, iterative, and complex, impatience essentially becomes part of Nancy’s self-learning.

Nancy continues: “I still fail at hiding [my impatience]. It’s the way I’ve always been. It’s been so hard for me to change. I don’t want to get upset with students anymore, because an authentic teacher would not be that person.” As a result, Nancy feels the tension between patience as a conceptual ideal and the perceived residue of impatience, but does not acknowledge how much she has evolved as a self-learner. She recognizes that change is hard, and perceives a big difference between thinking something and knowing it “in her soul,” yet offers several examples of self-work and practice toward becoming patient. One is the realization that came outside of teaching, but influenced her ability to be more patient with students. Nancy explains:

I always wanted to play an instrument; I'm not good at it. When I go for my violin lessons, and if I haven't prepared, I know exactly how my students feel when they walk in the room and have not done their homework. You would say to yourself: 'Yeah, of course they feel bad.' But I know inside my soul how they feel, whereas before I would say: 'Sure you don't know how to do this, because you didn't practice, you didn't do your homework.' That's just an off the cuff remark that I might think or say, but it doesn't mean anything, because of course the kid knows it. But having done music lessons, not only do I know that if I haven't done my homework, I'm not prepared and have to face the music, but it's hard. Now, when this kid is sitting there, looking at long division and is like, 'I don't know what you're talking about,' now that really means something to me. I forgot that as I grew up, what that feeling was about. Totally forgot it. Now I'm remembering it. It's factored into my teaching.

In short, the patience that Nancy admires in the former mentor and that is essential to her motivational ideal is being discovered and manifested in her own unique way. Nancy is essentially embracing the tension between where she is and where she wants to go.

Like Rachel and Nancy, Olivia has been redefining the meaning between personal truth and inner growth. For all three teachers, likewise, learning to integrate their ideals into the ebb and flow of lived experience provides the fuel for this process. Recall Olivia's ideal, which balances pureness of heart and teaching students to think reflectively and morally; pureness, however, is the "driving force." As a reminder, pureness means "being in the zone" and also includes selfless qualities such as kindheartedness, which she expounds when describing an aunt who embodies "generosity without conceit" and "confidence without presumption."

For Olivia, the tension arises between two periods within her teaching career. First is two decades ago, when she taught for five years before taking a twelve-year sabbatical to raise children. While on leave, she states: “I glorified teaching in my mind. I was just dying to get back.” Second is several years ago when Olivia re-entered teaching. She experienced a very different climate, with the school’s focus on standards-based reform and differentiated instruction, but also with the students’ demeanor: “They are just not as orderly as they used to be. There’s more of a need for immediate gratification.” Consequently, these two periods represent a tension between “glorifying teaching in her mind” and feeling like “master of none,” that is, between holding the ideal as an abstract concept and assimilating it with the flow of lived experience.

The tension between glorifying teaching and being a master of none is revisited and further probed in the section on existential pain, but for now, Olivia’s perception of her ideal had been greatly disrupted. However, consider the empirical definition of authenticity: i.e., an ongoing process, dynamic, iterative, and complex, that is motivated by a desire to care and is sustained by an intention to act upon this desire. Despite the disruption, Olivia sustains the intention to care, and as a result, continues a process of reorienting the meaning of her authenticity within this largely changed context, with these new reform approaches, and with this differently perceived demeanor of student. She confirms:

With the generous patience of my principal, and the energy and eagerness of the students before me, I learn, I train, and I practice. And I find that I connect. With thought and perseverance, in fits and starts, with these sometime ill-fitting pieces, this new puzzle is coming together, and I am slowly reaffirming that teaching is still part of who I am.

For Beth and Laurel, the tension between their ideals as concepts and their lived experience is less directly observable than with the previous teachers. The tension for both of them emerges within their perceptions about the teaching profession. Recall that Beth's ideal is to convey to students the significance of her religious faith, which is the concern for "the greater good." On the one hand, teaching is the conduit to discover the meaning of her faith through a lived, experiential process. Beth makes the point: "There's always a push to be the best teacher you can be. While serving others through teaching, it's like a self-journey to figure out the best way to teach and to draw on your individual strengths." In this understanding, faith becomes integrated into a process of personal growth and social service. However, contradiction begins to emerge when Beth subtly implies a duality between the human and teacher sides of teaching. She explains:

I need to constantly be thinking about students as both students and the people that they are. And myself: I'm a teacher and I'm a person. There are times where you have to let the human side come out more than the teaching side, even though you try to link them as much as you can. I'm constantly trying to balance out whether, at that moment, the human needs are more important and at what moment the learner needs are more important.

Implied is "trying to balance out" the two co-existing sides: the human and teaching sides. Consequently, the duality arises in the way that Beth is framing teaching. In the former case, i.e., teaching as a self-journey of social service, her ideal of faith is integrated into a perspective of teaching as a living, experiential process. In the latter case, there is less integration, as Beth's meaning implies being a teacher on the one hand, and a human on the other, both co-existing within the classroom context. The duality can be seen more clearly if

Beth were to say: “I am a human *who is* a teacher.” In this alternative phrasing, the two are one in the same, thus allowing her ideal of faith to be understood as more fully integrated with her explicit construct of teaching. This subtlety is reinforced by Beth’s perception about the teaching profession. Beth states: “My classroom is how I think in my head how teaching is supposed to be,” and then adds:

Throughout my teaching, there are certain constructs that need to happen. There needs to be quiet at times; there needs to be work getting done; there needs to be learning happening. My job as teacher is to ensure that these things are happening; that students are listening and reading, as well as absorbing what I am saying.

Beth’s perception about teaching, which appears to be very teacher-centered, reinforces this subtle duality between the ideal of conveying faith and the explicit construct of teaching. Recognizing and working with this duality could help Beth to realize, as indicated above, teaching as a “self-journey through serving others.” In addition, because Beth is a first-year teacher, this implicit duality can represent a starting point on which to build the exploration.

For Laurel, a more explicit tension emerges between the profession and her ideal of “doing what works.” For example, she states: “Teaching is the career that pulls you away from being as whole and as happy as you want to be.” Laurel perceives an unhelpful interplay of constraints, embedded within the profession of teaching. These constraints are a lack of personnel support, a lack of time, and financial insecurity. Time inside of school to prepare and plan is not sufficient because of the lack of personnel resources; as a result, Laurel needs to do most of the planning and preparation outside of school. However, a need for financial stability creates time limits outside of school, because she needs to work additional jobs. In turn, balancing time inside and outside of school can be difficult. Laurel states the outcome: “I feel

like I'm always rush, rush, rush; I'm always rushing around, which tires me out, and makes me have less energy for the students." Consequently, Laurel's ideal of "doing all the tasks required for the reward of student learning" becomes more challenging to actualize. She explains:

If I could slow down and have time to observe students playing and to find more teachable moments; that would be real life. I'd get to know them better, and how they relate to each other, and what they enjoy. That goes back to how I stimulate them in the classroom. You have to take what they like, and use that to help them learn, to keep them interested, because as kids that's their main motivation: playing and enjoying themselves.

The tension between the profession, as Laurel understands and experiences it, and her ideal may provide an opportunity to expand the concept of "realness." As previously with Rachel, who reoriented herself to "being a woman for others," perhaps the tension for Laurel represents a similar opportunity. Through the motivational ideal, Laurel as the teacher would do all of the tasks required to help a student who is struggling with the curriculum. Likewise, in this reorientation, Laurel might consider herself as the student, and this perception and experience of the profession as the curriculum. The constraints are the challenge. In turn, Laurel would simultaneously play the teacher to herself, "doing what works," which means discovering ways in which she might become more fully actualized in her ideal, in spite of these professional conditions that exist.

Maria's ideal as an abstract concept and her process of inner growth do not evidence a pattern of tension, unlike with the previous examinations. Recall that Maria's ideal focuses primarily on the social/ emotional well-being of students, while academics are "like frosting on the cake." In fulfilling the ideal, Maria frequently quotes a line by Maya Angelou, which reveals her basic attitude about personal growth: "I did then what I knew then. When I knew better, I did

better” (source unknown). Maria does the best that she can each day, with the self-understanding that, when she knows better, she will do better. It also forms Maria’s main attitude in supporting the students’ social/ emotional growth: i.e., when students know better, they do better.

Nonetheless, my intention is not to suggest that Maria does not experience moments in which her ideal is disrupted and she is compelled to grow personally. The key point is to suggest that, concerning the data, there is no discernible *pattern* of tension between an explicit construct of being authentic and the self-perceived facts of her experience. In Maria’s words:

If you’re giving everybody the best you can that day, that’s all you can do. You can’t go back and change that, and you can’t be anyone other than who you are that day. Some days you come in here and you’re great; you’re on your game; they’re on your game; you have a wonderful day. Other days you come in here, other things are going on, and it’s hard. Still, you gave the best you could at that time, but you move on and improve on what you’ve learned.

Personal Truth and the Meaning of Ambiguity

The first analysis on meaning demonstrated that the teacher’s personal truth influences how she relates with the curriculum, and orients her toward strengthening a connection between the student and curriculum. The second analysis emphasized a connection between the teacher’s personal truth and the meaning of inner growth. This analysis describes the meaning of ambiguity, which is inevitable in light of a process-oriented relational view of authenticity, i.e., the mutual structure of caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher. Without ambiguity as being essential, personal truth could easily be reduced to an independent, reified concept in the mind, removed from the rhythms, modulations, and flow of teaching. Ambiguity

implies a fundamentally relational view of the authentic teacher-self, and is understood in a twofold sense: (a) the teacher exists relationally with students and the school community, but also (b) within time, as in the interdependency of an irrevocable past, an emerging present, and the still-to-come future. Thus, ambiguity extends personal truth beyond isolated, individualistic knowledge to embrace a dynamic, interdependent, process-oriented nature.

Ambiguity was implied in the two previous analyses. For example, in personal truth and inner growth, the teacher cannot fully know how the motivational ideal as an abstract concept will emerge within the living flow of experience. In personal truth and curriculum, the teacher cannot fully know how and to what extent she will develop a relational view within an objectivist-based curriculum climate. Ambiguity also creates the fundamental condition for the perceived tension that results in the teacher's experience of existential pain, which will be discussed in the next section. However, the key point of the current analysis is that ambiguity is a constituent process of personal truth, and speaks differently to each teacher's unique authenticity.

For Maria, the meaning of ambiguity is demonstrated symbolically. She is intrigued by the curiosity of students as they engage in open art activities, which provide them different materials to explore. Maria enjoys seeing what they create and how they react, describing these observations as "really interesting" and "fascinating." The meaning of her intrigue is subtle, unfolding on two levels: one literal and one symbolic. First, open art nurtures the natural curiosity of students. Maria states: "When you're giving them open art, you have to be curious. 'What does this do?' 'How does this work?' That's what you want. They will like to learn if they're curious about stuff." Accordingly, if the students enjoy their learning, they will be "happy to come to school everyday." Therefore, embracing the unexpected in student learning can clearly support her ideal. However, Maria's intrigue with the unexpected in student learning

also suggests the ideal on a deeper, more symbolic level. For example, she describes open art as “really messy,” and elaborates:

Much of the time, students are not exposed to these materials outside of school. I just find it really interesting to see the ways in which their different personalities play into what intrigues them and how they react to things.

This description suggests a symbolic parallel with Maria’s emigration experience at the age of five years old. She was exposed, “like being dropped from the air,” to an unfamiliar situation that was really messy, as well: e.g., “the language is different; the food is different; the people are different; and their dress is different.” Maria’s previous questions, “What does this do?” and “How does this work?” may in fact rekindle the earlier intrigue of this experience and the necessity to learn her way through the messiness of a strange, new situation. This symbolism may explain, at least in part, why she describes observing the students in open art activities as “fascinating.” Maria’s curiosity about the unexpected in these activities supports her ideal; yet the meaning of why she deliberately cultivates and embraces this ambiguity appears more deeply connected to her motivational ideal than she may explicitly recognize.

Beth also demonstrates subtlety in the meaning of ambiguity, as represented symbolically through her ideal. She describes a moment in the religious education class. Topics of sickness and death emerged during a discussion about the sacrament, “Anointing of the Sick.” Students were confused about why some people who are greatly sick or disabled live long and may even improve their health, while other people do not improve. Beth comments: “They were asking me lots of questions: ‘Why do some people die young and some people die old?’ Well, what does happen after we die?” She continues:

It's a very difficult situation to be in, because they're so hungry for answers, and I want to feed their faith and help them to grow, but the best answer that I can give them at that time is, 'I don't know.'

One could plausibly argue that Beth's difficulty arises in part from being a first-year teacher who may be uncertain about how to pose questions that probe the students in their thinking. However, the self-perceived difficulty could also arise from Beth's objectivist assumptions, which as previously mentioned, focus on "certain constructs" about teaching, e.g., a belief that "we're all on this continual quest to increase our knowledge, and that she is further along in her learning journey than they are." In other words, the assumption that, when students have questions, she as the teacher should have answers. In an objectivist climate, ambiguity is unwelcome, and as a result, Beth's perceived difficulty could be in not achieving a measureable, tangible outcome from the lesson.

However, most germane is that Beth permitted the questions to be expressed, and allowed herself to be vulnerable in the ambiguity of this teaching moment with students, as a fellow person who does not know, just like them. She calls it: "An equalizer kind of thing." In turn, there may be a subtle recognition by her as well as students (i.e., "They giggle when I say, 'I don't know'") that, despite no tangible outcome, an implicit but perhaps powerful outcome had been achieved. In other words, Beth exposed and modeled an aspect of the Catholic teachings, i.e., vulnerability, that can implicitly support her ideal of "carrying on that gift of faith."

The meaning of ambiguity is evident through Nancy's ideal of cultivating relational trust with the students. Recall that Nancy, by taking violin lessons, is transferring her learning to develop a more empathetic and less judgmental way of seeing students. Implicit in this learning is also openness to ambiguity, which is developing in other ways, as well. In particular, Nancy

shares a cognitive reframing strategy, which emerges from self-observation/ reflection when interacting with students. She distinguishes between clinging to “preconceived notions” about students and putting these “prejudices” aside to meet them as persons. Implied is a threefold process: (a) recognizing the preconceived notion, (b) challenging it, and (c) letting it go. Nancy best illuminates this process in a description about being a Confirmation coordinator, which she then connects back to her teaching.

Many of the kids in this Confirmation program went to school here. I have teachers working for me; they’ll say: ‘Oh that kid’s really a hard nut. He doesn’t get it.’ I’ll say: ‘Okay. This is him. I’ll explain to you. I know him. He’s not like he appears to be.’ When other kids come to the program, kids that didn’t go to school here, and so I don’t know them; if they’ve got an attitude, I look at them, stop myself and say: ‘Wait a second. If I knew that kid in fourth grade, I would see the person inside the child, not just the specific problem.’ I learned that teaching, and am able to transfer that.

Evident is that Nancy has been working through pre-conceptions and embracing the ambiguity of being open to “the person inside the child.” What this ambiguity means for Nancy clearly connects with the ideal of creating a classroom environment in which “everyone is breathing okay.”

The meaning of ambiguity is also evident through Olivia’s understanding of pureness of heart. As a reminder, Olivia re-entered classroom teaching after a twelve-year absence. She comments: “When I first came back, I expected that I would be the same, and that teaching would feel the same as it did years ago.” During this absence, she “glorified teaching in her mind,” which resulted in a conflict between how she expected her ideal to look and the ambiguity of this new situation. However, perhaps being inspired by the students in their

spontaneity and flow through a pureness of heart, Olivia is learning to move beyond this pre-conceived expectation, as she believes that adults “can learn to be open to their experience, [and as a result] can learn more about themselves.” Openness to ambiguity in this new phase of teaching means “giving herself time by seeing the long road ahead, instead of just what’s in front of her,” and also accepting that “tomorrow is a new day, and that there are always opportunities in front of her; just appreciating everything around her in a better sense.” Time and acceptance help Olivia to open to the flow of this different context, and to explore a balance between pureness of heart and reflection in the students’ learning as this new phase of the teaching process emerges.

For Laurel, the meaning of ambiguity is demonstrated through the ideal of realness, i.e., “doing what works,” which focuses on embracing the “whole child.” She elaborates on this concept: “Everything is a mystery to kids. They think everything is awesome and wonderful. They get so excited about learning.” In realness, therefore, Laurel implies that teaching, to some extent, should align with this natural spontaneity. Opportunities arise when she engages with students in science experiments and art projects. She explains: “You don’t know exactly where it’s going to go or how it’s going to turn out. We’re in it together.” Laurel’s sentiment of accepting and embracing the unknown in teaching is also substantiated in the earlier example in which she supported the students’ moral concerns, after a classmate had been telling about a violent episode that happened downstairs in the girl’s house over the weekend.

Lastly, the meaning of ambiguity for Rachel is evident in the “aha moment,” which, although a common refrain of many teachers in general, holds unique significance when understood through one’s personal truth. Rachel describes an encounter with a former student, Jackson, who “flourished” as a Terrific Tiger in her first grade classroom but was now

experiencing difficulties as a second grader. At the request of the second grade teacher, the young boy came to talk with Rachel, because he “always talks about first grade and about her.” Rachel elaborates on the surprising and unpredictable nature of this relational moment as well as its significance for enriching her understanding of the motivational ideal:

The first graders love being Terrific Tigers. I often hear my kids who are now in second or third grade tell me they miss being a Terrific Tiger. But this moment with Jackson was totally different. I realized that for him, the identity of a Terrific Tiger gave him confidence and a road map for success at school, and that he truly understood that Terrific Tigers intrinsically build self-awareness and independence. In this moment, I realized that it was not simply my enthusiasm for Terrific Tigers that created this sentiment from Jackson. I realized that my authentic love for school, first grade, Terrific Tigers, the values of Terrific Tigers, and most importantly my students was understood and transferred onto my kids. This was truly an “aha moment” for me, in terms of realizing that I can truly change my classroom and my students, now and into the future.

Rachel could not anticipate the “aha moment” in meeting with Jackson. It could only arise in the surprise of this relational moment with the former student. She entered the ambiguity of this encounter and in turn recognized its inspired meaning in terms of understanding her ideal in a fuller, more dynamic way.

Existential Pain

The previous section brought together personal truth and the meaning of curriculum, inner growth, and ambiguity. The key consideration was that personal truth orients the teacher to the meaning of these three subtle processes; in turn, what curriculum, inner growth, and

ambiguity mean to each teacher is unique, because each ideal is unique. Furthermore, the structure that holds together personal truth and meaning is the teacher's authenticity. In this empirical framework, authenticity is being defined as the teacher's desire and intention to care for students, which in turn affirms one's personal truth as a teacher.

Forthcoming is existential pain and authentic action, which are like structural building blocks that emerge from the teacher's explicit thinking, feeling, and action. Unlike the discussions on personal truth and meaning, which alluded to subtle conditions for manifesting authenticity as an ongoing process, these next sections illuminate perceptual and moral dynamics of the teacher's authenticity.

Existential pain presents the teacher's cognitive, emotive, and intuitive experience of the tension between being affirmed and disrupted in the desire and intention to care. This self-perceived tension stirs the movement of the teacher's authenticity process. This tension was evident in the discussion on meaning as a process orientation, e.g., there is tension between personal truth as relational and the objectivist-based curriculum climate; and also between personal truth as an abstract concept and as an emerging process within the living flow of experience. It was also noted that ambiguity, as another process orientation, was implicit in these two, and is an essential condition for the perceived tension that results in existential pain. Existential pain, however, although intrinsically connected with meaning as a process orientation, receives its own analysis to emphasize the cognitive, emotive, and intuitive complexity within this interplay between being affirmed and disrupted in one's caring.

Five themes illuminate this dynamic stir within the teacher's authenticity. With the data analysis, not every theme applies to each teacher, but rather applies to the majority of the teachers, and therefore is worth noting. These themes are: (a) taking a stand; (b) the calling of

conscience; (c) teaching as a healing response: a special consideration; (d) parents: a special consideration; (e) burnout: a special consideration.

Taking a Stand

Taking a stand means that the teacher accepts the responsibility of caring for students despite the risk of being disrupted in her desire and intention. This resolve is sometimes symbolic, as if she is taking an inner stand between re-indoctrinating old habits of thinking and becoming the teacher she wants to be. For example, and as previously mentioned, Nancy has been embarking upon a major shift in how she relates with students. Much of the “aloofness” in her earlier years as a teacher was characterized by a “fear of judgment” that she habitualized in her thinking through her own schooling experiences. The shift toward creating a personal, inviting space within the classroom has been a gradual process. Nancy describes a moment in Prayer Circle, a common ritual at the school, in which she decided to hold hands with students as they prayed. She explains:

I would never have held the hands of a fourth grade child. I would have been so afraid to do that, and the first time I tried, it took a lot for me. I felt very uncomfortable. Some of the students would be smirking, but I ignored it. I just refused to focus on it. All of a sudden, it wasn't uncomfortable anymore.

Nancy stubbornly refused to validate these smirks from several students. However, the real struggle in this experience may be symbolic, i.e., refusing to legitimate the past voices of judgment, which she had internalized. Consequently, the underlying struggle may in fact be the de-legitimizing of these inner habits, i.e., self-judgment and possibly self-contempt, which impelled her to keep safe distances in the earlier part of her teaching. To that end, Nancy was

taking an inner stand between re-indoctrinating old ways of thinking and becoming the teacher she wants to be.

This symbolic stand is also evident with Olivia, who observes that pureness of heart often diminishes in adulthood (this point is elaborated below in “teaching as a healing response,” but for now, the focus is the symbolism of taking an inner stand). She states: “You’re changed by the decisions you make and don’t make. Sometimes the worst kind of thing that can happen is when you don’t make the decision and you let somebody make it for you.” Olivia’s process upon re-entering the classroom, in fact, has been an ongoing major decision to “slowly re-affirm that teaching is still part of who she is.” To that end, the “worst kind of thing” might have been to let her “glorified image,” i.e., the symbolic “somebody” that she perceived during a twelve-year absence from teaching, to decide for her the outcome of the current teaching situation. From the more recent starting point of feeling like a “master of none,” Olivia is symbolically taking an inner stand to change her image of teaching, and, as previously mentioned, to reorient herself to the meaning of her ideal within this largely changed educational context.

However, taking a stand can also be less symbolic. In this case, the teacher knowingly takes a risk for the sake of more fully actualizing her personal truth. This risk can be focused more directly on the classroom; other times, more peripherally on the school community. Regarding the former, take for example Rachel, who recognizes the significance of Terrific Tigers as providing the classroom “a mutual way to all love and work toward the same thing.” As indicated earlier, Terrific Tigers is an abstract concept that she and the students “all end up creating together.” As a result, many learning risks arise for Rachel, as a third year teacher, as she develops new routines and implements new strategies to support the students in their character development and academic learning. Despite risks, she is steadfast in her conviction

about Terrific Tigers and what it means regarding personal truth, and therefore, is willing to take risks in the face of uncertainty and failure. Rachel states:

If it's new, it can be really risky. You have to push through and be like, 'Here we go guys. We're going to do this. This is how it works. If it doesn't, then we're going to figure out what didn't work and try again.' You have to come in with that full-fledged attitude to bring them in with you. It's scary, though, because if it flops, you've tried and you've failed; that is a big risk.

Consequently, the tension between being affirmed and disrupted in one's desire and intention to care would be felt more locally by Rachel within the classroom. However, at times, taking a stand can mean the teacher's commitment to personal truth despite the risk of disapproval from people within the school community, such as parents. Take for example the student who, in Laurel's class, told about a violent episode over the weekend; others also conveyed similar experiences and concerns. As already noted, Laurel believes: "They're talking about it because they're questioning it morally. I feel like I have to embrace it." However, conversations like these can be "uneasy" to facilitate because they focus on a "touchy subject." Laurel explains: "You don't want to say the wrong thing or give them the wrong information, especially something that their parents wouldn't want them to know." Still, "doing all the tasks required for the reward of student learning" impels Laurel to stand firmly with her ideal, and in turn, to allow conversations like these to enter classroom discourse. She states:

For me, it's a personal choice; it's my personal feeling. The students make it clear to me what they need from me. If they need me to be their guidance, a little bit, I feel like I should, since that's something they've expressed to me by asking these questions, and wondering, but also by just feeling open enough to ask.

In comparison with all of the previous examples, Beth takes a stand on the broadest level, linking her risk with the community of professional practice. As a first year teacher, Beth began the school year by using the school-adopted reading program. However, many of the students were struggling with the texts in this program. After teaching the first theme in the program's anthology, she decided to "throw out" the texts and to design her own lesson plans and units. She explains:

I separated myself because I need to create lessons in a way that works for me and my classroom; at the same time, I'm separating myself from what is deemed to be a published, well-respected set of lesson plans that are used in a lot of schools around here and in the classroom next door. In throwing that away, I've decided to do what I think is right instead of what other people have decided is a good set of lessons.

On the one hand, one could argue that the school-adopted curriculum may be adequate for Beth's students if it were taught by a more experienced teacher, or that she might have personally grappled with the curriculum to make it work. In short, being brand new as a teacher could have influenced the perceived inadequacy in the curriculum more than she realizes. However, Beth is, in fact, brand new as a teacher, which therefore matters in her decision. In addition, her yardstick for the decision is the "greater good" of students, i.e., to develop and teach lessons in ways that support their responsiveness as learners. Citing a poster in the hallway, Beth decided to "take a stand," resolving to do what she understood as being "right" for these particular students in this particular situation, as this first year teacher. Implied is that Beth's desire and intention to care for students, according to her personal truth, exceeds the authoritative standards for practice that are suggested through this prescribed curriculum.

The Calling of Conscience

The calling of conscience suggests that the teacher is in constant dialogue with her teaching life, and that at times, she experiences dissonance within some aspect of her truth, which in turn heightens an awareness of this dialogue. Often with a sense of doubt, and sometimes anguish, her teaching life calls her to question her personal truth. In fact, the teacher's questioning, which bears some sense of palpable weighing on her being, may be what her teaching life is demanding her to ask during these times. This kind of deeply felt questioning can occur within specific, identifiable moments that connect with the ongoing process of personal truth. For example, Nancy describes frustration and puzzlement when incidents arise on the playground, and she is unable to discern a clear response from students about what happened. She calls moments like these as one of her greatest anguishes because she does not know exactly what happened, but also, she does not know how much she needs to pursue the matter. Nancy describes the situation:

I'll bring whoever was involved, and as more people come into the group, and put their two cents in, so to speak, they'll bring up other names. Pretty soon, you've got a whole group of people there, all saying something different. I stand there, and I'm listening, and I'm thinking: 'How did I get here?' 'Why am I doing this?'

In this situation, there is disorganization, and a sense of lack of control or feeling of helplessness. In her anguish, Nancy states: "It's just that, why can't kids simply be kind to each other, and no fighting; we just come in really happy, doing school work together. I know that's a 'pie in the sky' attitude." This attitude sets up an interplay of mental models, which in turn establish the playground scenario as a metaphor for Nancy's ongoing work of creating a classroom space in which "everybody is breathing okay." The model of aloofness in her earlier

teaching created distance from students. In addition, the “pie in the sky” attitude is a more tacit kind of aloofness, i.e., another black-and-white, all-or-nothing polarity that wishes on some level to resist the messy shades of grey in which lived reality with students is actually happening. Thus, the messy recess scenario may be a metaphor for how Nancy’s teaching life is calling her to more fully enter the middle of these extremes to meet the students in lived reality together. Her anguished response – “Why am I doing this?” – indicates that she is listening.

Maria points to specific moments in her teaching career in which a student’s social and emotional needs were beyond her control. She explains: “They needed more care than we were able to provide. To me, that’s very sad. I feel like I failed them, and that’s a hard thing to let go.” Maria recognizes that each student, even at this young age, enters the classroom with a whole set of experiences, many aspects of which are unknown to the teacher. To draw from an earlier metaphor, these troubled students, whom she is referencing, are “being dropped from the air” into the classroom, but Maria does not have the social-emotional net to catch them, as she comments: “They were too far gone by the time they came.” In turn, she is deeply saddened. In situations like these, moreover, where many outside variables are beyond Maria’s control, and her efforts seem ineffective, she states: “That’s when you feel like you’re at your end. ‘Why am I doing this?’ It just feels futile.” Perhaps in these moments, when Maria raises this question, she is intuitively paraphrasing questions that are resonating for her within the circumstances of her teaching life, such as: Who are you as this teacher whose basic intention is to care for this student? How are you responsibly fulfilling the meaning of a personal truth that is uniquely yours? When all else seems helpless, the calling of conscience may be a step toward deep humility, accepting vulnerability as inherent to the authentic helping act. Thus, Maria responds:

“You pray on it. You reflect on it. You know that you can’t do anything beyond that. That’s the hardest part of this: you’re dealing with people, not some abstract problem.”

Rachel and Beth illuminate deeply felt questions that, unlike the other examples, are more perpetual in their daily existence as teachers. An integral part of Rachel’s truth is that students “carry with them, beyond first grade, little suitcases, figuratively, that are full of knowledge and skills, as well as character traits.” She questions herself, however: “I’m just a little piece of this huge puzzle in the whole world. Because I can only control so much, it’s like: ‘Is this all worth it?’ ‘How much does it matter in the end?’” In this felt sense of doubt, Rachel keeps grounded through faith in God, striving to “let the worries go as prayers.” In turn, she focuses on what is in her control, reminding herself: “Today is what counts. I can’t predict everything that’s going to happen to me or to every child for the rest of their lives. I bring myself back to the present.” Nonetheless, Rachel’s deep appreciation for students as sacred beings (i.e., “there’s a little piece of God inside each of us”) opens her to subtle and not so subtle signs in which her teaching life is providing some relief to these questions. For example, Rachel’s “aha moment” with the former student who missed being a Terrific Tiger is a resounding affirmation to this doubt.

Affirmative signs are also evident with Beth’s questions, which center on a sense of puzzlement or wonder. She states: “I think I’m standing up here doing a good job teaching, but who is really to say what that means?” Beth continues:

I constantly ask myself: Am I best serving these students or not? How do I know when I’ve done something right as a teacher, or when students really learned? Sure, I can give them a test, but how do I know if they really, really internalized it?

Beth's comment suggests the earlier discussion about personal truth and the meaning of curriculum. Clearly she perceives standardized assessments such as tests to be insufficient for knowing whether students "really, really internalized" what they learned. However, take for example Beth's surprising encounter with the student at recess, in which she helped the young girl to make a personal connection with the science lesson about heat. This unexpected meeting may in fact be an affirmative sign from Beth's teaching life, providing some relief to the questions of doubt, as indicated above, but equally offering direction on how to proceed. Drawing from Beth's expression, this affirmation may be a sign of "God's providential nature," instructing her to challenge "how she thinks in her head teaching is supposed to be" in order to become more fully the teacher she is meant to be. In other words, to become a teacher whose ideal of selfless concern for "the greater good" is meant to deepen intimacy between the students and their world as curriculum. Thus, to reiterate Beth's earlier puzzlement: "I won't stop thinking about it. 'How is my subject matter connected?'"

Teaching as a Healing Response: A Special Consideration

Sometimes the tension between being-affirmed and disrupted in one's desire and intention to care is indirectly evident. Special consideration of this can be seen in teaching as a healing response. In this case, the mutuality of caring for students and being self-affirmed is understood by the teacher through a perceived loss that enriches the meaning of personal truth. Take for example Maria, who immigrated to America when she was five years old. Maria's life dynamic changed: e.g., friends left behind; people who spoke different languages; highly diverse culture, unlike the small village where "nothing really changes, and it's all just very much the same." On Maria's first day in America, she inadvertently knocked on a neighbor's door,

thinking it was the door to her apartment. When the neighbor answered the door, Maria began screaming; she did not understand the woman. Her aunt and uncle came running. At that moment, Maria realized “just how lost she was in this new country.” Her analogy, “like being dropped from the air,” provides a sense of the traumatic shift in her life at this young age, and the loss of security that she felt in this strange new place.

Maria perceives her young students as experiencing their own traumatic shift, as well, but in their case, they are crossing a “huge divide” between the familiarity of home life and the unfamiliarity of a strange, new school setting. She states: “They are so little, and are leaving their cocoon. For many of them, this is their first experience out of their house or with somebody who doesn’t even look like them. It’s scary for them.” In this regard, the students are also “being dropped from the air.” However, Maria provides them a parachute for landing, as she explains: “I don’t wait for my students’ aunts or uncles to show up, [but rather] try to reassure them and make them feel comfortable in this new and scary place.” As with her own experiences, Maria helps the students to develop a “sense of themselves” during their first year in this strange land, as well. In this way, Maria’s teaching can be understood as a healing response to her own perceived losses, and in turn, this healing response may explain why she teaches kindergarten, instead of another grade.

The same can also be said for Nancy. She describes fourth grade as the “best age” because of the students’ fairness and honesty. She explains that older students are usually self-conscious about other people’s judgments toward them; while younger students “don’t even know that other people have thoughts about them.” Fourth graders, however, are in the middle of these two extremes. Nancy elucidates:

They are very honest. They just tell you exactly what is on their mind. But they are also looking around at other people in their world, and they're concerned with others' feelings. If a teacher is treating someone unfairly, you can see the empathy in their faces. It's just a really cool age. *I wish we could just stay that way for the rest of our lives.*

[Italics added]

Implied is that people do not stay that way as much as Nancy might like. For example, recall the "aloofness" of Nancy's earlier teaching, which is characterized by the "fear of judgment" and "fear of disappointing others," and is internalized through her own formative experiences. In addition, regarding honesty in other adults, Nancy comments: "I'm a naive person. I assume that what you're saying is really what you're thinking. I've been burnt on that so many times that there was a period where I doubted almost everything that everybody said to me." Teaching fourth graders may be a healing response that allows Nancy to reclaim the perceived loss of fairness and honesty within her own disposition, and also to learn these qualities from the people whom she suggests are exemplars. In this regard, the mere presence of the fourth graders nourishes Nancy's ideal of creating a classroom space in which "everybody is breathing okay."

Like Nancy, Olivia may also discover similar nourishment in teaching the second graders. As a reminder, the "driving force" of Olivia's truth is to create conditions that enable the students' "pureness of heart," that is, their whole-hearted engagement with learning, to flourish. She indicates that this pureness "is amazing, because you don't see it very often in adults," and then elaborates on this loss in adulthood: "Life happens. Experience happens. People learn what the negative things about the world are, and they experience that, and they change." Nonetheless, Olivia believes that "adults have the capacity to learn to be more open to others and to their

experience.” Her concept of pureness of heart, along with this belief that adults can reclaim it, in fact reminded me of an article that I wrote. In turn, I sent the relevant portion to Olivia to check whether my interpretation was accurate. The segment is as follows:

Have you heard the story of the woman who approached Picasso during one of his last exhibitions? She said, ‘Maestro, your paintings are very beautiful, but tell me, couldn’t a child paint the same way you do?’ Picasso responded, ‘Si, you are absolutely right. The only difference is that it took me ninety years to paint like a child.’ [*If Picasso were to continue, he might say*] ‘Only the innocence of childhood – which, I now know, has never left me – could create such beauty. To find this long forsaken part of me, though, meant that I also had to take up company with the right teacher. Unfortunately, it took me this long to unlearn much of what I learned in my adulthood in order to find this person.’ He would take a contemplative pause, and continue, ‘For you see, what I wish to have known earlier but have since discovered is that to acquire the simplicity, openness, and purity that lies within this very beautiful painting is, nevertheless, always clearly abundantly available through the pure teachings of the child.’ (Akoury, 2012, pp. 60-61)

In the email response, Olivia responded with a resounding: “That’s exactly it!” Like with Nancy’s case, teaching may be a healing response that allows Olivia to reclaim the loss of pureness in her own disposition, but also to learn these qualities from the people whom embody it the most. In this regard, the mere presence of the students nourishes Olivia’s understanding of personal truth.

Beth’s teaching is also a healing response to perceived loss. Unlike the previous teachers, however, whose healing response points inward, Beth’s response points outward toward distressing conditions in society. For example, and as previously mentioned, Beth perceives a

“tragic gap” between the significance of her faith, which connotes selfless service for “the greater good,” and a more prevalent individualistic attitude within society. She adds: “People are not really looking at all of the consequences of their actions. Instead, they think about what’s best for themselves rather than what’s best for the greater good. Personally, that really upsets me.” In Beth’s case, therefore, teaching can be understood as a healing response “to carry on that gift of faith [i.e., of selfless service for others] to students so that it doesn’t get lost in future generations.” Accordingly, Beth understands teaching as a way that she “can take action toward [healing this loss].”

Parents: A Special Consideration

Sometimes the tension between affirmation and disruption is intimated within the teachers’ work with parents. The teacher and parent are bound in a relationship through a shared concern for the well-being of the particular child. In turn, the teacher’s authenticity, i.e., the mutuality of caring for students and being self-affirmed in one’s truth, depends in part on how effectively she can receive support from the parent. This work can be difficult at times for the teacher, but despite the difficulty, she persists in these efforts. Take for example Laurel, who indicates that working with parents “has to be a real partnership.” However, communicating with them “can be scary” because what they may say is unpredictable. She elaborates:

I never know what they’re going to say. I sometimes feel like I’m defending myself. I’ve always had kind of: ‘Oh, I don’t feel like calling them.’ But the more I do it, the more they actually see how much I care. Then I feel more motivated to contact them. So, even though it can be scary, I have to throw myself out there.

Through experience, Laurel has grown more confident in working with parents. Like Laurel, moreover, Rachel has overcome perceived adversity in working with parents, and has developed “a lot of strength” from her efforts. Rachel wants parents to be an “advocate, not an adversary,” but explains that “parent communication wasn’t one of her strengths.” She adds, however: “It was hard for me, so I thought that I should tackle it and make it better.” For Rachel, part of the adversity in parent communication emerges from the almost accusatory tone that she encounters on occasion. She explains:

My underlying fear is, when parents have been argumentative, I felt that I was being accused of not being a good teacher; as if their child did something inappropriate but it was my fault because I wasn’t in charge enough.

Rachel has implemented new classroom policies, including communicating with parents whenever a behavioral incident happens in school. She explains that the policy is a “big commitment” on her part, but that the consistency is important to her. She states: “I want to be as transparent as possible, and to keep parents informed about what’s going on with their child. I think that’s really important for my students.” As with Laurel’s situation, implied is Rachel’s care for students through working with parents. To that end, working with parents can be inferred as part of teacher authenticity, and as a result, poses a tension for the teacher between being affirmed or disrupted in one’s desire/ intention to care.

At times the disruption in working with parents can considerably lessen the teacher’s self-determination to care for students indirectly in this way. Take for example Nancy, who, like Laurel and Rachel, understands working with parents “as a partnership.” Nancy “always felt that she should be as honest as she could be with parents about her perception of a situation.” A few years ago in math class, however, she had an extremely quiet student who “never talked to her”

but spoke with classmates. Halfway during the school year, in a conference with the boy's mother, Nancy explains: "I told her what was happening. I said: 'It's really difficult to teach him because I don't know him that well.'" After the conference, the mother sent the school principal a "horrible letter of complaint," which stated that Nancy "did not care enough to get to know her child." Nancy explains:

I was so sad. So sad. After that, I felt reluctant to say what was on my mind, because I wasn't sure how the parent would understand it. This mother obviously misunderstood me. She didn't question me, but went home and let it stew in her mind. I took a risk in being honest, because I'm really kind of a shy person. For me, parents were scary, freaky scary. But I tried, it backfired, and then I stopped.

In meeting with the mother, Nancy implies that caring for a particular student, and thereby being self-affirmed as a teacher, depends in part on cooperation with the parent, but as demonstrated here, this work can be difficult. In turn, this difficulty can dramatically discourage the teacher's persistence in working with parents, as it did with Nancy. However, because of a shared concern with parents for the students' well-being, and its connection with affirming one's truth as a teacher, Nancy concludes: "Now I'm getting back to it."

For Beth, the disruption in working with parents may be much more subtle than with the previous examples. This subtlety is based on reasonable conjecture, beginning with her statement: "Most of the students don't know it's my first year teaching. I try not to let on. It's my personality. I don't like to let on when I'm wrong or when I don't have things totally under control." Implied is an underlying vulnerability about being a first year teacher. However, hiding this newness may impede to some degree Beth's openness with students about what she needs from them. For example, she comments: "When it's too loud in here, and they see that I'm

stressed and about to blow, they say: ‘Shhh... everybody quiet.’” In this case, Beth considers the students’ reactions as an act of compassion toward her. However, it may also be a kind of anticipatory bracing reaction. Still, part of the impediment to more openly communicating with students about her needs may emerge from a perception regarding some of the parents. Beth explains:

Parents are entrusting their kids to me, so they are not likely to let me off easy. They don’t want me to have days where I make mistakes or don’t get across what I was supposed to teach, because it’s their kids in here and they want their kid to be having the most positive experience they can have. They’d rather blame than give compassion.

Although a somewhat dualistic way of viewing the dilemma, suggested is that this perceived attitude may contribute to Beth’s desire to hide her novice status. Perhaps tacitly at work is the assumption that, as a first year teacher in an objectivist educational climate, which mostly disregards the teacher’s personal truth, Beth’s perceived authority is diminished. In turn, “she tries not to let on.” Part of Beth’s authenticity, as with the other teachers, is to work with the perceived tension in a way that enables her to more fully affirm her sense of personal truth as a teacher, through this shared concern with parents for the students’ well-being.

Burnout: A Special Consideration

Inferred within the data analysis, with minimal evidence yet still worth briefly noting, is a fresh construction of being inauthentic: i.e., burnout. Burnout occurs when the mutual relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed in one’s truth is severely disrupted for a long period, and the teacher’s intention to actualize her desire to care has become largely obstructed. When this occurs, the teacher’s personal truth yields to the perspective of

teaching as a job to endure or to leave. Burnout can occur when institutional pressures are too disparate with the support that is needed by the teacher to sustain her personal truth. It can also occur when the teacher holds onto thinking patterns that keep her from satisfactorily negotiating the environment, in turn largely reducing her capacity to learn from experience and move on. Most likely, burnout is a combination of the two.

These considerations about burnout are most evident with Olivia. As already indicated, after a twelve-year absence from classroom teaching, she re-entered a dramatically different teaching climate. She had been “dying to get back” but her hopes were disrupted when the “glorified image of teaching” during her absence became disillusioned by a self-perception of being “master of none.” However, the school’s cultural conditions along with Olivia’s openness to learning has been supporting a process of renewal. For example, she states:

Learning patience with myself, I’m learning to see the long road ahead instead of what’s right in front of me. When I wasn’t doing that, I was very frustrated all the time. But here, I’m allowed to give myself time. My principal is very supportive. She doesn’t expect me to learn a whole new style of teaching all at once. She gives me time, and that allows me to give myself time.

Furthermore, recall that Rachel is learning to take care of herself, such as visiting her family even if she needs to miss a couple of school days. Otherwise, “she’ll completely burnout, because she can only run on empty for so long.” As with Olivia, Rachel acknowledges the principal’s support in making this change in perspective. She explains: “Principal X said, ‘Go home to your family.’ By doing that, she showed that family is priority. Then she said, ‘You need some time for you, because you won’t take that time otherwise, so I’m going to say, ‘Go.’”

In both cases, i.e., if Olivia were unable to “re-affirm that teaching is still part of who she is,” or if Rachel were to continue “running on empty” and eventually burnout, the desire to care for students might still have been intact. However, a key factor in burnout, which again can only be speculated, is that a sustained intention to actualize the desire may have become largely diminished, and if this were to occur, then an inauthentic state may have been experienced in one’s teaching.

Action

Thus far, authenticity has been interpreted as a dynamic, mutual relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed in one’s truth as a teacher. Personal truth has been proposed as the motivational ideal, driving and organizing the teacher’s understanding of what it means to care, and thereby mutually affirming the teacher. The meaning of personal truth has brought into focus authenticity as a unique, complex, and iterative process, and has explored how a teacher’s personal truth influences perspectives about the curriculum, self-learning, and ambiguity in teaching. Existential pain has been presented as the teacher’s cognitive, emotive, and intuitive experience of tension between being affirmed and disrupted in the desire and intention to care; this self-perceived tension stirs the movement of the teacher’s authenticity process. This final section delineates authentic action, which for the purposes of the empirical framework, are actions that help the teacher to more fully realize her personal truth. Three kinds of actions were identified: (a) actions of the teacher toward herself; (b) actions of the teacher’s colleagues toward the teacher; (c) actions of the teacher toward her students.

Actions of the Teacher toward Herself

In authentic actions toward oneself, the teacher deliberately makes choices to support a process of more fully actualizing one's personal truth as a teacher. For example, in making the decision to enter a two-year graduate program, Beth knew that enrolling would enable her to carry on the gift of her religious faith in a setting that permits religion to be explicitly addressed. She also knew that the program would provide the support that she needed to begin to actualize this ideal in lived practice. The decision to enter the program was therefore a stepping stone that allowed Beth to support her own process.

Sometimes, authentic actions pertain to an underlying self-attitude that supports the teacher in dealing with her own human limitation and fallibility. Take for example, the personal philosophy that underlies Maria's self-learning. She states: "If you're giving everybody the best you can that day, that's all you can do. You gave the best you could at that time, but you move on and improve on what you've learned." Maria thinks back to her first year in teaching, almost with self-reproach for not being able to offer students the benefit of experiences and insights that she has since accrued. However, she recognizes that teaching "is something that she has to experience to learn," and concludes: "That's what it's all about, like you're building on experiences. What I knew then, I did." This self-forgiving attitude is then translated in Maria's approach with students, and is fundamental to her ideal of supporting a safe, happy, and nurturing social/ emotional as well as academic classroom climate.

Like Maria, Laurel also takes on a kind of "roll with it" attitude. She gives herself permission to take risks, make mistakes, and accept the messiness of teaching. Maintaining a positive outlook about teaching, including the adversities, allows Laurel to remain open to possibilities for self-growth. For example, she states: "Even though there have been tough times,

I don't see them as negative. Each time a student pushes me to work hard, it makes me a better teacher because it gives me more experience." As a result, even seemingly negative experiences are viewed advantageously. Because Laurel chooses this positive outlook, she enables herself to take the risks that are necessary to "do all the tasks that are required for the reward of student learning."

Sometimes the teacher confronts and challenges a self-perceived weakness or limitation within her teaching, and by doing so, allows herself more freedom to move forward in the exploration of her ideal. For example, Rachel focused on parent communication because she perceived it as an area of tremendous challenge, especially as a teacher who is still in the beginning of her career. In implementing new policies and committing to follow through, she evolved in her development. Rachel explains:

It's helped me to grow because I've gained a lot of experience from it, and a lot of strength. I overcame a lot in dealing with something that was difficult for me, as well as a lot of the adversity that came with it.

As a result, Rachel is nourishing her ideal, since she believes that keeping parents informed is "really important to her students," both for their character and academic development. Sometimes, however, the teacher's confrontation with herself is less evident. Recall for example Nancy and Olivia, each taking a symbolic stand toward overcoming self-obstructing images to the development of their personal truth. In Prayer Circle, Nancy stubbornly refused to validate smirks from students, symbolically refuting the past voices of self-judgment, which were internalized. Olivia, in slowly re-affirming herself as a teacher, has been symbolically taking a stand to reorient herself to the meaning of her ideal within a dramatically changed educational context.

Actions of the Teacher's Colleagues toward the Teacher

The teachers indicate moments in which colleagues' actions support them in their personal truth. These moments can be considered authentic for several reasons. First, in light of the empirical framework, one can infer that the teachers and their colleagues are bound together by a shared belief in authenticity. In other words, the mutuality of caring for students and being self-affirmed in one's personal truth is centrally binding among teachers, impelling them to help one another. Although this claim is primarily speculation (because many of the teacher colleagues did not participate in the study), there is substantiating evidence to make it worth noting. For example, Beth describes how colleagues support her as a first year teacher. She states: "They understand what it's like to be in my shoes, and they try to make things as easy as they can for me, each in their own way." In third grade, Laurel is Beth's teacher colleague. She describes how she supports Beth.

I was helping her get acclimated to the curriculum. I said: 'These are the things that we both need to do, but it's better for us not to be doing the exact same thing.' I showed her how I use different books, and *how it's more important to put some of her own personality into it.* [Italics added]

Laurel's final remark is based on the ideal of realness, which, as previously mentioned, in part means "being creative" and "staying fresh" in one's teaching. Because the mutual relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed is embedded within a teacher's ideal, one can therefore infer that this mutuality is, to some degree, centrally binding in Laurel's support with Beth. Still, another inference can be gleaned: when teacher colleagues help each other, their ideals, as in Laurel's example, influence their supportive actions.

Second, the empirical framework also suggests that colleagues' supportive actions are authentic as well as relevant because they indirectly create space for the teacher to more fully actualize her ideal. Take for example the school principal, who suggested that Rachel visit her family, because "she won't take the time otherwise," and demonstrated patience toward Olivia, who is now feeling less frustrated and is "seeing the long road ahead." In effect, the principal's actions helped Rachel to rethink "being a woman for others" and helped Olivia to allow herself time to learn the different teaching approaches. Likewise, recall Nancy's former mentor, with whom she taught third grade in her earlier teaching. Nancy describes the mentor teacher as embodying patience, which is significant in Nancy's ideal, i.e., being a teacher whom "students know cares for them." Nancy explains: "I probably asked her the same questions a hundred times, and she never got impatient with me. She would say: 'That's what I'm here for. I'm here to help.'" As evidenced, therefore, the colleagues' actions were authentic because they supported these teachers in their process of more fully actualizing their ideals.

However, sometimes the support that teachers receive from their colleagues does not appear to fit with these previous analyses. In this case, teachers and colleagues are not centrally bound by the shared belief about teacher authenticity, i.e., the mutual connection between caring for students and being self-affirmed in one's personal truth. One can speculate that the teachers and their colleagues have stepped outside the shared belief to essentially become caring friends toward one another. Two examples lead to this speculation. First, when Maria's mother suddenly passed away in the previous year, teachers supported her by ensuring that she was given space to grieve. She states:

I never felt that I needed to be here. Everybody picked up the slack. They were just very respectful of my space, and of my pain, like ‘We need to let her struggle with it.’

Everybody was very wonderful about it, and they still are.

Second, Olivia explains that she had been experiencing health issues early during the school year. She adds: “Teachers made dinner for my family every night of the week, even though I said ‘No,’ they said, ‘Yes, we will.’ When I would come home, I didn’t have to worry about that. It was wonderful.” Thus, examples like these with Maria and Olivia demonstrate a different quality in the dynamic of actions among teachers toward one another.

Actions of the Teacher toward Her Students

In their actions toward students, the teachers reach beyond content pedagogy to the social and emotional needs of each student, often with consideration for how these influence the classroom. Four themes emerged in the quality of their responses. First, the teachers act with a belief in the intrinsic goodness of each student, even though they may not accept all of the student’s choices, often relating to behavioral issues. Second, the teachers recognize that each particular student is a unique person, and tailor their responses with deliberation upon the issues and circumstances that each one brings to the classroom. Third, their responses aim to affirm each student’s potential to grow, which also becomes an affirmation of their own personal truth. Fourth, these responses can be complex and challenging, which in turn demonstrates the teachers’ sustained intention to act upon and actualize the desire to care for the particular child.

For example, Maria states: “I try to find the good in everyone, no matter what they’re doing.” She explains that “some of the most difficult kids I’ve had are near and dear to her heart, because there was a reason for their behavior.” Maria implies that behaviors do not define the

intrinsic worth of the student. Her empathic understanding can be gleaned from her own experience as the little girl who knocked on the neighbor's door. On the surface, there is a screaming, panicking child. However, the reasons for the traumatic reaction were complex and unique to Maria's recent immigration as well as to how, as this young child, she had been processing its dramatic impact upon her. In other words, there "was a reason" for her behavior. In turn, this event, which is still etched strongly in Maria's memory, creates an empathetic gauge that naturally compels her to distinguish the student's behavior and intrinsic worth.

Earlier in the year, for example, a young girl in Maria's class was mimicking playful behaviors from home, pinching students and wrestling with them, but to the classmates' displeasure. Maria worked with the family, reassuring them that the girl "is not doing it to be mean or malicious, but just doesn't understand that it's not acceptable in a large group, even if it's acceptable at home." Although the school year was "a really rough start," Maria helped the student to cross the "huge divide" between the familiarity of home life and the unfamiliarity of the new school setting. Maria comments: "She's really getting a sense of herself, becoming more self-assured, and really becoming a leader."

Another example of these four themes is with Rachel, who believes in the kindhearted tenderness and joyful spontaneity that are natural qualities in her young students. However, she recognizes the need to help them make appropriate choices for themselves and in their interaction with others, which in turn is fundamental to their character development. For example, Rachel describes the student who, "when there is an issue, is never accountable for his actions," and would escalate into tantrums when others confronted him about his behavior. On one occasion, he ran away from the classroom. Rachel spoke openly with the student about the incident. She states: "It really worried me. I specified how important it is for him to be in charge

of his actions; that no one is perfect, and that we need to do our best and admit when we make a mistake.” Later in the month, an incident occurred in the cafeteria. The student threw a piece of food. He became angry and defensive when another teacher and the student’s peers accused him of the transgression. Rachel continues:

He stopped, thought about it, and said: ‘Yes. I did it.’ The teacher who saw it all happen was very upset with him, and rightfully so; he shouldn’t have done it. But I was jumping up and down with joy. I was ready to throw a party, because we came so far from a month ago, with the lying, the tantrums, the arguing, hitting, and screaming, and the running away from me. Now there was this incredible turnaround of admitting his mistake, being accountable for his action, and apologizing on the spot with a promise to do better. It was not the most beautiful situation for some, but I was really able to see the beauty of it.

Affirming the student’s potential to make better choices had been complex and challenging; yet, as Rachel states, she was able to “show him compassion and stick with him, instead of write him off.” Caring for the student in this way, i.e., helping him to make responsible choices, mutually affirmed Rachel in her sense of personal truth.

Like Maria and Rachel, all of the other teachers distinguish between the student’s intrinsic worth and behavior; in the light of their personal truths, they likewise work to affirm the potential within their students. However, the challenges of this process can be ongoing. An example from Laurel illustrates this point. She describes a third grader who had been acting defiantly in class, e.g., throwing books on the floor. With the ideal of “doing what works,” Laurel identified and reflected on the student’s need for negative attention, and then adapted a response to reinforce only the positive behaviors from the student. She states: “It took all year for

things to fall into place, but not every kid is going to sit there and listen to you; they just don't." Through this ongoing process, the student began to respond positively to Laurel's efforts and to function more effectively in the classroom. As a result, Laurel was able to affirm some of the student's potential, and by doing so, mutually affirmed her ideal of "realness" as a teacher: i.e., "doing all the tasks required for the reward of student learning."

On occasion, despite ongoing efforts, the teacher explicitly recognizes her limited capacity to affirm the potential within a particular student. An example from Nancy clarifies this point. Like all of the teachers, she believes that students are "people to be respected," and recognizes that "there are plenty of behaviors that she doesn't like, but she's always been able to separate the child from the behavior." However, Nancy elaborates that sometimes the students whom she finds the most difficult to affirm in their potential remain difficult for her throughout the year. She describes a student who had been kept back from the fifth grade to the fourth, and explains: "He's got a lot of aggression and has been known to throw things, to resist doing anything, and to get up and leave classrooms because he didn't like the way the teacher was speaking to him." Nancy has worked to build a sense of trust with this student, and as a result has observed success with him in the classroom when he visits her for math and science. She continues, however:

I don't know if the success is real or not, like I'm playing a game with him. It's a dance; sometimes he's leading and I think, 'Okay, this is what's going to happen today. Fine. I'll go along with it, just to keep him quiet,' even though it wouldn't be right for other people in the classroom.

On the one hand, Nancy has been building trust with this student, which is essential to her ideal, and to some degree, she feels affirmed in this effort, but skeptically so. She is dissatisfied

with the perceived conditions of this trust, calling it “like a dance” between her and this student. The dissatisfaction is intensified by a belief that, even though the student appears to be responding favorably, Nancy does not have the capacity to identify and address the underlying problem, “which is never going to go away until he is being treated correctly.” She concludes, using a metaphor: “There’s a little bit of light in the fact that the child is coming in the door and doing his work, but it’s not a long lasting, bright light.”

Chapter Summary

In this empirical framework, authenticity was interpreted through the mutual relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher. Care, which was defined broadly, denoted a selfless concern for students’ well-being, and included qualities such as respect, persistence, kindness, generosity, and empathy. Personal truth was the motivational ideal, driving and organizing the teacher’s understanding of what it means to care, and thereby mutually affirming the teacher. Meaning brought into focus authenticity as a unique process, and explored how a teacher’s personal truth influences perspectives about the curriculum, self-learning, and ambiguity in teaching. Existential pain presented the teacher’s cognitive, emotive, and intuitive experience of tension between being affirmed and disrupted in the desire and intention to care. This self-perceived tension stirs the movement of the teacher’s authenticity process. Lastly, action pointed to behaviors supporting the teacher in realizing her personal truth, i.e., actions of the teacher toward herself; the teacher’s colleagues toward the teacher; and the teacher toward her students.

The sixth chapter, as mentioned, now brings these findings into dialogue with the earlier theoretical framework. A faith perspective of authenticity will be made explicit, defined as a trust

that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. The integrative discussion will then proceed as a catalyst for the seventh chapter, which responds to the autobiographical question about the researcher as an authentic learner. Finally, the eighth chapter concludes the study and discusses key contributions, implications, areas for future research, as well as limitations.

Chapter Six: Integration of Theoretical and Empirical Frameworks

The purpose of this chapter culminates the vision of the dissertation: i.e., to integrate the philosophical/theological and empirical resources into a construct of authenticity that supports the significant but underacknowledged educational works in this area. Teacher authenticity is being re-defined as a faith process, interpreted as a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. Thus, rather than being merely psychological or social, the truth and meaning of the teacher's authenticity is proposed at the level of being.

A key point needs to be clarified to provide an appropriate context for the reader, i.e., philosophical/theological resources and empirical resources function differently. The philosophical/theological brings into focus the possibilities relative to the profound meaning of an empirical study (Friedman, 1960, p. 172). With the integration of these cumulative resources, a faith perspective can be applied to the data. A key insight emerges from this integration: What is extraordinary about the teachers is not how much technical competence and knowledge they have to deliver a standards curriculum, but rather the extraordinary is already tucked deep inside the ordinary of their daily lives, as seeds within their deepest mission and purpose for teaching, universally shared among them but uniquely expressed through them. Therefore, a philosophical/theological interpretation envisions the ordinary as what it truly could be: sacred and extraordinary.

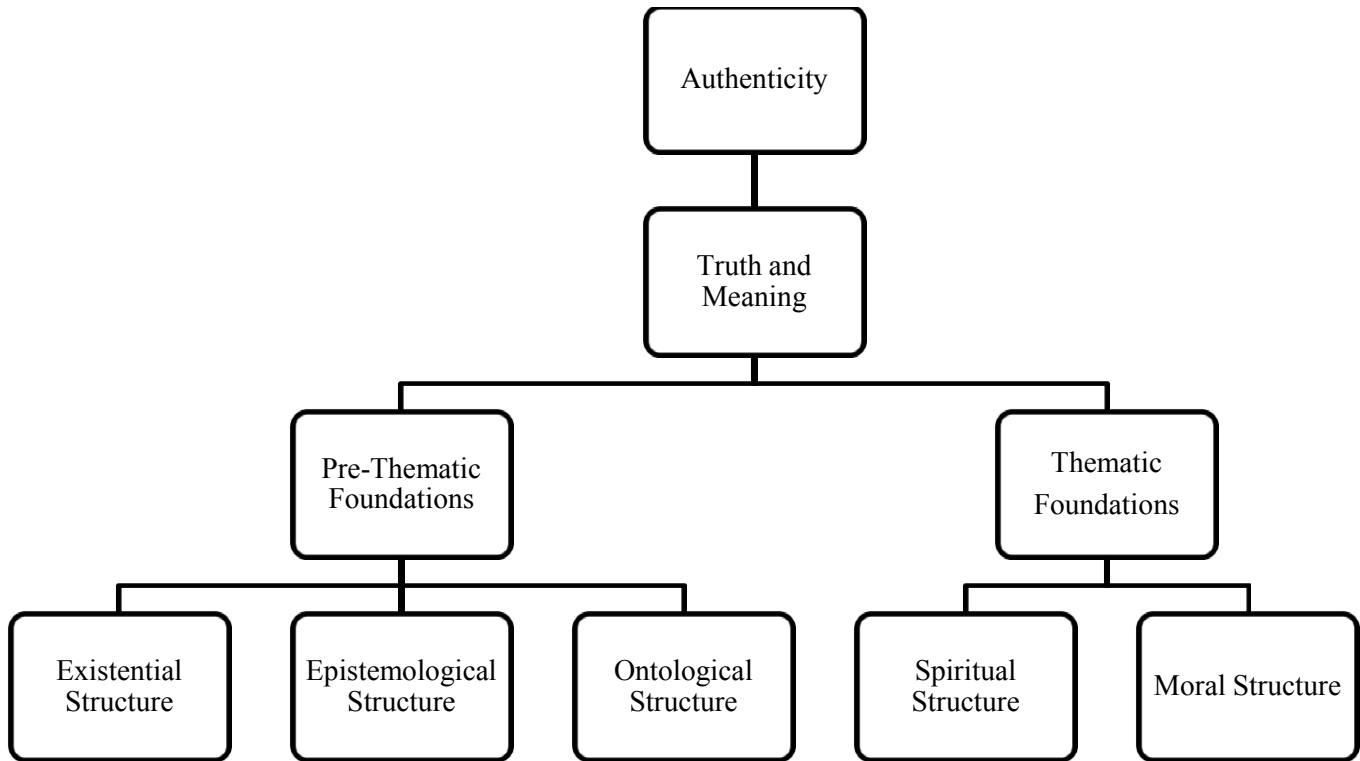
Figure 6.1 presents the integrative framework. First described is authenticity as a faith process in which the teacher affirms a relational nature. In the next section, authenticity is examined as an ongoing process that joins truth and meaning together as one. Five structures are then presented, which together describe the process of affirming the truth and meaning of the

teacher's relational nature through caring for students. These structures are organized into two parts: the pre-thematic and thematic foundations of the teacher's authenticity.

The pre-thematic foundation consists of existential, epistemological, and ontological structures. The existential structure interprets the teacher's vocational truth as the concrete conduit of the faith process, and explains the teacher's temporality, which demonstrates that truth is process oriented. The epistemological structure contextualizes vocational truth within a relational way of knowing, framing the teacher's role in support of authentic connections between the student and curriculum. The ontological structure completes the pre-thematic foundation of authenticity, and focuses on the intersecting realities between the teacher's relational nature and the human habit to reify this nature as concepts.

The thematic foundation consists of the spiritual and moral structures. The spiritual structure highlights the dynamics of ambiguity, risk, and courage, which are inherent to faith in the teacher's authenticity. The moral structure completes the thematic foundation by delineating the responsible actions of the teacher toward herself and students, i.e., actions that speak to the relational sacredness of teaching. Furthermore, discussions included throughout the framework highlight the institutional need to support teacher authenticity, thus foreshadowing implications in the concluding chapter.

Figure 6.1
Theoretical/ Empirical Framework on Teacher Authenticity



Authenticity

This section explains teacher authenticity as ultimately being centered on a faith perspective. The outcome is a revised definition, which integrates the philosophical/ theological and empirical resources, and is stated as follows: *Teacher authenticity is a trust that, through the desire and intention to care, the teacher can awaken through teaching a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. This trust is the teacher’s faith perspective, and is lived, dynamic, and iterative, which makes authenticity an ongoing process.*

To show how the definition emerged as a faith perspective, in the empirical framework, authenticity was defined as an ongoing process in which care and self-affirmation were mutually

dependent. Desire and intention were pivotal terms in the definition, and therefore warrant a brief exploration. The following discussion (a) explores desire and intention as distinct and connected; (b) appropriates desire and intention within a philosophical/ theological perspective; and (c) theorizes authenticity as a faith perspective. The next section presents the ongoing process, i.e., truth and meaning, which further supports the revised definition.

Exploring Desire and Intention as Distinct and Mutually Dependent

Olivia epitomized the feeling of the group in the remark: “What matters most is what you do for other people, [but] there should be some level of satisfaction in teaching.” In the empirical definition of authenticity, this remark and those of Olivia’s colleagues were interpreted as implying the desire and intention to care for students, and thereby to affirm one’s sense of vocational truth. This section points out how desire and intention are distinct and connected.

Intention is interpreted as a deliberate and willful activity, further emphasized in the spiritual and moral structures. Desire is therefore interpreted as a natural impulse. To support this point, Levine writes: “Care for others is care for ourselves, a deep honoring of the Being we all share” (p. 48). Noddings (2003), with a feminist approach, also confirms caring as an inherent tendency. She writes: “As human beings, we want to care and be cared for” (p. 7). Estola, Erkkila, and Syrjala (2003), in a study of teachers’ narratives regarding the moral voice of vocation, conclude: “It is natural to assume that serving others involves an ethic of caring in the relationship between teachers and children” (p. 250). However, it would be one-sided to view desire and intention as merely distinct while dismissing a mutual relationship. Intention needs desire as fuel; but desire needs intention to find expression. To adapt from Buddhism, therefore, the two are a dependent origination (Dalai Lama, 2005, p. 64).

Appropriating Desire and Intention Philosophically/Theologically

Rachel's statement, "This is what I love, and that's huge, because that's what makes me who I am," supports a philosophical/theological perspective, which can be applied to all of the teachers in their desire and intention, i.e., that teaching moves them to affirm an existence that is fundamentally relational in nature. Desire and intention are being understood primarily in this regard. Tillich's (1957) concept of eros and agape as being mutually dependent substantiates this philosophical/theological perspective. As a reminder, eros needs agape to prevent self-serving ends, and agape needs eros to prevent blind submission to a group (p. 133). In Christian theology, eros/agape symbolically point to "the cross... [which essentially is] our hunger to give ourselves away, and in doing so, [to become] truly who we are" (Himes, 1995, p. 78), i.e. to become God's servant. With this interpretation, take Nancy's teaching belief, for example, which hangs on the classroom wall and states: "Give and gifts will be given." From the philosophical/theological perspective, "gift" does not merely signify a personal gratification in performing well and feeling self-competent about teaching. In the eros/agape interpretation, Nancy most deeply intuits "gift" as an affirmation of being an authentic participant in God's community. In Buddhist theology, with no theistic interpretation, "gift" may be intuited as an affirmation of dependent origination (e.g., Dalai Lama, 1999, pp. 35-47), i.e., the reality that "[the teacher's] interest and [the student's] interest are intimately connected" (Dalai Lama, p. 47). Ultimately, these philosophies/theologies point to a similar outcome, i.e., desire and intention to care are rooted in affirming an existence that is interdependent in nature (Buber, 1958, pp. 3-4; Dalai Lama, pp. 37 & 45).

Theorizing Authenticity as a Faith Perspective

This section culminates the teacher's desire and intention as a faith perspective, which will be presented as a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. The temporal nature of desire and intention highlights this faith perspective. Take for example, Laurel's story about the third grader who "thought he couldn't read, so he didn't read." Through diligent support, the student's attitude transformed over time. He learned to love reading. Laurel concluded: "That was very rewarding. I felt like I gave him a lifelong gift." From the philosophical/theological perspective, Laurel's reward affirmed the recognition of, in Christian terms, participation in God's community, and in Buddhist terms, a mutually dependent existence. However, because humans are naturally limited in what they can ultimately know and do (Himes, 1995, p. 26), and because life is an insubstantial, impermanent flow of experiences (Dalai Lama, 1999, pp. 35-47; 1994, pp. 53-57), Laurel's desire and intention cannot be conclusively resolved, but rather are essentially ongoing and part of an emerging process. Therefore, desire and intention are philosophically/theologically interpreted as a driving power, a "restlessness of the heart" (Augustine, 1960, p. 43), continually moving the teacher toward a recognition of life's relational sacredness, as revealed through teaching.

Desire and intention essentially point to a faith perspective, which in Christian terms is the "ultimate concern" (Tillich, 1957) to serve God's community without ultimately knowing the full meaning of one's service (Frankl, 1984, p. 141; Himes, 1995, p. 30). In Buddhist terms, desire and intention point to a unique bodhisattva path, i.e., an altruistic attitude of selfless concern and action for others' well-being (e.g., Dalai Lama, 2005a, pp. 139-140; Makransky, 2007, pp. 229-231; Surya Das, 2007). Integrating these Christian and Buddhist resources, the

teacher's desire and intention can be interpreted as essential to a faith perspective, which, throughout this framework, will denote a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. This faith perspective, which is at the center of the teacher's authenticity, now lays the basis for a dynamic, iterative process in the remainder of the framework.

Proposing the Revised Definition of Authenticity

The culmination of the above discussions that teacher authenticity can in fact be considered as a faith perspective, lead to the following definition being proposed: *Teacher authenticity is a trust that, through the desire and intention to care, the teacher can awaken through teaching a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. This trust is the teacher's faith perspective, and is lived, dynamic, and iterative, which makes authenticity an ongoing process.*

The revised definition now connects with authenticity as presented in the theoretical framework, i.e., the deeply felt sense of oneself as distinct yet undivided and deeply connected with others and the world. This both/and paradox was referred to as "the between," which is the deepest reality of human beings. The "deeply felt sense" is akin to the teacher's desire and intention to care, and the affirmation of a relational existence implicitly suggests "the between" in which the person is understood as distinct but undivided. The faith perspective alludes to the "beatific attitude" in Christianity (Himes, 1995, pp. 72 & 129) and also to Buddhism's "pure perception" (Dalai Lama, 1996, pp. 68-69; Makransky, 2007, p. 134), both of which broadly correspond and connote compassionate action by the teacher to affirm the intrinsic worthiness of students and herself.

This revised definition of authenticity as a faith perspective clearly employs theological interpretations, and could easily be perceived with religious connotations. Although theological language and resources are incorporated throughout the integrative framework, the revised definition is framed and referenced in secular terms. This is based on the following: To paraphrase Tillich (1952), the teacher's authenticity in its most subtle and profound sense is interpreted as "transcending [theology] in all its forms" (p. 185); in other words, authenticity essentially points to a trust in the unknown. Beth, for example, might explicitly perceive faith as the religious teachings of her church, but in this more subtle interpretation, authentic faith transcends Church doctrines, although these are helpful to Beth's process. Thus, framing a faith perspective of authenticity as being secular most accurately conveys the intention of the revised definition.

Truth and Meaning

The previous discussion accomplished several goals. It explored the teacher's desire and intention to care as distinct and mutually dependent, and then appropriated them within a philosophical/theological perspective. It also suggested a revised definition of authenticity from a faith perspective: i.e., a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world.

In this philosophical/theological context, the truth and meaning of the teacher's authenticity implicitly cannot be viewed as merely a category of knowledge, which can easily be compartmentalized from other categories. Truth and meaning are instead integrally rooted throughout authenticity as a faith process. Accordingly, the meaning of truth and the truth of

meaning unite together as a mutually dependent basis for the remainder of this integrative framework.

Five structures are presented to describe the process of truth and meaning. These structures are organized into two parts: the pre-thematic and thematic foundations of the teacher's authenticity. The pre-thematic explains the structures that exist prior to the teacher's deliberate and willful activity, which is to say, the intention to care. Accordingly, the thematic explains the structures that are within the purview of intentional activity.

Pre-Thematic Foundation of the Teacher's Authenticity

The pre-thematic structures are existential, epistemological, and ontological. The existential structure interprets the teacher's vocational truth as the concrete conduit of the faith process, and explains the teacher's temporality, which demonstrates that truth is process-oriented. The epistemological structure contextualizes vocational truth within a relational way of knowing, framing the teacher's role in support of authentic connections between the student and curriculum. The ontological structure focuses on the intersecting realities between the teacher's relational nature and the human habit to reify this nature into concepts.

The Existential Structure

The existential structure consists of two parts. The first part revisits the empirical definition of personal truth in light of this new understanding of teacher authenticity as a faith perspective. The second part highlights authenticity as foundationally temporal, specifically indicating the ways in which the teacher's truth is essentially a process by nature. Heidegger's

philosophy of Being-in-the-world supports the interpretation that personal truth is rooted in temporality, and therefore that authenticity as a faith perspective is lived, dynamic, and iterative.

Personal Truth as the Conduit of the Teacher's Faith.

This section aligns the concept of personal truth, i.e., vocation, with the philosophical/theological interpretation of authenticity as a faith perspective. As previously mentioned, Maria's sense of "how lost [she] was" characterizes her perspective about kindergartners, who like her are arriving in a strange new land, as well. Maria's formative experiences create the basis for how she perceives and experiences her personal truth as a teacher, which was defined in the empirical framework as a motivational ideal. The ideal is an organizing focus that personalizes the teacher's sense of what it means to care, originating prior to teaching. Through the ideal, the sense of teaching as a vocation rather than as a job finds its mission and purpose.

These points were elaborated with each of the teachers. For example, Nancy's ideal is to create a relational space of trust in which "everybody is breathing okay." This ideal emerges from her formative schooling experiences, which to some degree were punitive, isolating, and humiliating. With Beth, bothered by the tragic gap between selfless service and the individualism that she observes as widespread in society, her ideal is to instill in students an appreciation for serving the greater good.

To support these findings about vocation, Estola, Erkkila, and Syrjala (2003) write: "Vocation is a personal commitment that is only understandable as part of the personal biography of the teacher....Vocation is an answer to the question of why a teacher wants to teach" (pp. 247 & 249). In other words, vocation is an organizing focus, the content of which is

unique to each teacher's life. Maria expresses a personal sense of vocation, for example, by ensuring that her kindergartners feel safe and happy, and by helping them to function outside the familiar home setting.

With the revised definition of authenticity, this perspective of vocation as “an answer to why a teacher wants to teach” (Estola, Erkkila, & Syrjala, 2003, p. 249) is accurate but does not arrive at the deepest philosophical/theological significance. More profoundly, the teacher's vocation, i.e., truth or ideal (which are all used identically), is the personal conduit through which teaching, from a faith perspective, can emerge. In other words, vocation personalizes a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. Vocation points to the teacher's essential sense that, like Himes (1995) writes: “The world has never had you and it does need you or God would not have made you, and so you have to discover the unique ways in which you can give yourself away in service to the world” (p. 59).

The Teacher's Personal Truth as Temporal.

Hansen (1994) writes: “[T]he work of teaching is one's sense of vocation becoming concrete” (p. 265; also see Wu, 2004, p. 321). This concept implies that vocation is a process, and Heidegger's (1962) philosophy of Being-in-the-world helps to elucidate the temporal nature of this process. To enhance the fluidity and clarity of this presentation, the following discussion expands Laurel's reading example from earlier; however, it is applicable to all of the teachers.

For Laurel, a personal truth of “doing what works” includes being creative in her teaching approach, supporting the whole child, and maintaining a positive outlook about the students' capacity to learn. Interpreting personal truth through the Heideggerean (1962) lens,

Laurel is pre-thematically involved with students and the equipment (e.g., teaching tools and approaches) of classroom practice; and all of her explicit knowledge about “doing what works” *derives from* this pre-thematic involvement. As Heidegger explains:

A commercium of the subject with a world does not get created for the first time by knowing [i.e., by representing knowledge], nor does it arise from some way in which the world acts upon a subject. Knowing is a mode of Dasein [the person] founded upon Being-in-the-world. (p. 90)

Thus, as Hansen’s (1994, p. 265) proposal suggests, vocation is fundamentally understood as the level of existence, which is prior to conceptual knowledge. As a result, Laurel’s work with the third grader on reading develops from the shared sense of pre-thematic involvement in the world of their classroom. Emerging from this pre-thematic involvement, Heidegger’s (1962) concept of Being-in, i.e., facticity and understanding, clarifies Hansen’s theory that vocation is a lived process.

To continue with Laurel, she is already situated within the classroom environment, which Heidegger calls “facticity” (p. 176). The teaching situation contains a set of practices and knowledge bases that have already been developed and that are rooted in the socio-cultural history of the teaching profession (e.g., see Hansen, 1994, p. 272). To that end, facticity is defined by the past. However, in “understanding” (Heidegger, p. 184), which orients Laurel toward the future, she projects a set of pre-thematic possibilities onto the situation. For example, she understands tutoring the student each day after school, instead of going home, as a possibility.

With facticity and understanding as a temporal basis, Heidegger’s (1962) concept of referential context clarifies the teacher’s personal truth as a faith process. Referential context, as

part of Being-in-the-world, includes “for the sake of,” “in order to,” “in which,” “toward which,” and “with which” (p. 120). Drawing again from Laurel’s reading example, she teaches *in* the classroom, *with* this student as a learner, and *with* instructional practices and tools.⁵ She teaches him *in order to* “do all the tasks required for the reward of student learning.” This reward moves Laurel *toward* the goal of more concretely and personally caring for this particular student. She cares for this young student *for the sake of* affirming teaching as personally fulfilling and meaningful. This desire and intention to care are *for the sake of* her authenticity, i.e., awakening through teaching the relational sacredness of teaching.

Thus, Laurel’s Being-in-the-world, as can likewise be interpreted with all of the teachers, sustains vocational truth, as Hansen (1994) suggests, as a continual, dynamic, and lived process. Accordingly, authenticity as a faith perspective is always temporal in nature.

The Epistemological Structure

Thus far, teacher authenticity has been reframed as a process of faith, i.e., a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. The teacher’s vocational truth is the conduit through which this process finds expression. The meaning of this truth arises temporally through an existential structure, which is one of the pre-thematic structures within this integrative framework. However, epistemological and ontological structures provide an additional level of pre-thematic support. These two structures help to form the pre-thematic basis for the teacher’s authenticity.

⁵ Recall that Donnelly (1998), in his Heideggerean analysis of teaching, imprecisely interprets Being-with equipment and Being-with people as comparable (p. 946). In Heidegger’s (1962) terms, circumspective concern (Being-with equipment) and solicitude (Being-with people) are *not* parallel, although they are equally pre-thematic (p. 157).

In this section, the epistemological structure describes the intersecting realities between the teacher's relational truth and the objectivism of the educational climate, and explains an embedded inverse relationship: i.e., objectivism implies subjectivism. A key point needs to be clarified to provide an appropriate context. A relational way of knowing brings to bear a full range of human capacities, i.e., reasoning, sensory input, emotion, and intuition, to know reality as a mutual truth both within oneself and also out there with others and the world (Dalai Lama, 2005b, pp. 68-69; Palmer, 1993, pp. 51-54). The objectivist/subjectivist duality (Palmer, pp. 27 & 55) does not assume this mutuality of knowing.

The Objectivism/Subjectivism Duality.

The findings indicate that the teacher is not merely teaching formal curriculum, but is also fulfilling her vocation, i.e., personal truth. However, the formal school curriculum, which is objectivist based, is an inevitable part of her teaching responsibility; and is an unavoidable influence within her teaching. It therefore intersects with her process of authenticity.

The prevalence of objectivism is evident throughout the school. In the faculty lounge, five large posters cover the back wall facing the entrance. Each poster presents an objectivist message, such as listing the key steps of lesson design, from what students will know, to how they will demonstrate their knowledge. Some of the school's change initiatives involve the teacher's use of reform-driven software programs that connect lesson plans with state curriculum frameworks, and that support the principal's monitoring of teachers' instructional practices with standards-based reform. In each of my classroom observations, the lessons were grounded in objectivist educational practices, focusing on students' development of skills application and basic content knowledge. To highlight this last point, in the two third grade classrooms, step-by-

step, teacher directed lessons were observed, one by Laurel on homophones, the other by Beth on poetry writing. In the fourth grade, Nancy implemented a similar teacher-directed format, but instead focused on a math skills-based activity, which progressed sequentially through circumference, diameter, radius, and pie. The lessons in the lower grades were less teacher-directed, but likewise focused on skills acquisition and basic content knowledge. The kindergartners were learning the letter “s” for the week, and the first graders were involved in learning centers that included activities such as counting money and making sentences.

The prevalence of objectivism implies an underlying assumption about curriculum and instruction. Palmer (1993) clarifies: “Objectivism assumes a sharp distinction between the knower and the objects to be known” (p. 27). In objectivism, the overarching perspective of truth is reduced to conceptual knowledge (Palmer, p. 27; also see Heidegger, 1962, pp. 256-273). Therefore, objectivism disregards a potential for mutuality between the learner and the curriculum. As Mayes (2001), Palmer (1993) and Shields (2005) conclude, objectivism does not support teachers in cultivating a sense of relationship with students and curriculum. However, as observed in the findings, and despite the prevalence of an objectivist-based climate, the teacher’s sense of vocational truth to some degree influences the meaning of curriculum, and her role in supporting a more authentic relationship between the student and curriculum.

Still, in an effort to help the student connect with the curriculum, teachers may revert to the opposite end of the spectrum, which is subjectivism. This realm frequently falls under the category of “relevance.” The earlier review of educational literature indicated numerous studies on subjectivism, i.e., relevance, in teacher development (e.g., Barab, Squire, & Dueber, 2000; Boyd, O’Reilly, Bucher, Fisher, & Morton, 2010). However, whether in teacher development, or with regard to the teacher’s role in supporting a connection between the student and curriculum,

the paradox with subjectivism is that it often leads to similar results as objectivism. As Palmer (1993) writes: “The impulse behind subjectivism may be anti-objectivist, but it takes us to the same end, a place where truth has no chance to weave us and our world together in a community of mutual change” (p. 55). Thus, the concept of relevance in the curriculum can be understood along with objectivism as opposite sides of the same coin.

In this regard, therefore, the teacher’s sense of personal truth can be interpreted as supporting the subjectivist principle of relevance in students’ lives. Some examples are: Rachel’s *Terrific Tigers*, the curriculum that enhances the “personal identity” of her students, provides tools for character and academic development; Laurel’s “doing what works” moves her to seek ways to match curriculum with the learning styles of students; Maria, who seeks to nurture the students’ curiosity, explores ways to deepen the relevance of curriculum, such as by developing a unit on countries across the globe to address the students’ interest in maps and passports.

Thus, objectivist and subjectivist ways of knowing function toward similar ends. Each in its own way perceives curriculum as an object that can be utilized for individual purposes. However, these perceptions do not need to be understood as negative. For example, Buber (1964) indicates the functional necessity of subject-object knowing. He writes: “Without the splendid condensations, reductions, generalizations, symbolizations that [subject-object knowing] turns out, the handing down of a ‘given’ order from generation to generation would be impossible” (p. 48). Still, education’s heavy-handed objectivist emphasis becomes problematic because it disregards the teacher’s truth, which is relational in nature. With the revised definition of authenticity, personal truth can be interpreted prior to the subject/object duality, as Buber would have it (described below), which is to say, in the light of a more fundamentally relational way of mediating between the student and curriculum.

Relational Knowing.

In keeping with the revised definition of teacher authenticity as a faith perspective, personal truth can be interpreted through a relational way of knowing the curriculum. This section briefly theorizes this relational way of knowing, primarily drawing from Martin Buber's dialogic philosophy. It then re-appropriates the teacher's truth in light of this theory. Implications are then considered.

In respect to the relational way of knowing, the teacher's capacity to support authentic connections between the student and curriculum can emerge. The curriculum becomes part of the teacher's relational wholeness with students and with the world of subject matter. The teacher, student, and curriculum become subjects, each with a unique voice, bound in a community of mutuality and change (Palmer, 1993). However, for this community to emerge within classroom practice, the teacher must have a relational way of knowing the curriculum that goes deeper than merely the relationship between subject (teacher or student) and object (curriculum). Friedman (1960), in reflecting on Buber's dialogic epistemology, clarifies the teacher's task:

What is necessary [for the teacher] is that [she] overcome the tendency to regard the subject-object relation as itself the primary reality. When this false objectification is done away with, the human studies [in this case, the teaching of curriculum] will be in the position to integrate the I-thou and the subject-object types of knowing. This implies the recognition that subject-object knowledge fulfills its true function insofar as it retains its symbolic quality of pointing back to the dialogical knowing from which it derives. (p. 172)

In the findings, this relational way of knowing is subtly presented, and is like a seed that, when watered, can mature as an actuality of classroom practice. For example, Olivia recognizes the need for reflection and planning; however, the excitement of sharing the experience of curriculum with her students is the “driving force” of her personal truth. She states: “That’s the part of teaching that I think is so rewarding. When you can reach that in a child, having them caught up in the moment, and so excited; it doesn’t get any better than that.” In the spontaneity of the moment, according to the relational way of knowing, she understands herself more authentically as a relational person who exists, as Palmer (1993) writes, in “bonds of Thouness” (p. 50) with the students and curriculum.

As another example, recall Beth’s encounter with the girl student at recess. Unexpectedly, Beth helped this student to deepen a personal connection between the concrete experience of her jacket and the abstract science lesson on heat. This encounter may in fact be a sign of, as Beth calls it, “God’s providential nature,” instructing her to challenge “how she thinks in her head teaching is supposed to be” so that she may become more fully the teacher she is meant to be. In other words, to become a teacher whose personal truth of selfless concern for “the greater good,” means deepening the bonds of relational intimacy between students and the world of curriculum.

Similar interpretations can likewise be made with each of the teachers. However, the critical point is that the teacher’s personal truth can be interpreted within a relational way of knowing the curriculum. In the objectivist-based educational climate, however, the teacher’s truth is neither applicable nor desirable. Still, this framework assumes that the teacher’s authenticity as a faith perspective does not completely wane from practice but rather continues to speak through the desire and intention to care. In support of this assumption, Mayes (2001)

writes: “[Ultimate concern] as the essence of true religiosity, is often the basis of [one’s decision to teach]” (p. 10). Therefore, Palmer (1999) points to the key implication for how the teachers might evolve in their capacity to understand personal truth within a relational way of knowing the curriculum. He writes:

We become teachers for reasons of the heart. / But many of us lose heart as time goes by [because of curricular approaches that deny the teacher’s truth]. / How can we take heart, alone and together, / *So we can give heart to our students and our world*, Which is what good teachers do. [Italics added] (p. 10)

Implied is the need to support the teacher in deepening the self-knowledge of her personal truth as relational in nature so that she can facilitate a community of mutuality and change with students and curriculum. Palmer (2003, p. 377) as well as other educational writers call this work, the spirituality of teaching (Dantley, 2005, p. 501; Mayes 2001, p. 6; Shields, 2005, pp. 610-611; Starratt & Guare, 1995, p. 191). Likewise, this work is an integral part of teacher authenticity. More specifically, the need for cultural conditions that support this authentic development is implied. This point is revisited in later sections, and also in the proposal about additional research questions, explained in the concluding chapter. The ontological structure builds on and completes the pre-thematic foundation of the teacher’s authenticity within this theoretical/ empirical framework.

The Ontological Structure

As noted, the integrative framework has defined teacher authenticity as a faith perspective, i.e., a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. Truth and meaning were posited as the mutually

dependent basis for the teacher's authentic process. Two pre-thematic structures have been presented. The existential structure interpreted the teacher's vocational truth as the concrete conduit of this faith perspective, and explained the teacher's temporality, which demonstrated that truth is process-oriented. The epistemological structure contextualized vocational truth within a relational way of knowing, framing the teacher's role as an authentic mediator between students and curriculum. The ontological structure completes the pre-thematic foundation of authenticity, and focuses on the intersecting realities between the teacher's relational nature and the human habit to reify this nature into concepts. Like the objectivism/subjectivism duality in the epistemological structure, the ontological structure points to a duality, as well, i.e., reification and nihilism.

The Reification-Nihilism Duality.

The findings indicate that the teacher understands personal truth as being abstract; this often contradicts the implicit sense that truth is emerging in process. Understanding the teacher's truth as essentially based in concepts indicates the human tendency to reify experience into abstractions. Buddhist philosophy elucidates this habit as the impure perception of "grasping at a delusory notion of 'I' and 'mine,' self and other, and all the concepts, ideas, desires, and activity that will sustain the false construction" (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 117). This habit is reinforced by the subtle belief that, as Garfield (1995) writes, "without an intrinsically real self, an intrinsically real world, and intrinsically real values, life has no real meaning" (p. 317; also see Nagarjuna, 1995, p. 72).

Olivia evidences this reifying habit with her re-entrance into teaching after a long absence to raise children, feeling tension between "glorifying teaching in her mind" and being

“master of none.” Rachel struggles to learn that, to be a woman for students, she must also be one for herself. Nancy is discouraged about her impatience with students; she appears to discount at times the significant personal growth in creating a classroom space “where everybody is breathing okay.” Beth is “trying to balance out” the human and teaching sides of classroom experience, which in turn emerges from “certain constructs about how she thinks teaching is supposed to be.” Laurel suggests that the personal truth of “doing what works” is diminished by the constraints of the profession, but does not acknowledge that her interpretation of these constraints may also be inhibiting her from “being as whole and as happy as she wants to be.” Maria, on the other hand, appears as an outlier, since no discernible pattern of tension was found; however, the self-perceived inability to help several needy students clearly indicates the reifying habit. She states: “They needed more care than we were able to provide. I feel like I failed them.” Implicit is Maria’s reifying sense of what it means to help students, which, as she suggests, is “a hard thing to let go of.”

In addition to this reifying habit, a more subtle dynamic arises. As Garfield (1995) suggests: “Without an intrinsically real self, an intrinsically real world, and intrinsically real values, *life has no real meaning*” [Italics added] (p. 317). This statement indicates the opposite side of the reification coin, i.e., nihilism. The underlying assumption is that, if the intrinsically real self is the basis of meaning, then without this intrinsic self, life has no meaning; therefore, nihilism is the result (see Garfield, p. 180; Loy, 2003, pp. 22 & 30; Shantideva, 2006, p. 63⁶).

Today, the prevalence of an objectivist educational climate poses an additional dynamic. The standards-based movement heightens an underlying societal pattern of objectification. This pattern, which suggests the uninhibited movement of modern day progress, is the underlying

⁶ Shantideva states: “All those who fail to understand/ The secret of [an intrinsically empty self], the greatest of all things, / Although they wish for joy and sorrow’s end, / Will wander to no purpose, uselessly.”

force of objectivism in today's educational climate. The theoretical framework explains this pattern, i.e., Tillich's (1952) democratic conformism (pp. 105 & 110-111); Heidegger's (1971d, p. 112; 1977, p. 27) uninhibited self-assertive production. Loy (2003) clarifies: "Our incredible technological power means we can do almost anything we want, yet the ironic consequence is we no longer know what we want. We postpone thinking about where we are all going so quickly" (pp. 166 & 180; also see Himes, 1995, pp. 53-54; Nietzsche, 2005, p. 67). Therefore, the teacher's tendency to reify personal truth can also result from this heightened context of objectivism, which powerfully yet subtly sends the message that the meaning of the teacher's truth is institutionally irrelevant.

Still, as Bohm (1986) suggests: "[O]nly large masses of human beings obey simple statistical rules [or objectivist societal patterns]. Individually they are far more subtle [and complex]" (p. 110). Therefore, with the revised definition of teacher authenticity as a faith process, personal truth can be interpreted in the light of a more fundamentally relational view of reality.

The Teacher's Relational Reality.

Recall that Rachel loosened her perception about "being a woman for others" to include herself. By taking care of herself, she can give more of herself to her students. In turn, she supports her process of authenticity by "being a woman for her students." In Rachel's authenticity, and that of the other teachers, the mutuality of giving and receiving that manifests through personal truth subtly indicates the relational view of reality within the teacher's faith process.

The teacher's authentic relational reality is implied in the following philosophies that define the giving/receiving mutuality. Heidegger's (1977) concept of worlding emphasizes expropriating and appropriating (p. 177), which was explained using the metaphor of the jazz ensemble. Buber's I-Thou philosophy is also analogous to this mutual movement. There is the distancing of the self from the other, recognizing the self and the other as uniquely separate; yet at the same time, the distancing act makes room for entering into authentic relationship (Friedman, 1960, p. 80; Kramer, 2003, p. 100). In Buddhist doctrine, Shantideva (2006) teaches: "All the joy the world contains/ Has come through wishing happiness for others./ All the misery the world contains/ Has come through wanting pleasure for oneself" (p. 127). Analogously, in Christian doctrine, Jesus states: "The one who holds onto life loses it; the one who gives life away sees it become everlasting life" (Himes, 1995, p. 77).

With the teacher's authentic relational reality, giving and receiving are mutual, resulting in the lines between giver and receiver becoming blurred. Rachel's personal truth, as with the other teachers' truths, essentially points to this giving/receiving union of the relational reality. For example, Rachel selflessly gives to students through the desire and intention of "being a woman for [them]." She reciprocally is affirmed in who she is as this relational being. The paradox is that not only by giving does she receive, but in receiving, she also gives. This mutuality is the relational reality of the teacher's authenticity. Dass and Gorman (1987) confirm: "What's real is the process in which we are all blessed. How much we can get back in giving! How much we can offer in the way we receive! Where does one begin, the other end" (p. 147)?

This ontological basis supports the relational epistemology in the previous section, and also speaks to the insubstantial, impermanent, i.e., temporal, nature of the teacher's vocational process, as described in the existential structure. However, as indicated above, the objectivist

educational climate regards the meaning of the teacher's truth as institutionally irrelevant. Still, it should be noted that the cultural conditions of this Catholic school help to offset some of the objectivist influence. Weekly intentions, i.e., the teacher and students join in a circle to express a lived wish of well-being for other people, and also daily prayers are part of the Church's teachings in their school lives. Integrating religion into the daily curriculum discourse is critically important to the teachers, as well. Beth epitomizes this sentiment: "Religion is such a central part of [a spiritual] life. If we're really going to be living [our spirituality], how can we have a job or go to school where religion cannot be an important part of that?" Clearly, some of the embedded theological structure within the school can help to offset some of the overly-weighted objectivism of the standards-based climate. Although this dissertation was not specifically designed to examine school and classroom culture, as it was not an ethnography, other cultural conditions could be gleaned from the data. They will briefly be considered later. The next section highlights key aspects of the two thematic structures.

Thematic Foundation of the Teacher's Authenticity

The thematic foundation points to the intentional activity of the teacher. Intention represents the teacher's active participation in the authenticity process, and refers to Buddhist karmic theory, which states: "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now" (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1993, p. 93; also see Garfield, 1995, p. 238). Applying this theory, intention is the responsibility of choosing to actively participate in teaching as a faith process that affirms a relational existence, and is the creativity of being able to participate in a unique expression of this process; intention also points to the teacher's willful direction of awakening to

life's relational sacredness, as revealed through teaching (e.g., see Friedman, 1960, p. 141; Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, pp. 34 & 138; Sogyal Rinpoche, pp. 92-98).

Intention provides the thematic foundation of the teacher's truth and meaning; and complements the pre-thematic structures, while being clearly linked to them. Intention influences (a) the teacher's personal truth, which is temporal by nature and is a lived, dynamic, continual process (existential structure); (b) the teacher's movement toward a relational way of supporting authentic connections between the student and curriculum, despite the prevalence of an objectivist-based educational climate (epistemological structure); and (c) the movement toward the recognition of the teacher's relational reality, despite the human habit to reify reality into concepts (ontological structure).

As a result, each of these pre-thematic structures is implied within the following discussions, and supports the thematic foundation, which comprises the spiritual and moral structures. The spiritual structure explores the teacher's capacity to choose teaching as a faith process despite the risk of uncertainty. The moral structure describes the teacher's responsible actions of care toward oneself and others, and importantly, extends previous discussions about supporting a faith perspective, i.e., a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world.

The Spiritual Structure

The spiritual structure speaks to the dynamics of the teacher's faith, i.e., ambiguity, risk, and courage. Ambiguity is the teacher's participation in the process of authenticity, never knowing the full implications of what teaching means in her life or the lives of students. In metaphorical terms, the ambiguity of authenticity is like the marriage vow (Himes, 1995, p. 85).

The married couple senses the importance of the meaning of the vows, but neither they nor anyone else can know what these vows will mean during the course of their marriage. The meaning of the vows is the couple's personal truth that is lived, and the couple participates, but to some degree is always uncertain about the full meaning of the vows. Hansen (1994) makes this same point. He writes that teachers know "everything and nothing" about teaching as a vocation, i.e., that "the teacher has a *sense* of vocation before she has *awareness* of what it implies for her life, and the meanings and commitments she will find" [Italics in original] (p. 274).

This criterion of ambiguity points to the dynamics of authenticity as a faith process. Ambiguity implies the unknown; what the life of teaching means, how personal truth unfolds, and how teaching affirms the teacher's relational nature are all essentially an ambiguous process. In light of the unknown, the teacher takes a risk in teaching. The risk is that teaching is intended to address the teacher's ultimate concern, which is to affirm her relational nature. Because of ambiguity, teaching cannot guarantee that the teacher's concern will be met, and teaching becomes a risk (e.g., see Tillich, 1957). However, to willingly take the risk also implies courage.

In the findings, the teacher risks the interplay of affirmations and disruptions to her intention to care, such as when a student does not respond favorably. With the revised definition of authenticity, the interplay implies much greater stakes than personal satisfaction or disappointment: i.e., the ebb and flow of the teacher's life speaks to the ambiguity, the risk, and the courage of the teacher's faith process.

The presented examples below articulate these dynamics of a faith perspective, i.e., ambiguity, risk, and courage. The interpretation of these examples imagines a deep spiritual connection between the findings and Christian theology, in particular "Temptation in the Desert"

(Lk 4:1-15, 1978) and “The Fall of Man” (Genesis 3:9, 1978, p. 4). Each of the examples articulates a different nuance of the connection. Although others examples from the findings can be equally applied, these examples most clearly express this connection. In addition, with the objectivist based climate, these examples should more accurately be understood as sacred seeds of potential, explained in the last section as needing a different kind, a more spiritual kind, of watering can to grow.

Examples of the Spiritual Structure.

As previously mentioned, Nancy has been confronting “aloofness” and “fear of judgment,” which characterized her earlier years of teaching. She describes a moment in the classroom’s prayer circle, in which she decides to hold hands for the first time with students as they prayed together. She states: “It took a lot for me. I felt very uncomfortable; [I was] so scared. Some of the students would be smirking, but I ignored it. I just refused to focus on it.”

One can say that Nancy’s story is analogous to “Temptation in the Desert” (Lk 4:1-15, 1978; also see Himes, 1995, pp. 25-28; Palmer, 1990, pp. 99-114). However, thinking in terms of analogies lessens the implications of what is really happening. Nancy is incarnating Jesus in the desert. Friedman (1960) confirms: “Without [the intersection of myth and reality], the person listens to the story of Lucifer and hushes it up in her own life” (p. 105).

Jesus refuses to separate himself from humanity, despite the devil’s temptation (Himes, 1995, pp. 26-28). Nancy likewise resists the inner temptation to remain distant and aloof in her teaching, despite her perception of the students’ smirks. In Buddhist karmic theory, Nancy is focusing on the inner source, i.e., self-defeating thinking, rather than the external trigger of the emotional and mental discomfort (e.g., see Dalai Lama, 1996, p. 98; 1999, p. 90; Makransky,

2007, p. 71). Neither resisting nor indulging this impulse, Nancy is more integrated, turning toward her personal truth of creating a more trusting classroom space. As a result, as Friedman (1960, p. 65) suggests, Nancy transfigures the impulse, even if momentarily.⁷ This point is confirmed in the conclusion of Nancy's story: "All of a sudden, it wasn't uncomfortable anymore."

Take as another example, Maria, whose self-perceived inability to help several needy students was mentioned in the discussion on reification. In her deep sadness that her efforts had failed to help the student in need, she states: "That's when you feel like you're at your end. Why am I doing this?" The findings indicated that Maria could be experiencing a spiritual calling of conscience. The interpretation of this calling can be deepened as Genesis 3:9 (1978): "The Lord God then called to the man [Adam] and asked him, 'Where are you?'" (p. 4; also see Kramer, 2003, pp. 98 & 131-132; Tillich, 1952, p. 51). If each person is like Adam, then Jesus, whose "life flows in our veins" (Himes, 1995, p. 125), is constantly challenging us to respond to questions about authentic meaning. Although Adam hides from this challenge in anguish and fear, Buber proposes an authentic alternative, which is also the course that Maria chooses. Kramer (2003) clarifies Buber's response to this passage, and writes:

Adam mistook God's original intention in creation. Adam didn't realize that he had to work toward perfecting the image of God placed inside him. Buber came to recognize in these verses his life purpose. And not just his alone. He understood this to be the task of all people who recognize God's address to them. The task is to become a partner *with* God in creation. [Italics in original] (p. 131)

⁷ Himes (1995) writes: "The devil has only one card to play, and if it does not work now, the devil will play it later in the game" (p. 28).

The passage suggests that the authentically meaningful life requires the courage to risk answering God's question affirmatively. In Maria's example, she is being called toward deep humility, accepting vulnerability as intrinsic to the authentic helping act. As she concludes: "You pray on it. You reflect on it. You know that you can't do anything beyond that. That's the hardest part of this: you're dealing with people, not some abstract problem."

Rachel provides an additional example. Rachel's personal truth is for students "to carry with them, beyond first grade, little suitcases, figuratively, that are full of knowledge and skills, as well as character traits." She questions herself, however: "I'm just a little piece of this huge puzzle in the whole world. Because I can only control so much, it's like: 'Is this all worth it?' 'How much does it matter in the end?'" These self-questions can be interpreted as signs of Rachel's attunement to the ambiguity of God's challenge to her. To paraphrase Dass and Gorman (1987):

Rachel says that she's going to help her students, but what does that really mean? It turns out to be an endless series of questions. That's who the students are; they are those questions. Part of her has become those questions, and Rachel's service is to explore them and awaken through them. (p. 222)

Rachel's challenge in the ambiguity of God's address is to live the questions (also see Palmer, 1999). Additionally, she must also choose the courage to risk living them, because otherwise, the questions can become a source of discouragement and burnout. Dass and Gorman (1987) clarify the choice that is implicit throughout the ambiguity of teacher authenticity: "We can be worn out by uncertainty, or find a way to open to the ambiguity, embrace it, work with it, be moved and inspired by it... and thereby come closer to the very heart of service" (p. 202).

Rachel chooses to courageously accept the ambiguity as an inevitable part of the authenticity process, despite the sense of risk (i.e., “Is it all worth it?”). She states:

I let the worries go as prayers, and put the things that I can’t control into God’s hands, hoping that He can help the students and their families. I also keep reminding myself: ‘Today is what counts. I can’t predict everything that’s going to happen to me or to every child for the rest of their lives.’ I bring myself back to the present.

The Moral Structure

Within the spiritual structure, the dynamics of ambiguity, risk, and courage are highlighted as inherently part of the faith in teacher authenticity. The moral structure completes the thematic foundation of the integrative framework, and delineates the responsible actions of the teacher toward herself and students. These actions are moral because they support a faith perspective, and speak to the relational sacredness of teaching. This section also extends earlier discussions about the institutional need to support the teacher’s authenticity, thus foreshadowing implications in the concluding chapter.

The Moral Structure toward Students.

The findings indicated that teachers act with a belief in the intrinsic goodness of each student, even though they may not accept all of the student’s choices, often relating to behavioral issues. Nancy expresses the sentiment of the group, stating that “[the students] are people to be respected, and even though there are behaviors that she doesn’t like, she has always been able to separate the child from the behavior.” According to the Buddhist tradition, the teachers “discriminate between the action and agent” (Dalia Lama, 1999, p. 106); with the Christian

tradition, the teachers believe that the student is endowed with God's grace, thus making any questions about his or her intrinsic worth as irrelevant (Merton, 1961, pp. 74-75).

In addition, the findings indicated that the teachers recognize each particular student as a unique person; tailor responses to meet the unique needs and circumstances of each one; and aim to affirm each student's potential to grow. This point was most clearly presented in the example of Rachel's student who, in the lunchroom, finally took responsibility for his inappropriate behavior. Leading up to and throughout this incident, Rachel "showed him compassion and stuck with him," even though affirming his potential to make better choices was complex and challenging.

With the revised definition of authenticity as a faith process, this finding points to Buber's (1958) "normative limitation" in the teacher and student relationship; and is interpreted as a seed of potential toward what Buber had intended. The normative limitation proposes that the main educational task is to awaken in each student the I-Thou relationship with the teacher, other people, and the world of curriculum (Buber, 1958, pp. 131-132; also see Anderson & Cissna, 1997, pp. 37-42; Friedman, 1960, pp. 82 & 180-183; Kramer, 2003, pp. 191-194). While this integrative framework interprets the teacher's deepest intuitive meaning in the light of proposals as Buber's, one can logically reason that the objectivist-based climate strongly inhibits them. The reason is that the prevalent climate largely diminishes the teacher's personal truth and instead emphasizes technical training (Palmer, 2008, p. 13; Shields, 2005, pp. 611-612). Accordingly, the profession, which is replete with huge deterrents, meets the teacher, as previously suggested in the epistemological and ontological structures.

This point leads to the importance of actions (i.e., by the self, the community, and the profession) that support the teacher in her authenticity. The integrative framework therefore concludes with a discussion on the moral structure toward the teachers themselves.

The Moral Structure toward Teachers Themselves.

The findings suggest that personal qualities support the teachers in the authenticity process. For example, Laurel believes that “difficult students have taught her a lot.” She continues: “Every time that I had to work harder because a student was pushing me, it made me a better teacher.” With the revised definition of authenticity, Laurel’s attitude speaks to the Buddhist concept of patience, which is as Shantideva (2006) teaches: “My enemies [i.e., any person who challenges our self-centered habits] are helpers in my Bodhisattva [spiritual awakening] work, and therefore they should be a joy to me” (p. 92; also see Dalia Lama, 1999, p. 107; Pelden, 2007, pp. 220-224). Laurel’s attitude also implies the Christian concept of joy, which proposes that our true mission is service to God, even though the joy of serving God does not always feel good (Himes, 1995, p. 40; Merton, 1961, p. 259).

As another example, recall that Maria states: “If you’re giving everybody the best that you can each day, that’s all you can do. You move on and improve on what you’ve learned.” Maria implies an acceptance of her humanity, which Himes (1995) notes, is the accepting of one’s limitations in time, energy, ability, and intelligence (p. 108). Through acceptance, Maria clearly depicts an attitude of self-forgiveness. Smith (1998) elaborates:

To acknowledge that as a human being most of our responses are incomplete and partial is to admit that our growth is unfinished. We have been placed on this earth to grow in an

open-ended way, not to be pure. Forgiveness was never divine, and has always arisen from the innocence of heart which gives permission to be fallible. (pp. 68-69)

The findings also point to the cultural conditions that support the teachers in their authenticity. As discussed earlier, some of the theological structures within the school help to offset some of the overly-weighted objectivism of the standards-based climate. Adding to this discussion, collegial actions that support the teacher's authenticity were also identified. For example, recall that the principal demonstrated compassion toward Olivia, who, in re-acclimating herself to classroom life, is now seeing the "long road ahead" and allowing herself the necessary time to learn many new approaches. As another example, Beth, as the first year teacher, describes many supportive actions by her colleagues. She states: "They understand what it's like to be in my shoes, and try to make things as easy as they can for me, each in their own way."

The findings speculated that collegial support is caring not only for its own sake but also for the shared underlying belief that "our care for others is our care for ourselves, a deep honoring of the Being we all share" (Levine, 1987, p. 48). This point is substantiated by Buber's (1958, p. 45) concept of the Central Thou, which is defined as "the group's spirit of mutuality that is [built up out of] a common task or dynamic connection through which a community forms" (Kramer, 2003, pp. 81-82). With the revised definition of authenticity, the dynamic connection that binds collegial actions is most deeply rooted in the shared faith that the teacher can awaken *through* teaching the relational sacredness *of* teaching.

Still, the same challenge is posed as with the previous discussion about Buber's normative limitation; in other words, the objectivist-based climate, with its epistemological and ontological assumptions, under-nourishes the moral structure from taking root more firmly.

Thus, if Palmer's (1993) assertion is correct, i.e., "the transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher" (p. 107), then a different kind of watering can is necessary to grow the seeds of potential that were identified in this integrative framework. This point will be briefly elaborated as this chapter concludes.

Conclusion

This chapter culminated the vision of this dissertation: i.e., to integrate the theoretical and empirical resources, and develop a framework that supports the significant but under-acknowledged educational works in this area. Teacher authenticity was re-defined as a faith perspective, i.e., a trust that teaching can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. Rather than being merely psychological or social, the truth and meaning of the teacher's faith was proposed at the level of being and was explained through the pre-thematic and thematic foundations.

The pre-thematic foundation consisted of the existential, epistemological, and ontological structures. The existential structure interpreted the teacher's vocational truth as the concrete, lived, and dynamic conduit of a faith process, and explained the teacher's temporality, which demonstrated that truth is process-oriented. The epistemological structure contextualized vocational truth within a relational way of knowing, framing the teacher's role in support of authentic connections between the student and curriculum. The ontological structure completed the pre-thematic foundation of authenticity, and focused on the intersecting realities between the teacher's relational nature and the human habit to reify this nature into concepts.

The thematic foundation consisted of the spiritual and moral structures. The spiritual structure highlighted the dynamics of ambiguity, risk, and courage, which are inherent to faith in

the teacher's authenticity. The moral structure completed the thematic foundation by delineating the responsible actions of the teacher toward herself and students, i.e., actions that speak to the relational sacredness of teaching. Furthermore, discussions included throughout the framework highlighted the institutional need to support teacher authenticity, thus foreshadowing implications in the concluding chapter.

The key insight emerging from these discussions is that the teacher's perceptions and experiences are seeds of sacred potential. These seeds can blossom with the right kind of watering can, one that nourishes rather than reduces the teacher's longing to connect to a deeper reality (e.g., see Dantley, 2005; Mayes, 2001; Palmer, 2003; Starratt & Guare, 1995). This watering can would encourage the teachers to explore the hidden truth that, as Remen (1999) writes, "[m]ost of us live far more meaningful lives than we realize" (p. 47; also see Palmer, 1999, pp. 6-8). The watering can would also support the teacher in examining questions such as those by Simmer-Brown (1999): "What is it that you have been reluctant to engage with, in yourself, in your [teaching], in the world? Where is it that you need to go [in your practice] to grow more openly to your [authenticity]" (p112)? Additionally, this watering can would even challenge and support teachers in reflecting deeply upon inquiries like the one that Dantley (2005) poses: "What if one were to discover the source of one's ethical identity as merely obedience to the set of loyalty norms that the schooling institution demands to do one's job correctly" (p. 504; also see Palmer, 1999, pp. 9-10)?

To summarize, what is extraordinary about these teachers – and perhaps teachers in general – is not how much technical competence and knowledge they have to deliver the standards curriculum. Rather, the extraordinary is already tucked deep inside the ordinary of their daily lives, as seeds of potential in their deepest mission and purpose for teaching,

universally shared among them but uniquely expressed through them. With imagination, one can begin to entertain and perhaps even to realize the ordinary as what it truly is: extraordinary. This integrative framework hopefully contributes some insight to support this point.

Chapter Seven: Researcher as Authentic Learner

This chapter is a response to the question: “What does it mean for the researcher to engage as an authentic learner throughout the research process?” In the positionality statement, I mentioned that the underlying theme of my personal and professional growth has been the question: “What does it mean to be authentic?” I call this theme my “ontological” question, i.e., the question that matters most deeply to me. In turn, the main research question, “What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?” represents an outgrowth of this ontological question. Because the research question is somewhat autobiographical, this chapter turns the inquiry back to my own growth as an emerging scholar. Before I respond to the question, however, several key points need to be clarified in order to provide an appropriate context for the reader.

First, this chapter provides an intimately philosophical and psychological firsthand perspective about authentic learning. My data sources are extensive reflective journaling, as well as regular meditative practices and counseling sessions, which supported an in-depth exploration into my change process. These were all necessary, because they exposed some of the self-clinging tendencies that are normally elusive. In essence, my goal has always been to be as “whole-hearted” and “open-minded” (Horney, 1945, pp. 163 & 183) as possible in my educational work. Therefore, this deep self-inquiry has been necessary. Smith (2010) elaborates this point:

The maze of [authentic learning] is often lengthy and tedious because unconscious forces of mind are frequently controlling our effort. Though our intentions are well meaning, most of our [authentic] path is contained and controlled by what we do not see. We take ourselves to be someone, and we do so in the unseen areas of our psyche where that

someone cannot be challenged, [where] the self plays out its agenda and drives our effort.
(pp. 95-96)

Second, understanding myself as an authentic learner includes all aspects of the research process. These deliberations explore psychological and philosophical reflections of my inner experience, including the construction of the theoretical framework, design and implementation of the study, interactions with teachers and committee members, engaging in the data analysis, and writing-up the findings.

Building on this point, there is no ontological divide between me as a researcher and as a person. I do not assume any difference in understanding myself as an authentic learner throughout the research process and exploring my life and humanity. This point follows the Buddhist principle of karma. Sogyal Rinpoche (1993) elaborates: “As Buddha said, ‘What you are is what you have been, and what you will be is what you do now’” (p. 93). Therefore, the following discussions include self-inquiries outside of the research process, which in turn illuminate aspects of my authentic learning as a researcher.

This chapter is organized with the same structures as the integrative framework. The discussion begins with my own authenticity, and then explores existential, epistemological, ontological, spiritual, and moral structures of being an authentic learner. Some of the basic themes from the integrative framework are considered, but because this self-reflection draws from firsthand perceptions and experiences, I bring to light dynamics of authenticity that were not evident when studying the teachers. As a result, the dynamics within the following discussions are different in content from the previous findings.

Authenticity

In the previous chapter, I imagined the teachers' faith as not being bound by their religious concepts but rather as speaking to their most profound possibilities as humans who have chosen to teach. I have learned that for me as a researcher, this same realization of faith applies, as well. Like with God's address to Adam, I feel that the research process has been a calling for me to take another step forward in answering the question: "Where are you?" As Himes (1995) writes: "The world has never had you and it does need you or God would not have made you, and so you have to discover the unique ways in which you can give yourself in service to the world" (p.59). My struggles as a learner have moved me to contemplate more deeply how this research process is an act of giving to the world of education, and in turn, is an act of affirming God's mission and purpose for me as an emerging scholar. This essentially is my faith process.

Reflecting on my faith in this research points to Heidegger's (1962) resoluteness, interpreted in the theoretical framework as being one's authentic self not for the sake of separating oneself but for realizing one's deep connection to others. Being resolute in my research means a re-membering of Christ's mystical body, or more plainly stated, a raising to consciousness the life-giving potential that is most fundamentally at work in a teacher's aspirations. This is integral to my faith as a researcher.

In defining my faith process, and throughout this research, a conscious deliberation evolved about personal integrity, explained by Remen (2000) as "the [alignment] between our authentic values and how we live our lives" (p. 177). This deliberation led to an understanding that authentic learning is more than just examining the externals of the research process, but also

is an internal examination about what helps and hinders my capacity to experience the process more fully and openly. Metaphors such as feeling “boxed-in” and “stuck” were initially stressful cues to me, and essentially this stress forced me to turn inward to the areas that were preventing me from being more open-minded and non-judgmental in the research. Although I explore these cues later, for now, they were a significant factor and a catalyst to the psychological aspect of my authenticity as a learner, i.e., of my trust that research can awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of self and others.

In this faith process, moreover, I have learned that the goal of my research is spiritual in nature, but that the psychological work on myself is an ongoing component that supports the spiritual. As applied to my own faith as a researcher, my psychological growth compelled me to look at the ingrained habits that interfered with my willingness to change. To clarify this psychological component, I looked at Levine’s (1995) use of the Greek mythological character Narcissus, noted in later discussions, to express the Buddhist concept of the egoic tendency.

Levine writes:

Narcissus is that part of the mind which thinks about itself. He is always inventing someone to be, and is seldom patient. Narcissus is the overindulged architect of the ever-indulged self-image. (p. 99)

Levine (1995) takes it a next step by suggesting that Narcissus is that part of all of us that fixates on oneself not because of arrogance or self-grandeur, although it may appear that way at times. Instead, Narcissus fixates because of a fearful tendency of being vulnerable, and therefore is resistant to changing old habits, as he truly believes that doing so would make him unreal. But the key, as Levine states, is not to disparage Narcissus but to help him develop a wiser perspective toward living. As Levine writes: “You have to embrace Narcissus before you can

embrace the Beloved, [e.g., God or Buddha-nature]" (p. 103); in other words, a healthy ego is critical to the spiritual journey. The remaining discussions help to elaborate this point of the connection between my psychological and spiritual growth.

Existential Structure

During the data analysis, I wondered about the basis of my own calling as an emerging scholar. "What is it about this study that resonates most deeply for me?" This question challenged me, but I knew that it was necessary to contemplate. At times, I would meditate on it, and on occasion would feel inspired and motivated; other times, there was confusion and uncertainty. I would remind myself, as Levine (1987) states, not to "second-guess God" but to trust "don't know" and stay open to the process (p. 46). Answers to my question never came in logical or linear fashion, but by the time I wrote the last paragraph of the previous chapter, i.e., that the extraordinary is already tucked inside the ordinary of teachers' daily lives, I felt clarity about the unfolding of my vocation as an educational researcher.

A brief autobiographical sketch illuminates this point and its implications for me as an authentic researcher. As an academic student, which included the construction of the theoretical framework, I believed that my intellectual indulgence into ideas represented authentic learning. I now realize that it was a way of isolating myself, like fearful Narcissus who reaches into the idols of the self-clinging mind for salvation rather than venturing more intimately into his humanity for one that is God-given. Moreover, I have come to recognize that my vocation is not, as Palmer (1990, pp. 31 & 79-98) indicates, a separation from humanity but instead is a movement of accepting and working with fallibility while nurturing a potential for goodness, i.e.,

a movement which in turn characterizes and connects us all as humans (Dalai Lama, 1999; Makransky, 2007, p. 113).

In the data analysis, as I pondered the teachers' struggles but also listened to their aspiration to be of service, I began to feel a dim but frequently vibrating sense: "Come down and put your feet squarely on the ground and embrace your humanity and theirs." I felt a broadening of perspective, which penetrated into the meaning of theological words that I had heard somewhat superficially before.

For example, Himes (1995) suggests that "the essence of the first temptation is to reject the goodness of creatureliness: i.e., be God or don't be at all!" He then concludes: "And alas, we fall for that temptation" (pp. 25-26). I now pondered the question: "How have I fallen for this temptation, and what needs to change within me to be more authentic as a person, an educator, and a researcher?" The answer was becoming clearer. As Paul (2 Philippians 6-7) writes: "His state was divine, yet He did not cling to His equality with God but assumed the condition of a servant, becoming human as all other humans" (1978, p. 989). To be more authentic, I now recognize with a bit more clarity that my path is to do like Jesus did: i.e., to accept being human as fundamentally good, which also means accepting and working with my human imperfection and limitation.

With this acceptance, I began to feel myself more closely connected with the humanity of the teachers. In the solitude of months of data analysis, I had an uncanny sense that we were somehow together, each in a unique way, as a community of beings who were fundamentally aiming for the same truth. I then understood Augustine's (1960) words anew:

See what Scripture delivers and pronounces in only one way, ‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth.’ Is not this statement understood in many ways, not by deceit of error but by various kinds of true interpretations? (p. 359)

In the Buddhist theology, perhaps we are all together, in that being involved in education is a unique bodhisattva path, i.e., a path of embodying the spirit of selflessness in action (e.g., Makransky, 2007, pp. 229–231).

My tendency to think philosophically points to the calling that not only am I sensing education as my chosen path of awakening a deeper reality of connection, but also that my vocation is to help teachers find this fundamental sense within themselves, as well. I have a renewed appreciation for the work of the educational thinkers and researchers in the literature review, especially the work of Parker Palmer, whose words and mission now clearly connect with my own purpose. Palmer (1999) writes:

We become teachers for reasons of the heart/ But many of us lose heart as time goes by./
How can we take heart, alone and together,/ So we can give heart to our students and our
world,/ Which is what good teachers do. (p. 10)

Epistemological Structure

As I entered this study, I knew that empirical research and philosophy could go together. Since then, I have learned some important lessons. The challenges that emerged pointed me in the direction of authentic learning as a researcher.

The first challenge was a question: “What does it mean to be an empirical researcher and a philosopher during the same process?” I came to conclude that empirical research and philosophy function differently. Empirical speaks to Buber’s (1958) “I-It” knowing (i.e., subject-

object duality). Philosophical speaks to Buber's "I-Thou" dimension. However, I also concluded that being a researcher/philosopher is important, because they go hand in hand. Philosophy brings in the larger questions about the profound meaning of an empirical study (Friedman, 1960, p. 172). From these two conclusions, an important third consideration emerged, which I framed as a question: "As a researcher, how prepared am I to turn from speaking I-It to speaking I-Thou?" This question permeated my reflections during the research.

The question became most evident when interacting with the teachers. I noticed how difficult it was for me to meet them as more than just research participants in *my* study but rather and more basically as fellow people. This led me to question: "What does it mean for me to play the role of researcher, and they the role of teacher/study participant, but not to forget that, although roles are important, they do not define our most fundamental reality?" Dass and Gorman (1987) support this reflection: "At one level there *are* forms [e.g., roles]. It's just that there are other levels as well. As we embrace them all, we find ourselves able to enter forms without being entrapped by them" [Italics in original] (p. 148).

The metaphor of entrapment is appropriate, because it speaks to my challenge of being open-minded and more fully present as a researcher. I sometimes felt "boxed-in" because I identified myself so strongly with my role as a researcher and their role as my study participants. Levine (1982) summarizes my concern:

If we pay close attention, we notice that whenever we say 'I am this,' or 'I am that,' there is to some degree a feeling of being an impostor. That whenever the 'I am' of just being is attached to this or that, there is a feeling of falsity, of incompleteness, of somehow not quite telling the whole truth. (p. 17)

Even with regular meditation practice, intended to help loosen my identification with “this” and “that” and to see them as a relative truth (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987; Levine, 2005), my authentic learning throughout this research process could not be rushed. As explained in the next section, to transform many years of social conditioning and mental habit is an ongoing process; in other words, as Buddhist theory suggests, one most likely cannot undo a lifetime or more of karmic accumulations within a few months (e.g., see H.H. Dalia Lama, 2000, pp. 43-51).

Two experiences during the research process deepened my experiential and intuitive sense about what it means for me as a researcher to be more open-minded and present, i.e., as Levine (1987, 1995) suggests, to perceive the teacher as a subject of the heart instead of an object of the mind. Ironically, both of these experiences happened outside of my interactions with the teachers, but illuminated the implications for my authentic learning during the study. The first occurred in the parking lot, as I reviewed notes before heading into the school to conduct an interview. Off to the side, I observed a group of children playing at recess time. After observing for a few minutes, my attention shifted inward. I realized that this all seemed familiar to me, as if I had already seen this recess a thousand times before. Nothing uncanny or wondrous spoke to me during the observation. Instead of bearing witness to a unique, unrepeatable moment, I was “stuck” inside my concepts, which are always rooted in the past. Friedman (1960) explains this difference using Buber’s I-Thou/I-It pairing:

Real presentness cannot be identified with the I, for the I does not exist in itself but only in relation to a Thou or an It. Presentness exists, not *in* but *between* the I and the Thou. I-It, on the other hand, is always past, always already become, and this means that the I of the I-It relation is as much a part of the past as the object which it knows. (p. 168)

Neither Friedman nor Buber (1964, p. 48) deny the functional necessity and inevitability of the basic word pair I-It. Empirical research is rooted in this basic word pair, i.e., the subject-object duality is needed for an empirical investigation. However, in this moment, I felt Buber's (1958) words penetrate deep within: "The I is real in virtue of its sharing in [I-Thou] reality. The fuller its sharing, the more real it becomes" (p. 63). This dawning led me to question: "How authentic is my knowledge as a researcher if I do not, from time to time, let my Narcissus turn away from a self-constructed reality to a fuller reality that 'neither belongs to [me] nor merely lies outside [of me] (Buber, p. 63)?"

With that question, the second experience provided me an epiphany-like moment into what it means to cut through, as Buddhism suggests, conceptual designations and to see them as a relative truth (Garfield, 1995, pp. 304-305). This experience happened outside of the research setting, in the front yard of my house with my two-year old son. It was a cold morning. The frigid air was unpleasant. Thoughts streamed through my mind: "This is uncomfortable." "I don't like the cold." "I prefer to go inside where it is warm." As these thoughts occurred, I also observed my son's reaction, which was pure enjoyment. Like with the previous example, an uncanny sense came over me. I realized that, even though we both stood outside in the cold morning air, we each experienced it very differently. My son most likely felt the physical sensations of the cold air, as did I, but unlike me, he was open to the experience, not labeling or judging it but rather accepting it as a part of reality in the moment.

I then recognized a deep level of possibility in my process of authentic learning. This experience offered me a glimpse into how powerfully concepts can filter my way of knowing throughout the research process. The issue for me was not whether concepts exist, because on a relative level they do. Instead, the deep inquiry was to sense how "entrapped" I was in a

conceptual way of knowing to the exclusion of other dimensions of knowing. My readiness to turn from I-It to I-Thou influenced my sense of presentness and open-mindedness in meeting the teachers not just as *my* study participants but more fundamentally as fellow people. This readiness also spoke to my tendency as a philosopher and researcher, and how authentically I could combine these two to sense a profound, deeply human meaning in this study.

Ontological Structure

I mentioned in the previous discussion that my sense of being boxed-in and stuck resulted from an over-identification of who I am with “this” and “that.” I also indicated how over-identification affected my way of knowing the research process more authentically. However, an authentic way of knowing needs to be supported by an authentic view of reality. The two go hand in hand. In education, for example, a great deal of discussion centers on epistemology. As a researcher/philosopher, my belief is that how we come to know (i.e., epistemology) is always colored by who we think we are (i.e., ontology). Thus, the epistemological is always rooted in an ontological attitude, whether this is recognized or not, and as a result, I felt that an authentic way of knowing needs to be supported by an authentic view of reality.

Through this research, I realized that my authentic learning involved an honest investigation, i.e., experiential and reflective, into the hindrances that diminish a person’s ability to have a more open view of reality. These hindrances are defined in Buddhism essentially as “disruptions of mind and blocks to the heart... difficult energies” (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 38) that we all experience. I understand them as the root basis of the thinking and emotional patterns that inhibit an authentic learning process. Also in Buddhism, the hindrances often create

a distorted view of reality, i.e., the trigger of mental and emotional reactions is often mistakenly perceived as being their source (Dalia Lama, 1999, p. 90; Makransky, 2007, p. 71).

As an example of the hindrances, I think back to my group interview. Being a new experience, my uncertainty about facilitating the meeting made me feel anxious and doubtful. However, after reviewing the audio recording, I realized that my inward perception did not match the calm and thoughtful tone in my voice. If I had not reviewed the tape, I would have continued to believe that my anxiety and doubt were obvious to the teachers as opposed to being a misperception on my part. In this epiphany moment, I realized how my hindrances made me project and color a certain view about myself and the reality of the situation. This insight led to my awareness that mental and emotional hindrances can be a psychological component of mind training along the spiritual path. Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) write:

When we examine our own minds, we will inevitably encounter the root forces of greed, fear, prejudice, hatred, and desire, [which can] become an opportunity for us. They raise central questions for anyone who undertakes a spiritual life. Is there some way that we can live with these forces constructively and wisely? Is there a skillful way to work with these energies? (p. 38)

To embark upon my own skillful path of working with the hindrances, I discovered that mindfulness and cognitive therapy were the most helpful. Mindfulness increases awareness of (a) sensory perceptions that trigger a subtle feeling of (b) desire, aversion, or indifference, which fuel (c) cognitive and emotional habits that make-up the story of I, me, and mine (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, pp. 78-79). Cognitive therapy deconstructs (a) the activating event that triggers (b) an automatic, distorted thought (i.e., hindrance), which is easily overlooked because of ingrained habit, and leads to (c) an emotional and cognitive reaction, misperceived as being

intrinsically real instead of the outcome of unnoticed thought patterns (Burns, 1999 & 2006; Clark & Beck, 2012; Ellis, 2001; Leahy, 2010). The approaches within both of these processes helped me to develop a greater clarity of mind. In turn, this mind training has supported my capacity to know, i.e., experientially and reflectively, what it means to be more open-minded and non-judgmental as an educational researcher.

Spiritual Structure

As I wrote the findings chapters, I reflected on the question: “What does it mean to write with my own voice as an emerging scholar?” Almost twenty years ago, I was dealing with the same question, but as a drummer, asking what it means to express my own musical voice. The same sense of being boxed-in and stuck was also prevalent then. Although I progressed technically in my musical skills, I often felt that something was incomplete about my drumming experiences. I imitated, analyzed and synthesized other people’s styles, but usually felt that my authentic self was missing in my musical voice. Likewise, during the past years as an academic, I believe that my learning has followed a similar path, opting for intellectually accurate analyses/syntheses of other people’s work. Although the teacher in me knows that this process is natural, my hindrances could also be restricting me. I was determined to explore this possibility. As I discovered, the exploration required my taking the risk to leap into the unknown. My resolve to do this presents the spiritual structure of my authentic learning. At the heart of this process, I struggled with two interdependent themes: worthiness and failure. Inquiry into these themes strengthened me as a person, and helped me to realize with more clarity my mission and purpose as an educational researcher. I gained insights, but these gains were hard won. They often pointed to a meeting with the shadow, i.e., the unflattering parts of ourselves that are

pushed into unconsciousness (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 188; Jung, 1977, p. 20; Smith, 1998, pp. 45-53).

My struggle with worthiness is based on Merton's (1961) observation: "The root of Christian love is the belief that one is loved by God irrespective of worth." Merton then concludes: "The discovery that worthiness is of no special consequence is a true liberation of the spirit" (p. 75). The challenge of this insight became increasingly evident during my write-up of the findings. As I discovered, a key to unlock its profound meaning was hidden inside a fear of failure, which I needed to honestly exam.

First, I learned that fear of failure is rooted in a belief that can be summarized as a mathematical equation: achievement equals worth. Burns (1999) writes that there is a silent assumption that "worth as a human being is proportional to what one has achieved in one's life" (p. 327). I began to discover its powerful influence within me most prevalently during several occurrences of writer's block.

During a writer's block, I reflected and meditated. I reviewed the Taoist "wui wei" (Chuang Tzu, pp. 99-102; Lao Tzu, 1988, p. 43), i.e., active surrender, from the theoretical framework. I recognized a depth of wui wei in Palmer's (1990) story about Abba Felix, the second century desert father, drawn into silence by his students, who wanted words of mastery, control, and ownership instead of "words of truth, of relatedness with reality" (p. 42). I realized that my unrealistic view about worthiness compelled me to fixate on outcomes, and to attempt to control the writing process rather than to harmonize myself with its living, unpredictable flow. My intentions were essentially being governed by a fearful Narcissus, and because of this, I was drawn into a prolonged silence, like Abba Felix.

In silence, however, I learned to listen for a grace that could move me forward. I realized a felt sense in Levine's (1995) words: "Even though you may think that God is in control, he is not! No one is in control – be like God, let go of control" (p. 275). With mindfulness practice and cognitive therapy, I involved myself in a "cope don't mope" (Burns, 1999; Leahy, 2010) approach. Words that resonated most deeply for me no longer related to an intellectual indulgence but rather a guiding truth to be courageously examined here and now during the days of writer's block.

I also learned that fear of failure is rooted in another belief that can be summarized as a mathematical equation: approval equals worth (Burns, 1999, p. 290-291). It was not the possibility of disapproval that was the core problem, but rather the *fear* of disapproval that hindered me. This distinction was an essential insight in becoming unblocked. As Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) write:

When we investigate the fear of being judged, of not being accepted, we see that it does not have to do primarily with other people; instead it has to do with our own unwillingness to experience certain of our feelings and emotions. It is we who are judging ourselves, not accepting ourselves, not loving ourselves. (p. 126)

As I reflected and meditated on this notion, I heard Merton's (1961) words with greater clarity, i.e., that the question of human worth is irrelevant. A subtle shift occurred within me and provided relief from the burden of this question, and when it did, I was being more honest with myself. In turn, this fear loosened its grip on me, and the writer's block began to dissipate. Thus, through my struggles with the misperception of worthiness and fear of failure, I gained some wisdom into what it means to be an authentic learner as a researcher. My struggles revealed a

wellspring of courage, courage to risk the unknown. As a result, I emerged with a more integrated sense of self-knowledge and connection with the research process.

Moral Structure

Throughout the research process, I gradually came to realize that this empirical study was also a self-study into what it means to be authentic in my purpose, knowledge, and practice, and concluded that being an educational researcher is fundamentally a spiritual journey. This self-study has been a step forward in what Dass and Gorman (1987) suggest as “a balance in which we can work within our separateness while resting in the greater unity which lies beyond it” (p. 229). However, if research is essentially a spiritual activity, then it must be deeply moral, as well. As an educational researcher, I now realize my moral question as being: “How can I help to increase the life-giving capacities and decrease the life-depleting habits that we all bring, by birthright as human beings, to the educational setting?” Likewise, I understand that my moral question is in reverence of, as the Dalai Lama (1999) observes, the truth that “we all naturally desire happiness and not to suffer” (p. 49). In addition, I more clearly discern this moral question as fundamentally a spiritual one, as well, based on the “eros/agape” (Tillich, 1957) belief that, as Levine (1987) writes: “Our care for others is also our care of ourselves, a deep honoring of the Being that we all share” (p. 48).

Conclusion

When I designed this study, my fundamental belief was that “the transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher” (Palmer, 1993, p. 107). I indicated that a lack of attention is given to the inner life of the teacher. In turn, my research question, i.e.,

“What is teacher authenticity?” is a stepping stone in my process of helping teachers to realize a more integrated teaching life, i.e., spiritually, emotionally, and morally. However, I now propose a similar question about researchers themselves: “What can be done to support researchers in developing their own authentic paths of learning?” I now believe that, when the deep mission and purpose of what we as researchers do is recognized, then the work of educational research can take on another dimension. Rather than just being academic work, the research brings together the spiritual, emotional, and moral significance, as well.

This reflection compels me to consider my connection to the educational research community, and also to the community of humankind that researchers and teachers generally share, a community that perhaps is focused on the same basic question: “How can I help?” Thus, as I conclude the chapter with this proposition, I also suggest, as I have learned, that research provides the curriculum for nurturing the question in each of us. In turn, my hope is that this reflection provided an honest and heartfelt glimpse into how I am living this question and curriculum of service in my own work. With that, Dass and Gorman (1987) plant a seed not only for my own continued exploration but also a seed that we all might continue to discover ways to water. They write:

To the question, ‘How can I help?’ we can of course help through all that we *do*. But at the deepest level we help through who we *are*. We help, that is, by appreciating the connection between service and our own progress on the journey of awakening into a fuller sense of unity. We work on ourselves, then, in order to help others. And we help others as a vehicle for working on ourselves. (p. 227)

Chapter Eight: Summary, Conclusion, and Implications

This chapter concludes the study. A summary of the entire study is presented, from its inception to the final synthesis of the data; the findings are differentiated from the earlier review of educational literature to propose the key contributions; future studies are presented as possibilities for building on the outcomes of the current study; a critique is provided on the limitations of the research design; the implications are described, with a focus on the professions of teaching and research, but also on the relevancy for education and society; and a creative closure describes how the outcomes of the study have inspired me, the researcher, as well as influenced my future directions.

Summary of the Entire Study

This section summarizes the entire study, and as Moustakas (1994) notes, the comprehensive summary “offers a kind of abstract of an entire investigation, [which] enables other researchers to determine its relevance to their own research pursuits and whether or not to review the entire report” (p. 156).

The first chapter introduced the problem in education as an overly technical focus on teaching to the negation of a more authentic consideration of what it means to teach, including an exploration of the spiritual and moral dimensions. In particular, the standards movement of recent decades was discussed as supporting an educational and societal climate that largely disregards the interconnection of oneself, others, and the world, and therefore narrows the spiritual and moral disposition of the learner. The problem pointed to a need for educational change, and the teacher’s authentic way of being was presented as the basis (Palmer, 1993, p. 107).

As a result, the primary research question was posed: “What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?” The question was underscored by three key beliefs: (a) that philosophical/theological resources were necessary to clarify authentic being; (b) that educational resources were necessary to clarify authentic teaching; and (c) that empirical research was needed to explore the ways in which authentic teaching occurs in teachers’ lives as well as ways that may promote authenticity in teaching. A sub-question was then presented: “What does it mean for the researcher to engage as an authentic learner in the research process?” As was noted in the positionality statement, the underlying reason for this question is my personal/ professional history in probing the deeply felt question, “What does it mean to be authentic?”

The second chapter presented a philosophical/ theological review of authenticity, drawing from the Buddhist and Christian traditions, as well as the Twentieth Century writings of Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger. Authenticity was defined as a penetrating sense of oneself as distinct yet undivided from others and the world. This definition was then distinguished from being inauthentic, and was clarified with the analogy of seeing a movie. The images on the screen are distinct and always changing, i.e., the world of forms, but the screen, which is inseparable from the images, is formless, still, and whole. Being inauthentic perceives only the images, while being authentic perceives the images but also cuts through them and realizes the inseparableness that has always been holding them. A dynamic, interdependent construct of authentic being was then presented, exploring authenticity in relation to four thematic clusters: truth, meaning, existential pain, and action.

The third chapter delineated conceptual and empirical bodies of work on authenticity in education. Spiritual and moral writings of educational thinkers supported a dynamic review of authenticity and aligned with the view of interconnectedness, which was interpreted in the

philosophical/ theological chapter. Because the educational literature on authenticity was lacking as it pertains to teachers, the review was expanded to include a variety of settings and levels throughout the educational establishment. Therefore, this chapter comprehensively reviewed significant but small and underacknowledged bodies of work in this area. Moreover, the chapter concluded with an interpretive summary that, together with the philosophical/ theological review, created a working theoretical framework of authenticity to support the empirical part of this study.

The fourth chapter described the research methodology as phenomenology, which is a qualitative exploration of the content and form, i.e., the meaning and structure, of one's perceived experience (Creswell, 1998, p. 51; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 7). A key distinction was made between the philosophical orientation of the working theoretical framework (i.e., the authentic perception of oneself as distinct yet undivided), and the philosophical method originated by Edmund Husserl (Creswell, 1998, p. 52; Eagleton, 2008, p. 47; Groenewald, 2004, p. 3; Moustakas, 1994, p. 25), i.e., the "essentialist" connotation of traditional phenomenology. This in turn clarified my methodological position regarding the key questions on teacher authenticity and also on researcher as authentic learner.

The research design included six teachers from a small Catholic urban K-8 school, and represented a variety along the professional career span, i.e., beginner, mid-career, and veteran teachers. Data collection involved written reflections, individual and group interviews, and classroom observations. In addition, part of the interview process applied a scaffolded experience, defined as a deliberate structure and support to expand the teachers' reflections. Caldecott books, which are award-winning picture books, became a fulcrum between the interview questions and essential concepts of the working theoretical framework. A detailed

description clarified the development of the tools and rubric for the scaffolded experience, and a semiotic/ structuralist methodology supported the selection of two exemplars, i.e., *The Mouse and the Lion* (Pinkney, 2009), and *The House in the Night* (Swanson & Krommes, 2008). Data analysis emphasized two primary procedures: (a) phenomenological reduction identified “a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements” (Creswell, 1998, p.147), which were then grouped into meaning units (Creswell, pp.150, 280, & 286-287); and (b) imaginative variation explored these units to construct themes that epitomized the conditions and qualities that accounted for the teachers’ experiences and understanding of authenticity.

The fifth chapter presented the findings, allowing the data to speak without explicitly or deliberately imposing the pre-existing theoretical framework. The tone of this discussion differed from that of the earlier framework, as the interplay of the teacher’s human limitation and fallibility as well as the aspiration to serve became clearly evident during the analysis. Authenticity as a unique process, dynamic, iterative, and complex, gradually permeated my outlook. This influenced me to interpret the data with a noticeably different cadence from the earlier framework, which presented authenticity as a neatly defined, either/or construct, i.e., one is either authentic or inauthentic. As became evident, my interpretation of the earlier framework emphasized authenticity as a quality of presence, i.e., a state of being, while the current interpretation evolved and emphasized authenticity as an ongoing process of becoming. This distinction was critical, as it set aside any dissonance that may have emerged between this interpretation and the earlier one, with the understanding that in the sixth chapter, i.e., the integrative framework, any dissonance would be resolved, since authenticity could then be understood as *both* a state of being *and* a process of becoming.

In this empirical framework, authenticity was interpreted through the mutual relationship between caring for students and being self-affirmed as a teacher. Care was defined broadly and denoted a selfless concern for students' well-being, including qualities such as respect, persistence, kindness, generosity, and empathy. Personal truth was the motivational ideal, driving and organizing the teacher's understanding of what it means to care, and thereby mutually affirming the teacher. Meaning brought into focus authenticity as a unique process, exploring how a teacher's personal truth influences perspectives about the curriculum, self-learning, and ambiguity in teaching. Existential pain presented the teacher's cognitive, emotive, and intuitive experience of tension between being affirmed and disrupted in the desire and intention to care. This self-perceived tension stirs the movement of the teacher's authenticity process. Lastly, action pointed to behaviors supporting the teacher in realizing her personal truth, i.e., actions of the teacher toward herself; the teacher's colleagues toward the teacher; and the teacher toward her students.

The sixth chapter culminated the vision of the study, i.e., the philosophical/ theological resources brought into focus the possibilities relative to the profound meaning of this empirical study (Friedman, 1960, p. 172). With the integration of these cumulative resources, a faith perspective developed and was applied to the data. The outcome was a revised definition, stated as follows: *Teacher authenticity is a trust that, through the desire and intention to care, the teacher can awaken through teaching a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world. This trust is the teacher's faith perspective, and is lived, dynamic, and iterative, which makes authenticity an ongoing process.*

Authenticity was then examined as a process that joins truth and meaning together as one. Five structures were presented, and organized into two parts: the pre-thematic and thematic

foundations of the teacher's authenticity. The pre-thematic consisted of existential, epistemological, and ontological structures. The existential structure interpreted the teacher's vocational truth as the concrete conduit of the faith process, and explained the teacher's temporality, which demonstrated that truth is process oriented. The epistemological structure contextualized vocational truth within a relational way of knowing, framing the teacher's role in support of authentic connections between the student and curriculum. The ontological structure completed the pre-thematic foundation, and focused on the intersecting realities between the teacher's relational nature and the human habit to reify this nature as concepts. The thematic foundation consisted of the spiritual and moral structures. The spiritual structure highlighted the dynamics of ambiguity, risk, and courage, which are inherent to faith in the teacher's authenticity. The moral structure completed the thematic foundation by delineating the responsible actions of the teacher toward herself and students, i.e., actions that speak to the relational sacredness of teaching. Furthermore, discussions throughout the framework highlighted the institutional need to support teacher authenticity.

The seventh chapter provided a response to the question: "What does it mean for the researcher to engage as an authentic learner throughout the research process?" As previously mentioned, the underlying theme of my personal and professional growth has been the question, "What does it mean to be authentic?" which led to the main research question, "What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?" representing an outgrowth of this burning question. Because the research question was therefore somewhat autobiographical, this chapter turned the inquiry back to my own self-learning as an emerging scholar.

The chapter was organized with the same structures as the integrative framework. The discussion began with my own authenticity, and then explored the existential, epistemological,

ontological, spiritual, and moral dimensions of my being authentic as a learner. Some of the basic themes from the integrative framework were considered, but because this self-reflection was based on firsthand perceptions and experiences, dynamics of authenticity that were not evident when studying the teachers surfaced. As a result, this chapter's contents differed from the previous findings.

With the comprehensive summary of the entire study complete, discussion now focuses on how this study distinguishes itself from previous educational literature, and is followed by a consideration of possible future studies, a critique of the design limitations, a discussion on implications, and a creative closure.

Distinguishing the Current Study from the Previous Literature

This section describes the findings, which differ from those that were presented in the review of educational literature, i.e., twenty-seven conceptual and twenty-six empirical educational works that covered a wide range of settings and levels across K-16 education.

One of the clearest ways in which this study distinguishes itself is in its vision, i.e., the integration of philosophical/ theological and educational resources into a comprehensive construct of teacher authenticity, presenting two equally intensive parts (the theoretical and empirical), and combining two studies into one. Likewise, Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, and Knottenbelt (2007) and Kreber, McCune, and Klampfleitner (2010) utilized a parallel approach, as they first created a working theoretical framework on authenticity and then designed and implemented a study from their framework. However, two distinctions can be made. First, the working framework that Kreber et. al developed was not as comprehensive or as integrative as the framework in the current study. Second, Kreber et. al utilized their framework

as the explicit basis for organizing and interpreting data, and this was essentially different from my approach, which was to let the data speak without deliberately imposing the pre-existing construct, and then to bring the two frameworks, i.e., theoretical and empirical, explicitly into dialogue to propose an integrative framework.

A second way in which the study distinguishes itself is through the systematic comprehensiveness of the integrative vision, i.e., a dynamic and complex view of authenticity. As previously mentioned, the philosophical/ theological part functions differently from the empirical, and brings into focus the larger questions about the profound meaning of field-based research (Friedman, 1960, p. 172). As a result, the integrative framework points to layers of sacred potential in the existential, epistemological, ontological, spiritual, and moral dimensions of the teachers' experiences. Although the integrative proposal of authenticity as a faith perspective coincided with some of the educational works in the conceptual literature review, e.g., Hansen (2004) and Palmer (2003), this systematic, comprehensive integration provides a unique framework that can contribute to and perhaps expand conversations in the field with educational thinkers like these.

Another distinction is the focus of the researcher as an authentic learner. As the researcher, I not only positioned myself toward the topic of study (i.e., in the positionality statement) but also pointed the topic back to me by making inquiry into what it means for the researcher to be an authentic learner. Estola, Erkkila, and Syrjala (2003, p. 253), who conducted a study on the moral voice of teacher vocation, alluded to a similar approach when they turned the research question about vocation back onto themselves. Since this occurred in the last sentence of their report, it was only presented as a speculation for future consideration. Focus on the researcher as an authentic learner presented an expanded view of reflexivity, probing deeply

into the philosophical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of my own learning process throughout the study. Being open, present, and non-judgmental in a study is not just a matter of intellectual ability, as was made clear, but is rather a movement of one's whole being, including emotive and intuitive capacities. To do this, as was demonstrated, requires a willingness to engage in the difficult, ongoing, and messy work of de-conditioning old habits of mind, which at the subtle core are rooted in the human tendency to believe in a fixed sense of self. This comprehensive outlook can be an essential contribution in thinking about researcher reflexivity. Smith's (2010) words are again worth repeating:

The maze of [authentic learning] is often lengthy and tedious because unconscious forces of mind are frequently controlling our effort. Though our intentions are well meaning, most of our [authentic] path is contained and controlled by what we do not see. We take ourselves to be someone, and we do so in the unseen areas of our psyche where that someone cannot be challenged, [where] the self plays out its agenda and drives our effort. (pp. 95-96)

Lastly, the development and implementation of innovative tools, such as the Caldecott rubric, distinguishes this study from the literature. Furthermore, the incorporation of the Caldecott books provided a way to convey the complex concepts and language of the working theoretical framework into a user-friendly format, which in turn supported the philosophical/theological integration within the interviews. Likewise, Fallona (2000), in a study on the moral manner of teaching through an Aristotelian framework, utilized a "card sort to elicit the teacher's conceptions of particular virtues and their relationship to teaching" (p. 688). However, the conceptual depth of the Caldecott rubric, and the methodology to identify two exemplary books, i.e., supported by the visual and literary elements tools (Appendixes F & G), extended beyond

Fallona's card sort. In effect, these innovative tools offer a seed of potential for researchers who may be inspired to develop and operationalize their own integration between empirical research and a philosophical and/or theological exploration.

Future Studies

This section presents several possibilities for deepening and extending the outcomes of the study, with reference to Moustakas (1994), who writes: "During a study, the researcher becomes an expert on the topic, knows the findings of prior research, develops new knowledge, and becomes proficient in recognizing future research that would deepen and extend knowledge on the topic" (p. 162).

One possible extension is to conduct a collaborative action research with teachers, which Pine and Bruce (2010) define as "a nonlinear, recursive process of study designed to achieve concrete change in a specific situation to improve teaching and learning" (p. 3). A potential research question is: "How can the researcher and teachers work together to promote a more authentic process of self-learning?" A sub-question is: "How does the teacher's self-learning translate into authentic learning conditions for students?" With the integrative framework, new tools can be developed as user-friendly guides to support a co-constructive process by the researcher and teachers. In addition to promoting change action, another benefit of this study is to deepen the involvement and immersion by the researcher within a school's culture, which, as discussed under limitations, appeared as a gap in the current study.

As Palmer (1993) noted, the transformation of teaching begins with the teacher (p. 107), but as other educational thinkers indicated (e.g., Dantley, 2005; Keyes, Maxwell, & Capper, 1999; Shields, 2005; Starratt & Guare, 1995), the self-learning of school leaders invariably

impacts a school's learning culture, and therefore is important to address. An extension of the action research idea would therefore be to focus on school principals, perhaps designing a study that examines how school leadership as well as other cultural factors help or hinder more authentic approaches to the development of teachers in their own self-learning. In turn, a longer term and important focus is to examine how this research translates into possible benefits for students as learners. The advantage of this study addresses an earlier concern within the integrative framework, which stated that an objectivist-based educational climate, with its epistemological and ontological assumptions, under-nourish if not largely disregard teacher authenticity.

Another extension of the findings is to conduct a study of authenticity in a public elementary school. On the one hand, the small Catholic urban K-8 school in which the current study was conducted is similar to public schools in its standards-based focus as well as demographics and student need. However, one could argue that a heightened focus on high-stakes testing in public schools is greater than in a Catholic setting, and therefore a study on teacher authenticity in public education would be beneficial to the knowledge bases on teacher development. The integrative framework, representing a comprehensive construct of authenticity, could be used explicitly as the theoretical lens to analyze data, unlike with the current study, which deliberately excluded the earlier working framework from the data analysis. In addition, as implied in the previous recommendations, a strong ethnographic focus, which involves extended immersion within a school's culture, becomes essential. As Friedman (2011) writes: "[C]ontext (classroom and school)... is a critical variable of educational reform" (p. 135). Therefore, a more balanced approach between phenomenology and ethnography can provide a broader perspective relative to the dynamics of culture and teacher authenticity.

An interesting alternative to my proposed public school study is adapted from Watzke and Valencia (2011), who studied nine teachers across public and religious school contexts to examine elements of Freirean pedagogy. Thus, with the integrative framework as a theoretical lens, a small, “purposeful” (Creswell, 1998, pp. 118) sample of teachers, e.g., veterans of more than ten years, could be studied across a public and Catholic schooling context. Ideally, this study would be part of a longitudinal, multi-phase project that also includes action research, as indicated above, as the next step.

Lastly, as noted in the fifth chapter, I have argued in the past (Akoury, 2012) that a passion or love of subject matter is necessary for authentic teaching, and that, as a result, a question emerged during the analysis as to whether this applied to the findings. Evidence was subtle, as a number of factors inhibited more explicit answers: (a) prevalence of an objectivist-based, standards-driven climate; (b) over-emphasis on factual knowledge/skills acquisition in each classroom observation; (c) greater focus on students than on curriculum in the teachers’ interview responses; and (d) under-emphasis in the research design on school culture and classroom immersion. In addition, one could argue that, as teachers reflect more explicitly on the existential, epistemological, ontological, spiritual and moral dimensions of their authenticity, they may come to understand and approach subject matter in a more authentic way. This idea in part emerges from an observation, which occurred five times in total during the current study, whereby the teacher referenced the Caldecott book (i.e., in the scaffolded experience) to support her self-reflection and response. This observation became a seed idea, perhaps realistically for another action research, and inspires a future research question, such as: “How can teachers engage with subject matter to awaken a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself and their students?”

Limitations

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) write: “Limitations set some conditions that acknowledge the partial and tentative nature of any research” (p. 133). Therefore, this section highlights the key limitations of the study.

First, the issue of generalizability is a key limitation with many qualitative studies, including this one. For example, readers may or may not identify with the setting or participants, which in turn, this influences the degree to which they deem the findings relevant to their own situation. In addition, with the small sample size, the findings must be understood with consideration for the complex, diverse contexts in which readers work and live (Rossmann & Rallis, p. 66). Therefore, as was mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the current study by design imposes constraints on its readership, and perhaps restricts the stated goal of eliciting awareness in discourses on educational policy and practice about the significance of teacher authenticity.

Second, as was indicated, the data collection schedule emphasized only one 60-minute classroom observation per teacher, which appears insufficient for developing a broader, more inclusive understanding of the dynamics relative to cultural context and teacher authenticity. An ethnographic need for long-term immersion by the researcher in the classroom and school most likely would have deepened inquiry into the formal and informal interactions among teachers as colleagues, between teachers and students, and among students themselves as members of a school and classroom community. In addition, a stronger ethnographic component might have allowed a better examination of how well the teachers’ words and actions align; and also a deeper exploration of the influence of cultural factors, such as standards-based reform practices,

and how the teacher explicitly and implicitly is living with and negotiating these realities. Nonetheless, as Leahy (2010) notes: “Failure in design paves the way for innovation” (p. 82), and therefore, limitations like these supported my reflections on possible future studies, as indicated above.

As was presented in the previous chapter, learning to be more open and present as a researcher is ongoing, and most likely never ends. To borrow from Buddhism, as long as the relative truth of I, me, and mine is essentially understood – intellectually *and also* emotionally and intuitively – as my essence, then my readiness to be open and present as a researcher will always need more self-work and practice. This most basic tendency must be acknowledged as a limitation on the research implementation as well as the interpretation of findings. Still, limitation paves the way for innovation, and perhaps a deepened interest in the philosophical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of researcher reflexivity may grow from this limitation.

Implications

This section explains the implications of the study, with a focus on the professions of teaching and research, but also on the relevancy for education and society. The most impending implication pertains equally to teachers and to researchers, and focuses on a need for professional development that emphasizes programs of self-learning and self-formation.

Although programs like these already exist, e.g., The Courage to Teach (see Palmer, 1999, p. 10) and The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society⁸, they appear underacknowledged within larger conversations on educational practice and policy. In light of authenticity as being a faith perspective, self-formation programs would encourage teachers and researchers to engage in a

⁸ The Courage to Teach is an initiative of The Center for Courage and Renewal and can be found online at <http://www.couragerenewal.org>. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society is an initiative of The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education and can be found at <http://www.contemplativemind.org>.

self-learning process that helps them to name and claim not just the academic but also the spiritual, emotional, and moral significance of their work, and thereby to reflect on their deepest mission and purpose. Furthermore, if teachers and researchers participate in a shared human community that focuses on the same fundamental question, “How can I help?” then the essence that drives such programs would be this shared and basic human question, and the essential curricular approach would adhere to the wisdom of an earlier quote by Dass and Gorman (1987), which bears repeating:

To the question, ‘How can I help?’ we can of course help through all that we *do*. But at the deepest level we help through who we *are*. We help, that is, by appreciating the connection between service and our own progress on the journey of awakening into a fuller sense of unity. We work on ourselves, then, in order to help others. And we help others as a vehicle for working on ourselves. (p. 227)

Specifically, the key finding on authenticity as a faith perspective calls upon school and district leaders to “give teachers an opportunity, in solitude and in community” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10), to grow beyond mere technical training. Technical training does not totally enhance or nurture the teacher’s personal and professional life, and therefore, a balance and complement to the technical focus of standards-based education is implicated in the study’s findings. For example, as part of staff development, schools and districts can build-in programs for teachers to reflect on what inspires them in their teaching lives; what sustains them in difficult or challenging times; what gives them a renewed sense of teaching; and what deepens their purpose and meaning, personally and professionally. This on the surface might appear as common practice in some schools; however, the essential focus is different, i.e., the explicit goal to

nurture teacher authenticity will awaken a profound potential of goodness for the mutual well-being of oneself and others.

The implications of teacher authenticity specifically call upon educational researchers, as well. As a community, educational researchers can raise to consciousness within the grand conversation of standards-based reform that not just the teacher's technical competence and knowledge drives student success. Rather, the inner landscape of the teacher – the spiritual, the moral, the intellectual, and the emotional – is also imperative to achieve the kind of thoughtful, creative, and compassionate students that are often envisioned in school/ district mission statements. Educational researchers therefore need to explore within their specific areas of interest the fundamental paradox and truth relative to this study's findings: that teachers are uniquely complex and multi-dimensional, and are also joined by a basic, shared human concern, which, as Levine (1987) writes, is that “care for others [i.e., students] is care for ourselves, a deep honoring of the being we all share” (p. 48).

The implications are also relevant for education and society. Teaching would become an act of renewal, and teachers would become better prepared as change agents to balance an over-emphasis on technical training, with teaching that nurtures a student's capacity to think, speak, and act in ways that channel technical competence toward a healing, life-giving impact on others and society. This implication essentially points to a guiding reflection, which should concern policymakers, researchers, educational leaders, and practitioners alike. Palmer (1999) sets the tone, and writes:

Whoever our students may be, whatever subject we teach, ultimately we teach who we [think] are.... If we do not live good questions, and live them in a way that is life-giving,

our own deformations will permeate the work we do and contribute to the deformation of the students whose lives we touch. (p. 10)

Therefore, the guiding reflection is: Do we want teachers who merely live questions regarding technical competence in teaching and learning? Or, do we want this, *and* much more? Do we want teachers who are nurtured in their sense of mission and purpose, a sense that teaching can awaken a deep life-giving potential for the well-being of oneself, others, and the world? Moreover, as a parent, aunt/uncle, not just as an educator or policymaker, one might ponder: Which question would be more self-assuring, knowing that the present and future well-being of my child is at stake? In effect, if questions like these ring true for the reader, then the implications of teacher authenticity as a faith perspective must point back to a need for continued exploration of an assumption from the first chapter, which states: “The transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher. Only in the heart searched and transformed by truth will new teaching techniques and strategies for institutional change find sure grounding” (Palmer, 1993, p. 107).

Creative Closure

Although the previous chapter, i.e., researcher as authentic learner, explained in depth what the study means to me, in terms of the value of the acquired knowledge as well as my future directions as a professional educator (Moustakas, 1994, p. 184), one point elucidates the essence: *a profound sense of renewal and hope about teachers and teaching has emerged*. In spite of an educational system that tends to depersonalize and relegate teachers as merely technical trainers, this study revealed a basic drive within teachers to connect with humankind through teaching, and as a result, the sacredness of teaching penetrated a depth of appreciation

within me that was previously unrecognized. In addition, this sense of appreciation has also turned back toward me, recognizing this same basic drive and essential sacredness manifesting uniquely through my work as a researcher, and also previously as an elementary school teacher. Essentially, I have taken a step into a community of educational thinkers and researchers who wish to re-connect and align educational reform more explicitly with the potentially deepest mission and purpose of teachers. Therefore, Palmer's (1999) words close this study but also suggest an opening for my future work:

We become teachers for reasons of the heart/ But many of us lose heart as time goes by./
How can we take heart, alone and together,/ So we can give heart to our students and our
world,/ Which is what good teachers do. (p. 10)

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Appendix A: Lynch School of Education, Curriculum and Instruction
Informed Consent to be in study: *Teacher Authenticity*
Paul Akoury, Principal Investigator

Introduction:

You are being invited to take part in a research study on teacher authenticity, which will explore the spiritual and moral dimensions of teachers' lives. The study will be conducted by Paul N. Akoury, who is a doctoral candidate at Boston College. The research is a dissertation study that will be supervised by Professor Lillie R. Albert. You were selected to be in the study based on the recommendation of your school principal. Please read this form. Ask any questions that you may have before you agree to be in the study.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore what it means to be an authentic teacher. The study aims to integrate comprehensive literature reviews about authenticity with field explorations that investigate teacher experiences, conceptions, and reflections concerning authenticity.

For the study, there will be two beginner teachers (1-5 years), two mid-career teachers (6-10 years), and two veteran teachers (more than 10 years) to represent variety along the professional career span. Your participation will help me to fulfill this desired continuum. All of the participants will be teachers from your school.

What will happen in the study:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in the following ways. First, you will be asked to write a two-page reflective narrative, which will provide background information as well as create an informal space in which you may explore authenticity. I will provide writing prompts to stimulate your thinking about the topic. In addition, there will be two 60-minute individual interviews. The first of these will create space for extensive spoken elaboration and clarification with me about your written reflection. The second interview will involve what I am calling a "scaffolded experience," because it is designed to deepen your reflections about authenticity through intentional structures and supports, i.e., scaffolds, which I will provide. More specifically, I will be incorporating Caldecott Medal books that have met researcher-defined criteria as exemplars of authenticity. I will also present a schematic tool to support synergy and reflection in your thinking about what it means to be an authentic teacher.

In addition, you will be asked to participate in a 60-minute focus group, which will be a scaffolded experience, as well, but will provide you an opportunity to listen to the perspectives of others, and to clarify and probe your understandings within the context of conversing with your peers. Moreover, the innovative format for these scaffolded experiences will be based on a working theoretical framework about authenticity, which I developed in the initial conception of the study from comprehensive literature reviews in education, psychology, philosophy, and theology. Furthermore, I will conduct a 60-minute classroom observation to supplement the interviews. The observation will occur in between the two individual interviews.

All of the data collection activities will take place on school site at times that are mutually agreed on by you and me. I will take notes during the observation as well as each interview, including the focus group. Moreover, I will audio record each interview and the focus group to ensure accuracy. Transcriptions of each audio recording will be made by a professional

transcription service. With your permission, I will keep these transcriptions, audio recordings, and interview/observational notes indefinitely in case I revisit the topic in future research projects. Furthermore, I will contact you as I begin to interpret the findings to seek your input regarding accuracy. By doing so, I can ensure that the final report will be a truthful representation of your perspectives.

Risks and Discomforts of Being in the Study:

The study has the following risks, although minimal. First, there is the possible inconvenience of time commitment to participate in the various aspects of the study. Second, because of the small number of participants, and because I will want to use direct quotes and specific examples to illuminate the reported findings, absolute confidentiality may be difficult to guarantee. I base this potential risk on the following reasoning: Your school principal and colleagues might want to learn about the study's findings; in turn, the small, intimate school community in which you teach may make direct quotes and specific examples identifiable among your peers. However, when possible, I will change non-essential "contextual" aspects of what I share and write (e.g., physical characteristics about the classroom) in order to obscure the identification of specific persons. Third, as with any study, there may be unforeseen risks, as well.

Benefits of Being in the Study:

Benefits for all participants include the opportunity to reflect on and explore an aspect of professional development that is often overlooked within standards-based reform. Furthermore, the topic of authenticity, and in particular the scaffolded experiences, may provide an experience of self-renewal, allowing you to reflect on the deep, personal truths and meanings of your service as an educator. Moreover, participation may arouse and rekindle new understandings about the spiritual and moral dimensions of teaching.

Payments:

Upon completing your participation in the study, I will provide you with a \$75 gift card to your choice of Staples.com, Amazon.com, or Apple Store online. If you prefer, instead of a gift card, I will submit a \$75 donation to the charity of your choice. This reimbursement is intended as a token of appreciation for your commitment to the study. The researcher can withhold this reimbursement, however, if the participant does not comply with the study requirements.

Confidentiality:

I will take a number of steps to protect your identity. I will keep all interview and observational data in a secure space at my house. Field notes will be in a locked file cabinet, while all other data (e.g., audio recordings) will be stored on my desktop computer. I will be the only one to have access to any of these spaces. Furthermore, pseudonyms will be used in all analytical procedures (including in discussions with my committee members) as well as in the written report. The list of pseudonyms to identify participants will be stored in a locked file cabinet separately from all of the other data materials. In addition, I will make every effort to keep your research records confidential, but it cannot be assured. Records that identify you and the consent form signed by you may be looked at by the Boston College IRB or Federal Agencies overseeing human subject research.

Rights of Participant and Researcher:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. At any time, you have the right to withdraw. You may refuse to answer any questions that I pose, as well. Conversely, the researcher can withdraw a participant if it is deemed in the person's best interest or if there is failure to comply with the study requirements.

Copy of Consent Form:

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records and future reference.

If you have any questions about the research project, you can contact me by phone at 781-803-2801 or via email at paulakoury@comcast.net. In addition, you can reach my research advisor, Lillie R. Albert, at 617-552-4272 or albertli@bc.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, or if any breach of confidentiality should occur during the course of the research, you can contact Office for Research Protections via phone at 617-552-4778 or email at irb@bc.edu.

I understand the above information. I have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I voluntarily consent to participate in this research. I give my permission to be audio taped during the interviews and focus group.

Printed Name of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

I received a copy of the consent form for my records.

Appendix B: Approach for the First Individual Interview

The researcher introduces the purpose and focus of the interview:

The main purpose of the first interview is to elaborate, extend, and deepen your initial explorations from the written reflective narrative. I will begin with introductory questions to warm-up your thinking, and then will shift explicitly to exploring authenticity. Your narrative essay can be the catalyst for this exploration. Important to note is that I will focus on authenticity as it pertains not only to you as a teacher but also to you as a “whole” person. To clarify, I believe that we bring the “whole” of ourselves every time we enter the classroom, and because of this, the life that you live outside of teaching and the life that you live as a classroom teacher – as well as how these two connect – may be important areas to explore. Lastly, I believe that we can illuminate authenticity by exploring counterexamples, as well. Because of this, I will pose questions that probe your experiences and reflections concerning what it means to be “other than” authentic, or inauthentic, as a teacher.

Warm-Up Questions

How long have you been teaching? How about in your current grade?

Tell about your decision to teach. What are some of your main reasons for deciding to enter teaching? Were there specific people or experiences that influenced your process?

How did you come to teach elementary students? What do you enjoy about teaching young children?

Why did you decide to teach in a Catholic school? What do you enjoy about teaching in a Catholic school? Do you have teaching experiences in other school settings, as well? If so, how do you describe some of the similarities and differences?

“The Life that You Live as a Teacher” Questions [*Process note*: If the participant’s written narrative reflection describes a moment outside of teaching, then the researcher can begin with the next section and then proceed through this section.]

What images or ideas come to mind when you hear the word authentic, as in an “authentic teacher” or someone who is being authentic?

Describe an authentic moment in your own teaching life. [*Process note*: Inform the participant that the moment may be subtle, as with seemingly small moments that speak in personally meaningful or profound ways; it might be a more epiphany-like moment; or maybe somewhere in between. Also, the moment might not match exactly the participant’s ideal vision about authenticity, but it can still touch important aspects of it.]

Contextual Questions: Where did this moment occur, e.g., classroom, school yard, faculty lounge? Which people and/or things were sharing this space with you? When did it happen, e.g., the time of school day and year; the year within your career span? What were you doing at the time?

Experiential-near Questions: What were you thinking and feeling as the experience occurred? What were you noticing about the people or things around you? How were you interacting with them?

What were you thinking, feeling, and doing just before this moment occurred? In other words, what were some of the conditions leading up to the moment?

What was the rest of your day like after the experience occurred?

Interpretative Questions: Does this experience – or perhaps this experience along with other experiences – influence how you relate with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators? Explain....

Does it arouse questions about what it means to teach? Does it awaken new possibilities for you as a teacher? Explain....

Does it influence your thinking about what you value most as a teacher, as well as what you envision for your students? Explain....

“The Life that You Live Outside of Teaching” Questions

Think about some of the roles of your past and present life outside of teaching, such as you as a parent, sibling, friend, and even student or child. Describe an authentic moment pertaining to one of these roles in your life.

Process note: Researcher repeats the previous contextual and experiential-near questions.

Do you observe similarities between this moment and the one that you described with you as the teacher? Explain.... [*Process note:* After this question, the researcher repeats the previous interpretative questions. However, if the researcher begins with this section, i.e., depending on the written reflective narrative, then he should save the above question for the appropriate time.]

Counterexample Questions

What images or ideas come to mind when you hear the word “inauthentic,” as with inauthentic teaching or someone who is being inauthentic?

Either inside or outside of teaching (you choose), tell me a story about an inauthentic moment in your life.

Process note: Depending on time, the researcher may ask to explore additional authentic moments. Furthermore, he may incorporate follow-up, non-structured questions to probe for clarity and to deepen inquiry into specific points of interest that arise during the exploration.

Appendix C: Generic Format for the Scaffolded Experience

The approach for the scaffolded experience will comprise a generic format that may be adapted to each of the chosen books, i.e., once they have been identified through the Caldecott analysis. This generic format will apply to both the second individual interview and the focus group. The format for the scaffolded experience will follow these steps:

- Step 1:** Researcher begins with an introduction to the scaffolded experience:
I constructed a working framework based on comprehensive literature reviews about authenticity. This interview is scaffolded because I will be making the framework explicit to you and using it to support our time together. In this regard, the scaffolded experience will be different from your written reflection and the first interview, in which I did not include this working framework about authenticity.
- Step 2:** Researcher introduces the schematic tool, including the working definition of authenticity as well as the thematic clusters: truth, meaning, existential pain, and action:
The schematic tool is presented in two parts. The first provides a statement about authenticity. The second offers a visual representation. Together, these two parts will provide you a working reference during the scaffolded experience. Also, I wrote the statement in the first person to establish the personal tone of reflection that this experience is intended to evoke. Refer to the statement as well as the visual on the next page as needed. Lastly, although the statement is written as a unified piece, the main parts are chunked by bullets and the key words are bold-faced to help with accessibility when cross-referencing between the visual schema and the verbal statement. [*Note:* If this interview is the focus group, then the researcher will remind participants about the first two steps.]
- Researcher gives the participant(s) an opportunity to review the schematic tool, and if necessary addresses any questions for clarification.
- Step 3:** Researcher presents the Caldecott book and provides a summary. If the participant is familiar with the book, the researcher will ask her to summarize, and then will add any pertinent information if necessary.
- Step 4:** Researcher provides a brief statement to highlight why the book was identified as an exemplar of authenticity.
- Step 5:** Researcher gradually guides the participant through the story, connecting story events or brief sequences with aspects of the working theoretical framework, and on occasion, exploring the absence of authenticity.

Step 6: Participant reflects on the suggested meanings about authenticity as represented in the book, as well as how these meanings connect with her understandings and experiences concerning being an authentic teacher.

Process Note: As the participant becomes comfortable with the schematic tool, she may possibly “take the plunge” and begin to interpret, reflect, and connect without scaffolding prompts from the researcher. The researcher should be sensitive to the spontaneity of these moments, when they occur, and provide space to the participant to freely interpret, reflect, and connect.

Appendix D: Schematic Tool on Authenticity

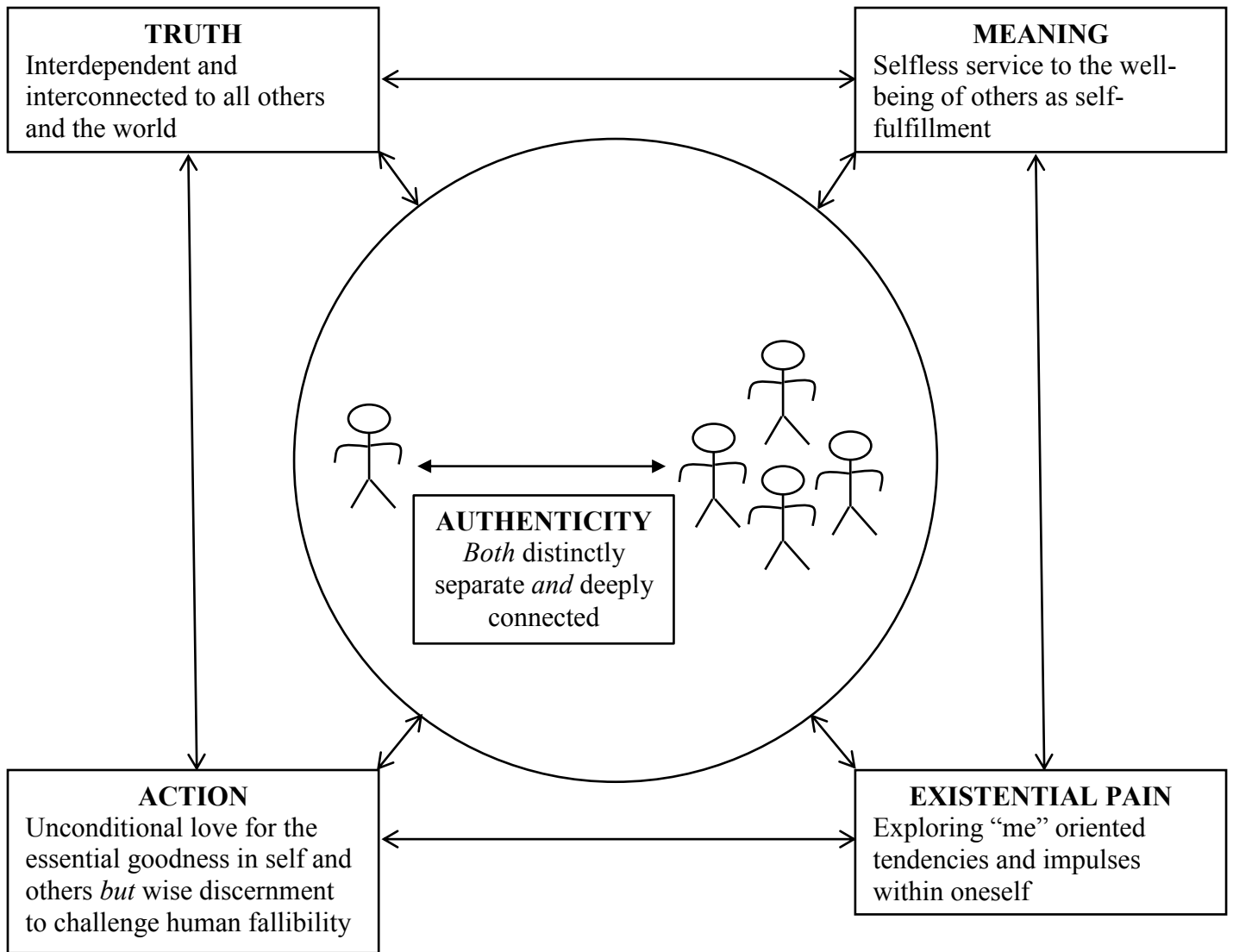
The schematic tool is presented in two parts. The first provides a statement about authenticity. The second offers a visual representation. Together, these two parts will provide you a working reference during the scaffolded experience.

Statement about Authenticity

Note: The statement is written in the first person to establish the tone of personal reflection that the scaffolded experience is intended to evoke. Therefore, the participant should read the statement, and then refer to it as well as the visual on the next page as needed. Furthermore, although the statement is written as a unified piece, the main parts are chunked by bullets and the key words are bold-faced to promote accessibility if cross-referencing between the visual schema and the verbal statement.

- **Authenticity** means to intuitively sense with my whole being, not just my intellect, that I am BOTH separate as a person in this human body AND deeply connected to all others and the world by an underlying wholeness.
- In authenticity, I see that the **truth** of my innate nature is interdependence and interconnection with people and the world of subject matter. To make an analogy: waves on the ocean are distinctly separate, but beyond appearance, we all know that they are deeply connected in oneness with the vast ocean.
- Because of this truth, the **meaning** of authentic self-fulfillment emerges from my intention to live selflessly in service to the well-being of others, which, in turn, is truly my well-being. Metaphorically, just as I feel good when I take care of my physical body, so too do I feel good when I take care of my “hidden” body, that is, my hidden wholeness with all others and the world.
- Yet, as do all humans, I may forget this hidden wholeness and instead buy-into “me” oriented tendencies and impulses, as if they were my deepest truth. When this forgetfulness happens, it creates **existential pain**; in other words, an undertow of restlessness or uneasiness within my being. To make another analogy: when I walk, the left leg does not ignore the right leg, or vice versa; nor do my legs forget the ground that supports them; naturally, walking is an integrated activity, otherwise, it would become uneasy, fragmented, if not painful. Likewise, when I explore the ways in which “me” oriented tendencies may manifest, sometimes subtly, in my life, I embark on a path of living more integratively and less divisively with all others and the world.
- Implied is that my **actions** should recall two things. First, all people are part of this sacred underlying wholeness, and therefore are essentially good in their holy nature. Second, people including me are humanly fallible and may be prone to forget the sacred wholeness in favor of “me” oriented habits. The twofold result: I try to act with unconditional love for the essential goodness in myself and others but also with wise discernment to challenge our fallible ways.

Appendix D (continued): Schematic Tool on Authenticity



Appendix E: Guidelines for the Written Reflective Narrative

Overview: The main purpose of the written reflective narrative is to create an informal space for you to enter this study about teacher authenticity. It will also provide a catalyst during the first individual interview to elaborate, extend, and deepen this initial exploration. Please write two-pages (double spaced) in response to the writing prompt.

Writing Prompt:

First, take a moment to think about some images or ideas that come to mind when you hear the word authentic, as in an “authentic teacher” or someone who is being authentic. Then, describe an authentic moment in your own life. The moment may be subtle, like seemingly small moments that speak to you in personally meaningful or profound ways; it can be a more epiphany-like moment; or maybe somewhere in between. Also, the moment might not match exactly your ideal vision about authenticity, but it can still touch important aspects of it. Furthermore, it may be a moment that occurred within your teaching life or outside of it, including from childhood. To clarify, I believe that we bring the “whole” of ourselves every time we enter the classroom, and because of this, the life that you live outside of teaching and the life that you live as a classroom teacher may be equally important areas to explore. In turn, feel free to consider the parameters of this reflective exploration as wide open. Lastly, below are some questions from which to choose in order to support your description and reflection.

Contextual Questions: Where did the authentic moment occur? Which people and/or things were there in this space with you? When did it happen, e.g., time of school day and year; your age? What were you doing at the time?

Experiential-near Questions: What were you thinking and feeling as the experience occurred? What were you noticing about the people or things around you? How were you interacting with them?

What were you thinking, feeling, and doing just before this moment occurred? In other words, what were some of the conditions leading up to the moment?

What was the rest of your day like after the experience occurred?

Interpretative Questions: Does this experience, or perhaps this experience along with other experiences, influence how you relate with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators? Explain....

Does it arouse questions about what it means to teach, or awaken new possibilities for you as a teacher? Explain....

Does it influence your thinking about what you value most as a teacher, as well as what you envision for your students? Explain....

Appendix F: Literary Analysis Terms (Friedman, 1992)

Alliteration: the repetition of sounds, usually consonants, at the beginning of words or accented syllables

EX. She sells sea shells by the sea shore.

Allusion: a reference to a person, place, thing, event, situation, or aspect of culture, real or fictional

EX. The poem entitled “Ruth” alludes to the biblical Ruth.

Analogy: a fully developed comparison between two things or ideas that are basically unlike although they share something in common

EX. The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book.

Characterization: the means an author uses to develop the personality of a character via physical appearance, personality, thoughts, behavior, feelings, and speech. A character can be flat (as in a stereotype), dynamic, or static

Connotation: the emotional or cultural associations surrounding a word, as opposed to its strict, literal dictionary meaning

EX. Sunrise connotes new beginnings, rebirth.

Denotation: the strict dictionary meaning of a word, presented objectively, without emotional associations

EX. Sunrise denotes the sun rising.

Figurative Language:

Simile: comparison of two unlike things, ideas, or events, using like or as

EX. Her eyes are like pools.

Metaphor: comparison of two unlike things, ideas, or events, *not* using like or as

EX. In the morning, he is a bear.

Personification: ascribes human qualities to a nonhuman entity

EX. When Eve ate the apple, the Earth felt the wound.

Hyperbole: using extreme exaggeration for effect

EX. She had a mountain of food on her plate.

Apostrophe: directly addressing something that is not living

EX. Soul, soul. Throw forward your chest.

Synecdoche: where a part stands for a whole and a whole for a part.

EX. Referring to a policeman as “the law”

Metonymy: when one term naming an object is substituted for another word

EX. Money is called “bread.”

Foreshadowing: providing clues about what is going to happen in the plot

Hyperbole: the use of exaggeration for effect

Imagery: sensory details that provide vividness and immediacy in a literary work by arousing in readers complex emotional associations

Irony: a contrast between what seems to be and what actually is
EX. I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paper work.

Mood: the general atmosphere or prevailing emotion of a work as created by the choice of words, setting, images, and details

Paradox: a statement, character or situation that appears to be contradictory but that is nonetheless true

EX. Whoever comes to the gates of death knows the value of life.

Plot: the pattern of interrelated events in the story that present a resolve of conflict

Point of View: the vantage point from which an author presents the actions and characters in a story (i.e., first person, third person, omniscient or limited, objective)

Protagonist: central character of a literary work (usually positive)

Antagonist: a character or force opposing the protagonist

Satire: a technique that exposes human weakness or social evils

Setting: the time and place in which the action of a narrative occurs

Stereotype: a fixed, generalized image of a character, setting, or plot

Symbol: a concrete image used to represent something abstract such as a concept or idea
EX. A flag is a symbol of patriotism.

Theme: the underlying meaning of a literary work; usually implied, and makes an observation about the subject of the work

Tone: an author's attitude toward the subject matter and audience

Appendix G: The Visual Elements (Adapted from Norton, 1991)

Line suggests direction, energy, motion, and mood.

- **Vertical lines** suggest lack of movement.
- **Horizontal lines** suggest stability or absence of strife.
- **Right angles** suggest artificial elements that differ from the natural world of irregular and approximate shapes.
- **Diagonal lines** suggest loss of balance and uncontrolled motion (unless forming a triangle, which rests on a horizontal base and suggests safety).
- **Jagged lines** connote breakdown and destruction.
- **Curved lines** suggest fluidity because of their resemblance to whirlpools or concentric ripples of water.

Color combines with line to create mood and feeling, to contrast moods, to expose or conceal differences between character and setting, and to create drama and enhance plot.

- **Reds, yellows, and oranges** are most associated with fire and sun, and suggest warm or hot connotations, e.g., friendliness, high energy, anger.
- **Blues, greens and some violets** are most associated with air, water, and plant life. These colors suggest coolness or coldness, and they convey moods and emotions such as tranquility and melancholy.

Shape emphasizes mood. Lines join and intersect to suggest shapes, while areas of color meet to produce shapes.

- **Organic shapes** are irregular and curving and are common in nature and in handmade objects. They may be used to convey anything from receptivity and imagination to frightening unpredictability.
- **Geometric shapes** are exact, rigid, and often rectangular and usually have mechanical origins. They may be used to connote complexity, stability, assertion, or severity.
- **Symmetrical shapes** such as rectangles, squares, and ovals are calm and solid.
- **Asymmetrical shapes** are imbalanced, irregular, and dynamic.

Texture satisfies curiosity about how something feels, e.g., soft, hard, smooth, sharp, rough, or bumpy.

Organizing the Visual Elements

Composition is the way in which an artist combines the visual elements of line, color, shape, and texture into a unified whole. Design techniques include:

- **Visual sequence** to suggest most important elements in the picture
- **Size** to emphasize dominance (e.g., the largest form is seen first)
- **Color contrast** to emphasize dominance (e.g., an intense area of warm color dominates an intense area of cool color of the same size)
- **Placement** to emphasize the most important element in the center
- **Strong lines** to suggest visual pathways
- **Nonconformity** to disrupt the viewer's visual pathway

Page Design helps to provide a unifying quality between text and illustration. Types of page design include:

- **Most formal:** The text is placed opposite the illustration on adjacent pages; the use of borders may convey the formal feeling of a traditional legend.
- **Formal:** The text is placed above or beneath the illustrations.
- **Informal:** The text is shaped with irregular boundaries to fit inside, between, around, or to the side of the illustrations.
- **Very informal:** The text is combined with two or more arrangements.

Artistic Media

Ink may be applied with brush, sponge, cloth, or fingers to convey meaning and develop mood.

Water Colors, Acrylics, Pastels, and Oils may be applied from thin transparent washes to thick pigments, depending on the effect that the artist wishes to create.

Woodcuts create strong lines and bold colors to suggest a simplicity that is often desired by illustrators of folktales.

Collage involves pasting and sticking materials such as cardboard, paper, cloth, glass, leather, metal, wood, leaves, or flowers to communicate texture.

Artistic Style

Representational depicts subjects as they are seen in everyday life, i.e., compositions that clearly refer to people, objects, or natural phenomena in realistic ways.

Impressionistic uses outdoor subjects; experiments with breaking up colors and shapes to create an impression of the scintillating and changeable quality of light.

Expressionistic uses visual elements to express deepest inner feelings.

Abstract eliminates representational images by taking ordinary things as its subject and emphasizing certain characteristics of the subject by changing or distorting the usual image.

Appendix H: Evidence Sheet for the Caldecott Analysis

Caldecott Title:

Author/Illustrator:

Year of Award:

Book Summary:

Rubric Rating:

Summary of the Analysis:

Page-by-Page Description of the Evidence:

Appendix I: Working Set of Guidelines: *The Lion and the Mouse*

Caldecott Title: The Lion & the Mouse
Author/Illustrator: Jerry Pinkney
Year of Award: 2010
Book Summary: Staged within the African Serengeti of Tanzania and Kenya, <i>The Lion & the Mouse</i> is Jerry Pinkney’s near wordless retelling of Aesop’s classic fable between two very unlikely friends.
Rubric Rating: 6
Summary of the Analysis: The lion’s and the mouse’s journey represents a metaphor of human greatness: the human capacity to conquer narrow self-perceptions and to enter into caring and compassionate relationships. Pinkney depicts the “awesome yet fragile sides” of both protagonists as they embark upon an interconnected journey that illuminates the awesome yet fragile nature of authentic being.
<p>Working Set of Guidelines:</p> <p>Front and back covers: The lion and the mouse are equally large.</p> <p>Pages 1 & 2. The animals share the same space but keep with their own kind: e.g., lions together, zebras together, and elephants together. Not paying attention to animals “other than” their own kind.</p> <p>The babies, adults, and vulture (who feeds on the carcasses of dead animals) represent the connectedness of birth, life, and death... i.e., all sharing the same space.</p> <p>Pages 3 & 4. Proportion and size: mouse stands in the lion’s paw print; mouse tracks cover the paw prints; ants parade from one paw print to the next.</p> <p>Camouflaged frog in the grass looks toward the mouse.</p> <p>Flow of the “dedication” words suggests fluidity, as with nature.</p> <p>Set-up: Contrast these two pages with the front and back covers (i.e., equally large). Implied are two dimensions of reality: that as known through the senses versus that as understood by the heart, i.e., the deepest intuitive place within you.</p> <p>Reflection: Can you recall a moment as a teacher in which some kind of self-perceived inequality between you and someone else (perhaps a student) melted away, and in the moment you experienced a kind of sacred equality? Explain....</p> <p>Pages 5 & 6. WHO, Who, whoooo. Like the human question: Who? [Foreshadowing the two human poachers (“who” times two) and one owl (“whoooo”). Both represent a threat to the protagonists: owl to the mouse; poachers to the lion.]</p>

The mouse senses the impending threat.

Camouflaged imprint of a frog in the rock looks toward the mouse. Image of human hand in the tree log. [Reference with pages 3 & 4, i.e., the camouflaged frog and “dedication” words. The illustrator may be suggesting the theme of connectivity, and its subtleness.]

Pages 7 & 8. Mouse escapes from the owl.

Pages 9 & 10. A narrow escape. Everything appears to be okay to the mouse.

Unaware... the mouse is sitting on the back of the lion. [Implied is that she does not realize the uncertainty on which her life now rests.]

Pages 11 & 12. Wake-up call for the mouse. The frightened mouse dangles by her tail from the lion’s paw. The mouse is vulnerable and helpless: “squeak.” The lion is powerful: “GRRR.”

Set-up: The mouse experiences the dissonance and uncertainty of life. In this moment, she realizes existentially – that is, “bone deep”– how much of life is beyond her control, and this realization makes her feel vulnerable.

Reflection: Can you recall a moment in which you experienced existential or “bone deep” dissonance and uncertainty about teaching, or about being a teacher in general, perhaps in some way making you feel vulnerable? If so, how did you respond? Explain....

Pages 13-16. The lion gently props-up the mouse. With open paws, the lion releases the mouse, freeing and preserving her fragile life. [Contrast with the owl: The owl’s instinct is to do violence to the mouse. The lion’s instinct may be to do violence to the mouse, as well; however, the lion rises above the instinct and chooses compassion and nonviolence.]

Pages 17 & 18. [Symbolism of the foreground and background] The lion’s choice to free the mouse and preserve her life speaks indirectly, i.e., “in the distance,” to the mouse’s babies, who may survive and grow because they still have their mother.

Everything appears to be okay to the lion. But there is a poacher truck in the background.

Pages 19 & 20. Scurrying animals.

Poachers are driving a stake into the ground to arrange their net.

Set-up: [With reference to the previous comment for pages 13-16] Like with the owl, the humans’ instinct is to do violence to nature, as well; but this human instinct may be called the “me” oriented tendency. For example, recall pages 1 & 2. The animals all share the same space but keep with their own kind and ignore the “other” animals. Implied is separateness, fragmentation, and divisiveness of the underlying wholeness, which metaphorically emerges from the “me” oriented tendency. This way of being is “inauthentic.”

Reflection: Can you recall an inauthentic moment in your life as a teacher? Can you describe aspects about teaching, or about being a teacher in general, in which you feel inauthentic? Explain.... [Process note: Potential opportunity to deepen the question from the first individual interview about being “inauthentic.”]

Pages 21 & 22. Unaware... the lion is approaching the trap. Then, he steps into the noose on the ground.

Pages 23 & 24. [Similar theme to pages 11 & 12. Elaborate: even the seemingly most powerful creatures are vulnerable and helpless on some level.] [Process note: Potential opportunity to deepen the earlier question about reality as known through the senses versus that as understood by the heart, i.e., human equality.]

Pages 25 & 26. The roar of the lion arouses the mouse to action. [Process note: Potential opportunity to deepen the question from the first individual interview about the decision to teach, i.e., teaching as the response to a calling.]

Page 27. The lion is weary and defeated. [Reference pp.13-16. Earlier, the mouse utterly depended on the lion’s compassion to free and preserve her life; now, the lion is the one who is utterly dependent.]

Pages 28-30. The mouse mobilizes the gifts that are natural to being a mouse: nimble mover, facile climber, gnawer and scratcher.

Pages 31-32. The net releases its hold on the lion. The lion and net fall to the ground.

Page 33. The lion is content: his tail is curled, and he appears to be smiling at the mouse.

Set-up: Recall pages 13-16 in which the lion acted compassionately and selflessly by preserving the integrity of the mouse’s delicate life. Now, in this most unexpected way and from this most unforeseen source, the lion receives compassionate and selfless help that preserves the integrity of his own delicate life.

Reflection: What does it mean to act compassionately and selflessly in your teaching life? Provide examples.... Can you think of moments in which you, like the lion, have deepened your sense of integrity (i.e., your sense of personal truth) as a teacher in unexpected ways and from unforeseen sources?

Page 34-35. The mouse takes a piece of the netting and brings it back to her babies, who are all gathered together, playing with the rope.

Set-up: [With reference to the series of events on pages 23-35]. Consider the rope as symbolic for human forgetfulness about the underlying wholeness. For example, the human poachers reduce the earth’s gifts, such as hay and wool, to develop technologies (in this case netting) that diminish life. However, the mouse’s gnawing at the rope represents a metaphor about challenging this human tendency to forget. The net loosens its grip on the lion, suggesting that

human technologies can heal as much as harm life [potential link to pages 5 & 6: the image in the tree of the “open” human hand]. Lastly, the mouse brings the piece of rope back to her babies, whose playful curiosity is now nurtured by this restored gift. In effect, the mouse’s interaction with the rope may be a metaphor for challenging human fallibility and evoking human goodness.

Reflection: Are there moments in your teaching life in which you, like the mouse, have functioned on these two planes of understanding, i.e., recognizing human fallibility but seeing through it and evoking its inner goodness? Can you provide an example or tell a story?

Page 37. The mouse and her family as well as the lion and his family abide together. The other animals recognize this togetherness.

Set-up: The final illustration suggests the realization of both separateness and wholeness, i.e., authenticity. Exploring the implications of this image reveals the mystery and wonder of this scene. For example, in separate moments during the story, the lion was the helper as well as the helped. The same applies to the mouse. In the wholeness of the story, however, the lines are blurred between who is truly the helper and the helped. More subtly, the wholeness of the story joins together the negative and the positive, such as the threats of the owl and the poachers, which were part of the lion’s and the mouse’s journey toward authentic being. In addition, recall pages 1 & 2 in which the babies, adults, and vulture all share the same space. Implied is that the separateness of birth, life, and death all interconnect within the underlying wholeness. In short, the wholeness of life mysteriously and wondrously holds all things and beings together.

Reflection: Are there moments in which the mystery and wonder of both your uniqueness as a teacher and your connectedness with humanity and the world of subject matter (i.e., as represented in the curriculum) have spoken to you in your teaching life? Explain....

Appendix J: Working Set of Guidelines: *The House in the Night*

Caldecott Title: The House in the Night
Author: Susan Marie Swanson Illustrator: Beth Krommes
Year of Award: 2009
Book Summary: <i>The House in the Night</i> presents nighttime things that intrigue and inspire the purity of perception in young children. Swanson's poetry and Krommes' scratchboard illustrations, which contain gentle touches of golden watercolor, illuminate images of harmony and order in the universe.
Rubric Rating: 6
Summary of the Analysis: The young girl's journey reveals that each of us is deeply connected to the universe, while the universe is deeply connected to each of us. The rhythmic movements of the verbal and visual patterns suggest that, beneath the appearance of separateness, there is oneness without division. Metaphors in the poetry provide invitations to ponder one's participation with this deeply harmonious and non-divisive Way of things. The elegant lines, the interplay of black and white scratchboard, and the warm, glowing touches of golden watercolor deepen and complement the metaphors in their implied sacred sense.
<p>Working Set of Guidelines:</p> <p>[<i>Note:</i> Read the poem through for participants to hear and enjoy its meter and rhythm. For example: (a) the inverted rhythm of the poem, which begins and ends with the key to the house; (b) the accelerated meter, which occurs with the abbreviated phrases in the second half of the poem.]</p> <p>[<i>Note:</i> Inform participants that I will draw on metaphors in the first half of the poem to frame some of the reflections. I will direct them to the relevant picture(s) for each reflection. Suggest that the pictures evoke a feeling tone of complexity in their rich detail but also of warmth, gentleness, joy, and simplicity. These qualities convey a sense of sacredness in the imagery. Ask participants to let themselves sink into this feeling tone of the picture(s) as they reflect on the question at hand, i.e., a kind of reflective meditation.] [<i>Note:</i> I will provide enough copies of the book for participants to share in partners or, if possible, for each person individually.]</p>
<p>Set-up: [With reference to the pages: "Here is the key to the house" and "In the house burns a light"] Pretend that the key is a metaphor for your teaching and that the house is a metaphor for your life as a teacher.</p>
<p>Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the light that burns inside the house of your teaching life? • How do you express this light to children through the key of your teaching? • Is there evidence to indicate to you that your children are reaching for the key that you wish to hand them? Explain....
<p>Set-up: "In that light rests a bed" does not imply lethargy or inactivity. It metaphorically suggests refuge, that is, the sense of being fully alive, fully present and whole, as you directly</p>

touch the light burning inside the house of your teaching life. “On that bed waits a book” implies that this refuge waits for persons who, like the girl, risk opening the book and taking flight into the “starry dark,” that is, the novelty and curiosity that can arise in exploring the unknown.

Reflection:

- What are the learning risks that you have embarked upon to take flight into the “starry dark,” the unknown, of your teaching, perhaps making you feel more fully alive, fully present... whole?
- What risks do you imagine are still necessary as you renew your commitment to exploring the light burning inside the house of your teaching life?

Set-up: Pretend that the light of your teaching takes flight, like the girl on the bird, and breathes a song throughout the universe of subject matter that you teach, as represented in the curriculum.

Reflection:

- Pick a subject that you teach. How does the light of your teaching breathe its song into this particular subject?
- Do you imagine there is still more to sing? Explain....

The book presents images of harmony and order that cut through illusions of division – of me “in here” and the world “out there.” In other words, it carefully illuminates a deep truth that, in the wholeness of life, nothing is excluded and everything is held as deeply connected.

[*Note:* Below is a menu of examples relating to connectivity in the book. I may choose several to highlight for participants. Some of these examples will serve as catalysts for the reflections below. Some of them may remain as notes for my ongoing reference, depending on what emerges in the dialogue with participants. Equally important, some of these examples may evoke elaborations from some of the above reflections, i.e., the reflective meditation. In this case, I need to be aware of these openings if they occur and allow the participants to explore new insights that may emerge. Lastly, as I provide some examples, I may invite participants to share any of their own observations in the book regarding deep connectivity. This invitation may create an unexpected reflective opening for me to pursue in the dialogue.]

- a) In the rhythm of the poem, the beginning turns back toward itself. Beginning and end are on the same continuum, and perhaps are indivisible. As the poet T.S. Elliot says: “To arrive where we began, and to know the place for the first time.”
- b) In the meter of the poem, the first half is slow because the phrases are elongated by the verbs (e.g., “In the house *burns* a light.”) while the second half accelerates, since there are no verbs (e.g., “light in the house”). The whole meter of the poem holds these opposite tempos as integral to the structure of the entire piece.
- c) There is the interdependence of pages through the explicit overlapping of words: e.g., “Sun in the moon, / moon in the dark, / dark in the song, / song in the bird....”

- d) The bird in the book faces the moon [title page] but also faces the sun [two-page spread in the middle]. Perhaps the joyful expression on the bird's face in each picture metaphorically implies the wisdom of integrating opposites, such as light and dark, into one's understanding.
- e) [With reference to the page: "On the moon's face shines the sun"] The sun is shown facing opposite the moon, which reflects the light of the sun. On the next page, i.e., "Sun in the moon, moon in the dark," the sun is visually absent, but the sun's presence is there still shining in the moon's face, implying that the light is in the dark. [Note: I might also reference the page: "...all about the starry dark." The placement of the girl and bird and the visual flow of the page seem to suggest that they are moving toward the light while bringing the dark with them, as intrinsically connected to them; or perhaps that the dark is following them into the light, implying that they are always connected with it. Also, there appears to be a ying-yang formation between the shades of dark and light, which may suggest this deep connection.]

In addition, [with reference to the last page: "... a home full of light"] the moon reflects the sun's light into the girl's bedroom. Remember the beginning, "In the house burns a light," in which the sun was setting. [With reference to the first bullet about the rhythm of the poem] The end brings us back to the beginning with fresh insight: perhaps the light is always shining, even in the dark. Again, perhaps the joyful expression on the bird's face suggests an understanding of this integrated wisdom.

- f) [With reference to the pages: "In that bird breathes a song..." through "On the moon's face shines the sun"] The wholeness of the girl's journey represents all kinds of rhythms and movements: (a) the diagonal motion as the girl takes flight; (b) the flowing organic and intersecting lines from the panoramic view, which seem to hint at branches of a tree (i.e., earth-and-sky connection), that is, if one were to imagine the middle crease as the base of the tree; (c) the vertical flowers and horizontal clouds; and (d) the circular motion of the planets orbiting the sun.

[With reference to the same pages as above] The perspective from beneath the flowers, as if a small creature such as a bug were looking to the sky, and the panoramic view from the sky toward the earth, suggest the connection of earth and sky. In fact, observe that the flowers appear to be touching the clouds. But, in the next page of the earth's orbit, these perspectives fall away and there is just space, which simply holds our reference points of earth to sky and sky to earth. Metaphorically, this may allude to the truth that the undivided space of human wholeness holds our distinctly separate selves, i.e., you are you and I am me, but yet we are deeply connected.

Set-up: The wholeness of life speaks to us not in linear language, i.e., the language of analytic thinking and reasoning, but rather in the language of the heart: the deepest intuitive space within each of us. When we access the space of the heart, we can hear the wholeness speak to us in ways that may transcend our ordinary habits of thinking. For example: recall in *The Lion and the Mouse* how the wholeness of the story joined together the negative and the positive, such as with the threats of the owl and the poachers. In those particular moments, the events appeared negative for the characters, but in the whole of the story, they were an important part of the lion's

and the mouse's journey toward authentic being. *The House in the Night* conveys this same theme: that in the wholeness of life, nothing is excluded and everything is held as deeply connected. [Recall bullets d & e to emphasize this point, e.g., the bird's integrative understanding of dark and light as intimately connected.]

Reflection: Let's use dark and light as metaphors for negative and positive experiences in your journey of teaching. Is there a seemingly negative experience in your teaching journey that, in the whole of this journey thus far, may be revealing itself as a blessing to the evolution of wisdom in your understanding? Explain....

Set-up: [With reference to bullet f] On the one hand, the content of the richly detailed illustrations reveals the immense complexity of life that bears witness to the young girl's journey. Perhaps the content of your richly detailed teaching lives bears witness to the immense complexity of your own unique journeys. On the other hand, the warmth, gentleness, joy, and simplicity that is conveyed in the feeling tone throughout the illustrations suggest a sense of sacredness that motivates and inspires the girl's journey. Perhaps the deepest life values that were calling you into the teaching profession are what continue to motivate and inspire your own journey, despite all of the ups and downs.

Reflection:

- What are the values that most deeply embody your decision to teach?
- What did these values mean to you when you entered teaching, and how has your understanding of them evolved since then?
- What are the ways in which you might be (or you imagine yourself) renewing your commitment to these values?