Bearing Witness to the Personal Core of Teaching

Rebecca Sullivan

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Abstract

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Through a dynamic interplay of philosophical analysis and fine-tuned fieldwork, this dissertation seeks to bear witness to the presence and power of the *personal core of teaching*, a dimension of education that, I argue, is of utmost importance, but which remains largely undervalued by educational policymakers and underexamined by educational research. I first carry out a careful phenomenological analysis of teaching that illuminates the existence of teaching's personal core, as well as its defining characteristics. Then, following the research orientation David Hansen (2021) names *bearing witness*, I render narratives drawn from 1,150 hours spent observing three different kinds of teachers: a high school history teacher, a collegiate cross country and track and field coach, and master chefs who work with adolescent apprentices. My philosophical analysis reveals that these three diverse modes of teaching share a common *personal core* and manifests the pedagogical import of this dimension of teaching for fostering students' self-actualization. I conclude by drawing out implications of my study for teacher education and practice, and by offering recommendations for how teacher educators, administrators, and teachers can better recognize and respond to the reality of teaching's personal core.

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INTRODUCTION

There are some realities that remain hidden from view, not because they are foreign, but because we lack the attentive vision required to see them clearly. Teaching, I argue, is one such reality. In this dissertation, my purpose is to compellingly illustrate the presence and pedagogical power of what I will refer to as teaching's *personal core*. In speaking of the personal core of teaching, I make the claim that interpersonal encounter is integral to teaching's identity. I also acknowledge that this personal dimension of teaching is easily overlooked, owing to the fact that the impact resulting from the meeting of teacher and students as persons resists quantification, generalization, and replication. Nevertheless, as my project seeks to illustrate, the personal core of teaching can be seen and its impact can be articulated by a viewer who attends to education with reverent, non-objectifying, contemplation. Attending to the personal core of teaching reveals that there are educational gifts offered through the interpersonal encounters that occur between teacher and student by which students not only learn things, but are invited to become themselves by seeing and responding to value in a new way. I intend, in what follows, to illustrate these gifts and their importance. This descriptive work will further highlight that the personal gifts of teaching are not something detachable or generalizable that a teacher passes on to their students, but, rather, they are given through the teacher's personal, singular gift of self.

In my opening chapter, I will conduct a phenomenological inquiry aimed at establishing the presence of the personal core of teaching and illustrating its key characteristics. I will first distinguish teaching as an instance of what early phenomenologists refer to as *empathy*, and will then characterize teaching as what Jean-Luc Marion (2002) calls a *saturated phenomenon*. Ultimately, I will describe teaching as a gift of self on the part of the teacher by which students are given to themselves.

After establishing the existence and importance of the personal core of teaching through philosophical consideration, the focus of my dissertation will turn to how this personal core can be seen and made visible in educational research. In Chapter 2, I will distinguish the mode of educational inquiry David Hansen (2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2021) names *bearing witness* as uniquely suited to this aim. I will articulate identifying characteristics of research that seeks to bear witness to the personal core of teaching and will retrospectively name past research as enacting this orientation. My aim in providing this historical review is to help crystalize the meaning of *bearing witness* and to illustrate its complementary value to other modes of educational research.

Chapter 3 will relate the impetus for this project and how I came to understand my work as an effort to bear witness to the personal core of teaching. The heart of this chapter will relate testimony drawn from a period of three years I spent observing the work of an experienced high school teacher, Gene.[1] I will describe how I gradually came to see the meaning and impact of interpersonal encounters between Gene and his students, and to recognize these moments as constituting the core of the teaching and learning that occurred in Gene's classroom.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I will render testimony from two long-term fieldwork projects in which I intentionally aimed to see and bear witness to the personal core of teaching. Chapter Four will relate narratives drawn from observations and interviews carried out at Rosewood, a working kitchen that engages an apprenticeship pedagogy. My focus in this chapter will be to illuminate the personal gifts I saw offered through the teaching of culinary arts in this environment. The narratives related in Chapter 5 will capture moments in which I saw the presence and power of the personal core of teaching during nine months I spent observing

[1] By prior arrangement, all names of persons and institutions referenced in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

Kelsey: the head coach of a Division I collegiate track and cross country team. My aim in this chapter will be to highlight how the personal gifts Kelsey's athletes receive through her coaching appear as gifts of self that proceed from Kelsey's singular person.

The final chapter of my dissertation will be devoted to drawing out the ramifications of my project for teaching and teacher education. Taking the personal core of teaching seriously, I will argue, involves recognizing the importance of both singularity and embeddedness in teaching. This acknowledgment necessitates the development of teaching practices, metrics of evaluation, and programs of professional preparation and development that honor, safeguard, and aid the presence of teachers and students in the classroom as persons, engaged in the unique interpersonal encounter proper to teaching.

Chapter 1: The Personal Core of Teaching: A Phenomenological Inquiry

1.1 Introduction

In this first chapter of my dissertation, I will enact phenomenology to take a fresh look at the familiar concept of teaching. Through this reflective investigation, I aim to illuminate what can, I argue, be termed the *personal core of teaching*. This personal core names a dimension that reveals teaching to be what phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion terms a *saturated phenomenon*, in which teachers offer students *gifts* that go beyond any measurable or targeted learning outcome. These gifts are personal because they are offered and received when teacher and student encounter each other in-person and as persons. In what follows, I will attend to the phenomenological structure of teaching, thus revealing that the personal core of teaching appears, on the one hand, as a gift of self on the part of the teacher, and, on the other, as a gift by which students are given to themselves.

In characterizing teaching as a saturated phenomenon, I happily join company with philosophers of education who find in Marion's philosophy accurate and illuminating language with which to describe the rich, awe-inspiring reality of education and, simultaneously, to fight against reductive understandings of teaching and learning. Gert Biesta (2021), for example, names three gifts students are invited to receive from a teacher that carry education beyond the realm of ego-centered learning and into an orbit of receptivity and response, namely: (1) being given what one didn't ask for, (2) being given the frame within which to appreciate the truth of something radically new, and (3) being given oneself as a subject. Kevin Gary (2019) and Samuel Rocha (2009) both cite the capacity to let oneself be overwhelmed with wonder by the

saturated nature of education as key to recovering a place for love in teaching and learning that is inaccessible to a conception of education infatuated with performance-based standards.

In what follows, I will enact my own phenomenology of teaching in an effort to make visible its saturated nature and its gifts. In doing so, my intention is not to ignore, negate, or senselessly repeat the work of other scholars. Rather, I seek to take the famous injunction of Edmund Husserl (2001), the founder of phenomenology, seriously, urging would-be phenomenologists to return "to the 'things themselves'" (p. 168). As John Drummond (2008) describes, the urgency of Husserl's exhortation lies in the declaration that each phenomenologist must think "*for* oneself" (p. 46, emphasis original). The truth seen and affirmed by the phenomenologist cannot be taken on hearsay. At the same time, Drummond explains, in a robust undertaking of phenomenology, the phenomenologist avoids thinking "*by* oneself" (p. 46, emphasis original), caught in their own simple subjectivity, but rather, approaches the world through dialogue with other perspectives. In this chapter, as well as throughout my dissertation, I will do phenomenology for myself, while freely drawing on and thinking with other philosophers, in an effort to convincingly illuminate the presence and power of the personal core of teaching. I invite you, reader, to think both with me and for yourself as we consider together the phenomenological nature of teaching.

Why Phenomenology?

I have elected to inquire into the nature of education through phenomenology because looking again, with the purpose of seeing familiar realities with fresh eyes, is the aim and essence of phenomenological inquiry. Phenomenology is not a theory, but a way of looking. The phenomenological reduction, introduced by Edmund Husserl (2014), "brackets" questions of existence, and with them, all empirical, metaphysical, and conceptual theories and debates. This

bracketing occurs, not because such questions and debates are unimportant or in an effort to throw their reality into doubt, but because bracketing enables the philosopher to focus their attention on how a phenomenon presents itself, on how it is given in experience (pp. 52-55). The reduction strips away theories and concepts that, however helpful they may be in other contexts and for other purposes, risk obstructing our vision or distracting us from seeing a phenomenon just as it shows itself. Phenomenology enables us to step outside the flow of our everyday experience and see what we might normally miss because our attention is directed elsewhere, for example, toward action, explanation, evaluation, or production.

Education is a reality that is inexorably entrenched in theories, concepts, procedures, evaluations, explanations, and outcomes. This complexity is part and parcel of education and I do not suggest that it ought to be done away with or ignored. However, it can, I think, be helpful, refreshing, and clarifying to set all these dimensions temporarily to the side, to put them out of action, to place them in brackets or parentheses, in order to focus with clear vision on the experience of education, specifically, the experience of learning from a teacher. What do we have to gain from doing this? Such reflection does not aim at practical outcomes; it will not yield a harvest of best practices for education. Rather, through phenomenology, we can hope to deepen our understanding of the essence of education: to strip away everything accidental and to see more clearly what, at its core, teaching is really like.

Seeing Within the Phenomenological Reduction

The phenomenological reduction is not reductive. On the contrary, what remains within the reduction is what is essential to a phenomenon: the core that makes it what it is and without which it would lose its integrity. In one sense, the phenomenological reduction functions like a reduction in cooking: everything inessential is boiled away and, while the concentrated sauce

diminishes in volume, its flavor becomes more potent. At the same time, there is another sense in which the phenomenological reduction is not at all like a reduction in cooking, for the simple but important reason that when we speak of a sauce being reduced to its essential flavor, we are speaking of an empirical process, whereas phenomenology brackets questions of existence and is therefore unable to make empirical, metaphysical, or causal claims (Husserl, 2014, p. 55-6) . Hence, to say that what remains within the reduction is what is *essential* to the phenomenon is not a metaphysical claim. It is rather a description of how that phenomenon appears, how it shows itself to me in my experience of it. This bracketing differs from Cartesian doubt, for, as Husserl explains:

> *We do not give up the thesis that we have posited, we alter nothing in our conviction.* That conviction remains in itself as it is, as long as we do not introduce new motives for judgment, which is precisely what we do not do. And nevertheless it undergoes a modification—while it continues to remain in itself what it is, *we place it as it were "out of action," we "suspend it," we "bracket it."* It is still here as before, like the bracketed in the brackets, like the suspended outside the context of the suspension. (p. 54, emphasis original).

Martin Heidegger (1992) describes bracketing in similar terms, as a "reversal of perspective" in which "the perceived is not directly presumed as such, but in the how of its being." He seconds Husserl's affirmation that "(t)his bracketing of the entity takes nothing away from the entity itself, nor does it purport to assume that the entity is not." Rather, "(t)his phenomenological suspension of the transcendent thesis has but the sole function of making the entity present in regard to its being" (p. 99). Phenomenology does not ask *what* a thing or person or event *is*, but rather *how* that thing, person, or event *shows up* for me, how it *appears* to me, and, furthermore, how it appears to me precisely as itself and not as something else. Therefore, looking at teaching within the reduction involves considering how things, persons, and events manifest themselves within the experience of teaching.

Phenomenology can be understood as offering a sort of x-ray vision into the structure of experience. A foundational insight that appears in the reduction is that experience has what Husserl (2001) calls an *intentional* character. Phenomenological reflection reveals that thinking is always thinking about something (pp. 62-4). It is always intentional, involving directedness-at an object (p. 64). It is an error, according to phenomenologists, to conceive of thought as mediated by appearances, occurring in a separate realm from the world of things, persons, and events. On the contrary, phenomenologists insist that whenever I think, my thought reaches the thing itself. This is true even within the phenomenological reduction, when questions of existence are bracketed.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012) clarifies this phenomenon with regard to our experience of other persons. He describes how, when I perceive a photograph of a person I know, Pierre, or call him to mind in my imagination, my thought aims at the person himself: "I imagine an absent Pierre, I am not conscious of contemplating Pierre in an image numerically distinct from Pierre himself. As far away as Pierre might be, I aim at him in the world" (p. 186). Within the phenomenological reduction, in which I temporarily bracket questions regarding Pierre's empirical, ontological existence in order to focus on how he appears to my perception, I find that I still encounter Pierre himself. I also still encounter him in the context of the world. Although I do not, within the reduction, consider questions about that world or Pierre's existence, neither the world nor Pierre disappear; the world is still where I encounter the person of Pierre. Thus, the phenomenological reduction does not involve a moving away from the world into an abstract

realm, but simply involves a change of focus: from the *being* of a thing or person to their *appearing* (Marion, 2002, p. 12).[2]

Furthermore, phenomena rarely, if ever, show up in our experience in a neutral way, nor can our interaction with the world be characterized as a series of incidental collisions with various phenomena. Rather, when we take a reflective look at how we experience the world, we see that our way of being has an attunement to or directedness toward meaning. We experience the world as meaning-laden. This attunement to meaning is part and parcel of what Husserl names intentionality. Our way of being in the world is intentional. Human beings move in the realm of meaning: what we encounter in the world shows up first and foremost as meaningful and only secondarily as empirical data.

According to Husserl (2014), every intentional act (that is, every movement of the human being through the world) consists of two elements: *noesis* and *noema*. In broad strokes, *noesis* names the pole of an act that gives it its distinct character (i.e. thinking, remembering, imagining, etc), and *noema* refers to that toward which the *noesis* is directed (the thought, memory, image, etc). *Noesis* and *noema* are not two different phenomena; they are two dimensions of the very same phenomenon, like the heads and tails of a single coin. Husserl corrects what he considers to be an error of Descartes by noting that whenever we think, we think about something. The thinking (*noesis*) and the object of thought (*noema*) are utterly indivisible, and yet also distinct.

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[2] Husserl (1989) puts forward the possibility of performing a second reduction, called the *eidetic reduction,* in which thought is considered in an abstract "region of pure consciousness" (§33). The possibility of this second reduction and its philosophical implications have been a source of contention in the history of phenomenology. In this dissertation, I will not directly enter the debate about the possibility or nature of the eidetic reduction. My dissertation will move in the realm of what Husserl (1989) calls the *phenomenological reduction* (§56)*,* described above, which considers how phenomena appear in our experience. However, the phenomenology I enact in this project will accord with and affirm Marion's (2002) critique that considering what our experience is like does not justify establishing a firm phenomenological separation between consciousness and world. On the contrary, careful phenomenological inquiry reveals that the meaning of phenomena is given in and through our experience of those phenomena.

The same intentionality characterizes acts of perception: to see is always to see something; to touch is always to touch something. Moreover, the *something* seen (or touched or thought about or imagined or remembered) appears in a meaningful way. I see a stool, for example, not as a flat plane supported by four legs, but as a place to sit down. I can of course calculate its geometrical qualities, but this only occurs through abstraction; it is not how I encounter the stool in experience. In experience, the stool appears to me simply and directly as somewhere to sit.

Jean-Luc Marion, while he agrees with much of Husserl's characterization of intentionality, critiques Husserl for treating *noesis* as belonging to consciousness, thereby ultimately indicating that the mind is a creator or giver of meaning. Marion (2002) emphasizes that reflecting phenomenologically on experience reveals that both *noesis* and *noema* are given; neither appears as proceeding from my own consciousness (p. 21). Furthermore, we encounter phenomena in our experience in which the *noema* exceeds the *noesis*, in which, to use plainer language, the meaning we encounter exceeds our ability to conceptualize or comprehend it. An example Marion (2005) offers of such a phenomenon is the human face: when we encounter the face of another person, we see a depth of meaning that infinitely exceeds what our conceptual knowledge of that person will ever grasp (p. 106). An implication of this insight is that *receptivity* is a fundamental feature that characterizes how we as human beings experience meaning (Marion, 2002, p. 10). We are not creators of meaning, but rather receive meaning as a gift to which we are invited to offer a response.

1.2 The Phenomenological Structure of Teaching

A phenomenological consideration of teaching reveals it to be, like all human actions, intentional: it aims at something. The intentionality of teaching can be rendered in multiple ways.

Most simply, we can say that to teach is always to teach something, just as to speak is always to say something and to point is always to point at something. This is true, but it is not enough to clarify what is unique about the phenomenon of teaching: what distinguishes teaching (something) from talking (about something) or showing (something). For one thing, teaching involves an added layer of intentionality. To teach is to teach something to *someone*: it is a communicative, intersubjective act. I can recite a brilliant lecture in the privacy of my home, but if my lecture is not heard by anyone besides myself, I cannot be said to be teaching. Teaching is, in its essence, interpersonal. Yet this is still not all, for not every communicative act qualifies as teaching. When I greet a neighbor while walking down the street, I communicate something to him, but I am not teaching him. It is also not enough to say that the communicative act of teaching aims at the other person's reception or response. My neighborly greeting also seeks a response, and only can really be considered a greeting if it is received and acknowledged in some way. But it is still not teaching. The communicative act of teaching aims at being recognized, received, and responded to in a particular way by the act's recipient: the student.

Gary Fenstermacher's (1986) account of "studenting" helps clarify the unique contours that define teaching. The teacher's action, he explains, does not aim directly at the student's learning of content, for the act of learning is something the student—and not the teacher—must accomplish through their own engagement with the material presented. Rather, the teacher's actions aim to equip students to be ready for such engagement. Thus, the teacher seeks to enable students' ability to "student" through actions such as "instructing the learner on the procedures and demands of the studenting role, selecting the material to be learned, adapting that material so that it is appropriate to the level of the learner...monitoring and appraising the student's progress, and serving the learner as one of the primary sources of knowledge and skill" (pp. 39–40). Thus,

we can say that a teacher's action, in teaching, aims at learning, but in an indirect way, similar to how filling the gas tank of a car is an action that aims at reaching an intended destination. Putting gas in the tank in New York City does not directly bring about my arriving in Boston; many other factors must fall into place, including my possessing the ability to drive, knowing the route, and having the requisite time blocked into my schedule to make the trip. However, while filling my gas tank is not sufficient to enable me to reach Boston, it still may be an action aimed toward that end. In the case of teaching, as Fenstermacher rightly points out, the eventual outcome of learning is even more uncertain than my reaching Boston by car, since the act of learning lies in the student's—and not the teacher's—control. However, teaching still appears as seeking to enable the ultimate end of student learning. If the student fails to learn through "studenting," the action of teaching seems to remain incomplete and unfulfilled in its intention, even though the full completion of the action lies outside the teacher's control.

Gert Biesta (2016, 2020) names the uncertainty of teaching the "beautiful risk of education," since, while the fulfillment of the teacher's intentions is beyond their control, the fact that a teacher offers a student something that they can choose to take up or leave behind safeguards both the freedom and the value of education:

> There always is a possibility, and there always should be a possibility, that our students take their freedom and then turn back to us and say that they don't want—or, perhaps more importantly, don't need—our intentions. This risk is always there in education as well, and if we see this as a risk that needs to be overcome, a problem that needs to be "solved," we actually eradicate education itself (2020, p. 103).

Phenomenologically, teaching appears as an act of offering. Without an object to offer, teaching becomes a simple conversation between two people. Without a student who freely receives or rejects what the teacher offers, teaching becomes either solipsistic study (involving a teacher's infatuation with subject matter without offering the object of study to the student) or

indoctrination (forcing students to engage with subject matter through compulsion, but without leaving space for genuine learning, or "studenting," to occur).

Thus, we can employ Husserl's language to say that teaching is the *noesis* and learning the *noema* of a single educative act. Phenomenologically, a teacher appears as a pointer, directing a student's focus toward something they attend to together. This phenomenological understanding of teaching is fairly broad and does not confine teachers to those who possess that job title in a formal way. On the contrary, phenomenologically, if a person is given as deliberately aiming to teach something to someone, then they are given as a teacher. Parents may be given in this way, as might coaches or anyone whose sustained instruction helps others develop a skill or increase their domain of knowledge. The important thing, phenomenologically, is not whether society labels a person as a teacher, but whether they embody the posture of pointer.

The image of teacher as pointer evokes the much-discussed educational triangle between teacher, student, and subject-matter (Hawkins, 2002). Each element of this "I, thou, and it" relationship is integral to what teaching is, although, naturally, it is possible to consider each "line" of this triangle in isolation. Teaching may (and certainly does) involve moments in which the "I-thou" relationship is especially pronounced. Teaching likewise involves, especially in the teacher's class preparation, times in which teacher and subject matter are in direct relation and the student fades temporarily from view. It is also possible to identify moments that foreground the student's direct engagement with subject matter and in which the teacher takes a back seat. However, were any element of the triangle to disappear permanently, teaching would cease to be what it is.

If subject matter were excluded from teaching altogether, as discussed above, an encounter between teacher and student would cease to appear as an act of teaching, appearing instead as an interpersonal encounter with a different sort of intentionality: perhaps, for example, as a polite conversation aimed at passing the time, or as a joint engagement aimed at exploring a topic hitherto unknown to both parties. Conversely, when either teacher or student is bracketed from the consideration of education, the phenomenon of teaching disappears and only learning remains. If I focus my attention on the interaction between the student and the something they are attempting to learn, I find that much can be learned through the student's unmediated encounter with the world.

Philosophers across millennia have emphasized the importance and efficacy of learning by doing, or by discovery. "(T)he things we have to learn before doing them, we learn by doing them," Aristotle famously quips in his *Nicomachean Ethi*cs (p. 21). However, philosophers likewise distinguish such learning from the act of learning from a teacher. "Now a man acquires knowledge both (a) from an interior principle, as is clear in the case of one who acquires his own knowledge through discovery," Thomas Aquinas reasons, "and also (b) from an exterior principle, as is clear in the case of one who learns by being taught" (*Summa Theologiae,* 1.117.1). Jean-Jacques Rosseau (1979) likewise contrasts learning from a teacher, which he calls "the education of men," with "the education of things," by which we gain knowledge "from our experience about the objects which affect us" (p. 38). Thus, to return to the language of Fenstermacher, when the teacher is bracketed from the educational I-thou-it triangle, the phenomenon of *learning* or *studenting* remains, but the phenomenon of teaching disappears. Bracketing the student from the educational triangle reveals a similar phenomenon: a teacher's solitary study of subject matter appears phenomenologically as this learning by discovery. Now

it is the teacher who is engaging in learning through direct, unmediated contact with the world. Phenomenologically identical to what Fenstermacher refers to as "studenting," this learning on the part of the teacher is more commonly termed *study* or *scholarship*.

1.3 Teaching as Empathic Encounter

Since teacher, student, and subject matter are all essential to the phenomenon of teaching,—since none can be bracketed without the phenomenon of teaching itself disappearing from view—teaching is importantly *interpersonal*. Teaching appears as a special kind of interaction between two persons in which one person (a teacher) directs the attention of the other person (the student) toward a shared object. Phenomenologically, any interaction in which two people engage with each other as persons is given the name *empathy*. Teaching, therefore, appears as an empathic phenomenon.

Defining Empathy

Through phenomenological inquiry, Husserl (1989) distinguishes two ways in which we, as human beings, engage with the world around us, which can also be described as two modes of learning. As I move through the world, meaning appears to me either *primordially*—through solitary exploration that puts me in direct contact with my surroundings—or *empathically*—through interpersonal encounter. Understanding the phenomenological distinction between primordial learning and empathic learning will help clarify the distinguishing features of teaching as a special kind of empathic act.

In his *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl (1960) acknowledges Descartes's insight that I always move through the world as myself, as my own subjective "I." I experience myself at the center of my own universe, as the sole subject occupying what Husserl calls my "sphere of peculiar ownness" (p. 93). No matter where I move, I always experience myself "here," and

everything outside of me is "there." It is germane to note that with this phenomenological statement, Husserl makes a descriptive comment about the way I experience the world, not an ontological or empirical claim. My "sphere of ownness" names my unshakeable first-person perspective. I always and only see the world through my own eyes. This is not to say that my vision is not influenced, affected, or touched by what I encounter, but rather describes the manner in which I encounter and respond to such influences: from my subjective "I" perspective. Importantly, though, while Husserl contends that I always move through the world as myself, he holds that my understanding of the world differs when I engage in solitary exploration—what he names "primordial" learning—versus when I encounter the world with other people, other subjects. Primordially, everything I encounter—including other people—is given to me (or, in Husserl's language, *constituted* for me) as an object. I am the sole subject, the only "I," and everything outside of me is some*thing* that I understand in reference to myself. In this way of moving through the world, which correlates with what I have referred to above as *learning by discovery*, I am the sole agent of my learning.

When I engage with the world with other people, whom I recognize as subjects like me but with singular first-person perspectives that differ from my own, my understanding of the world, others, and myself is expanded and enhanced. Husserl names this second way of approaching the world—with others, as one subject among many—"empathy." To consider what is learned through encounter with other subjects is, in phenomenological language, to consider what we learn *empathically*. It is important to note that empathy has a specific meaning in phenomenology that differs in important ways from the way the term is used colloquially and by many social scientists. In phenomenology, empathy is a way of knowing. *Empathic learning* names the kind of learning that occurs when I encounter another human being in-person.

To meet in-person means that they appear to me, phenomenologically, as a subject who, like me, engages the world in a meaningful, intentional way, but whose "sphere of ownness" differs from my own. The key point here is that the other person appears to me as a some*one* and not as some*thing*: as a subject who possesses their own "I" perspective and not an as an object. In the primordial sphere, I am the only subject. Other human beings can show up for me primordially, but they appear as objects: their identity is reduced to how they relate to me. For example, when I pass through the checkout line in the grocery store, the man behind the counter might be primordially given to me as a cashier; my understanding of his identity is reduced to the function he performs for me. Likewise, my AP calculus teacher may be primordially given to me as a resource to help me avoid taking Calculus in college. In these cases, my relationship to others is that of subject to object. The other does not appear "in-person," but rather in relation to my person, to my "I." Experiencing others in this way is not inherently problematic; it is simply a facet of one way in which we move through the world.

However, phenomenological reflection reveals that we do not only experience other human beings as objects; there are times when others appear to us in-person: as subjects in their own right. Furthermore, in these cases, I do not *infer* that the other is a subject; they are *given* to me as a subject immediately and directly. I simply see the other as a subject who is like me, but who has a different perspective.

In phenomenology, empathy names a cognitive capacity, not an affective one. Empathy does not, as in common contemporary uses of the word, involve feeling what another person feels, but rather denotes understanding the other person as a conscious subject who enacts a particular kind of directedness toward a shared world. In empathy, I am given the world from the other person's perspective, but I do not experience their perspective in the same way they do. For

example, in seeing my friend jerk away from a dog, I see, through empathy, that she perceives the dog as a threat to her safety. I appreciate her fear, but I do not thereby take it on as my own. She experiences fear primordially; I perceive her fear empathically. By seeing my friend's response, I see that the dog can be perceived as a threat, and I may respond to the dog with fear as well. If I do so, however, my response becomes primordial and no longer empathic. My empathic appreciation of my friend's trepidation might alternatively invite from me a different primordial response, for example, compassion. The important phenomenological point is that empathy does not lead me ipso facto to respond to the world in the same way as the other person does;[3] rather, it shows me a possible way of responding to the world that I perceive as distinct from my own.

Furthermore, phenomenologists understand empathy to be a natural human capacity or faculty. Cognitive scientists and developmental psychologists share this view, defining what phenomenologists call empathy as "joint attention": the ability to follow another's gaze and understand their gesture as intentional, as pointing to a shared object of attention. This ability has been empirically shown to develop in early infancy (Tomasello, 1999), and has been proposed as a primary feature responsible for human beings' evolutionary development (Thompson, 2007). Empathy, in phenomenology, is not a virtue, but rather a way of attending to the world and others. It is a way of seeing. Thus, in phenomenology, becoming more empathetic does not consist in *feeling* more or *doing* more. Empathy, in phenomenology, resembles what Simone Weil (1959) refers to as the faculty of attention. While the ability to attend is a natural capacity of human beings, Weil's writings, as well as recent literature on the effect of mindfulness

[3] In fact, psychologists cite the inability to differentiate between my perspective and someone else's perspective (in other words, failing to appreciate the difference between primordial and empathic knowledge), which they name "enmeshment," as an inhibitor of healthy autonomous development (Kivisto et al., 2015).

practices in education (Suárez-Garcia et al., 2020), attest that this faculty can be developed and honed by practice. When phenomenologists such as Husserl write about empathy, however, their concern is not how to hone this way of seeing, but rather, what kind of knowledge and understanding are gained through this intersubjective kind of looking.

Empathy and Self-Knowledge

Encountering others gives me new perspectives on the world, and in doing so, changes the way I understand the world and my relationship to it. In the primordial sphere, just as I am the sole agent of learning, so too, I am the sole agent of meaning. That is not to say that I am the creator of meaning; primordially, objects appear to me as meaningful, and I can understand myself as discovering meaning. However, it is to say that, primordially, I experience meaning as purely subjective: the world appears to me as meaningful solely in relationship to my subjective "I." I am, so to speak, the center of my own universe. When I encounter other "I" perspectives, I come to understand the world in a new way. The world appears as an object that an indefinite (potentially infinite) number of subjects can look at together, each from their own unique, meaning-laden perspective. I come to understand my perspective on the world to be partial, and the other person's perspective to be partial as well. I come to appreciate meaning as irreducible to my perspective or any single perspective. Furthermore, the more perspectives I am given, the more meaning appears. I understand myself and other subjects to be looking together at the same world, but none of us and no combination of us can see it completely. Thus, the world appears as something truly other, with its meaning transcending my or anybody's perspective. At the same time, the world appears as a meaningful object I can fruitfully examine together with others. I recognize my posture toward the world as one of receptivity: I am given others' perspectives and so am given new appreciations of the meaning of the world. I no longer see myself as the sole

agent of meaning; rather, I understand myself to be living in a world whose meaning is independent of me and which extends beyond my reach.

By showing me to myself as one subject among many, empathy clarifies my understanding of myself as a person. Primordially, I understand that to be a person means to be a subject that acts by responding to meaning.

Encountering others shows me that my ways of seeing and responding are not the only ways for a subject to respond to meaning. Furthermore, the intentional responses of other subjects appear to me as given freely: as motivated, not caused, by the subject's appreciation of meaning (Stein, 1964). This helps me understand my own responses as freely given, and also invites me to live my freedom in a new way: by looking at the world through another person's eyes and considering whether I want to affirm or deny the meaning they see. I am not forced to see the world in the same meaningful way that they do, but am invited to do so. This invitational aspect of empathy shows me to myself as free and shows me a new way of enacting my freedom, should I so choose.

Thus, I am given to myself as a person through empathy in two ways. First, empathy offers me a deeper understanding of my own personhood: to be a person, I see more clearly, is to be a free responder to meaning. Second, I am invited through empathy to step into my personhood by freely responding to the meaningfulness of reality in a new way. Empathy enables me to understand myself and to become myself.

Edith Stein (1964) describes the process of becoming myself through empathy as the development of the personality. This process is enacted through feeling, which she names the primary act of the person. When I see another person, I understand their actions to be motivated by feeling, defined as an internalized, affect-laden judgment of value (p. 83). Empathy gives me

an understanding of another person's feeling, but does not give me the feeling itself. Rather, I am invited to look again, through their perspective, at the object that prompts their response. As I look again, I can consider whether I want to affirm the other's judgment, and to thereby adjust my own *feeling* toward the object.

To summarize: In interpersonal encounter, both the other and myself are given to me more fully as persons: subjects who experience the world as meaningful and whose actions are motivated by free, felt judgments regarding value. Furthermore, seeing the meaning-filled responses of others invites me to continually look again: to reconsider, with the perspective of fresh eyes, something's value. Empathy thus appears phenomenologically as inviting me to appreciate and inhabit my own agency.

Seeing Empathy in Teaching

While teaching appears phenomenologically as importantly interpersonal, and therefore as an instance of empathy, not all empathic learning appears phenomenologically as an experience of being taught by a teacher. As noted above, all three elements of the educational triangle—teacher, student, and subject matter—appear as phenomenologically essential to teaching. None can be bracketed. Teaching, therefore, shows itself to be a special form of empathy in which one person (a teacher) invites another (a student) to direct their attention toward a common object. This directing of attention invites the student to see the subject matter from a fresh perspective. This new seeing has multiple dimensions, but importantly involves inviting the student to feel the value of the subject matter and of themselves in a new way. An example can help us see more clearly how empathy is at work in teaching.

In Algebra class, my teacher's excitement shows itself in his upbeat tone of voice and animated posture. I not only understand him to be excited; I see him to be excited about

something, namely, Algebra. In seeing his excitement about Algebra, I understand my teacher to be expressing a judgment of the subject's meaningfulness. His expression says to me: "Algebra is a subject that is worth being excited about; it has positive value."

What is phenomenologically unique about how the meaningfulness of Algebra is given to me in this example is that it presents itself as a proposal or invitation. The positive value of Algebra is not given to me as an indubitable phenomenon the way my teacher's excitement is. Rather, through my teacher's expression, Algebra appears to me as possibly worthwhile and valuable. The distinction here is subtle but important. My teacher's feeling of excitement is given to me through his posture and tone of voice. This is a description of what we might call phenomenological fact. I cannot doubt that my teacher appears to be excited, or that his excitement appears to be about Algebra. It is important to note here that my teacher might not actually be excited: he might merely be pretending to be excited about Algebra with the aim of promoting student engagement. Alternatively, he might be excited about something that has nothing to do with Algebra—perhaps he proposed to his girlfriend last night—and this excitement is bubbling over into his teaching. The actual existence and source of his excitement are not currently relevant, however, since phenomenology operates in the realm of appearances and givens. What phenomenology can say is: my teacher shows up for me as someone who is excited, and his excitement appears to me as motivated by his appreciation of Algebra as a valuable subject to learn.

While I cannot phenomenologically doubt that my teacher appears to be excited about Algebra, I can doubt the worthwhileness of studying Algebra. Algebra is given to me here as an object my teacher has judged to be valuable, and therefore as an object that it is possible for a person to value, but it does not show up for me in this exchange as inherently worthwhile. In

other words, I do not directly *feel* Algebra's value in the way I understand my teacher to feel it. Rather, I am invited to turn my attention to Algebra, to either affirm or contradict the judgment I perceive my teacher to be making. The phenomenon of my teacher's excitement presents itself to me not as a fact, but as a question: "What is the value of Algebra?" Through empathy, I see my teacher's value-laden response to an object, and in doing so am invited to direct my attention to the object he values and to consider for myself: Does this object show up as valuable for me in the same way?

When my attention is thus turned away from my teacher and toward Algebra itself, I find that my preexisting understanding of Algebra is not neutral; I already have a certain feeling toward the subject that bespeaks my current appraisal of its meaning. The feeling may be unmeditated and indistinct—perhaps my previously positive experiences with math predispose me to approach Algebra with excitement, or, alternatively, memories of my older brother's frustration with the subject imbue me with a vague feeling of dread. However, I find some initial feeling there. The preexisting feeling that I find when I enter the Algebra classroom accords with Hans-Georg Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutical account of prejudice, tradition, and situatedness. Gadamer forcefully illuminates the impossibility of achieving the Enlightenment-inspired ideal of prejudice-free objectivity. Whenever we approach a topic or situation, we approach it as our historically-situated selves, carrying our past experiences, thoughts, commitments, and ideals with us. To ignore the presence of these pre-existing prejudices, Gadamer argues, does not free us from them, but keeps us held within their power: "A person who does not admit that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what manifests itself by their light" (p. 354). Acknowledging my pre-existing dispositions toward Algebra and where they come from opens me to appreciate other ways of seeing and valuing the subject.

What I gain when I see my teacher's excitement is a new perspective. I see that I do not have a monopoly on Algebra's meaning; other people appreciate the subject differently than I do. This realization does not appear to me as a prompting to choose between options (siding with either myself or my teacher regarding who has the right appreciation of Algebra's value) nor does it lead me to conclude that the meaning of Algebra is relative (it shows up as worthwhile for my teacher and pointlessly irksome for me and that's just the way it is). Rather, seeing my teacher's excitement appears to me as an invitation to look again, to see Algebra in a new light. The meaning of Algebra is not given to me as tied to or residing within either me or my teacher, but as something that is, in a way, independent of either of our perspectives. I understand that I must turn toward Algebra itself if I want to take up the invitation to reconsider its meaning. I am thus given to myself more clearly as a responder to meaning that is not reducible to me (or anyone else).

When my teacher's excitement shows up for me as an invitation to turn toward Algebra and (re)consider how it shows up as meaningful for me, I do not feel this invitation to be forced. It is important to note here that my teacher may very well "force" me to engage with Algebra in a certain sense, for example by assigning homework and requiring class participation. However, my meaningful engagement with Algebra cannot be coerced. Seeing my teacher's enthusiasm invites me to approach Algebra in a way that is receptive to understanding the subject as having meaning that extends beyond my current appreciation of it. This new appreciation, if it occurs, appears as feeling: as an internalized, felt sense of the meaning or value of Algebra. The feeling is motivated, not caused, because its emergence requires me to approach Algebra with receptivity, to "open my eyes" to appreciating its meaning. Put another way, it requires me to approach Algebra not just as a student, for whom the subject appears as a series of instrumental

tasks at the service of a goal (achieving good grades, being admitted to college, etc.), but as a person, open to appreciating Algebra as possessing a meaning that transcends its usefulness for me and my current appreciation of it.

1.4 The Personal Core of Teaching

In the preceding section, I considered the way in which the intended object of teaching—the subject matter—is given to the learner in an instance of teaching. In this section, I will elucidate how examining teaching as a particular kind of empathic encounter reveals that what is given through teaching has the potential to go beyond subject matter. I will draw on the language of Marion and consider how teaching appears as a saturated phenomenon*:* a phenomenon in which *noema* exceeds *noesis*, in which more is given than was intended or even realized. In a saturated phenomenon, what is given appears as irreducible to the giver, the recipient, or the gift itself.

As discussed above, teaching appears as an intentional act in which a teacher aims to teach something to someone. That something seems at first glance to be something concrete and of which both teacher and student are aware. I understand my Algebra teacher as intending, through his words and actions, to give me increased mathematical knowledge and skills. This relationship appears as transactional and easy to understand. It fits with a consumeristic understanding of a teacher as a provider of services. However, examining *what* I learn from a teacher more closely reveals that I learn more than mathematics. I am given more than I expected or asked for, and thus what I learn appears not as something I have earned or purchased, but as a gift. What is given in teaching thus exceeds subject matter, even while subject matter is integral to teaching. Likewise, through phenomenological inquiry, I find that the gift of teaching exceeds the teacher, since the student often only fully receives the gift of teaching in the teacher's

absence. Teaching also, in a way, exceeds the student, since the teacher gives without knowing whether their gift will be received.

In what follows, I will consider gifts that render teaching a saturated phenomenon. I name these gifts personal for two interrelated reasons. First, these gifts of teaching give students to themselves: they invite students to take up new ways of seeing and being as persons. Second, these gifts appear as gifts of self: they are singular offerings that appear as flowing from and particular to the person of the teacher.

Giving Students to Themselves

Marion (2002) juxtaposes the phenomenon of *gift* with what appears as an object of exchange. He insists that the gift disappears when approached from the perspective of an economy of exchange. A fundamental difference between what Marion calls the "horizon of givenness" and the "economy of exchange" is reciprocity (p. 82). In an economy of exchange, the receiver must offer restitution of some sort in order for the exchange to be complete. Marion affirms Derrida's conviction that demanded reciprocity is inimical to gift-giving, stating that it "voids the gift of all givenness" (p. 75). The mark of a true gift, Marion holds, is gratuity. On the one hand, the giver must not look for reciprocity. On the other, the givee must not interpret the gift as a debt to be repaid.

Considering education in this light, much of what happens between teacher and student appears not as a gift, at least in the fullest sense of the word, but as an exchange. As a teacher, my actions aim at specific learning outcomes. I intend, as an Algebra teacher, that by the end of the school year, the students in my class will have learned specific formulas and skills. I test my students throughout the year to track the progress of their learning, and their final grade (as well as their standardized test scores) indicates whether or not my actions as a teacher have succeeded

in bringing about the results I intended. My students' high grades and passing test scores affirm that my teaching has been effective; they show me my competence (or incompetence) as a teacher and indicate areas in which I might need to improve my instruction.

A necessary element of exchange appears in this dynamic. My students' grades offer me a kind of compensation for my work as a teacher. This is a very good thing, as I am aiming for my students to learn specific things and knowing whether or not they have achieved those learning targets helps me make my instruction more effective. However, I do not understand myself from this perspective to be giving a gift, in the sense of seeking no direct recompense. I am—and must be—acutely aware of both *what* I am trying to teach and of *whether* I have been successful in passing on that instruction to the students in my class. To phenomenologically classify this process as an exchange in no way demeans its value; it simply describes the way the process is and must be if instruction is to be effective in achieving its intended learning outcomes.

However, considering the phenomenon of teaching (and being taught) carefully reveals that there is a dimension of teaching that appears not as an exchange, but rather as gift-giving. In the act of teaching, as discussed above, there is always the possibility that *more* is given than instruction alone. From the perspective of the student, who has been taught, she has gained a new way of seeing, and has thus begun to inhabit the world as a person in a new way. This kind of learning appears, phenomenologically, as a gift and not as an exchange.

To return to an earlier example, in offering me his perspective on the subject of Algebra, my teacher offers me the gift of expanded vision; he invites me to see and value the subject in a new way. This new way of seeing, given to me by my teacher, opens for me a new way of responding to Algebra as an object of value. I have received more than the skills of *doing*

Algebra; I have been invited to take up a new way of being with regard to Algebra. In taking up a new way of seeing, I receive a gift that is internal, that affects the very way I perceive, understand, and move through the world. Marion (2002) describes the reception of this kind of gift of self as a hallmark of subjectivity: "The subject is one who has the capacity to receive, and to "receive *himself* from what he receives" (p. 4, emphasis original). This gift of new vision does not appear as some*thing* I have, but rather as a part of who I am. I receive from my teacher the gift of myself.

When I am given to myself by a teacher, not only does the world now show up for me differently; I am given to myself in a new way. For example, perhaps my Algebra teacher's encouraging way of responding to my mistakes throughout the year taught me to see my limitations (and therefore myself) in a new way. He has, perhaps, shown me to myself as someone fallible by pointing out my algebraic errors, and has also taught me to see my limitations as opportunities for growth. Had my teacher responded to my mistakes differently, I may have been given to myself in a different light. For example, my crippling and self-critical perfectionism may have been taught to me, at least in part, by teachers whose pedagogy remained fully situated in the economy of exchange and gave me to myself as someone whose worth is measured by her performance, her ability to repay what has been taught.

When I am given a genuine gift by my teacher, I am shown to myself through empathy as some*one*: as a person existing outside the realm of exchange, in which my value is tied to what I give in return for the goods I receive, and within the orbit of gift, where my reception of goods is not contingent on my ability to repay. Instead, I am shown to myself as having intrinsic value: as being worthy of receiving gifts just by virtue of who I am, without consideration of what I can do or produce. The foil of this personal vision is to be given to myself as having instrumental or

contingent worth. This would be, phenomenologically, to understand myself as an *object*: as a thing whose value can only be seen in relationship to another. Peggy Graham (2018) offers an eloquent example from her own experience of what it means to be shown to oneself by a teacher. She describes "being seen" by a teacher as an experience of being shown one's own inherent worth as a *person*: a *someone* who defies objectification and instrumentalization. Through being seen as a person by a teacher, a student is invited, though not coerced, to "see that she is infinitely valuable even if she does not contribute in objectified ways" (p. 171). The *gift* of teaching that shows me to myself as a person appears, in Graham's words as "wrapped in beauty," "verg(ing) on the sacred," and "fundamentally unearned" (pp. 170-1). Following Graham, we can describe being shown to myself as a person as being given an inherently non-objectifying vision of my own worth.

Teaching as a Gift of Self

Not only does the gift of teaching give students to themselves; it also appears as a gift of self on the part of the teacher. In the dimension of teaching that involves exchange, a teacher gives students knowledge and skills that he has acquired through study or experience. These learning targets appear as objects, as things that the teacher possesses and is sharing. These things include facts the teacher knows and skills he knows how to do, and they appear as somewhat separate and detachable from who the teacher is as a person. I can, for example, learn how to ski from a person who knows how to ski. While my ski instructor cannot learn to ski for me—I must go through the long and painful process of getting a feel for it for myself—eventually, through his instruction and example, coupled with my effort, I am able to ski in the same way he can, using the same form and techniques. He has passed on to me a skill that I have

made my own. I would not, however, say that because I now know how to ski, my instructor has given me something of himself.

In contrast, a way of seeing that I learn from a teacher shows itself as a gift that proceeds from the teacher's very person: a genuine gift of their singular self. I am given my teacher's way of seeing and responding to the subject matter and to me, and their way of seeing is given to me as personal: as a way in which my teacher, as a person, offers a free response to a value they perceive. I might, in the example above, receive from my ski instructor the gifts of a deep reverence for nature or a wonder-filled appreciation of the human being's capacity for dynamic and daring aerobic movement. These gifts go beyond the skills of skiing, but are offered to me in and through my experience of being taught how to ski by this particular person. The personal gifts offered by the teacher are singular, proper to their way of seeing, valuing, and responding to the world. Had I learned to ski with a different instructor, the personal gifts offered would have been different as well.

Whether new ways of seeing have been taught cannot be measured. However, taking up new ways of seeing appears phenomenologically as most essential to the core of teaching, since the learning that consists in the acquisition of knowledge and skills does not appear as intrinsically involving a teacher, while these ways of seeing are learned only through being taught. As discussed above, learning (or "studenting") is an act carried out by a student that can be phenomenologically considered in isolation from the teacher. Taking up new ways of seeing and thus being given to myself, in contrast, appears as proper to the core of teaching, since these acts essentially involve encounter between teacher and student.

It is important to note that *teaching*, in the phenomenological sense in which I employ the word in this dissertation, takes on a broad meaning. The word does not name a profession

(classroom teaching), but, rather, describes a phenomenon possessing particular characteristics. Teaching is distinguished as a phenomenon from learning by virtue of being fundamentally empathic: involving genuine encounter between persons. However, these *persons* who encounter one another might not formally embody the identities of "teacher" and "student." In the study of teaching that I carry out in this dissertation, I consider the relationship between a coach and her athletes as well as the teaching that occurs between master-chefs and apprentices. As I hope to illustrate in the chapters that follow, these relationships appear phenomenologically as instances of teaching due to the particular kind of empathic encounter that occurs. Furthermore, while the phenomenon of teaching involves interpersonal encounter, this does not imply that teacher and student must be physically present together. A student might encounter the person of a teacher in the pages of a novel, for example, and be offered the gift of expanded vision by being invited to take up the perspective of a character or an author. I will consider such possibilities and their implications in the final chapter of this dissertation.

As a teacher, there is no guarantee that I will know whether my students have, in fact, learned ways of seeing, even if my pedagogical actions intentionally aim at these outcomes. One reason for this is that taking up a way of seeing is a change that occurs interiorly. I might be able to see a change in students expressed empathically in their newfound excitement or confidence, or in words of gratitude. However, these responses cannot be guaranteed, and I cannot look to them for proof of my competence in teaching the way I look to students' test scores. This is due, in part, to the inherent fallibility of the kind of knowledge we gain through empathy: there is always the chance that I might misread my student's change in attitude, for example, attributing her apparent confidence to an increased sense of self-worth when it is really an expression masking her ongoing insecurity. Another reason that requires me to offer students new ways of

seeing without looking for confirmation that these gifts have been received is that students may not fully realize the personal impact their teacher has had on them, at least immediately. It is often only in retrospect that I realize that the playful way I approach problems, my sense of confidence even in the face of my limitations, or my ability to understand the needs of those I work with are ways of being (and of seeing) that I have been *taught*. I may, in fact, display these qualities without ever reflecting on their origin. Part of what Biesta (2016, 2020) names the "beautiful risk of education" is that, in coming to the classroom, the teacher is aware that they will never and can never know the full impact (for good or ill) that they have had on their students as persons. Biesta describes this risk as beautiful because, for all its uncertainty, were teachers to stop offering students personal gifts, teaching would cease to be fully what it is, and would, in effect, be reduced to the level of exchange.

The gifts of teaching thus *exceed* the teacher in an important way, even while being singular, personal gifts of self. In giving, the teacher lets go even of the need to know if his gift has been received. The teacher steps back in a way that resembles how Heidegger (1976) describes the artist as annihilating himself so that the work of art can appear in all its fullness (p. 669). The teacher gives gratuitously: without holding onto the gift or seeking compensation. He, like Heidegger's artist, steps back so that the gift can appear in all its fullness and be received by the givee without being tied to the teacher.

Personal Gifts and Freedom

The gift of teaching is a gift of self, a gift that seeks no recompense. Paradoxically, in offering a gift of self, the teacher eclipses themselves: they let go of the gift and the givee completely. In doing so, the teacher's gift of self—their way of seeing—can be taken up by the student: the student has the possibility to make the way of seeing their own, to internalize it in a

way that does not depend directly on their teacher. Thus, in receiving the gift of teaching, the student carries out a free action that brings about a change in their person. Taking up their teacher's way of seeing enables the student to respond to the world, others, and themselves in a new way. Their vision has expanded. The change is not quantitative or clear cut: having learned to value Algebra the way my teacher does, I don't subsequently put on his way of seeing, the way I put on a hat, choosing to see Algebra from his perspective one day and from my previous perspective the next. Rather, I experience the *newness* in my vision as an enrichment, clarification, or deepening. Sharing my teacher's perspective, I come to appreciate more fully the richness of Algebra as a subject. I see it more clearly or in fuller relief, since the perspective I have gained broadens the horizon on which Algebra appears. This deepening vision is the result of free action: I am not compelled by my teacher to take up his way of seeing, but I am invited to do so. The gift of teaching gives me to myself by opening a new avenue through which I can freely respond to meaning.

It is difficult, even phenomenologically, to describe the relationship between the gifts of teaching and freedom. In an attempt to see this dynamic more clearly, I turn to poetry. A phenomenologically unique characteristic of poetry is that it quite literally makes space for the unspoken. Verse breaks lines, thus giving the reader or listener silences in addition to words. These silent spaces speak: they make the poem communicate more the literal meaning of words and phrases. The spaces in verse are given to the reader as wordlessly saying: there is more meaning here than can be captured in words. These spaces appear as a warning to the reader: "be careful not to reduce meaning to what can be rendered in words." While perhaps indistinctly, some of the meaningfulness of reality that exceeds the ability to be articulated is given through the silent spaces of poetry. Poetry appears as speaking the ineffable. For this reason, I turn to a

poetic depiction of teaching in an effort to bring more clearly to light how the gift of teaching gives freedom.

At the outset of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante, the pilgrim, finds himself lost in a dark wood. From the valley where he stands, terrified, he sees the mountain of Purgatory rising up, illuminated by the light that shines from Heaven. Dante sets out to climb the mountain, but his way is blocked by a leopard, a lion, and a she-wolf in turn. Upon encountering the wolf, Dante despairs of reaching the mountain's peak:

> And then a she-wolf who, all hide and bones,
> seemed with all the appetites
> that have made many live in wretchedness
>
> so weighed my spirits down with terror,
> which welled up at the sight of her,
> that I lost hope of making the ascent.
>
> And like one who rejoices in his gains
> but when the time comes and he loses,
> turns all his thought to sadness and lament,
>
> such did the restless beast make me—
> coming against me, step by step,
> it drove me down to where the sun is silent (Alighieri, 2000, Canto I, lines 49-60).

It is at this moment, as Dante comes face to face with his own inability to scale the mountain, that Virgil appears. Dante, seeing that Virgil is a human being like himself, cries out to him:

> While I was fleeing to a lower place,
> before my eyes a figure showed,
> faint, in the wide silence.
>
> When I saw him in that vast desert,
> 'Have mercy on me, whatever you are,'
> I cried, 'whether shade or living man!' (Canto I, lines 61-66)

Dante is not certain whether Virgil is dead or alive, but he recognizes him immediately as a human being, a person. Dante appears to Virgil as a person as well: upon seeing Dante's tears,

Virgil understands Dante's desire to reach the light and the frustration and sadness brought on by his thwarted efforts. Virgil responds to Dante with advice:

> 'It is another path that you must follow,'
> he answered, when he saw me weeping,
> 'if you would flee this wild and savage place…' (Canto I, lines 91-93).

Virgil sees Dante's intended goal and points toward a path that he thinks will lead him there. Virgil also acknowledges what Dante himself already knows: he cannot, by his own power alone, reach his desired destination. Virgil offers to guide Dante, to be his teacher:

> 'Therefore, for your sake, I think it wise
> you follow me: I will be your guide,
> leading you, from here, through an eternal place
> where you shall hear despairing cries
> and see those ancient souls in pain
> as they bewail their second death…' (Canto I, lines 112-117).

Virgil's advice is self-assured yet invitational. He does not impose his guidance onto Dante, but rather makes an offer to which his potential pupil must freely assent. Dante expresses his predisposition to trust Virgil, since he already considers the poet the teacher to whom he owes the success of his verse (lines 85-87). Then, after Dante listens to Virgil's account of the certain peril that awaits him if he travels alone, the first Canto ends with Dante accepting Virgil's invitation and deciding to follow where his teacher leads:

> And I answered: 'Poet, I entreat you
> by the God you did not know,
> so that I may escape this harm and worse,
> lead me to the realms you've just described
> that I may see Saint Peter's gate
> and those you tell me are so sorrowful.'
>
> Then he set out and I came on behind him (Canto I, lines 130-135).

Virgil appears in Canto I of *Inferno* as embodying the posture of teacher as pointer. Dante and Virgil stand side by side, looking together at a desired destination. Virgil is given as a

teacher to Dante for two reasons. First, the two aim together at a concrete end: reaching the peak of the mountain of Purgatory. Secondly, it is impossible to consider Dante's ascent in isolation of Virgil. What appears to the reader is not an instance of "studenting" that can be contemplated without direct reference to a teacher. On the contrary, it is evident that Dante is unable to achieve his goal without Virgil's help. Virgil cannot be bracketed, but rather appears as essential to Dante's journey. Teacher, student, and "subject matter" (here appearing as the peak of Mount Purgatory: Dante and Virgil's desired destination) all appear as integral elements of the action that unfolds at the outset of the poem. Thus, we are presented, as readers, with what appears as a genuine (albeit non-traditional) example of teaching.

By the end of Canto XXVII of *Purgatorio*, the intended goal of Dante and Virgil's journey is in sight. They are about to enter the Garden of Eden, which marks the peak of the mountain of Purgatory. Hope of reaching the peak and encountering Beatrice, his beloved, is the reason Dante followed Virgil. The concrete aim of Virgil's teaching has nearly been accomplished, and Dante describes himself as quivering with excitement as he listens to Virgil's words:

> 'That sweet fruit which mortals seek
> and strive to find on many boughs
> today shall satisfy your cravings.'
>
> Such were Virgil's words to me,
> and never was there promise of a gift
> that might yield equal pleasure (Alighieri, 2004, lines 115-120).

The gift Dante hears Virgil promising him in these lines appears to be that of reaching their destination: the Garden of Eden. However, the last lines of the Canto reveal another gift of Virgil's teaching that is more truly a gift than the pleasure of entering earthly paradise. At the top

of the staircase that leads to the gate of the garden, Virgil turns and addresses Dante for what will be, although Dante does not know it, the last time:

> When the stairs had all run past beneath us
> and we were on the topmost step,
> Virgil fixed his eyes on me
>
> and said: 'The temporal fire and the eternal
> you have seen, my son, and now have come to a place
> in which, unaided, I can see no farther.
>
> I have brought you here with intellect and skill.
> From now on take your pleasure as your guide.
> You are free of the steep way, free of the narrow.
>
> Look at the sun shining before you,
> look at the fresh grasses, flowers, and trees
> which here the earth produces of itself.
>
> You may sit down or move among these
> until the fair eyes come, rejoicing,
> which weeping bid me come to you.
>
> No longer wait for word or sign from me.
> Your will is free, upright, and sound.
> Not to act as it chooses is unworthy:
>
> over yourself I crown and miter you' (lines 130-142).

The gift that Virgil bestows on Dante in this scene is the gift of his own freedom, his own agency. This gift has multiple dimensions. For one thing, it signals a change in the relationship between teacher and student. Virgil instructs Dante to no longer look or wait for his advice, but rather to follow his own will. In this statement, Virgil expresses the paradox that a teacher's success consists in their rendering themselves unnecessary. Virgil as teacher appears more fully than ever to occupy the posture of pointer: gesturing away from himself toward a path that Dante must continue to forge with his own steps, following the guidance of his "free, upright, and sound" will. This will is interior to Dante, but it also appears as a gift given by Virgil. It is

through following his teacher's guidance that Dante has developed the ability to see and follow his own path. At the outset of *Inferno*, Dante did not have the capacity to travel alone. Now, thanks to the guidance he has received from Virgil, he does. Virgil, through his action of pointing, has invited Dante to take up a new way of seeing and responding to the world, and now, by enjoining him to follow his own will, Virgil emphasizes that Dante has freely taken up this way of seeing himself, making it part and parcel of his person.

A second aspect of the gift of agency that appears in this scene is the way in which Dante's will operates. Virgil does not instruct Dante to be guided in his actions by reason or intellect, but by *pleasure*. The agency bequeathed to Dante thus appears, not as the capacity to make the "right" choice, but as a following of *feeling*. In other words, this kind of freedom is not solely about outcomes, but appears, first and foremost, to concern dispositions. This internalization of desire corresponds phenomenologically to the personal core of teaching, which invites a student to see the world or themselves in a new way. This seeing is an act of feeling: an individual, internal, affective affirmation of meaning that manifests in personal, free response to the value that is perceived (Stein, 1964). In this scene of *Purgatorio*, Virgil's instruction to Dante to take pleasure as his guide emphasizes the radicality of the freedom that appears as a gift bequeathed by his teaching. As Dante decides freely how to act, he must not perform an action simply because it is what Virgil would have done or has advised him to do in the past. Rather, Virgil instructs Dante to look at the sun, the grass, the flowers for himself, and to act however he pleases. In other words, Virgil urges Dante to do what he feels like doing; to see and respond to meaning for himself.

Again, a paradox of teaching appears. Before being taught by Virgil, Dante's pleasure was not able to guide his actions toward his goal. Without Virgil, Dante would have been driven

back into the woods or devoured by the she-wolf as he attempted to scale Mount Purgatory. Dante had not *felt like* traveling through hell, but, trembling, followed Virgil in an act of trust. Dante allowed Virgil to lead him where he did not want to go. It is only through following Virgil's guidance and not his own pleasure that Dante has reached his goal: the peak of the mountain. But now, Virgil reveals that their educational journey together has accomplished more than the achievement of their tangible goal. Dante has not only learned to climb Mount Purgatory; he has gained the ability to be successfully guided by his own pleasure. Following Virgil's pedagogical pointing gesture, Dante has learned to feel the meaningfulness of reality for himself and to respond with freedom to the dictates of his own feeling. The gift of teaching by which a student is given their own freedom thus appears as a capacity to be guided by one's own desire. This capacity, while internal and agential, shows itself as a gift given, for it is through the invitation of a teacher that the student is invited to see (and feel) the meaningfulness of the world and of themselves in a new way.

Virgil's final words to Dante make the personal nature of this gift of freedom explicit: "Over yourself I crown and miter you" (line 142). Virgil gives Dante to himself (or, perhaps more truly, has given him to himself over the course of their journey together). Now he steps back and Dante must step into his own, navigating reality for himself and as himself. Dante is able to be himself—indeed, has become himself—through the help of Virgil.

After speaking these words to Dante, Virgil disappears, presumably returning back to Limbo. Dante does not realize that his teacher has left him until Canto XXX, when, upon finally seeing his beloved Beatrice approach in a chariot, he turns to Virgil, only to find him gone. Virgil's departure is the culmination of the gift he has bestowed: the gift of freedom he has given Dante is a gift in the truest sense, since it looks for no recompense. Virgil does not hear the

words of gratitude his student speaks nor witness the tears he sheds when Dante realizes that Virgil has departed. Virgil does not see Dante meet Beatrice nor know if his student reaches Paradise. Furthermore, Virgil enables Dante to receive the gift of freedom and act fully as himself and by himself by stepping away. It is only in Virgil's absence that Dante is able to take pleasure as his guide. Will Dante make Virgil's way of seeing his own? Will he respond to himself, others, and reality around him the way Virgil hopes he will? Virgil will never know and can never know, for this culmination of freedom can only be accomplished in the teacher's absence. That is the "beautiful risk of education" (Biesta, 2016): that the gift of teaching, which is a gift of freedom, necessarily extends beyond the reach and vision of the teacher themselves.

1.5 Seeing the Personal Core of Teaching

As I have intended to illustrate in this chapter, phenomenology reveals that teaching, at its core, involves more than the exchange of information or skills. To teach, in the fullest sense, means to offer a gift of self by which a student is given to themselves. This gift is importantly personal: it involves the teacher acting as a person—a free responder to meaning—and inviting the student to appreciate and step into their own personhood. Furthermore, I have endeavored to illuminate that to teach is to embody the position of pointer: directing a student's vision toward a shared object of attention. It is within the I-thou-it relationality proper to teaching that the personal core of teaching and its corresponding gifts show themselves.

Phenomenology is a descriptive method that aims, not to discover or explain, but rather to illuminate dimensions of reality that are visible, yet easily overlooked. Therefore, if the phenomenological account of what I have called the personal core of teaching is correct, then it should be able to be seen, not merely in theoretical considerations, but in the practice of teaching itself. The aim of my dissertation is to illuminate the gift of teaching as it appears in practice in

an effort to illustrate how this dimension of teaching can be seen and honored by scholars, teacher-educators, and teachers themselves.

I seek, in other words, to bear witness to the personal core of teaching. To emphasize that this personal core is proper to teaching understood as a particular kind of interpersonal encounter (and not as a job title), I have chosen to focus my study on three very different kinds of teaching. In the chapters that follow, after elucidating the meaning of bearing witness and explaining how and why I engaged in this mode of research in my study, I will relate narrative accounts illustrating moments in which I saw the personal core of teaching appear in three diverse educational environments: a high school classroom, an apprenticeship kitchen, and a college cross country and track practice field. My purpose in sharing this testimony is to express the existence and importance of the personal core of teaching with living force and clarity.

Chapter 2: Seeing the Personal Core of Teaching in Educational Research: Bearing Witness to Teaching and Teachers

2.1 Introduction

The phenomenological analysis of the previous chapter shows teaching to be a *saturated phenomenon*: one whose meaning exceeds its ability to be exhaustively conceptualized. In the act of teaching, there is the possibility of a gift being given which goes beyond subject matter. This gift is personal: it is a gift of self on the part of the teacher that gives students to themselves, inviting them to see and respond to the world and themselves in a new way. The personal core of teaching, as I hope to have shown in Chapter One, is integral to what teaching is, yet is impossible to capture in causal terms and is difficult even to describe. The phenomenon of teaching, when seen in its fullness, contains an element of mystery. I do not mean that teaching is mysterious in the sense of being inscrutable, foreign, senseless, or opaque, but rather, I refer to teaching as a mystery in a positive sense: as a reality whose meaning exceeds and will always exceed the ability to be exhaustively analyzed, predicted, and explained.

Philosopher and playwright Gabriel Marcel (1950) characterizes this kind of mystery as possessing "presence" (p. 204). Marcel emphasizes that mysteries are not unknowable (p. 212), but call for a particular kind of response: one of recognition and not objectification.

> Presence cannot be grasped because it is not an object. … a presence is something which can only be gathered to oneself or shut out from oneself, be welcomed or rebuffed; but it is obvious that, between the two notions of gathering to oneself, or welcoming and seizing, there is a fundamental underlying difference, a difference of attitude. … I cannot gather to myself or welcome an object; I can only take it or leave it—not comprehend it. Presence, in a sense, cannot be comprehended; it can only be invoked or evoked (p. 208).

When I speak of teaching as a "mystery," I mean to emphasize, like Marcel, that teaching possesses *presence*: that it resists objectification and calls, on the contrary, to be gathered in,

welcomed, and recognized. The mystery of teaching mirrors the mystery of persons: no matter how well we know another person, they can always surprise us; we can never exhaustively understand who they are. In fact, oftentimes the better we know a person, the more mysterious they appear, since to know a person well involves resisting replacing their unique, singular self with what Marcel (1950) calls a simulacrum: a flattening, explanatory generalization. Marcel warns against this danger, which, he argues, can be precipitated by language. When we describe a person with adjectives—"she is intelligent, charming, and kind"—we run the risk of replacing our knowledge of that person themselves with those adjectives, thus obscuring our vision of the other's singularity and complexity (p. 59). Ludwig Wittgenstein likewise acknowledges that there are some realities before which words fall short. Such realities, Wittgenstein (2009) argues, cannot be named in the way that other things can. Rather, they possess "proper names" (§39). When a person or thing has a proper name, its meaning is not contained or dictated by context; the meaning of a word, in this case, is not equivalent to its "use in the language." Rather what possesses a *proper name* forms part of a category of realities whose meaning can only (and, Wittgenstein insists, even then only "sometimes") be "explained by pointing to its *bearer*" (§43, emphasis original).

I take this gesture of pointing to be an acknowledgment that there are some things we come across in our experience whose meaning exceeds our ability to conceptualize or capture in words. To return to the language of Jean-Luc Marion, such phenomena appear in our experience as *saturated*: with *noema* transcending *noesis*. Before such realities, the conceptualizing process of naming and explaining risks ignoring or doing violence to the excess of meaning encountered in living reality. Marcel (1950) offers art as a means through which to honor and maintain the mystery of meaning and to avoid replacing our appreciation of meaning-filled reality with a

flattened simulacrum. Art does not attempt to explain, but puts forward a reality in all of its messy complexity so that it can simply be seen (p. 58). Art, in this way, embodies the gesture of pointing that Wittgenstein cites as appropriate for appreciating the meaning of realities with proper names. Pointing is not explaining, but rather invites a directing of attention toward the reality in question. For example, in response to the question “Who is she?” I might receive two kinds of responses. One describes the person in words: “She is a clever woman with two children who lives next door and works at the hospital.” This description might be accurate but is certainly not comprehensive, nor does it capture the singular contours that undoubtedly comprise this person’s character. Another possible response to my question “Who is she?” would be for my interlocutor to point to the person in question, saying, in effect: “There she is.” This gesture turns my attention toward the woman herself and invites me to answer my own question by getting to know her, not by hearsay, but by personal acquaintance. I gain less information, at least at the outset, from this latter response. However, pointing to the person herself respects the meaningfulness and mystery of who she is and resists reducing her identity to a combination of generalizable and impersonal features.

Teaching, as a saturated phenomenon, is a reality whose meaningfulness and mystery call for a response of recognition and respect, and I suggest that a gesture of pointing, such as that described by Wittgenstein and Marcel, can facilitate the appearance of the meaning of teaching and protect against explanations that risk replacing the mystery of teaching with a reductive simulacrum. I further hold that the research orientation David Hansen names “bearing witness” enacts this pointing gesture and can thus serve as an appropriate and effective approach for seeing the personal core in teaching in practice.

2.2 Bearing Witness: Naming an Orientation

Bearing witness, as employed by Hansen, is a descriptive term. It captures the way in which a researcher turns toward and relates to the subject of their testimony. Hansen (2021) dubs bearing witness an "orientation," a which he distinguishes from a "*method*, *approach*, or *means*, on the one hand, and from terms such as *ideology* on the other hand" (p. 62, emphasis original). An orientation describes a way of seeing, perceiving, and responding. The term names an embodied posture that one takes up, in Hansen's case, towards teaching.

> An orientation connotes embeddedness in the world. It points to how a person turns (i.e. orients) body and soul in order to perceive and listen well. Perceiving is deeper than merely seeing, and listening is more encompassing than merely hearing. These are gestalts: whole experiences. (p. 62).

The posture of the witness is one of pointing: "Look, there she is. She is a teacher. Look, there it is: That is teaching. See for yourself."

In a number of recent publications, Hansen (2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2021) describes his own research as an effort to bear witness and both enacts and articulates characterizing features of this orientation. However, Hansen does not claim to have invented bearing witness, nor does he codify procedures for future researchers to follow. Hansen (2021) describes how his articulation of the notion of bearing witness and its characterizing features grew out of his experience observing teachers, coupled with his ongoing study of the works of writers and artists whose testimonies, in their varied forms, "respond to the tapestry of the human" (p. 75). The *how* of bearing witness, as well as the *what* the witness to teachers bears witness to, are, in the words of Darryl De Marzio (2021), "categories that emerge from the ground up" (p. 5). The embedded, receptive, and responsive nature of bearing witness tie it inseparably to its enactment; the witness appears as witness only in the act of bearing witness itself. Furthermore, bearing witness names a way of attending, of turning oneself toward teaching. It is not a method that can be picked up or

stepped into, the way one steps into a pair of shoes, but, rather, describes a way of seeing that forms an integral element of the witness's person, of their way of being in the world. The form bearing witness takes is in some ways as singular as the person who embodies the orientation. For these reasons, Hansen (2021) insists that bearing witness cannot be taught to a person directly, nor can its features be strictly delineated. However, he states that the orientation can be "'caught' if the would-be witness immerses themselves in exemplars and considers their testimony deeply," and if they continually practice learning to see (p. 76).

Hansen's work on bearing witness to teaching and teachers, as well as his characterization of other exemplar works as embodying this orientation help clarify the distinct posture and purpose of the witness. They also emphasize that bearing witness is a descriptive term. An author, artist, or researcher might bear witness in the way Hansen describes without self-identifying as a witness or consciously taking up the orientation. The touchstone of the witness is their testimony. Hansen, by engaging with other authors' testimony, recognizes and identifies them as witnesses, even if they never use the term themselves (Hansen, 2021; Hansen & Sullivan, 2022).

In a similar way, over the past fifty years, educational researchers can be described as having engaged in bearing witness to teaching and teachers, even though they have not employed that term to describe their work. Hansen's more recent work on bearing witness does not appear as an anomaly and does not emerge *de novo.* In my view, with the term *bearing witness*, Hansen gives a name to a way of seeing, understanding, and writing about teaching that he, along with other scholars, had been engaging in for decades. The language of bearing witness clarifies the contours of an approach to educational research that is not new, but whose identity and value has remained indistinct, unarticulated, and difficult to capture. In what follows, I will trace what I

take to be the historical roots of the orientation Hansen names *bearing witness* in an effort to illuminate characteristic features of this mode of research.

2.3 The Historical Roots of Bearing Witness

Tracing the "lineage" of Hansen's notion of bearing witness leads directly and without detour to the work of Philip Jackson, who served as Hansen's dissertation advisor and with whom Hansen, as a graduate assistant, collaborated in the Moral Life of Schools project. I will suggest in what follows that Hansen "inherited" a way of approaching educational research from Jackson—an orientation toward teaching and teachers—that he continued to take up in his subsequent work, and which he eventually named bearing witness. Examining how Jackson, for his part, developed this posture toward education sheds light on the primary purpose of this scholarly orientation and situates it in relation to other modes of educational research.

A Call on Researchers to Play the Full Organ of their Songs

Jackson began his career as a psychologist committed to the view that education is a science that can be fruitfully measured and predicted by quantitative metrics. Together with J. W. Getzels, Jackson created a statistical measure that provided evidence to suggest that IQ is not a mark of giftedness in children (Getzels & Jackson, 1962). However, during his time working at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University from 1962-1963, Jackson dramatically shifted the direction of his research trajectory. At the Center, Jackson became acquainted with a researcher who drew on behaviorist techniques to test and train baboons. Jackson realized that, in his own research, he was treating students "like animals in a behavioristic paradigm" and concluded that "there must be a better way to understand children, a better way than poking them with sticks" (Hansen, cited in Craig and Flores, 2020). Upon returning to the University of Chicago, Jackson ceased conducting statistical measurements of

learning and instead began to engage in what Craig and Flores (2020) dub an "ethnographic style of research," which they claim Jackson pioneered in the field of education (p. 165). Long-term classroom observations and engagement with teachers culminated in Jackson's 1968 publication: *Life in Classrooms*. In this book-length study, Jackson emphasizes the rich complexity of teaching and learning, highlighting the impossibility of exhaustively understanding, evaluating, and predicting learning through quantitative measurement. Jackson's study is not explanatory, but descriptive: it places classroom life, in all its messiness and unpredictability, onto the page, in a gesture that seems to say to readers, especially other educational researchers: "Do you want to understand education? Look! Here it is."

In my reading, Jackson's shift in research agenda does not necessarily signal his negation of the value of quantitative measurement in educational research. It does, however, indicate that he considers such measures inadequate for capturing the full reality of education. In other words, the crux of Jackson's disillusionment with behaviorist-inspired research lies in the claim that such research is capable of exhaustively answering the question "What is education?." *Life in Classrooms,* along with Jackson's subsequent publications, constitute a call on educational researchers to see, recognize, and appreciate that there is more to education than can be captured by quantitative analysis. Jackson's (1968) central claim in *Life in Classrooms* is that "classroom life . . . [is] too complex an affair to be viewed or talked about from any single perspective," and he therefore implores researchers to "use all the ways of knowing at our disposal" in an effort to appreciate and understand the full reality of education (vii). These "ways of knowing" may well include quantitative methods, but must extend beyond them. Jackson's emphasis on the importance of attending to *life* in classrooms foregrounds the centrality of teachers as persons who teach, not only or primarily by enacting rote techniques, but rather through their skillful and

singular response to the needs of particular students as they unfold in real time. The classroom, his work indicates, is a living reality because it is the environment of living, acting persons who, as persons, resist exhaustive explanation or codification.

Beginning with *Life in Classrooms* and throughout the duration of his career, Jackson integrated poetry into his scholarly work and called upon educational researchers to employ their imaginative capacities in their efforts to see, appreciate, and render education in all its fullness. In an AERA address in 2014, Jackson exhorted listeners to “play the full organ of our songs as observers, as former students,” calling on them to engage their memory and imagination in their work and to allow themselves to be “mystified by education” (cited in Craig and Flores, 2020, p. 167). Hansen (2017b) echoes Jackson’s call on researchers to take up a posture of wonder toward the mystery of education, naming “reverberating wonder” a motivating and sustaining force of a witness’s ongoing work (p. 8). Hansen (2021) draws on Hans-Georg Gadamer to clarify that standing in wonder before education is not a posture of astonishment alone, but involves admiration (p. 77). This kind of wonder is distinct from curiosity, which fades upon investigation. Deep wonder, or what Jackson calls being “mystified by education” is not extinguished but fueled by greater knowledge, the way one’s admiration of a role model endures and strengthens as their acquaintance grows. Paul Woodruff (2014) articulates this unique dynamic of knowing and unknowing in his definition of reverence, which he characterizes as wonder coupled with awe, and silence provoked by an encounter with something that exceeds human capacity to control, create, or fully understand, yet which, at the same time, we affirm to be true (p. 113). Through taking up a posture of reverence toward education, scholars mitigate the risk of flattening and reducing a reality saturated with meaning and mystery.

Central to Jackson's work of rendering the full living reality of education is what he leaves unsaid, uncertain, and unexplained. Jackson embodies a gesture of pointing toward education and, in particular, toward the persons involved in the act of education: teachers and students. Through his mode of research and way of writing, he makes every effort to avoid replacing individual human beings, in their complex, irreplaceable singularity, with simulacra that reduce education to an impersonal process carried out by what Hansen (2021, 2023) later describes as "interchangeable functionaries." To achieve this end, Jackson spends ample time in classrooms, getting to know teachers well. In his writing, he engages with the humanities, particularly poetry, in an effort to truthfully express the living reality of education. His turn to poetry embodies Marcel's emphasis that it is the office of the humanities, and in particular of art, to honor and preserve the singularity proper to human beings. Jackson's work can be seen as seeking to safeguard education as an inherently human endeavor: a practice of persons.

Bearing Witness to Teaching and Teachers

In explaining what it means to bear witness to teaching and teachers, Hansen (2021) notes that the notion of "bearing witness" is widely and diversely employed (p. 71). Some witnesses, such as the witness in court and the witness of a marriage, are called upon to verify the accuracy and validity of facts or events. Their testimony seeks to be precise, impartial, and impersonal: their ideal is to approach the accuracy of a machine. There is, however, another type of witnessing that is intensely and intrinsically personal. The aim of these witnesses' testimony is to invite (and even implore) listeners to share in some way in an experience the witness has had or seen. The religious witness, the social witness, and the moral witness testify to a truth they have experienced—whether beautiful or ugly, transcendent or traumatic—that, in their view, demands to be known and appreciated by others (Hansen & Sullivan, 2022, p. 152). This type of

witness feels called to give testimony, to bear witness. Their posture is first receptive and then responsive. Far from assuming a private personal claim on their experience as "their truth," the witness understands themselves to have been touched (in a felt, though not necessarily a physical, way) by a truth that has, so to speak, arrived to them, perhaps unexpectedly, which they feel has bearing for others, and which they understand themselves as having been entrusted with the task of sharing. In short, they feel "called to witness" by a truth that they have touched in their own experience (Hansen, 2021, p. 73).

Hansen situates the witness to teaching and teachers among the latter type of witness. Such a witness has seen, experienced, and appreciated dimensions of teaching that they feel a duty and responsibility to make known to others. The identity of "witness" is thus not, strictly speaking, self-endowed. A person does not become a witness by means of making a choice from among options, the way a student selects to enroll in one of many possible majors or a diner chooses an entrée on a menu. A person bears witness by responding to a call, by heeding an invitation.

The paradigm shift Jackson experienced in his understanding of teaching while observing baboons at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences illustrates this responsive dynamic. In and through this experience—which appears as nothing short of revelatory—Jackson heard a call to bear witness that continued to resound for the remainder of his career. This originating call made a claim on Jackson: his subsequent research, writings, and speeches show him to understand himself as having been entrusted with appreciation of a truth about teaching that he felt was important to make known. Thus, the origin of Jackson's witness gives way to its aim: to render testimony that strives to makes visible to others the truth of teaching that he has seen.

The witness's work is directed toward what Hansen (2021) refers to as "ethical truth," which he describes as "lived truth" that extends beyond propositional accuracy and encompasses realities such as the truth of a friendship, the truth of suffering, and the truth of teaching (p. 73). Ethical truth is personal and active; it concerns the very ethos of who persons are and are becoming as they engage with and respond to others (p. 49). The truth of teaching is, Hansen (2021) insists, importantly ethical, because, at its core, teaching is an act of "*being with* students and the particular subject matter at hand" (p. 35).

Ethics, in this sense, is understood as "a comprehensive term that encompasses the aesthetic, moral, and intellectual ethos" of the persons involved in an experience, in this case, the experience of teaching and learning (Hansen, 2021, p. 29). "Ethics" is, in this understanding, a more primary category than that which concerns the moral, the aesthetic, or the intellectual aspects of education as such, one that appears directly in and is utterly inseparable from experience as it unfolds. Hansen (2021) points to teaching as having a "distinctive ethos" or "built-in ethics." This ethics does not name a "guiding set of principles or values regarding conduct" that are given in advance and applied by each practitioner, like a common mission statement. Rather, *ethos* "speaks to a person or community's animating sensibility or orientation" and "evokes the overall spirit of the person or community, their character or characteristic way of being, which pervades virtually all that they say and do" (p. 119). The witness to teaching and teachers seeks to perceive, understand, and faithfully communicate the ethos of teaching and of teachers.

Ethical truth, as Hansen depicts it, appears in the living reality of teaching itself, made up of the moment-by-moment attunement, receptivity, responsiveness, and tact of human beings in action, engaged together in the joint project of attending to a topic of study. To return to the

phenomenological language of Chapter 1, the ethical truth of *being with* appears through empathic encounter. The witness's attunement to the ethical truth of teaching roots them inextricably in the dynamic reality of what Jackson calls "life in classrooms," where the ethos of teaching as a practice of persons lives and breathes.

The ethical truth of teaching escapes the purview of research methods that translate the practice of teaching into the language of calculatable evaluative metrics. The *life* or *ethos* of teaching cannot be captured in numbers or generalizable measures; the ethical truth of teaching is constituted by singular, unrepeatable moments that are, to return to Marion's phenomenological language, saturated with meaning. The dynamism of ethical truth demands a certain tenor of testimony. Hansen (2021) notes that the witness takes the artist, not the scientist, as an exemplar in rendering testimony, since while the scientist attempts to explain, the witness, like the artist, aims through their work to illuminate meaning. Art preserves singularity and maintains mystery, refusing to replace a complex reality with a simulacrum, and instead embodying a gesture of pointing. Jackson's integration of imagination and poetry into his speeches and writings and his encouragement of other researchers to do the same manifests his careful effort to *render* teaching justly, avoiding reducing life in classrooms to a flattened *representation*. Hansen (2017a) describes the artful rendering of testimony as the office of the witness, with "render" denoting both "forming" or "fashioning" as well as "giving what is due," "giving back," and "returning in kind" (p. 26). The witness's rendering aspires to preserve and capture a wholeness that Hansen juxtaposes with *representation*, which carries connotations of substitution and replacement (p. 26). The witness does not seek to replace the living reality of what they have witnessed with their testimony, but rather, to illuminate it, to help it appear. The witness is a pointer.

The witness's work is imbued through and through with reverence, mirroring Woodruff's (2014) depiction of the reverent teacher who embodies a posture of "awe and respect—awe for the enormous subject that is being learned and respect for the students who are learning it under their own power" (p. 214). The witness present in the classroom extends this reverence toward teachers as well, and seeks to convey, as fully as possible, the awe-inspiring reality they have seen. Jackson's unebbing wonder at the mystery of education and his steadfast dedication to rendering the complexity of life in classrooms as truthfully and fully as possible through drawing on memory, imagination, and art in his qualitative research make him, in my reading, an exemplar witness to teaching and teachers.

2.4 Seeking Deep Knowledge

A distinguishing feature of bearing witness as a primarily ethical (as opposed to epistemic) orientation is the kind of insight such research seeks. As described above, the aim of the witness is to illuminate meaning, not to predict or to explain. Thus, educational research that can be described as bearing witness is distinguished by both the kind of knowledge that it seeks and its purpose in seeking that knowledge.

The kind of knowledge that the witness seeks is neither cumulative nor generalizable. Jackson (1992) describes his research—which seeks insight into the moral dimensions of teaching—as seeking a kind of knowledge of teachers that "deepens" and becomes "more complex" over time. This deep knowledge "does not grow arithmetically" through the accumulation of evidence (p. 406). In fact, Jackson notes that sometimes a researcher seeking this kind of deep knowledge "actually seems to know *less* about the teacher" as time goes on (p. 406, emphasis original), echoing Marcel's (1950) depiction of persons as mysteries that cannot be fully grasped or comprehended (p. 208). Thus, deep knowledge is not epistemically

summative. Unlike statistical measurements, which treat "each observation as uniform in its informational value" and therefore generalizable (Jackson, 1992, p. 406), deep knowledge bears a mark of singularity; it names the kind of knowledge we have when we know another person well. Such knowledge is not immediately apparent or available to a first-time observer. As Jackson (1992) insists, it "takes time to see" (p. 404). Perhaps these distinctive characteristics of deep knowledge lead Hansen (2021) to refer to the witness's work as concerned, not with *knowledge* per se, but with ethical *truth*. I take Jackson's depiction of deepening knowledge of a teacher's moral self as seeking a similarly ethical (and not primarily epistemic) truth.

Jackson's distinction between summative and deep knowledge evokes the distinction many languages draw between *knowing something* and *knowing someone*. Samuel Rocha (2016) juxtaposes the two words for "knowing" in Spanish, *saber* (to know about something) and *conocer* (to be deeply acquainted with, as with a person or a place) to articulate a shortcoming he sees in educational theory: we know a lot about (saber) this thing called education, but we lack *conocer* knowledge of education. Deep, *conocer* knowledge does not deal in facts and figures; it seeks deep understanding. Jackson characterizes his enjoinment on researchers to seek deep knowledge as a reverberating echo of Clifford Geertz's (1983) direction of researchers toward what he terms "local knowledge": concrete, singular, descriptive knowledge that can only be gained by researchers dwelling among the subjects they study, in the case of educational researchers, through spending time with teachers and "learning how to look" (Jackson, 1990, pp. 7-8).

In addition to distinguishing the kind of insight a researcher seeks, the term "bearing witness" reveals a second aspect of the kind of inquiry scholars like Jackson have undertaken. Simply seeking deep, *conocer* knowledge or ethical truth is not enough to characterize research

as bearing witness. The witness exhibits a distinct purpose in pursuing such insight. The hallmark of "bearing witness" is the witness' effort to make visible (to witness to) the insight they have gained. Through this effort, the witness seeks simply to illuminate the truth they have seen. Testifying to the truth of teaching is the primary purpose of the educational researcher-as-witness. Their testimony is offered for the sake of the truth it shows, not as a merely instrumental means of evaluating teacher performance or of improving practice.

Hansen (2107b) describes the office of the witness as one of "remembrance": the researcher as witness seeks, first and foremost, to remind readers (researchers, policymakers, and teachers themselves) of the depth of meaning found in teaching (p. 9). The witness accomplishes this aim through scholarship that is descriptive, not explanatory, predictive, or directly aimed at improving teachers' practice. Such scholarship seeks to portray the truth of teaching as fully and faithfully as possible, the way a painter aims to portray a living personality in his depiction of a human face. It is as impossible to fully capture the depth of truth in teaching as it is to fully capture a human face on canvas. However, just as an artist's work, when done well, can truthfully (though never exhaustively) express the living spark of the subject it portrays, so too does the descriptive work of the witness seek to truthfully express deep knowledge of teaching and of the singular persons who engage in the practice.

This descriptive work embodies what I call a gesture of pointing, through which the witness directs readers' attention toward teaching, endeavoring to help them see its truth more clearly and fully. In order for a researcher to take up a pointing posture, they must enact what Hansen (2021) describes as simultaneous proximity to and distance from the action of classroom life. Turning to projects that intentionally seek the deep knowledge Jackson describes and aim to illuminate the truth of teaching through descriptive scholarship can help illustrate how proximity

and distance work together in research that can, in my view, be aptly described as bearing witness to teaching and teachers.

2.5 Ethical Proximity and Participation: Bearing Witness as Contemplation

In a project that cites Jackson as a direct source of inspiration, Virginia Richardson and Gary Fenstermacher (2001) describe the quest for deeper, personal knowledge as seeking insight into teachers' manner. The Manner in Teaching Project, which began in 1997, emerged out of a worry that behaviorist-inspired research "was leading educators and policy makers to form excessively simple ideas of both the purposes and practices of teaching" (Fenstermacher, 2001, p. 639). Instead of viewing education as a complex intellectual and moral endeavor, behaviorism, in these scholars' view, reduces teaching to the method of enacting behaviors most likely to lead students to acquire prescribed subject-matter knowledge (Fenstermacher, 2001, p. 639). Fenstermacher (2001), co-director of the Manner in Teacher Project, examined teacher *manner* as a foil of *method* in an attempt to "direct attention to the teacher's role in fostering the moral and intellectual development of the young" (p. 640). The research team behind the Manner in Teaching Project aimed to "make manner visible" by attending closely to the persons who teach (Richardson and Fenstermacher, 2001, p. 632).

The Manner in Teaching Project focused specifically on examining how teachers' conduct aims at fostering virtue (Richardson and Fenstermacher, 2001, p. 631). The project began with the hypothesis, drawn from an Aristotelian tradition of virtue theory, that virtues are not taught directly, but are picked up by students through a teacher's virtuous conduct (their manner). Thus, researchers involved in this project were attuned to observing how elements of a teacher's moral character manifested in their way of being in the classroom. In an article published at an interim point in the study, Matthew Sanger (2001), a doctoral research assistant

involved in the Manner in Teaching Project, relates how, over time, he came to see third-grade teacher Margaret's respect for students in her way of interacting with them.

In an excerpt from an interview, Margaret relates how she endeavors to foster respect in her classroom in concrete ways, for example, through teaching students the meaning of the word "respect" and through spending the first weeks of the school year studying examples of respect: "We act it out, we draw pictures of it, we talk about it and we use literature that shows people being respectful, or a lot of times they are animal characters at this level" (Sanger, 2001, p. 690). However, Sanger distinguishes between these descriptions of what Margaret does to foster respect and the way that she shows respect through her manner of being with students:

> Being in Margaret's classroom and watching her on videotape only reinforces what she expressed in our conversations. There seems to be an air of professionalism in the way she conducts her classroom, in terms of how she carries herself, how she carries out instruction, and particularly how she interacts with her students in general. Her professionalism goes beyond calling her third graders "ladies and gentlemen." It is in her positive, encouraging, yet clear and matter-of-fact way of answering questions, solving problems (or encouraging such solutions by her students), and settling conflicts in which she regularly appeals to the idea of respect, and other notions such as courtesy, consideration and kindness associated with her general view of how people ought to treat each other (p. 691).

Sanger's descriptions of Margaret's demeanor are not conclusions he could have drawn after a single observation session; rather, they speak to his deep familiarity with her classroom and with her as a teacher. Furthermore, Sanger's depiction of Margaret's manner shows not only that he has spent many hours in her classroom, but also that he has approached his observations of her teaching in a particular way. He does not draw judgments about her effectiveness, but rather describes the "air" about her as she moves about the classroom. Sanger's disposition seems to be fundamentally open and appreciative: he does not appear to be testing how well Margaret lives the ideal of professionalism in her classroom, but, rather, he enters her classroom open to appreciating the meaning behind her manner.

In his work on bearing witness, Hansen (2017a) notes that insights such as those captured by Sanger would not be apparent to any casual observer; they require a researcher to approach what happens in the classroom with "an ethos of piety and reverence" that engenders and manifests "aesthetic, moral, and reflective responsiveness" (p. 20). Hansen describes such a researcher as "heeding" and not merely "observing" teachers' actions and ways of being. They are present in the classroom not as a spectator, but as a witness: prepared to see and testify to moments in which "the *being* of the human being come(s) into view" (Hansen, 2017a, p. 11, emphasis original). Seeing such moments requires what Hansen (2021) calls "ethical proximity": seeking to be with and see with the teacher, attuned to the meaning-laden action of classroom life (p. 93).

The hallmark of ethical proximity is presence. When a witness ceases to be fully present to and with teachers, Hansen (2021) explains, their vision can become spectatorial (p. 71). In phenomenological terms, this shift describes a move from empathic perception, which is attuned to persons, to primordial perception, in which I, the observer, perceive all persons and happenings in reference to myself, precluding the possibility of genuine interpersonal encounter. Presence on the part of the witness preserves the possibility of a genuine *being with* teachers and of seeing the ethical nuance of teaching.

Being present as a witness demands a particular kind of proximity. On the one hand, the witness orients themselves toward the primary experience of others. While a witness might draw on the assistance of technological tools in their work, for example through audio or video recording (as Sanger does in the example above), the testimony the witness offers is intensely personal: the insights they depict extend beyond pure facticity and can thus only be seen by a person. Furthermore, the witness's testimony is unique to their singular person; a different

witness would see differently because of their unique perspective. While many research methods seek to diminish the impact of the researcher's personal perspective and biases, the witness embraces the singularity of their own perspective, including their prejudices and prejudgments while also engaging in what Hansen (2021) calls "ethical self-cultivation" in an effort to achieve greater awareness of the factors that impact their way of seeing and to cultivate ever greater openness and receptivity to seeing the persons before them.

In explaining the value of the witness's personal perspective, as well as their need for ongoing self-cultivation, Hansen (2021) cites the hermeneutic insight that all perspectives are animated by prejudices and prejudgments, since to see is always to see from somewhere. However, he notes the importance of drawing these prejudgments into awareness, of examining their moral and ethical value, and of questioning and rooting out morally problematic prejudices with vigilance (p. 137). Additionally, the ethical self-cultivation of the witness involves ongoing practice in refining one's ability to see. "To respond to the world in a non-objectifying manner," Hansen (2017a) writes, "the person must cultivate continuously her or his aesthetic, moral, and reflective capacities" (p. 10). This cultivation can occur, Hansen (2021) contends, through an immersive study of literary, philosophical, and artistic works (p. 76). Furthermore, the self-cultivation of the witness involves a honing of one's perceptive capacities through the practice of attending to what Jan Zwicky's (2013, 2019) calls "resonant particulars." Resonant particulars are moments, actions, expressions, gestures, etc. that "bring the *being* of a human being, their very personhood, into presence, however fleetingly" (p. 65). Seeing persons appear in this way in the classroom is the aim of the witness, but in order for resonant particulars to appear, the witness must be fully present and attuned to their possibility. Seeing resonant particulars requires learning to look through ongoing practices of self-cultivation (Hansen, 2021, p. 64).

Paradoxically, perhaps, being fully present to see teaching, moment-by-moment, requires advanced preparation (Di Paolantonio, 2023, p. 105).

The witness's proximity and way of seeing can be described as contemplative, although, as Hansen (2021) notes, there is nothing stereotypically "meditative" or passive about such contemplation (p. 93). The witness's contemplation is active, attuned, and responsive; it is a genuine and unique form of participation in the action of classroom life. Marcel (1950) sheds light on the meaning of contemplation by contrasting it, not with action, but with spectating. A spectator, Marcel notes, is a passive observer of a scene. The spectator sees action unfold before him but does not feel himself to be "caught up" in any way by what he sees (p. 121). The spectator stands apart from action in a posture of passivity, like a watcher of television or a fan at a sporting event. The spectator might very well feel curiosity, excitement, and any number of other emotions as he beholds what is happening, but the action he sees does not affect his person. A spectator watches an event in which he is not an actor. His vision is thus not rooted fully in the present, but is oriented toward the future: What will happen next? What will the implications of this action be? Under what conditions can what I see be generalized or replicated? Such are the questions of the spectator, who separates himself and his person from the action at hand and observes what is happening from a distance.

Marcel (1950) juxtaposes the act of spectating with that of contemplating. While a person engaged in contemplation may appear, from the outside, to be passively observing, such is not the case. Contemplation is, Marcel (1950) holds, a genuine (albeit unique) mode of participation in the unfolding action. He even calls contemplation one of participation's "most intimate modes" (p. 123). Contemplation is, unlike spectating, free from curiosity and looking toward the future. On the contrary, contemplation is firmly rooted in the present: it is an act of embodied,

personal presence. What is contemplated makes a claim on the person contemplating; it grips them; it addresses them personally and calls on them to respond. Contemplation is far from passive; it is *receptive* and *responsive*. Marcel clarifies that the receptivity of the contemplative is both active and personal. The contemplative receives what they contemplate the way a host receives a guest or a person receives another in an embrace. To receive in this way requires self-possession because to receive another person is to welcome them into my prepared place of reception. This prepared place is mine, it is me, but it is not *for* me; it is meant to take in another, it waits to welcome what it has prepared to receive (p. 118).

When describing the active receptivity of the witness, Hansen (2017b) cites the distinction Martin Heidegger (2010, pp. 75-6) draws between "waiting" and "awaiting." He compares the waiting of a witness to taking a meandering walk through a forest. While a botanist might trudge through the forest in a posture of intense observation, "awaiting" the appearance of a specific plant, the walker takes her time, her vision open, alert, and "waiting" to take in whatever the forest, in those moments, will reveal (p. 15). Cast in Marcel's terminology, while an observing spectator "awaits" the appearance of hypothesized data, the contemplative witness "waits" with patience and openness, prepared to receive and respond to an unforeseen revelation.

To contemplate, one must be fully present. This is because contemplation attends to singularity and is open to encounter. While a spectator observes an object the way a botanist observes plants in the woods, Marcel (1950) describes contemplation as a fundamentally non-objectifying vision attuned to uniqueness and singularity:

> …might we not say that the very essence of contemplation as such consists, negatively at least, in the fact that it can never be brought to bear on a specimen as such; its object, if it has an object, is not considered as being a member of a class or as having a place in a series; it is considered in itself, in its uniqueness, while for the specialist—in spite of any appearance to the contrary—that uniqueness can never be taken into account (p. 126).

This contemplative attunement to singularity can only occur through what Marcel calls "ingatheredness:" an "inward regrouping of one's resources" in the presence of what is contemplated. This "ingathering" includes openness to bringing what is contemplated into oneself, to receiving it and "gathering it into" one's own inwardness, one's own person (p. 126). In this way, the contemplative is utterly distinct from a recording apparatus. Marcel (1950) illustrates this distinction through the example of an artist. While an indifferent tourist or newspaper reporter might record a view of Delft on a camera, Vermeer contemplated the scene: he took it into himself, participated in it, let it affect him and become a part of him. In short, through his contemplation (which was far from passive) the view of Delft took on inner meaning for Vermeer (p. 127). His contemplation was then given expression in his painting. What is more, it called for expression through painting. Marcel (1950) notes the personal, meaning-laden nature of this receptive and responsive encounter:

> An artist like Vermeer, we might say, did not paint his *View of Delft* just as he would have painted some other view, if he had lived somewhere else; rather, if he had lived somewhere else, though he might still have been an artist, he would not have been Vermeer. He was Vermeer in so far as the *View of Delft* was something he had to paint; do not let us say, however, 'He was Vermeer *because* he painted the *View of Delft*', for the conjunction 'because' in its causal sense, has no bearing at all on the matter (p. 135).

Contemplation, as Marcel describes it, is the way of looking of the witness. Put another way, bearing witness arises from contemplation; the witness's testimony (in whatever form it takes) expresses meaning accessed through contemplation. The witness's own person is implicated in and affected by this process. To bear witness is a deeply personal act. For that reason, it is singular, unique, unrepeatable. No two witnesses will offer the same testimony. The witness is made (though not in a causal sense) by what they witness, and the testimony they offer is uniquely theirs. Thus, while bearing witness can seem, from an external perspective,

indistinguishable from other modes of observation, witnessing involves taking up a unique, contemplative orientation.

2.6 The Distance of the Witness: A Close, Third-Person Perspective

While bearing witness is a genuine and active mode of participation, the witness maintains a certain distance from events as they unfold. This distance does not derive from indifference, but rather preserves the integrity of the witness's unique perspective, which can meaningfully complement the perspectives of the classroom's primary actors: teacher and students. Understanding the distance involved in bearing witness helps clarify its value as a distinct research orientation.

As indicated above, bearing witness is a polysemous term. Bearing witness to teaching and teachers is not a mode of witnessing that testifies to the legitimacy of facts or events, as does a witness in court or a witness to a marriage. Rather, it is situated among the kinds of witnessing that testify to the meaning of an experience. While the former mode of bearing witness is a primarily epistemic affair, the latter mode of witnessing is first and foremost ethical. The witness to teaching and teachers seeks to perceive, understand, and faithfully communicate the ethos of teaching and of teachers. Since this ethos is immanent—it appears in the action of teaching itself—bearing witness requires close proximity to persons in action. At the same time, the witness is not a primary actor in the events that unfold. Thus, bearing witness to teaching and teachers exemplifies a distinct mode of ethical witnessing, one that I refer to as *second-order witnessing*. In addition to proximity, this kind of witnessing requires the witness to maintain a certain distance in order to preserve the unique value of their perspective.

Second-Order Witnessing

There are, as I see it, two possible modes of bearing witness to the meaning of an experience: (1) one can offer testimony expressing the meaning of an experience they have undergone themselves, or (2) a witness can offer testimony regarding an experience they have seen but in which they have not been a primary actor or protagonist. There is a need for both of these ways of witnessing in classrooms and in educational scholarship. However, after a brief introduction of the kind of witnessing that involves offering first-person testimony, I will focus on the second mode of witnessing, since that is the kind of bearing witness enacted by Hansen and other scholars whom I have identified as bearing witness to teachers.

Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert (2005) describe “first-order witnessing” (p. 51) as an act in which a witness seeks to share, through their testimony, the meaning of an experience they have undergone themselves. Often, though not always, these witnesses’ testimony relates experiences of trauma or suffering. Simon and Eppert (2005), drawing on an insight offered by Robert Brinkley and Steven Youra (1996), describe how first-order witnessing initiates a chain of transmission, because the testimony of the witness makes a claim on listeners, who then become obliged to be witnesses themselves, though of a different kind. Witnesses of a first-order witness’s testimony become what can be called “second-order witnesses:” those who feel an ethical responsibility to bear witness to an experience that is not originally their own. Simon and Eppert (2005) describe this chain of transmission as an ongoing communicative process, forged and powered by a felt sense of responsibility and respect:

> Hence, the first-order witness initiates a chain of testimony-witnessing held together by bonds of an ethics forged in a relationship of responsibility and respect. Testimony is thus always directed toward another. It places the one who receives it under the obligation of response to an embodied singular experience not recognizable as one’s own (p. 51)

Second-order witnessing can be inspired by many sources and take many forms. While Simon and Eppert focus on the second-order witness who feels summoned to pass on testimony they have heard from a first-order witness, I suggest that another initiating source of second-order witnessing can be seeing (or, in Marcel's words, contemplating) the experience of another. First and second-order witnessing are not mutually exclusive. Hansen (2021), for example, dedicates an entire chapter of his recent book to relating, directly and without comment or interpretation, the first-order testimony provided by teachers through interviews. He also includes testimony in the form of what he calls "vignettes:" narrative depictions of classroom life drawn from his time spent in teachers' classrooms. This latter kind of testimony might give us pause. What is the value of this second-order testimony? Would it not be better to allow teachers to speak for themselves? Why, in addition to relating teachers' own words, does Hansen compose vignettes portraying the meaning of classroom life as he sees it? What does his perspective add to scholarly inquiry?

Returning to the phenomenological language related in Chapter 1, the posture the second-order witness embodies with relation to classroom life is one of empathy. The witness does not actively participate in teaching, and therefore does not experience this action primordially. Rather, they see—or witness—another person engaged in the act of teaching. If the witness contemplates the teacher, not as a specimen, but as a *person,* then they gain access, through empathy, to the teacher's intentional world: it becomes possible for the witness to see the meaning behind the teacher's actions, to achieve the deeper knowledge Jackson (1992) describes. Through the witness's attuned, interpersonal encounter with the teacher, they really can perceive honesty in the wideness of the teacher's smile and their steady tone of voice. The witness's insight is neither exhaustive nor infallible—there is always more to be seen and the chance that

the witness's reading might be mistaken—but their attentive vision is nonetheless a genuine avenue of knowing. Furthermore, as Jackson indicates, the insights yielded by empathy grow in precision and nuance over time, as the witness comes to know a teacher better as a person. For this reason, Hansen (2021) cites spending ample time in classrooms and conversing with teachers as indispensable means by which the witness can hone their capacity to truthfully see what happens in classrooms (p. 53). In the following chapter, I will discuss criteria for evaluating the credibility of a witness's testimony: on what grounds ought a reader to believe that what the witness sees is true? In this section, I put questions of credibility to the side and focus on articulating the nature and value of what I call the close third-person perspective of the witness.

A Complementary Perspective

As outlined in Chapter 1, phenomenology holds that we, as human beings, experience the world as filled with meaning; our actions aim at and respond to our perception of meaning. Furthermore, acknowledging empathy as a genuine way of knowing corresponds to a commitment that meaning is not (wholly) constructed by an individual subject, for it acknowledges that my perspective on reality is partial and can be meaningfully augmented by others, whose unique (and likewise partial) perspectives offer me new vantage points from which to understand objects, actions, events, and even myself. Empathic knowledge (gained through interpersonal encounter) complements primordial knowledge (gained solely through one's own, subjective perspective) and reminds me that no matter how many perspectives I gain, there will always be more to see.

These phenomenological insights have various implications for educational research. First, they highlight the vital importance of research methods that have the capacity to access meaning. A central tenant of phenomenology is that "to see is to see from somewhere" (Merleau-

Ponty, 2012), that is, from one's own perspective, and, therefore, understanding human experience requires understanding its significance from the perspective of the persons involved. If responding to the world in a meaning-laden way is a defining feature of human life, then it is crucial for researchers seeking to improve a human practice such as education to understand the significance, and not just the ontic facticity, of what happens in the classroom. This insight has animated various methods of qualitative inquiry including narrative interviewing (Josselson, 2013), ethnography (Gordon, 2002), and descriptive phenomenology (van Manen, 2016). Probing dimensions of meaning is a primary aim of qualitative research, which in general holds that understanding an experience requires understanding the significance it has for the persons involved (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

In recent years, educational research has been enriched by qualitative studies that capture and share teachers' testimony about education (e.g. Alisic, 2012; McClintic & Petty, 2015; Remesal, 2011; Shernoff et al., 2011). Such research is vital for preserving and promoting teaching, not just as a measurable science, but as a meaning-filled human practice. Qualitative studies that capture teachers' experiences in their own words also honor and foreground teachers as educational experts whose insights and experiences scholars and policymakers ought to seriously attend to and heed. Numerous scholars (e.g. Craig and Flores, 2020; Eisner, 2007; Torres, 1991) cite Jackson's work as inaugurating educational research that gives pride of place to the experiences of teachers, to what goes on "in teachers' minds and spirits," as they prepare for, enact, and reflect upon their teaching (Kompf & Rust, 2013; cited in Craig and Flores).

While such qualitative studies, in their varied forms, present teacher testimony, not all can be called acts of bearing witness in the way Hansen employs the term. In order to be classified as studies that bear witness, the researcher must seek deep knowledge, which is gained

over time through what I have described above as contemplative looking. Furthermore, the researcher must present teachers' testimony, not with a view to supporting generalized explanations or to informing improvements in practice, but simply with the aim of illuminating the truth of what it means to be a teacher and to teach.

When a researcher presents teachers' testimony in scholarship with a view to illuminating the truth of teaching, they become a second-order witness. Such second-order testimony imbues the studies cited above in which the researcher contemplates classroom life, seeking deep knowledge, and then renders an account of the meaning they have seen. In phenomenological terms, such studies offer insights through empathy: a witness who attends to classroom life carefully really can see meaning in teachers' and students' actions. The perspective of the witness does not replace those of the primary actors—teachers and students—but rather offers an additional vantage point from which the significance of what happens in classrooms can be seen.

An example of the complementarity of the witness's perspective can be seen in the testimony cited above that Sanger (2001) renders based on his time spent in Margaret's classroom. In her first-person testimony, Margaret explains the concrete ways she fosters an environment of respect in her classroom: defining the term, studying examples in literature, etc. Through spending many hours in Margaret's classroom, Sanger comes to recognize how Margaret imbues her classroom with respect in ways that extend beyond the details mentioned in her interview. Sanger sees Margaret living respect in "how she carries herself," in her manner of "carrying out instruction," and especially, he notes, in the way she interacts with her students: in her "positive, encouraging, yet clear and matter-of-fact" manner of responding to questions, supporting student's work, and settling conflicts (p. 691). Sanger's testimony does not contradict Margaret's, but rather complements it by providing another point of view through which to see

and appreciate how Margaret teaches respect in her classroom. Margaret might quarrel with Sanger's depiction of her actions, objecting that she did not intend to foster respect in the moments he describes. Nevertheless, according to Sanger's testimony, as he contemplated Margaret teaching, an ethos of respect appeared. It is up to the reader to decide whether Sanger's testimony is credible, drawing on criteria I will lay out in the following chapter. However, the very posture of the witness is intrinsically committed to the expansiveness of meaning beyond any one perspective or intention. Neither Margaret nor Sanger has a monopoly on the ethos of Margaret's classroom; there is always room for more witnesses. As Hansen (2021) puts it: "The truth in teaching and in being a teacher is richer and more multifaceted than any single witness can encompass" (p. 74).

The second-order testimony of the witness can give teachers a new perspective through which to see and appreciate themselves and their work in the classroom. The value of this perspective shines through in the testimony of Earl, a teacher whose classroom Hansen visited 23 times over the course of a three-year long project oriented by the question: What does it mean to be a person as a teacher in the world today? As part of a five-page reflection, which Hansen (2021) includes unabridged and without comment beyond brief remarks clarifying the meaning of terms, Earl reflects about what it was like to have Hansen and his doctoral assistants present in his classroom and to read a vignette Hansen composed based on his time there:

> ...I was entirely unaccustomed to having another educator visit my classroom with no institutional agenda of evaluating or coaching. This was almost unsettling at first, but over time I began to realize that I was noticing things about myself, my students, and my vocation, which I had previously been unable to see. Like many teachers, I was accustomed to other educators coming into my classroom with a rubric, a checklist, or some other institutional instrument for assessing my practice. I almost couldn't fathom how someone could sit in a classroom without one of their instruments to guide their observations. I frequently wondered what they were looking for. Frankly, it was difficult to shake the sneaking suspicion that some kind of evaluation must be happening (p. 83).

However, I eventually came to realize that, again, the project facilitators were true to their word that their intention was solely to "observe and listen." Later, when reading a formal write-up of the project, I got a clear sense of what the facilitators were seeing when they were sitting in my room. In this write-up, David described a vignette that took place in my class as we were beginning a unit on August Wilson's *Fences*. Prior to beginning any new text, I typically have students activate prior knowledge through an "opinionator activity" whereby they debate statements that relate to the larger themes of a given text. For example, for *Fences*, one of the statements was "Children should always forgive their parents for the mistakes they make." As the students began debating this statement, David noted:

> The discussion becomes heated, though not ad hominem (the teacher has worked hard, since their first day of school, to help the class avoid such a turn). Suddenly, Patrizia, in the very midst of saying "parents just have to be accountable," shakes her head vigorously and falls silent. She rushes to her chair by the far wall and, taking her seat, lowers her head on her arms. A tall girl, Cornelia, with whom she had been debating, goes over and, brushing the girl's knee with her hand, asks "You okay, Patrizia?" The teacher, Earl, also goes over and, kneeling down to eye level, asks if she is okay. Patrizia keeps her head down and offers no response. Meanwhile the class has been returning to their seats, sensing that the opinionator activity is over.

This all matched my memory of the moment, but I was struck by the next moment that David noticed, a moment that was important, but so microscopic as to pass below (or above, as the case may be) the threshold of my conscious awareness. In that class, as we moved onto the next activity, David noticed something that happened with Patrizia:

> Within a minute or so of the start of the activity, Patrizia raises her head from her arms and follows the discussion, taking notes as do the other students. She appears calm and composed. Suddenly, she sneezes. In that very instant, Cornelia and the teacher both say "Bless you," in a firm but gentle tone.

When reading this account of a moment in my classroom, I was struck by the caring attention that David was able to bring to such a miniscule moment as Patrizia's sneeze. Even more enlightening for me, as the teacher in the room, was David's exegesis of that microscopic moment.

Through his commitment to bearing witness, David was able to unearth complex emotional dynamics that were being transacted in my classroom and that were yet almost entirely outside my ken. I recall being vaguely pleased/relieved that the "heated discussion" never turned acrimonious or "ad hominem," and I also recall being pleased/relieved that the other students gave Patrizia supportive emotional space and that she was able to reenter the class activity after taking a moment to herself.

However, my memory and impression of the moment compared to the vignette that David rendered was like an Impressionist painting of a pond set next to a high-definition

photograph of the same pond. David's brief vignette, and his exegesis, was a gift that allowed me to see fine details in my classroom that I hadn't noticed before: the complex, delicate ballet by which students can debate emotionally charged ideas and simultaneously support each other, or the way students avoid becoming condescending when someone displays emotional vulnerability. For me, the vignette was like a model of perception that showed me how to notice things in my classroom. And once I noticed them, I could begin to question how they came into being, or what I could do as an educator to foster them even more. Clearly, this advanced my practice as a pedagogue and yet it never involved any sort of rubric or pedagogical checklist (pp. 83-4).

Earl's words, and the prominent place they occupy in Hansen's writing, make it clear that the testimony of the witness does not replace or render less valuable the testimony of teachers themselves. Hansen did not see Earl's classroom *better* than he did, but *differently*. Earl's recollection of the day Hansen describes in his vignette reveals that his attention was, very appropriately, focused simultaneously on facilitating students' meaningful engagement in a learning activity (intentionally aimed at activating their prior knowledge) and responding to students' needs and actions as they unfolded in real time (tracking the emotional tenor of the discussion and attending both to Patrizia's taking space and reentering the class activity). Earl appears, in both his recollection and in Hansen's vignette, as a primary actor in the classroom scene. He is fully engaged in the dynamic, responsive, and intentional act of teaching. His attention is geared toward instruction: toward subject matter, toward engaging students, toward ensuring their ongoing well-being. In a word, Earl's attention is turned toward action.

Hansen, as witness, attends to classroom happenings differently. He is not responsible for instruction, nor for responding to students' needs. His attention is, as Earl notes, entirely focused on "observing and listening." His engagement in classroom life is contemplative, though by no means passive.[4] He sees the meaning in the "microscopic moment" of Patrizia's sneeze and Earl

[4] Margaret Buchmann (1992) aptly describes the engaged posture of contemplation as a "careful vision" involves suspending direct action, but which is far from passive. On the contrary, the careful attention of contemplation enables perception of and responsiveness to the "thrilling sense of the irreducible uniqueness in the person one confronts" (p. 12). Thus, contemplation both involves active receptivity and prepares for outward action.

and Cornelia’s response, because his attention is directed at, devoted to, the appearance of such moments. To return to an image introduced in Chapter 1, the witness brackets or puts out of play his participation in the action of the classroom in order to devote his full, undivided attention to perceiving minute moments of meaning that easily pass unnoticed when one’s attention is directed elsewhere.

The direction of attention is what characterizes the distance of the witness, which goes hand in hand with their proximity. Earl describes Hansen as “another educator”: he does not visit Earl’s classroom as a tourist stepping onto foreign soil, but as a fellow teacher entering a native place and sharing its commitments, cares, and concerns. At the same time, as Earl notes, when Hansen enters his classroom as a witness, he leaves the common actions of an educator—teaching, assessing, evaluating, coaching—at the door. He puts them out of play, thereby forging temporary distance between himself as witness and the daily action of the school and classroom. For the time being, he acts not as a teacher, but as a witness: with full attention focused on contemplating what happens in the classroom, and with openness to seeing, appreciating, and responding to moments of meaning as he patiently waits for such moments to appear.

It is because the witness's perspective differs from that of the teacher that their testimony is able to augment a teacher’s own insights. The vignette Hansen composed about Earl’s classroom enabled Earl to see his teaching, his students, and himself with greater clarity: as a “high-definition photograph” as opposed to an “Impressionist painting.” Earl’s depiction of his own memory of the moment described in the vignette as an “Impressionist painting” expresses a phenomenological truth about perspective: we cannot, from our primordial point of view, see ourselves clearly: it is impossible, save in a mirror, to observe our own face; we are utterly incapable of looking into our own eyes. Our own body is given to us primordially as “the

strangest object" (Stein, 1964, p. 38), always incomplete, impressionistic. We cannot see our body clearly or fully because we experience it as a lived body, perceived from the inside out. Only through empathy—through the perspective of another person—can we see ourselves more clearly. The perspectives of others can show us to ourselves, lending our vision of both our self and the world around us enhanced clarity and higher definition.

2.7 The Gift of Bearing Witness

Earl describes how Hansen's testimony about his classroom served as a "model of perception" that showed him how to notice "fine details" of complexity in his classroom, to "question how they came into being," and to consider what he could do "to foster them even more." It short, he says it was "a gift." What passes between teacher and witness in both directions lies squarely outside the level of exchange. There is nothing explanatory, let alone prescriptive, about Hansen's vignette, yet Earl writes that it "clearly...advanced my practice as a pedagogue." Returning to the language of Chapter One, Earl receives more from Hansen's writing than what literally appears on the page. There is an excess, a saturation to the vignette Hansen writes; it describes an actual event, but captures more than ontic happenings and communicates more than it literally says. Furthermore, Hansen's writing indicates that the teacher is not the sole recipient of a gift through the process of bearing witness. Hansen (2017a) describes how, before leaving a classroom where he had been observing, he would thank the teacher. Often, he recalls, his expressions of gratitude were met with surprise: in the teacher's mind, they had not *done* anything for Hansen. But Hansen explains that he received a genuine gift in these teachers' classrooms:

> The teachers did not know, and I could not have said at the time, that I was "thanking" them for the grace of being: for the "is-ness" of their work with children and youth, and for their enactment of the very Idea of teaching (the ideal made real). I was thanking them for helping to bring into the world what was not there before: the education of their

> students, understood as more than acquiring fact and skill, and their own hard-to-see transformations in that very act, since teaching— as contrasted with training or merely passing along information — always seems to modify the teacher, however microscopically in a given instance (p. 21).

In "infinitesimal" yet nonetheless real ways, Hansen (2021) saw students and teachers being given to themselves through the action of classroom life (p. 21). What is more, Hansen describes himself as receiving a gift through his experience of witnessing, a gift that transformed and modified him, that gave him to himself and altered his way of seeing, being, and moving through the world. Putting Shari Goldberg's (2013) notion of "quiet testimony" in conversation with his own experience bearing witness to teachers, Hansen (2021) describes how heeding such testimony impacts the witness themselves:

> Once *witnessed*, the world of people, events, and things is no longer a world to be analyzed and used. Through heeding the quiet testimony expressed through everyday doings and moments, the person acknowledges reality at a deeper, wider, and richer level. At the same time, the person transforms even as their horizon of reality broadens. The person can no longer move in the world in the same way: The world is fuller, more fragile, more precious. Their newly won responsiveness morphs into a fresh sense of responsibility. Bearing witness to teaching and teachers is at once an education in responsiveness *to* educational work and an experience of what it can mean to share responsibility *for* education (p. 68).

The process of bearing witness, as indicated above, is inextricably united with the process of self-formation; the witness's way of seeing the world and their sense of responsibility are formed by what they witness. The witness feels called to bear witness to the truth they have seen in teaching because they receive it as a gift: as something entrusted to them and on which they have no claim of ownership. Teacher and witness alike feel called to share the gift they have received through bearing witness. Earl indicates that the work of the witness offers him new insight into his person and practice, and this serves as a spur for his ongoing dedication to improvement as a teacher. He does not receive the vignette Hansen composes about his teaching as static praise or affirmation, but seeks to "give forward" what he has received by becoming

more attuned as a teacher (Hansen, 2021, p. 84). Likewise, Hansen describes the witness as called to give testimony to the truth they have seen. What the witness sees in classrooms is not for their eyes alone; they must endeavor to render it visible to others: for example, teachers, scholars, policymakers, and other educational stakeholders. The rendering of such testimony does not constitute a repayment for what they have witnessed, for that would thrust the experience into the realm of exchange. The witness's testimony does not make them "deserve" or "earn" the gift they have received, but rather, it manifests the feeling of responsibility (the duty to offer just response) that corresponds to the realization of having been entrusted with an unearned gift.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sketched, in general contours, the orientation of *bearing witness*. Bearing witness is a contemplative way of looking that attends to persons in all their complexity. It is characterized by patient receptivity, but is, at the same time, attentive and active, calling on the witness to engage and hone their powers of perception. The witness is not self-made, but is called to testify to what they have been privileged to perceive. To bear witness is to attempt to pass on a gift received and, in doing so, to offer a gift to others. The witness to teaching and teachers does not speak for or instead of teachers, but offers a complementary perspective, which is all their own, based on the truth they have been shown by teachers. A primary task of the witness is to maintain distance, to step aside, so that they can be a "conduit" for passing on the truth of what it means to teach and to be a teacher (Hansen, 2017a, p. 26).

I hope to have made clear in this chapter that bearing witness does not consist in following a step-by-step method or ready-made formula. Rather, the path of the witness is made

by walking. In the following chapter, I will describe the first inroads of the path that has given shape to my efforts to bear witness to the personal core of teaching.

Chapter 3: Beginning to Bear Witness to the Personal Core of Teaching

3.1 Introduction

The witness moves in the realm of gift, not exchange (cf. Marion, 2002). This is true of both the act of bearing witness (as outlined in Chapter 2) and of its origin. The originating impulse to bear witness is a summons: a felt need to respond to truth one has experienced or seen and feels a responsibility to pass on. Bearing witness is responsive to truth, but it is an orientation that is distinctively ethical as opposed to epistemic. Thus, the criteria of truthfulness and of credibility for the witness differ from the criteria employed by research methods measured by strict rubrics of reliability and validity. The witness responds to truths that are not measured, but felt, such as the truth of a mother's love for her child. Such a truth is irreducible to data, to the sum total of its measurable expressions, yet it can be known in a deep and meaningful way.

Ethical truth presents a paradox for scholarly inquiry. It appears as real and important (who could doubt the importance, for instance, of a mother's love?), yet impossible to *prove* in the commonly employed empirical sense of the term, due to the irreducible quality proper to the realm of *gift*. Giving evidence to "prove" a mother's love—for example, a discreet number of meals cooked, embraces offered, or instructions given—seems not merely inadequate, but to do violence to the very truth of what a mother's love is. Such love is, indeed, expressed through and seen in concrete, tangible actions, but is not reducible to them: it is greater than, and even exists in a different register than, the sum of its parts. To equate something like love with a collection of concrete activities egregiously cheapens a truth that can be known with depth and certainty in a felt way, but which cannot (and ought not) be measured.

The knowledge proper to ethical truth is based in trust. The trust that corresponds to ethical truth is rooted in and flows from the deep, *conocer* knowledge described in Chapter Two: the kind of knowledge by which we know not facts, but persons. In bearing witness, the witness seeks to act as a “conduit” or “hand-person” passing on ethical truth they have seen or experienced (Hansen, 2021). To trust the credibility of a witness’s word is to trust that their testimony reflects with fidelity the truth they have seen. How does a witness gain this trust, and thus establish scholarly credibility? It is a trust that cannot be demanded, but must be earned.

As illustrated in Chapter Two, the title “witness,” as Hansen employs the term, can be bestowed on persons in retrospect. In fact, a witness only truly becomes such once they have rendered testimony. Since this is the case, the criteria for evaluating the credibility of a witness lies in their testimony itself. Although the credibility of a witness cannot be evaluated through use of a strict rubric any more than the definition of what makes a witness can be conveyed in checklist form, it is possible, through considering the traits of exemplar witnesses, to identify, from the ground up, criteria that characterize a trustworthy witness. Through considering the works of exemplary literary witnesses such as W. G. Sebald, Saidiya Hartman, Jonathan Lear, and Etty Hillesum, Hansen and Sullivan (2022) articulate six criteria for a witness’s trustworthiness: (1) The witness is compelled and abides in wonder and respect, (2) The witness has done their homework, (3) The witness approaches truth as a regulative ideal, (4) The witness works on the self-in-formation, (5) The witness hones their imaginative and expressive capacities, and (6) The witness attends to details, concepts, and percepts (pp. 165-168).

Taken together, these criteria concern the witness’s aim and orientation, their way of seeing and responding to the events and persons they witness, and the way they express their testimony. A trustworthy witness must, first and foremost, embody the characterizing posture of

this distinct orientation. They must, that is, take up an orientation toward ethical truth that is rooted in sincere wonder and concern. The witness cannot be a detached observer, but rather must take up a posture of engaged, active contemplation, and show, through their testimony, that what they have witnessed makes a claim on them. Their testimony must speak as well to the witness's dedication to truth: to their respect for factual accuracy along with their effort to seek and express "the truth of others," which expands beyond the realm of fact and encompasses more than the witness will ever be able to see (p. 165). In other words, the witness embodies a posture of reverence toward the truth of others: acknowledging the saturated mystery of persons as well as the importance of recognizing and expressing the truth that can be known through seeking deep knowledge. The witness's posture of contemplation and orientation toward truth informs their way of seeing and responding to the events and persons they witness. The witness seeks deep knowledge of persons through careful attention to detail and endeavors, through description to allow details to "speak" and come to life on a page, in a film, on a canvas, or through another medium of testimony (p. 168). The witness continually hones their powers of expression in an effort to achieve this end, and, in their testimony, employs concepts to "gather details and help the reader see anew" (p. 168). The endeavors both to see the truth of others clearly and to express that truth with fidelity require continual "work on the self" (p. 165). As discussed in Chapter Two, bearing witness is a *personal* endeavor in a dual sense: (1) it is a person who bears witness, and what the witness sees depends on their capacity to contemplate, to attend, to "wait for truth to disclose itself" (p. 266); and (2) the witness's very person is formed by what they witness. A credible witness takes their own self seriously, continually seeking, through both experience and through study of exemplars, to learn to see.

These criteria of a trustworthy witness display two characteristics that render judging the credibility of a witness-as-researcher a unique process. First, each of these criteria can be seen only in the witness's testimony itself; they cannot be assured or evaluated in advance, but come to the surface in and through the witness's efforts to bear witness. Second, the criteria are personal, in that they concern the witness's dispositions as well as their expressive capacities, their sincerity as well as their skill. In order to trust the credibility of a witness's testimony, therefore, a reader must get to know a witness, to a certain degree, as a person. Just as the witness must come to know a teacher in order to see honesty in their smile or care in their most minute gesture, so too, the reader must come to know a witness in order to recognize sincerity, dedication, and truth in their testimony. In the case of a reader getting to know a witness, this happens through engaging with the witness's testimony.

The witness as researcher thus finds themselves in a unique position. In order to accomplish their aim, they must not only get to know the subjects of their study; they must also let themselves be known, both by those whom they witness and by those who read their testimony. As the qualitative research quip rightly states, the researcher is the primary instrument; however, in bearing witness, the perspective and person of the researcher do not only impact the way that the witness sees (although this is certainly the case); they form the indispensable basis of establishing credibility and trust. The researcher thus does not employ reflexivity solely as a means to control bias, but also to show themselves to their reader in an effort to earn their trust. The person of the witness—in all its singularity—does not pose a threat to the integrity of the study, but rather is integral to establishing its credibility.

In this chapter, I will articulate the various sources that feed into the inquiry I carry out in this dissertation project. I will describe how I gradually learned to see the personal core of

teaching, both through my own experience and through preliminary fieldwork, and in so doing, I will express how I gradually came to understand myself as seeking to bear witness to the personal core of teaching. My purpose in relating these methodological origins is both to invite my reader, along with me, to learn to see the personal core of teaching, and to allow them to get to know me more fully as a witness. I compose this chapter in lieu of a statement of positionality with the aim of offering you, reader, not just "saber" knowledge about my background, but "conocer" knowledge about my way of being and seeing as a person. As these pages will reveal, my way of seeing teachers and students as persons was not fixed at the beginning of my study, but has been formed in a dynamic way through what I was privileged to witness.

3.2 The Origins of this Project

This dissertation constitutes an attempt to bear witness to what I have called the personal core of teaching. In Chapter 1, I described this personal core phenomenologically, manifesting as a gift of self on the part of the teacher, by which students are given to themselves. The impetus for this inquiry is personal and multi-pronged. The personal core of teaching is something that I have come to know and value in a felt way, both through my own experiences and through experiences that I have had the honor to see without being a primary actor. This felt appreciation of the personal core of teaching has spurred my theoretical study and given direction to my fieldwork, which in turn has served as a wellspring of my philosophical inquiry.[5] My project as a whole can be characterized as an effort, not of explanation or discovery, in an empirical or scientific sense, but of articulation: I seek words with which to faithfully depict the personal gifts I have seen at the core of teaching and which I feel the responsibility to make visible.

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[5] This reciprocal dynamic between experience and theoretical study reflects Hansen's (2017a) portrayal of philosophy as "receptive, first and last, and analytical in between" (p. 10).

Recognizing a Gift Received: A Call to Remembrance

I begin by relating a moment in which I came, belatedly, to recognize a gift of teaching that I received:

> During my Junior year of high school, I formed part of a four-person Executive Student Government team, the central leadership of the student body. Our team was charged with selecting the theme of the year, organizing events to foster unity and collaboration among students of different grade levels, serving as liaisons between faculty and students, promoting the enactment of the school's mission in everyday life, and (in our minds, most importantly) planning and leading the annual school-wide Field Day festivities. Field Day occurred in May, but its organization began in the previous July. That year, the other members of the Executive team and I spent months budgeting our funds in anticipation of unveiling a surprise Field Day activity. The inspiration for the activity had struck in the last weeks of summer, when we had chosen "reach" as the theme of the year. The surprise would be a perfect enactment of the theme, which was meant to inspire, encourage, and support students' efforts to grow through reaching for their goals and reaching out to others. Field Day promised to be a capstone celebration of nine months of collective effort to "reach for the stars" as individuals and as a school community.
>
> I remember the meeting we had in March with Dr. Reilly, the head of school, to tell her about our Field Day plan. It did not enter my mind that we were asking permission; as the Executive Student Government team, we felt full freedom and full responsibility for student activities, and understood faculty as serving a role of support and, if requested, advisement. I do not recall the content of our meeting with Dr. Reilly, but I remember leaving with a renewed sense of excitement. Our plans for Field Day had altered during the meeting, but our new idea for an activity was even better than our last one, and was very much our own: students would be challenged to stretch their capacities and reach for their goals through completing a highly competitive obstacle course.
>
> Years later, I sat eating a bagel during a school-sponsored breakfast in which alumni were invited back to campus. Dr. Reilly was sharing a few remarks about the culture and mission of the school. She spoke of the faculty and staff's dedication to fostering student confidence, freedom, and initiative. She paused there, smiling as a memory flashed across her face:
>
> "Yes, we are committed to fostering student initiative, even when it leads to out-of-the-box ideas." She smiled again. I put down my bagel, intrigued by the story sparking her memory. "I will never forget the day, some years ago now, that the Executive Student Government team marched into my office to share with me their plans for that year's Field Day activity. They said to me, in respectful but no uncertain terms: 'Dr. Reilly, for Field Day this year, we have decided to rent a hot air balloon.'"

> The room full of alumni and faculty shook with warm-hearted laughter. Dr. Reilly's face burst into a smile of mirth and delight. I sat stunned with shock. My adult consciousness flooded with thoughts of student safety and liability, which, until that very moment, had not occupied an atom of my mind. I sat face-to-face with the many reasons why renting a hot air balloon for a student-sponsored school-wide event was an utterly impossible, impractical, and foolhardy idea. The moment of realization did not make me feel embarrassed, but rather filled me with a sense of gratitude. When we presented our idea for a hot air balloon to Dr. Reilly all those years ago, she had not laughed. What is more, she had not responded to our idea with a lesson on liability or an admonition to consider student safety. She could very well have responded in such a way (indeed, I reflected that I likely would have), taking the opportunity to provide enthusiastic teenagers with insight into the kinds of considerations that must be taken into account when one occupies a position of leadership. But she did not mention any of that. She steered us away from the incendiary idea while encouraging and affirming every ounce of our confidence and initiative. Dr. Reilly did not give me a lesson in responsible leadership; she gave me to myself.

I do not mean to exaggerate the impact of that half-remembered meeting in Dr. Reilly's office. That one moment was, as Dr. Reilly's comments indicate, part of a greater whole. The faculty and staff were united in their commitment to intentionally fostering students' confidence and initiative. What struck me about this particular moment was that I was made suddenly aware of a concrete instance that had an undeniable formative impact on my self-understanding, and which could so easily have been otherwise. In having this one moment brought to my consciousness, I recognized it as one of countless moments like it of which I will likely never be aware, but which shaped the way I am and move in the world. I realized, for example, that the sense of confidence I feel today in taking initiative is not a trait that I earned or developed solely by dint of my own effort; it was a gift fostered in me by the words and actions of others in concrete moments like that afternoon in Dr. Reilly's office.

I received this gift—which I am certain forms an integral part of the self I am today—without full awareness. But when Dr. Reilly's words made me aware of the gift I had received, it called forth a response of gratitude and a desire for recognition and remembrance. It is not within my power to recall the undoubtedly countless other moments in which I was the unknowing

recipient of a personal gift. However, I can, as a scholar, attempt to see and bear witness to this vitally important and highly impactful aspect of education as it is lived out in the seemingly mundane everyday interactions between teachers and students in both formal and informal educational contexts. Such is my aim in this project.

Appreciating Everyday Educators and the Power of Art

Reflecting on my experience with Dr. Reilly sparked my consideration of educative interpersonal encounters that occur beyond classroom walls. It struck me that at the core of education as personal formation (which I have come to refer to as the personal core of teaching) is a particular kind of interpersonal encounter, and that such educative encounters could (and likely do) happen both within and outside of school. My desire to bear witness to the personal core of teaching ignited a desire to recognize and honor all who teach in this way, inside or outside the classroom.

In the film *Babette's Feast* (Axel, 1987), adapted from the short story by Karen Blixen (published under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen), I discovered a powerful portrayal of the personal core of teaching in a non-traditional educational context. The plot of the film is simple: Babette, a renowned French chef, spends 17 years living as a refugee in an isolated village in Denmark, working as a maid among the villagers (a quarrelsome, sectarian group), who are unaware of her previous profession. The central action of the film is a bountiful feast, which Babette prepares and serves to her neighbors using money she gained through winning the lottery.

However mundane it appears, this simple plot serves as the setting for profound personal transformation. Over the course of the feast, through the very eating of the meal, each guest exhibits a visible change which bespeaks an inner transformation. They enter the dining room in a state of tense constraint, determined not to speak of or enjoy an ounce of the feast (since,

according to their sect of Christianity, they understand such pleasures as evil). They do not make eye contact, and interact with one another with a restrained formality consistent with their recent quarrels and stale resentments. However, as they each take the seat prepared for them at the table with plates set on an ironed, white tablecloth and glowing with light from freshly polished candlesticks, and as they partake of course after course of beautifully presented, richly flavorful food and drink served to them by a polite, neatly dressed boy Babette has employed as her assistant, the villagers change. They relax; they begin to reminisce fondly about the past and the teachings of their deceased pastor; grudges are forgiven with fraternal gestures; lovers reunite with affectionate embraces.

What accounts for this profound change, which overwhelmingly exceeds the bodily nourishment provided by the meal? The artful cinematography of the film makes visible the countless concrete details through which Babette communicates care and solicitude for each guest she serves. To the attentive viewer, Babette appears as an intentional and expert educator: every detail of the meal, from the leaves inserted to expand the table, to the perfect ripeness of the fruit, to wine bottle returned to the guests mid-meal, to the arrangement of the chairs in the parlor after dinner, communicates in a tangible and palpable way to each guest the gift of being personally cared for, individually loved (Sullivan, 2020). Babette's care-filled way of treating her guests (whom she does not greet during the meal) invites them to understand themselves in a new way. It also encourages them to see their neighbors with new eyes: to see them the way Babette sees them.

A phenomenological perspective, in particular the work of Gaston Bachelard, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Martin Heidegger, has helped me understand the meaning and manner of Babette's educational work. Bachelard's (1994) astute and poetic writing on the space of the

home vividly manifests the vibrant power of this intimate space: “Everything breathes again, the tablecloth is white” (p. 52). Bachelard reverences and makes visible the formative impact of the homemaker, noting how inert objects “come alive” when touched by a caring and careful hand, and how their newfound vibrance speaks to inhabitants a word of welcome and solicitude. Household members and guests see something of themselves as cared for reflected in the clear surface of the polished glass (pp. 67-8). Merleau-Ponty's (2014) account of perception complements Bachelard’s writing, giving a more robust depiction of how objects speak and of how our understanding is augmented by the perspectives of others. Finally, Heidegger’s (1976) description of the “great artist” as one who hides herself in the creation of her work, so that the art shows forth in all its fullness reveals Babette’s behind-the-scenes action as intelligible, intentional, and deeply educative (p. 669).

This richly meaningful and artistically masterful film has exerted an incalculable influence on my understanding of the value and importance of bearing witness to what I have come to call the personal core of teaching, which is not confined to classroom education alone. The film, through both its patient, detailed attention to seemingly insignificant actions and its inspired artistic rendering, shows Babette to be a teacher who gives to her neighbors an inexpressible, excessive, and gratuitous gift that is personal, that involves their adoption of a new felt understanding of themselves and their relationship to others and the world and one another. Babette gives this extraordinary gift in and through seemingly ordinary actions: the ironing of a tablecloth, the polishing of candles, the folding of a napkin, the serving of a meal. Babette’s Feast inspired me to expand my understanding of teaching beyond the classroom and school and to attend closely to what Hansen (2021), drawing on the work of Shari Goldberg (2013), terms

the "quiet testimony" of actions and gestures that, while seemingly ordinary, carry and communicate immense meaning.

3.3 Beginning to Bear Witness

My own experience of what I have come to call the personal core of teaching and my initial scholarly endeavors led me to undertake a three-year project that put me directly in touch with the everyday actions of one public high school teacher: Gene. The time I spent in Gene's classroom was not a prerequisite for my current project, but rather forms an integral part of my ongoing endeavor to see the personal core of teaching. It was in Gene's classroom that I gradually learned to approach teaching and teachers from the perspective of a witness and to gain a felt understanding of meaning and value of the witness's perspective. This project played a formative role in my understanding of and ability to bear witness to the personal core of teaching.

Meeting Gene

I did not originally conceive of my work with Gene as formal research. When I entered his classroom during my second year of graduate studies, my aim was to learn what it means to teach and how a person becomes a teacher. My own teaching experience to date—most recently as an ELA instructor in an urban middle school—had convinced me that I had much to learn with regard to what it means to be and become a teacher. I began to visit Gene's classroom thanks to the support of a fellowship dedicated to supporting educational initiatives with urban youth. From becoming acquainted with Gene, an experienced teacher in a public school located

in a large urban metropolis, I sought insight into what it means to be a teacher and how a person comes to embody that identity.[6]

Over the course of three academic years, I spent approximately 750 hours with Gene, seeing first-hand his work as a teacher. Gene was amenable to supporting my endeavor in any way. During my initial weeks in his classroom—which, during the first two of our three years working together, I visited almost daily—he inquired about my purpose and goals. He invited me to teach sections of his class or to introduce his students to my own academic interests. Gene was, at the time, serving as a cooperating teacher for a graduate student completing her student teaching, and he extended an open invitation to me as well to teach and receive his support and feedback. After considering Gene's generous invitation, I decided to decline. There was so much to see in his classroom, and I wanted to focus all my attention on seeing. Gene was supportive of this decision. Daily, during a break in Gene's schedule, we would discuss what had happened that day and Gene would field questions I had that emerged from seeing him teach. My very general guiding questions—What does it mean to teach? and How does a person become a teacher?—were made concrete in the person of Gene. Every day I spent in his classroom, I asked myself: Who is Gene as a teacher? I found that, with time, my appreciation of Gene as a person and a teacher deepened dramatically. In what follows, I will relate some of my experience in Gene's classroom, with the aim of illustrating how, for me, those many hours spent with Gene constituted a gradual experience of learning to see the personal core of teaching.

My Posture in Gene's Classroom

As discussed in Chapter Two, a hallmark of the witness's way of seeing is maintaining simultaneous proximity and distance. The witness is not a primary actor in the environment in

[6] See Appendix A for a profile of each teacher who participated in my study and a record of how many hours I spent observing each.

which they move, but they really do participate in that environment through their work of attentive contemplation. While I did not at first approach my work with Gene as an act of witnessing, through the time I spent in his classroom, I came to understand the meaning and power of contemplating teaching as I gradually learned (by doing) to take up this perspective.

I was present in Gene's classroom as an educator—when I began, I had just finished working in a public middle school and during the final two years spent with Gene, I taught undergraduate and graduate level courses—but not as a high school teacher. I was thus present as someone familiar with—close to—the happenings of the classroom, but I did not participate directly in its day-to-day activities. Rather, I sat with my notebook at a desk behind all the students and took in what was going on. Gene and I would sometimes discuss the lesson after class—in particular, students' reactions, responses and levels of excitement—but I never gave feedback about how the lesson "went." I was there as someone close, but apart: a contemplative, not an actor in classroom life. Gene never looked to me during class for feedback or input, but he did sometimes look at me, or rather, with me: while students were working or talking in groups, he would glance my way and say with a smile: "They're on the edge of their thinking" or "I love this" or "I'm right in there with them." Without fail, these comments caught me off guard, since I was unaccustomed to being noticed, let alone addressed. They pulled my focus with a jerk of surprise away from pure attending, from putting all my effort into seeing. However, I quickly learned that Gene was not seeking a verbal response to his comments. What I was doing gave a wordless response: "Yes, I see that."

3.4 Seeing Gene

My first impression of Gene was: Here is a teacher. Gene taught History and Philosophy during the years I spent in his classroom. His philosophy classes were comprised of about 15

students each, and his History classes had nearly 40 students in each section. Desks were crammed into all corners of Gene's stuffy fifth-floor History classroom. As lanky adolescent bodies and backpacks filled the room to the brim on the day of my first visit, which was also the first day of school, I found myself holding my breath, as if to save space. The students seemed to share my immediate affirmation of Gene's identity as teacher. The respect they showed him was immediate and total. Gene shook each one's hand as they entered the room and looked them in the eyes. He spoke quietly when addressing the class, but the crowded room became hushed as if his voice had a kind of magnetism. Gene is a slight man but appeared larger than life as he addressed his students. His voice rose in a crescendo as he described the scope of the class, and dropped in quiet seriousness as he looked around the room, explaining expectations. At the end of the history period on the first day of school, one student summed up their first impression, speaking for the entire class: "We can't play you." Gene appeared to his students, as well as to me, as the real deal. Here is a teacher.

Gene's comments to me during a break between classes solidified this impression and deepened my wonder about what it might mean. After describing the trajectory of his 24 years of teaching, Gene paused and looked at me: "I've become much more myself teaching in public schools." As we ascended the five flights of stairs to his classroom he repeated the same sentiment from a different perspective, as if continuing the thought: "Teaching," he stated, turning to face me as we climbed, "is taking a deep dive into yourself."

The meaning of these phrases remained opaque to me on that September morning, and yet they made an impression. That initial impression did not fade, but rather deepened over time, simultaneously crystalizing and expanding in meaning as I came to know Gene as a person and as a teacher. I came to realize through the time I spent in Gene's classroom that getting to know

teaching is like getting to know a person. In other words, teaching is a reality that is both immediately recognizable and which contains inexhaustible mystery. I recognized Gene as a teacher, in a robust sense of the word, on the first day that I witnessed his work in the classroom. However, the meaning of this identity gained continually greater vibrance and clarity with the passage of weeks, months, and years, as I came to know Gene better, more deeply. My first sweeping impressions were not obviated but enriched by the subtle details that came into focus with time, the way one's initial perception of a work of art is enriched by continued contemplation.

My notetaking reflected this gradual crystallization of vision. As I came to know Gene better, I took notes differently. First, I wrote down everything, scribbling as many details in my notebook as my hand could muster without becoming overly distracted. The entries focused primarily on content: what topic Gene was teaching, how he presented it, how students responded. In later entries, my notes shifted to relate aspects of Gene's way of being with students: his habitual gestures, his tone of voice, the ethos he embodied and which imbued his classroom. The records of the final months I spent in Gene's classroom are characterized by silence: my entries became sparse and made note of details that seem, at first glance, peripheral to classroom education: sounds, smells, students' slight changes in posture, etc. Over the course of the years I spent in Gene's classroom, my vision gradually took on a more magnified focus: first, I took in the excitement, din, and chaos of classroom action; then my attention zoomed in, so to speak, on Gene, as I became more deeply acquainted with his way of being; finally, I became attuned to the microgestures that pulse quietly at the heart of classroom activity, giving and sustaining its life. At the close of the three years I spent in Gene's classroom, my initial conviction—Here is a teacher—remained the same, but had gained depth and breadth of

meaning. My aim in this section is to communicate the depth and breadth I came to see with time, as I gradually began to recognize the personal core of teaching.

The Outward Drama of Classroom Life

In the early days of my visits to Gene's classroom, he told me that he thinks every teacher, as part of their preparation and professional development, should take a class in improvisation: "There's a lot of performing in teaching." The drama of Gene's classroom was immediately palpable during the first year I spent with him. It was as though Gene were directing a symphony: orchestrating different movements with varying emotional cadences, sweeping his students along. I, too, was swept along in this current. I wondered at Gene's pedagogical intentionality, his ability to cultivate an atmosphere, a *gestalt*, that fostered a particular kind of learning. One of the most striking features of this drama was the contrast between the classroom atmosphere in September and the atmosphere in April.

The first year I spent in Gene's classroom began with a bang. Nearly every day in the early weeks, Gene facilitated fiery debates among his 38 students about the nature and knowability of history. The discussion related below ensued during the second week of school in Gene's freshmen history class:

> Gene, having just finished a brief lesson on different cultures' origin stories, walks into the middle of the crowded classroom. He looks around and addresses his students, placing his hands on his hips and speaking in a slightly exaggerated interrogative tone: "When these origin stories were first told, did people believe them?" Gene holds his pose, his eyes wide and questioning, as he continues to scan the room.
>
> The class of 38 students responds with a chorus of mixed "yes's" and "no's." Gene continues in a provocative tone, his voice slightly raised to cut across the hum: "There's something behind every story. We didn't just dream them." He continues to pace among the desks, looking up as if deep in thought. After a few moments, a hand shoots up in the middle of a cluster of desks towards the back of the room. Gene bends his knees and raises both arms in excitement. He extends an arm toward the student in a beckoning gesture: "Yes. Milna."

“The stories are all about community. Every one of these cultures desires to know, to have an identity. We find significance in shared ideas.” Gene nods as Milna speaks, his expression thoughtful. “Is there something specific in the article that made you say that?” There’s a pause, a rustle of papers from Milna’s direction as she says, excitedly: “Hold on…”

Gene nods silently and turns to another topic, giving general directions to the class about how to take notes. After a minute, Milna’s hand shoots upward again. Gene stops speaking mid-sentence and calls on her. “I found evidence!” she exclaims with enthusiasm. She reads a short section of the article that references neighbors building community.

On the other side of the room, Jemar quickly raises his hand. Gene pivots and points to him. “Yeah, what she said is right. You put two people together to make a whole truth.” Gene gives an affirmative though silent nod and instructs Jemar calmly: “Call on the next person.”

It's the second week of class and the first year of high school for these students, and they don’t all seem to know each other’s names. Jemar points to a young man in a hooded sweatshirt with his hand up, saying: “That guy.”

The boy begins in a faltering voice: “I want to agree...I don’t know how to explain it…” There’s a little pause before Gene enthusiastically announces: “That’s awesome, Tyreak! You’re on the edge of your thinking.”

Milna comes in again with a comment, and a back-and-forth ensues between her and another student, Ross. Milna doesn’t understand what Ross is trying to say, so he rearticulates his point.

Gene suddenly interrupts to loudly express surprise that one student, Juan, is packing up his bag with eight minutes left in class. More students raise their hands. Gene calls on Joey.

“History is what humans create to believe and what they find most significant.” Isias’ hand shoots up and Joey points to him. David speaks quickly and excitedly: “I don’t think history is what we create; I think it’s what existed before us. We’re not the center of history.”

Juan, who has stopped putting away his books animatedly interrupts: “But we can’t see history; it’s in the past.”

“I didn’t say we could see it,” Isias responds, turning to face Juan. “I said it existed before us. Maybe unicorns evolved into horses.”

> Gene's eager commentary cuts across the rising voices: "Juan's reacting to what you said, Isias, because you've put out something controversial. You've contradicted Joey's claim. I love it."
>
> Isias suddenly gets out of his seat and walks to the front of the room, where a timeline depicting history from the Big Bang through the present takes up almost half the wall. He points to the miniscule portion of the timeline during which humans have existed, then gestures to the rest of the timeline: "Look how much we weren't there for!" he says, almost shouting, his arms spread out and waving. "How do we know all this about history if we weren't there?"
>
> Gene walks over and dramatically reenacts Isias' gesture, re-illustrating for the class the scale of the timeline, and commenting on the hugeness of history before human life. Jemar raises his hand, perching on the edge of his seat. "We know things because of scientists." He also leaves his seat to point to the timeline. An anonymous voice shouts "oral history!," and someone else comments: "It's kind of like a game of telephone."
>
> At this point, five students are standing at the board and others are standing at their seats. Their voices are animated and lively, but they are not shouting over one another. The bell rings, piercing the charged atmosphere. Gene thanks them for a great discussion, and students spontaneously erupt in applause.

At that moment, I felt like applauding as well. The drama of the class was exhilarating, unexpected, exciting. I marveled at how, in just a few days, Gene had fostered an atmosphere of intense, spontaneous engagement that was simultaneously controlled and respectful. I use the word *gestalt* to describe this scene because my impression was one of a whole: Gene and his 38 students seemed to form a living unity, a togetherness for which it mattered little that the students still did not know one another's names. Even while disagreeing, the class seemed to move as one, with attention directed first to one student, then another, then Gene, then another student as the drama of the debate unfolded. The class was united around a single object of attention: the question of what history is and how we know it. Gene and his students appeared, to my viewing, as a unified whole, as a community.

As the word itself indicates, "community" arises when something is held in common. John Dewey (1916) describes community as constituted, not by mere physical proximity, but by

diverse perspectives being directed toward a common object and communicating about that object. This kind of community certainly seemed to be forged in Gene's classroom on that September morning. I marveled at it. However, I marveled even more at the striking contrast between the exuberance of Gene's September classroom and the silence that characterized the later months of the academic year.

The Inner Drama of Classroom Life

> It is the week before April vacation. Since late January, Gene's class has been engaging almost exclusively in silent, individual work. In the six weeks between February and April vacations, students have been tasked with completing a research project. Every class begins with a very brief introduction by Gene or his co-teacher Henry before silent work begins. Gene and Henry answer questions and check the work of students who write their names in a queue on the whiteboard. Gene tells students at the outset of the class: "Henry and I are here to answer questions, but *you* have to come up to us and ask." I keep rough track each day of how long the room stays (relatively) quiet. During the first and second week of the project, by 10 minutes into the period a handful of students were walking around the room and general giggling erupted. By week four, the generally focused atmosphere lasted about 20 minutes, and after a few minutes of dispersion, quiet work resumed. For the past week and a half, the students have been either working furiously or hardly work at all. However, even the non-working students have been mostly silent. Today, Gene leaves the room in the middle of class. No one speaks or even seems to notice. Thirty seconds later, he pokes his head through the door, looks over at me, shrugs, and smiles.

These are the same students from the opening narrative. However, the six weeks in the spring semester described above contained none of September's outward enthusiasm. In fact, in the spring semester project, no formal student to student interaction occurred until the final two days. During these winter weeks, Gene spoke with students quietly, answering their questions and checking their progress, but his contact with them was minimal.

Gene had another class that spring semester, this one made up of 15 students spanning all four years of high school. It was a Philosophy class that met at 8:00 am three mornings per week. In this class as well, September featured lively discussion while the winter weeks were shrouded in silence.

> For the past five weeks, since late January, students have been working independently on a project in which they identify something they want to change about their school, make a hypothesis about the process and promised effects of the change, and then explore and articulate their philosophy of education through engaging with various readings. There are no enforced deadlines for this project, but each student must complete a stage fully before moving on to the next. For the past few weeks, Gene has neither begun nor finished the class, and even leaves the room with a fair amount of frequency (always ensuring first that another adult is present). Today, two students enter the room late and Gene is not there. They each ask if Gene is in school that day. Both times, another student answers yes, that he is printing something. The late students both sit down silently and begin to work.
>
> Not all of Gene's students work all the time, but an overall atmosphere of serious engagement pervades the room. Today, as on most days, students begin working when the bell rings without prompting. They read slowly, looking up words they don't know on their phones or computers, and writing extensive annotations. Each student gets distracted at some point during the class period. Some start flipping through social media on their phone, some seem to space out, staring at the ceiling or out the window, some take extended bathroom breaks. However, this all happens silently, and each distracted student returns to reading eventually on their own initiative. A few minutes before the bell rings, they silently pack their bags. Sometimes Gene says a few parting words before they go, but today he doesn't say anything.

It struck me that Gene's presence, even when he was physically absent or physically in the room but silent, could be felt in as equally palpable a way in March as during the raucous days of the early school year. Furthermore, the contrast between his pedagogical styles was dramatic, to say the least. On the surface, it appeared that Gene was engaged in student learning in September and relatively disengaged in March. After all, in the winter months, his contact with students was minimal and he even left the room with frequency. However, as I sat day after day in Gene's silent, seemingly uneventful classroom, I began to see the situation differently. I began to notice, beneath the surface of apparent inactivity, a dimension of teaching that I had not fully attended to during those early September weeks. My vision began to focus and I started to perceive not just the educational gestalt of the room as a whole, but what was happening on a personal level. Through Gene's promotion of silence in the classroom, I saw him invite students into a space of inner drama that was deeply personal.

Philosopher Max Picard (2002) argues that silence is necessary for unity of self. Without silence, the self remains in a depersonalized and mechanized state, exhibiting behavior like that of fragmented, atomistic particles, which are put in motion by being acted upon by an outside force and lack internal agency and cohesion. Silence, Picard holds, creates space for the interiority proper to personhood to develop, which enables self-knowledge and deep learning. Without silence, everything and everyone (including myself) appears to me as an object with merely instrumental value, exhaustively knowable by experimentation and explanation. In silence, I step away from myself and my relationality to the world comprised of things I can use and listen in wonder to the mysterious world of silence itself, which speaks of an immense reality that I can touch but which lies beyond my complete grasp or control. In listening to silence, I am invited to perceive my place in the great mystery of reality, which I can feel and respond to, but whose full meaning will always extend beyond my comprehension. In silence, I realize that I am neither the creator of reality nor a mere object to be used. In phenomenological language, I realize that I am a subject—an "I"—who is capable of meaningful engagement with the world.

Angelo Caranfa (2004) draws on Picard's work to argue for the necessity of silence for the aspect of learning that concerns self-knowledge. Silence, he explains, enables students "*to see* and *to feel* the whole of things," and, by doing so, to become more conscious of themselves in relation to the world around them (p. 227, emphasis original). By being encouraged to dwell in silence, students are invited to touch and respond to reality in a deeply personal, relational, and wonder-filled way. Caranfa argues that while discourse can help create an inner space of silence indispensable to achieving self-knowledge, discourse is unable to awaken self-knowledge, which grows in silence in the interior of a person (pp. 215-16). By engaging in silent wonder, a person

comes to see themselves in a new way: as an individual engaged in a meaning-filled relationship with the world.

In Gene's September classroom, the lively discussion raised thought-provoking questions about reality. What is the nature of history? What kind of knowledge can we gain about things that happened in earlier eras? What makes an origin story worthy of belief? These questions appeared to erupt from and in discourse: ideas bounced around the room like ping pong balls, ricocheting off different students, gaining new momentum and direction with each comment. The effect was electric, dramatic. When I mentioned the contrast between the classroom atmosphere at the beginning of the year and in March to Gene, he responded with seriousness: "That kind of discussion we had in September is good, but the writing they're doing now is where the real thinking happens." As I looked again at the silent classroom, day after day, I began to see the meaning of Gene's words. There was no outward drama happening, but an inner drama played out before my eyes in students' visible struggle to keep their phones stored away, to recover focus after exploding with giggles, to attend to silent reading in a sustained way, to follow the guided writing prompts in their journals. Their efforts were palpable, and sometimes painful to watch. I saw the interplay Caranfa describes between discourse and silence play out before my eyes. Early discussions had engaged student interest and sparked new ideas about history; now, students were challenged to crystalize their articulation of thoughts, to listen and respond to the material of the course for themselves, to bring the ideas that emerged in discussion inside themselves and make them their own. In short, in students' struggle to work independently, in silence, I saw them being invited to bring the outward drama of the early school year inside of them, to make it personal.

As I began to see more clearly the inner drama playing out in the silent classroom, I gained an appreciation for Gene's role as a teacher in this silent space. In September, Gene's presence in the classroom was reminiscent of an exuberant conductor of an orchestra: his whole body bent and swayed with enthusiasm as he turned to call on different students and responded to their comments. While he took care not to be the center of attention (for example, he often instructed students to call on one another instead of referring back to him), Gene was the lynchpin that held the discussion together: offering commentary, encouraging participation, facilitating respectful disagreement. His movements were often larger than life: he would open his eyes wide behind his glasses when asking a question, would bend his knees with enthusiasm as students spoke, often ending up close to the ground. He would pump his fists in the air like a cheerleader when an unexpected insight emerged. Gene told me once that the classroom is a place of "pure act." These moments certainly appeared that way.

In the early months of the spring semester, Gene's posture was radically different, so much so that it seemed, at first glance, that he was not teaching at all. His actions were quiet, subtle, and almost exclusively carried out with individual students. However, over time, I came to appreciate a different kind of teaching taking place, one that both enacted and invited contemplation. Gene's quiet, subtle presence manifested in a striking way the posture of teacher as pointer. Even physically, Gene stood off to the side, out of the limelight, directing and redirecting students toward engagement with the course content. Gene, like his students, was largely silent in these days (although he had carefully curated all course content and steps for his students to follow). His silence was reminiscent of Caranfa's (2006) depiction of the silent teacher as contemplative:

> An aesthetic of silence as instructional method embodies the idea that to learn or to teach is to remain in solitude; in solitude we learn to feel and to think beautiful thoughts on our

> own, and the teacher herself should be contemplative, moved not by endless explanations upon explanations but by endeavouring to remain silent before the unexplainable dimension of the human experience and of the world (p. 101).

Gene was not always or mainly a silent teacher in the dramatic way in which he embodied that pose during those winter weeks in my first year in his classroom. After the close of the Philosophy and History projects, discussion and instruction resumed in both classes. In the next two years, I never again saw Gene carry out a silent project of such long duration. However, those silent weeks led me to see Gene in a new way. I began to notice that Gene embodies Caranfa's image of a silent teacher, even when his teaching involves verbal instruction and lively discussion. I began to see, sprinkled throughout Gene's teaching, moments in which he would invite students to engage with the course material in a personal way, to contemplate it, to make the outer drama of classroom action an inner, personal drama. I began to notice moments in which Gene would invite a student to approach learning, not just as a pupil seeking a grade, but as a person engaged in a meaning-filled and non-instrumental relationship with reality. In such moments, I saw Gene likewise appear as a person: approaching his student and subject matter in a contemplative way, offering a wonder-filled response to both. These moments manifested what I have come to call teaching's *personal core*. I began to attend to how Gene interacted, not just with the class as a whole, but with particular students. In these encounters, however brief, I saw the personal core of teaching—that dimension of teaching in which student and teacher encounter one another as persons—become present before my eyes. As I came to know Gene better, I began to recognize characteristic gestures through which he would invite a student to engage in this kind of interpersonal encounter: for example, his way of shaking hands with students when they entered the room, of greeting each one by name in the hall, of pausing in

front of a student who was looking down, waiting for them to make eye contact. Most striking in my memory, though, is Gene's way of handing back student journals.

The Personal Core of Classroom Life

> Gene approaches a student who is slouched in his chair, looking down with Airpods in his ears. He speaks to the student softly, crouching down to put himself at the boy's eye level: "Xavier." Gene's voice is calm, deliberate, and unhurried. The boy doesn't look up. His face is hidden in the shadow of his black hooded sweatshirt and he gives no sign of having heard his name. Gene continues in the same soft, slow cadence: "Xavier. Xavier." As he repeats the boy's name, Gene's blue eyes look intently through the lens of his glasses at the shadowed circle where the student's down-turned face disappears beneath his hood. Gene leans in slightly, rotating a packet of papers in his hands so that the words face the student. "In case you need it, here is your first journal." Gene holds the papers firmly but gently, cushioning the pages from beneath with both hands. Xavier sits silently. He does not look up nor reach for the papers, but his head moves slightly as he eyes the packet. I think I see his slouched shoulders straighten a fraction of an inch, but he might simply fidget. Gene remains kneeling, extending the packet toward Xavier. A moment passes before he repeats in the same soft, deliberate tone, altered only by an added touch of finality: "In case you need it." Gene gently places the packet on Xavier's desk and begins to straighten and turn away. "Thanks," Xavier says, as he removes one of his Airpods and looks up. Gene turns back to face Xavier, gives an almost imperceptible nod and blinks. He maintains eye contact with Xavier, even as he adjusts his posture to a standing position. In the same steady tone of voice, he responds: "You're welcome." Gene turns, walks across the room to his desk, and picks up another packet, raising it with both hands to read the student's name.

This encounter with Xavier, although it involves talking, struck me as being shrouded in silence. Gene cushions Xavier's journal, which contains his work for the class, lightly in his hands like a precious object. This is the journal that contains Xavier's writing, his personal response to the content of the course. In holding his journal lightly, with care, Gene expresses something about his relationship to both Xavier and to the course content. Gene does not grasp onto the journal as if it is his property, nor does he toss it lightly toward Xavier, as if it were of little importance. Rather, he holds the journal reverently, as an object of value, and extends it toward Xavier, its rightful owner. In this gesture, Gene himself steps away, expressing an

invitation to Xavier to engage with the course content himself, to listen to it and to respond in a personal way.

In this encounter with Xavier, I saw Gene embody Caranfa's silent teacher, opening space for a student to bring the outer drama of the class into their interior space and to thereby foster a meaningful personal relationship with reality. I also saw an additional dimension of personhood at play in this moment. I saw Gene look at Xavier in a particular way, one marked by reverence and seriousness. And through this look, I saw Gene invite Xavier to see himself in a new way: through his teacher's eyes.

I have come, with time, to understand the meaning of this moment between Gene and Xavier in phenomenological terms. Gene's actions and demeanor express that, in this moment, he does not see Xavier only or primarily as a student in an instrumental sense: as an entry in a gradebook, whose identity is reducible to the number of assignments they complete and grades they achieve. I imagine there are times (during late nights of grading perhaps) when Gene does, quite unproblematically, see Xavier and his classmates in this way. But in this moment, it was immediately obvious to me as an observer, as I hope it is to you as a reader, that Gene sees and responds to Xavier as a person. To return to the distinction drawn in Chapter 1, Xavier does not appear to Gene phenomenologically as an object, but rather as a subject: as an intentional agent who approaches reality from his own singular perspective.

Gene interacts with Xavier in an invitational way that expresses his appreciation of the "otherness" of his student: Xavier has his own perspective, makes his own choices, acts from a center—"a sphere of ownness" (Husserl, 1960, p. 93)—that belongs to him alone. Gene does not demand that Xavier look up, or that he take the journal, or that he respond to his teacher's address. Gene's words and actions are all entreaty, but without being demanding. His tone does

not change when Xavier offers no initial response to his words or gesture. Gene's way of treating Xavier does not appear as a corollary of *what Xavier does* (whether or not, for instance, he respectfully acknowledges his teacher's address). Rather, and in a striking way since Xavier's response is, in fact, far from fully reciprocal, Gene's manner of interacting with Xavier seems to respond first and foremost to *who Xavier is*: to a value Gene sees and appreciates that exists on a level entirely separate and distinct from the instrumental. Gene's attentive and care-filled way of approaching Xavier is expressive of Anders Shinkel's (2018) depiction of wonder, which he describes as fundamentally non-instrumental:

> To be capable of wonder is to be capable of adopting a receptive attitude of appreciation of something for its own sake, apart from any reference to one's own desires, preferences, or plans (p. 44).

In the above narrative, Xavier evidently does not act in accord with Gene's desires, preferences, and plans. Gene clearly planned to hand Xavier his journal and, presumably, would have preferred his student to have returned his eye contact and to have reached out to take the journal from his outstretched hands, which, as it happened, remained dangling awkwardly in the air in what appeared, in my viewing, to be a painfully incomplete gesture. Gene could have cited his authority as a teacher and demanded that Xavier take his journal and complete his work. He could have insisted that Xavier remove his Airpods. He could have commanded that his student show him respect by returning his eye contact. Instead, Gene continues to look at and speak with Xavier in a same calm, steady voice. He does not rescind his gesture of offering when Xavier does not accept his journal, nor does he compel his student to take the papers from his outstretched hands. Rather, Gene lays the journal gently on the desk where, should he "need it," Xavier can choose, at a later time, to pick it up and read it.

Gene does not only acknowledge and accept that Xavier moves in a realm beyond his teacher's control; he affirms, by his actions, that he values the "otherness" of Xavier. Thus, Gene's actions do not express mere wonder at Xavier's personhood; they express reverence. Shinkel (2018) notes that while wonder is receptive of and open to value, reverence moves beyond wonder by affirming something or someone's value:

> Whereas wonder—although (usually) suggestive of positive value and importance—retains an element of indeterminateness, stopping short of a full judgment or ascription of value, someone who experiences awe or reverence has "decided" that the object of his attention is great, "awesome," and that his attitude toward it therefore ought to be one of humility, respect, admiration, and reverence (p. 36).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Woodruff (2014) defines reverence as a virtue that involves standing in awe before something that I appreciate as exceeding my ability to comprehend or control, but whose truth and value I nevertheless affirm. More than simply acknowledging that something or someone exists and acts in a realm that I cannot reach, as wonder does (often with bafflement), reverence involves feeling awe in the face of this realization. This object or person I behold is "awe-some" precisely because they exceed my capacity to comprehend or control, because they appear to me as saturated with a depth of meaning that my understanding will never exhaust (cf. Marion, 2002). Gene expresses no frustration with Xavier, despite his lack of responsiveness and engagement with the class work. Neither does he show signs of disappointment when Xavier does not accept the journal and take up Gene's invitation to engage in the class content. Gene's actions indicate that he perceives something more at play in this interaction than whether or not Xavier gets his work done. That "something more" is Xavier himself. Whether or not Xavier completes his work as a student is secondary; first and foremost, Gene seems to see and value him as a person.

Personal Gifts

In my viewing, Gene's interaction with Xavier manifests Marion's (2002) phenomenological description of gift-giving, since, in an instance of giving most worthy of the name, the giver, the gift, and the givee can all be bracketed from view. In this interaction with Xavier, I saw Gene offer his student a real gift, but whether Xavier received the gift remains unknown. Gene stepped away from Xavier, thus becoming absent. This absence of the giver, for Marion (2002) safeguards the gift as gratuitous and distances the act of giving from the realm of exchange, since, when absent, the giver withdraws all claim to recompense:

> In fact, by disappearing and being missing, the giver, far from failing, fulfills his function all the better in absentia. He truly gives a gift, whose given character can never be contested, since no return can (through lack of a destination) reduce givenness to the rank of a commercial transaction. The giver acts perfectly because he disappears perfectly (p. 97).

The perfect gift is not contingent upon receiving anything in return: it is given in excess of the giver. Such will be the case if Xavier does, in fact, decide to take up and read the journal now lying on his desk. Gene has already walked away; he may never know whether his gift has been received.

What personal gift does Gene offer Xavier as he holds his journal, cushioning it in his hands, rotating it so that the writing faces Xavier, and extending it toward him? On a material level, Gene offers Xavier the journal itself. The journal, though, is not the gift, although it is through the handing of the journal that Gene extends his personal gift to his student. Marion (2002) explains that this is another mark of a true gift: that it goes beyond—exceeds—its material manifestations, as in the case of a wedding band, the material value of which pales in comparison to the value of fidelity and total gift of self that it expresses:

> Far from being confused with the gift, the object either disappears from the game or is reduced to merely an extra, interchangeable, and optional support (souvenir, keepsake, or

> wage, etc.), in short, to a mere index of what's really at stake in the gift, much more precious and serious than the object that conventionally represents it. In fact, the more the gift delivers a considerable, indeed immeasurable, largesse, the less it succeeds in becoming visible as an objective thing—or rather, the less the object that makes it visible corresponds to the phenomenal accomplishment of the gift" (pp. 103-4).

In giving Xavier his journal, Gene offers him more than the paper's materiality, although this gift is expressed in and through the gesture of handing the journal to him. What is the gift that Gene offers Xavier that goes beyond the object of transfer? In my viewing, Gene offers Xavier the gift of himself.

The paper that Gene offers Xavier is not blank: it contains writing on the cover, including Xavier's name, and Gene rotates the packet so Xavier can more easily read it. It is Xavier's graded course journal: a tool Gene prepares for each unit that contains instructional material, questions to answer, and activities to complete. Some questions check students' comprehension, asking, for example, "What claim does the article make? Write exactly what it says in the article." Other prompts introduce activities that imbue the course content with personal relevance. The following prompt, for instance, appears after instructional material about understanding scale in the study of history: "In this exercise you will create a timeline of events in your life by year, but also add a timeline from a parent to compare the scale of years." Some questions and activities go a step further and invite deep reflection:

> **Now turn your timeline into an origin story.** The timeline you did earlier was an ontic story of your life. It shows the facts. Of course you chose certain facts out of all the facts possible. Just the choices tell a story a certain way. How would your story read if you gave those facts meaning, telling why each event is important to why you are the way you are today.

Student journals are always completed individually, although Gene does include some peer review exercises. Their content, as the above examples show, is personal: no two student journals will be completed in the same way. Xavier's journal contains his story, his thoughts, his

interpretations of how his life events connect to the discussion of history introduced in class. When Gene holds Xavier's journal in his hands, "firmly but gently, cushioning the pages from beneath with both hands," his action expresses acute awareness of its connection to Xavier's person. When I saw Gene hold papers in this way—a habitual (though always, in my viewing, thoughtful) action that I came to recognize as characteristic of his way of being—I would write in my notes: "He holds persons in his hands." Xavier's paper is his work, the work of his hands, and it tells his singular perspective and story. In holding his journal with reverence and care, Gene expresses his reverence for Xavier's person: his thoughts and point of view.

Additionally, in giving Xavier to himself through passing back his journal, Gene offers his student a gift that only he can give. It is not the exact same journal which Xavier handed in that Gene offers back to him; it has been read and responded to; it has been seen by his teacher. Gene has seen Xavier in the pages of the journal and has offered comments in response. His careful gesture of extending the journal toward Xavier also manifests a response. It is a gesture of appreciation, even perhaps of gratitude, at having been privileged to see Xavier. In being offered his journal, Xavier is offered a new perspective on himself: Gene's perspective. This perspective is a gift that only Gene can give, for only Gene sees from his singular, first-person perspective. Thus, the gift that is offered to Xavier appears as a genuine gift of self on the part of Gene, his teacher. Marion (2002) cites the gift of oneself as a gift in the fullest sense because its truth exceeds its expression through the giving of an object or token, in this case, the student journal (pp. 104-5).

It is important to note that the gift Gene offers Xavier—the gift of himself—does not depend on Gene's full, intentional awareness of its offering. In fact, Marion (2002) notes that, in an act of gift-giving, there is always the possibility that more will be given than that of which the

giver is aware (p. 98). This unknowing is part and parcel of the hiddenness of the giver, which safeguards the gift as gratuitous.

In the moment I witnessed, Xavier does not receive the journal from Gene. He does not extend his hands to grasp the pages, but remains apparently unresponsive, with his head turned down and arms hanging limply by his side. Xavier does not look up to read his name printed on the paper, facing toward him. Gene places the journal on Xavier's desk and begins to turn away. Then, Xavier looks up, removes one Airpod from his ear, and mutters "Thanks." Xavier does not see the careful way that Gene held his journal in his hands, nor does he extend his own hands to meet Gene's. But he does see something and offer a response; Xavier shows that he does, in a way, receive the journal, that is, himself, from Gene, in his muttering of thanks.

Marion (2002) describes how the gratuitousness of gift-giving leads to a hiddenness or bracketing even of the givee, although this bracketing is not absolute, because for a gift to appear as such, it must be offered to a recipient. However, because the giver gives "a*s if* the givee never had to repay" (p. 87, emphasis original) and, once having offered the gift, recedes from view, the givee need not (and sometimes cannot) express gratitude toward the giver. A gift may be given and received but not recognized as such for years (as was the case with the gift offered to me by Dr. Reilly, related in Chapter 2), or even may never be recognized as a gift. However, when the gift is recognized, the givee is moved to gratefully acknowledge the gift received. Marion (2002) notes that the giver, through their act of giving, asks but does not demand that their gratuitous gift be responded to with gratuitous recognition (p. 101).

When Xavier looks up and says "Thanks," Gene turns toward him and they fleetingly make eye contact. Xavier not only sees Gene; he sees Gene seeing him and thus sees himself through Gene's eyes in an instance of empathic encounter. Xavier sees the attentive, patient,

gratuitous, and caring way that Gene looks at him, and is given to himself as someone who calls forth that kind of response. The encounter also goes two ways: when Xavier looks up, Gene sees himself from his student's perspective. In this case, he is given to himself through Xavier's eyes as a person who has given his student something of value, who is appreciated. Xavier may or may not realize the full extent of the gift he has received from Gene, but his reciprocal gesture is one of recognition, of gratitude.

3.5 Taking the Personal Core of Teaching Seriously

On the first day of school, I heard Gene say to a student, as he looked unblinkingly into the boy's eyes: "This year, I am going to take you seriously as a human person. I don't think you'll have ever seen someone take you as seriously as a human person as I will." In the moment with Xavier related above, I saw that seriousness become concrete in Gene's intent gaze, the soft deliberation of his words, the steady cadence of his voice, the care with which he held Xavier's journal and turned it toward him. What does it mean to take a person seriously in the context of the classroom? In other words, what does it mean to take the personal core of teaching seriously? Samuel Rocha (2023) paints a powerful image of what it means to take what he calls (citing Marion) the "excesses" of education seriously, which I take to include, importantly, what I call teaching's personal core:

> Education demands a sense of seriousness about its excess. We do not walk through a puddle in the same way that we dive into the deep sea. We do not hop down some steps in the same way that we skydive or cliff jump. We do not say goodbye to the clerk at the store in the same way that we bury our dead. Seriousness is the difference between a false and limited approach to education, an approach that denies its fundamental excess due to a fearful sense of confidence, and the truer one that concedes its poverty and yearns for an education that is beyond measure (p. 148).

During the three years I spent in Gene's classroom, I learned to take the personal dimension of education seriously. I learned to see, more and more clearly, that teaching is a

saturated phenomenon that gives gifts in excess of the achievement of content knowledge and the assignment of grades, and that these gifts are personal: they touch and impact students as persons. Through looking again and again at Gene's teaching, day after day, I began to see a level of detail, of everyday drama, that had been present from the start, but which I had not initially had the clarity of vision and focus to notice. I am sure that Gene frequently engaged in encounters like the one described with Xavier during the first year I visited his classroom, but none appear in my notes. I was focused, at that time, on the gestalt of the classroom as a whole, first on the outward drama that seemed to sweep the room, and then on the inner drama that pervaded the silent classroom. Only with time and with a focus of attention did I begin to notice the presence and importance of the one-on-one interactions that Gene had with students, in which the two met, or at least he invited them to meet, as persons, face-to-face. My belated recognition of these encounters, which struck me, once I saw them, as palpably embodying teaching's personal core, sparked in me a desire to attend to how the personal dimension of teaching appears in other educational spaces.

In my study of *Babette's Feast*, I refer to Babette as an artist-educator (Sullivan, 2020). The film portrays Babette as a great artist (1:40:30), and it is through her art—through the preparing and serving of a meal—that she teaches. Moreover, Babette's teaching is *personal*: she does not teach her neighbors how to cook; rather, she (through her cooking) teaches them about themselves and about their relationships with their deeply held commitments and with one another. Through the course of the feast she serves, the viewer of the film witnesses a change in the dinner guests: they begin to see themselves, each other, and the beliefs that form the fabric of their common way of life differently. The transformation the guests undergo through the course of the meal appears as a gift through which they receive incalculably more than physical

nourishment. The gift they receive is themselves: a new way of seeing themselves and of being in the world and with others. I return to Babette at the conclusion of this chapter because, during the three years I spent in Gene's classroom, I came to see him as teacher who, like Babette, invites students to experience deep, personal transformation through his artful engagement with the concrete, tangible, and material aspects of classroom life. Specifically, I saw Gene invite students to see education differently, and to see themselves as students and as persons in a new way. Through seeing Gene make this offering to students, I came to appreciate how the practice of classroom teaching—so often marked by exchange—can be a place of genuine encounter and personal gift.

As a public school teacher in the United States, Gene works largely within the realm of exchange. He is an employee of the state, entrusted by families and taxpayers with the duty of helping students achieve discreet benchmarks of knowledge and skill. In return, he receives a salary. It is not my purpose to disparage the value of this exchange. However, as I hope to have made clear in preceding chapters, the aim of my project is to illuminate the presence and power of an altogether different realm, one that exists in the same spatiotemporal locus as that of educational exchange, but whose operation and impact are entirely distinct: the realm of encounter, of gift.

In *Babette's Feast*, many instances of exchange occur: Babette exchanges her lottery winnings for the ingredients she uses to prepare the feast; her guests receive physical nourishment from the meal Babette serves, and she, in exchange, receives the opportunity to practice the artistry of her profession. Babette herself admits to the existence of this exchange. When one of her guests realizes with shock that Babette spent the entirety of her 10,000-franc lottery winnings in the work of preparing the feast and exclaims: "Babette, you ought not to have

given away all that you have for our sake," Babette replies with seriousness: "It wasn't just for your sake" (1:39:30-40). Babette acknowledges that she receives a great deal from the feast she prepares and serves: it gives her the opportunity to inhabit, once more, her identity as artist. However, existing alongside this realm of exchange is the realm of encounter, in which through the very serving of a meal, Babette offers her guests not only nourishment, but a gift: an invitation to see themselves through her eyes, and thereby to see themselves and their relationships with each other and the world in a new way. Through the details of the feast, Babette not only shows her artistry and culinary skill, but communicates to each guest that they are seen, that there is a place for them at the table, that they have a dignity that deserves to be responded to with care and even, on occasion, with extravagance. These communications of Babette appear as personal gifts: expressions of how she, as a person, sees her neighbors. These gifts are gratuitous, demanding no response, and they invite guests to participate in a personal encounter with Babette by which they are given to themselves in a new way.

Similarly, I saw in Gene's classroom that a teacher can, through the very elements that make up educational exchange, give something more than class content. This 'something more' appears as a gift and invites students and teacher to meet on an interpersonal plane. With Gene, as with Babette, the personal gifts offered through his teaching are more than material, yet they are expressed in an embodied, material way: with body language, for example, or carried in the pages of a paper journal. I saw Gene's artistry endow the most minute and seemingly inconsequential items and movements with deep, personal meaning. Furthermore, my time in Gene's classroom helped me appreciate the particular power of what I have come to call *side-by-side teaching*. I use the term side-by-side teaching to describe the pedagogical posture in which a teacher engages with a student individually, in an embodied way. This side-by-side stance

appears in the way Gene engaged with Xavier. Standing (or kneeling) side-by-side struck me as a poignant posture through which the personal gifts of teaching can be expressed.

3.6 Continuing to Bear Witness

The years I spent in Gene's classroom clarified and gave direction to my desire to bear witness to the personal core of teaching. During the time I spent with Gene, I gradually learned, in an experiential way, how to approach teaching and teachers as a witness, and I also came to recognize, with fuller clarity, the value of taking up such an orientation. Seeing Gene opened my eyes to how the personal dimension of teaching—the dimension of gift—can appear with force, clarity, and artistry within an environment marked largely by the dimension of exchange, and how this personal dimension of teaching can be seen by a close observer who attends carefully to classroom life and who seeks, through this attending, to know a teacher deeply. Only with time did I come to see the personal gifts Gene offered students in moments such as his encounter with Xavier and recognize the meaning of his characteristic gestures and ways of being. The extensive time I spent in Gene's classroom, coupled with my own experience and ongoing study of philosophy and education, gave me a proximity to the work of teaching that aided my vision. At the same time, the distance I maintained from the action of day-to-day classroom proceedings enabled me to contemplate aspects of teaching that go beyond (even while appearing within) the realm of objectives, methods, strategies, and outputs. My experience in Gene's classroom gave me a felt understanding of the kind of deep knowledge of teachers and teaching that can come only with time and of the simultaneous proximity and distance proper to bearing witness.

Seeing Gene inspired me to spend time in other educational environments, attending to how and whether the personal core of teaching might appear through the actions and gestures of educators in those spaces. I chose two environments largely marked by materiality, embodiment,

and, at least externally, relationships of exchange. I also selected spaces in which side-by-side teaching is part and parcel of pedagogy. Finally, I chose to observe persons who do not bear the professional title of “teacher,” but who nevertheless struck me as embodying the identity of artist-educator. I entered these environments with the express desire to see, understand, and bear witness to the personal core of teaching. In the following two chapters, I will describe how I embodied the orientation of a witness—with its characteristic combination of proximity and distance—during long-term observations of professional chefs working with adolescent apprentices and a Division I track and field and cross country coach working with her collegiate athletes. In these chapters, I will endeavor to render testimony that illuminates how I saw the personal core of teaching present in the actions and interactions of teachers in these spaces. In Chapter 4, in which I will share testimony from the apprenticeship kitchen, I will focus my vision on how the personal gifts of teaching give students to themselves: inviting them to freely adopt new ways of seeing. In Chapter 5, I will give a detailed account of the year I spent with Kelsey, a Division I track and cross country coach, in an effort to illuminate how the gifts offered by a teacher appear as gifts of self: proceeding from the singular person of the teacher.

Chapter 4: Receiving Personal Gifts

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I defined teaching as an empathic encounter: an interaction between two persons in which one person (a teacher) directs the attention of the other person (the student) toward a shared object that they contemplate together. For this reason, I described a teacher as embodying the posture of pointing. The teacher, importantly, points beyond their own person in a gesture that invites a student to interact meaningfully with an aspect of reality. To effectively point a student's attention toward a shared object of contemplation, teacher and student must—metaphorically speaking—stand side-by-side. A teacher who embodies an exclusively face-to-face posture in relation to a student risks obscuring the object of study from the student's view and filling their vision with themselves. I described a teacher as standing side-by-side with students to evoke the image of teacher as guide, as Virgil guided Dante on his journey through hell and purgatory. Like Virgil, a side-by-side teacher plays an indispensable role in a student's learning, but, also like Virgil, they ultimately aim to prepare the student to continue their journey without their teacher's help.

As a particular kind of empathic encounter, learning from a teacher is an experience both of *being seen* and of *seeing with*. Through their pointing action, a teacher offers their student gifts that extend beyond the realm of exchange, of the passing on of knowledge or skill. These gifts are, as I described in Chapter 1, *personal*: they invite the student to see the world and themselves differently, from their teacher's unique perspective. This enriching vision gives the student to themselves in a new way, invites them to inhabit their own personhood differently, and thus can spur their freedom and agency. These gifts of teaching, by which a student is

invited not just to gain knowledge but to become themselves, constitute what I call teaching's *personal core*.

The personal core of teaching names the dimension of teaching, in which a teacher, through teaching of information or a skill, gives more than that purported object of study. The appearance of this personal core reveals teaching to be a *saturated phenomenon*: the meaning of which appears as bursting beyond and unable to be contained by metrics and measures of exchange. As I argued in Chapter 2, while impossible to quantify and difficult to describe, the personal core of teaching can be seen, appreciated, and responded to by a close observer who contemplates teaching (Marcel, 1950), seeking the "deep" (Jackson, 1992), "*conocer*" knowledge (Rocha, 2016) by which we come to know not things, but persons. Such an observer—a witness—seeks empathic knowledge about what it means to teach: they are present in an educational environment *in-person* and *as* a *person* and they contemplate teaching and learning as an intrinsically interpersonal encounter between teacher and student.

In Chapter 3, I described how I came to recognize the personal core of teaching in my own experience as a student, in my study of the film *Babette's Feast*, and in the years I spent observing Gene's work as a classroom teacher. I also described how I felt an increasing desire to bear witness to the important but difficult-to-articulate personal dimension of teaching. My ongoing inquiry has been rooted in and driven by the dual forces of wonder and concern (Hansen, 2021, pp.77-8): the strong conviction that the personal core of teaching and its corresponding gifts matter—that they are not peripheral to, but form the true core of teaching—and deep concern that this important dimension of teaching is largely overlooked and ignored by scholars and policymakers whose metrics of measurement lack the capacity to capture the gifts of teaching that exceed the realm of exchange. My aim in this chapter and the one that follows is

to render testimony that illuminates the presence of personal gifts in teaching and that reverently maintains the mystery of teaching as a reality whose saturated meaning exceeds the capacity of being fully seen and captured by any one perspective or combination of perspectives.

4.2 Introducing Rosewood

Multiple factors inspired me to seek insight into the personal core of teaching at Rosewood: a working kitchen in which adolescent apprentices work with experienced chefs to learn the art of caring for others through the material details of the work of the home: preparing meals, setting the table, cleaning, etc. Before beginning graduate school, I worked in a program similar to Rosewood's. Through that experience, I gained a felt understanding of the educative power of seemingly minute and menial material details such as the way napkins are folded or teacups are set. I saw that such details communicate something meaningful to those being served that extends beyond their material or transactional value. This experience has played an animating role in my scholarly inquiry. It motivated my return to school to try to find words to describe the importance and impact of what I had experienced as deeply meaningful, personally formative work, but which, regrettably, is often understood as unskilled, non-intellectual labor.

Furthermore, my study of *Babette's Feast* deepened my appreciation of and awe at the artistic and educational depth that the material dimensions of culinary work can touch, especially when carried out in a home-like environment. I saw in Babette an artist-educator whose manual work nourishes her neighbors' understanding of themselves, their commitments, and their relationships with others. Finally, Rosewood struck me as a promising place to seek insight into the personal core of teaching because of its distinct pedagogical identity. Rosewood's apprenticeship program seeks to teach chefs to understand their work, not as strictly functional, but as capable of having a formative impact on the persons they serve. As the narratives related

in this chapter will attest, Rosewood's pedagogy aims to help young chefs learn to appreciate how their work impacts the people they serve in a way that extends beyond physical nourishment. In and through the serving of a meal, chefs learn that they can communicate messages of care, solicitousness, and respect, and that these messages have the power to augment diners' understanding of themselves.

Rosewood is therefore a place not only of teaching, but of teacher-education. Furthermore, Rosewood's pedagogy is intentionally and intensely personal: each apprentice works with one master chef, learning from them and gradually taking on increasing responsibility and independence. Teaching at Rosewood consists largely of moments in which teacher and student stand literally side-by-side, the apprentice first watching the master work, and then embodying the master's posture herself. This pedagogy exemplifies in a particularly clear way how empathic knowledge is gained through joint attending to a common object. I sought to observe this side-by-side pedagogy not with a view to how skills such as chopping or baking are learned per se, but rather to see what personal gifts might be offered through these teacher-student interactions that go beyond technical knowledge, moving not in the economy of exchange, but, rather, in the orbit of gift (cf. Marion, 2002). As I aim to illuminate in what follows, at Rosewood, the offering of personal gifts does not occur apart from the elements of exchange that are part and parcel of the kitchen's work. Rather, it is through the teaching of culinary skills (an act of exchange in which master chefs invest time in teaching apprentices so that they, in turn, can productively contribute to the operation of the kitchen) that the gifts of Rosewood's pedagogy appear.

Witnessing a Unique Pedagogical Environment

The unique contours of Rosewood's educational environment shaped my posture as witness there. Rosewood is a working kitchen of a residence located in an international urban hub that seeks to create a warm family atmosphere for 12-15 occupants. Three professional chefs, Lin, Mirella, and Annie, work at Rosewood full time, along with Renee, Rosewood's program director.[7] Additionally, 18 adolescent girls participate in Rosewood's youth apprenticeship program. These adolescents typically work 1-2 shifts a week, either after school or on the weekends, for the duration of their four years of high school. Adolescent apprentices are compensated for their work and pass through different phases of apprenticeship pedagogy, gradually taking on greater responsibility in the kitchen.

I devoted approximately 200 hours to observing the day-to-day work of master chefs and apprentices, and spent over 300 total hours at Rosewood, getting to know the environment and those who work there. I also interviewed six adolescent apprentices about their experience working at Rosewood. As I will explain in the following section, the posture I enacted at Rosewood and the actions I engaged in were both responsive to the unique contours of that educational space.

Rosewood enacts an apprenticeship approach both in teaching their part-time employees and in the ongoing professional development of their full-time staff. The aim of Rosewood's apprenticeship pedagogy is not only to teach technical culinary skills, but to teach part-time and full-time workers alike the art and science of caring for others through the creation of a home-like environment. The youth apprenticeship program is one of numerous initiatives that form part of Rosewood's mission to support women who desire that caring for their home and family form

[7] See appendix A for details about the professional experience of Rosewood's full-time staff.

an integral part of their lives. Rosewood does not claim that women (as opposed to men) should take sole responsibility for the work of the home, nor does their mission imply that all women ought to engage directly in such tasks. Rather, they hold that women who choose to devote part of their time and lives to creating and sustaining a home environment engage in deeply educational work. Their website claims:

> The home is the most influential place on Earth. Through their work in the home, women play a special role in creating an environment that nurtures, heals and instructs those around them ("About").

Rosewood's apprenticeship pedagogy strives to assist women who have an interest in learning the art of caring for others through the material work of the home, not only by teaching them the skills required to carry out such work, but also by inspiring in them a sense of service and helping them touch the deep, formative influence such work can have.

Rosewood's Pedagogical Mission: Learning to See the Whole

During the time I spent at Rosewood, I repeatedly heard the full-time professionals reference their pedagogy as aimed at teaching apprentices how to see. In a meeting on my first day, the three full time chefs and program director discussed how best to support the learning of various apprentices:

> Brittany is totally in her head. She doesn't see.
>
> ***
>
> Jamie has strong baking skills, but she's product oriented. When she's in the kitchen, she's so absorbed in her recipe that she doesn't even see the dishes piling up in the sink.

Renee, Rosewood's program director, explained to me that both Brittany and Jamie are in what the full-time staff calls Phase One of the adolescent apprenticeship program:

> Phase One is really about getting the apprentices to think about what others need, to see the whole and how they can fit into that whole and help out in different ways. It's not so

> much about the cooking in this stage. Some apprentices learn to see the whole quickly; for others, it takes some time.

Renee describes Rosewood as a community of practice, citing a term coined by anthropologist Jane Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). A community of practice is defined by three key components: domain, community, and practice. In order for a group of people to be designated as a community of practice, they must possess a shared domain of interest, engage in common activities, and participate as joint practitioners in a practice with a shared repertoire of resources (Wenger, 1998). Learning to “see the whole” means learning to see and, eventually (especially in the case of the full-time staff), to fully take up one’s place as a practitioner in the community of practice.

On an early visit to Rosewood, I observed Annie, the youngest and least experienced full-time chef, working in the kitchen with Lin. “This is the most important aspect of our pedagogy,” Renee tells me when she sees me watching Lin and Annie prepare dinner. During a break, she explains her comment more fully:

> Where the apprenticeship method matters most is in the ongoing formation of our full-time staff: the ones who aren’t just working an afterschool job, but who see this work as their professional vocation. The biggest pedagogical challenge Lin, Mirella, and I face is how to teach bigger picture things like decision-making to Annie, who’s still in the early years of her profession. How do you teach someone to make decisions based on the needs of others: the residents, for example, and particularly the other members of the team? When a young chef like Annie starts taking on responsibility in the kitchen, they’re often anxious about doing things right, about keeping track of time, about ‘meeting the mark.’ But that thinking gets a chef caught in their own head and can keep them from thinking as part of a team. For more experienced chefs like Lin and Mirella, it’s tempting to focus the pedagogy on skills, since it’s easier to teach someone skills than to teach them how to see. But being able to see from the perspective of others is more important than any skill, and we want to give Annie the chance to develop to her full capacity professionally; we don’t just want her to learn how to do things.

Learning to “see the whole,” at Rosewood, seems to involve learning to see from the perspectives of others, and to come to see oneself not as an individual chef, but as a member of a

team. To return to the phenomenological language of Chapter 1, professional development at Rosewood consists largely in empathic learning: interpersonal encounter that enables a person to see themselves and the world through the eyes of other people. In fact, Husserl (1989) describes working with others on a common project in what he calls an "association of persons" as the height of empathic encounter. In such associations, without losing their individual subjectivity, persons form a unified "social subjectivity" that is more than "merely a collection" of the subjectivities of members (p. 206). Social subjectivities, which seem aligned with Lave and Wenger's (1991) definition of "communities of practice," possess internal cohesion because they are oriented toward a common goal. In these groups, every member plays a role that requires individual expertise; empathy comes into play when each combines their skill in pursuit of a common goal that exceeds the capacity of any individual member to accomplish. In an association of persons, each member, without losing their singular "I" perspective, sees their surroundings and common project from the perspective of "we."

Renee notes the difficulty in teaching a young chef to see from the "we" perspective, and also indicates that such teaching involves more than passing on skills or techniques. It is a type of learning that is deeply personal, singular, and therefore, contains an element of indeterminacy and mystery (cf. Marcel, 1950):

> We emphasize through our apprenticeship pedagogy that reaching one's professional capacity is not a general thing; there's no standard measure or ideal that everyone has to meet. Professional capacity is unique, personal. As Annie learns to make decisions, she'll come into her own in the kitchen. She'll be herself there. None of us knows exactly what that will look like, but we have a responsibility to help her get there and discover her capacity for herself. When you take on an apprentice, you take on a person.

Rosewood's adoption of an apprenticeship pedagogy with full-time staff is relatively recent, and Renee explains their rationale for taking this new approach to professional development:

> We think that our apprenticeship pedagogy will have an even bigger impact with the full-time staff than it does with the adolescent apprentices. Learning from a master is invaluable, and we also hope it will help us get out of the 'rut of manuals': of thinking things need to be done in a certain way, or that 'this is the way we do things.' We used to use manuals all the time, but now we're moving away from it. By learning from a master instead of a manual, you get to know one person's way of doing things, but it's not *the* way. Each one can learn from others and then do things her own way. We're each very different, and we have to work as ourselves. I think when we haven't been able to love in our work and love each other in our work, it's been because we haven't really let each person be themselves in their work.

Renee's explanation of the aim of apprenticeship pedagogy illustrates how learning to "see the whole" does not involve losing one's individual perspective. Unlike a manual that teaches a single way of seeing and doing, in a community of practice, each practitioner maintains their own singular perspective, even as their perspective is enriched by empathically learning to see from the perspectives of others and of the social subjectivity of the community. This insight corroborates Husserl's (1960) insistence that, while the experience of interpersonal encounter (empathy) gives me the perspective of another person directly and non-inferentially, the way I see the world through the other's eyes remains distinct from the way they experience the world as themselves. While I experience the other's perspective empathically, as a way of seeing originally belonging to another that complements my own, first-person perspective, the other experiences their perspective as first-personal, belonging to their "sphere of ownness" (cf. Husserl, 1960, p. 93). Learning to see from her teammates' perspectives will not replace or negate Annie's own point of view, but rather promises to enrich it. Through the empathic experience of working with Lin, she is invited to see both herself and her work environment in a new way: through Lin's eyes. In so doing, she is offered a gift of expanded vision. This expanded vision does not aim to take away her individuality, but rather holds the promise of enabling her to "do things her own way" and to "discover her capacity for herself." Annie is not

meant to replace her way of seeing with Lin's, but rather, through working with Lin, to have the opportunity to enhance and broaden her own ability to see.

Furthermore, Renee's comments emphasize that learning to see is connected in an important way to the experience of being seen. The personal nature of apprenticeship learning, as opposed to learning from a manual, respects differences and aspires to allow each person to "be themselves in their work." Renee expresses the seemingly paradoxical conviction, corroborated by phenomenologists, that learning one person's way of doing things, as opposed to learning an impersonal, objective approach from a manual, protects against uniformity and safeguards personal freedom. Renee's comments about the challenges Lin and Mirella face in helping Annie learn to see from the perspective of the team, as well as the chefs' musings (cited above) about how to support adolescent apprentices' learning, indicate that this personal approach requires a master to take up a certain posture when attempting to help an apprentice learn to see the whole: one that strives to notice and respond to that particular apprentice's singular dispositions and needs. In a word, apprenticeship pedagogy requires getting to know the apprentice very well, not just as a worker, but as a person. Renee's remarks indicate that, at Rosewood, master chefs feel a sense of responsibility to meet apprentices on this personal level: "To take on an apprentice is to take on a person."

With their adolescent apprentices, the chefs at Rosewood take the same personal approach. Their way of seeing apprentices seems, in some instances, to contrast the way the teenagers and their families are seen in school. Renee tells me:

> Each one is different. We have 18 apprentices, and most work with us for four years so we get to know them really well, and their families, too. We have a partnership with a local school, and sometimes teachers or administrators from the school warn us about a particular girl or parent. But we've never had an interpersonal problem that we couldn't work out. Partly, I think, this is because we get to know the girls and families so well, and partly it's because we're not perceived as a threat the way a teacher in school might be

> because of the pressure these families feel about college admissions. We're outside of the rat race of getting into college, and I think that's a relief for everyone involved.

Annie, who is responsible for interviewing and hiring adolescent apprentices, tells me that she's amazed by how comfortable the apprentices become with her and the other masters, even after working for just a short amount of time:

> "The things these girls tell me about their lives! You wouldn't believe how much they come to trust me, just by working together. It's incredible."

At the close of my first day observing in Rosewood's kitchen, Annie tells me a little bit about the two apprentices who were working that evening: Cat and Gloria:

> "Cat hasn't been working here that long; only about six months. She is really, really quiet. You probably noticed. But her mom tells me that she talks about us all the time at home. She might not say much while working, but she's listening. And she's comfortable here. It's amazing."
>
> ***
>
> "I interview all the apprentices who apply, and I ask them why they want to work here. Gloria told me: 'My older sister worked here for four years in high school, and I saw her really grow as a person. I want that too.'" Annie's face bursts into a wide smile and her knees bend with excitement. She continues, with joy in her voice: "And I was like, 'You're hired!' She pauses for a moment, then adds, thoughtfully, "We have really great girls."

There is wonder and reverence in the way that Renee speaks about Annie, and in the way that Annie describes Cat and Gloria. Renee, in speaking about Annie's professional development, takes care to express that she, Lin, and Mirella have no rigid standard in view of what she should or will look like as a mature master chef. Instead, Renee's comments reveal that they take pains not to focus exclusively on outcome-based skills, but rather to foster Annie's ability to see her work environment from a wider perspective, to enable her to discover her own capacity: a feat that, ultimately, Annie can only accomplish for herself. Likewise, words fail Annie when she speaks about what it is like to work with Cat and Gloria and what they seem to

take away from the experience: “It’s incredible.” “It’s amazing.” “We have really great girls.” A certain ineffability appears as proper to the interpersonal work of apprenticeship pedagogy, of endeavoring to help others learn to “see the whole.”

In my time at Rosewood, through contemplating masters and apprentices at work and listening to their testimony, I sought to see with greater clarity how masters help apprentices learn to “see the whole,” and, in doing so, how they offer personal gifts that go beyond technical skill.

My Posture at Rosewood

I came to Rosewood committed to maintaining the simultaneous proximity and distance I described in Chapter 2 as proper to the witness. However, I soon discovered that my posture in this space would look different than it had in Gene’s classroom. On one of my first days observing at Rosewood, I stood silently in the corner by the freezer, apart from the activity of the kitchen or dining room, as Lin, the head chef, worked with an adolescent apprentice, Cat. I quickly learned that this position created tension, especially among the master chefs. Before ten minutes had passed, Lin looked over at me, paused, and then said in a rush of words:

> “I feel so weird having you here watching me, Rebecca. I’m not used to having people here and ignoring them. I just had to say that out loud. I’ll try pretending you’re not here and see how it goes.”
>
> Maybe ten minutes later, Lin looks over at me again: “Can I give you a little job? Can you plate these cookies? For four people. You can stand here at the island so you can still observe.”

From that moment on, I began to take on small jobs at Rosewood. These tasks were inessential and could have easily been performed by someone else, but they gave me a place in the kitchen. These small tasks, I realized, gave Lin, Annie, and Mirella a way to see and respond to my presence in the community of practice. Lin’s remark did not strike me as expressing

discomfort at being observed because she felt evaluated or judged; rather, it seemed to communicate her discomfort at having a person present in the kitchen whom she ignored. It struck me that, in a community of practice—an environment defined and united by a common project, in which each member participates in and contributes to the shared goal of serving meals and in which mastery consists in seeing and appreciating each person's place in the whole—my presence as what seemed like a mere observer was understandably disorienting for a master chef like Lin. Proximity, I discovered, in this environment, required contributing to the community and its common goal, even while my dedication to contemplation precluded me from engaging in all-engrossing activities such as working at the stove or baking. In navigating my posture at Rosewood, I turned to the character of the carriage driver in *Babette's Feast* (Axel, 1987) for inspiration.

In my viewing of the film, the carriage driver, who spends the evening sitting on a stool in the corner of the kitchen, bears witness to Babette as artist-educator. In many kitchen scenes, the camera pans to show his face in the background, his attention focused on contemplating Babette's culinary work. His eyes open wide with wonder as she elegantly pours turtle soup into porcelain bowls, slices quail in half with the swift stroke of a knife, fills coffee cake with a hot rum sauce, and arranges bright, succulent fruit on a large silver platter. His eyes become even larger when he tastes the samples Babette brings to him throughout the evening. Often, the camera shows the driver behind Babette, looking at her with open, appreciative, fully focused attention (e.g. 1:25:30). His look directs the viewer's eyes back to Babette, helping them see Babette with the same appreciative wonder.

The carriage driver plays no formal role in the preparation of the feast; he is merely waiting for the guests to finish so that he can drive two of them home. However, Babette gives

the driver small jobs throughout the evening, such as grinding coffee beans (1:16:25) and uncorking a bottle of wine (1:30:09). These tasks are materially inconsequential, and it certainly seems that Babette or Erik, the boy she has hired to assist her, could have performed them without difficulty. Perhaps, though, like Lin, Babette felt the need to give every person in her kitchen a job that contributed in some way to the whole. Through the small tasks entrusted to him, the driver participates in the kitchen community that prepares and serves the meal, and, at the end of the night, Babette thanks him for his help (1:34:46).

The example of the carriage driver in *Babette's Feast* inspired me to participate in small ways in the work carried out at Rosewood. At the same time, like the carriage driver, I chose to only undertake tasks that would not distract from my main purpose: to contemplate the pedagogical work of the master chefs. These tasks included plating cookies and washing and drying dishes. Additionally, on top of the time I spent observing the work of masters with apprentices, I spent 100 hours working in Rosewood's laundry, contributing to the kitchen's common project by washing, drying, and preparing table linens. During those intensive working hours, I did not take up the posture of witness, but rather became acquainted with and part of the community of practice at Rosewood. While the time I spent working at Rosewood did not contribute directly to my project of bearing witness, it helped me establish the proximity required to be present as witness in this particular pedagogical and professional space.

Finally, I chose to interview six adolescents who were current or past participants in Rosewood's apprenticeship program. Unlike in Gene's classroom, where I was able to sit in a place that offered me an unobstructed view of the whole classroom, at Rosewood, I could only see part of the kitchen at once. For this reason, I was only able to focus my vision on one master chef and apprentice at a time. Additionally, after 200 hours spent contemplating Lin, Mirella, and

Annie's work with apprentices, I felt there was much more to see and deeper knowledge to gain about how apprentices learn to see the whole and are offered personal gifts through their side-by-side work with master chefs. I sought to augment my perspective through open-ended interviews that invited apprentices to share recollections and impressions about their experience working at Rosewood. In these interviews, I asked apprentices to describe their first day working at Rosewood as well as another day that stood out in their memory. I adapted these prompting questions from the guidelines articulated by Max van Manen (2016) for seeking insight into the experience of others through interviews. The descriptive testimony of apprentices served as a complement to the perspective I gained through observations, helping me to better "see the whole" of the rich pedagogy happening at Rosewood.

In what follows, I will relate testimony drawn from observations, conversations, and interviews in which master-apprentice encounters appear as occasions in which apprentices are offered personal gifts.

4.3 The Gift of Value Beyond Performance

> Lin gestures to Cat, a lanky fifteen-year-old apprentice, beckoning her to join her at the stove. As Cat walks over, Lin starts cracking eggs into a large bowl that sits on the counter. Lin gives Cat a faint smile as she sidles up by her side and looks over Lin's shoulder into the bowl. "Have you made mini omelets before?" Lin asks in a quiet, curious voice, her face taking on a serious expression. Cat shakes her head. Lin raises her eyebrows slightly and nods. "First, we beat the eggs, then we'll fry them in the saucepan individually." As Lin speaks, she beats the eggs and Cat watches her, nodding. After a minute of silence, broken only by the regular pulse of the whisk hitting the side of the bowl, Lin rests the bowl on the counter. She looks closely at the eggs, squints her eyes, gives an almost imperceptible nod and blink, as if of approval, and then, slowly, with one arm crossed over her chest and the other on her chin as if deep in thought, turns to face Cat. Lin looks at Cat with an expression that is calm and serious.
>
> "Now, to make the mini omelets, we'll pour a little bit of egg at a time into the saucepan. I'll show you first." They pivot toward the stove, both standing directly in front of the saucepan. Cat arcs her body to follow Lin's motions as she raises the bowl and pours a small amount of egg into the saucepan. Cat pulls her head back as the oil starts to sizzle. Lin places the bowl on the counter and picks up a spatula. She holds it in her right hand

as she stands in front of the stove. Beside her, on her right side, stands Cat. Cat's left arm almost touches Lin's, which is bent at the elbow, the spatula raised in the air. Both Lin and Cat point their gaze downward, their attention fixed on the saucepan with the egg sizzling inside. A minute passes. Lin points silently toward the saucepan with her spatula, her eyes still fixed downward. "The edges are forming" she says, "It's ready to flip." With an agile movement, Lin slides the spatula under the right side of the omelet, her arm steady. Then, with a slight flick of her wrist, she folds the omelet so that half the cooked side faces upward. She repeats the gesture on the left side of the omelet and then, her left hand holding the arm of the saucepan steady, she flips the whole thing so that the folded seam faces downward. The oil sizzles. Cat has neither moved nor taken her eyes off the eggs. She barely blinks as her eyes follow the motions of Lin's hand and wrist. After a few seconds, Lin lightly presses the top of the omelet with the spatula. It gives, but with resistance. She nods and, glancing first at Cat and then back at the omelet, says, "It's done." Lin slides the spatula under the egg and lifts it into the air. She places it onto a plate that lies waiting beside the stove. Lin gently rests the spatula on the counter beside the stove, crosses one arm across her chest again and, with her other hand touching the tip of her chin, turns toward Cat. Lin looks at Cat steadily, and Cat returns her gaze.

"Now you try the next one." Lin takes a step back so that Cat can take her place directly in front of the stove. Once Cat has moved over, Lin steps forward beside her, reversing their earlier pose. Cat slowly extends both arms toward the bowl of beaten eggs. She looks uncertainly over her shoulder at Lin, who gives a slight nod. Cat gingerly tips the bowl so that some of the egg mixture falls into the pan. She places the bowl back on the counter and picks up the spatula. It dangles at an awkward downward angle in Cat's right hand as she watches the egg simmer in the pan. Lin stands beside her, watching too. Neither moves. After about a minute, Cat glances over at Lin with a questioning look. Lin nods and says nothing. Cat grips the spatula more tightly in her right hand and, with her left hand holding the arm of the saucepan and her face taut with concentration, she slides the spatula under the right side of the eggs. Her right arm shakes. She pulls her hand up with a jerky movement and the right side of the egg mixture flips up then falls back. The cooked bottom breaks and egg oozes across the bottom of the pan. Without speaking, Lin calmly reaches over and grips the spatula below Cat's hand, steadying it. Cat lets go and takes a slight step to her left. Lin moves closer to the pan and, with Cat positioned directly over her shoulder, slides the spatula slowly under the right side of the omelet and flips it up. She presses the broken part down slightly so that raw egg spreads to fill the open gap. Lin flips the left side of the egg up and then turns the omelet over in the pan. She steps back and extends the spatula toward Cat, who takes it, her brow furrowed. Lin looks her in the eyes: "We can also fix what they look like once they've cooled" she says calmly. Cat presses the top of the omelet in the pan like Lin had done and looks at her. Lin nods. Cat slides the spatula carefully under the egg and, her hand shaking slightly, slowly lifts it and places it on the plate beside the first omelet. Then, without looking over at Lin, she reaches for the egg mixture again.

Lin stays beside Cat as she makes the next two mini omelets. Each time, after Cat tries to fold one side, Lin silently reaches over and takes the spatula from her hand, adjusting it in her own and silently showing her how to flip her wrist. Then, as Cat pours the egg batter

into the saucepan for the fourth time, Lin turns, walks a few steps over to the island, and begins chopping onions.

The narrative above relates teaching a skill. Teaching culinary techniques is an integral aspect of Rosewood's pedagogy, but one that Renee describes as easier to accomplish than teaching an apprentice to "see the whole": to expand her vision to see and respond to the needs of others, to see herself not only as an individual, but as a member of a team engaged in a common pursuit. Nonetheless, I saw at Rosewood that teaching skills and teaching an apprentice to see from the perspectives of others are not unrelated. Cat learns how to make mini omelets by watching Lin and engaging in empathic learning. By attending closely to the movements of Lin's hand and wrist, Cat is able to see them as if they were her own, and thus, through observation and imitation, she learns to make the movements herself. As they work side by side, Lin's movements are calm, smooth, and deliberate, and Cat's look is alert, focused, and intent. The pedagogy is mimetic, in the fullest sense of the term[8], and exemplifies the form of empathic learning social scientists (Tomasello, 1999; Thompson, 2007) name "joint attention": the shared focus of two individuals on a common object. In the above narrative, Lin and Cat focus their attention jointly on the eggs as they simmer in the pan. Lin is teaching Cat to make mini omelets, but her verbal instruction is minimal. Rather, to teach, she makes the omelets herself while Cat watches her. Then, they switch places. Cat attempts to enact primordially the motion she has observed empathically. Her first attempts at imitation lack precision. Lin observes Cat's motions, empathically seeing them as if they were her own. She steps in where Cat falters. The two work together, almost as one, on a joint project, not communicating with words or through eye contact,

[8] See Billett (2014) for an elegant presentation of the meaning and importance of mimetic learning, particularly in the context of work, in light of cognitive science's growing understanding of embodied cognition. Robert Halpern (2009) offers a complementary, case study-based account of the importance of side-by-side apprenticeship learning for adolescent development.

but rather through mutually understood gestures aimed at a common outcome. Eventually, Lin steps aside and leaves Cat alone, seemingly confident that the apprentice has internalized the technique of cooking mini omelets.

There is an important pragmatic dimension to the encounter between Lin and Cat described above that situates it in the economy of exchange (cf. Marion, 2002, pp. 75-8). The kitchen's immediate aim is to serve omelets, and Lin seeks to teach Cat how to perform this task so that this aim can be accomplished. However, in and through the process of teaching this skill, there already appears an element of gift. A horizon of givenness appears that is irreducible to that of exchange, although, at the same time, it is in the context of exchange that the horizon of gift appears. I will consider the dynamic interplay between these two horizons more in depth in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Lin invites Cat to attend to her motions, to watch her carefully, to notice the slightest and most seemingly insignificant details of actions. In the context of teaching, Carol Rodgers (2020), citing Dewey, defines the practice of focused attention as *perception*. The ability to attend closely and to perceive well is, in her view, vital not only to the learning of skills or techniques, but also to seeing and responding to persons. Rodgers considers perception to be of utmost importance in teacher education, since it enables teachers to contemplate students as persons, to "take in the whole of them":

> Perception, in contrast [with recognition], involves suspending the urge to categorize and catalogue, staying with the object of attention long enough to allow it to reveal itself on its own terms rather than on ours. To perceive is to study and "take in," writes Dewey (1934, p. 53). Perception would demand that teachers resist the urge to label kids (recognition) based on selected behaviors and instead take in the whole of them (p. 7).

Rodgers (2020) describes learning to teach as largely a process of learning to see, to perceive, to "take in the whole." Seeing the "whole" ultimately means seeing "the whole of the

person" (although, she emphasizes, one will always be "on the way" to seeing the whole person, never "there") (p. 7), and Rodgers holds that such perception is a skill that can be developed through practice. In her teacher education courses, students practice perception through activities such as spending thirty minutes drawing a single leaf. This activity takes inspiration from S. H. Scudder's 1879 account of his first experience with Harvard Professor Louis Agassiz, who, upon hearing that Scudder wished to study insects, instructed him to observe a dead fish. For three days, Agassiz kept redirecting his student's attention back to the fish, instructing him continually to "look again" and describe what he sees. In her version of this exercise, Rodgers, like Agassiz, aims to teach students to slow down, to look carefully, and to notice the richness and complexity of what lies before them (p. 119). Rodgers relates that the purpose of activities like the leaf exercise is to help graduate students (who are also teachers) experience the value of close attention, and also to help them learn, by practice, how to see well, to "take in the whole" (p. 7).

Cat's experience learning to make mini omelets, in addition to having pragmatic, exchange value, is an exercise in perception, in some ways not unlike Rodgers' leaf exercise or Agassiz's dead fish assignment. In order to learn, Cat must look, and look again, carefully attending to Lin's movements. However, unlike the leaf or fish exercise, in which students practice the mode of perception phenomenologists call *primordial* (seeing the world from one's own first-person point of view), in Rosewood's kitchen, Cat experiences an exercise in *empathic* perception: seeing through the perspective of another person. On a practical level, Cat's empathic learning is moderately efficacious: through a combination of watching Lin, of practicing herself, and of being corrected, Cat succeeds in making mini omelets that somewhat resemble those made by the master chef. At the same time, in addition to seeing how Lin sees and acts with reference to the omelet batter, Cat is invited to see herself from Lin's perspective.

In other words, she is invited and enabled, through her close attentiveness, not only to appreciate what Lin does, but also to perceive Lin as a person, to be given Lin's perspective.

What is Cat invited to see through Lin's eyes? Lin's demeanor toward Cat is friendly, but focused. She smiles slightly as Cat first joins her, but keeps her attention directed toward the eggs. Cat stands by Lin's side, looking with her in a posture that enacts shared vision and engages in a common project. At first, Cat does not participate directly in the making of the omelets, but, from the moment she moves by Lin's side, she is a real and welcomed participant in the work of the kitchen. Lave and Wenger call this stage of learning in a community of practice "legitimate peripheral participation." This learning is peripheral—Cat does not, at first, contribute directly to the action of omelet-making—yet is a genuine form of participation. In Lave and Wenger's (1991) words, this stage of learning offers the apprentice "more than an 'observational' lookout post" (p. 95). Cat's focused attention is the first step in moving toward fully fledged membership in the community of practice (Wenger, 1998, p. 100). Lin's smile and beckoning gesture communicate her appreciation of the value of Cat's presence. When Lin steps back and instructs Cat to try cooking an omelet, she shows that she counts on Cat's attentive perception and that she has confidence in the apprentice's capacity to move toward fuller participation in the kitchen community. At the same time, Lin does not leave Cat alone. She steps forward, standing right by Cat's side as she attempts her first three omeletes. Lin shows neither surprise nor disappointment when Cat's first omelet breaks; she simply reaches over, fixes the mistake, and hands the spatula back to Cat, her confidence in the apprentice's capacity apparently undiminished. Coupled with this confidence appears an acceptance of mistakes. While Lin counts on Cat's help, she indicates that a perfect output is not an ultimatum, nor seemingly even the goal: "We can also fix what they look like once they've cooled." For three

omelets in a row, Lin corrects Cat's motion as she flips the egg. Then, she walks away. Lin's actions and demeanor express trust and confidence that are not tied to a faultless outcome. Cat, at this point, has not proven that she can make omelets perfectly; she has not, in fact, succeeded in making even one on her own. Lin is aware of Cat's mistakes, yet still entrusts her with carrying out the work. Lin stands close by—available, it seems, to help or answer questions—but faces the opposite direction. Cat, Lin seems to say through her posture, is in charge of the omelets. The apprentice has assumed a role of fuller participation in the kitchen. At the same time, even while Cat's contribution is counted on, her value in the kitchen is not determined solely by her performance. From working with Lin, Cat is invited to see herself as trusted, as counted on, as valuable, even while acknowledging that her performance is imperfect.

From my perspective as observer, I cannot say for certain whether Cat accepted Lin's invitation to see herself through the master chef's eyes. But my time at Rosewood showed me that learning to not identify oneself with one's mistakes, while an ongoing struggle for many apprentices, is an integral part of getting "out of one's head" and "seeing the whole." A gift apprentices are offered, although it seems for some to be hard to accept, is the realization that their value as a member of the kitchen goes beyond their technical skill and that avoiding mistakes is not the kitchen's primary objective.

> Lin is out today, so Annie is working in the kitchen with Callie, a Stage One apprentice. They have just started to prepare dinner when I arrive. "I have a lot to do today," Annie tells me with a nervous laugh in her voice. "I hope I can get it all done."
>
> Annie has asked Callie to chop parsley for a garnish while she prepares a sauce. After retrieving cilantro from the refrigerator, Annie walks over to where Callie is working. She looks down at her roughly chopped parsley. "Oooh, I should have been watching," she says, her eyes squinting thoughtfully and her free arm moving to settle on her hip. Callie blushes, puts down her knife, and looks up at Annie. "What am I doing wrong?" she asks, nervousness sounding in her voice. Annie pauses mid-motion and looks at Callie. Slowly, she places the bunch of cilantro on the counter and takes a step back, pressing her hands together. After a moment, she speaks in a gentle, deliberate tone,

looking steadily at Callie: "You're not doing anything wrong. You don't know how to chop parsley. I'm the one who did something wrong because I didn't show you how." After a moment's pause, Annie continues, her hands still pressed together. "When we correct, we're not judging, OK?" She looks at Callie, who meets her gaze and nods.

Annie steps forward so she is elbow-to-elbow with Callie in front of the cutting board. She picks up the knife and begins to chop the parsley. Callie watches the motion of Annie's wrist and of the knife, the tip of which never leaves the cutting board. Annie rearranges the parsley bits and chops them again, into fine pieces, then puts down the knife and lifts the chopped parsley with her hand, brushing it into a small container. Callie watches silently. Once finished, Annie moves a few steps away from Callie and sets up a second cutting board beside her. On it, she begins chopping cilantro. Annie grips the bunch firmly with one hand and chops it with a smooth, rocking motion of the knife. Callie gingerly grips the bunch of parsley and, biting her lip with focus, imitates Annie's motion, her knife rocking slowly and awkwardly back and forth across the cutting board. A few silent minutes pass. Annie and Callie work side-by-side, each looking attentively down at their cutting board as they chop. Then Annie speaks, her eyes fixed on her chopping hands, as if continuing an uninterrupted conversation. "I need to remember that myself. I get corrected all the time." Both Annie and Callie keep chopping, their eyes intent on their work. After a moment, Annie speaks again: "I'm still pretty new at this. Mirella's been working in the kitchen forever—she's a real master—and Lin has been here for a long time, too. But I'm still pretty new. I need to remember that corrections aren't judgments." Silence falls again as both Annie and Callie continue to chop.

Later, when preparing serving platters for dinner, Annie opens the refrigerator. After looking around inside, she turns to Callie. "Where did you put the parsley?" Callie walks over, opens the other refrigerator, and pulls out the parsley. She hands it to Annie, looking down. "Sorry…I did it wrong." Annie reaches out to take the parsley from her hands and smiles. "Hey, what did I say?" she says in a teasing tone. Callie looks up and smiles back. "I mean, I didn't know."

Seeing Annie and Callie work, I remembered Renee's comment about how it's easy for young chefs to get caught up in anxiety about doing things right and meeting the mark, but how this kind of thinking can keep a chef stuck in their own head and make it difficult for them to think from the perspective of the team. Perhaps paradoxically, letting go of perfectionism seems to be a prerequisite for "seeing the whole," for becoming a master.

4.4 The Gift of Seeing and Responding to Other Perspectives

During the afternoon break, Mirella tells me a little bit about how she works with apprentices. She speaks calmly, methodically, unhurriedly. "I try to teach little things and

> teach them how to notice. A lot of the apprentices don't want to do anything unless they think they can do it perfectly. But that's not what this is about. Yes, I've been working in the kitchen for decades, they call me a master, but I still make mistakes. And that's how I learn! That's how we all learn. New apprentices also tend to rush. They want to finish a task quickly, as if that were the goal. But that's not what this is about either. If you just want to finish the task you're given, you're thinking about the wrong thing; you'll overlook the little things that make the work about serving others. So I try to point things out—not all at once, but little by little. For example, cleaning jelly jars. Most apprentices want to wait until the jelly is gone to wash the jars, but I wash them whenever they are full of crumbs. It takes a little extra effort and extra time, but it's a detail that communicates something. When you're sitting at the table and see crumbs in your jelly jar, it tells you something. And when you open the jelly jar and it's clean, with no crumbs, that tells you something, too. Those details are important." Mirella pauses and smiles knowingly, looking at me with a twinkle in her eye. "The apprentices pick that up over time," she says, with a short, definitive nod. "And then they start to notice other things."

Being a master, it seems, is not about achieving a perfect output, but rather about seeing, noticing, and responding to the needs of the team and of the residents the kitchen serves. Matthew Crawford (2016) describes an environment like Rosewood as an "ecology of attention," in which the common aim directs each person's actions:

> A humming kitchen of the sort I have described may be regarded as an ecology of attention in which the external demand of feeding people in a timely manner provides a loose structure within which the kitchen staff themselves establish an order of smooth, adaptive action (p. 34).

A main aim of Rosewood's pedagogy is to expand apprentices' vision, to help them learn to "see the whole." This involves teaching apprentices to see and respond to both the needs of their teammates and those of the residents they serve. Rosewood is not a home economics classroom, but rather a working kitchen. From their first day, apprentices participate in work that is part of what Lave and Wenger (1991) call a "productive practice" (p. 110). In such a practice, each action and task gains direction and purpose from the kitchen's concrete goal: serving meals in real time to real people. Furthermore, as Mirella tries to teach apprentices, by cleaning the crumbs out of jelly jars, their aim in serving meals goes beyond the goal of providing physical

nourishment; like Babette, Mirella is aware that the details of how the chefs carry out their work "communicate something" to the residents they serve. What does a crumb-filled versus a crumb-free jelly jar communicate? Mirella does not explain in words, just as she does not verbally explain the rationale to her apprentices. Rather, she directs apprentices' attention to the power of that detail of service by performing the action herself and requesting their help. She shows apprentices the difference between a clean jar and a crumby jar and invites them to see for themselves the meaning of that small gesture of service.

Cleaning the jelly jars regularly is not a rule or expectation of the kitchen. The action is gratuitous, extending Mirella's work beyond the economy of exchange and into the realm of gift. In her gesture of cleaning jelly jars, Mirella touches the personal core of her pedagogical work. A crumb-free jar says to the resident opening it at the breakfast table: "I see you as a person capable of receiving a gift and to whom I would like to give a gift." Mirella's action embodies an invitation to interpersonal encounter; it is an empathic act. When a resident opens the jelly jar and finds it free of crumbs, Mirella's way of seeing is communicated to them; they are invited to see themselves through her eyes as someone cared about in a gratuitous (and even superfluous) way. By showing apprentices this action, she also invites them to see the people they serve the way she sees them: as persons with dignity that extends beyond what they can do or produce. The insight of Immanuel Kant (2016) that human beings are subjects, not objects, and, as such, possess intrinsic dignity is manifested in Mirella's gesture, which shows that she sees those she serves not as means to the end of a paycheck, but as persons who, simply by virtue of being human, call for a response that extends beyond exchange.

By showing apprentices the gratuitous, personal gestures she enacts, Mirella invites and encourages them to "start to notice other things." Mirella's goal is not that the apprentices

flawlessly imitate her actions, but rather that they start to think: how do I see the people I serve, what do I want to communicate to them, and how can I do it?

Through inviting apprentices to notice and perform details of service that go beyond the strict confines of professional duty, Mirella opens new horizons for them to understand their identity in the kitchen. An apprentice is not an "interchangeable functionary" (cf. Hansen, 2018, p. 22) whose value is measured by their ability to complete a checklist of tasks perfectly in a short amount of time; rather, an apprentice is encouraged to be and become an artist-educator: someone who sees and responds to those she serves as persons, who teaches them something about themselves through the care she provides. This dimension of Mirella's pedagogy invites apprentices to engage their freedom and creativity. She does not ask that they copy her actions, but rather, seeks to help them see the people they serve as persons and then to notice ways that they, through their own creative work, can communicate this vision and thus give the residents the experience of being seen and responded to, not only in the realm of exchange, but rather, in the realm of gift proper to interpersonal encounter.

4.5 The Gift of Freedom

Mirella's comments related above bring to light another personal gift offered to apprentices through their work at Rosewood: the gift of freedom. While, as the opening narrative of this chapter illustrates, Rosewood's apprenticeship pedagogy involves learning by imitation, the goal is not for an apprentice to become a carbon copy of her master. As Renee articulated in the above section, by pairing apprentices with masters, the aim is to introduce them to "one person's way of doing things,…not *the* way." This approach is meant to give each member of the kitchen the freedom to be themselves in their work, and therefore to enable each one, as Renee put it, to "love in our work and love each other in our work." By striving to teach apprentices to

see from another person's perspective, the masters at Rosewood aim to help them more fully occupy their own point of view, to be more themselves, with vision that is expanded, but still their own. From my perspective as observer, it is difficult to see whether this gift of freedom is being received. However, interviews with apprentices suggest that this pedagogical aim of giving is being accomplished. Lidia, who had been working at Rosewood for about a year at the time of the interview, described how she began to realize and take up a posture of freedom in her work by learning to see from different perspectives. She remembers how she learned to set the table on her first day working at Rosewood with Delma, a full-time master chef:

> The first day they explained a lot and gave me a tour. Just basic things because I didn't know where anything was. The master I was working with, Delma, showed me where to find plates and silverware, and then I helped her set the tables. She set one place, then I set all the other places copying her. She gave me a lot of tips. For example, I kept mixing up where to place the big fork and the small forks. Delma explained to me that you always start on the outside when you eat: so you might have a salad fork, then a dinner fork, then a dessert fork in that order. That was really helpful to me because it made sense. Delma taught me lots of tricks like that: when setting teacups, you want to put the handle of the cup at 4 o'clock, because imagine you're trying to reach for the cup when you're sitting down—you don't want the handle to be facing away from you so that you have to reach across your food to get it.

Lidia's first memories of Rosewood's pedagogy involve imitation—Delma set one place at the table, and Lidia copied her—but, already, Delma imbues her teaching with perspective. The different elements of the place setting are not arbitrary; each element is meant to communicate something to the person who will sit in that spot. For example, placing a small salad fork on the left side of the plate, farther outside than the dinner fork and dessert fork, signals to the diner, without words, to pick up that fork first. When placing a teacup on the table, Delma turns the handle to 4 o'clock, so that it is within easy reach of the diner's right hand. Lidia appreciates these explanations because they "made sense." From her first day of work, she is initiated into a pedagogy of perspective: she is encouraged not to memorize formulae, but to start

to see and think from the perspective of the people she serves. She is invited, little by little, to start to see the whole.

Lidia goes on to describe how, by working with different masters, she learned different perspectives and ways of acting, even within the kitchen's common aim of seeing from the perspective of the people served.

> I love working next to somebody. If you watch them do things enough, eventually you see different mannerisms. It's kind of funny, because each individual person does things differently. Delma trained me: she showed me how to do everything at the very beginning. But as I've gone along, other masters have taught me things slightly differently than how she taught me, and I sometimes like one way better than the other… For example, when setting the table, some people place the teacup handle at 3 o'clock, some put it at 4 o'clock, some put it at 6 o'clock. I like 4 o'clock because that's the way I'd rather have my teacup. But some people like 3 o'clock because it's easier to place the handle exactly halfway.

Lidia discovers, through working at Rosewood, that there is no one "right" way to set the table. She learns that expertise consists not in reacting to situations with a precise, formulaic solution, but rather in offering a personal response to a perceived need. Crawford (2016) paints this distinction by contrasting the role of a McDonald's worker and a short-order omelet-maker (p. 34). The former's role has been reduced to a technical performance of manual labor. The goal of the corporation is to achieve machine-like consistency on a global scale. The work is devoid of thought and the agency of the worker is irrelevant. The role has been designed precisely so that anyone and everyone will perform it in the same exact way. In contrast, the short-order cook responds to the needs of the moment with agency and creativity. While his possible avenues for action are defined by the orders coming in and the ingredients available at his disposal, it is up to him to skillfully respond to the inevitable variations and unexpected occurrences that spring up in real life. There is no single, rote way to do things. Every action of the omelet-maker is

oriented toward the person being served. However, he is free and challenged to act freely, within the constraints of the environment, with the aim of making the customer as satisfied as possible.

Crawford (2016) describes the omelet-maker as engaging in a "skilled practice" that achieves a happy medium between "the overdetermination of the assembly line and the ideal of autonomy" (p. 34). Such practices, according to Crawford, exemplify the paragon of human agency. While 21st-century American culture embraces what he describes as a Kantian equating of freedom with unconstrained, decontextualized choice (expressed, he argues, through an infatuation with technology as a means to overcome the constraints of context), Crawford holds that the fullest expression of human freedom consists, not in removing constraints, but in responding to them skillfully. Just as, on the one hand, the total determination of a McDonald's assembly line stymies the worker's expression of freedom, so, too, would the total absence of constraints in the kitchen. While the available ingredients, kitchen equipment, and customers' requests restrict the short order cook's domain of choice, these limiting factors actually spur his creativity by setting the direction for his response. Total freedom of choice in the kitchen, Crawford argues, would overwhelm the cook's cognition and paralyze his creativity. The strongest force for directing creative activity is a sense of purpose. Crawford puts forward jazz musicians as embodying an image of full human freedom: with the aim of producing beautiful music, each musician molds their action in response to the constraints of their instrument and the sound of the other instruments; yet this responsiveness to constraints enables the group to achieve a greater level of beauty and creativity than would be possible if each musician banged away with unconstrained autonomy (p. 129).

Rosewood is an environment rife with constraint, yet, as in the case of an orchestra, constraints appear as opening an avenue for each practitioner's creativity and freedom. Every

task at Rosewood takes direction from the overarching aim of the kitchen: to serve real people in real time. Furthermore, this service does not concern physiological nourishment alone; the practitioners at Rosewood intentionally strive to extend their service beyond the horizon of exchange and into the realm of gift. An integral aspect of Rosewood's pedagogy is teaching apprentices to see and act in the orbit of gift, understanding their work not as merely a series of technical tasks, but as a way of giving the people they serve the experience of being seen and responded to gratuitously, as persons. Learning to work within the horizon of givenness (cf. Marion, 2002) seems to be what Renee means when she describes Rosewood's pedagogical aim of teaching apprentices to "see the whole." No manual can teach this kind of responsiveness, for it is characterized by singularity. As Lidia discovers, the choice of how to position the teacups is up to her. When she decides to place the handles at 4 o'clock because of the inviting impact she reasons that position will have on the residents, she extends to the diners a gift: her way of seeing. This gift is personal both by virtue of manifesting a response to the diners as persons and because, by expressing her way of seeing, it proceeds from Lidia's singular person; it is a gift of self. I will consider the dimension of self-giving proper to personal gifts more fully in Chapter 5.

The apprentice at Rosewood gradually learns to assume agency in her role by learning to think from the perspective of others, by learning to "see the whole." The shared goal of the community of practice is to serve meals to residents, and all action is directed toward that end. However, there is no one road that leads to that common destination. In the narrative cited above, Lidia realizes that placing the handle of the teacups at 3 o'clock and placing them at 4 o'clock can both be the "right" way to do it, since there are valid reasons for both options. One master prefers to set the handles at 4 o'clock to facilitate guests' comfort as they reach for their drink; another prefers 3 o'clock because, as Lidia relates, "it's easier to put it exactly halfway." Placing

each handle at an exact right angle facilitates precision and uniformity throughout the dining room, which lends the room as a whole a sense of symmetry that guests perceive upon entering. Thus, while 3 o'clock might be the "right" angle to facilitate the comfort of the seated guest, 4 o'clock can be the "right" angle when considering the overall aesthetic appeal of the room. The apprentice sees that both perspectives are valuable and valid to take when making a professional decision about how to set the table. She is thus empowered to choose the angle she prefers, opting in this case to see from the perspective of the seated guest. Lidia puts herself in the diner's place, and decides that she prefers the ease of the 4 o'clock handle to the 3 o'clock aesthetic. She might even have elected to set her teacups at a different angle altogether, provided her reason for acting originated in considering the perspective of the people she serves.

Learning to appreciate perspective and skillfully respond makes Lidia aware of her agency and the full scope and meaning of her work. This grasp of meaning engenders in her a love for her work that cannot be reduced to the pleasure found in exhibiting technical expertise.

> Making everything nice for the people who live here is so important, and I really like that. I want to make each thing as nice as possible, because I know it would be so nice for me to walk into this dining room and see the beautiful centerpiece and everything in order…
>
> …I love setting the table. It's so much fun…I've gotten really good at working here and doing the same things almost every week. I set the table, I make it orderly, and I know that I'm bringing joy to other people even if they don't realize it. They might take it for granted, but if the dining room wasn't like this, it wouldn't feel as peaceful.

As an apprentice at Rosewood, Lidia performs the same tasks repeatedly, often many times a day. However, in her comments, there is no sense of routine or boredom. Her work bears nothing in common with the repetitive action of a machine, but rather, she understands herself to be offering a creative response to the needs of real persons. As Lave and Wenger (1991) put it, the apprentice, through "both absorbing and being absorbed in" the culture of the kitchen, makes

the culture of the practice her own (p. 95). As Lidia learns to see the whole by being given the perspectives of different masters, she is enabled to expand her own vision and inhabit her agency. This gift of freedom—of learning to see and creatively respond to the needs of others—is given through Rosewood's pedagogy, but seems to extend beyond the confines of the kitchen. When she decides to set the teacup handles at 4 o'clock, Lidia makes a choice that expresses her understanding of herself as a *person* whose actions are motivated, not by what she "should" do as an employee, but by what she wants to communicate to the residents who will enter the dining room.

4.6 The Gifts of Responsibility and Humility

Along with the gift of freedom offered apprentices through learning to see from other perspectives appears the gift of responsibility: of seeing oneself as a valuable member of a larger whole. Like this gift of freedom, this new way of seeing oneself is given through work in the kitchen, but appears as touching the core of the apprentice's person and thus extending in impact beyond the kitchen. Interestingly, hand-in-hand with responsibility appears the gift of humility: of understanding one's own limitations and interdependence on others. Kiera, an adolescent apprentice, relates a striking instance of this multi-pronged personal learning in an interview:

> One time, I was in the kitchen working with Annie[9], and she asked me to make a cake. I was pretty stressed, not sure why she was putting this responsibility on me, but Annie told me I'd be fine. She gave me a little introduction about how cakes work and what parts are more important and less important, and then sent me off to bake. I did my *mise*

[9] Interestingly, the full-time staff at Rosewood recall that Kiera was working with Lin, not Annie, on the day that these events occurred. Since both Lin and Annie confidently affirm that Kiera was working with Lin, I trust their recollection to be factually accurate. However, I have related this narrative as I recorded Kiera recalling it. In my view, this factual inaccuracy takes away nothing from the truthfulness of Kiera's witness of the personal gifts she received on that day (See Felman and Laub [1992] for a compelling example of how recollections that are factually inaccurate can, nevertheless, express fidelity to lived truth). Furthermore, Kiera's misremembering of which master chef she was working with exemplifies how, in the most gratuitous form of gift-giving, the giver recedes from view (cf. Marion, 2002).

en place,[10] and then Annie came over and asked if I had turned on the oven. I hadn't and I was super embarrassed to have forgotten. So I turned on the oven and went back to my *mise en place*, but then Annie came over to me AGAIN and told me that whenever I turn on the oven, I also have to turn on the fan. I was mad at myself for having forgotten another thing. I turned on the fan and got back to my ingredients. Then, I realized that I hadn't measured the butter and I'd put in too much! I told Annie and she said we had a choice: we could either ditch this recipe or double the ingredients and make two cakes. I was embarrassed, but I started doing ANOTHER *mise en place*. I put all the ingredients together and made sure I had the right measurements this time, and we put the cakes in the oven. It was time for lunch, so I turned on the timer and went outside. Then I realized that I'd left the timer in the kitchen, but I wasn't worried because it takes pretty much an hour to bake and we have an hour for lunch. When we headed inside after lunch, though, the timer was going off like crazy! I panicked. Annie and I hurried to take out the cakes, and I was relieved to see that they were fine.

But a couple hours later, when I'd moved on to doing other things, we received a call from a resident who was wondering about a beeping noise he'd heard coming from the kitchen all during lunch.

I was mortified. That day will forever be imprinted on my memory. I realized that I was human. By that time, I'd been working as an apprentice for nine months and was kind of strutting around: I knew how to set the table, I knew how to fold towels, I knew how to chop tomatoes; I thought I was pretty much sailing through life. And then, having that incident of so many little mistakes and especially having the resident ask about the noise, I realized how much I still have to learn. I realized that the masters who work here know more than I will know for probably twenty years. I felt so grateful to have mentors with such knowledge and experience so close to me. You know how people have idols that they look up to—maybe a basketball player if you play basketball or a singer if you sing? But here, having people with such knowledge and experience so close to me that they are actually working with me and teaching me, people I can watch and copy myself after, it's a really humbling thing. When I'm in the kitchen, I realize that the person I'm working with has a huge amount of knowledge and I just have a tiny piece of knowledge. Unless I practice and practice and practice and work and work and work for twenty years, trying to improve every day, I will probably never reach their level. And in the situation that I mentioned, it kind of hit me like—whoa—I need to reflect about how I treat these people. Because they are my superiors, both in work and in talent, and pretty much in everything. They are so far advanced, and it made me think: how do I treat them? How do I respect them? It also made me think: How do I treat myself? I had been treating myself like a master chef, but from now on, I need to make sure that I take in every single little piece of knowledge that's offered me, with the attitude: "Yes! This is gold!" Because it IS gold.

[10] "Mise en place" can be translated from French as "everything in place" and is a term that describes the practice of measuring out all ingredients before beginning to combine them. Chefs and bakers engage in this practice to reduce the likelihood of making an irreparable mistake in measurement.

What Kiera recalls learning on this memorable day at Rosewood is inseparable from the work she is carrying out—baking a cake—yet also extends beyond its technical dimension. At the beginning of the narrative, during the actual baking of the cake, Annie interacts with Kiera in a way reminiscent of how Lin interacted with Cat in the omelet-making narrative related earlier in the chapter. Annie guides Kiera's actions, but does not hover over her. She leaves her responsible and expresses confidence in her ability to prepare the cake batter. Annie's confidence in Kiera did not mirror the apprentice's own level of confidence, but rather gave her a new way of looking at herself and her ability: "I was pretty stressed, not sure why she was putting this responsibility on me, but Annie told me I'd be fine." Kiera makes many mistakes, and although she recalls being flustered, embarrassed, and angry with herself, Annie's demeanor remains calm and her confidence unflagging. In the face of every mishap—forgetting to turn on the oven, neglecting to turn on the fan, adding too much butter—Annie points to a remedy. She does not take the task of cake-baking away from Kiera nor express frustration at the apprentice's mistakes; rather, she redirects Kiera's course and points her ahead. The goal once again, it seems, is not reducible to technical perfection. Kiera's value, Annie's actions seem to say, extends beyond her ability to avoid mistakes.

Kiera, despite her embarrassment, seems to feel the power of this lesson. She continues baking and, even after the timer mishap, seems relatively unperturbed. Kiera is "relieved to see that (the cakes) were fine" in spite of her errors and moves on to engage in other tasks entrusted to her in the kitchen. Embarrassment about baking foibles is not, it seems, the reason that she recalls this day in the kitchen so vividly. Rather, it is the inquiry from the resident, who heard the beeping timer, that spurs what Kiera relates as a striking moment of new vision in which she comes to see herself and the masters she works with in a new light.

What is the content of the new vision Kiera gains? First, she relates receiving the gift of humility, of seeing her own limitations clearly: "I realized that I was human." After working as an apprentice for nine months, Kiera had started "strutting around." She felt like an expert, immune to mistakes: "I knew how to set the table, I knew how to fold towels, I knew how to chop tomatoes; I thought I was pretty much sailing through life." Even her baking mishaps of that morning ended in relief because they all had found a remedy; the cakes, from a technical perspective, turned out fine. However, when the resident inquires about the noise, Kiera is faced with a mistake that cannot be fixed. She turns toward herself and sees herself in a new light: not as the technical expert she had imagined herself to be, but as a human being who makes mistakes, some of which are not or cannot be remedied. Furthermore, Kiera comes to understand that her mistakes are not private; they impact others, in particular, the people whom she serves through her work. The resident's inquiry offers Kiera a new perspective through which to view her professional identity: she is invited to see that her responsibility to bake cakes springs from her responsibility to serve the people in the dining room. She had known all along that the cakes would be eaten by residents, but in this moment she seems to see in a new way the connection between her actions and the people she serves.

In this moment of new vision, Kiera also gains fresh insight into her relationship with the master chefs in the kitchen. Work that had previously seemed to her to consist in mastering relatively simple tasks—setting tables, folding towels, chopping tomatoes—now takes on deeper meaning. The "huge amount of knowledge" that the apprentice realizes her master possesses seems to be much more than technical mastery. To be a master, she seems to now intuit, is not simply about technical expertise or perfect production, but has to do with seeing the whole: appreciating one's place in an interconnected web of relationships and noticing and responding

to the needs of others. These skills cannot, Kiera seems to see, be developed overnight, or even in a few years: "Unless I practice and practice and practice and work and work and work for twenty years, trying to improve every day, I will probably never reach their level."

Hand-in-hand with a newfound appreciation of her limitations, Kiera expresses a sense of responsibility that seems born of the experience of being seen as a representative of her community of practice, responsible to and for the whole. The inquiry from the resident about the beeping expresses only a slight complaint, yet it impacts Kiera immensely. She seems to blush not only with embarrassment about an error she has made, but with the realization that, through her work, she represents the entire kitchen. From the resident's point of view, there is no individual to blame; the kitchen as a whole bears the burden of what the apprentice knows to be her personal mistake. However, this embarrassment does not alienate the apprentice from her community of practice, but, in fact, increases her appreciation of her coworkers and deepens her understanding of her place within the whole. She seems to realize that she is not an isolated verse; her single note contributes to either the harmony or the dissonance of the entire piece. Kiera sees, in her words, "how much I still had to learn." She is not, as she had previously supposed, a master chef. At the same time, she is reinvigorated in her desire to improve, to "take in every single little piece of knowledge that's offered me, with the attitude: 'Yes! This is gold!'" Kiera seems to have glimpsed that her contribution to the work of the kitchen is not ancillary, but essential to the work of the whole: what she does or does not do, makes a real difference. And although this realization arrives on the crest of a mistake, her newfound sense of responsibility spurs her continued desire to learn.

There is no evidence in this narrative suggesting that Kiera's technical skills as a baker improved based on this experience. Nevertheless, she gained insights into the meaning of her

work, the people she works with, and herself as a person. This increased knowledge does not appear as a straightforward result of a particular interaction, but rather, comes from the interrelated gaining of new perspectives: most prominently, the perspective of Annie and of the resident who inquired about the noise. Through these perspectives, given in the context of making and serving dessert, Kiera received more: she received personal gifts and came, it seems, to grow in her ability to "see the whole."

4.7 Conclusion

On the surface, Rosewood aims to teach apprentices how to cook. However, beneath this layer of exchange lies a personal core. Rosewood's pedagogy involves not only the passing on of skills, but the giving of personal gifts: the gift of understanding one's value as extending beyond performance, the gift of learning to see and respond to other perspectives, the gift of freedom, the gift of humility, the gift of responsibility. This personal work is ongoing and endows the practice of teaching—both at Rosewood and in other pedagogical spaces—with unassailable dignity. In Renee's words, "To take on an apprentice is to take on a person." Conversely, becoming an apprentice is an invitation to become oneself as a person. As Annie recalled one apprentice saying in an interview: "My older sister worked here for four years in high school and I saw her really grow as a person. I want that too."

Chapter 5: The Personal Gift of Teaching

5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I sought to illuminate the personal gifts I saw offered at Rosewood, by which apprentices not only acquired a technical skill, but were given to themselves: were invited to take on new, personal ways of seeing, being, and understanding themselves and their relationship with others and the world around them. The time I spent at Rosewood also brought to light a dimension of gift-giving integral to the work of the kitchen itself. Through small gestures of care and attention to detail, master chefs like Mirella, Lin, and Annie strive to offer the people they serve more than physical nourishment; through their material work, they offer gifts that invite the residents to recognize themselves more fully and clearly as persons: with inherent dignity that situates them outside the economy of exchange (cf. Marion, 2002). Thus, Rosewood's pedagogy not only offers personal gifts to apprentices, but also aims to aid them in becoming gift-givers: fully-fledged professionals who understand their work as possessing a personal core, and who strive to respond to the people they serve as persons.

What I witnessed at Rosewood illuminates two inseparably related dimensions of teaching's personal core: receiving personal gifts and gift-giving. In this chapter, I will turn my focus to the latter dimension of teaching, considering how the act of gift-giving by which students are given to themselves appears, on the part of the teacher, as a gift of self. I will do this by sharing what I have seen through prolonged and deep acquaintance with one teacher and her work. My aim in what follows is to invite you, reader, to get to know Kelsey in the same way that I have, through contemplating her teaching. In doing so, I invite you to see along with me how, in offering personal gifts, she gives the gift of herself.

5.2 Meeting Kelsey

Kelsey is Director and Head Coach of a Division I NCAA collegiate Cross Country and Track and Field program, and serves as the primary coach for the team's long-distance and middle-distance runners, a group of about twenty male and female athletes. Kelsey has been coaching for eleven years and has also completed an impressive collegiate and professional career as a middle-distance runner. She holds multiple nationwide records and has competed in the quarter-final round of the Track and Field World Championship.

I had the privilege of spending an entire academic year immersed in the day-to-day happenings of Kelsey's coaching. I joined the team for practice an average of three afternoons a week and attended one cross country and one track and field meet.[11] For the duration of the academic year, I was in nearly daily contact with Kelsey, who would relate to me what had happened at practices and meets that I was not able to attend.

Like at Rosewood, I approached Kelsey's practice with the intentional desire to see and bear witness to the personal core of teaching. Since completing my time in Gene's classroom, I had been seeking to observe teaching in environments that feature side-by-side teaching as a prominent pedagogical posture. I sought to better understand moments like the one I had witnessed between Gene and Xavier, described in Chapter 3, in which I saw the personal core of teaching appear in and through an act of interpersonal encounter. Furthermore, my experience in Gene's classroom had opened my eyes to the communicative power of gesture. I had seen how Gene's habitual way of handing back student papers spoke volumes, how it communicated an ethos of respect and an invitation to contribute to the classroom community. For these reasons, I sought to spend time in pedagogical spaces in which one-on-one encounters and embodied

[11] I spent approximately 200 total hours observing Kelsey's practice, as recorded in Appendix A.

gestures have a prominent place. Coaching struck me as a pedagogical posture that integrally involves both these features and, therefore, observing the work of a coach could be a way through which I might come to see the personal core of teaching more clearly.

I was acquainted with Kelsey before I began observing her at work. For about a year, we had been neighbors and had spent a few mornings a week running together. On those runs, Kelsey would occasionally tell me stories about her athletes and coaching. I could tell, from these conversations, that Kelsey saw her athletes as persons, that she took the personal core of teaching seriously. She expressed concern that collegiate sports often prioritize performance to the detriment of the person. During that time, concerns about mental health among athletes had risen to new heights of general public consciousness thanks to the actions of gymnast Simone Biles and tennis star Naomi Osaka (Rosenberg, 2021), and in the coming months, that concern would focus particularly on American collegiate athletes, after five NCAA student athletes committed suicide during the Spring 2022 semester (Hensley-Clancy, 2022). I saw Kelsey's concern about her athletes as persons as we discussed these current events. I also glimpsed Kelsey's attentiveness to her athletes as persons through the stories she told about her team; it was clear to me that she knew and, it seemed, took delight in each of her athletes. I also saw, through her ongoing considerations and thoughtful comments, that, for Kelsey, coaching is not only her profession; it forms an integral part of her person. These initial intimations of the personal dimension present in Kelsey's teaching inspired me to tell her about my efforts to see and understand the personal core of teaching and to ask if she would be willing to participate in my project.

5.3 My Posture at Kelsey's Practice

I was committed to maintaining the simultaneous proximity and distance I describe in Chapter 2 as proper to bearing witness during the time I spent with Kelsey and her athletes. Like at Rosewood, what that proximity and distance looked like was directed by the particularities of the pedagogical environment. My initial visits to Kelsey's practice helped me navigate my place and posture there.

I took a notebook to my first day at practice, and never brought it with me again. In part, this decision was logistical: practice occurs outdoors and requires frequent movement from place to place. However, the deeper reason for this choice was that I found the notebook distracting: it got in the way of my ability to see, and, in particular, of my ability to feel the energy and ethos of the practice. A palpable intensity pervaded the atmosphere and engaged all of my senses: the rhythmic sound of feet pounding the ground and the beeping of Kelsey's stopwatch, pierced by groans, sighs, and cries of frustration or triumph; the feel of the wind broken by waves of heat rising like dew off the runners as they pass; the smell of sweat, of forest, of sneakers; the sight of bulging muscles, of strained faces and wild eyes; the taste of air: refreshing or bitter or damp with falling rain. And the sight and sound and feel of Kelsey watching it all with concentration, with intensity, with care; shouting times and encouragement and correction; speaking softly to one athlete apart, and then to another; touching a shoulder, shaking a hand, looking at her assistant coach Herb or at me with a face that said wordlessly but plainly, whether out of bemusement, irritation, or pride: "Look at them! Look at them!"

I did look at them—and at Kelsey looking at them—with all my senses, all my concentration. Seeing Kelsey coach, I was reminded of words Toni Morrison (1987) wrote in a *New York Times* obituary for James Baldwin: "Jimmy, there is too much to think about you, and

too much to feel. The difficulty is your life refuses summation—it always did—and invites contemplation instead." At Kelsey's practices, contemplate I did, with total enthrallment and unebbing wonder. And after practice, recalling the sensory details as fully as I could, I wrote down what I had seen.

Maintaining distance from the action of teaching was, in some ways, easier for me to do at Kelsey's practice than it had been in Gene's classroom or at Rosewood. While I have experience classroom teaching and working in kitchens like Rosewood's, I have never participated in formal competitive running. The environment was, in this sense, new to me. Given my lack of experience and expertise, I was never invited to lead practice the way Gene invited me to teach his class. It was clear from the beginning to me, to Kelsey, and to her athletes, that I was there to observe. Furthermore, my posture as observer seemed natural in the environment of collegiate sports. Unlike at Rosewood, where it was typical for every person present in the kitchen to contribute to the common project, Kelsey and her athletes were accustomed to being watched. Spectators attend their meets and it was not unusual for a high school recruit or another coach to observe practice.

Gaining closeness to Kelsey's coaching took more of an effort than maintaining distance. As indicated in Chapter 2, the witness is not a spectator, but a contemplative (Hansen, 2021, p. 71), and, as such, participates in the action that unfolds in a genuine way. Unlike a spectator who sits apart from the action, watching, the witness is "caught up" in what they see (Marcel, 1950, p. 121); it makes a claim on them and calls for their response. I soon discovered that, in order to contemplate Kelsey's practice, I needed to gain a feel for the action unfolding before me. I desired to gain a felt sense of what it was like to run competitively, and also of the kind of workouts Kelsey's athletes were completing, so that I could experience for myself a bit of the

feeling I could see in their faces as they ran. Kelsey showed unstinting generosity and enthusiasm in supporting my efforts. During the time in which I observed Kelsey's team, she helped me train for two races: a half-marathon and a marathon. Periodically, after observing Kelsey's practice, I would run the same route that her athletes had followed or engage in a much slower but similar track workout as they had completed. Sometimes, Kelsey and I would run together, and we would chat about practice, or she would tell me stories about her coaching experience. Running with Kelsey led me to appreciate and marvel that she is all of a piece: she coached me with the same seriousness and enthusiasm with which I saw her coach her athletes, never making comparisons or indicating that my pace was, comparatively, painfully slow. She pushed me when my dedication faltered and encouraged me when I faced disappointment. It was a gift to get a feeling, not only for running, but for what it was like to have Kelsey as a coach. It helped me see.

While I sat apart in Gene's classroom, at Kelsey's practice, I stood right by her side. This decision was partially pragmatic: it was only from this position that I could hear her instructions and comments to athletes above the sounds of wind and the bustle of activity taking place on the track, in the gym, or in the field. At first, I thought this position might be too close: that it would seem like I was embodying the posture of a coach and that might make Kelsey or her athletes uncomfortable, or, alternatively, it might encourage Kelsey's athletes to put on an affected performativity while I was present, watching. However, neither of these worries came to pass. Kelsey's athletes paid me almost no heed. Kelsey told me on my first day at practice, while her athletes were running an infamously difficult route called the Back Hills: "When they're doing a workout like this, they have way too much going on in their minds and bodies to be thinking about someone watching them." When I tried doing a workout in the Back Hills myself, I felt the

truth of this statement. Throughout the months I spent with Kelsey's team, her stumbling, recovering athletes would pass so close to me that I sometimes wondered if they could see me, or if their vision was clouded by sweat and effort. I often had to take a quick step back to avoid a collision.

Kelsey would frequently make comments to me during practice. Often, we stood alone, with the athletes on the far side of the track or field. Kelsey never asked me for advice, but she did talk to me as if I were versed in the running world: "Sarai is looking really good these days. Check out her calves!" "I should have pulled Jordan before this rep; he's falling off. I wanted to push him, but not break his confidence. This is one too many for him right now." "What's with Finnley's arms? We'll have to start working on form." Like the comments Gene made to me in his classroom, it was clear that these statements required no response from me. But I listened and looked with Kelsey, offering the silent affirmation: "Yes, I see that, too. I see you seeing them."

5.4 Seeing a Gift of Self

Kelsey coaches as herself, and through seeing her coach, I came to see her and to know her, with the deep knowledge that can only be gained with time and attention (cf. Jackson, 1992). In what follows, I will reflectively consider aspects of Kelsey's way of being as they appear in her coaching, attending to how, through her words and actions, she offers her athletes not just skills or techniques, but gifts that proceed from her very self, from her person. Specifically, I will focus on gestures that, over time, I recognized as singular and characteristic: her habit of shaking athletes' hands; her posture of standing next to athletes, looking sidelong into their faces; her manner of looking into the distance with her hands behind her back, waiting for her runners to appear; the way she bends at the waist when screaming with enthusiasm or folded up in laughter. I will consider what gifts are offered through these gestures, and how they appear as gifts of self.

“This One’s Your Pose”

> It’s the week leading up to the conference championship, and Kelsey’s team is celebrating spirit week. The athletes choose a theme for each day, and the entire team dresses according to that theme. Today is “twin day.” Most athletes pair up with a teammate and wear matching outfits. Angela, however, arrives at practice wearing black jeans, a hooded sweatshirt, and a baseball cap with the school logo. Her hair is pulled back in a low ponytail.
>
> Kelsey sees Angela approaching and bursts out laughing. She looks down and gestures toward her own outfit; the two are almost identical. “Looking good, Angela!” Kelsey shouts across the gym. Angela smiles broadly. Kelsey gestures for her to come over. “Come on, we need to take a picture.” The other women on the team gather around them, joking and laughing. “What pose should we do?” Kelsey asks, teasingly. “This one?” She crosses her arms, her brow furrowed. “Or this one?” She bends her knees and points ahead, opening her mouth as if shouting. Maeve, a Senior, chimes in, with a knowing voice and a slight, wry smile: “No, Coach. This one’s your pose.” Maeve spreads her feet shoulder-width apart and looks ahead intently, her face serious, her eyes focused. She clasps her hands together behind her back and sways slightly from heel to toe as she looks determinedly into the distance. The other women on the team laugh, and Kelsey joins in. “That’s it!” Kelsey’s athletes exclaim amid giggles. “That’s you!” Kelsey and Angela stand side-by-side for the picture, taking up the pose.

I agree wholeheartedly with Maeve. If there is one posture that characterizes Kelsey, it is her way of looking, of seeing her athletes. Her serious expression, the intensity of her focus, the attentive look in her eyes. In a word, her presence. From my perspective, a particularly striking aspect of this posture of total attentiveness is how I saw it activated by the athletes, “switched on” so to speak, when they appear on the track, ready to begin a workout. Often, when I arrived fifteen minutes before practice began, I would find Kelsey distracted, tired, pulled in many directions by the demands of her position. “I almost didn’t come into work today...” “Today feels like a Monday…” “I’ve almost reached a breaking point…” As soon as her team gathered, her focus and tone would shift. She would become completely, radically, attentive to them. There were some days at practice, naturally, when I saw Kelsey distracted: fielding urgent phone calls from colleagues or seeming to think about other things while her athletes were running.

However, these days were exceptions. Usually, Kelsey embodied her “pose” of showing full, undivided, intense attention for as long as her athletes were present.

In one-on-one conversations, I saw this attentiveness expressed through Kelsey’s steady gaze, her measured tone of voice, the unflustered eye contact she invites with each athlete, even if their focus shifts or they look away: over her shoulder, at the ground:

> Practice is over and Kelsey has dismissed her team. Angela looks like she is going to run off, but when she sees that Kelsey is alone, she turns back. “Coach?” Kelsey turns to face her. Angela’s eyes shift, scanning the field and flitting briefly back to Kelsey’s face as she speaks. “Will you be in your office today or tomorrow?” Kelsey’s gaze stays steady. “You want to find a time to talk?” Kelsey asks calmly. “Yeah.” There’s a high pitched-note in Angela’s voice, like nervous laughter. “About the race last week.” Kelsey responds in an even tone, still looking straight at Angela: “To debrief? Sure. How about you get to practice 15 minutes early tomorrow and we’ll talk then.” Angela makes fleeting eye contact with Kelsey, nods in agreement, and then turns to run toward campus.

When her athletes run, Kelsey directs this focused attention at them as they circle the track, or the training field called the Flat Loop, or the trail that makes up the wooded course the team refers to as the Back Hills. She turns her whole body to follow them, spinning around on the track, squinting to see them as they circle the Flat Loop, craning her neck to follow their path up the winding slope of the Back Hills. Her face in these moments is serious and intense, marked with the effort of looking, of “keeping eyes on them,” as she calls it.

In addressing the team as a whole, especially after workouts, I saw Kelsey’s focused attention mirrored on her athletes’ faces. They returned her expression, with looks so intent that I describe them in my notes as “listening eyes.”

Kelsey’s way of looking manifests that she takes her athletes seriously. She embodies Carol Rodgers and Miriam Raider-Ruth's (2016) definition of presence: “a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional, and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments, and the ability to

respond with a considered and compassionate best next step" (p. 266). Kelsey's response to her athletes' comments and concerns varies. Sometimes she speaks quickly and firmly. Other times, she responds slowly and softly, pausing before speaking. Often, she encourages. I am not sure that Kelsey would say that she always responds with the "best next step," but her responses strike me as habitually deliberate, thoughtful—never rote or mechanistic—even if she is answering an athlete quickly or shouting a response in the middle of a workout. Kelsey's responses seem to flow directly from her seeing, her attending to athletes, her being fully present. Kelsey's way of engaging with athletes manifests, in a striking way, that teaching is, at its core, being-with (Hansen, 2021, p. 33-40).

Waiting as a Kind of Seeing

> The runners have just disappeared up a wooded path called the Back Hills. The loop is approximately 1.5 miles long. Herb, Kelsey's assistant coach, stands silently by the finish line with a stopwatch, looking up the path toward the point where the runners will eventually emerge. Kelsey stands farther down the trail, looking up into the woods as well. There is patient expectation in their postures. Kelsey's hands are folded behind her back. Her head is tilted upward, as if she's craning her neck to see up the hill. There are at least five minutes before the runners will come into view. But it's as if Kelsey and Herb are seeing them now, even though they are far up the path and out of sight. It's as if they are watching them even there, with calm, firm, encouraging, challenging, appreciative expectation.

Kelsey's way of seeing her athletes is more than literal. Even when it's physically impossible for her to "keep eyes on them," she attends to them in a very real way. The hallmark of this gesture is Kelsey's availability. She communicates to her athletes through her presence before and after practice, her frequent check-ins, her attentive waiting for them to finish workouts, that she is there for them; she is there to see them. If I had the ability, I would have painted the moment described above. It was an autumn day. The forest was quiet. The almost setting sun shone through the red and orange trees. The air was crisp; breathing felt like sipping a glass of cold water. The clearing smelled of decomposing leaves. And in that cool, golden,

sweet-smelling silence, Kelsey and Herb stood apart, each looking fixedly up the path, into the woods, where somewhere, still a mile away, their athletes ran. And, it seemed to me, without seeing, Kelsey and Herb saw them. It was hard to capture the ethos of that moment in my notes. I resorted to poetry:

> You stand straight
> Hands behind your back
> Like a soldier at ease
> But attentive
> Looking fixedly
> Silently
> Up the trail
> Into the woods.
>
> Nothing happens
> Or will happen soon.
> It takes time to run the course
> There is nothing now to see.
> Still
> You watch
> Without distraction
> Without looking away
> Even for a moment
> As if
> In some way
> You see them
> Now.
> As if
> Waiting were a kind of seeing.
> Seeing you,
> I think it is.
>
> What are you saying with that look?
> I am here to see you.
>
> You know
> And they know
> And I know
> That when they do come
> Running
> They will see you there
> Looking up
> Seeing them.

In my view, Kelsey's posture in the Back Hills, waiting for her runners to appear, is an enactment of her disposition of availability. I saw Kelsey communicate her availability for athletes in numerous unspoken yet strikingly intentional ways:

> "I've seen my team seven days a week for the past three weeks. That has to change. But I need to be there for them at the beginning of the semester. They have to know that I'm there for them."
>
> ***
>
> "There really is no need for me to be here today, but I like to be present while they're warming up in case anyone wants to talk."
>
> ***
>
> "I don't have access to my office right now," Kelsey tells me, "and I'm tempted to go home." Laughing a little, she adds: "Maybe that way I'd actually get some work done!" Her voice quickly shifts to a more serious tone. "I want to be around when my runners come back, though." She sits down on a bench and opens her laptop, squinting to see the screen in the sunlight. She sighs and smiles slightly, shrugging her shoulders. "Depending on which route they take, I might not even see them come back, but I want to be here in case someone wants to talk. I want them to be able to find me if they are looking for me."

Kelsey's posture of waiting resembles the disposition of a father in a study that examined how families use and relate to different spaces in their homes. The father of a teenager spent almost every Saturday evening in the living room, while his son stayed upstairs in his bedroom. The father told the interviewer that his friends sometimes invite him to go out on Saturdays, but he usually turns them down, saying:

> "I don't think it's pleasant to go out on Saturday night…That is the idea, Saturday night we should be home all of us…That does not mean, that they, especially our oldest son, should be downstairs here…I don't think it's nice, when he comes down and we are not there…the idea is we ought to be together" (Pennartz, 1999, p. 99).

For this father, the living room is a place of family encounter, and his presence there communicated his availability for such encounter, even if it was not realized. His presence in the

living room did not force an encounter, nor did it seem to pressure his son to leave his room; however, the father would be there if his son decided to come downstairs. Kelsey, likewise, communicates availability for encounter with her athletes, but not in a forceful way. She simply waits, just in case someone wants to talk, in a place where, if an athlete were to look for her, she would easily be found. And this availability speaks. Kelsey's waiting is a kind of seeing.

Face-on and Side-by-Side

> "You know, Coach, I've come to realize that you say a lot through your posture. That when you're next to me, like, side-by-side, we're cool. But when you get square with me, face-on, that's when things are really serious." –Evan

Evan's insight is apt, and it's something I noticed as well. Kelsey does say a lot through her posture, through how she positions herself in relation to her athletes. Often, I saw Kelsey face her athletes head-on, looking them steady and seriously in the eyes, seeing them squarely. Other times, especially in the middle of practice, I saw Kelsey pull an athlete aside, away from the group, and position herself by their side.

Phenomenologically, these two postures speak. Both invite what Marcel (1950) calls an encounter, which occurs when two people genuinely meet in-person and as-persons. Marcel notes that such experiences are characterized by a sharing of inwardness, which makes it difficult to describe or capture in visual terms. An encounter, he writes, can only happen "between beings endowed with a certain inwardness: and the encounter between such beings resists, of its very nature, the attempt to express it in merely visual terms, where the collision of billiard or croquet balls, for instance, obviously does not" (p. 137). To return to the language of Marion (2002), encounters are saturated phenomena: they give more than can be captured by the words that are exchanged. In both Kelsey's "face-on" and "side-by-side" encounters with athletes, I saw the personal core of teaching appear. The personal nature of these interactions between Kelsey and

her athletes reminded me of moments in Gene's classroom, such as his way of handing back student papers, and of encounters I witnessed between masters and apprentices at Rosewood. At the same time, Kelsey's interactions with athletes struck me as markedly singular. As Evan's comment suggests, Kelsey's different postures say different things, and the meaning of these messages crystalizes as a person comes to know Kelsey better, more deeply.

> Shortly after we walk into the gym, one of Kelsey's athletes approaches her. "Coach?" Kelsey looks him full in the face as he stumbles through a short, jerky speech: "I just want to let you know that my Achilles has been bothering me. I wanted to tell you now, so that if I drop out of the workout, you know that's why and that I'm not making it up." Kelsey touches the athlete's arm and moves a step backward with him, maybe to get more privacy or to hear him more clearly. She pauses a second as she looks intently up at his face, her brow slightly furrowed, before responding with seriousness: "Omar, if you told me your Achilles was acting up during the workout, I wouldn't think you were making it up." Omar gives a jerky kind of nod. Kelsey keeps her gaze on him without changing her expression. "OK, why don't you warm up with the team and we'll see how it goes. Let me know if it starts bothering you." Omar nods his agreement and, with a hasty mutter of "Thanks, Coach," bounces back to the spot on the ground where he had been stretching.
>
> ***
>
> After practice, Maeve asks Kelsey if she has a minute to talk. Kelsey motions for her to step to the side. Kelsey looks at her expectantly. Maeve's eyes shift a little and her words come out in a choppy, almost hesitant way. "Coach, do you think...would it be ok...could I run at home this weekend? I didn't think we would have practice because of the long weekend so I planned to visit my family…I know everyone probably wants to see their family…" Kelsey's voice, calm and decisive, cuts across Maeve's wavering silence. "But this is different." Kelsey nods and looks intently at Maeve. "Of course you can go home this weekend." Maeve exhales heavily as she says "Thanks, Coach" and quickly turns to walk away. Kelsey follows her and gently touches her arm from behind. Maeve stops. Kelsey walks with her for a few steps: "Maeve," she says softly, "how is your family?"

When Kelsey speaks to an athlete "face-on," as in the moments related above, she sees them with exclusive focus. Often, in these exchanges, Kelsey's athletes' eyes would shift, looking over her shoulder or scanning the ground, as if the intensity of Kelsey's look were hard to bear. Kelsey's gaze would stay steady and strong, despite these vacillations. There is, as Evan points out, a seriousness to these "face-on" encounters. Kelsey's look is both inviting and

demanding. There is strength to it. The look asks for a response on the part of her athlete. It summons the individual athlete out of anonymity into a personal encounter. I saw this summons appear in a striking way during interactions between Kelsey and Manni:

> As I walk up to the meeting point for practice, Kelsey is talking with Manni. She stands with her arms folded, looking squarely up at him. He stands leaning sideways away from her, his body making a diagonal, his eyes resting on the ground by Kelsey's feet.
> "I'm in a bad place, Coach, I just need to be honest."
>
> Kelsey's tone is calm. "Look, Manni, your feedback from the race last Saturday was good; it's just better to talk one-on-one than to go back and forth in front of the whole group."
>
> Manni speaks quickly, notes of nervousness in his voice. "I just…my goal now is to make sure I taper well to run at the championship. I've put in the work—this summer, this year—but I've never done anything like this before. I've never tapered from this volume." His arms flap with emphasis as he talks and his eyes dart across the ground.
>
> "Right," Kelsey says with firmness, her eyes fixed where his would be, if they weren't pointed toward the ground. "We're going to start to taper down next week to get you ready. And I appreciate your feedback. But I need to know that you'll follow the training I give you. You've been doing your own thing: running 14 miles on Friday morning, before the race, was one example, but there have been other times." Manni shrinks farther away from her as she speaks. Kelsey continues to look at him steadily. "It's not horrible, but I need to know that you're on board with me being the coach and you being the athlete. I don't always get that from you. You sometimes give the impression that you have the last call on your workouts."
>
> Manni continues to look down and lean back, as if recoiling. But he answers right away. "No, I'll let you coach. I'll tell you my ideas and you tell me the plan."
>
> "And what if what I say isn't what you want to do?"
>
> "I'll go with your plan."
>
> "OK. Tell me what you've been running. It's OK that you're running higher volume—basically in the taper we'll keep the same structure but drop down 10-15 miles a week. I'll make sure you're fresh for the championship."
>
> Manni eyes Kelsey sidelong. He speaks quickly, the words rushing out. "OK. But my friends who have graduated already run 100 miles a week before races."

Kelsey nods calmly. “I understand.” There is a pause. Kelsey goes on, looking steadily at Manni, her tone calm, but strong. “What happened on Friday, Manni? I’m not saying your race was ruined by running 14 miles that morning. You might have come in 4th place anyway. But the reality is you weren’t able to push at the end. We need to set you up to be able to race. What do you think happened? Did you try to break away too soon?” Kelsey leans forward as she talks, and Manni, as if cued, leans backwards. His eyes scan the surroundings.

“No, I’m just not quite at that racing level. I know I should be able to win with all the work I’ve put in. But the kid who won is fast. I’m just not quite there.”

“If you were there, would you have broken away at the same spot or waited? Would you have broken away harder?”

“I think I would have done the same thing. I’m just not at the level to be able to sprint.”

“I don’t like that word ‘sprint’ since that’s not what it has to be. It can be gradual. But you do have to make a firm, deliberate decision to break away and stick to it.”

Manni looks down. “I...I just don’t have the experience for it, I guess,” he mumbles. “I’m a novice. You have more experience.”

Kelsey’s voice remains the same: firm, calm, and steady. “I do have more experience. In college, I was doing what you’re doing now, and I had to learn how to race strategically, how to break away. We’ll target that skill in track workouts.”

“OK. OK.” Manni starts backing away toward the gym. His head is tilted downwards, but every few seconds, his eyes dart upward to momentarily meet Kelsey’s intense, steady gaze, which continues uninterrupted until he’s through the gym door and out of sight.

A characteristic feature of these “face-on” encounters is the intensity and steadiness of Kelsey’s look, which often, as in this interaction with Manni, appears in striking contrast with the darting glances of her athletes. There is, as Evan notes, a seriousness to Kelsey’s look that appears to be in part conveyed through its rooted constancy, apparently unflustered by the skittish movement of her interlocutor’s eyes and body. In the encounter described above, Manni’s whole body bends backward and downward under Kelsey’s look, even though she, who

is much shorter than he is, looks up into his face. The rapid darting movements of his eyes appear frantic, especially in contrast with Kelsey's unmoving, almost unblinking, eyes.

It might seem, to a first-time viewer, that Kelsey's face-on posture enacts and perpetuates a hegemonic dynamic of teacher power and control: her intense look and insistent words might seem to coercively encourage Manni to affirm that it is in his best interest to lay his ideas to the side and docilly follow his coach's instruction.[12] However, long acquaintance with Kelsey coupled with careful attention to interactions such as the one between her and Manni described above suggest that power dynamics are not the heart of what is happening here. Rather, this encounter appears, in my viewing, as one of many instances through which I saw Kelsey invite Manni to engage with her in an interpersonal encounter marked by freedom and mutual trust.

I see the narrative above as an appeal Kelsey makes that Manni allow himself to be seen by her, not that he fold under the grip of her control. Kelsey addresses Manni alone, apart from the rest of the team. She does not begin the conversation by chiding him for his recent disregard of her training plan which, it seems, was likely a contributing factor to his disappointing race performance. Rather, she listens to his worries about the recent race and about tapering his running for the championship. Although he looks away from her, Kelsey does not demand that Manni look her in the eyes, nor does anything in her tone of voice indicate frustration, irritation, or surprise in response to his skulking demeanor. Her words focus on running: that is the content of their interaction. However, it is as if her steady eye contact were exerting a force of its own in the conversation: silently inviting Manni to meet her gaze, though without insisting that he do so. Her look is invitational, not demanding.

[12] For an in-depth consideration of hegemony and power dynamics in teaching, see Brookfield (2017).

At the end of the conversation, Manni does, fleetingly, look up from the ground into Kelsey's eyes. And even while he looks at the ground and leans away, his body faces Kelsey as he backs toward the gym, as if he did not want to turn his back on her. When he does meet her gaze, Kelsey's posture and tone remain the same: steady, calm, unruffled. She shows no outward signs of pleasure or triumph at having her invitation answered. She seems to offer her look as a gift that is not contingent upon receiving a response. Whatever Manni does, wherever he looks, whether he sees her looking at him or not, she'll keep her "eyes on him," inviting him to meet her gaze.

What is Kelsey inviting Manni to see when she steadily and intently invites him to look up and make eye contact with her? What would he see were he to return her look? Put in simple phenomenological terms, Manni would see Kelsey seeing him; he would see himself through her eyes. While he skirts her gaze and leans away, Manni is still given Kelsey's perspective about many things through her words and tone of voice: he perceives her calm admonishment and her request that he trust her authority and take direction; he is given Kelsey's take on what happened during his race last week and sees that her understanding of the situation is informed by years of coaching and running experience; he hears in her tone her confidence that she can prepare him for next week's championship and that, regardless of what happened at last Friday's race, she has confidence in him and in his ability to perform at a high level. What more would have been given Manni had he met Kelsey's gaze? That I cannot say because it is not for me to see; it was a look for him only that he did, in fact, meet, if only fleetingly. However, what I could see, from my perspective, is what was communicated by Kelsey's unflappable and unfaltering invitation to make eye contact with Manni. That look, even when unreturned, said: "I want to see you. Not your performance or mistakes, but you. I am here to see you."

Kelsey's steady eye contact shows that she sincerely wants Manni to meet her gaze, to engage in face-to-face, personal encounter. However, her gesture is gratuitous. She offers him the gift of her way of seeing him, a gift that only she can give, that expands beyond the bounds of performance and exchange, and that, therefore, cannot be forced. Like Gene's interaction with Xavier related in Chapter 3, Kelsey does not seek to control Manni's movements, but leaves him free to respond—or not—to her invitation to encounter. I saw this same depth of invited encounter in Gene's classroom, although I learned that this depth takes time to see. Gene's colleagues seem to share the sentiment. Gene told me about a conversation he had with a former colleague in the months following his retirement: "I always thought students behaved in your class out of fear," Gene's junior colleague said, "but now I see that your classroom was a place where the students saw you as present, willing to have difficult conversations, honest, and validating of their concerns." Through getting to know Gene and Kelsey, I saw them both invite students to meet them on a level of shared personhood that goes deeper than power dynamics.

The primary focus of Kelsey's face-on posture is the other person: she looks at them and invites them to see themselves as she sees them. When standing side-by-side with athletes, the emphasis of the encounter differs slightly. In this posture, it is as if Kelsey invites her interlocutor to look together with her at something seen in the distance. She still sees them, but the intensity of focus is distinct, and this is why, perhaps, this stance struck Evan as more relaxed: "when you're next to me, like, side-by-side, we're cool." Kelsey told me once that her own coach, when she ran professionally, would occasionally, at particularly poignant moments, stand by her side, with his hand on her shoulder, and that she found that gesture hugely encouraging. When I saw Kelsey take up this stance with athletes, it seemed to speak words such as: "Keep going." "I am with you in this." This posture struck me as a kind of seeing, but with its

own distinctive tone: one of accompaniment. Its appearance was always brief, constituting interactions that often lasted only seconds, but which seemed to resound with meaning:

> There's a race on Saturday, and after their workout, Kelsey asks her women's team how they're feeling. Their looks express a mixture of nervousness and excitement, but they don't say much. As the group breaks up and begins to gather their belongings, Kelsey gestures toward Janelle, asking her to hang back. She puts her hand on Janelle's shoulder, standing by her side. They face in the same direction—forward—but Kelsey turns her head and looks Janelle sidelong in the eyes: "Go out a little faster this Saturday, OK? You looked good last week, but this time go out faster." Janelle's eyes are serious as she turns toward Kelsey. She nods, flashes a tiny smile, and pivots, jogging back to rejoin the group.
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> ***
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> Kelsey gives her team instructions in the gym, then sends them off to run on their own. Sheena has been having some health problems, so she doesn't join the rest of the team. As the other runners stand, stretch, and head for the door, Sheena remains sitting, her knees folded against her chest. When everyone else has left the gym, Kelsey walks over to where Sheena is sitting. She squats beside her, looking into her face and talking softly. As Sheena answers Kelsey, her face contorts and she puts a hand over her eyes. Kelsey shifts her posture from squatting on her feet, facing Sheena, to sitting on the ground beside her. The two sit side-by-side, each with their knees folded against their chests. Sheena keeps a hand over her eyes, her head bent downward. Kelsey folds her hands on her knees and sits quietly, facing forward and saying nothing. After a few moments, Sheena lifts her hand and speaks, looking sideways at Kelsey, who nods and responds softly, looking back at her.
>
> ***
>
> After practice, as the team starts to walk off, Kelsey matches stride with Isabel. She ran today's workout, but has been practicing on and off as she navigates some health issues. Kelsey puts her arm around her shoulder and walks with her for a few paces on the track, talking softly. They're both smiling and looking ahead. Kelsey stops, and as Isabel keeps walking toward campus, Kelsey gives her a soft push between her shoulders, sending her off with a boost.

C.S. Lewis (2017) describes friendship as a relationship of standing side-by-side, looking at and moving toward something together. While there are definite limits to the comparability of Lewis's depiction of friendship and Kelsey's relationship with her athletes, there are elements of

Lewis's image that illustrate the posture I have described in Chapter 1 as *teacher as pointer* and that appear in moments such as those described above, in which Kelsey literally positions herself by an athlete's side.

For Lewis, the distinctive nature of friendship, as a particular kind of love, is that friends stand side-by-side, "absorbed in some common interest" (p. 90). This common interest, the common object at which friends direct their gaze, is essential for friendship; without such a common object, Lewis holds, friendship would not exist. "Friendship must be about something," he writes, "even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice" (p. 98)," "(W)ithout wanting something other than a friend," he continues, "we cannot have friends. There needs to be a common looking together." Friendship springs from and is sustained by a common interest, or, perhaps put in better terms, a common journey. Lewis describes friends as "fellow-travelers." He cites Ralph Waldo Emerson, who translates "Do you love me?" as meaning "Do you see the same truth?" Lewis considers a more accurate phrasing of Emerson's insight when applied to friendship to be: "Do you care about the same truth?" Lewis clarifies that friends agree that something—some question, subject matter, issue—is of importance. They need not agree about why. Friends share questions in common, he explains, not answers (p. 98). They look ahead at the same thing, they travel toward it together, but each may see the common object of interest differently.

The posture of teacher as pointer embodies this element of friendship. In whatever guise teaching takes, it is about something: the teacher invites students to join her in contemplating and engaging with an object of interest: the subject matter. In Kelsey's work with her athletes, the primary object of common interest is competitive running. Racing is what Kelsey and her athletes look at together, what they journey toward as the season progresses. This interest is

never absent from Kelsey's interactions with athletes: running forms the context of their relationship. Even when Kelsey does not take up a literal side-by-side posture beside her athletes, such as in the conversation with Manni related above, she and they have this common object of interest in view. Manni approaches Kelsey with worries about preparing for the championship race, and the ensuing conversation centers around their journey toward this common destination. However, in moments in which Kelsey places herself beside an athlete, she seems to offer them a particularly poignant invitation to look with her, to see their common object of interest—racing—in a new way.

The upcoming race is the direct focus of the exchange between Kelsey and Janelle related above. Janelle is Kelsey's fastest female runner, and she singles her out to offer advice. Kelsey stands by her side, not obstructing her movement, but as if she and Janelle were traveling down the same path, as indeed they are. The two women are of a similar height and build, and Kelsey's stance and physique, as well as her confident tone of voice, seem to say: "I have traveled this path before. Trust me. You're going the right way, but you'll go faster and farther if you take my advice. I know. I've been there." The hand Kelsey places on Janelle's shoulder seems to communicate stillness, pause: the two stand unmoving, side-by-side, looking together down a path. Neither is walking now, but it is as if they are meeting at a crossroads or at a place of departure. Kelsey looks sidelong at Janelle, making eye contact, but does not turn toward her. The direction of their conversation is outward, even as they speak together. Janelle takes in what Kelsey is saying, but does not linger in conversation. Even in this brief interaction, Kelsey's words and posture seem to act like a launching pad: not holding Janelle in place, but rather, buoying and directing her forward movement, her continuing journey.

Kelsey's exchange with Sheena likewise appears in the context of competitive running, even though Sheena is not presently preparing for a race. On the contrary, she stays behind in the gym, conspicuously and tangibly isolated from the team, from training for competition. In this interaction, Kelsey begins addressing Sheena "face-on," but when Sheena covers her eyes, Kelsey adjusts her posture, moving into a sitting position by her side. I am not privy to the content of their conversation, but even from a distance, their posture spoke volumes. When Kelsey speaks "face-on," Sheena cannot meet her gaze: she covers her eyes with her hand and looks down. She hides from the look Kelsey offers her: the invitation and challenge to see herself as Kelsey sees her. Kelsey responds by changing position; by moving from "face-on" to "side-by-side." She holds this posture patiently: not saying anything, not looking at Sheena; simply sitting beside her, mirroring her pose, looking out across the gym. Kelsey seems in no hurry, like she could sit there indefinitely, not asking anything, not demanding anything, not saying anything. To me, it seemed her silent presence spoke words of accompaniment, of acceptance: "I have all the time in the world." "I have nowhere to be but here." "I see that you are suffering, and I am with you." Eventually and without prompting, Sheena removes her hand from her eyes and lifts her head. She looks at Kelsey as she speaks, but they both face outward, as if to emphasize that, even though Sheena cannot train today or race tomorrow, she is going somewhere, and Kelsey is there to point her and encourage her movement in that direction.

The brief interaction between Kelsey and Isabel described above most fully embodies some aspects of Lewis's depiction of side-by-side friendship, and it also points to an element of Kelsey's relation to her athletes that marks the distinctiveness of teaching as a particular kind of side-by-side encounter. In this moment, which lasted mere seconds, Kelsey and Isabel walk side-by-side, like Lewis's image of friends, literally treading the same path together. They walk on

the track, the very place of competition, and they both look forward, even as they speak to each other. However, Kelsey only maintains this posture for a few brief moments. Then, she stops, while Isabel keeps walking, unperturbed and without looking back. As Isabel moves ahead, Kelsey gives her a soft push in the back, as if to encourage her onward journey. Kelsey embodies the posture of a friend with Isabel insofar as they walk side-by-side and share a common interest, goal, and journey. However, Kelsey is not a peer to Isabel, but a teacher. She does not continue to walk with Isabel, but only starts the journey with her. Kelsey then encourages Isabel to keep going, to travel herself down the path she points out and which they have begun together.

Kelsey's posture in this encounter is reminiscent of the posture Virgil takes up with respect to Dante, described in Chapter 1. Virgil, as Dante's teacher, travels with him and plays an indispensable role in the pilgrim's journey. However, his objective is not to accompany Dante to his final destination. Rather, it is to equip Dante with the ability to travel without him, taking his own freedom and pleasure as his guide:

> '…No longer wait for word or sign from me.
> Your will is free, upright, and sound.
> Not to act as it chooses is unworthy:
> over yourself I crown and miter you' (Alighieri, 2004, Canto XXVII, lines 139-42).

As with the encounter with Sheena, I am not privy to the content of Kelsey and Isabel's conversation. I do not know if they spoke of competing or of something else altogether. I am convinced, however, that Kelsey communicated more through this interaction than whatever concrete advice she gave. Likewise, I am confident that in her encounters with Janelle and with Sheena, Kelsey gave them more than the content of her speech. This gift, like that offered to Manni in the conversation described above, was personal and was made possible by encounter. It was somehow more than an exchange between coach and athlete because even while the context was competitive running, the encounter expanded beyond the bounds of performance.

In each of these empathic encounters, I saw Kelsey offer her athlete the gift of her perspective, of her way of seeing. I saw her invite them to see running—and themselves as runners—from her perspective of close accompaniment and encouragement. In encounters like these, Kelsey imbues the context of competitive running with a personal dimension: racing appears not merely as something the athletes do on their own, but as an activity that involves an integral dimension of being with. Furthermore, in moments like those narrated above, the person appears as taking priority over the athlete. While preparing to compete sets the context for and direction of Kelsey's interactions with her athletes, the encounters themselves exceed the bounds of competition and are directed toward a wider destination. Even when an athlete cannot compete, as in the case of Sheena, or is not in top form, as in the case of Isabel, Kelsey still engages them in encounters that occur in the context of running, but somehow point beyond it. This aspect of encounter is difficult to articulate, but one of Kelsey's athletes found words to describe this phenomenon when answering a recruit's query about what Kelsey is like as a coach: "She coaches us as people first and athletes second."

Shaking Hands

Each of the gestures I have described in this section thus far can be described as ways of seeing, with *seeing* taking on more than a literal meaning. Through these gestures, Kelsey manifests that she *really sees* her athletes, that she is present with them, that she attends to them. Furthermore, Kelsey's gestures express a particular kind of seeing; they show that she attends to athletes as persons in the phenomenological sense: as singular subjects with unique perspectives on the world. Returning to the language related in Chapter 1, Kelsey's way of interacting with athletes in the moments described in this section show themselves to be empathic and not primordial. In other words, Kelsey's actions show that she does not perceive her athletes in these

moments as “objects” whose relationship to her is purely instrumental, the way we might perceive a cashier in the grocery store as a mere means to our making a purchase, or fellow commuters on the sidewalk as obstacles to our movement. In the case of a coach, this primordial perceiving might take the form of interacting with team members strictly as athletes: runners whose value is determined by performance metrics. I observed many moments in which performance took a front seat, so to speak, in Kelsey’s interactions with athletes. However, my perception of Kelsey’s way of being with her team seconds the sentiment of her athlete, related above: “She coaches us as people first and athletes second.”

This empathic way of treating athletes—of coaching them as “people first”—can be seen in Kelsey’s gestures: her attentive waiting, her steady eye contact, her hand placed on an athlete’s shoulder. The theme of athletic performance is not absent from these moments, but it appears in the context of an encounter and not a purely instrumental exchange. These gestures communicate respect, compassion, challenge, appreciation. They manifest ways of responding to persons and not merely runners whose performance serves as the measure of the coach’s own professional stature. Kelsey, in these moments, meets her athletes first and foremost on the plane of personhood. In doing so, she appears as a person first, and coach second, offering her athletes gifts that proceed from her person, from her very self.

A genuine empathic encounter requires that both parties perceive the other as a person and not as an object. In other words, for a true meeting of persons to occur, Kelsey’s athletes must respond to her perception of them as persons by seeing her as a person as well, and not merely as a coach: a means to their improved athletic performance. This mutual recognition can be seen in the minute gestures of Kelsey’s athletes: Manni’s momentary eye contact, Janelle’s slight nod, Isabel’s smile. These gestures express a feeling of being seen, constituting a response

to and consummation of Kelsey's invitation to personal encounter. In addition to these small but meaning-filled gestures, athletes' words and actions manifest their acceptance of Kelsey's offer to meet them as persons: Maeve's insistence that attentive looking is "Kelsey's pose," for example, or Evan's reflection about the different meanings communicated by Kelsey standing "face-on" versus "side-by-side." These responses show a realization and appreciation of being seen. Such realization is itself a response: an empathic act that recognizes and brings about a meeting on the level of persons.

While athletes' responses to the gestures described thus far in this chapter evidence recognition and manifest the occurrence of interpersonal encounter, the communicative nature of these gestures appears as largely one-sided: Kelsey, through her ways of seeing, steadily invites interpersonal encounter, and athletes occasionally show by their returning gaze or nod or smile that they accept Kelsey's invitation. However, there is a final gesture that I came to recognize as characteristic of Kelsey's way of being with athletes that I saw to be not only communicative, but communal: mutual in a more robust sense than the gestures described above. This gesture is a handshake.

> Kelsey looks steadily at Omar, as if inviting him to meet her gaze. "Look, Omar. Here's what we'll do. Sometimes I'll have to make adjustments for you because you're physically not up for what the rest of the team is doing. Like today: you're not ready for the Figure 8s workout, so I'm giving you an adjusted workout. But sometimes, like during Tuesday's workout, you should have been able to keep up. I'm asking you to push yourself to stay with the pack. You have to trust my judgment on this. So when I put you with the group, I don't want to see you giving up. We'll work with where you are, but I need you to give full effort. And I need you to trust that if I give you a workout, you can do it."
>
> Omar nods, glancing briefly at Kelsey, then looking away.
>
> Kelsey speaks matter-of-factly: "OK, so, longer warm up and hill repeats today."
>
> Omar answers, still looking away. "OK, Coach."

> In the silence that follows, Kelsey reaches out her hand and Omar shakes it, his eyes briefly looking up to meet hers. Then he turns and jogs back to join the rest of the team, who are stretching and warming up.

When Kelsey reaches out to shake an athlete's hand, her gesture requests a definite response. Unlike her waiting and her eye contact, which show themselves as largely invitational—Kelsey does not insist that an athlete comes to talk with her after practice or that they return her eye contact—when she reaches out her hand, Kelsey asks the athlete to reach out their hand as well. For the gesture to be fully enacted, it requires mutual participation. In these moments, Kelsey doesn't only "speak" to her athletes; she indicates that she wants—perhaps even needs—to hear them speak something to her as well.

In moments like the one with Omar described above, when Kelsey reaches out her hand, it seems to speak both a promise and a question. Kelsey has just given Omar critical feedback and direct instruction. Her tone is calm, but her words are challenging. When she stretches out her hand, it appears to signal the enduring confidence she has in Omar, despite his shortcomings as a runner. It is also a gesture of equality: after speaking to him with the authority of a coach, without undermining that authority, she offers to shake his hand, to meet him on the level of their common humanity. Kelsey's outstretched hand also leaves questions hanging in the air, questions addressed to Omar that only he can answer: "Are we good?" "Do you believe that what underlies my critical feedback is my trust in you?" "Are you ready, as I am, to put your past mistakes behind us and start again?" Kelsey's hand asks for a response. And Omar gives it by stretching out his hand to meet hers. It appears as a sign of closure, of mutual understanding, even of reconciliation. It signals an end to the interaction, an ending that involves neither correction nor instruction, but mutual agreement and trust.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012) describes phenomenologically how genuine interpersonal communication depends on reciprocity. When two people communicate as persons, empathically, they enter together into a shared space, which Merleau-Ponty calls an "inter-world" (p. 373). In this space, the two people make a "pact," each one committing to "leaving as much room for the other as I do for myself" (p. 373). This requires, first and foremost, securing space for the other person's freedom: recognizing and respecting that they have their own perspective and that, even in the inter-world that we share, they do not occupy the world in the same way that I do. Therefore, I cannot speak for them, for doing so would be to conflate their perspective with my own. Were I to do this, I would cease seeing them as a person and would draw them into my world, seeing them from my primordial perspective as an extension of myself. The same phenomenon also has the possibility of occurring in the other direction: I might see myself so much from the other person's perspective that I fail to recognize and honor my own unique perspective, thus allowing myself to be pulled into the other's primordial world.

When Kelsey stretches out her hand to Omar, I see her inviting him to make the interpersonal pact Merleau-Ponty describes. She has just been speaking to him from her position as coach, but in reaching out her hand she seems to express: "Omar, I see you as an athlete, but first and foremost, I see you as a person." In initiating a gesture that can only be completed with Omar's engaged response, she makes space for his freedom, making palpable her commitment to treating him, not as an extension of herself, but as a person who is distinct from her. She asks for his participation in an "inter-world:" a shared project in which they have different roles, but in which they both must participate freely, as persons. When Omar takes Kelsey's hand, he fulfills the reciprocal pact required for communication. He answers her invitation as himself, with a free

act that only he can give. He steps into a shared world with Kelsey: an interpersonal world in which each member maintains their own freedom while engaging in a common project.

Kelsey frequently shakes her athletes' hands, especially after challenging conversations (like the one with Omar related above) or difficult workouts. Most of the time, the gesture is brief: Kelsey extends her hand, the athlete extends theirs, they shake for a moment, making eye contact, then the athlete turns away. However, I saw times when the gesture was prolonged, when Kelsey did not immediately release the athlete's hand; when she seemed to wait to receive a response of recognition.

> Manni has been running the workout alone today. He's prepping for a 10k race. Kelsey is timing him. His pacing is inconsistent. When he has finished the workout, Kelsey walks over and grips Manni's hand in a firm handshake: "That was good work, Manni," she says seriously. Manni looks at the ground and pulls away and down, so that even though he's much taller than Kelsey, Kelsey, still gripping his hand, is pulling his arm up. It looks almost as if Kelsey's arm is the only force holding Manni off the ground. Their figures form a diagonal line. Kelsey looks intently at Manni, Manni at the ground, turning his body away from her, even while she grips his hand. "I'm disappointed," Manni mutters at the mud. He tries to pull his arm away, but Kelsey pulls back so that his arm is held completely taut. She continues to look at Manni, although he looks away. "Look, Manni. You did 5k work in under 15 minutes. That's race pace." Manni continues to look down, and responds in a despondent tone: "It would have been better yesterday without the wind and rain." Kelsey responds on the next beat, in a steady, matter-of-fact voice: "Welcome to the outdoor season." She pauses and looks at the back of Manni's head as he stares at the ground. After a moment, she continues, calmly and firmly: "I wanted you to have a good day, too, but I'm happy for this. In a couple of weeks, you'll be saying 'you were right, Coach.' My favorite words to hear." There's a smile in her voice now. She lets go of Manni's hand and he straightens up. She gives him a light shove in the back as he turns to jog away.
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> ***
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> Today is Monday. There's another big race this weekend. When Janelle finishes her workout, she jogs over to Kelsey. As she approaches, Kelsey reaches out and shakes Janelle's hand. "Nice work, you good?" Janelle nods quickly with a shaky smile on her face. She leans back, and begins to turn to jog toward campus, but Kelsey doesn't let go of her hand. Kelsey grips Janelle's hand and pulls her forward gently, but firmly, so that Janelle turns to face her again. Kelsey looks intently into Janelle's face: "You good?" she repeats, more softly and with more deliberation. "You seem stressed." Janelle smiles

> again and continues to nod, not saying anything. Kelsey waits for her to answer, still gripping her hand: After a few moments, Janelle speaks: “No, I’m good.” She lets her breath out heavily. Kelsey smiles and her tone lightens: “Just excited? Trying to pretend you’re not out of breath?” She lets go of Janelle’s hand. Janelle laughs and nods. “Alright,” Kelsey says, “nice work. Get back up to school.” “Thanks, Coach.” Janelle turns and jogs off.

In both the instances cited above—Kelsey's encounter with Manni and her encounter with Janelle—Kelsey’s invitation to shake her athlete’s hand is answered right away, at least on a literal level. However, something appears incomplete. In the encounter with Manni, Manni takes Kelsey’s hand, but immediately tries to pull his arm away, resisting the handshake gesture. It is as if he were responding to the question, communicated by Kelsey’s outstretched hand, “We’re good?” in the negative: “No, we’re not good.” His words and tone of discouragement magnify this sentiment, rising in dissonant contrast to Kelsey’s affirmation that he has completed the workout well. Kelsey does not release Manni’s hand, but grips it tightly, insistingly offering him her perspective, inviting him to accept her affirmation. Manni declines Kelsey’s offer, at least in this moment. Coach and athlete do not (either literally or metaphorically) come, in this instance, to see eye-to-eye. They do not manifest the mutual understanding proper to shaking hands. The gesture itself seems to remain incomplete, unfinished. However, Kelsey lets go of Manni’s hand on a note of hope and with an invitation extending into the future: “In a couple of weeks, you’ll be saying ‘you were right, Coach.’ My favorite words to hear.” She does not speak the words for him or dismiss his present feeling of discouragement. But she points to the future, sharing her confidence that with time he might see his situation—and himself—differently.

In her interaction with Janelle, Kelsey speaks words that express the question posed by the handshake: “You good?” Often this question, whether verbally articulated or not, is silently answered by athletes in their return gesture: the shaking of hands. In this encounter, Janelle returns Kelsey’s handshake with a smile and nod and begins to turn away, as if the exchange

were complete. However, like in the moment with Manni, Kelsey seems to perceive a dissonance or lack of full agreement in the interaction that leads her to prolong the gesture, pulling Janelle back toward her. In repeating her question—"You good?"—Kelsey appears to be checking the sincerity, veracity, and completeness of Janelle's response, to be making sure that they are really on the same page. Kelsey expresses her reason for doubting the completeness of Janelle's response: her affirmative gesture of nodding clashed with indications of feeling stressed: her unsteady smile, perhaps, or her silence. In this case, in the moment of prolonged hand-shaking, Janelle insists that her response was sincere, that she is, in fact, good. Kelsey's attitude changes; she appears to see Janelle and the situation differently: "Just excited? Trying to pretend you're not out of breath?" What Kelsey had read in Janelle's bearing as nervousness was, perhaps, excitement. And her silence might in fact have been a result of being winded after a hard workout. The misunderstanding is resolved, and Kelsey releases Janelle's hand. Janelle laughs and turns away.

In offering to shake hands with her athletes, as in the other gestures described in this chapter, Kelsey offers them a gift. It is a gift that is personal, since, if accepted, it enacts an encounter that goes deeper than the level of exchange between athlete and coach and that manifests the mutual respect for freedom that Merleau-Ponty describes as proper to communication between persons. Kelsey offers her athletes a new way of seeing, but does not forcefully dictate the terms of the exchange. As the narratives related above show, she is herself responsive to the dispositions and attitudes her athletes bring to the encounter, and ready even to adjust her way of seeing, as happens with Janelle.

I hope to have communicated, through the narratives presented in this section, that Kelsey sees her athletes, not just as athletes, but as persons; that she communicates this seeing

through concrete, habitual gestures, each with its own character; and that through their responses—their eye contact, smiles, nods, handshakes, and sometimes words—Kelsey's athletes affirm that they feel seen by her, that they welcome the new perspective she offers them. These responses, however hard to see, express that Kelsey's athletes, like me, saw and appreciated meaning in her gestures:

> Today, when I greet Kelsey, she turns to me energetically, almost bursting with enthusiasm: "I wish you had been at practice yesterday!" She tells me with a smile and laughter behind her voice. "Everyone was just having a great day. I wish you could have seen it. After practice, I shook Janelle and Angela's hands, and I was about to turn away when Isabel piped up: 'Hey, Coach! Can I have a handshake, too?'" Kelsey smiles at the memory. I can hear the energy in her voice. "I said: 'Of course! A handshake, a shoulder tap, the whole nine yards!'"

5.5 Responding to the Gift of Being Seen

There is much about the personal gifts Kelsey offers her athletes that I cannot see, know, or speak to. In part this is because I am neither the giver nor the recipient of the gift. Additionally, there is the phenomenological reality, described in Chapter 1, of the hiddenness of gifts: in what is most truly a gift, both giver and givee recede from view. The giver offers a gift without guarantee that it has been received, and the givee may be unable to share their recognition of receiving a gift with the giver (cf. Marion, 2002). Kelsey, in the encounters related in this chapter, offers gifts to her athletes, gifts that are personal in the sense that they proceed from her person—her singular way of seeing, valuing, and responding to reality—and extend an invitation to them as persons (and not just as athletes) to see, value, and respond to reality (including themselves) in a new way. However, part of the integrity of the gifts Kelsey offers her athletes is that whether or not the gifts are received does not depend on her, nor will she necessarily know whether her athletes have taken up her invitation to see in a new way. Perhaps, as was the case in my experience with Dr. Reilly, related in Chapter 3, her athletes might only

realize years later that Kelsey has had a definite impact on the way they see themselves and the world, in a word, on who they are as persons. Neither Kelsey nor I will ever see the full impact she has had on her athletes through her work as coach. However, the responses of gratitude and the sincere spontaneity that I saw in Kelsey's athletes' words and actions give me the sense that they have, indeed, received personal gifts from their coach, gifts that go beyond their improved athletic performance.

Gratitude

About five months into the school year, Kelsey tells me that she has noticed a change in her athletes, especially her women's team:

> "The women have started this new thing of thanking me after workouts. Have you noticed? I wonder why."

A few weeks later, we go on a run together after practice and talk a little bit about Kelsey's team.

> "You know," she says, with notes of happiness and surprise in her voice, "I have really good women. I've had such good conversations with each one lately. I'm starting to see that I need to come to terms with the fact that these are the women I have. We might not have the results in races, but these are my women and good things are happening." We run in silence for a few paces, then Kelsey continues, "I asked them about the thanking thing. It's not a joke and they didn't plan it."

What motivated these responses of gratitude from Kelsey's female athletes? Their performance in competitions remained poor throughout the season, and the incommensurability between their expressions of gratitude and their results on the track is striking. Their gratitude appears to be about something more than running, although it also appears as inextricably linked to the life of the team: the women thank Kelsey on the track after practice, where the focus of attention is most directly on training for competition. I also saw athletes like Manni, who excelled in competitions, offer expressions of gratitude that seemed to be about more than just Kelsey's impact on her team as athletes:

It's the final week of the cross country season and winter has arrived. It's extremely cold on the track. Kelsey is all business, calling out times for different groups. Manni sidles up to her when he finishes his workout. "Hey, Coach, can I talk to you?" Many athletes are still running, and Kelsey is constantly turning to keep them in view. She answers Manni's greeting, but distractedly. When he keeps talking, she cuts him off, continuing to pivot as she tracks her athletes. "Manni, look, I have a lot going on right now. Do your cool down and then loop back."

Manni returns when the others have left the track to cool down. Kelsey, her assistant coach Herb, and I stand alone among the runners' strewn belongings. Manni looks sidelong at Kelsey and launches into a hurried speech about how excited he is to finish his cross country career on Saturday, and about how much he's learned about teamwork and how he's grown as a runner and as a person over his years as a student athlete. Kelsey looks straight at him as he talks, but also shows signs of being very cold. She lifts one foot after the other off the ground and rubs her hands together. After a few minutes, she raises a gloved hand and cuts Manni off mid-sentence: "I've seen you grow a lot as a runner over these years, Manni. You can be proud of that. Now you'd better get back up to campus and get warm." When he runs off, she turns to Herb and me and says, jokingly, through shivers:

"Manni is a poet."

Herb, usually the lead jokester, responds seriously: "He needed to say that, Kelsey. That was important for Manni to say. What he was saying is thank you. He was thanking you for making him the person he is today."

Kelsey pauses for a beat and then looks up at him: "Thank you, Herb. Thank you for saying that."

It is not for me to name the exact inner feeling that motivates these expressions of gratitude. From my perspective, however, I can say with confidence that Kelsey sees her athletes as persons, that they feel seen by her. Kelsey's habitual gestures and her athletes' responses to them bring this reality to life. And these spontaneous expressions of gratitude? What could they be but verbalized recognition of a gift received, a gift given on the track, but that extends beyond it?

What is the difference between a sign of recognition of a gift accepted, such as a smile or nod, and a verbalized expression of thanks? There appears, in verbal expressions of gratitude,

evidence of reflective acknowledgment, of conscious realization of being the recipient of a gratuitous offering, a gift that breaks through the realm of exchange and that cannot be repaid in a strict sense of the word, but that calls for a response. It signals a move from a passive experience of receptivity to an active one of transformation. Douglas Yacek and Kevin Gary (2020) describe such a move in their account of transformative experience and epiphany in education. It is not enough, they argue, for teachers to cultivate wonder in students: to encourage them to "gawk" at the saturated phenomena around them. In education for epiphany, one dedicated to promoting genuine transformation, teachers aim to help student "see that the mysteriousness and miraculousness of the things around them can become sources of moral edification, which call them not only to behold in wonder but also to pursue a higher version of themselves" (p. 232). I cannot say for certain whether Kelsey's athletes, by their expressions of gratitude, have undergone epiphanies, which, according to Yacek and Gary, require (1) a disruption of everyday activity, (2) a realization of an ethical good or value, and (3) an aspiration to integrate this value more fully into one's lives (p. 233). However, their expressions of gratitude appear as spontaneous indications that they have, indeed, received from Kelsey something of value, that they recognize the value of what they have received, and that they feel inspired to verbalize their gratitude.

Spontaneity, Sincerity, and At-Homeness

In addition to personal expressions of gratitude, I saw a spontaneity and sincerity in Kelsey's athletes, especially when they were together as a team, that struck me as an expression of a kind of at-homeness that seemed to flow from and into the experience of being seen by Kelsey, of being appreciated and valued by her. Additionally, I saw a posture of Kelsey's emerge in response to these moments of spontaneity: bending over, sometimes yelling encouragement,

sometimes folded over in laughter. This posture struck me as a gesture of intensity, of effort, and of deep appreciation and delight.

> Kelsey's men's team is nearing the end of the first hard workout of the year in an infamously difficult part of the local park called the Back Hills. As the athletes begin to finish, spirits are high. They cheer for each runner by name as they approach the finish line of the final loop. After they cross the line, Kelsey instructs each athlete to keep standing, to keep walking. Slowly, as the athletes recover their breath, they begin to congregate, waiting for Kelsey's final words before the close of practice.
>
> Looking at her men, Kelsey is all seriousness. They form a semicircle around her and their faces morph to match her expression. They look at her intently. Some of their brows furrow slightly. They barely blink.
>
> "Gentlemen," Kelsey begins, calmly but seriously, "I'm seeing a pattern here. You are coming up to me worried you can't do something, and then you have a pretty good workout. It's time to let me push you. You can do what I'm asking you to do." She points to Finnley: "Finnley here jumped into a workout he wasn't expecting and did a great job." Finnley, standing at the back of the group, says nothing. A moment passes. Kelsey's athletes keep their eyes fixed on her. Suddenly, Kelsey's face breaks into a smile, and she adds, laughingly: "And look, Finnley doesn't say anything. That's what I like to see! He does whatever is asked of him and stays silent. You could all learn a thing or two from Finnley."
>
> Kelsey inhales as if about to go on, but Manni, a leader on the team and very talkative, interrupts, tilting his head to one side and smiling: "I certainly could learn something from Finnley." Kelsey lets out her breath in a loud burst of laughter. She bends over laughing, shaking her head, smiling and pointing teasingly at Manni. His smile widens. The whole group joins in the laughter, their faces relaxing into goofy grins. Evan, who is standing beside Manni, gives him a playful shove: "That's a little too funny, Manni." For a minute, the air rings with laughter. I find myself smiling as I see the men drop their shoulders, throw back their heads, and exchange sweaty nudges and fist bumps. Then Kelsey stands up straight and looks around at her team. Their attention returns to her. She points to Manni again, still with a smile: "We have a good time, Manni, but you're right, you could learn something from Finnley. OK, gentlemen, that's all for today. Get out of here."

On days like the one related above, I was struck by the mixture of joviality and seriousness Kelsey's athletes expressed, as well as their spontaneity, unguardedness, sincerity, and at-homeness. Yet, more than anything, I was struck by Kelsey's way of responding: her total

energy, her uncontrolled laughter, her joy-filled appreciation of who her athletes are, with their spiritedness, their periodic despondency, and their quirks. I was struck by how well she knows them, and by how she delights in them. I was also struck by the impact of Kelsey's delight: how it seemed to overflow in the spontaneous and sincere actions of her athletes, in their being present as themselves, without masks, without insecurity. I saw athletes' masks and insecurities in many moments, some of which I have related in this chapter. But I also saw moments like the ones described in this section, in which their masks came down and their insecurities fell away. It seemed to me in these moments that everyone present felt a deep sense of at-homeness: of being appreciated for who they are, secure in their sense of their own value. This at-homeness erupted in—showed itself in—moments of joyful spontaneity related above, moments in which Kelsey's athletes seemed to be fully present as themselves. And it seemed to me that Kelsey's presence to and for her athletes invited and encouraged them to be fully themselves. I saw the vivifying power Marcel (1950) attributes to presence become palpable in moments like these: "When somebody's presence does really make itself felt, it can refresh my inner being; it reveals me to myself, it makes me more fully myself than I should be if I were not exposed to its impact" (p. 206).

Kelsey delights in her athletes. She sees them, she knows them, and she delights in them. This manifests in a poignant way in her laughter: in the spontaneous explosiveness with which she responds to Manni's expression of self-knowledge: "I certainly could learn something from Finnley." There is no trace of guilt in Manni's comment, nor is there any condemnation in Kelsey's response. Her laughter expresses not derision, but delight, appreciation of who Manni is, in all his messy and occasionally annoying complexity. There were many times, some related in this chapter, when Kelsey's patience was visibly tried by Manni's loquaciousness, his

tendency to contradict her direct instruction, even in front of the team, and his periodic plunges into discouragement and despondency. But in this moment, when Manni shows a flash of good-humored self-reflection, Kelsey responds with an overflowing joy: a joy whose source is Manni himself, that delights in him exactly as he is, and that appreciates his ability to see himself. And the whole team joins in her delight, in her appreciation of Manni. Months later, Kelsey still recalled the interaction vividly:

> "That moment will stick with me a long time. When Manni made that joke about learning something from Finnley. The men were just so themselves. They didn't have any masks up. Manni had the insight to see himself, to laugh at himself, and everyone could laugh with him. The other guys have a hard time sometimes with Manni, you know, being Manni. There can be a lot of 'Manni Moments,' a lot of tension that has to be diffused. Moments like that one, they really help. They make us a team."

Kelsey does not only encounter her athletes as individuals; they are her team. And she, by her appreciative way of responding to them, helps foster their appreciation for each other and for her. Kelsey not only sees her athletes as individual persons; she sees them as forming a community.

> Today's men's workout is on the Flat Loop—a 1.4 mile dirt path that circles an open field—with some track work tagged on at the end. Before sending the men off, Kelsey instructs them: "Run the first loop in 7:50-8 minutes, OK? That goes for everyone. I want to see you packed together for the first loop." She scans the group and her eyes single out one runner. "Manni, don't pull away."
>
> Manni's head is cocked to the side and he does not look happy. His face seems to say: "I want to work; 7:50-8 is a jog." But he doesn't say anything. The men line up and Herb yells a loud "yeah-ho" to send them off as he starts the stopwatch.
>
> Kelsey, Herb, and I watch the runners as they circle the Flat Loop. Mason, the team manager, also follows the athletes with his eyes, looking down periodically to check the time on his stopwatch. The runners look like tiny specks as they circle the far side of the field. But they are still within view. Kelsey tells me that she likes the Flat Loop because she can "keep eyes" on her athletes, even though they only appear as dots on the horizon. "Who's that trailing off?" She asks the air. "Is it Omar?" "Is that one in blue Jordan?"
>
> "Do you think they'll come in at 7:50-8?" Kelsey voices, "Or will they be faster?" Herb and Mason place bets. Kelsey keeps following her runners with her eyes, saying nothing. She checks their time when they reach the mile mark. "OK, looking good." The group

crosses the line at 7:58, all packed together. Only two runners have fallen a few steps behind.

"Good! Good!" Kelsey screams, her whole body bending into the path as the men run by. "Eyes on them, Finnley! You look great—stay right there with them!"

When the runners have passed out of earshot, Kelsey lowers her voice to a moderate volume and turns toward Herb, Mason, and me. "Omar's staying right in there," she comments, clearly pleased.

On the runners' fourth and final loop, Kelsey, Herb, Mason, and I watch the men move around the far part of the field. Two tiny figures have pulled out in front. Their motions are synchronous and their strides long. The others run behind them, their pack unweaving into a thin line. A few minutes later, the men approach the finish line. Manni and Jordan are running side-by-side in front, their strides exactly in synch. Neither pulls ahead; they run in lockstep. They cross the finish line together. "7:10!" Mason yells, as he clicks the stopwatch. The runners are jubilant. They smile and nod to one another as they stumble around the clearing by the finish line, gasping for air and walking Pinocchio-like as their muscles tighten and cramp.

Manni circles straight to where Kelsey is standing, waiting for the women to finish. He approaches from behind. She doesn't notice him; she has her eyes on her women running across the field. "Coach!" He pants. Kelsey turns, and Manni lunges toward her and gives her a hard high-five. Kelsey barely has time to raise her hand to meet his. Her face shows surprise at the sudden movement. Manni is beaming. "Coach, I just need to tell you, you are always right, and I am always wrong!" Kelsey's face opens into a broad smile. She grabs Manni's hand and shakes it enthusiastically. "Say it again!" she says, laughing. "Say it again!" She nods, still shaking his hand. Then Kelsey speaks, and her tone, while still warm and energetic, becomes more serious: "That was great work, Manni."

Jordan, who is standing a few feet away, is smiling from ear to ear. He catches Kelsey's eye. "Coach," he says jovially, bouncing on his feet, "when they make the movie about our team, the crowd will cheer at this part." Kelsey grins.

It's all excitement as the men gather around Kelsey. Before she can speak, Kieran pipes up: "We were a team today! We ran like a team today!" Kelsey fuels their enthusiasm. "With this work, we could win the meet on Friday. How would you like to win something?" She looks at them with intensity in her eyes, but also smiling. Then her tone becomes serious. "Now, you're not done yet. Get to the track for your 300s. You've done good work today, but you're not done. I need you to give more. That's what we're practicing." Before they run off, she touches Manni's arm and motions for him to step to the side: "Did you see how you finished today?" She looks him in the eyes, and today, he stands up straight and meets her gaze. Kelsey's right arm extends in a pointing gesture

that accentuates her words. "That's how you need to race on Friday. Play the field—don't let anyone get away—but try not to push it too much at the beginning." Manni looks into Kelsey's eyes and nods, his face attentive and serious.

When the men run off, Kelsey asks Herb to read her back the splits recording the time of each loop. She nods as she listens. "If I hadn't told them to start at 7:50-8, Manni probably would have run the same overall time. But he wouldn't have had that 7:10 lap. He wouldn't have been able to cut down like that and finish strong. And that's what I needed him to practice today."

Kelsey, Herb, and I drive back to the gym after practice. It's silent in the car for a few minutes. Then Kelsey's voice breaks in: "I hope I didn't build up the men too much after the workout today." Her tone is thoughtful. Then, she smiles, and her excitement overflows. "I just really don't think there's anyone who can beat us on Friday!"

The men do win the meet on Friday. I can't be there, but Kelsey texts me afterwards to tell me the news.

The delight Kelsey takes in her team is contagious. I saw it affect her athletes. I felt it affect me. Her athletes, while still taking their training seriously, delight in each other, in themselves, in their coaches and team. They delight, it seems, in being seen, in being appreciated, and, consequently, in being themselves.

Today, the workout is hill repeats. The pace is moderate because the championship is ten days away, but the workout is still challenging. Herb shouts encouragement each time the groups descend the hill. "Still smiling, right? Pack up! Pack up! All together!"

There are three Jordans on the team: a Senior, a Junior, and a Freshman. The Senior jokingly refers to himself as "Big Jordan." As the men are about to begin the sevenths of eight repeats, Freshman Jordan, from the middle of the pack, shouts: "This next one is to see who's really Big Jordan!"

Kelsey, Herb, and I all burst out laughing and watch the runners sprint up the hill. We adjust position so that we can keep them in view longer as they turn around a curve. Freshman Jordan (typically the slowest of the three) is pounding up the hill, his arms swinging furiously. On the ascent, he's out in front. "I bet they'll all come down covered in dirt," Kelsey says, laughing. "This could be a real fight." A few minutes later, the men return with Senior Jordan at the front of the pack, smiling and raising his fist in quiet triumph. "Very nice," Kelsey says, smiling, too. Freshman Jordan, from the middle of the pack again, comments: "Hey! There's still one more rep to go!" Kelsey raises her

eyebrows, still smiling. "Go get 'em!" The group begins to climb the hill again, with what seems like renewed energy.

When the pack comes charging down the hill, Evan has pulled in front, with Senior Jordan a pace or two behind him. Their arms flail wildly as gravity pulls them toward the finish. Evan crosses the line, whoops, and flexes his muscles. He turns to Kelsey and flashes a smile: "I'm Big Jordan now!" Kelsey laughs so hard that she bends double. The rest of the team joins in as the athletes—Jordans and all—exchange fist bumps and handshakes.

5.6 Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I described the personal core of teaching as involving two dimensions of givenness: students are given to themselves through a teacher's gift of self. This gift of self on the part of the teacher is personal and, as such, is utterly singular. I hope to have illustrated in this chapter how this singular gift of self manifests in the person of Kelsey. She offers her athletes her way of seeing them, of responding to them, of delighting in them. These are not gifts that anyone else can give, because only Kelsey sees from her own perspective. Kelsey's gestures, actions, and ways of being are her own; I do not present them here as techniques or strategies to be imitated by educators looking to better attend to teaching's personal core. I do not put forward Kelsey as a model to be followed, but, rather, hope that the gift of self that she shows through her coaching can serve as a role model (cf. Hansen & Sullivan, p.163), inspiring teachers of all guises to appreciate the irreplaceable value their singular selves have in their deeply personal work.

Conclusion: Taking the Personal Core of Teaching Seriously

C.1 Persons at the Core of Teaching

Throughout this dissertation, I have pointed to a dimension of teaching that I refer to as its *personal core*, by which a teacher, through a singular gift of self, gives students to themselves, offering them gifts of expanded vision and valuing of world and themselves, and thereby inviting them to grow in agency and freedom. I have described how I came to see and recognize this personal core gradually, through my own experiences as a student and through witnessing the work of teachers. I have related how these initial intimations of the personal core of teaching expanded and were clarified through my study of phenomenology, which offered me language with which to articulate and better understand what I had begun to see. In seeing its personal core, I recognized that teaching has a dimension of givenness that exceeds the economy of exchange (cf. Marion, 2002). This dimension of teaching cannot be captured by measurement, generalization, or standardization, but can, I have argued, be seen and articulated by researchers who attend with reverence to teaching as a fundamentally human endeavor, a practice of persons. I describe such research as embodying the orientation David Hansen (2021) names *bearing witness*.

I have sought to bear witness to the personal core of teaching by attending closely to different kinds of teachers. The preceding chapters testify to the distinctness of the professional identities of Gene, a high school teacher; Lin, Mirella, and Annie, professional chefs; and Kelsey, a collegiate track and field and cross country coach. At the same time, the narratives related in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 reveal the presence of the personal core of teaching in each of their dealings with students, apprentices, or athletes. In this concluding chapter, I will look

reflectively at the testimony rendered from these three environments and consider its implications for teacher education and the practice of teaching.

Taking the personal core of teaching seriously demands clarifying what it means to be a teacher and to teach. In my fieldwork, I only observed one person who embodies the professional identity of classroom teacher: Gene. Lin, Mirella, and Annie are professional chefs, and Kelsey is a coach by profession. Each of these fields operates in a distinct economy of exchange that corresponds to the profession's purpose and aim. As discussed in Chapter 1, a hallmark of exchange is reciprocity: each party gives and receives something in an exchange of goods and services (cf. Marion, 2002, p. 82). In his public school classroom, Gene's students expect to receive an understanding of history in exchange for the tax dollars that pay their teacher's salary. At Rosewood, multiple levels of exchange occur. Both master chefs and apprentices are paid in exchange for the meals they serve to Rosewood's residents. The master chefs also expect apprentices to make meaningful contributions to the operation of the kitchen in exchange for the time they dedicate to teaching them culinary skills. Kelsey's athletes follow their coach's training regimen with the expectation that their performance in competitions will thereby improve. Kelsey, in order to maintain professional prestige, counts on her athletes to take their training seriously and to perform in accord with her expectations. Each of these particular economies of exchange require the professionals present to possess distinct, non-interchangeable expertise. Kelsey does not have the skills to be a classroom teacher or a professional chef, nor do Lin, Mirella, and Annie have the expertise required to be classroom teachers or track coaches. Gene is neither a coach nor a chef, but a classroom teacher. Each professional I observed has developed the expertise necessary for their profession through a combination of training and experience: Gene completed a teacher education program and had taught for 24 years when I

first entered his classroom; Kelsey's coaching was buoyed by both her successful athletic career and 5 years she spent working with a seasoned senior coach before becoming head coach herself; Lin, Mirella, and Annie each continually hone their technical skills through ongoing apprenticeship pedagogy, and have between 14 and 52 years of experience working as chefs.

Despite the differences in their professional identities, I saw a common pedagogical dimension appear in the work of Gene, Kelsey, Lin, Mirella, and Annie. Through their distinct kinds of teaching, each offers personal gifts that exceed the economy of exchange. This common element of givenness constitutes what I call the personal core of teaching. Attending to the appearance of this common personal core in three very different economies of exchange illuminates two of the characteristic features of teaching: singularity and embeddedness. These features are not ancillary to teaching, but touch the heart of its deepest and most profound dimension: that of givenness, in which a student does not receive items of exchange, but, rather, is invited to accept personal gifts that expand their vision of themselves, the world, and others.

The dimension of givenness and personal encounter appear as the core of teaching because, as illustrated by the phenomenological inquiry of Chapter 1, in the absence of such encounter, the phenomenon of teaching disappears. A student might still learn through their engagement with subject matter, but they are not taught. In the absence of teaching, the possibility of receiving personal gifts is eliminated. On the contrary, when a teacher teaches a subject to a student (whether that subject be math, history, culinary arts, or running), through the very teaching of that subject, the teacher can offer the student *more* than technical knowledge or skill. As I have illustrated through the narratives related in this dissertation, through the personal encounter proper to teaching, teachers like Gene, Lin, Mirella, Annie, and Kelsey offer their students personal gifts by which the students are invited not just to learn something, but to step

into themselves by gaining gifts such as understanding their value as exceeding instrumental performance, learning to see from others' perspectives, and growing in responsibility, humility, and freedom.

Singularity in Teaching

The gifts proper to the personal core of teaching appear as gifts of self, proceeding from the person of the teacher themselves, and, therefore, as utterly singular. The perspective that Kelsey offers her athletes through her gestures and words is her own; it expresses her singular way of seeing and valuing her athletes. A different coach would offer the same athletes a different perspective. Kelsey's singularity is expressed through her gestures, and her athletes' comments indicate that they appreciate this singularity. Maeve's declaration—"This one's your pose!"—expresses her deep familiarity with her coach's way of being, of seeing her athletes. The pose is one of focused, attentive, patient looking, and the laughs of Maeve's teammates affirm that they, too, recognize the posture as characteristic of Kelsey's person. Evan articulates this recognition when he comments: "You know, Coach, I've come to realize that you say a lot through your posture." The narratives related in Chapter 5 show how Kelsey's way of seeing, trusting, encouraging, and delighting in her athletes is expressed through her posture: standing face-to-face or side-by-side; looking up the path, waiting for runners to come into view; spinning to keep eyes on her athletes as they circle the track; bent double shouting encouragement; throwing her head back as she laughs at her team's jokes and antics. Kelsey's person appears in these postures. They are expressive of how she sees her athletes; how she values them. I saw, and hope to have expressed through the narratives related in Chapter 5, an authenticity in Kelsey's gestures and postures; they do not appear as artificially or strategically put on to encourage her athletes to act a certain way. Nor are they stances that could or should be taken up by any coach.

They are expressive of Kelsey as a singular person. They are, in Maeve's words, "her pose(s)." Kelsey's postures parallel the singularity of Gene's way of handing back student papers, holding them gently in both hands, turning the writing to face the student. This gesture of Gene's does not appear as a pedagogical strategy; rather, it embodies the reverence and care with which he perceives his students. As I wrote in my fieldnotes, with that gesture, Gene seems to hold persons in his hands. I came to see the gesture as characteristic and singular: expressive of Gene's person. It is through these singular gestures that Kelsey and Gene offer personal gifts that proceed from their persons and that invite their athletes or students to see themselves through their teacher's eyes.

Lidia experiences the singularity of the personal core of teaching at Rosewood when she sees one master chef position the handles of the teacups at 4 o'clock and another places the handles at 3 o'clock and comes to understand that each of these choices is the result of a decision to communicate something to the residents the kitchen serves. The master chef who sets the cups at 4 o'clock facilitates diners' comfort by placing the handles at an angle that is easy to grasp; the master chef who elects to turn the handles to 3 o'clock wants diners to experience a sense of aesthetic symmetry when they enter the room.

Lidia learns three related lessons as she becomes acquainted with setting the table at Rosewood. First, she learns that the aim of such work is more than pragmatic; it seeks to offer residents an experience of value. Second, she learns that an action such as setting the table affords the possibility of multiple values being at play. Finally, she sees that these values are not in competition with one another, but cannot all be enacted simultaneously. In deciding whether to place the teacup handles at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock, Lidia deliberates whether she wants diners to experience the aesthetic value of symmetry or, rather, whether she desires them to experience

a sense of being at ease, with their teacup within arm's reach. Electing to express symmetry will lead the dining room to look more formal and will, perhaps, diminish diners' sense of comfort. Alternatively, opting to facilitate comfort by placing the teacup handles at 4 o'clock will lend the room a messier look. Lidia comes to see that there is no one right choice for how to place the teacup handles, but, rather, that her choice will express her way of valuing the residents who will enter the dining room. Her choice, in other words, will be expressive of her person. It will be what Stein (1963) refers to as an act of *feeling*. Stein names feeling the kind of action proper to persons because it is not determined or caused by a stimulus, but, rather, is motivated by a free affirmation of value (p. 83). "I like 4 o'clock because that's the way I'd rather have my teacup," Lidia decides. In making this decision, Lidia begins to embody a pedagogical position in the kitchen. She touches the personal core of teaching by offering the residents in the dining room a gift that exceeds the material dimensions of her work and that is expressive both of her person and of her singular way of seeing and responding to value.

The time I spent with Gene, with Kelsey, and with Lin, Mirella, and Annie showed me that the orbit of givenness—where the personal core of teaching appears—is a realm of singularity. Persons do not appear *en masse* or in general, but, rather, singular selves are expressed through singular gestures. Moreover, the gifts offered by teachers as persons are singular in nature: they invite students to see themselves through their teacher's unique, first-person perspective. Thus, the personal gifts offered by each teacher are gifts that only they can give.

The singularity proper to teaching's personal core makes demands on teachers and teacher educators who want to take the personal core of teaching seriously. It demands that teaching not be reduced to an impersonal implementation of generalizable strategies. While in

the economy of exchange, strategies and practices form an integral part of the expertise proper to the teaching of particular subject matters and grade levels, in the realm of gift, generalizations fade from view. At its core, teaching involves an encounter of persons, and such an encounter can only avoid devolving into an act of instrumental exchange if the singular mystery of each person's presence is seen, reverenced, and safeguarded (cf. Marcel, 1950, pp. 204-212). Thus, recognizing the existence and importance of the personal core of teaching requires making space in teacher education, professional development, and practice for the singular persons of teachers and students to appear and act. The testimony related in this dissertation suggests that the personal core of teaching appears when a teacher, as their singular self, sees and responds to students as persons. Thus, making space for the personal core teaching within the practice of education requires encouraging and aiding teachers in being fully present as themselves in the classroom and in attending closely to the singularity of their students.

Rodgers's (2020) work on presence emphasizes the interrelatedness between teacher presence and attending to students as persons. Being present enables a teacher to notice students through careful attending. Such attending, in turn, helps the teacher see students more fully. Reflecting on what they have noticed then increases the teacher's ability to be present, noticing and responsive to student needs (p. 192). Learning to teach is, according to Rodgers, largely a process of learning to see. For this reason, growth as a teacher is inseparable from growth as a person, for seeing is an act of a singular self. Cara Furman and Cecelia Traugh (2021) put forward a practice they call "descriptive inquiry" as a means to help teachers become more attentive and responsive to students as persons. They describe the practice as an act of both professional development and self-care through which teachers, including themselves, "build our ethical selves":

> Practicing description makes us practice seeing. It makes us practice trying to see people in their terms, trying to hear what their version of the world is, trying to learn what sense they make of their work and life. Practicing description can result in a kind of double vision, alert to the immediate situation and the quick action that may be required and aware that there is more there than meets the eye, to be uncovered with careful watching and increased awareness of the larger social systems that may be at play. In these times of "one size fits all" solutions, practicing descriptive seeing runs against the grain and so is difficult. But that difficulty tells us that it is ever more important to do if we are to engage in the kind of care of the self that helps us build our ethical selves (p. 41).

Both Rodgers' and Furman and Traugh's work draws inspiration from Patricia Carini's (2000) method of descriptive review, which involves the composition of a fine-tuned narrative about a single student. This narrative is not directly solution-oriented or explanatory, but rather, seeks to paint as full a portrait as possible of a child: their physical appearance, mannerisms, behaviors, dispositions, likes, dislikes, ways of learning, style of interacting with others, etc. The aim in carrying out a descriptive review, Carini (2000) states, is to see and recognize students as persons (p. 5). Through practicing description, a teacher can learn to see and value students more fully as persons. This unlocks, so to speak, the dimension of gift in teaching, because it is through seeing students as persons that a teacher offers them personal gifts such as those described in this dissertation.

Embeddedness in Teaching

It might seem that foregrounding teaching as an act of interpersonal encounter and teacher education as a process of ethical self-building and learning to see demotes the context and subject matter of teaching to a place of secondary importance. However, while the narratives related in the preceding chapters illustrate that, through interpersonal encounter, a teacher offers students gifts that exceed technical instruction, they likewise reveal that the content of teaching provides the context in which the personal gifts of teaching are given and received. In the moments in which personal gifts appeared in Gene's classroom, at Kelsey's practice, and in

Rosewood's kitchen, *what* was being taught appeared as integral to the gifts offered through interpersonal encounter, even while the gifts extended beyond the learning of information, skill, or technique.

In Gene's classroom, the subject matter being taught is history, and it is through engaging with the activities and assignments of the class—for example, the course journal—that Gene invites students like Xavier to see themselves from his perspective. In doing so, Gene invites students to take up a new way of appreciating themselves and the subject matter of history, to see and value each as he does. Kelsey's interactions with her athletes invariably occur in the context of running. It is in and through training for competitions that her athletes appreciate how, as one team member told a recruit, "She coaches us as people first and athletes second." Furthermore, by prioritizing personhood, Kelsey does not negate the value of competitive running. Rather, she invites her athletes to see themselves as *persons* who run (hopefully very fast), and not merely as *runners*, whose value is reducible to their performance on the track. The relationship between content, context, and givenness appears in an especially clear way at Rosewood, where the pedagogy consists of teaching concrete culinary techniques through one-on-one instruction.

The lengthy narrative describing Lin teaching Cat how to make mini omelets offers a striking illustration of the dynamic between teaching a skill and offering personal gifts. In the narrative, both Lin and Cat focus their attention intensely on the concrete steps of the task at hand: cracking the eggs, pouring the batter into the saucepan, flipping the omelet when the edges have hardened. Lin teaches Cat, but she does not make herself the object of Cat's attention. Rather, she directs the apprentice's attention to their joint project. Lin, in this narrative, embodies the posture of teacher as pointer. Through master and apprentice's shared focus on the omelet, however, Lin communicates her way of seeing and valuing Cat. At first, Lin stands right by

Cat's side, almost bumping the apprentice's elbow with her own. She remains in that position while Cat makes three omelets, calmly and silently reaching over and aiding her when she makes a mistake. Lin's posture communicates closeness and accompaniment. Then, before Cat has perfected the process of omelet-making, Lin leaves her side. She remains close by—an arm's length away—but turns in the other direction. Lin's departure expresses confidence in Cat, despite her lack of proven expertise. Lin's valuing of Cat does not appear as commensurable with Cat's technical performance, even though the content of their conversation and activity centers around the process of making omelets. Lin's response to Cat's mistakes invites the apprentice to see herself as occupying a place of value in the kitchen, even while acknowledging that her performance is imperfect.

Through expressing her way of seeing and valuing Cat, Lin offers her personal gifts. These gifts are given, almost entirely non-verbally, through the making of mini-omelets. The making of omelets does not merely provide the backdrop for an interpersonal encounter; it directs Lin and Cat's engagement. If the joint task were to be removed from the situation, the personal gifts Lin offers Cat would disappear as well. Furthermore, as expressed by the narratives related in Chapter 4, a main aim of Rosewood's apprenticeship pedagogy is to teach young chefs to see and value cooking not merely as a technical skill, but as an avenue of expressing care and solicitude through which diners are invited to see and value themselves in a new way. Chefs at Rosewood, like Babette, offer personal gifts through their cooking. Thus, Rosewood's pedagogy, through the teaching of culinary skills, invites apprentices to see and appreciate the educative power of culinary art that goes beyond, but passes through, technical expertise.

Gert Biesta (2016) argues that learning from a teacher is marked by the reception of more than an experience of learning would offer on its own. This seems to hold true in Cat's experience learning from Lin. Without Lin, through following a recipe and the process of trial and error, Cat likely would have been able to learn how to make satisfactory mini-omelets. However, Lin's presence as teacher offers Cat the possibility of receiving *more* than technical know-how from the experience of omelet-making. Biesta describes teaching as involving an element of transcendence because of the more-ness that teachers offer students (p. 44). At the same time, the narrative describing Cat learning from Lin, as well as the other narratives related in this dissertation, reveal that the transcendence of the gifts of teaching—the more-ness that makes teaching a saturated phenomenon—are not reached by abstracting away from the concreteness of the educational environment and situation, but, rather, appear in and through the gritty reality of the particular learning context. The gifts of the personal core of teaching appear as embedded in context, even while they appear as transcending, or in Marion's (2002) language, *exceeding* that context.

The embeddedness of teaching, like its characteristic singularity, has implications for teacher education and pedagogy. The content and context of teaching matters, for it is through teaching something that a teacher offers personal gifts. Likewise, the teacher appears in this view as indispensable for the kind of learning that is proper to teaching's personal core. Biesta (2016) critiques constructivist education approaches that emphasize students' role in constructing their own knowledge and describe the role of the teacher as merely setting the conditions for students to interact with the learning environment. Such approaches, he argues, when they define a teacher's role as a mere facilitator of learning, fail to appreciate that learning from a teacher involves the possibility of learning something genuinely new, something more than could be

learned through solitary exploration alone (p. 46). Biesta (2017) puts forward a robot vacuum cleaner as an image of the teacher's place as a mere facilitator of learning:

> The image of the robot vacuum cleaner actually provides a rather accurate image of learning-focused education, where teachers are not there to impart knowledge to students but are seen as designers of learning environments that set particular tasks for learners, but where it is for learners, through interaction with learning environments, to reconstruct their patterns of action and thought (p. 424).

The actions of teachers I have described in this dissertation bear nothing in common with the work of a robot vacuum cleaner. I have related moments in which Gene, Kelsey, Lin, Mirella, and Annie engaged directly with students, athletes, or apprentices, in an effort to help them understand history, improve their racing time, or learn culinary techniques. Each teacher's past study and experience inform their instruction in their area of expertise. At the same time, through their intentional efforts to teach concrete content, I saw these teachers offer their students, athletes, and apprentices something more: personal gifts. These gifts appeared through the teaching of content, embedded in but transcending the economy of exchange proper to each pedagogical space. In the narratives I have related in this dissertation, teachers appear neither as "sages on a stage," engaged in what Barr and Tagg (1995) call an antiquated "instruction paradigm" of education, nor do they embody the posture of "guides on the side," merely setting up the environment so that students can engage in meaning-making in the "learning paradigm" of education.[13] Rather, the teachers described in this dissertation embody a posture of being with students, directing their engagement with a shared object of attention. The teachers' posture is that of pointing, which emphasizes, on the one hand, their knowledge of and appreciation for the object they gesture toward and, on the other, the interpersonal nature of the act of directing another's gaze. Understanding teaching as an act of pointing demands that pedagogical

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[13] See Tagg (2003) for a more fully developed vision of what Barr and Tagg's Learning Paradigm might look like in college classrooms.

importance be given both to teachers' deep understanding and valuing of content and to teachers' ability to be present with and responsive to students as persons.

C.2 Persons who Teach

The importance of both singularity and embeddedness in teaching affirm Hansen's (1995) insistence that it is the person who teaches, not the role. It is the person of Kelsey who brings her experience as a professional runner and assistant coach to her work with athletes and is able to draw on that experience to direct her athletes' training and to understand the challenges, hopes, and fears they face. It is the person of Annie who brings her own struggle to understand that corrections, in the kitchen, are not judgments, to her work with Callie, helping the apprentice grapple with the same lesson. It is the person of Mirella whose decades of experience working in the kitchen inform her pedagogical efforts to help apprentices notice ways that they can communicate care through their work, unlocking its personal and formative dimension. Each of these persons, through their teaching, offer what they have to their students: their technical expertise, the lessons they have drawn from experience, their ways of seeing and valuing others. Teaching appears, in a robust sense, as an act of self-giving. Developing as a teacher, therefore, involves developing oneself. Teacher education must, in this view, integrally concern what Hansen (2021) calls "ethical self-cultivation" (p. 136), or what Furman and Traugh (2021) refer to as "care of the self" (p. 41).

The self-formation of teachers is multifaceted and ongoing. Like the self-cultivation of the witness, the ethical self-cultivation of the teacher involves learning to see, be present with, and respond to students with ever greater attentiveness. Learning to see, be present with, and respond to students are not benchmarks to be met, but, rather, name orienting ideals that guide a

teacher's ongoing movement. Rodgers (2020) describes the ideal of presence in teaching as having "no arrival point:"

> No one can be fully present to all these things, 100% of the time. There is too much, especially in a classroom, to be present to— too much to get done, too many problems to solve in the moment. There is no arrival point in teaching when we are the best teacher. We struggle toward full vision and a full response, but never achieve either completely (p. 10).

In addition to there being "no arrival point" at which a teacher can satisfactorily say that they have achieved presence or learned to see, so, too, is there no end to the expertise and experience that a person who teaches can bring to their classroom and which can then be offered to students as part of the teacher's gift of self. Sometimes, the passing on of expertise may be planned, as when I saw Kelsey adapt a workout her coach had designed for her when she was training for Olympic trials to use for her team's practice. Other times, communication of experience arises spontaneously, as when Kelsey responded to Manni's struggle to know how to pace himself in races by sharing the trajectory she followed to learn that skill during her collegiate years. Still other times, aspects of the teacher's person will shine through their actions in an unplanned and perhaps even unintentional way. Kelsey's spontaneous laughter comes to mind in this regard. The person of the teacher simply appears when the teacher is present with students.

Understanding that it is the person, and not the role, who teaches opens expansive avenues for ongoing teacher formation and professional development. The study of humanities, for example, by which a person encounters other and expansive perspectives, can serve as a powerful force for a teacher's deepening of their self, regardless of the discipline they teach. Hansen (2021) suggests that teachers develop "personal canons" made up of "novels, poems, paintings, musical works, film, and more" that "inspire, encourage, remind, and challenge them"

(p. 134). The study of such works will not (at least usually) directly inform teachers' classroom instruction, nor does it aim to do so. Rather, the practice of developing a personal canon arises from the understanding that a teacher is present in the classroom as a person—their person—and that who they are, inside and outside the classroom, will appear in their teaching.

As touched on in Chapter 1, the act of reading (along with acts of encountering other forms of art) appears phenomenologically as an act of teaching. Through reading, we encounter another person—the author—who enacts a gesture of pointing, inviting us to take up a new way of seeing ourselves and the world around us. We are invited not only to gain information, but to receive personal gifts, to become more ourselves. Thus, the teacher who takes up reading as a practice of self-cultivation opens themselves to learning from other teachers.

Furthermore, practices of self-cultivation such as developing a personal canon or practicing attentive presence through engaging in descriptive review are not meant to form an oppressive regimen of professional development by which teachers are given one more thing to do to improve their efficacy. Such practices are not merely or primarily instrumental and do not aim at achieving discreet learning outcomes in the classroom. Rather, they invite teachers to travel avenues of personal growth by which they can expand their vision of the world, others, and themselves.

It has been my aim, in this dissertation, to compellingly illustrate that teaching has a personal core; that teaching is a gift of self on the part of the teacher by which students are invited to become more themselves by receiving their teacher's perspective. There is, therefore, at the very heart of teaching, a dimension that is formative of persons. We are invited to become ourselves through the work of teachers. My hope is that the testimony I have rendered here helps

to illuminate the presence and importance of the formative work that teachers do, by which they offer students the gift of themselves.

C.3 The Meaning and Value of Bearing Witness to Teachers

Throughout this dissertation, I have endeavored both to enact and to articulate what it means to bear witness to teachers. As I have described, my understanding of bearing witness and of seeing my work as an effort to bear witness has been gradual and is ongoing. I will close by offering a few remarks and questions regarding the meaning and value of bearing witness to teachers that have emerged from engaging in this project.

I have taken up bearing witness as a way of doing research, as what Hansen (2018) calls a "mode of ethical inquiry" (p. 30). The formal research project that formed the heart of my inquiry was involved and long-term. I spent hundreds of hours contemplating teachers and getting to know them and the environments in which they work. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to spend so much time with teachers, and hope that the narratives I have related speak to the value of the insight that I gained through such extended encounters. However, I also acknowledge that devoting so much time to fieldwork is a rare privilege. Is spending hundreds of hours observing teachers a prerequisite to bearing witness? If so, is bearing witness a realistic orientation for scholars to take up? Might there be other ways of bearing witness to teachers besides engaging in long-term research projects?

I have come to the conclusion, through carrying out this project, that bearing witness is a notion that is both general and generative. In Chapter 2, in addition to describing the distinguishing features Hansen ascribes to bearing witness, I have retrospectively characterized the work of other scholars such as Jackson (1968) and Fenstermacher (2001) as bearing witness because their work embodies those features. A witness, in my understanding, seeks deep

knowledge or ethical truth through the contemplation of persons and endeavors to illuminate that truth for others to see, recognize, and revere. Such work can be undertaken by a scholar who, as I have done, spends ample time with teachers. However, scholarship does not strike me as the only way to bear witness to teachers. Hansen (2021) points to the possibility of "witness-mentors" being present in schools to accompany, support, and sustain teachers and the practice of teaching itself, and posits that many teacher-mentors undoubtedly embody the spirit of a witness already (pp. 138-9). Such persons would spend time observing teachers with a view to offering them an additional perspective through which to see and respond to daily happenings in their classroom. Hansen emphasizes the importance of witness-mentors holding frequent conversations with teachers as well as paying frequent visits to their classrooms (p. 139). The ongoing nature of the witness-mentor's work stresses that, while they may be charged with evaluating teachers, this evaluation comes second to and follows from seeing and knowing teachers well. The witness-mentor would seem, in my view, to engage in an ongoing attempt to, in the words of the masters at Rosewood, "see the whole" in their work with their colleagues; by striving to appreciate, ever more fully, the rich complexity and singularity of each teacher and of each classroom.

I find the proposal of witness-mentors a promising one, and can imagine various school personnel—administrators, curriculum developers, etc.—taking up this role. I can also imagine that members of a school's staff who are not teachers, such as nurses, secretaries, or custodial staff, might serve as witnesses to teachers.[14] In these cases, the witness would not aim at evaluating teachers, but, rather, would focus on simply seeing teachers work and conversing with them about what they have seen. My work in this project has shown me that sharing a

[14] Naturally, in order for this to be possible, school administrators would need to work time into these staff members' schedules for them to devote to classroom visits and conversations with teachers.

professional identity with a teacher is not necessary to serve as a witness, although the would-be-witness must, it seems to me, care about the work of that profession and strive to deepen their understanding of it. I am neither a coach nor a chef, and therefore offered no advice about how Kelsey or the professionals at Rosewood could improve their practice, yet my experience suggests that the teachers I witnessed nevertheless found my efforts to see and articulate the personal core of their work valuable. Considering what makes bearing witness valuable for practitioners can, I think, open expansive possibilities for considering how the orientation might be taken up in practice.

The moments I have witnessed and related in narrative form in this dissertation bespeak the value of being seen. I have described times when I saw Gene, Kelsey, Lin, Mirella, and Annie see and respond to students, athletes, or apprentices as persons, thereby offering them new perspectives through which to see the content of their study and themselves. In many cases, the experience of being seen invited students, athletes, or apprentices to appreciate their own dignity: seeing, for example, their value beyond their performance; experiencing themselves as delighted in; knowing themselves to be trusted. I witnessed how these instances of being seen can have a vivifying effect on students. I saw Kelsey's women's team, for instance, develop the habit of thanking their coach after practice, and witnessed how Kelsey's delight in her team encourages expressions of spontaneity and at-homeness among her athletes. At Rosewood, the resolution Kiera made following her cake-baking foibles powerfully attests to the vivifying power of being seen: "I need to make sure that I take in every single little piece of knowledge that's offered me, with the attitude: 'Yes! This is gold!' Because it IS gold." Far from being discouraged by her mistakes, Kiera expressed enthusiasm, appreciation, and renewed dedication in response to the experience of being seen.

I have presented bearing witness as an orientation attuned to seeing persons. Thus, I consider a prominent value of bearing witness to teachers to be the animating and encouraging impact that the witness's work of seeing can have on teachers themselves. A primary aim of bearing witness, as I understand it, is to show teachers to themselves: to offer them a close, third-person perspective through which they can see, appreciate, remember, and revere the great dignity of their work. Such has been my intention in endeavoring to bear witness to the personal core of teaching. I have sought to remind the teachers I have worked with, first and foremost, of the depth of meaning that is present at the core of teaching and which they touch in their seemingly ordinary encounters with students. I hope, through my writing, to remind other teachers of this as well.

If, as my project suggests, being seen as a person has a vivifying effect, then bearing witness to teachers promises to serve as an encouraging and enlivening force in educational practice. Earl's account of having Hansen present as witness in his classroom speaks to this effect (Hansen, 2021, pp. 83-4). Comments from the teachers I worked with throughout this project likewise suggest the positive power of being seen. After reading an early version of a narrative about an afternoon at practice, Kelsey wrote to me: "I really loved reading that section. Your reflection on that interaction and your time observing is striking me. I think you're seeing more than I know is there, but it's definitely real." Likewise, Renee described an early draft of writing about Rosewood as touching "a certain 'core' truth," and added, "We are really struggling with identity issues right now, and this is the type of thing that really helps."

In my view, a primary purpose of the witness is to, as Kelsey puts it, help teachers to "see more" by offering an additional perspective through which to see themselves and their work. In an era in which teachers of all guises face "identity issues," exacerbated by trends in policy that

reduce education to the realm of technical exchange, directing teachers' attention toward the dignity and meaning embedded in the work they do is a good in itself, and one that promises to have a positive effect on teachers' practice. Just as teachers, by seeing students, can offer them gifts that encourage a response of freedom and spontaneity, so, too, might a witness—someone who earnestly seeks to see teachers as persons and to show them to themselves—spark a movement of renewed vigor, enthusiasm, and dedication among teachers in a school.

This promise makes bearing witness to teachers a fundamentally positive endeavor. In attending to the personal core of teaching in this dissertation, I do not suggest that all educators enact personal encounters in their work. Some, unfortunately, see their work solely as an act of exchange and thus eliminate the possibility of interpersonal encounters of the kind described in this dissertation. All, undoubtedly, sometimes neglect the personal dimension of their work in the face of external demands, stress, or any number of other limiting factors. The witness would do well to be attentive to moments of exchange and of gift and to discuss such moments with the teacher. A witness must not be blind to instances—familiar to every teacher—in which interactions with students fail to touch teaching's personal core. However, in my view, bearing witness to teachers as persons must first and foremost involve attending to and pointing toward moments in which, perhaps unbeknownst to the teacher themselves, the personal core of teaching appears. My work in this project has convinced me that showing such moments to teachers, and thereby illuminating the dignity, magnitude, and beauty of their work, promises to have a deep and vivifying impact on teachers and teaching.

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Appendix A

Teacher	Professional Title	Educational Environment	Years of Professional Experience	Observation Hours
Gene	History and Philosophy Teacher	Urban Public High School	27 years	750
Kelsey	Director of Cross Country, Track and Field	NCAA Division I College	11 years	200
Mirella	Master Chef	Apprenticeship Kitchen	52 years	200*
Lin	Master Chef	Apprenticeship Kitchen	40 years	200*
Annie	Master Chef	Apprenticeship Kitchen	14 years	200*
Renee	Program Director	Apprenticeship Kitchen	36 years	n/a

*I spent a total of 200 hours observing the work carried out at Rosewood, where Mirella, Lin, and Annie all work.