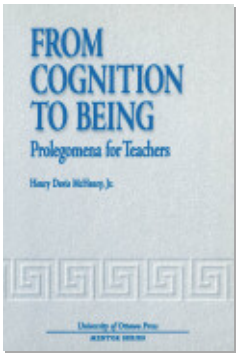
7. HERMENEUTIC CIRCLING AND THE PRAGMATIC ONTOLOGY OF ENCOUNTER



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HERMENEUTIC CIRCLING AND THE PRAGMATIC ONTOLOGY OF ENCOUNTER

> Language as *saying* is an ethical openness to the other; as that which is *said*—reduced to a fixed identity or synchronized presence—it is an ontological closure to the other.
>
> —Emmanuel Levinas[1]

> ...as teachers learning along with those we try to provoke to learn, we may be able to inspire hitherto unheard voices... Such a project demands the capacity to unveil and disclose. It demands the exercise of imagination, enlivened by works of art, by situations of speaking and making... We need to teach in such a way as to arouse passion now and then; we need a new camaraderie, a new en masse. These are dark and shadowed times, and we need to live them, standing before one another, open to the world.
>
> —Maxine Greene[2]

> Because it is address, attending always on the response of the addressed, infinite speech has the form of listening. Infinite speech does not end in the obedient silence of the hearer, but continues by way of the attentive silence of the speaker. It is not a silence into which speech has died, but a silence from which speech is born.
>
> —James P. Carse[3]

In this final chapter we will begin to construct, in the vocabulary of Saying, a set of techniques for conducting schoolwork (leading it together)

as being together and inventing. We will be exploring the "saying" and the "said," asking what is the *practical* difference between "ethical openness" and "ontological closure." To what extent do we teachers, as bringers forth, practice "infinite speech"? What is there in our silence, our listening, that calls forth the speech of our students, and how and what does it call forth? If, as Heidegger says, speaking and listening are the same, how does my speakinglistening provide the clearing in which is born Dustin's speech, imitating, mocking, or inventing? How does his provide for mine? How are the character, mood, and feel of the space between us, or the space in a classroom, given? What is there about a "situation of speaking and making" that can bring us into one another's presence, open to the world?

Now that we have, by re-inventing the wheel of Saying, shifted our listening away from one that seeks and expects structured knowledge toward one that invites the being-together of inventing, we may move on to consider some possibilities of operating in the new environment—which, you will note when you wake up tomorrow, is the same old environment. How can a car built thirty years ago be a new car? How can an education system built on a model at least a hundred years old give birth to an ever original mode of speaking and listening in which schooling is the opportunity for inquiry and shared creation? Having spent all this time driving a wedge into the log of algorithmic teaching, the procedural model of instruction, and moving toward what I hesitate to call a model at all, for fear that it will induce imitation (that is, more algorithmic teaching) instead of invention—I am now in a position to rejoin the two. The aim is to make room in the heart of instruction for inventing. In our best moments together in a classroom, we said, because of the being together that has arisen among us, students discover meaning and purpose in material new to them: then cognition and invention are inseparable. What we need, as teachers and as students, is to find ourselves in that environment which is not a surrounding, like a decorated room, but like an atmosphere, a breathing-space. Then, even if the procedures we transact remain as procedures, they are now shot through, interpenetrated with relation, with *greeting*: cognition immersed in being.

So the questions begin to pile up. In Part One: What is articulation? How does it work? Are we articulate because we know, or do we know because we dwell in an articulation? And now: how does the articulation we dwell in mesh with the possibilities we have available for being and for being related? What is a more powerful artifice for being? What would a heuristic for being together look like? To propose an answer, one more idea.

Just as I remember the moment in my graduate school class when my teacher presented for us Saussure's idea of the arbitrariness of the sign, I

recall another idea from that course, the concept of hermeneutic circle. *Hermeneutic* means "of interpretation"—Hermes being the Olympian god who brings messages from the beyond to mortals. When you get the meaning of something, when the light bulb over your head lights up and you say "Aha, so that's it!", you have been visited by Hermes. The hermeneutic circle is a description of a logical peculiarity that characterizes this moment of illumination, the arrival of the message, the act of understanding anything. We should now re-invent the idea of the hermeneutic circle, as it bears not only on cognition or understanding, but also on the provision of that breathing-space of being related.

So first the logical peculiarity. When you understand something, what happens? You get the point, the idea becomes clear, the message arrives: but what is going on when that happens? Here, I hope, is a familiar example. You are in the car on the highway, driving straight and fast, and as you crest a tiny rise there appears below you, in the middle of the road, a pond of water, a lake shimmering in the sun. As your foot touches the brake pedal, you realize in a flash: but it hasn't been raining... maybe there's a flooded creek in the next bottom... oh, I know, it's a mirage! As if three successive realizations had crystallized into one instant, jerking your foot off the accelerator and in almost the same moment keeping it from pressing the brake. In the "first," your sense impression is of a suddenly appearing lake. (Notice that this is Lockean vocabulary: knowledge coming out of sequential sense impression, input. Descartes, at first, would speak of your sudden "judgment" of the lake, making you responsible, at least in part, for the perception.) In the first interpretation of the "data," what flashes in your apprehension, maybe, is "water" or "lake."

But here is the question: did you get the data first, or the meaning first? We cannot assign priority here: the "flash" is data and meaning instantaneously together, and here is the logical peculiarity, the circularity. There is not a one-way causal relationship between data and meaning—first the data, then the interpretation. Rather, the so-called sense data *arise along with an interpretation*. When "lake" springs to clarity, it organizes a whole system of visual and tactile values, a cluster like X/Y/Z/A/B/Q/R...: light reflects off smooth surface/color of surface contrasts with surroundings/water seeks its own level/traction fails on wet roads/... That is, a perception is a relationship between parts and a whole which they comprise; but the parts are not there first, so that they can combine one by one into the whole; and neither is the whole available before the parts that come with it. A perception *is* a part-whole relationship; it is an articulation. Articulation is when jointed parts arise together, remember.[4] The system and its values arise together, making each other up. There cannot *be* parts unless they are jointed into some relationship, even if the relationship is one of disjunction, like a spilled jigsaw puzzle; no pieces without a

picture of which to be pieces; nor, conversely, a whole without parts. When jointed parts arise together in articulation, a hermeneutic circle has arrived and departed, leaving behind a background, a relationship between text and context.

Can we think of a room without walls? A sentence without words, a word without letters? Words without a sentence, yes; but words without a whole language in which sentences also occur? Hardly. Same for letters. There is no such thing as one letter—at least as a *letter* rather than an insignificant mark—any more than there is one word. What there is are systems of letters, words; articulations in whose use meaning occurs; language-games. What we mortals have at our disposal is the power of distinction. Or perhaps we *are* that power. Perception is distinctioning, more like Descartes' judging than like Locke's passive receiving of imprints.[5]

In this example, as I have partly remembered it from my own experience and partly made it up, the first hermeneutic circle includes "lake" or "pond" or "water." This piece, this judgment, instantly fits together with "road" and "fast" and "slippery," say, and with a million other perceptions and memories; all these together make up an interpretation, a relationship between parts and whole, "data" and meaning. "Whoa!" the interpretation says. "We're going too fast to make it through a puddle!" In the "next" instant, though it comes almost simultaneously with the first, the jigsaw puzzle is spilled and disorganized: how could there be water if it hasn't been raining? The lobes of those pieces—the fact of what appears to be water and the fact of no rain—do not join. This is still a hermeneutic circle, though; the message it brings is that further facts must be added to the picture, and the pieces re-arranged, re-joined, so the picture will make sense. But for now it appears as a disjointed picture. Perhaps this "second" hermeneutic circle slows your foot as it starts on its sudden trip to the brake pedal, as if a little bit of hypothesis-testing had occurred almost along with the flash of the first hypothesis, the first meaning, the first "impression." I hope by now the Lockean vocabulary of sense data that arrive uninterpreted and are impressed onto the *tabula rasa* is beginning to appear as, exactly, a vocabulary: one possible way of articulating things. But it is a way that cuts off the "impressed data" from the interpretation where they appear, without which they cannot appear.

Then the third "hypothesis" suggests itself—a flooded creek around here? Again the pieces of the puzzle would coalesce, crystallize into a clear picture; except that now the final hypothesis arrives, the one that gets accepted as relating all the parts into a coherent whole. Of course, I should have known—it's a mirage, like the ones I've seen plenty of times before!

Two things ought to be noticed about this "sequence" of nearly simultaneous events. First, it is not solely a matter of arriving at a true

interpretation, the correct cognition of the sense data. For your actions, too, are elicited, almost without your control, pre-consciously. With a quick reflex, your foot is pulled off the accelerator toward the brake. Again, I am making this up as an illustration. Maybe your foot would be more reasonable. But can you think of cases like it where the reflexive, non-thinking or pre-thinking character of your actions is obvious? Suppose I threw a chair in your direction when you weren't expecting it, or a book, an actual, physical, heavy dictionary—say, a volume of the *OED*—coming at you through the air. Would your hands fling themselves up to catch or deflect it? What happens when I fling etymologies at you?

The second thing to notice is that you do arrive, in a split second perhaps, at an interpretation that satisfies you. But why does the one that gets accepted satisfy you? What is it about that one that marks it as correct, so that you proceed with confidence in the scene it delivers? For is it not with the first circle, just as with the final one, that the parts, the data, are integrated by a whole, a meaning? Why does the scene given in one part/whole composition contain, as it were, a seed of doubt that uncloses the circle so that a new circle may form? Indeed, why does a spilled jigsaw puzzle—since that too is a part/whole circle—usually not satisfy you? (And are there times when the spilled puzzle is exactly what you want?) What is the difference between a hermeneutic circle that works—a hypothesis, a guess that promises to be fruitful—and one that doesn't? Is it that one "fits the facts" better? If the data come into being only in the presence of an interpretation, then outside that interpretation there are no facts to fit![6]

So where does this "fit" come from, this picture that combines thought and perception and action? Do the three successive-simultaneous hermeneutic circles progress from least to most representative of natural facts? Rain puddle——>flooded creek——>mirage: is this the window of representation getting progressively clearer? Certainly, one of these hypotheses accords better with our previous experience and knowledge of facts. Then where does our previous experience and knowledge come from? Do we accept the notion nowadays that the Earth is round because we have better evidence than the ancients? Do *I* have that evidence, personally? No. It is not even that I hear that the Earth is round, that I see the rain puddle or the mirage: I *have heard* that it is round, maybe seen some bit of the evidence and reasoning that supports the proposition. I *have seen* the mirage, plenty of times before. As an interpretation from the past, it is now one of those anchors that hold fast for me, its flukes dug into the sea floor. As part of my language, now, it looks as if it *had* to exist. A mirage is now a represented structure, and looks as if it had to exist! Even as I drive along by myself, there is something off here. I am not talking with anybody, but language is giving me a world, a system of fittings, each one

held in place by those that surround it. There is some vicious circle at work here, in this polyreflex of fittings.

A classroom, for all its presumptive emphasis on knowledge acquisition, is pre-eminently a social place. Unlike the automobile with a sole driver, it envelops its occupants in company, and thus in colloquy. Inevitably, the learning in a classroom occurs in a social field, is born out of a social matrix. What does the magnetic field of being together in a shared space have to do with hermeneutic circles—particularly with vicious ones?

When I taught introduction to literary interpretation in the eleventh grade, part of my purpose was to give students practice in carefully supporting their own ideas about what a literary work means, paying close attention to the significant features of the text, examining its details to see how and why they fit together. This kind of activity is new to most students at this level; they are accustomed to clearly demarcated standards of right and wrong, handed down from previous teachers' superior authority or from textbooks. It is important that much of their previous scholastic experience has occurred in "content" courses—especially sciences—where the teacher's superior position is associated with his broader and deeper command of a body of knowledge. My course was not intended to teach the content of pre-formed structures of knowledge, but instead the skill of creating these structures, so if most students were to understand the nature and purposes of many of the course activities, the paradigm by which they would usually operate—their stereotype of the teacher and of schooling in general—had to shift. They had somehow to get into a different hermeneutic circle, where the parts—the class activities, homework, tests, etc.—appeared as contributions to a different whole.

I could talk about the various aspects of a text scholars and critics must consider in formulating an interpretation, but my talk would be wasted unless the students knew how to take it, how to use it, what to do with it. And this is never a matter of their knowing something. You can always tell, can you not, when your lecture, or your attempt to start discussion, or even the discussion you have started, is going right out the window? In a diary I made for a class I taught once, I find: "[I was] not in my class today. Sense of dislocation, disconnection, like I was a talking statue, a curiosity to be observed, not a presence to be lived with." You can sense when students are engaged with you in what you are saying, just as Dustin can always tell when I am listening to him and when I am not. When I am open for business, ready to set forth on an expedition, I can feel him listening and he can feel me listening. We can travel together. But unless the compass needle, swayed by that unseen magnetic field, keeps pointing North, no journey can occur.

Rather than entering now onto a systematic prescription of ways to generate that magnetic field of listening, or to keep it going, I want to ask

you to listen for something that is not a system, not a prescription, not an answer to the question "How do I...?" We are talking about a classroom as a social place, a place in which people *be* together, for a purpose or at cross-purposes, a place where we are interested, first and foremost, not in what is being taught and what is being learned, but rather in how the students and teacher are being together. For the way of their being together is the medium in which will grow the possibility not only of their instruction but, *a forteriori*, of their education. It is not a question of *making* the compass point North. If Dustin is not open for business, I cannot be, either. In telling you my war stories, then, I am not presenting techniques or recommendations. I am listening, even as I write and re-write, for ways in which I am called to be, by and with my students. Trying to catch a whiff of mutuality, I am listening *from* the question that Heidegger raises and Buber deepens: what is being-with?

To shift the paradigm, the set of expectations and rules and heuristics that the students brought with them into the classroom, to bring their hermeneutic circles into service so that I could begin a new journey with them, I would begin the first class with a dittoed handout, an item with particular significance in the society of that school. Because of its social history—teachers of the lower grades had used it as a device for distributing text materials in parcels suited to their courses—it had a role in generating the schema with which students began to understand my course, the hermeneutic circle that occurred as they walked into my classroom.[7] The tenth-grade English teacher (to take the most pertinent example) would issue a weekly "Error Sheet," a compendium of grammatical gaffes and clumsy diction from student writing, which he would correct with students as a class exercise. The ERROR SHEET, so called in capital letters, activated the old accustomed paradigm of teacher-corrects-student, or teacher-supplies-correct-information, so students automatically knew how to use it, or to ignore it. The function of a cognitive schema is to provide for automaticity.

But the Error Sheet worked in other ways, too. Since the author of each error was identified by name, and because there was a certain notoriety in having one's work displayed ("making the Error Sheet") as well as in not making it, my colleague's handout embodied students' feeling of participating in the course. In the hands of this particular teacher, the Error Sheet was a powerful tool; *he* could use it, with laughter and a little irony, to elicit a community that valued improvements in writing.

At the beginning of my course, the handout consisted of several verbal puzzles and a Doonesbury cartoon, followed by two short poems (see Figure 7.1).

The office was cool because the windows were closed.

The trip was not delayed because the bottle shattered.

The haystack was important because the cloth ripped.

* * *

Watching a Peace March from the fortieth floor?

The view was breathtaking. From the window one could see the crowd below. Everything looked extremely small from such a distance, but the colorful costumes could still be seen. Everyone seemed to be moving in one direction in an orderly fashion and there seemed to be little children as well as adults. The landing was gentle and luckily the atmosphere was such that no special suits had to be worn. At first there was a great deal of activity. Later, when the speeches started, the crowd quieted down. The man with the television camera took many shots of the setting and the crowd. Everyone was very friendly.

* * *

"Doonesbury" cartoon strip:

Zonker: Boy, Thomas Hobbes was right. Life is nasty, brutish, and short.
Mike: Zonker, I think you're making too big a deal of this.
Zonker: Where do we have to go, anyway?
Mike: The Post Office.
Zonker: The Post Office, The Post Office is in charge of registering everybody?
Mike: Right.
Zonker: I feel better already.
Mike: I told you there was nothing to worry about.

* * *

Kisses

Give me the food that satisfies a guest;
Kisses are but dry banquets to a feast.

* * *

Heaven-Haven

I have desired to go
  Where Springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
  And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
  Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
  And out of the swing of the sea.

The office was cool because the windows were closed.

The trip was not delayed because the bottle shattered.

The haystack was important because the cloth ripped.

Watching a peace march from the fortieth floor:

The view was breathtaking. From the window one could see the crowd below. Everything looked extremely small from such a distance, but the colorful costumes could still be seen. Everyone seemed to be moving in one direction in an orderly fashion and there seemed to be little children as well as adults. The landing was gentle and luckily the atmosphere was such that no special suits had to be worn. At first there was a great deal of activity. Later, when the speeches started, the crowd quieted down. The man with the television camera took many shots of the setting and the crowd. Everyone was very friendly.

Give me the food that satisfies a guest;
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Heaven-Haven

I have desired to go
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And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

The meaning of each "text" is not clear until someone supplies the proper context, or a perspective in which it makes sense. One of my puzzles, for example, asks what imaginable state of affairs the following sentence could be describing:

The haystack was important because the cloth ripped.

At the beginning of the course it is usually the teacher who supplies the missing context—the cloth is a parachute—and this fits again into the superior teacher paradigm. But imaginative students will often find a different interpretation, especially if I ask for it. Maybe the cloth is a guerilla's tent containing plans for a surprise raid, into which a spy for our side has cut his way, undetected because of the adjacent haystack. Now we are in a place where paradigm shift can occur. I point to the fact that differing interpretations have arisen, and ask which is better. In the space of our being together around my handout—which started out like the space of being together around the Error Sheet—this is now a new question, to be answered not with information supplied by the teacher but with inventing from the students.

Now we need criteria for judging relative merit. And what is pedagogically important here is the character of our need, the quality of the space in which our need for criteria has arisen, not (at first) the merits of whatever criteria might be proposed. In the hermeneutic circling of the classroom—the already givenness, the interpretive inertia, the way people have already learned to do school—there is now the possibility of a listening for invention. This listening offers, in Carse's words, a silence that makes the speech of others possible. There is now the possibility not only of hermeneutic circling but also of being together, of being-with. In this space we can invent together not only interpretations but criteria for judging interpretations. There is now the possibility, at least, that the compass will point North.

Sometimes, though, what rushes in to fill the slight vacuum that has been created is whatever criterion of judgment is always already present in a particular culture of students. In my school, the funnier or more outlandish interpretation would usually take over the attention of the class. I might have tried to change this automatic criterion *per dictum*, following the old superior-teacher paradigm. But in order to decide between readings, both of which might now earn credit, we can pay the kind of close attention to the text that I was aimimg to teach, that critical care for details contributing to meanings that I want to let appear. I ask whether the phrase "the cloth ripped" implies an unintended and unforeseen event, or an adroitly executed step in a careful plan. Now there is the opening for a consensus (*con* + *sentire*, to feel together), an answer that is

not delivered and received but invented together and thus owned. The possibility of being together has made ownership possible.

To develop the same opening in a conversation about a literary text, I ask at the end of my Interpretation Sheet who the speaker might be in Hopkins' poem "Heaven-Haven." (I omit the telltale subtitle: "A Nun Takes the Veil.") Heaven being a popular metaphor for the easy life, my students will usually decide that we are hearing in this poem from a weary sailor longing for dry land. In the speaking and listening of the society of interpretation that is my classroom, this kind of "heaven" resonates with the gloss on "haven" as a harbor, as well as with the final line of the poem, in which the speaker wants to remove himself from "the swing of the sea." When I reveal Hopkins' subtitle (sometimes after filling out the weary sailor interpretation as convincingly as I can and then announcing "I have misled you") there is new information about the poem available, but it is available now in a particular way. The new information has a certain character; we feel an inclination to use it in a certain way, to incorporate it into our conversation, to honor it according to the space of our being together.

It is true that the space of the classroom at that point might be named "You tricked us!" Sometimes the students would give voice to that feeling, and I then had the opportunity of speaking into that listening, their listening that maybe I had tricked them, that now I was going to give them the *real* answer to what the poem means. What they got, they might be thinking, was incomplete information, and what rushed in to fill the vacuum was something they made up about my intentions, or something ready-made for them by the culture of schooling, say. "Teachers are really just out to trip us up and make us feel stupid." "Does that ready-made space prevent you from using the exercise for yourselves?" I could ask.

But in the space of an invitation to play, to invent, my use of the Interpretation Sheet provides an opportunity, an inclination toward careful re-reading of the poem to make all the images fit. In light of the subtitle, the sea and the harbor that linked it to dry land have *become* metaphorical. Now, it might be said that they were always metaphorical, and the metaphoricity has just now been revealed by the teacher who knows and is at long last telling his students what he has known all along. That is indeed the space of trickery. But now there is another possibility available. The Interpretation Sheet, like its predecessor the Error Sheet, has provided for another way of seeing the "data"; it has allowed for the transformation of the facts of the poem. The new facts about the poem—and *all* of them are new, now—have become metaphorical, now that the possibility of metaphor has arisen *between us*. Metaphor, like humor, is a between-us phenomenon. In the space of metaphor, we can now embark

on the first large unit, on lyric poetry, which one student called the "boot camp" of the course. (I think it was this same student who said in astonishment, "Mr. McHenry, you never *tell* us anything!")

Later in the course, when the question arises whether, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Stanley or Blanche is to be blamed more, we may summon out of the background this space of invitation to a dialogue in which the text gets created and owned by us, a space in which debate about the interpretation of the play can bear the fruit of engagement. At the beginning of the play, Blanche's behavior looks like snobbery, as she holds herself aloof from the raffish Elysian Fields. Then, as she disparages Stanley and Stella for a sexual appetite that we know is healthier than her own, it looks like hypocrisy. Then, as Stanley rapes her, she seems a victim of her own compulsions, not a free agent to be held responsible for her behavior. Though my students usually liked this play, most seemed to stop interpreting it at the first or second of these stages, rarely seeing in the final scenes anything to change the moral that snobs and hypocrites get their just deserts. But in the space of the Interpretation Sheet, they have experienced that they can participate by fitting all the evidence together in different ways, with the purpose of finding the most persuasive accounting for it. In this space of invitation to dialogic play, the drama of Stanley and Blanche becomes more than a soap opera with stock caricatures and predestined plot. It becomes a locus of sharing, of invention.

So what about the test? After all, that is the question already always in the background of whatever happens in the classroom, is it not? How am I going to be graded on this? In the space of transmitted knowledge, grading is easy for both teachers and students, because a structure of information, since it is a structure, persists, stands up to examination. How does the space of shared inventing allow for distinctions between right and wrong answers? Certainly students can be expected to share the common knowledge, say, that a sonnet has sixteen lines, divided into octave and sestet or quatrains and couplet. But in what context are we to teach this? In what way are we to let it appear as a fact, an item to be known?

One design that worked with my students was a modified multiple-choice test. There were three types of question; in the first, students read a short poem and chose from five statements the one that best expressed the poem's meaning. A second type of question asked them to divide a short poem into the sections that best accorded with its meaning. The poem might be a sonnet, and the answer choices would include a division into octave and sestet, or quatrains and couplet. In a third type of question, students would read an excerpt from a work they had studied, think how it fit the author's purpose and pattern of ideas in the whole work, and then choose from four phrases the one that best expressed the most im-

portant connection of ideas made by the passage given. In a multiple-choice test, there is one most correct answer for every question, and I constructed the answer choices and scored the test according to this model. But I immersed this standard, expected structure in another context by requiring students to justify their choice of answer. A well-written and persuasive justification earned full credit, even if the answer chosen was not the most correct one (and some credit was deducted for "correct" answers that were poorly justified).

What is the space that this test helps to articulate? In the classes in which I used it, it supported a shift in the paradigm of knowledge: from the private use of memory to the art of interpreting persuasively, from a binary standard—right or wrong answers—to "infinite speech." It called for argument between us, for the colloquy of interpretation. Since this kind of discussion of the texts has a sharper edge than finding out what a dead poet had to say about life, most students were engaged in it, and I supported their engagement by encouraging them to re-argue orally those answers that did not get full credit. About half the time they would persuade me that their answer deserved more credit, and in half the other cases I would persuade them that it did not. But in any case they usually came to see that the new kind of problem on the test was a genuine one; the chance to raise their grade lured most students to try the new paradigm. Re-arguing for credit was a bit of angling that worked not because of the structure of ideas in the text material or the test question, but because of the possibilities of the social situation, the space in which the ideas were placed. It was a space that, by calling for invention, allowed for our being together powerfully.

What else about that eleventh-grade course contributed to the articulation of a powerful space? What else in the hermeneutic circling of that classroom gave me the possibility of listening for the students' authentic participation in encounters with literature? Here is something else that happened.

After the Interpretation Sheet, and then the lyric poetry "boot camp," we would read my favorite book, Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*. It opens with these two sentences:

> Behind the smokehouse that summer, Ringo and I had a living map. Although Vicksburg was just a handful of chips from the woodpile and the river a trench scraped into the packed earth with the point of a hoe, it (river, city, and terrain) lived, possessing even in miniature that ponderable though passive recalcitrance of topography which outweighs artillery, against which the most brilliant of victories and the most tragic of defeats are but the loud noises of a moment.[8]

Though mild by the standard of later works in their squinting, layered density, this passage presents, in theme and technique, the opportunity to encounter the authentic Faulkner. To make that encounter available to students, I began class once by noting a parallel between Faulkner's first two sentences and a familar classroom event. "When you come into a classroom," I began, "you sometimes find the teacher writing on the blackboard, maybe an outline or a list of things to be covered that class period. The teacher might start off like this: 'Today we'll be talking about the topics I've listed here, as they show up in the poem I gave you last time...' Right? He's doing straight exposition, speaking to you as a public audience, and you're listening for certain kinds of things, too; you're listening for a sequence of ideas, for logical relations. You're listening to that outline, ready to transfer it to your notes. But then after he's started, the teacher begins thinking to himself about the implications of what he's saying, maybe feeling a private emotional significance in the poem, and he looks out the window for a moment while he's talking. His voice changes a little, and you can tell now that he's not addressing you in the same way. Now he's talking more to himself than to you; and you're listening in a different way, too—for different kinds of meaning."

By now my students were indeed listening intently, because the outline had become a personal matter in the space between us, and I could make the transition: "That's just what happens in the first two sentences of this book: Faulkner starts off with a very conventional opening for a story, almost a 'once upon a time,' and then in the second sentence his gaze turns inward; he looks back over the whole long calamity of the Civil War from his perspective as an old Southerner, and he's not just telling his story to you any more, he's thinking to himself about its significance." The next question—"What do you think that significance is?"—leads naturally to Faulkner's sense that human striving is inevitably subject to repeated defeat, and thence to one of his central metaphors, that of flags in the dust. Within this developing context, speaking into our listening made manifest, I could then expand our perspective on the opening sentences by informing students that Faulkner's first novel was titled *Flags in the Dust* and by reading passages from later novels in which the same metaphor appears, and we could ask what Faulkner thinks about human flags: trivial, futile, noble?

Before I began designing classes around the sociality of invention, I had been starting off the first class on Faulkner with the question about metaphor: "Read the first two sentences, keeping in mind that Faulkner's first novel was titled *Flags in the Dust*. Where do you see this metaphor in the opening of the book?" Such a leap, from pre-class socializing to intellection, excluded all but those who already cared about metaphor and how it functions to embody feeling in a novel or a poem. Students less

well versed were tuned out of the class at the very outset because of my disregard of what I would have called the social conditioning of learning. Heidegger might have called it the Being-with of classroom talk. Buber might have fixed me with a challenging gaze and asked: "And where were *you* when you asked them about that metaphor?" It is not that the question itself excluded some of the students. At the beginning of particular classes, in my use of it, it had that effect. I am describing what I did with my students, and what I did may not address the problem you have with your students, at a particular classroom moment, in your school-community. There may be little power in my description as a tip or a technique that you can use, but there may be considerable power in noticing the listening in which any technique is used. The listening of each classroom (let us call it) is unique, depending as it does on Bakhtin's integral and unrepeatable authenticity of being with others. There may indeed be certain kinds of activity, certain designs, that are likely to work better than others. But whether they work depends at least as much on the character of the relatedness available in the classroom as it depends on the character of the technique itself. When you hear "model"—are you listening for a structure of parts, like a model airplane; or for a person?

The being-together of the classroom can never be accomplished by me, can never be accomplished without me. It is our being-with that makes the difference for our students, not just the structure of the activities and content of our classes. Indeed, we can say that the structure of a class comes out of the ongoing conversation deriving from the listening of teachers and students in concert. For techniques apart from our relatedness are empty. By itself, a technique may have no character at all. There can be no treat in a technique.

So the arrival of a hermeneutic circle is the provision, and the provisioning, of the space of our being together. The room it makes comes with furnishings, with a décor. As perception, it makes the Gestalt of figure and ground. As language, it organizes systems of values so as to "limit arbitrariness" (this is Saussure's phrase[9]) so that each value, each word, can appear to refer to some thing; thus it lets the world appear for us as a structured place in which prediction and control are possible. As a component of "the listening," it shapes the character of the space between us, conditioning what we give to and get from a classroom situation. As a continuous event, the arrival of the hermeneutic circle is described by two science teachers as the inter-relation of text and context, background and form, that occurs in our speaking:

> Every speech act occurs in a context, with a background shared by speaker and hearer... background is a pervasive and fundamental phenomenon. Background is the space of possibilities

> that allows us to listen to both what is spoken and what is unspoken... The background is not a set of propositions, but is our basic orientation of "care" for the world.[10]

In a book about computer design, here is a contribution to a new vocabulary of teaching. Let us expand on it. To get at the "basic orientation of *care*" with our students, what tools do we have? What access do we have to this phenomenon of "background," if we cannot use propositional handles in our customary descriptive way? If the philosophers are right, the phenomenon of background springs up along with our languaging, making it possible for us to listen and understand; and languaging is what occurs when the intuition *ego sum, ego existo* springs up along with our *naming*, our common humanity, our being-with-in-a-world, the judging or distinctioning we live in together.

So how can we get languaging, judging, distinctioning—*naming*—into the world of the classroom? Is it possible to *declare* an "orientation of care," to manage the arrival of spaces, of possibilities; or is our conversation always emprisoned in the hermeneutic circle, the structure of the past? The philosophers suggest that an art of background might dwell in the area of inventing a languaging. The rest of this chapter will be devoted not to questions, but to a proposal. If there are enough questions, enough inquiry in the background now, the context it provides will give what follows the character of a proposal, a putting forth for consideration. It is important that we hear it as a proposal rather than as advice; for only if it occurs as proposal can we engage with it as a possibility to be explored rather than an option to be evaluated. Only then will we be able to reinvent it for particular students in particular classrooms rather than use it as a standard procedure.

In the Harvard Educational Review, Maxine Greene reminds us of an ideal of caring, for people and for the world, that is at odds with the contemporary perspective. She envisions "a reaching out towards becoming *persons* among other persons, for all the talk of human resources, for all the orienting of education to the economy":

> To engage with our students as persons is to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces still to be explored, desires still to be tapped, possibilities still to be opened and pursued. At once, it is to rediscover the value of care, to reach back to experiences of caring and being cared for... as sources of an ethical ideal."[11]

Reaching back to experiences of care surely nurtures that reaching forward for possibilities that can so enliven a public discourse. But what I envision here is not so much the declaration of solicitude for the rights and feelings of individuals of different ethnicity or cultural provenance as

it is the prior possibility of establishing in a classroom a background of "infinite speech," an orientation of care in which speaking, languaging, occurs as the condition of freedom, that is, of ethical openness to others.

So I propose as follows. As teachers we have the opportunity to open and maintain conversations that make a difference for our students. As Ms. Greene suggests, conversation that makes a difference is an event of "unveiling and disclosing," a "situation of speaking and making," an ongoing work of art. What makes a difference is being engaged in inventing. The House of Being is one that, unlike language, can be *entered* together: for it is not a structure, but an invention. In other words, the context we want to set up for our students is probably not "doing schoolwork," for that is an exercise in language rather than languaging. What context, what background conditions the relatedness of teachers and students as they interact, as they use the materials, the worn books, the chalkboard, the video? What gives us our dwelling-place? What is the name of the space you inhabit with your students? The conversation for inventing, the conversation that enables engagement, dwells in four areas or realms of speakinglistening. These are: the realm of speaking the basic word I-You, in the face-to-face encounter; the realm of speculating, asking "what if...?"; the realm of promising, of pledging; and the realm of acting, performing. For the pragmatic ontology of the encounter to be fully functional, students and teacher must participate together in all these realms, if not simultaneously, at least in fair proximity.

After Dewey, such an ideal space might be called something like "learning through living." But even if that were the motto of an actual school, embossed beneath the shield on its coat of arms, say, what transpires in the classrooms, the dining hall and the dormitories of that school will always be pulled back into the realm of the objective, of the I and the It, of the I as an It. Hard as it is to surmount that "tortuously dual" twofold, we are working on bringing it about that we turn to each other in inventing, in Saying, opening the world to the touch of our living. As in the previous chapter we focused on a story about an encounter between a parent and child, here I am telling some stories from the sites of actual classrooms, hoping to show how the background of sharingnaming can be introduced even where social class and racial distances, all the incommensurabilities of cultural discourses, are the ineluctable foreground.

Except for five or six rows of synthetic-wood and tubular metal deskchairs, with wire notebook-size shelves beneath the seats, the classroom at first seems empty. Absent the students who will pour fitfully into the room next period, and the teacher who will arrive purposefully, cautious and expectant, the room exudes space, a space filled with qualities, attributes, predications. Of course the chairs, self-contained on their four legs and re-arrangeable, are not the only contents of the room that speak

these predications about the students and the kind of enterprise they will be expected to pursue when they get here: things written and drawn on the two chalkboard walls (assignments, perhaps); the television on a swivel shelf high in the corner; the teacher's desk jammed into the opposite corner. The third wall, separating the classroom from the hallway, consists of large panels of glass; inside the panels, tiny filaments of wire form a cross-hatch like a chicken-wire fence. Across most of the glass panels, taped paper signs and posters announce the school play, the visit of the representative from the yearbook manufacturing company or the class-ring salesman, interrupting the view into the corridor. (One poster is mounted to be read from the corridor as students pass by the classroom. It says "Free Knowledge: Bring Your Own Container.") Adjacent to the entrance door, part of the glass wall is obscured by a massive double-door cabinet, also of hard composite (resin-impregnated sawdust perhaps). On the opposite wall (made partly of some stuff to which notices can be pinned) a hip-high bookshelf contains some frayed paper workbooks, and textbooks with the pictures on their once-hard covers worn through and doodled on.

As I walk into the already brimming classroom, I am not blank, either. With my platform in hand, I am both worry and élan. I have been here twice before, on Mondays just before 12:30, to introduce myself and my project briefly, and ask the kids (twenty-five "basic level" eleventh-graders) if they would be willing to work with me. Since they could sense the prospect of something outside the ordinary classroom English which most of them had already learned to dismiss as boring and useless—I had told them that when I visited, we would not be doing standard kinds of activities in the classroom, and would be going outside from time to time to do what I called "challenges"—and since, perhaps, they saw in me another opportunity for having fun instead of doing schoolwork, they had accepted my invitation. In the space of that emptyfull classroom, though, I worry that as soon as they see through my plan, which is in fact to re-engage them in schoolwork, they will shut me off as effectively as they have been shutting off teachers for most of their time in school so far. This is in fact what happened. But it happened more than once. Several times, these recalcitrants opened up to the Monday activities, to the possibility that school could be different than it had been, only to close down again the minute they got a whiff of standard operating procedure—as when I first handed out my Interpretation Sheet.

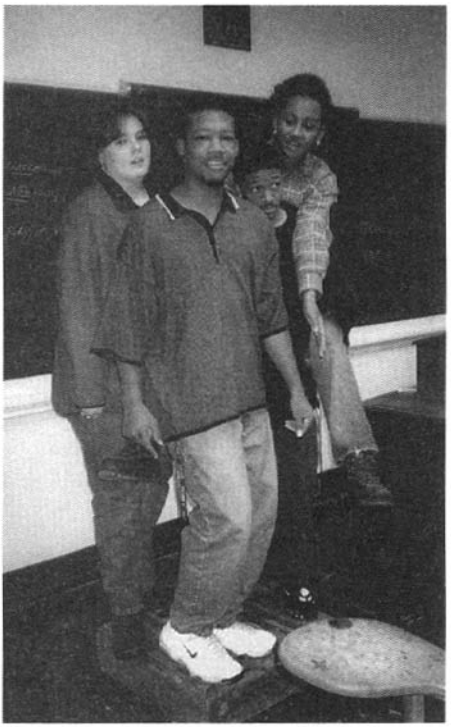
But now about that platform, and about the élan. At Outward Bound,[12] on the first day when students have arrived together from their separate homes and lives, before exchanging their clean travelling clothes for the shorts and T-shirts, before exchanging leather for rubber-soled shoes, before even being introduced to one another, still mostly just human faces

to each other, persons with this or that history, these or those relatives, one or another regional accent or identity—these individuals might encounter each other on one of these platforms. Two-and-a-half feet square and raised ten inches off the ground on stubby anchored legs, it is called the "All Aboard," and the object is to get all ten or twelve members of the group up onto it, standing, leaning on each other, braced or hooped or cantilevered in a controlled balance, for, say, three seconds. As they confront the challenge to their slippery leather soles and the clothes they still need to keep clean for the trip home after the course—a challenge that they think they will meet with their strength or their abilities, their skills of communication and cooperation—there arises between them the prospect of something that does not depend on ability or skill or effort: an unencustomed being-together, a moment of communion as unsettling as it is enticing. It is not something that will be prolonged past the three or so seconds of their almost-airborne clustering on the platform, but its voltage feeds my élan, charges my step as I enter the charged classroom. Plain nerves has a lot to do with it, too.

To bring that moment of blank synergy into the classroom, I built a portable platform out of some scraps of lumber, two-by-six cedar decking left over from a poorly built deck that had collapsed under my wife at our old house. (She wasn't hurt.) I had mitered the corners of the four edge boards so they would fit together snugly like the corners of a picture frame, and nailed more lengths of decking across this frame, leaving an inch or so between these top boards so it would work out that none of the top boards overhangs the frame. In fact, some of the left-over boards had been bevelled forty-five degrees at the ends, and I placed these ends with the bevel sloping in toward the center from the outside edge of the frame. Even if two people stand on one edge with no one on the opposite edge for balance, this deck will not flip up out of place. If this piece of classroom engineering is to succeed, it has to be safe. Its safety is as critical a part of its design as its outlandishness; craftsmanship, and not accident, is integral to designing breakthroughs.

Cedar at these short lengths is as strong as pine, but since it weighs less, I can carry the platform into and out of schools and down corridors with no strain. As an itinerant teacher, I keep it in the trunk of my car along with several other items designed to educe that moment of relatedness and possibility.

The moment of synergy—I call it so not only because there is muscular cooperation involved, but because because there arises in the moment a kind of sharing that is not as obvious as the cooperation of carpenters raising a joist. That is a task they already know how to perform, have already performed ten or a hundred times. Unless there is something special about *this* joist, some circumstance that makes raising it into posi-



tion unlikely, that requires that instead of repeating the task they invent it, the kind of relatedness that appears on the platform does not occur. To be sure, there is teamwork among carpenters, camaraderie and effective action; but there is not necessarily this space of creating out of nothing.

When students have been attempting to mount the platform for a minute or two, beginning to have fun with it and be frustrated by it, someone will usually ask some version of the question "how are we supposed to do this?" Relishing the moment—it is Bakhtin's "once-occurrent event of Being"—I answer: "I don't know. No group just like yours has ever done this before. It is yours to do." Now the space between us is blank: if I have created it freely, it is free of history, of preconditions, of directives, of reasons. Or at least, these have been attenuated momentarily, and what the participants are facing is not a picture from the past to be copied, but a possibility for a future to be invented. They are standing before each other, open for a moment to a world they can create. Between us, we have Nothing. They have the chance to Name a system, a way of getting more people balanced. There is before them a world to be brought into being.

Now, it is true that not all of the eighteen or so kids present for that third class session were involved in this conversation. At first, only five or six had volunteered to get up on the platform together. But gradually, with my own cheerleading and the coaxing of the regular teacher, one by one several more were persuaded to join in the fun. Against the grain, against and alongside the norm of stolid non-participation, there is developing a light-heartedness, a willingness to cooperate, a speaking and listening for participation, for relatedness, for sharing in the possibility of creating together. The context of the classroom is changing, though slowly and stiffly.

The stiffness, in some measure, is probably embarrassment at the prospect of close physical contact. As some of the kids feel safe enough or comfortable enough to begin, though, to approach one another and hang on, it begins to be possible for others to relinquish their stand-offishness. With personal, grinning, in-their-face appeals from me and their teacher, they get up out of their chairs—which we have moved to the periphery of the room—reach a hand across the laughing, groaning amalgam on the platform, and are absorbed. (Among the notable characteristics of Mrs. Zajak's teaching, in *Among Schoolchildren*, is that she gets up close to them, in their faces, and touches them a lot.) If I see in the eyes of one or two a longing to be involved, to play, I may ask them to get up and be "spotters" around the periphery, for it often happens that, as enthusiasm outstrips judgment, the whole mass of people will come tumbling off one side of the platform, and it's good to have someone standing by to brace the

floormost person. The platform thus becomes an occasion for Greeting, not only for the participants, but (at least partially) for the observers as well.

In the context developing, I can now bring in the other realms of speakinglistening in which engagement dwells. As the number of people on the platform approaches its apparent limit, I can say "Good work, you guys! Now how about it: do you want to try for one more?" I am asking them, in the space of encounter and possibility, for a commitment, a pledge. As the wheel of Saying is gathering speed, engaged by our sociable action, our being-together around and on the platform, and accelerated by the possibility of inventing a new way to get more people up, *naming* a new system, it begins to look as if setting ourselves a goal and going for it all-out might be the same thing as having fun. Somehow it is worth it, for the participants in this event, to give an honest effort, even to fail several times; to improvise, to use their heads as well as their arms and legs and shoulders; to commit themselves to trying to do what they don't yet know how to do. In the midst of the almost-mêlée, though, I am not yet speculating on the parallels between this surpass-your-best-because-you-say-so event and an irregular verbs contest.

The platform, of course, is Deweyan. It nurtures shared construction of a reality that is social through and through; it provides for moment-by-moment invention of community. Mind occurs on the platform *as* sociality. But though this may be hands-on, multisensory learning, what is going on here is not merely that. For one thing, there is nothing that we would recognize as conceptual happening in the group, unless we would want to say that figuring out a new way to get more people up is conceptual—and I don't think it is. The absence of conceptuality would be enough to disqualify this event as learning, in the "knowledge model" of education currently in question; but even if we admit the non-conceptual into the arena of learning, we still have not captured what transpires on the platform. The transactions here involve the physical being, they generate uninhibited conversation, and they enable a certain authenticity among the participants. If an elbow pokes you, you let it be known vociferously. We have confrontation; we are bathed in the presence of the basic word I-You. (We can smell each other, too.) If some members of the class want to hog the platform, or to show off, it becomes clear among the participants that that way of being will not get the job done; the task requires instead delicate cooperation, timing, and patience. Rather, it requires these if *we say* it requires them and act accordingly. In an activity of this kind, it can become clear to the participants that *what is being said* has a powerful effect on what is happening. What is going on here, it gradually appears, is that we are inventing a process and an outcome by Saying them. And we can invent according to an old pattern, expecting an outcome already avail-

able in the past, or we can invent according to our commitment, our declaration of a possibility for one more person up on the platform, or for one more second of stable balance, of cooperation, co-invention, co-poiesis. What is happening on the platform is a re-inventing of the wheel of Being. It is this presence to each other that will enable the main work of teaching, once we return to the cognitive curriculum.

In one physical education class where I tried the platform, for instance, there began to develop a kind of horseplay, a competitiveness between cliques which, I suppose, had existed prior to my visit. There seemed to be two leaders in the group, and as each asserted her own dominance over the game, its character shifted from cooperation to competition, and then to see-who-can-push-who-off. After a few moments of this, I called a time out, and asked: "What's the name of the game here? Are you all playing King of the Mountain? or Cooperation? Or is the name of this game Revenge? What are you saying here?" Just this question was enough to re-establish the common purpose that time, though it is true that there may have been some mild reproach in my manner of asking it. The question revealed to the participants their own responsibility for what was going on. It asked them to examine their commitments in the matter, bringing those commitments up as commitments rather than as a structure of habits. "Oh. You mean we have a say in how things go. So it doesn't have to be the way it usually always is."[13]

What about the kids who resist being involved the whole time, sitting passive in their immovable chairs? I can ask them—though by now I am shouting above the din—"What do you think is keeping you in your chairs?" So it's not just about doing another stupid activity, so as to come away with some equation or formula or list of facts about people—it's about who you are, what you do in situations, or what does "you"; what owns your life; and about owning what owns you. It is not an offer of freedom from academics or from homework. It is an offer of responsibility for one's own experience. (Buber would correct me here: No, he would say, it is an offer to *trade* experience for responsibility, to let responsibility supplant experience.)

In the basic-level English class, it was always usually noisy; the kids had made disruption and inattention into a fine art. And they had been captured by the system they had created, so that when I arrived with my platform it was literally impossible for them to pay attention to a lesson. They would have said that they were in charge of their lives in that classroom, that except for being made to come there one period a day they were free to do pretty much as they pleased. They needed to be impressed with the degree to which they were not free, the extent to which the pattern of disruption and inattention owned their lives. So I used another exercise with them to shift the class from being the effect of its system, to

generate the possibility of being its cause, actually, instead of apparently, owning what went on in the classroom.

The exercise, as I designed it for this class, consisted of two parts. First, since I had the advantage of outsider status for my first two or three visits, I could propose an activity that seemed to have no relevance to the practical tasks of schooling: Count Off. It is easy to count off the number of people in a line or a circle; the first person in line says "one," the second "two," and so on to the end of the line. But as they sit in their individual chairs (movable or not), a class of students usually does not see in itself the potential for such an organization as a line or a circle. So the task I gave them is to count the class off, without planning which person was going to say which number and without any two people saying a number simultaneously. The task, that is, is to invent this perfect count-off out of thin air, with nothing to start with except a simple "begin" from me and nothing to go on from then on except whatever is there in the silence of their listening for each other to speak the numbers consecutively. Since what is going on here is obviously not School, it becomes possible again for the students to pay attention to each other. Perhaps Buber would not call the students' experience in this exercise one of "bodily confrontation," but it does bring Presence into the room. The listening it allows for is exquisite.

And I can point out to them, when they have completed this part of the exercise, that what they did was invent something that would not have existed otherwise. They invented a medium, a way of being together for accomplishing a task. The medium of their accomplishment came from nowhere but themselves. While I can imagine that a class might hit on the expedient of counting up and down the rows of chairs, it has never happened that they spontaneously achieved this organization as a medium for accomplishing the task, though such a stratagem would itself qualify as an invention if it came out of the silence of their listening, instead of as somebody's bright idea of how to beat the game. Whatever happens, I can point out to the students that a perfect count-off can be achieved without pre-planning and without tricks—most classes can get it after three or four tries. Thus I can *distinguish* inventing, the silent engagement of listening, from those other ways of being together.

On the next Monday, perhaps,[14] I might carry out the second part of the exercise, which we could call "Invent Silence." The game here is simply for everyone in the room to be perfectly silent for a specified period of time, say a minute at first. It is remarkable how difficult this is in the eleventh-grade class. Why is it so hard to be silent, I ask them. Inevitably, the quick response: *I* was quiet, but *those guys* were talking. But notice the game you are playing, I say. You're playing "I be quiet for one minute." What game are those guys playing? Maybe they're still playing "I talk no

matter what." But the game I proposed is different from either: *we* be silent for one minute. Now how about that game? Do you all want to play that? If they Say yes (and this is different from their just saying "yes"), then the space of the classroom is suddenly given by their commitment to inventing the game, inventing a mode of engagement with each other, rather than by what always automatically happens in that room. As it actually happened, the students in the eleventh-grade Basic English class invented silence for nearly two minutes at the end of the Monday period, and afterward, when they noticed that they were being noisy and that I wanted to say something to them, would sometimes cry "Invent silence!" This became partly a joke, and it never worked perfectly, but in the few sessions I had with them, it began to take hold as a possibility they could return to. With the experience of inventing in their repertoire now, they could begin to assume the responsibility of having a say. Accordingly, the hermeneutic circling of the classroom began to admit of something beyond hermeneutic circling, to allow for new possibilities.

In that class, then, we had begun to set up a conversation for freedom and for responsibility. At first it was very tenuous, lost more often than found, as the old hermeneutic circle of disruption and inattention claimed its patrimony time and time again. But as the wheel of Saying gathered momentum, as my initial request and their acceptance began our relationship, as inventing possibilities and acting on them nurtured our relatedness, our sharing provided the space for more inventing of possibilities and for more launching out into the unknown of possibility, more committed action. Occasionally, some of the students began to listen *for* something that we had ourselves generated. On those occasions, the questions for the class become: "What are we saying here? Would it be possible to say something else, something different? Do we commit to trying out that possibility? How are we doing with enacting our new commitment?" You could print those questions on a standard business card and hand them out as reminders to everyone in the class. On the card I actually handed out, the questions were:

What conversation are you living in?

What conversation would empower you?

Who has a say about what conversation you live in?

Of course, like all the material we give out, anything that has the stamp of Schoolwork on it, this card is soon lost in the shuffle of papers into and out of the wire shelves below the seats. But I have plenty more of them to replace the first ones; and besides, it is not that the little card contains anything the students need to have. As teachers, what we want our students to have is the blank space of freedom/responsibility on the platform. We want them to say "You" to each other and to schoolwork, so that they may have nothing. So I give out the card, not hoping they will lose it, but intending that it cease to be an item of Schoolwork.

The scenes above describe my first attempts to bring the spirit of encounter into some classrooms. The mechanics by which this was accomplished, when it was, were activities with which I had become comfortable through practice at Outward Bound and elsewhere; it is not unimportant that they are connected with my life experiences and with the cluster of commitments that seem to have clung to me, organizing my identity not only as a teacher but as a person. They are the mask through which my person sounds. But the mask now actually becomes a resonator, a channel through which we make real our relatedness. Of course, teachers need to master the material content of their courses in a way that students cannot. But we need to know our stuff in another way, too. We need practice in bringing who we have been and who we are to the classroom in such a way as to establish a voltage, a potential energy that can result in the spark of encounter, the moment of "personal making present." In the classroom group, Buber affirms, even where there has been an institutionally sanctioned and rationalized draining of You from the lifeworld, there remains the possibility of authentically facing each other not as roles but as persons. There is in the flatness of the institutional floor an actual invitation to step into the presence of another, to step onto the slope of being together. We need teacher trainings that focus our energies, our personal histories, and our commitments through the lens of this invitation to encounter. "What can I do to help them learn?" then becomes several interrelated questions: "Who are they? Who am *I*? How can *I*, with my own history, predilections and idiosyncracies, make available in the relatedness of my classroom a mutuality of commitment? How can *I* greet my students so that we can name our world together?" For asking these questions so as to enable personal making present is, among a host of other things, what it is to be present as a teacher.

We say confidently that we draw upon knowledge. Perhaps we know that what we draw upon really is being together, being human, in the wilderness. Of course, in some cases, the past actually harbors the ecology of encounter; teachers and students dwell in it without forethought. But the crisis of our time is the destruction of wilderness: as the trees fall and the It-world consolidates, Adam has nowhere to turn. If we got *greeting*,

sharing in the wilderness into our classrooms, would a present world open to the touch of our living? What if we could take our students out into the city to name the buildings, the streets for themselves? What if we could, in the "confines" of our regular classrooms, build with students the edifice of knowledge as a house of shared *names*? What if the poster announced into the corridor:

Free Being

Bring Some, Get More

NOTES

1. Levinas, dialogue with Richard Kearney, in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 29.
2. In *Teachers, Teaching, and Teacher Education*, Margo Okazawa-rey, James Anderson, and Rob Traver, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review, 1987), 248.
3. James P. Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 132.
4. Again I use the non-standard expression grammatically (as part of our grammar here): when jointed parts arise together, articulation comes into being. And further: Dwelling-place is when articulation arises.
5. For a view of perception as a creative process, a delight, see Edmund Blair Bolles, *A Second Way of Knowing* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1991), especially 160.
6. Kuhn's point is not quite so extreme. In describing the changes in paradigm-induced procedures of scientific investigation as changes in world view, he says that facts appear and disappear, or sometimes change guises, as when a stone swinging back and forth on a chain (which scientists trained in the Aristotelian paradigm had seen as an instance of constrained fall to a terminal position of rest) changed into the pendulum (a "body that almost succeeded in repeating the same motion over and over again ad infinitum") with the emergence of the impetus theory of motion. Galileo saw a pendulum, rather than a swinging stone, because of "perceptual possibilities made available by a medieval paradigm shift." (Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 119)
7. The concept of "schema" was developed in the work of Ulric Neisser. See his *Cognition and Reality: Principles and Implications of Cognitive Psychology* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1976).
8. William Faulkner, *The Unvanquished* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 3.
9. Saussure, *CLG*, 133.
10. F. Flores and T. Winograd, *Understanding Computers and Cognition: A New Foundation for Design* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1986), 56-57.

11. Maxine Greene, "In Search of a Critical Pedagogy," in *Teaching, Teachers, and Teacher Education*, 247.
12. Outward Bound is an international organization of schools and centers whose programs are dedicated to ensuring not the survival of individuals, but of what its founder, the philosopher Kurt Hahn, regarded as the most important qualities of individuals' lives in society: "tenacity in pursuit, an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and above all, compassion." Most of the Outward Bound schools are located in remote wilderness areas and use back-country expeditions and challenge to show participants the possibility that a human life is most powerfully and happily lived as contribution. Compassion is "bearing or suffering with others"; contribution is "giving with others." The work of Outward Bound, in my experience at least, is to bring into being that living and genuine We of which Buber spoke.
13. There are many, many other exercises of this kind available for, and inventable by, teachers who, if they are willing, can set their old identities aside for a class period or two and take up the role of an "outsider." The largest collection I know about was assembled by Karl Rohnke of Project Adventure, and is available from Kendall Hunt Publishing, P.O. Box 1840, Dubuque, IA 52004 (1-800-338-8290). They will send you a price list for *Cowstails and Cobras*, *Silver Bullets*, and *The Bottomless Bag*, each of which contains descriptions of numerous "initiative games" and instructions for building or setting them up. Used as vehicles for breaking up habits, begetting the excitement of working together, the élan of invention, they are dynamite.
14. I say "perhaps" because I am designing the experience of these students almost minute by minute in my limited time with them. It might be that this piece of the design would fit better before the Count-Off exercise. It depends on how I can see to fit what I have with what they need on a given day. I am planning and improvising at the same time, improvising on the basis of a prior plan, or just plain making it up without a plan.