

Time is [Not] Always Running Out

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[Storytelling] is a fluid tradition that is as migratory as a winter bird, feeding as it goes from place to place and leaving something of itself behind. Those of us with gardens can attest to the hardiness of “volunteers” that spring up from seeds that have been carried in a bird’s body over countless miles.

Jane Yolen (1988, p. 3), from *Favorite Folktales from Around the World*

A Brief Story to Begin With

There is something palpable about gathering with children around alluring stories which, if well conducted, supersede teachers’ or parents’ fears of literacy skills and all those other easily induced panics that have ravaged too much of the great and ancient tasks of learning our way around language with children and in their midst. It is not that skills with letters and sounds and grammars are of no concern. It is that they have no legitimate claim to being “basic” or “fundamental,” no claim to being first and foremost, either chronologically or otherwise. It is only fear and inexperience that have allowed them to bully their way to the front of the line, only an amnesia about stories and their charms that concede to this falsehood.

“Something awakens our interest—*that* is really what comes first!” (Gadamer 2001, p. 50, emphasis added). Something awakens our being in the middle (*inter*) of things (*esse*), and we find that there is a story already underway, one in which we are already moving and living:

Told and retold or read and reread, the story exists neither in the mouth nor on the page, neither in the ear nor the eye.

Books Discussed

Tyler, R. W.
(1949/1969). *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago & London.

It is created *between*. No two listeners hear exactly the same tale. Each brings something of himself to the story, and the story is then re-created between the teller and the listener, between the writer and the reader. (Yolen 1988, p. 4).

Thus storytelling is linked up to the great arts of interpretation. It is the active and creative of weaving a text, a fabric (Latin *textus*) of experience and venture, between those gathered (tellers and listeners), the topographies of the story itself, and those whose tale the story tells. “*The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between*” (Gadamer 1989, p. 295). Stories are always, even in some small ways, the stories of those who have gathered in the light (one could say “radiance”) of the story being told.

Over the course of a story’s time, listeners, and the storyteller, too, slowly start to “recognize themselves in the mess of the world” (Hillman 1989, p. 49, from a book tellingly named *Healing Fiction*) that is being unfurled. Like in the making of a fabric, each person gathered experiences their own bias in and amongst and against and in concert with the bias fabric itself--and this seeming paradox (“the bias of the fabric”/“the bias of the listener”) is part of the story’s hold and why we are held *together*. The fabric pulls each of us differently as we each pull at it from here and there, and it also hold us together at the same time. This “at the same time” is part of the odd temporality of stories and their telling.

With lights lowed, we all lean inwards in this circle of storytelling, and its arc goes far beyond just those gathered here. This wider feel of textured fabric is also a nebulous part of the story told:

Next to the hearth, by the bedside, on the back porch, round the cracker barrel, in the lap. Mouth to ear, mouth to ear, over and over and over again, grandmother and grandfather, uncle and aunt, mother and father, nanny and nurse were in turn listener and teller. (Yolen 1988, p. 12)

Migratory arcs come back round again. This temporal fabric is *recurrent* and *intergenerational*--an odd experience of going somewhere new and returning to somewhere old at the same time, and coming to (re)inhabit a place already inhabited.

These tales could be as short as the English ghost story reported by the venerable English collector Katharine Briggs: *He woke up frightened and reached for the matches, and the matches were put into his hand*. (Yolen 1988, p. 2).

Or they could be as quickening as Jane Yolen’s own brief tale about the comforts of stories themselves:

“Story,” the Old Man Said, looking beyond the cave to the dragon’s tracks. “Story is our wall against the dark.” He told the tale: the landing, the first death, the second. They heard the rush of wind, the terrible voice, a scream, then another. Beyond the wall, the dragon waited but could not get in. (Yolen 1998, from the back cover).

Comfort: common strength. This is part of the work of teaching, to cast a tale where no one is damaged by living in whirls of words, ideas, images, apprehensions and joys that are partly beyond his or her ken, but, hopefully, no one is left quite the same. It “would not deserve the interest we take in it if it did not have something to teach us that we could not know by ourselves” (Gadamer, 1989, p. xxxv) but it would not arouse our interest if it didn’t hint at some already operating intimacy. Otherwise, we would not be “addressed”—the locale, Gadamer suggests [1989, p. 299], where “understanding begins.”

Understanding begins with the sometimes terrible, sometimes exhilarating, sense of being “drawn into an event” (p. 490) in which *something has already begun*. Something has “asserted itself and captivated us before we can come to ourselves and be in a position to test the claim . . . that it makes. We . . . arrive, as it were, too late” (Gadamer 1989, p. 490). This is the tale’s lure, both a nebulous promise of a future and a hint of a past that the future has already outrun:

“People are going to say, ‘Well, it’s not very truthful,’” says Dylan. “But a songwriter doesn’t care about what’s truthful. What he cares about is what should’ve happened, what could’ve happened. That’s its own kind of truth.” (Gilmore 2012)

I have had both had long and beautiful conversations with very young children about the familiar experience of foreboding that they often know with a secret intimacy and clarity, spots where something *could* happen, and its could-happening floods into our sitting here, some possible future, present and full and yet, in its “could,” also empty of the sort of specificity that would let it start to rest. Time, here, becomes elastic and pulls the future too close, too taut and taunting, keeping it hidden and approaching all at once. This taut time is one of the “wild things” (Sendak 1988), a *familiaris* (Hillman 2005, p. 107)—an animal spirit (a “familiar,” if you will, like the black cat on a witch’s broomstick) that can “reveal . . . the special quality and dangers . . . of a place. To know a situation one needs to sense what lurks in it” (p. 107).

“Something is going on, (*im Spiele ist*), something is happening (*sich abspielt*)” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 104).

So even in a children’s tale, we, too, as adults, suspect something about the lurks of familiarity, of *familiaris*, without perhaps knowing it. We’ve been here before and yet this is the first time. Someone is already here and it might be me in aspects I’ve never previously suspected, perhaps ones I’ve secretly dreaded, perhaps ones I’ve longed for all my life and always hoped would prove to be the truth of my living (“its own kind of truth” that doesn’t describe what is as much as what could have been, what should have been, what might still be). Recognition:

We do not understand what recognition is in its profoundest nature if we only regard it as knowing something again that we know already—i.e., what is familiar is recognized again. The joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing *more* than is already familiar. In recognition what we know emerges, as if illuminated, from all the contingent and variable

circumstances that condition it. (Gadamer 1989, p. 114).

This is how stories and their telling work-- they are the open cast of path out into what is both familiar and, at the same time, yet to be known. “Tales lend permission to the listeners” (Yolen 1988, p. 9), but we teachers know a secret. They lend permission to us as tellers as well. We, too, *love* them when they’re good, love what they do when they work their magic, love what they promise and can affect. Part of what draws students to stories is the love of a good story, but also the love of a good storyteller who slows time and condenses it in just the proper measure: “that trick and aunt or uncle’d use of always stopping right at the best part to take a bite of pie, a sip of tea, their way of leaning back to look around the table, let the story sink right in” (Wallace 1987, p. 13). The storyteller loves the story and the telling and the listenings, however worrisome or awful the story might be or how grievously necessary its message. In fact, these--the story, the telling, the listenings-- are, in the weird whiling arc of story time, the same.

Good stories thus can give us verdant “free spaces” (Gadamer 1986, p. 59), “possible ways of shaping our lives” (p. 59) in which our students (and teachers, too) come back to us with their own stories to tell of the story they have heard. They are a chance, even more intimately, to see how our lives, too, *have already been shaped* in many ways, often “beyond our wanting and doing” (Gadamer 1989, p. xxviii). We find hidden parts of our selves in them. They can affect us even if we have never cultivated an awareness of them.

As an aside, this is why hermeneutics is never simply a report on “my experiences,” why it lends itself to and relies upon phenomenology but phenomenology is not enough. The story told must be *lebensweltlich* (the German term for “life-worldly” or “close to the living world”; see Ross 2006, Grondin 2003, p. 333), but the life-world faces us, not with an array of given presences to be simply phenomenologically described. Rather, it arrives as “a task for consciousness and an achievement that is demanded of it” (Gadamer 1989, p.127), “a task that is never entirely finished” (Gadamer 1989, p. 301). It faces us as faces yet to be read. This task of living a life in the life of the world is one whose contours are often occluded, absent, portending, lying, anticipatory, forgotten, dangerous, suppressed, and we each feel our own deeply embodied culpability in precisely this mess. The life-world, then, is not available for simple phenomenological description. This does not make hermeneutics distant or abstracted from “lived experience” and its intimacies. Far from it. It means that understanding our lives and our way through the world must always be risked, must always be *undertaken*, not just “disinterestedly” documented by a “disinterested spectator” (Husserl 1970, p. 157). Not only is it “everyone’s task” (Gadamer 1986, p. 59) to work through how to live with the occluded text(ure)s I’ve been drawn into and that has already drawn parts of my life. Hermeneutics describes my own intimate experience with the story that is unfurling as a task that *no one can undertake for me*, instead of me or on my behalf. It is a venture I must take on myself. It is “not something anyone can be spared” (Gadamer 1989, p. 356). Or, as goes the new *de rigueur* in our local school board, keys to the pedagogical effectiveness and quality are “*engagement*” and “*personalization*.” In fact, and here is the terrible rub, even students who “dis-engage” are engaged in a venture that is formative of who they will become, and also formative of who we, as their teachers, become in the face of their dis-engagement (more on this story below,

and the tale of F. W. Taylor that is a secret yet intimate part of contemporary education).

So, stories can define us in some small way in our very attempt to unearth their origins and travels. I *myself* am part of the fabric being woven by a loom not just held in my hands alone. “The matches were put into his hand”--every tale, then, a bit of a ghost story rattled full of ancient bones, full of a time beyond the telling. Happened, could have, should have. It seems that we are “*always already everywhere inhabited*” (Smith 2006, p. xxiv). Part of the work of pedagogy is gathering up our inhabitations, coming to know them, coming to have some small hand in them and their possibilities. Pedagogy has an eye to freeing us from our already-everywhere sleepiness (try reading this statement by Sheila Ross [2006, p. 118] about Gadamer’s hermeneutics in light of Bob Dylan’s words cited above: “The antonym of truth. . . is not the untruth of falsity, but the untruth of utter familiarity”). We mustn’t be too quick or happy here to simply imagine each student caught in a romance held at the heart of teaching, a sleeping beauty to be awakened. We teachers know that sometimes we are the sleepyheads and our students are the awakeners. Their contempt for our sleepy familiarity thus makes them seem wild--that other sniff of *familiaris* that interrupts sleep. Such sudden reversals of fortune are themselves age old stories. Either way, or both, in weaving these tales, we are freed for the task of facing, shaping, remaking, rescuing, embracing, transforming, or fighting off, tearing up and casting aside the possibilities we already inhabit and that already inhabit us. Odd that such freeing ends up entailing a sense of obligation and necessity far outside the confines of schooling.

“Something awakens” (Gadamer 2001, p. 50).

So, then, we don’t just come to know these stories. We, each in our own way and to our own limits, *recognize ourselves in them*--what is, what could have been, what should have been. Reverse this. These stories *recognize us*. We are *known by them* (see Abram 1996, Palmer 1993). That is why, when the telling works, we sit still and rapt. Addressed. And that is why these matters occur and recur, no story ever quite finished with us. I think, now, writing this sentence, December 16th, 2012, of tales being told of how, yesterday, a Kindergarten teacher, Janet Vollmer, read stories to her children while violence came down outside the closed doorway, in Connecticut (see Carter 2012):

If they started crying, I would take their face and tell them, ‘It’s going to be OK.’ I wanted that to be the last thing they heard, not the gunfire in the hall.

And this occurs, such that a story already cited comes round in an arc of recitation and sounds different to the ear, yet oddly the same: “Story is our wall against the dark. They heard the rush of wind, the terrible voice, a scream, then another. Beyond the wall, the dragon waited but could not get in” (Yolen 1998), not this time at least, not, by terrible happenstance, with this class, these children, this terrible chanciness part of what we now must understand all over again, here, in these “stubborn particulars of grace” (Wallace 1987) and grieving.

Time, here, *halts* and falters, and often breath along with it (“*aesthesis*, which means at root a

breathing in or taking in of the world, the gasp, ‘aha,’ the ‘uh’ of the breath in wonder, shock, amazement, and aesthetic response” [Hillman 2006, p. 36]).

A Familiar Story About Time That is Not Well-Known: “Time is Always Running Out”

Perhaps it is only when we focus our minds on our machines that time seems short. Time is always running out for machines. They shorten our work . . . by simplifying it and speeding it up, but our work perishes quickly. (Berry 1983, p. 76)

“By choosing this or that story to tell, I reveal much about myself” (Yolen 1988, p. 13). But in such choosing we also can reveal much about our circumstances as teachers and students inhabiting the haunts of schools.

It is beyond doubt that teachers and students alike experience this phenomenon of time always running out with great intimacy and regularity. Teachers and students alike have become accustomed to the mood, tempo and consequences, personal and pedagogical, of how attempts to try to keep up with this time that is always running out, seem, in the end and seemingly inevitably, to give us less and less time:

“Well, in our country,” said Alice, still panting a little, “you’d generally get to somewhere else — if you run very fast for a long time, as we’ve been doing.”

“A slow sort of country!” said the Queen. “Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!” (Carroll 1871, p. 16)

An old story, this. In some schools, this clockwork “machine time,” like a demanding Red Queen, seems to render classroom experiences to its relentless demands, pressing itself in on what we do, how we think and imagine, even whether there is time to think much at all. There is almost too much to consider in this orbit--market-driven obsolescence (“our work perishes quickly”), flickering attention spans (“speeding it up”) and how such spans then create a world (“simplifying it”) that does not *require* much attention, thus aggravating this circle of consequence. Once this voracious and insatiable wheel starts turning, something else kicks in: as the Red Queen suggested, the only relief or fulfillment of this itch is to be found in, not in speed but in *acceleration* (Jardine 2008). It is yet to be decided whether the current fetish with “devices” helps students slip out of this slipstream, or whether such things simply aggravate, prey upon, and exaggerate such acceleration. It is already known, however, that the hand-held device in my hand will fall from it into a deliberately manipulated obsolescence. They are *designed* to not last, on *purpose*. However, new the device, this logic is nothing new, nor is the panic to keep up with it.

This suffering is real and palpable. It has become a familiar story--laments about time and its running--both inside and outside of schools, to the extent that talk of any other sense of time, of whiling time and the gathering that happens around good stories, good work, well sought inquiry, and thoughtfulness, seems, in the life of “real world” schools, simply fanciful, unreal almost:

To be glib, [in this “real world”] little requires human application, so little cultivates it. Long alienated from abiding in inquiry as a form of life and way of being, a restless humanity defers to models, systems, operations, procedures, the ready-made strategic plan, and first and last to reified concepts, long impervious to deconstruction. (Ross 2006, p. 111)

Luxuriating in the migratory arcs of rich and telling stories and ancestries and ways of the world, slowing down and pondering--this experience of time now seems the wonderland. Countless teachers have told me this: they would love to do this, but they simply don't have time, they are always already late no matter what they do, no matter how they try.

This sense of relentless, perpetually running-out machine time has become so obsequious that it becomes experienced, not as something that has emerged under causes and conditions that can be otherwise, but as if it is simply “the way things *are*.” As I hear so often from so many teachers, including those who wish it otherwise, this is simply “the real world.” This is where the real perniciousness lies, because once codified as simply “the real world,” any attempts to interrupt this spell and suggest that there is a life to pedagogy outside of this “real world” are looked upon with great suspicion, accusations of not understanding what it is like, so goes the telling phrase, “in the trenches.”

The trick here, of course, is to remember that this is not what the real world is in some intransigent, ontological sense. Rather, *it is how the world has turned out* and therefore, two things. First, there are causes and conditions that can be untangled that can help us understand something of how and why things turned out like this, thus loosening their grip on our imaginations and practice. Second, we can perhaps begin to shift the story being told to one that is more amenable to “abiding in inquiry as a form of life and way of being” (Ross 2006, p. 111). This loosening and shifting re-telling is, of course, perennial and tough and full of heartache and therefore cannot be fully fulfilled here.

So, for now, a small offering: two short stories that might help start decoding this familiar story about time running out.

Story One: Empty Time and a Succession of Nows

The designation ‘empty time’ is how [Hans-Georg] Gadamer terms time conceived of as the constant, flowing succession of ‘nows’ coming from a future and receding into the past. This is time subjugated to quantitative measurement. It is ‘empty’ because measuring time requires a separation of the temporal units which measure from that which is measured; to separate time from its contents is to ‘empty’ it [Ross here references Gadamer 1970, p. 342–3]. It is in fact the utility function of measured time – time made available for use – that Gadamer says is at the root of this emptying. (Ross 2006, p. 110)

Once we detach our understanding and experience of time from any substantive thing measured

in time, time becomes pictured an empty sequence or stretch. Like this, simple: “we’ve got two [empty] hours this morning with the kids.” This empty time can now be “filled” or “used” as we see fit or as circumstances allow. Time thus emptied becomes imagined as something utile, something “useable.” Also, and *because* of this imaginal shift, time becomes understood as something that can be “used up,” something that can therefore “run out.” Example: when parsing through a complex algebraic puzzle, and looking at the arcs that link quadratics to the physical lay-out of a dam that was built in China on the Yellow River and this linked to cultural meditations on the millions displaced and the odd state of the world and its workings (an easily imaginable example in a High School classroom), “inside” of the material, ideational and imaginal fullness of this work, “inside” the thoughtfulness and exploration that this work requires if it is to be done well, time is *not* running out. This puzzling has its own “indigenous” time, it “takes its own sweet time,” as the saying goes. It runs in flurries of interest and concern, it slows over beautiful finds or halts and halts sensing dangerous lures, it gathers and stops and starts in shapes and measures that are longing to be proper to the territories of its inquiry. Oddly put, such work needs our attention and devotion, and its very substantiveness “slows” (that isn’t exactly the right term) our investigation, turns it here and there, and makes demands on the while we take over it. We may not “have” enough time to consider it well, but that does not mean that it doesn’t have its own temporal inherence, only that we cannot live up to that behest.

However, in light of utile, empty, measured-time, those things that we have to do, our work, our teaching and learning, the topics we explore, are no longer understood to have a time of their own. Rather, pedagogy is understood as occurring within specific measures of useable time, empty time. This is where the turn occurs: the work that can then be pursued under such auspices is *rendered measurable* by such empty, formal, clockwork temporality. It is not simply that the things we have to do are molded into a tempo that is fast and efficient. Those very things themselves must, of a necessity borne of this empty time cast in a sequence of “nows,” become fragmented into pieces that can fit the measure of empty time itself. What we have to do (exploring animals and their habitats in Grade Five, learning about democracy and its characteristics in Grade Ten, or reading about dogs and cats in Grade One, and so on) changes in order to shape itself to the useable-ness of empty time. Given the sequenced and standardized march of empty time, then, only once things are fragmented into sequence-able bits and pieces can the things we do “fit” the ever-accelerating succession of “nows” that empty, measurable, machine-like time demands of things. To the extent that what we do *cannot* thus shape itself, to that extent, we have to eradicate from consideration such pursuits. China, the Yellow River, the quadratics of dam-building, the nature of displacements of water and people, the structure of government decisions. All this is quite lovely, but we don’t have time.

Thus, time is not simply *subjugated to quantitative measurement* (we mustn’t forget this, however, because that story-telling time has been subjugated and often marginalized in many classrooms to the hurries of skill development. “We’ll get to reading a story later if we have time”--the indigenous time of good work gets relegated to what is done “after” that work which is more, as it is called, “basic” [see Jardine, Clifford & Friesen 2008]. More on this below). Empty time now *subjugates* anything to which it is applied and marginalizes anything that cannot be thus subjugated. The thing

now measured “in [empty] time” must itself, in its very substance, become the objective equivalent of a series of “nows”--separate, self-contained, isolatable fragments or pieces--that must be then assembled in sequenced, ordered, managed and standardized in order to be adequately temporally measured and, especially, in order to be, as the saying goes “covered” in the allotted time. Thus a hidden logic churns: as things fragment, time accelerates *because* there is nothing to slow it down since no one of these isolated bits or pieces *requires* any prolonged attention. Once detached from the thing that lives in a time of its own, empty time produces fragments that no longer *need* “continuity of [our] attention and devotion” (Berry 1986, p 32). Worse yet, these fragments reject and cause to atrophy that very sense of devotion, making it seem, not surprisingly, like a “waste of time.”

Empty time thus now rules the work being done. But it is important to re-emphasize what has happened here. This is not just a matter of demanding that the same work being done simply be done “faster” (this would be as mistaken as imagining that the “slow food movement” is suggesting cooking fast food slowly). Nor does empty time simply rule *how* the work is to be done. *The very nature of the work itself changes*, as does the relationship that one can strike up with the work. And, to reiterate a point noted above, work “covered” in used-up, empty time work becomes understood as more “basic” than the (now thought to be) luxuriousness of “abiding in inquiry.” Worse yet, what might be attended to in a luxurious way is understood to be “really” made up of pieces and in order to get to the whole of that story, we must have the pieces out of which it is made *beforehand*. We must, as goes the familiar phrase, start with “the basics.”

What happens then is also all too familiar. This trumping of empty time is not just a matter of chronological deferral--“we’ll get to that later if we have leftover time that hasn’t been used up.” That which we might get to later--to use the shorthand, “abiding in inquiry”-- becomes not simply (possibly) “later,” but becomes understood as a “frill” that is unnecessary to the “real world” reality of things (now understood ahead of time as fragmented bits and pieces requiring simply standardized, sequential assembly in order to be understood). Matters such as “inquiry” are nothing but opulent and luxurious and unnecessary leftovers. In the real world of schools and Provincial examinations and parents’ demands for “accountability,” getting to it “later” is not really an especially urgent manner “in the real world,” because in the real world, there is, “in reality,” nothing “real” to get to (since the real world is, with empty time, understood in advance to *be* bits and pieces and their standardized assembly). Inquiry, engagement, and the like become understood as elitist, time wasting, slackenings of attention.

Maybe later. After all, “first things first.”

But here is a school reality that is hard to admit: those sorts of work that fit the clockwork, one-thing-after-the-other, always accelerating rush of empty time bully themselves to the front of the line and provide a way to not just marginalize but humiliate those who might suggest that there is thoughtfulness, rigorousness, authenticity and good work to be had out from under this running-out panic.

Story Two: Industrial Production and the Efficiency of Schooling

“Education is suffering from narration-sickness,” says Paulo Freire. It speaks out of a story which was once full of enthusiasm, but now shows itself incapable of a surprise ending. The nausea of narration-sickness comes from having heard enough, of hearing many variations on a theme but no new theme. (Smith 1999, p. 135-6).

The uniformity, standardization, and bureaucracy of the factory model soon became predominant characteristics of the school district. The key was to have the thinkers of the organization specify exactly what and how to teach at each grade level and then to provide strict supervision to ensure that teachers did as they were told. Decisions flowed from state boards of education down the ladder of the educational bureaucracy to local school boards, superintendents, and principals. Eventually, decisions would be directed to teachers who, like factory workers, were viewed as underlings responsible for carrying out the decisions of their bosses. Students were simply the raw material transported along the educational assembly line. They would be moved to a station where a teacher would “pour” in mathematics until the bell rang; then they would be moved to the next station where another teacher would “assemble” the nuts and bolts of English until the next bell rang, and so on. Those who completed this 13-year trek on the assembly line would emerge as finished products, ready to function efficiently in the industrial world. (Dufour & Eaker 1998)

Most schooled tasks have been stripped of that character which would take a while. A “continuity of [our] attention and devotion” (Berry 1986, p 32) to some classroom work is very often not simply *unnecessary* but *impossible* because the school-matters at hand have been stripped of the very memorability and relatedness . . . that might require and sustain and reward such attention and devotion. From the point of view of efficiency and management, intellectual whiling in the leisures (*schola*) of school simply seems dense and unproductive. [Little in school tasks organized thus is] worth *while*. (Jardine 2012, p. 175)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a profound shift in the way in which industrial production was imagined, organized, and carried out, and what was, at first, a brilliant shift, occurred, full of enthusiasm. F. W. Taylor (1856-1915), most explicitly in his still-published text *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), instituted what was later to be called “the efficiency movement” (Callahan 1964). This movement arose out of Taylor’s observations on the shop floors of various industries on the East Coast of America (Bethlehem Steel, for example) and his development of what he called time and motion studies.

It had been that artisans and workers would gather around the work to be done in ways that we age old and linked to ancient guild and master/apprentice organizations and to the sometimes written, but often oral transmission of knowledge and craft, of hand laid over hand, of breath and bread shared over the immediacies of laboring. Taylor entered this fray as an observer and conducted time and motion studies of such industrial production. Essentially, he measured every step of the work being done--who was doing what, what others were doing in the meantime, even literally

how many steps and in what direction anyone would take to get materials, to work around other worker or wait for them, and so on. In effect, Taylor temporally (“time”) and spatially (“motion”) broke down any particular industrial task into its, shall we say, basic, component parts and laid out ways in which the organization, management and sequencing of that task could be more efficiently organized. He experimented in great and meticulous detail with the sequence of the work, the portioning of the work, the effects of placing accessible parts or tools here or there, with this first instead of that, of this worker doing these three things, or two, or perhaps having this one arduous task done by two workers, turning to the left to grab the next part to be assembled, or to the right, working and resting for these lengths, in this order or that, this amount of training done this way, that way, and on and on, tumbling these components all with an eye to the elimination of waste--wasted time, wasted materials, essentially, wasted money--and all this with an eye to increasing the efficiency and productivity of the work being done, decreasing the errors and glitches encountered, and increasing, thus, *efficiency*.

All of these studies were traced with stopwatch in hand, notebooks and measuring tape, leading to a new invention: flow-charts for the work being done. As was the atmosphere of the early 20th century, this work of Taylor’s was touted with the portentous term “*scientific management*” to contrast it with old, practically based knowledge and work--we need to keep our eye on this shift, because this is part of the movement of evacuating from front-line practices and practitioners any knowledge or worth and placing in the hands of managers/administrators/principals the task of organizing work so that workers need not think, need not be “skilled” but only obedient to the system of work devised by management, thus making labor cheaper and thus increasing the efficiency of production as a whole (on the “deskilling” that comes from this movement, see Braverman 1998).

Henry Ford’s car assembly line provides us with an easily recognizable image of what was, in fact, a “culmination of a decades-long process” (Watts 2006, p. 153) initiated by Taylor: each worker has placed in front of them an isolated, repeated task to be done with singular, standardized procedures and invariant materials (on Taylorism and Fordism, see Kanigel 2005, p. 49):

The basic procedure made management the absolute arbiters of when, at what speed, and in what fashion the work was performed. The assembly line’s smooth, continuous flow, in the words of Horace Arnold, worked by “hurrying the slow men, holding the fast men back . . .and acting as an all-around adjuster and equalizer.” It was the apotheosis of scientific management. (Watts 2006, p. 154)

(I can’t help but think, here, of the mathematics department in a local High School requiring all those teaching mathematics in Grade Ten to be on the same chapter at the same time for the course of the semester). Even though there is no evidence that Henry Ford actually read or was directly influenced by Taylor’s work, “the Ford Motor Company was ‘Taylorized without Taylor’” (Watts 2006, p. 153):

Factory managers struggled to break the hold of artisan craftsmen, with their traditions

of stubborn independence, and fought to eradicate . . .”premodern” work culture, with its agricultural aversion to disciplined, time-oriented labor. They sought to construct a new model of labor more attuned to the demands of efficiency and mass production. (p. 153).

Note in passing here how the profound cleaving to a deep and well-understood sense of time that is indigenous to the ways of agriculture is simply swept aside in this statement, and how, therefore, the specific sort of “discipline” that comes with empty time casts agriculture as seemingly undisciplined, slack, stubborn--note, too, how “independence” becomes cast as a disparagement.

So, under the auspices of efficiency, all tethers of one specified task to any other tasks or to the object being assembled or any tether between this worker and other workers, or tethers to the ancient arts of craft and work, or tethers to any concern for the quality of what is being done or the purpose, or the even the local of this bit of work in front of me to what is being built--all this has been systematically eradicated as detrimental to the efficiency of the work being done:

“Every day, year in and year out, each man should ask himself over and over again, two questions,” said Taylor in his standard lecture. “First, ‘What is the name of the man I am now working for?’ And having answered this definitely then ‘What does this man want me to do, right now?’ Not, ‘What ought I to do in the interests of the company I am working for?’ Not, ‘What are the duties of the position I am filling?’ Not, ‘What did I agree to do when I came here?’ Not, ‘What should I do for my own best interest?’ but plainly and simply, ‘What does this man want me to do right now?’” (cited in Boyle 2006)

I should also not ask why we are doing this, what this is part of or leading to, what my role is in all of this. I will not asked to be interested, concerned, obligated or the like. The task for industrial factory workers is simply to learn by rote and repetition the efficient accomplishment of this one, isolated task and then to either simply repeat that task or get on to the next, equally isolated task at hand. Just again as a side note that rings through still:

This revolution in the conduct of labor also transformed its soul. For generations, American attitudes about work had been rooted in the Protestant work ethic. The assembly line, by making labor monotonous and unfulfilling, eroded the foundations of the ethic. It raised troubling questions about the meaning of work. (Watts 2006, p. 154-5).

Henry Ford’s solution to this conundrum is too astoundingly familiar to detail here. Suffice it to say this: the, shall we say, “pay-off” for doing monotonous and unfulfilling work is not found *in the work*, but in its resultant “consumer abundance” (Watts 2006, p. 155). The ethic of work and its fulfilling pleasures is replaced with the ethic of consumption--the pleasure to be had (to be purchased) *after* the work is done:

Work and play should not be mixed. “When we are at work we ought to be at work. When we are at play we ought to be at play,” [Ford] wrote. “When the work is done, then the play can come, but not before.” (Watts 2006, p. 155).

The once-”playful” pleasures and engagement and fulfillment of good work are evacuated from the work itself (which becomes fragmented, routine and monotonous) and the higher wages then paid for obediently enduring such monotony can be exchanged, “afterwards” (a whole other blush of time’s shape), for purchasable, enjoyable things. Engagement itself becomes a leftover caught in regimes of market-exchange, a great analogy to justifying and enduring the boredom of routinized High School classes in order to receive marks that can *then* be exchanged for future employment that then can be exchanged for one’s chosen enjoyments. Note the great eschatological arc of empty time here, where the present is drained of its life with the promise of future fulfillment: some time in the future, time will no longer be empty but full. Thus the Protestant work ethic re-emerges in the gruff anger swirling around “this is the real world” talk in High Schools, of the “get used to it” reprimands in response to students’ (and teachers’) resistance to the monotony. Thus, too, an origin of education’s obsession with the idea of “time on task.”

As a result of F. W. Taylor’s re-imagining of industrial production, industrial efficiency increased dramatically. Moreover, this image of efficiency and its promise took over the public imagination and swept through all facets of then-contemporary life, from mayor’s offices to hospitals to how housewives should organize their kitchens and their housework schedules and on and on (for more detail on these matters see Taylor 1903, 1911, Kanigel 2005, Dufour & Eaker 1998, Callahan 1964, Gatto 2006, Wrege & Greenwood 1991, Friesen & Jardine 2009, to name but a few available sources). Dozens of articles in popular magazines and scholarly journals were written and poured over, along with recurrent declamatory newspaper articles about the inefficiencies of this or that facet of then-contemporary life. “What about efficiency?” became a polemical, even moral clarion call in all quarters of North American consciousness: “Taylor’s thinking so permeates the soil of modern life we no longer realize it’s there. It has become, as Edward Eyre Hunt, an aide to future President Herbert Hoover, could grandly declaim in 1924, ‘part of our moral inheritance’” (Kanigel 2005, p. 7). In reference to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s explorations of empty time that is always running out, Sheila Ross (2006, p. 118) suggests that “the dominance of this modality of thought . . . is arguably pathological.” Just as a reminder, it is not that this way of thinking is pathological. It is its *dominance* that is at issue here, and how easily it has come to occlude, bully and marginalize other ways of experiencing work, time, engagement, learning, and so on. It has lost its sense of proportion and place due, in fact, to its being *premised* on the fragmentation of any place or territory it enters and considers. It thus cannot be expected to find its own limit. It is, thus, pathologically unsettled and displaced by nature. Just a brief side-long glance at the ecological tremors here:

It is impossible to divorce the question of what we do from the question of where we are-or, rather, where we think we are. That no sane creature befouls its own nest is accepted as generally true. What we conceive to be our nest, and where we think it is, are therefore questions of the greatest importance. (Berry 1986, p. 51)

Given the burgeoning numbers of immigrant children entering large East Coast American cities, and the equally burgeoning need for minimally educated workers in industry, schools had

become overwhelmed early in the 20th century, and the promise of more efficient schooling was irresistible: “educators needed little prompting” (Dufour & Eaker 1998). Thus we hear from Ellwood P. Cubberley, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford, from his book *Public School Administration*, originally published in 1916 [cited here from Callahan 1964, p. 97]):

In time it will be possible for any school system to maintain a continuous survey of all of the different phases of its work, through tests made by its corps of efficiency experts, and to detect weak points in its work almost as soon as they appear. Every manufacturing establishment that turns out a standard product or series of products of any kind maintains a force of efficiency experts to study methods of procedures and to measure and test the output of its works. Such men . . . [also] train the workmen to produce a larger and a better output. Our schools are in a sense factories in which raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of twentieth-century civilization, and it is the business of the school to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down.

There is, of course, much, much more to this story of the re-capitulation of empty time sequences in the shape of industrial production and how these images found a great ally in a then-emerging theory of knowledge which imagined knowledge as built out of separate bits and pieces:

As behaviorism grew in prominence during the period between the two world wars, the scientific management movement in education was being promoted by [Franklin] Bobbitt (1924), a curriculum specialist who, citing the need for efficiency and using the steel industry as his model, attempted to apply the techniques of business to the schools. In the name of efficiency, he gave paramount importance to the setting of acceptable performance standards and to their measurement. He formulated long and detailed lists of objectives which he felt would enable learners to prepare for life by mastering specific skills and subskills. (Tumposky 1984, p. 296)

Part of the attractiveness of Taylor’s industrial promise of efficiency thus dovetailed with the logic of fragmentation borne from a since-outdated version of the empirical sciences in the early 20th century. The then-emerging Behavioral Sciences produced an image of knowledge as built up one “basic” bit at a time. Each separate fragment is itself and has only “revocable and provisional” (Gray 2001, p. 35-6) connections to anything else. “The basics,” in education, became identified with those not-further-divisible “bits” out of which any knowledge was built, and “back to the basics” (see Jardine, Clifford & Friesen 2008) comes to mean back to a version of knowledge-assembly right in line with Taylor’s industrial assembly principles. Taylor’s influence thus found broad affiliations when applied to education, and its influence filtered down into the very ways in which the topics covered in schools were imagined to exist: sequences of separate parts and therefore, through the grades, assignable parts of such assembly to be “covered” in each grade. It may be that classrooms prior to such infiltration were already cast this way, but Taylor’s work, coupled with Behavioral Theory, gave this cast an air of modernity, of seriousness and scientific warrant that provide a way to trump any resistance to its influence.

It is impossible to detail all this in the present context. Instead, then, just a few closing bits and pieces, trails that can be followed, half-forgotten stories that can be hunted out, filled out, and re-told:

- From Henry Ford's (2007, p. 14) autobiography: "eliminate the useless parts. This applies to everything--a shoe, a dress, a house, a piece of machinery, an airplane, a steamship." Following the inculcation of Taylorism into education, this applies to each and every minute spent in the classroom, each and every topic that is learned, how schools and school departments are organized, and how the work of students, teachers and administrators are apportioned. Eliminate useless parts as well as useless replications of time and motion and effort, where, in each case, "uselessness" is defined in advance as that which cannot be efficiently learned, efficiently tested, and accounted for. What happens then is that, for example, heated conversations in a Grade Ten classroom about the exportation of democracy to other countries via pre-emptive, invasive actions are deemed "useless" in light of standardized assessment regimes that will be testing for students' ability to name four characteristics of democracy on upcoming Provincial Examinations. Those conversations become a waste of time, a, so to speak, "luxury item" that can be purchased *after* the monotonous memorization of those characteristics, providing that memorization is done efficiently enough to "save" enough time for such luxuries.
- The product thus efficiently and repeatedly produced becomes effectively identical every time. "Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black" (Ford 2007, p. 72). One can read rich and luxurious stories "so long as" reading skills are secured beforehand. And, of course, it is no longer the *responsibility* of schools to pursue such readings. They are "frills" unless such readings are accountably linked to outcomes such as "attends to story structure" or "is able to predict based on previous information." Because the desired product is thus standardized, a standardized assessment of the results of production can be developed and applied uniformly and without variation. To the extent that our "readings" of this story cannot be rendered identical, those readings are rendered "subjective," thus, again, marginalizing multifariousness in favor of self-sameness, favoring singularity and identity over diversity and abundance.
- Not only is the *product* standardized. Efficiency requires the "complete standardization of all details and methods. [It] is not only desirable but absolutely indispensable as a preliminary to specifying the time in which each operation shall be done, and then insisting that it shall be done within the time allowed" (Taylor 1903). There is thus only "one best way" (Kanigel 2005) for *what* is being done, *how* it is being done, *how long each step takes* to be done and the precise and undeviating *order* of such steps. Moreover, exactly *who* is responsible for *what* can also be specified with precisely the same standardization and uniformity. Anything that now deviates from this is considered an error in the system that needs eradication. Luckily, because of the standardization, the source of error is easy to find. For example, if we have a child who does not understand "place-value", we can specify precisely where "on the line" this understanding was to be "built," precisely where on the line one would have tested to ensure such building (or ensured that this line-step was repeated until such assurance was had)

and so on. Of course, there may not be a defect “in the system.” There may, rather, be a defect in, to use Elwood Cubberley’s phrase, “the raw product”--the child may be “defective.” And as those of us in education know full well, such possible “defects” have led to astoundingly complex regimes of alternate assembly lines for everything from “the retarded” to “laggards in our schools” (Ayres 1909), to children with special needs, to learning delays, slow children, Individual Program Plans (ready made and individually designed assembly lines geared to the precise “raw product” deficits [see Gilham 2012, 2012a]). Thus, even though, in *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911, p. 2), Taylor insists “in the past the man has been first; in the future the system must be first,” the school system leaves the fragmentation and sequencing of Taylorism in place and then simply starts, on behalf of the well being of students and their diversity and difference, to multiply that system into sub-assembly lines. Any student unable to meet the standardized demands of the main assembly line is thus ejected from that line, purportedly for their own good and to accommodate their special needs, but there is another reason, too. Such ejection is the most efficient way to maintain the efficiency of the main line of schooling. Difference, deviation, resistance, interruption, questioning too much, not obeying or being adequately compliant--all of these things are not taken to be indicators, perhaps, of something about the line itself, but pathological indicators of “abnormal” student characteristics.

- From a June 4th, 1906 lecture by F.W. Taylor (cited in Kanigel 2005, p. 169): “In our scheme we do not ask for the initiative of our men. We do not want any initiative. All we want of them is to obey the orders we give them, do what we say, and do it quickly.” Recall “little requires human application, so little cultivates it” (Ross 2006, p. 111). Initiative and interest become cast as a *detriment to efficiency itself*. They are, again, luxury items, leftovers. And students learn this quickly and become complicit in this logic. The student who asks too many questions becomes “taught a lesson” later in the hallway. The student who appears interested in what is being learned becomes marginalized as a “teacher’s pet.” Likewise, the new teacher who shows enthusiasm for their work is tolerated, but inundated with war stories about how the experienced teachers in the school, too, in their day, were once full of enthusiasm, interest and initiative (“sounds nerdy”). Thus, the restless student becomes named as suffering from Oppositional Defiance Disorders in the same gesture that names the new enthusiastic teacher green and naive. In light of the smooth operation of the line, “independence and stubbornness” become seen as a little “wild” and “undisciplined” while “discipline” now comes to be equated no longer with a hard-won practice and involvement, but with the compliant following of rules, and all that in a system now hysterically aroused over issues of bullying.
- Taylor’s “declared purpose was to take all control from the hands of the workman (whom he regularly compared to oxen or horses) and place it in those of management” (Kanigel 2005, p. 19). “What [Taylor] really wanted working men to be [is] focused, uncomplicated and compliant” (Boyle 2006). Educational psychology then often unwittingly conspires with theories of normality and abnormality, deviance and resistance, theories of giftedness and slowness, in order to codify these purposes.

- Since effective schooling becomes linked with the obedient following of rules and following them the way anyone and everyone follows them, it becomes clear that to be a student and to be a teacher means to be *completely and utterly replaceable*: This is part of the “scientific” character of “scientific management,” one of the consequences of how it operates. To the extent that who is learning and who is teaching makes a difference in the classroom, to that extent, that teaching has become, as goes the term in a failed experiment, *contaminated*. Any innovative practices are thus marginalized as the gifts of a particular teacher, thus once again preventing the normalcy of efficient schooling that can be done by anyone from being interrupted by such examples.
- Given this link of contamination with inefficiency, consider that H. Martyn Hart, the Dean of St. John’s Cathedral in Denver, from the September 1912 issue of the *Ladies’ Home Journal* decried decreases in character, increases in divorce and crime, lack of self-control, illicit political machinations and attributed all of this to *inefficiency* in “the system of schooling” (Cited in Callahan 1964, p. 52). Simply consider here how contemporary schools have become “hot spots” in this regard, where economic, social, cultural, political, and moral praise and blame swirl.
- What then happens is a sort of “ghost echo.” This tangled story of efficiency and its insinuation into education is not just a story produced in closed system. It is story and a system dedicated to *producing closure*. Any attempt to interrupt this story can be cast aside without hesitation because that attempt can now only be speaking on behalf of *inefficiency*. After declaring that “the man” used to be first but now “the system” is first, Taylor goes on to write that “this in no sense implies that great men are not needed. On the contrary, the first object of any good system must be that of developing first-class men; and under systematic management the best man rises to the top more certainly and more rapidly than every before” (1911, p. 2). Remember, though, that “greatness” and “first-class” here mean those who can maintain the system and its efficiencies. Taylor’s purpose in the introduction of the suggestion box in such settings is to take suggestions that, over time, *eliminate the need for further suggestions*—this is the moment where the system becomes first, and “the man” is simply either fitting into it or ejected out of it (teachers and students alike). This is the same “closed circle” echo found in *The Fraser Institute’s Annual Report Card on Alberta Schools*: “If teachers were following the provincial curriculum by definition they would be teaching to the test. If they’re not teaching to the test, then they’re not doing their job” (McGinnis 2008, p. B5, citing the institute’s Peter Cowley). Once this loop closes, the dominance of this form of thinking then projects upon any dissent the character of being irresponsible, being “unaccountable.” “Abiding in inquiry” looks like letting kids do whatever they want and to hell with the curriculum, let’s just be free and arty and “creative.” Thus rear up again those images of wildness, of the threat to the well-organized Capital of the stubborn and independent life of the fields (in Latin, *paganus*, root of the term “pagan”; Old English heath, root of the term “heathen”—in both cases, related to those who work the fields):

Restless students [ones asking questions beyond the efficient ken of the efficient classroom,

ones who ask where we are, what we are doing here, why we are doing these things or who are resistant to be considered replaceable, or who refuse to be disinterested or who text each other at the back of the class] become portends of utter, unutterable Chaos. As I've witnessed in many High Schools, there is the unuttered belief that if you let go for a minute of the narrowed and fenced regimes of management and control, quite literally, *all Hell will break lose*. That this hallucinatory vision of the threatening Hellishness portended by restlessness is, in some part and however unintentionally, *produced* by the very narrowing that has been set up to protect us from such a threat—this becomes to horrible to contemplate. (Jardine 2012, p. 83)

- Finally, schooling, *of all things*, becomes rife with anti-intellectualism (see Callahan 1964, p. 8). “Nerdy” is all that needs to be said and, at the same time, that which goes without saying.

Two last things in this lengthening short story.

First, looping back to our considerations of time, and weaving this with our contemporary concerns in Canadian schools with the burgeoning multicultural face of our classrooms, consider this brief reminiscence from “William C. Klann, foreman of motor assembly at the Highland Park facility” (Watts 2006, p. 142): “one [phrase] every foreman had to learn in English, German, Polish, and Italian [and now Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Mandarin and others] was ‘hurry up’” (cited in Watts 2006, p. 154).

Second, the promise of efficiency is a promise about *the very nature of the future itself*. In its sequencing and standardization of the steps towards becoming educated, it allow one to put one's mind at ease, knowing that the course ahead has already been totally mapped out in advance of any particular child's arrival, and all possible futures are already foreseen, including well-mapped deviations from the standard, “normal” course. Thus David G. Smith's (2006 p.25) horrifying insight about the temporality of such matters, a sort of “frozen futurism”: “there is no future because the future *already* is,” a terrible sentence that couples how efficiency forecloses on the future while, at the same time, portends weirdly apocalyptic fears and anxieties “about” the future.

Hence the need for such a long short story, because what gets hidden here is how the promise of efficiency is first produced out of a fear of the unforeseeable-ness of the future, and then produces the very detachments and consequent unease regarding such unforeseeable-ness for which it then offers itself as the only scientifically warranted and manageable and accountable *cure*.

A great and all-too-familiar story of pedagogical iatrogenesis that needs to be left for another day (see 2000; Gilham & Jardine 2013).

“Time is a Bringer of Gifts”

Time is a bringer of gifts. These gifts may be welcomed and cared for. To some extent they may be expected. They cannot in the usual sense be made. Only in the short term of industrial

accounting can they be thought simply earnable. Over the real length of human time, to be earned they must be deserved. (Berry 1983, p. 77)

It is vital, as we turn back towards a richer experience of time--what H.G. Gadamer calls “full-filled” time in contrast to “empty time”-- that we don’t unwittingly drag with us entrails of these short stories we are attempting to leave behind. An all-too-common critique of and resistance to the empty rush of Taylorism in schools is to *leave the bits and pieces in place and leave in place the underlying assumption of empty time*, and simply de-standardize the assembly. In what amounts to nothing more than an inversion of Taylor’s (1911, p. 2) “in the past the man has been first; in the future the system must be first,” each individual student is put “first” in a fragmented and scattershot world, each “left to their own devices” (Arendt 1969, p. 196), each making what they will of the bits and pieces, each caught, as Arendt’s title portends, “between past and future.” We end up with assembly lines democratized, now plural and diverse, now simply minus surveillance and uniformity. This, of course, ends up simply multiplying the rush into a sort of post-modern proliferation and scattering, leading, seemingly inevitably, to reactionary backlashes and new invocations of “back to the basics” as a tried and true remedy and fail-safe means to accountability. Thus we seem stuck with old, worn-out options, between the closures and foreclosures of “the system” or wild, scattershot, undisciplined twittery chaos. We lose sight of the fact that these feared images of wild, scattershot, undisciplined chaos are, in part, precisely a *product of* precisely the system that deems “all Hell breaking loose” as the only alternative to its machinations.

Breaking out of these old, worn-out, self-perpetuating options is tough work because they form the very atmosphere of our attempts to break out of them. Going back to Wendell Berry’s invocation of time as a bringer of gifts (recall that Berry is a *farmer*, one of those whose “stubborn independence” Taylorism and Fordism “fought to eradicate” [Watts 2006, p. 153]), the trouble is, for the gifts that full-filled time can bring to be deserved *requires something* of those anticipating such gifts. We need to *do something* more than simply demand, “Tell me exactly how do you do it?” We have to be adamantly wary that this sort of demand, and our assumption that the forthcoming answer should be simple and not require much of me, are *precisely* how Taylorism continues to lurk in efforts to step away from it. The worth while time of abiding in inquiry and coming to experience the gifts that can then arrive requires long, difficult, repeated, *practice*, and this requirement cannot be bypassed with Taylor-like false promises. The entire Teachers’ Convention quick-and-easy inquiry-in-our-classroom handouts simply induce its inevitable failure, this, in part, because of the profound power that the industrial model of empty time still holds over our imagination. “Abiding in inquiry” is therefore susceptible to becoming one more bandwagon precisely *because the ubiquity of empty time renders it thus*, demanding that it be quick and easy and efficiently implemented in a sure-fire way because, after all, “time is always running out” and we need a quick fix.

As with music or painting, or reading, or writing, or getting good at listening to others tell of their worries over the linger of a story, or becoming deft, as a teacher, at taking care of these responses and gathering them in to our collective care and attention, these matters take tough and repeated practice to get good at. They take thoughtful, rigorous, scholarly work, and the seeking

out those who have been in these territories before. They take imitation and emulation and complex conversations held in the refuge of others dedicated to such work.

So arises a paradox that we cannot avoid. Our ability to welcome and care for the gifts that may come from abiding in inquiry must be cultivated “over time,” and this ability must, of necessity, be cultivated over precisely the sort of time it presumes to cultivate. Unlike the immediate-yet-empty promises of procedurally-driven Taylorism (“just do this and it will work”), full-filled time is not available as a procedure to simply be obediently and mindlessly followed. It is available as a mindful practice that takes precisely full-filled time in a field of practice (another allusion to that agricultural stubbornness) to cultivate that practice and reveal its yield. Full-filled time is thus embedded in the fullness of the very topics being investigated and is therefore only available to be experienced and practiced through our involvement in traversing those very territories and seeking out the fullness of them. It’s yields are only “won by a certain labor” (Ross & Jardine 2009) proper to those (unfragmented, unsequenced, dependently co-arising) fields. It therefore requires engagement in those topics and the time and attention and devotion *they* demand of *us*.

So part of this practice involves precisely what is at the heart of the profession of education as a whole: *study* (Block 2009), and, in our present case, a study of these strange histories of temporality and how they have infused our imaginations and pedagogical practices. This is difficult, detailed (albeit, in its own way, pleasurable and, so to speak, “fulfilling”) work, but that is not a sign of an error in efficiency but of the worthwhileness of the object under consideration and the project of labor undertaken. Good work takes time because good things are complex and demanding of us and our attention and devotion. In this chapter, we are struggling with a topic that is and has perennially been tough in its telling: time, the worth-whileness of learning, and how that worth is to be sought and cared for.

Abiding in inquiry exists in the strangest sense of temporality. Full-filled time is the time *of* the work being done, the time belonging to the fullness of that work and its rich territoriality. It is migratory and returning, like gathering flocks. Or perhaps like those Golden Eagles greeted, praised, and lovingly counted and re-counted in the mountains to the West of Calgary each year, year after year. Each new count gathers up where we were “before” and adds itself to the story already underway, as do those volunteering for the count and those they tell of what they have done. The territories of traverse, the arcs of seasons and links between weather and food sources, the maps drawn and re-drawn, the missives sent north and south along the migratory routes through emails and websites full of images, counts, concerns, advice--all this happens, not precisely “at” the same (“now”) time of some empty “present” but rather “in” the same, shall we say, *presence*. This is not a matter of one isolated piece of information (first before and then) after another, but of a gathering into a while of time. That work done “before” becomes part of the present, because the “present,” in the life of such work, is no longer simply a “now.” “Being present” has a different meaning:

The concept of tarrying temporality [full-filled time] allows us to see how ‘the present’ posited as this (impossible) dimensional entity [a “now”], has been abstracted from ‘the present’ as *that which is fully here for us*, as a matter about which we have, so to speak, presence of mind.

This is the distinction between empty and filled time that Gadamer's [1970] title [Concerning empty and full-filled time] alludes to. (Ross 2006, p. 110)

When such work goes well, we lose a sense of the dominance of the empty measure of clockwork time and fall into the time of the story, of the work itself, of "that which is fully here for us." Even if the Eagles are "late," this is not the lateness of industrial assembly, but a lateness that sits in a long, migratory gather of time and a longer gather of tracing these migrations over the years. Even if the migrating Eagles are "late" in passing overhead, this lateness finds its measure and its significance only in the wider arcs of "that which is fully here for us" in such a worthwhile study-seasonality, these birds, this place and its routes for migratory passages, and the gatherings of memory and knowledge and experience such a place induces and protects.

Thus, key to "abiding in inquiry" is working in the *presence* of a topic and working to bring that topic to presence. It thus involves *the gatherings and the re-gatherings*, where what we've found, where we are "now," and "what is to be done next" are gathered together into the presence of "that which is [emergently] fully here for us"--the topic being investigated. These gatherings cultivate precisely this deep dependent co-arising key to worthwhile work: the sort of presence of mind that that which is fully present requires if it is to be thus present and if we are to have presence of mind about it. There is a phenomenologically undeniable sense in which each gesture of the study and exploration of a topic happens within "the same" full-filled time of "that which is fully here for us"--"presence (of mind)" not simply "the present [now]." Such presence is thus linked to forms of practice, but it is not fully adequate to think of this practice as occurring over a long string of "nows" but as itself recurring, remaining, somehow, in the same temporal locale of emerging presence.

Pushed one step further, this sense of full-filled time requires that we understand the topics entrusted to teachers and students in school as constituted, not by lifeless fragments and bits and pieces, but by living disciplines, live inheritances and fabrics into which our lives are already woven. This sense of aliveness (*lebensweltlich*) is thus key to resisting the rush of empty time: in inquiry we are dealing with "entit[ies] that exist only by always being something different. [They are] . . . temporal in a radical sense. [They have their] being only in becoming and return" (Gadamer 1989, p. 123). The topics we explore with students--betrayal and fidelity, perhaps, or "democracy" and its exportation to the Middle East and further East, or the curves of highway off-ramps and their mathematics, or the political spins of statistics, or the fragility of the Weaselhead marshlands in Calgary, and on and on-- are therefore no longer properly understood as simply fixed and finishing objects to be assembled or delivered, but are, rather living and often deeply contested "inheritances" that have been handed to us and to which we have been handed. They are living, ongoing gatherings into whose life of gathering we must enter into in order to come to understand them, in order for each of us to "gather" something of these gatherings. They are stories into whose tellings we must step and add ourselves. To understand, then, is to "further" (Gadamer 1989, p. xiv) the gathering --"only in the multifariousness of such voices does it exist" [Gadamer 1989, 284]). This requires that, in order to come to understand what is going on with a particular topic under investigation in the classroom ("Something is going on, [*im Spiele ist*], something is happening [*sich abspielt*]"

[Gadamer, 1989, p. 104], I myself enter into this “ordering and shaping” (Gadamer 1989, p. 107), because *that* is what any living topic is: an ongoing, still-gathering ordering and shaping, not just a fixed and already finalized order and shape. Even the seemingly finished formulae of, say, quadratic equations, are always appearing and re-appearing in the life of the life world, demonstrating and re-demonstrating the character and limits of their applicability and usefulness.

Abiding in inquiry thus requires practice, requires engagement. Temporally put, “to be present means to *participate*” (Gadamer 1989, p. 124). Full-filled time thus links coming to know a living field of work and its gatherings to the transformation of the one coming to know into someone who “know[s] one’s way around” (Gadamer 1989, p. 260): “this means that one knows one’s way around in *it*” (p. 260), in the gatherings of and in the dependently co-arising gathering presence of mind regarding, a living field of work.

There is a sense, here, that time, in such gatherings, “slows down.” But this isn’t quite right. This isn’t simply a slowing of the clock:

It is not merely one’s “taking time” to linger over something, as in the slackening or slowing down to contemplate. [This full-filled] temporality . . . is not a function of lackadaisical, meandering contemplation, least of all passive in any way, but is a function of the fullness and *intensity* of attention and engrossment (Ross 2006, p., 109).

We become enthralled and “enveloped in a time that does not pass” (Ross 2006 p. 106), a time described by Hans-Georg Gadamer with the German term *Verweilen*--translatable as “tarrying” or “whiling” or “gathering”:

In this tarrying the contrast with the merely pragmatic realms of understand becomes clear. The *Weile* [the ‘while’ in *Verweilen*, tarrying] has this very special temporal structure – a structure of being moved, which one nevertheless cannot describe merely as duration. In it we tarry. (Gadamer 2001, p. 76–7)

This possibility of, shall we say, “absorption” and being moved and addressed and, shall we say, summoned or beckoned by the work itself, is phenomenologically familiar. When the work undertaken is worthwhile, the inquiry, the topic, the images, the ideas, the story:

truly takes hold of us. [I]t is not an object that stands opposite us which we look at in hope of seeing through it to an intended conceptual meaning. Just the reverse. The work is an *Ereignis* – an event that ‘appropriates us’ into itself. It jolts us, it knocks us over, and sets up a world of its own, into which we are drawn, as it were. (Gadamer 2001, p. 71)

This link between worthwhile work and the while of its full-filled time has a wonderful, pedagogically rich, double movement: the thing we tarry or while over, as well as our ability to experience it “. . . becomes ever richer and more diverse. The *volume* increases infinitely – and for this reason we learn from [it] how to tarry” (Gadamer 2001, p. 76–7). In inquiry, the topic becomes richer and

we who gather around it and while over it become more and more able, through participation and practice, to experience that richness and diversity. As the topic becomes richer and more diverse, we, as St. Augustine put it, become “roomier” (cited in Carruthers 2005, p. 199).

There are important pedagogical hints in all this.

First, it is not just that good stories and good work ask us to linger over them and return and gather. Such things *teach us how to tarry*, to “while” by requiring this of us. “The ‘self’ is *forgotten* in the experience of tarrying” (Ross 2006, p. 112) as we become absorbed in the while of the work. This is why I’ve left these heated signifiers--“good stories,” “good work”--undefined, because they gain their signification and significance only through the concerted concern for and dedication to the question of what it is that is worth whiling over, worthwhile. “Who is to say what is worthwhile?” cannot be genuinely asked from a cynical distance by a self that is full of self-consciousness and who always wants to be first and who refuses the risk, refuses to let themselves enter the fray, the Spiel. “Something is going on, (*im Spiele ist*), something is happening (*sich abspielt*)” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 104)--the isolated and bereft, post-modern, cynical, self appears, now, as nothing more than a bullying, self-obsessed spoilsport who has fallen hook, line and sinker for the story of fragmentation and cool, safe, self-congratulatory distance and alienation.

Second, good work in (and outside of) the classroom becomes akin to an object gathering mass that, as it gathers, starts increasing its “draw” of attention. Its “gravity” increases as our knowledge and experience of it increases, which thereby draws our attention even more strongly. This, in fact, is a familiar experience. The more attention I give to this new work of art that has entered my house, or the more attention I give to writing this paper, or the more often I read these strange writings of Sheila Ross or Hans-Georg Gadamer or Jane Yolen, the more they attract my attention: “having become more experienced about some thing through whiling our time away over it has a strange result: *what is experienced* ‘increases in being’ (Gadamer 1989, p. 40)” (Jardine 2012, p. 190). The more often those Golden Eagles are noted, the stronger the draw of that noteworthiness, and until I myself enter into that sway, that noteworthiness is not yet “present.” It must be cultivated to be experienced. It does not lie there openly and anonymously available. That is, its coming to presence asks something of me. This is why Gadamer (1989, p. 122-3) parallels this whiling time to a sort of “festive” time, where, over time and through cyclical returning, something like a “tradition” is set up and why he suggests that “belonging” in this arc of telling and re-telling is a condition of the story’s draw (p. 262) (“a sense of ‘nativeness,’ of belonging to the place [Snyder 1980, p. 86]). We find this in classrooms where a time for storytelling--or any other experience considered by those gathering to be worth while--has been carved off and protected and reliably repeated. This is far from being simply the setting up of a classroom “routine” that is done simply for the sake of familiarity and predictability:

[the world] compels over and over, and the better one knows it, the *more* compelling it is. This is not a matter of mastering an area of study (Gadamer 2007, p. 115).

Thus, getting to return to something worth while has its own attraction which then teaches us

about the worth of this kind of returning. Good, worthwhile work creates a desire for good, worthwhile work and impatience with trivial things that are not only not worthwhile but ravage and atrophy and betray our keenness for worthwhile things. As Chris Dawson (1998, p. xxvi) notes in his “Translator’s Introduction” to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Praise of Theory*, this links to the hermeneutic interest in old Greek ideas of “the beautiful”: “any beautiful thing has a radiant elegance about it which . . . points beyond itself and drives us to look for further elegant unities in other things.” Again, then, whiling over a good story teaches something more than the tale being told. It “attracts the longing of love to it. [It] disposes people in its favor immediately” (Gadamer 1989, p. 481) and it disposes us to seek out and surround ourselves with such things. It disposes us to clear out the junk we have surrounded ourselves with and the junking of our lives that such junk induces. It teaches us--teachers and student alike--something about the worth of whiling and what it requires of us and what happens when we strive to surround ourselves and fill our lives with things worthy of, quite literally, spending our lives on.

Worthwhile things are thus secretly honoring of our sense of our own finitude. Pursuing “good work” involves becoming more and more aware of the frail fabric of things, of the vulnerability of knowledge and scholarship itself in this rushing, often degrading, trivializing world and of the knife-edge limits of learning that is, as living, always and inevitably up against the edge of impermanence. Up against this edge, that abiding in inquiry *happens at all* in the real world of real schools is downright miraculous, and this makes it all the more beautiful and all the more honorable to be part of. The mindfulness of inquiry often requires bloody-mindedness and refusing to expend ourselves in the ever-accelerating rush of empty time that is deliberately designed to never be satisfied and to produce in us a cynicism about any viable alternative:

Gadamer’s uniquely concrete account of the temporality of tarrying facilitates . . . a view of [human] continuity that is profoundly participatory. It gives the deadening abstraction of cultural alienation a specific meaning: participation is, so to speak, only a thought away. This corrects the view that the existence of the cultural artifact obviates or delays indefinitely any need to inquiry into human continuity oneself, as though the cultural artifact performed this custodial service for us by itself. It becomes possible to see how identifying human historical continuity, not with the hermeneutical event [of tarrying and gathering *for oneself* and *with others also gathered*], but as ‘elsewhere’ [already in the book, already known nor remembered by others, easily accessible if I want to on-line at a moment’s notice, so why should I bother myself with learning it or tarrying over it, since I can look it up any time I want?], merely lends itself to a self-understanding as helplessly alienated. The richness of the time of tarrying . . . provides a resource for revising our terms of engagement with the question of, say, the tragedy of our post-modern ‘condition’ by offering a way past the prognosis that this condition cannot be corrected. (Ross 2006, p. 113)

An Ending

“The temporality of tarrying serves as a backdrop against which [empty] time now becomes

suspect” (Ross 2006, p. 109).

“So that sitting there, listening like that becomes part of the story too, just as I am added when I tell it, as anyone will be, each version a journey that carries us all along” (Wallace 1987, p. 47).

Thus the great migratory conspiracies of storytelling, the telling from breath to breath (Illich 1998), each breath, of course, original, irreplaceable, and necessary in breathing life into the while of worthwhile things. “If the story does not have that breath of life, all the journeying, all the history, all the mystery, are for nought” (Yolen 1988, p. 10). Children come to school already breathing, already teeming with words and images, with loves and lives and fears, and tales of cats and water trickled through dirt. The stories of what happens next are always then created “in between,” in the liminal space that is neither inside nor outside, neither mine nor yours, of us both out into the fabric of the world and its “to and fro movement” (Gadamer 1989, p. 104).

“The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between” (Gadamer 1989, p. 295).

“. . .lifted from one teller’s quilt and sewn into another” (Yolen 1988, p. 5). Just now, here, in the immediacy of our gathering, and yet, still and again, “once upon a time.”

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